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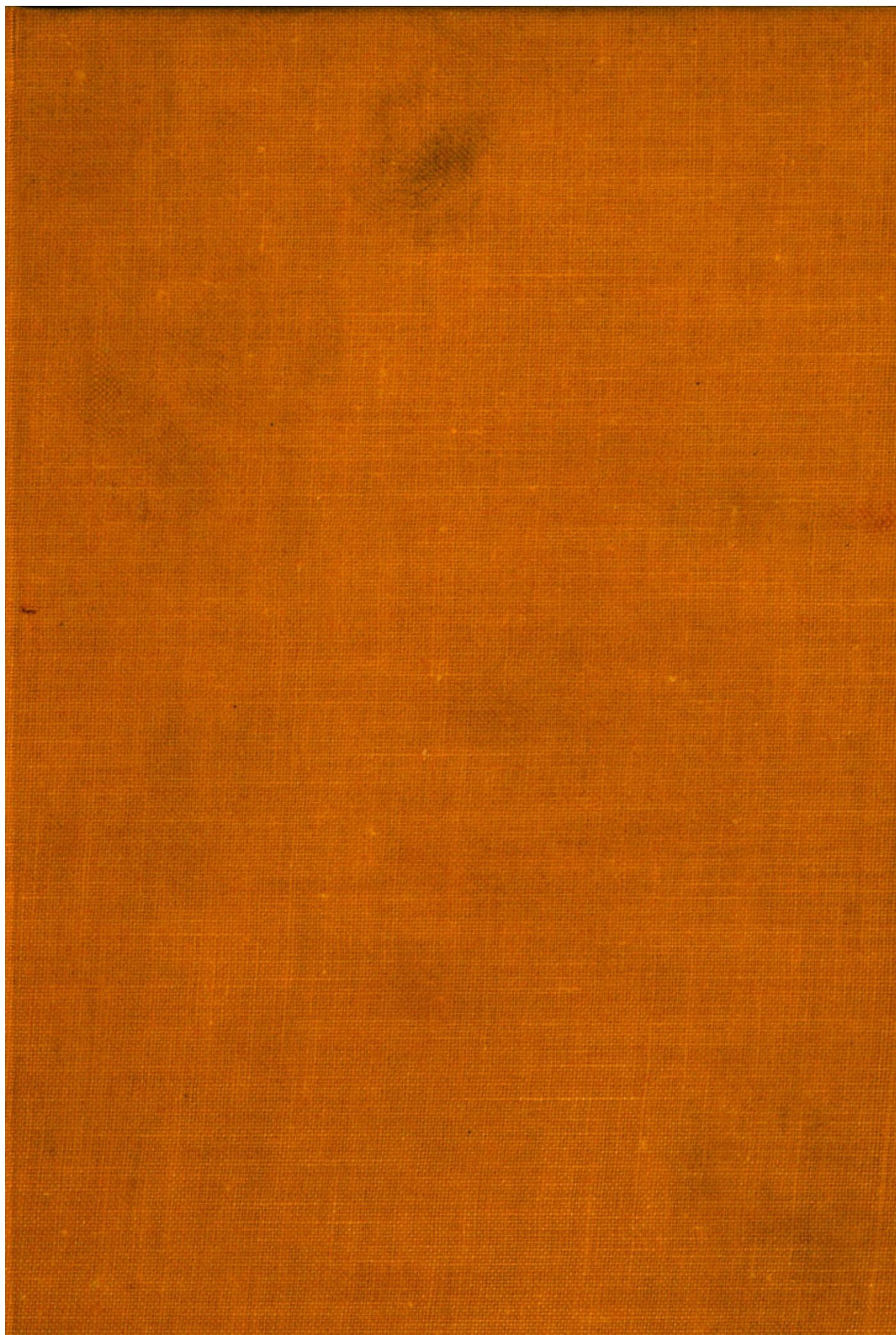
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MEMOIRS OF A SLAVE-TRADER

By
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CHAPTER ONE

MY FIRST VOYAGE FROM HAVANA

WHILST Bonaparte was conquering Italy, my father, Louis Canot, a captain and paymaster in the French army, won the heart and hand of a blooming Piedmontese, to whom I owe my birth in the capital of Tuscany.

My father was faithful to the Emperor as well as the Consul. He followed his sovereign until death closed his career on the field of Waterloo.

Soldiers' wives are seldom rich, and my mother was no exception to the rule. She was left in very moderate circumstances, with six children to support ; but the widow of an old campaigner, who had partaken the sufferings of many a long and dreary march with her husband, was neither disheartened by the calamity nor at a loss for thrifty expedients to educate her younger offspring. Accordingly, I was kept at school, studying geography, arithmetic, history and the languages, until near twelve years old, when it was thought time for me to choose a profession. I had always been a greedy devourer of books of travel, so I avowed my preference for a seafaring life. Proper inquiries were made at Leghorn ; and, in a few weeks, I found myself ready to embark, as an apprentice, upon the American ship *Galatea*, of Boston.

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It was in the year 1819 that I first saluted the element upon which it has been my destiny to pass so much of my life. The reader will readily imagine the discomforts to which I was subjected on this voyage. Born and bred in the interior of Italy, I had only the most romantic ideas of the sea. My career was necessarily one of great hardship ; and, to add to my misfortunes, I had neither companion nor language to vent my grief and demand sympathy. Besides the officers of the *Galatea*, there was a clerk on board, whom the captain directed to teach me English, so that, by the time we reached Sumatra, I was able to stand up for my rights, and plead my cause. As we could not obtain a cargo of pepper on the island, we proceeded to Bengal ; and, on our arrival at Calcutta, the captain, who was also supercargo, took apartments on shore, where the clerk and myself were allowed to follow him.

According to the fashion of that period, the house provided for our accommodation was a spacious and elegant one, equipped with every Oriental comfort and convenience, while fifteen or twenty servants were always at the command of its inmates. For three months we lived like nabobs, and sorry, indeed, was I when the clerk announced that the vessel's loading was completed, and our holiday over.

We touched at St. Helena for supplies, but as Napoleon was still alive, a British frigate met us within five miles of that rock-bound coast, and after furnishing a scant supply of water, bade us take our way homeward.

I remember very well that it was a fine night in July

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1820 when we touched the wharf at Boston, Massachusetts.

Captain Towne retired to Salem after the hands were discharged, and took me with him to reside in his family until he was ready for another voyage.

I sailed during five years from Salem on voyages to various parts of the world, always employing my leisure, while on shore and at sea, in familiarizing myself minutely with the practical and scientific details of the profession to which I designed devoting my life. When my apprenticeship was over, I made two or three successful voyages as mate, until a "disappointment" caused me to forsake my employers. This blight overtook me at Antwerp—a port noted for the backslidings of young seamen. My hard-earned pay soon diminished very sensibly, while I was desperately in love with a Belgian beauty, who made a complete fool of me—for at least three months! From Antwerp, I betook myself to Paris to vent my second "disappointment." Few young men of eighteen or twenty have lived faster. The gaming tables at Frascati's and the Palais Royal finished my purse; and, leaving an empty trunk as a recompense for my landlord, I took "French leave" one fine morning, and hastened to sea.

In a week, I was on board a Dutch galliot, bound to Havana; but I soon perceived that I was under the command of two captains—male and female. The regular master superintended the navigation, while the dame was the actual owner of the craft, and, from skipper to cabin-boy, governed not only our actions but our stomachs. I know not whether it was piety

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or economy that swayed her soul, but I never met a person who was so rigid as this lady in the observance of the church calendar, especially whenever a day of abstinence allowed her to deprive us of our beef. Nothing but my destitution compelled me to ship in this craft; still, to say the truth, I had well-nigh given up all idea of returning to the United States, and determined to engage in any adventurous expedition that my profession offered. In 1824, it will be remembered, Mexico, the Spanish Main, Peru, and the Pacific coasts were renowned for the fortunes they bestowed on enterprise; and, as the galliot was bound to Havana, I hailed her as a floating bridge to my El Dorado.

The light winds of summer soon brought us inside the Moro Castle, past the frowning batteries of the Cabanas, and at anchor near Regla, within the beautiful harbour of Havana. I hastened to Regla with a letter of introduction to the Italian grocer to whom I was confided. Carlo Cibo was an illiterate man of kind heart, who had adventurously emigrated from Italy to furnish the Havanese with good things; while, in return, the Havanese had been so pleased with his provender that Carlo may be said to have been a man "very well-to-do in the world" for a foreigner. He received me with unbounded kindness—welcomed me to his bachelor home—apologized for its cold cheerlessness, and ordered me to consider himself and his *casa* entirely at my disposal as long as I chose to remain.

I was content to accept this unstinted hospitality for a few days, while I ran over the town, the hills,

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and the *paseos* ; but I could not consent to dally long eating the bread of idleness and charity. I observed that my friend Carlo was either the most prudent or least inquisitive man I knew, for he never asked me a question about my early or recent history. As he would not lead the conversation to my affairs, I one day took the liberty to inquire whether there was a vessel in port bound to the Pacific Ocean or Mexico, in which my protector could find a situation for me as an officer, or procure me permission to work my way even as a common sailor.

The kind grocer instantly divined my true motive, and while he honoured me for it, deprecated the idea of my departure. He said that my visit, instead of being a burden, was a pleasure he could not soon replace. As to the expenses of his house, he declared they were, in fact, *not* increased. What fed five, fed half a dozen ; and, as to my proposal to go to Mexico, or any other place in Spanish America on the continent, with a view of " making my fortune," he warmly protested against it, in consequence of his own experience.

It is strange how our lives and destinies are often decided by trifles. My nautical eye and taste were struck by the trim rig of the sharp built " slavers," which, at that time, used to congregate at Havana. There was something bewitching to my mind in their racehorse beauty. A splendid vessel has always had the same influence on my mind that I have heard a splendid woman has on the minds of other men. These dashing slavers, with their arrowy hulls and raking

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masts, got complete possession of my fancy. There was hardly a day that I did not come home with a discovery of added charms. Signor Carlo listened in silence and nodded his head, when I was done, with an approving smile and a "*bueno!*"

I continued my sailing peregrinations for a month around the harbour, when my kind entertainer invited me to accompany him aboard a vessel of which, he said, he owned two shares—*she was bound to Africa*. The splendid clipper was one of the very craft that had won my heart; and my feverish soul was completely upset by the gala-scene as we drifted down the bay, partaking of a famous breakfast, and quaffing bumpers of champagne to the schooner's luck. When she passed the Moro Castle we leaped into our boats, and gave the voyagers three hearty and tipsy cheers. My grocer was a slaver!

My mind was made up. Mexico, Peru, South American independence, patriotism, and all that, were given to the breezes of the gulf. In a few days I was told that my wishes would perhaps be gratified, as a fast vessel from the Canaries was about to be sold; and if she went off a bargain, Carlo had resolved to purchase her, with a friend, to send to Africa.

Accordingly, the Canary *Globo* was acquired for three thousand dollars; and after a perfect refitting, loomed in the harbour as a respectable pilot-boat of forty tons. Her name, in consequence of reputed speed, was changed to *El Areostatico*; a culverine was placed amidships; all the requisites for a slave cargo were put on board; fifteen sailors, the refuse of the press-

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gang and jail-birds, were shipped ; powder, ammunition, and small arms were abundantly supplied ; and, last of all, four kegs, ballasted with specie, were conveyed into the cabin to purchase our return cargo.

It was on the 2nd of September 1826 that I bade farewell to Carlo on the deck of the *Areostatico*, cleared for the Cape de Verde Isles, but, in truth, bound for the Rio Pongo. Our crew consisted of twenty-one scamps—Spaniards, Portuguese, Frenchmen, and mongrels. The Majorcan captain was an odd character to entrust with such an enterprise, and probably nowhere else, save in Havana at that period, would he have been allowed to command a slaver. He was a scientific navigator, but no sailor ; afraid of his shadow, he had not a particle of confidence in his own judgment ; everybody was listened to, and he readily yielded his opinion without argument or controversy. Our chief officer, a Catalonian cousin of the captain, made no pretensions to seamanship, yet he was a good mathematician. I still remember the laughs I had at the care he took of his lily-white hands, and the jokes we cracked upon his girl-like manners, voice and conversation. The boatswain, who was in his watch, assured me that he rarely gave an order without humming it out to a tune of some favourite opera.

In this fantastic group, I occupied the position of supernumerary officer and interpreter : but accustomed as I had been to wholesome American seamanship and discipline, I trembled not a little when I discovered the amazing ignorance of the master, and observed the utter worthlessness of our crew.

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Forty-one days, however, brought us to the end of our voyage at the mouth of the Rio Pongo. No one being acquainted with the river's entrance or navigation, the captain and four hands went ashore for a pilot, who came off in the afternoon, while our master ascended in a boat to the slave-factory at Bangalang. Four o'clock found us entering the Rio Pongo, with tide and wind in our favour, so that before the sun sank into the Atlantic Ocean we were safe at our anchorage below the settlement.

While we were slowly drifting between the river-banks, and watching the gorgeous vegetation of Africa, which, that evening, first burst upon my sight, I fell into a chat with the native pilot, who had been in the United States, and spoke English remarkably well. Berak very soon inquired whether there was anyone else on board who spoke the language besides myself, and when told that the cabin-boy alone knew it, he whispered a story which, in truth, I was not in the least surprised to hear.

That afternoon one of our crew had attempted the captain's life, while on shore, by snapping a carabine behind his back ! Our pilot learned the fact from a native who followed the party from the landing, along the beach ; and its truth was confirmed, in his belief, by the significant boasts made by the tallest of the boatmen who accompanied him on board. He was satisfied that the entire gang contemplated our schooner's seizure.

The pilot's story corroborated some hints I received from our cook during the voyage. It struck me in-

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stantly, that if a crime like this were really designed, no opportunity for its execution could be more propitious than the present. I determined, therefore, to omit no precaution that might save the vessel and the lives of her honest officers. On examining the carabines brought back from shore, which I had hurriedly thrown into the arm-chest on deck, I found that the lock of this armoury had been forced, and several pistols and cutlasses abstracted.

As night drew on, my judgment, as well as *nervousness*, convinced me that the darkness would not pass without a murderous attempt. There was an unusual silence. On reaching port, there is commonly fun and merriment among crews; but the usual song and invariable guitar were omitted from the evening's entertainment. I searched the deck carefully, yet but two mariners were found above the hatches apparently asleep. Inasmuch as I was only a subordinate officer, I could not command, nor had I any confidence in the nerve or judgment of the chief mate, if I trusted my information to him. Still I deemed it a duty to tell him the story, as well as my discovery about the missing arms. Accordingly, I called the first officer, boatswain, and cook, as quietly as possible, into the cabin, leaving our English cabin-boy to watch in the companion-way. Here I imparted our danger, and asked their assistance in *striking the first blow*. My plan was to secure the crew, and give them battle. The mate, as I expected, shrank like a girl, declining any step till the captain returned. The cook and boatswain, however, silently approved my movement; so

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that we counselled our cowardly comrade to remain below, while we assumed the responsibility and risk of the enterprise.

It may have been rather rash, but I resolved to begin the rescue by shooting down, like a dog and without a word, the notorious Cuban convict who had attempted the captain's life. This, I thought, would strike panic into the mutineers, and end the mutiny in the most bloodless way. Drawing a pair of large horse-pistols from beneath the captain's pillow, and examining the load, I ordered the cook and boat-swain to follow me to the deck. But the craven officer would not quit his hold on my person. He besought me not to commit murder. He clung to me with the panting fear and grasp of a woman. He begged me, with every term of endearment, to desist ; and, in the midst of my scuffle to throw him off, one of the pistols accidentally exploded. A moment after, my vigilant watch-boy screamed from the starboard a warning "look-out !" and, peering forward in the blinding darkness as I emerged from the lighted cabin, I beheld the stalwart ringleader, brandishing a cutlass within a stride of me. I aimed and fired. We both fell : the mutineer with two balls in his abdomen, and I from the recoil of an overcharged pistol.

My face was cut, and my eye injured by the concussion ; but as neither combatant was deprived of consciousness, in a moment we were both on our feet. The Spanish felon, however, pressed his hand on his bowels, and rushed forward exclaiming he was slain ; but, in his descent to the forecastle, he was stabbed

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in the shoulder with a bayonet by the boatswain, whose blow drove the weapon with such force that it could hardly be withdrawn from the carcass.

Feeling my face with my hand, I perceived a quantity of blood on my cheek, around which I hastily tied a handkerchief, below my eyes. I then rushed to the arm-chest. At that moment, the crack of a pistol, and a sharp, boyish cry, told me that my pet was wounded beside me. I laid him behind the hatchway, and returned to the charge. By this time I was blind with rage, and fought, it seems, like a *madman*. I confess that I have no personal recollection whatever of the following events, and only learned them from the subsequent report of the cook and boatswain.

I stood, they said, over the arm-chest like one spell-bound. My eyes were fixed on the forecastle ; and, as head after head loomed out of the darkness above the hatch, I discharged carabine after carabine at the mark. Everything that moved fell by my aim. As I fired the weapons, I flung them away to grasp fresh ones ; and, when the battle was over, the cook aroused me from my mad stupor, still groping wildly for arms in the emptied chest.

As the smoke cleared off, the forepart of our schooner seemed utterly deserted ; yet we found two men dead, one in mortal agony on the deck, while the ringleader and a colleague were gasping in the forecastle. Six pistols had been fired against us from forward ; but, strange to say, the only efficient ball was the one that struck my English boy's leg.

When I came to my senses, my first quest was for

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the gallant boatswain, who, being unarmed on the forecastle when the unexpected discharge took place, and seeing no chance of escape from my murderous carabines, took refuge over the bows.

Our cabin-boy was soon quieted. The mutineers needed but little care for their hopeless wounds, while the felon chief, like all such wretches, died in an agony of despicable fear, shrieking for pardon. My shriving of his sins was a speedy rite !

Such was my first night in Africa.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FACTORY OF MONGO JOHN

WHEN the gorgeous sun of Africa shot his first rays through the magnificent trees and herbage that hemmed the placid river, five bodies were cast into the stream, and the traces of the tragedy obliterated as well as possible. The recreant mate, who plunged into the cabin at the report of the first pistol from the fore-castle, reappeared with haggard looks and trembling frame, to protest that *he* had no hand in what he called "the murder." The cook, boatswain, and African pilot recounted the whole transaction to the master, who inserted it in the log-book, and caused me to sign the narrative with unimplicated witnesses. Then the wound of the cabin-boy was examined and found to be trifling, while mine, though not painful, was thought to imperil my sight. The flint lock of a rebounding pistol had inflicted three gashes just beneath the eye on my cheek.

There was but little appetite for breakfast that day. After the story was told and recorded, we went sadly to work unmooring the vessel, bringing her slowly like a hearse to an anchorage in front of Bangalang, the residence and factory of Mr. Ormond, better known by the country-name of "Mongo John." This per-

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sonage came on board early in the morning with our returned captain, and promised to send a native doctor to cure both my eye and the boy's leg, making me pledge him a visit as soon as the vessel's duties would permit.

That evening the specie was landed, and the schooner left in my charge by the master, with orders to strip, repair, and provide for the voyage home. Before night, Mongo John fulfilled his promise of a physician, who came on board with his prescription, not in his pocket, but by his side! He ordered my torn cheek to be bathed, every half-hour, *with human milk fresh from the breast*; and in order to secure a prompt, pure, and plentiful supply, a stout negress and her infant were sent, with orders to remain as long as her services might be required! I cannot say whether nature or the remedy healed my wound, but in a short time the flesh cicatrized, and all symptoms of inflammation disappeared entirely.

It required ten days to put the *Areostatico* in ship-shape and supply her with wood and water. Provisions had been brought from Havana, so that it was only necessary we should stow them in an accessible manner. As our schooner was extremely small, we possessed no slave-deck; accordingly, mats were spread over the fire-wood which filled the interstices of the water casks, in order to make an even surface for our cargo's repose.

When my tiresome task was done, I went ashore—almost for the first time—to report progress to the master; but he was still unprepared to embark his

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living freight. Large sums, far in advance of the usual market, were offered by him for a cargo of *boys*; still we were delayed full twenty days longer than our contract required before a supply reached Bangalang.

As I had promised Mongo John, or John the Chief, to visit his factory, I took the opportunity to fulfil my pledge. He received me with elaborate politeness; showed me his town, *barracoons*, and stores, and even his *harem*. The visit paid, he insisted that I should dine with him; and a couple of choice bottles were quickly disposed of. Ormond, like myself, had been a sailor. We spoke of the lands, scenes and adventures each had passed through, while a fresh bottle was called. There is nothing so nourishing to friendship as wine.

While the rosy fluid operated as a sedative on the Mongo, and glued him to his chair in a comfortable nap, it had a contrary effect on my exhilarated nerves. I strolled to the verandah to get a breath of fresh air from the river, but soon dashed off in the darkness to the sacred precincts of the *harem*! I was not detected till I reached nearly the centre of the sanctuary where Ormond confined his motley group of black, mulatto, and *quartermoon* wives. The first dame who perceived me was a bright mulatto, with rosy cheeks, sloe-like eyes, coquettish turban, and most voluptuous mouth, whom I afterwards discovered to be second in the chief's affections. In an instant the court resounded with a chattering call to her companions, so that, before I could turn, the whole band

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of gabbling parrots hemmed me in with a deluge of talk.

At last my friends seemed not only anxious to amuse themselves, but to do something for my entertainment also. A chatter in a corner settled what it should be. Two or three brought sticks, while two or three brought coals. A fire was quickly kindled in the centre of the court ; and as its flames lit up the area, a whirling circle of half-stripped girls danced to the monotonous beat of a *tom-tom*. Presently, the formal ring was broken, and each female danced according to her individual fancy. The claret and champagne in my brain possessed me with the idea that it was my duty to mingle in the bounding throng.

Accordingly, I leaped from the hammock where I had swung idly during the scene, and, beginning with a *balancez* and an *avant-deux*, terminated my exhibition by a regular "double shuffle" and sailor's hornpipe. The delirious laughter, cracked sides, rollicking fun, and outrageous merriment with which my feats were received are unimaginable by sober-sided people. Tired of my single exhibition, I seized the prettiest of the group by her slim, shining waist, and whirled her round and round the court in the quickest of waltzes, until, with a kiss, I laid her giddy and panting on the floor. Then, grasping another—another—and another—and treating each to the same dizzy swim, I was about waltzing the whole *seraglio* into quiescence, when who should rise before us but the staring and yawning *Mongo* !

The apparition sobered me. A *quartermoon* pet of

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Ormond—just spinning into fashionable and luscious insensibility—fell from my arms into those of her master ; and while I apologized for the freak, I charged it altogether to the witchcraft of his wit and wine.

“ Ha ! ” said the Mongo, “ it seems you can scent a petticoat as readily as a hound tracks runaways. But there’s no harm in *dancing*, Don Téodore ; only hereafter I hope you will enjoy the amusement in a less uproarious manner. In Africa we are fond of a siesta after dinner ; and I recommend you to get, as soon as possible, under the lee of another bottle.”

We retired once more to his mahogany ; and, under the spell of my chieftain’s claret and sea-yarns, I was soon lapped in sleep.

Next day the captain of the *Areostatico* drew me aside and hinted that Ormond had taken such a decided fancy for me, and insinuated so warm a wish for my continuance as his clerk at Bangalang, that he thought it quite a duty, though a sad one, to give his advice on the subject.

“ It may be well for your purse to stay with so powerful a trader ; but beside the improvement of your fortunes, there are doubts whether it will be *wholesome* for you to revisit Havana, at least at present. It may be said that you *commenced* the warfare on board the schooner ; and as five men were slain in the affray, it will be necessary for me to report the fact to the *comandante* as soon as I arrive. Now it is true that you saved the vessel, cargo, specie, and my cousin ; yet, God knows what may be the result of

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Havana justice. You will have a rigid examination, and I rather think you will be imprisoned until the final decision is made. When that consummation shall occur is quite uncertain. If you have friends, they will be bled as long as possible before you get out; if you have none, no one will take pains to see you released without recompense. When you see daylight once more, the rest of these ragamuffins and the felon friends of the dead men will dog your steps, and make Havana uncomfortable as well as dangerous; so that I have no hesitation in recommending you to stay where you are, and take the doubloons of the Mongo."

I was satisfied he only desired to get rid of me in order to reinstate the chief mate in a situation which he could not occupy as long as I was on board. As I meant to stay in Africa, I told him at once that I grieved because he had not spoken his wishes openly, but had masked an ungrateful cowardice by hypocritical solicitude for my welfare. I departed abruptly with a scowl of contempt, called a boat, and throwing my sea chest, bedding, and arms aboard, committed my fate to the African continent.

Mr. Ormond received me very cordially, and, installing me in my new secretaryship, promised a private establishment, a seat at his table, and a negro per month—or its value at the rate of forty dollars—for my services.

When the runners returned from the interior with the slaves required to complete the *Areostatico's* cargo, I considered it my duty to the Italian grocer of Regla to despatch his vessel personally. Accordingly, I re-

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turned on board to aid in stowing one hundred and eight boys and girls, the eldest of whom did not exceed fifteen years. As I crawled between decks, I confess I could not imagine how this little army was to be packed or draw breath in a hold but *twenty-two inches high* ! Yet the experiment was promptly made, inasmuch as it was necessary to secure them below in descending the river, in order to prevent their leaping overboard and swimming ashore. I found it impossible to adjust the whole in a sitting posture ; but we made them lie down in each other's laps, like sardines in a can, and in this way obtained space for the entire cargo. Strange to tell, when the *Areostatico* reached Havana, but three had paid the debt of nature.

As I left the schooner a few miles outside the bar, I crossed her side without an adieu save for the English cabin-boy, whose fate I was pained to entrust to these stupid Spaniards. Indeed, the youth almost belonged to me, for I may say he owed his life to my interference.

I requested the *Areostatico's* owners to pay him liberally for his fidelity when he got back to Havana ; and I was happy to learn next year, that they not only complied with my request, but sent him home to his friends in Liverpool.

When I got back to Bangalang, my first movement was to take possession of the quarters assigned me by the Mongo, and to make myself as comfortable as possible in a land whose chief requirements are shade and shelter. My house, built of cane plastered with mud, consisted of two earthen-floored rooms and a

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broad verandah. The thatched roof was rather leaky, while my furniture comprised two arm-chests covered with mats, a deal table, a bamboo settle, a tin-pan with palm-oil for a lamp, and a German looking-glass mounted in a paper frame. I augmented these comforts by the addition of a trunk, mattress, hammock and pair of blankets ; yet, after all, my household was a sorry affair.

When I was summoned to act as secretary or clerk of such a personage as Mongo, I saw immediately that it would be well not only to understand my duties promptly, but to possess a clear estimate of the property I was to administer and account for. Ormond's easy habits satisfied me that he was not a man of business originally, or had become negligent under the influence of wealth and voluptuousness. My earliest task, therefore, was to make out a *minute inventory* of his possessions, while I kept a watchful eye on his stores, never allowing anyone to enter them unattended. When I presented this document, which exhibited a large deficiency, the Mongo received it with indifference, begging me not to "annoy him with accounts." His manner indicated so much petulant fretfulness that I augured from it the conscious decline or disorder of his affairs.

As I was returning to the warehouse from this mortifying interview, I encountered an ancient hag—a superintendent of the Mongo's *harem*—who, by signs, intimated that she wanted the key to the "cloth-chest," whence she helped herself to several fathoms of calico. The crone could not speak English, and, as

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I did not understand the Soosoo dialect, we attempted no argument about the propriety of her conduct ; but, taking a pencil and paper, and making signs that she should go to the Mongo, who would write an order for the raiment, I led her quietly to the door. The wrath of the virago was instantly kindled, while her horrid face gleamed with that devilish ferocity which in some degree is lost by Africans who dwell on our continent. During the reign of my predecessors, it seems that she had been allowed to control the store keys, and to help herself unstintedly. At dinner, I apprised Mr. Ormond of the negro's conduct ; but he received the announcement with the same laugh of indifference that greeted the account of his deficient inventory.

That night I had just stretched myself on my hard pallet, and was revolving the difficulties of my position with some degree of pain at my forced continuance in Africa, when my servant tapped softly at the door, and announced that someone demanded admittance, but begged that I would first of all extinguish the light. I was in a country requiring caution ; so I felt my pistols before I undid the latch. It was a bright, starlight night ; and, as I opened the door sufficiently to obtain a glance beyond—still maintaining my control of the aperture—I perceived the figure of a female, wrapped in cotton cloth from head to foot, except the face, which I recollected as that of the beautiful *quartermoon* I was whirling in the waltz when surprised by the Mongo. She put forth her hands from the folds of her garment, and laying one softly on my

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arm, while she touched her lips with the other, looked wistfully behind, and glided into my apartment.

This poor girl, the child of a mulatto mother and a white parent, was born in the settlement of Sierra Leone, and had acquired our language with much more fluency than is common among her race. It was said that her father had been originally a missionary from Great Britain, but abandoned his profession for the more lucrative traffic in slaves, to which he owed an abundant fortune.

I led my trembling visitor to the arm-chest, and, seating her gently by my side, inquired why I was favoured by so stealthy a visit from the *harem*. My suspicions were aroused ; for, though a novice in Africa, I knew enough of the discipline maintained in these slave factories not to allow my fancy to seduce me with the idea that her visit was owing to madcap sentimentality.

The manner of these *quartermoon* girls, whose complexion hardly separates them from our own race, is most winningly graceful ; and Esther, with abated breath, timidly asked my pardon for intruding, while she declared I had made so bitter an enemy of Unga-golah—the head-woman of the *seraglio*—that, in spite of danger, she stole to my quarters with a warning. Unga swore revenge. I had insulted and thwarted her ; I was able to thwart her at all times, if I remained the Mongo's "bookman" ; I must soon "go to another country" ; but, if I did not, I would quickly find the food of Bangalang excessively unwholesome ! "Never eat anything that a Mandingo offers

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you," said Esther. "Take your meals exclusively from the Mongo's table. Unga-golah knows all the Mandingo *ju-jus*, and she will have no scruple in using them in order to secure once more the control of the store keys. Good night!"

With this she rose to depart, begging me to be silent about her visit, and to believe that a poor slave could feel true kindness for a white man, or even expose herself to save him.

The "wifery" of my employer was a bare enclosure, formed by a quadrangular cluster of mud-houses, the entrance to whose courtyard was never watched save at night. Unga-golah, the eldest and least delectable of the dames, maintained the establishment's police, assigned gifts or servants to each female, and distributed her master's favours according to the bribes she was cajoled by.

In early life and during his gorged prosperity, Ormond—a stout, burly, black-eyed, broad-shouldered, short-necked man—ruled his *harem* with the rigid decorum of the East. But as age and misfortunes stole over the voluptuary, his mental and bodily vigour became impaired, not only by excessive drink, but by the narcotics to which he habitually resorted for excitement. When I became acquainted with him, his face and figure bore the marks of a worn-out *débauché*. His *harem* now was a fashion of the country rather than a domestic resort. His wives ridiculed him, or amused themselves as they pleased. I learned from Esther that there was hardly one who did not "flirt"

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with a lover in Bangalang, and that Unga-golah was blinded by gifts, while the stupor of the Mongo was perpetuated by liquor.

It may be supposed that in such a *seraglio*, and with such a master, there were but few matrimonial jealousies; still, it is not to be imagined that the Mongo's mansion was free from womanly quarrels. These disputes chiefly occurred when Ormond distributed gifts of calico, beads, tobacco, pipes and looking-glasses. If the slightest preference or inequality was shown, the favourite wife, outraged by her neglected authority, became furious; and, for a season, pandemonium was let loose in Bangalang.

One of these scenes of passion occurs to me as I write. I was in the store with the Mongo when an aggrieved dame, not remarkable either for delicacy of complexion or sweetness of odour, entered the room, and marching up with a swagger to her master, dashed a German looking-glass on the floor at his feet. She wanted a larger one, for the glass bestowed on her was half an inch smaller than the gifts to her companions.

When Ormond was sober, his pride commonly restrained him from allowing the women to molest his leisure; so he quietly turned from the virago and ordered her out of the store.

But my lady was not to be appeased by dignity like this. "Ha!" shrieked the termagant, as she wrenched off her handkerchief. "Ha!" yelled she, tearing off one sleeve, and then the other. "Ha!" screamed the fiend, kicking a shoe into one corner, and the other shoe into another corner. "Ha! Mongo!" roared

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the beldame, as she stripped every garment from her body and stood absolutely naked before us, slapping her wool, cheeks, forehead, breasts, arms, stomach and limbs, and appealing to Ormond to say where she was deficient in charms, that she should be slighted half an inch on a looking-glass?

Years afterwards, I remember seeing an infuriate Ethiopian fling her infant into the fire because its white father preferred the child of another spouse. Indeed, I was glad my station at Bangalang did not make it needful for the preservation of my respectability that I should indulge in African matrimony.

But these exhibitions of jealous passion were not excited alone by the unequal distribution of presents from the liege lord of Bangalang. I have observed that Ormond's wives took advantage of his carelessness and age to seek congenial companionship outside the *harem*. Sometimes the preference of two of these sable *belles* alighted on the same lover, and then the battle was transferred from a worthless looking-glass to the darling *beau*. When such a quarrel arose, a meeting between the rivals was arranged out of the Mongo's hearing; when, throwing off their waist-cloths, the controversy was settled between the female gladiators without much damage. But, now and then, the lovers themselves took up the conflict.

At the appointed time, the duellists appeared, accompanied by friends who were to witness their victory or sympathize in their defeat. Each savage leaped into the arena, armed with a cow-hide cat, whose sharp and

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triple thongs were capable of inflicting the harshest blows. They stripped, and tossed three *cowries* into the air to determine which of the two should receive the first lashing. The loser immediately took his stand, and received, with the firmness of a martyr, the allotted number of blows. Then came the turn of the whipper, who offered his back to the scourge of the enraged sufferer. Thus they alternated until one gave in, or until the bystanders decreed victory to him who bore the punishment longest without wincing. The flayed backs of these "chivalrous men of honour" were ever after displayed in token of bravery.

CHAPTER THREE

I AM ESTABLISHED IN THE SLAVE TRADE

My business habits and systematic devotion to the Mongo's interests soon made me familiar with the broad features of "country trade"; but as I was still unable to speak the coast dialects, Mr. Ormond—who rarely entered the warehouse or conversed about commerce—supplied an adroit interpreter, who stood beside me and assisted in the retail of foreign merchandise, for rice, ivory, palm-oil, and domestic provisions. The purchase of slaves and gold was conducted exclusively by the Mongo, who did not consider me sufficiently initiated in native character and tricks to receive so delicate a trust.

Long and dreary were the days and nights of the apparently interminable "wet season." Rain in a city, rain in the country, rain in a village, rain at sea, are sufficiently wearying, even to those whose mental activity is amused or occupied by books or the concerns of life; but who can comprehend the insufferable lassitude and despondency that overwhelms an African resident, as he lies on his mat-covered arm-chest, and listens to the endless deluge pouring for days, weeks, months, upon his leaky thatch?

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At last, however, the season of rain passed by, and the "dry season" set in. This was the epoch for the arrival of caravans from the interior; so that we were not surprised when our runners appeared, with news that Ahmah-de-Bellah, son of a noted Fullah chief, was about to visit the Rio Pongo with an imposing train of followers and merchandise. Now, when the coast-traders of the west are apprised that caravans are threading their way towards the Atlantic shores, it is always thought advisable to make suitable preparations for the chiefs, and especially to greet them by messages, before their arrival at the beach. Accordingly, *barkers* are sent forth on the forest "paths" to welcome the visitors with gifts of tobacco and powder. *Barkers* are coloured gentlemen, with fluent tongues and flexible consciences, always in the train of factories on the coast, who hasten to the wilderness at the first signal of a caravan's approach, and magnify the prosperity and merchandise of their patrons with as much zeal and veracity as the "drummers" of more Christian lands.

A few days after our band of travelling agents had departed on their mission, the crack of fire-arms was heard from the hills in our rear, signifying that the Mongo's *barkers* had been successful with the caravan in tow. A prompt response to the joyous signal was made by our cannons; so that, after half an hour's firing, Ahmah-de-Bellah and his party emerged from the smoke, marshalled by our band of singers, who preceded him, chanting with loud voices the praise of the youthful chieftain. Behind the master came the

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principal traders and their slaves laden with produce, and followed by forty captive negroes, secured by bamboo withes. These were succeeded by three-score bullocks, a large flock of sheep or goats, and the females of the party ; while the procession was closed by the demure tread of a tame and stately ostrich !

Mr. Ormond, when put upon his mettle, was one of the ablest traders in Africa, and received the Mahometan strangers with becoming state. He awaited Ahmah-de-Bellah and his committee of head-traders on the piazza of his receiving-house, which was a rather stately edifice, 150 feet in length, built to be fire-proof for the protection of our stores. When each Fullah stranger was presented, he shook hands and "snapped fingers" with the Mongo several times ; and, as every petty peddler in the train wanted to "*salaam* the white man for good luck," the process of presentation occupied at least an hour.

According to coast-custom, as soon as these compliments were over, the caravan's merchandise was deposited within our walls, not only for security, but in order that we might gauge the *value of the welcome* the owners were entitled to receive. This precaution, though ungallant, is extremely necessary, inasmuch as many of the interior dealers were in the habit of declaring, on arrival, the value of their gold and ivory to be much greater than it was in fact, in order to receive a more liberal "present."

When the goods were stored, a couple of fat bullocks, with an abundant supply of rice, were given to the visitors, and the chiefs of the caravan were billeted

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upon our townspeople. The *canaille* built temporary huts for themselves in the outskirts; while Ahmah-de-Bellah, a strict Mahometan, accompanied by two of his wives, was furnished with a pair of neat houses that had been hastily fitted up with new and elegant mats.¹

While the merchandise of these large caravans is unpaid for, their owners, by the custom of the country, remain a costly burden upon the factories. We were naturally anxious to be free from this expense as soon as possible, and gave notice next morning that "trade would begin forthwith." Ahmah-de-Bellah, the chief of the caravans, and Mr. Ormond, at once entered into negotiations, so that by nightfall a bargain had been struck, not only for their presents, but for the price of merchandise, and the percentage to be retained

¹ As it may be interesting to learn the nature of trade on this coast—*which is commonly misunderstood as consisting in slaves alone*—I thought it well to set down the inventory I made out of the caravan's stock and its result, as the various items were entrusted to my guardianship. The body of the caravan itself consisted of 700 persons, principally men; while the produce was as follows:

3500 hides	.	.	.	.	.	\$1750
19 large and prime teeth of ivory	.					1560
Gold	.	.	.	.	.	2500
600 pounds small ivory	.	.	.	.	.	320
15 tons of rice	.	.	.	.	.	600
40 slaves	.	.	.	.	.	1600
36 bullocks	.	.	.	.	.	360
Sheep, goats, butter, vegetables	.					100
900 pounds bees-wax	.	.	.	.	.	95
Total value of the caravan's merchandise .						\$8885

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as "native duty." Such a preliminary liquidation with the *heads* of a caravan is ever indispensable, for without their assistance it would be out of the question to traffic with the ragamuffins who hang on the skirts of opulent chieftains.

Each morning, at daylight, a crier went through the town, announcing the character of the specific trade which would be carried on during hours of business. One day it was in hides ; another rice ; another cattle. When these were disposed of, a time was specially appointed for the exchange of gold, ivory and slaves ; and, at the agreed hour, Mr. Ormond, Ahmah-de-Bellah and myself locked the doors of the warehouse, and traded through a window, while our *barkers* distributed the goods to the Africans, often using their whips to keep the chattering and disputatious scamps in order. Ahmah-de-Bellah pretended to inspect the measurement of cloth, powder and tobacco, to ensure justice to his compatriots ; but, in reality, like a true tax-gatherer, he was busy ascertaining his lawful percentage on the sale, in return for the protection from robbery he gave the petty traders on their pilgrimage to the coast.

At length the market was cleared of sellers and merchandise—except the ostrich, which, when all was over, reached the Mongo's hands as a royal gift from the Ali-Mami of Foota-Yallon, the pious father of Ahmah-de-Bellah. The bird, it is true, was presented as a free offering ; yet it was hinted that the worthy Ali stood in need of reliable muskets, which his son would take charge of on the journey home. As twenty

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of those warlike instruments were dispatched by Ahmah-de-Bellah, the ostrich became a costly as well as characteristic gift. Each of the traders, moreover, expected a "bungee" or "dash" of some sort, in token of goodwill, and in proportion to his sales; so that we hastened to comply with all the common-law customs of the country, in order to liberate Bangalang from the annoying crowd. They dropped off rapidly as they were paid; and in a short time Ahmah-de-Bellah, his wives, and immediate followers were all that remained of the seven hundred Fullahs.

Ahmah-de-Bellah was tall, graceful, and commanding. As the son of an important chief, he had been free from those menial toils which, in that climate, soon obliterate all intellectual characteristics. His face was well formed for an African's. His high and broad brow arched over a straight nose, while his lips had nothing of that vulgar grossness which gives so sensual an expression to his countrymen. Ahmah's manners to strangers or superiors were refined and courteous in a remarkable degree; but to the mob of the coast and inferiors generally, he manifested that harsh and peremptory tone which is common among the savages of a fiery clime.

Ahmah-de-Bellah was second son of the Ali-Mami, or King of Foota-Yallon, who allowed him to exercise the prerogative of leading, for the first time, a caravan to the seaboard, in honour of attaining the discreet age of "twenty-four rainy seasons." The privilege, however, was not granted without a view to profit by the courage of his own blood; for the Ali-Mami was never

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known to suffer a son or relative to depart from his jurisdiction without a promise of *half* the products of the lucrative enterprise.

The formation of a caravan, when the king's permission has been finally secured, is a work of time and skill. At the beginning of the "dry season," the privileged chieftain departs with power of life and death over his followers, and "squats" in one of the most frequented "paths" to the sea, while he despatches small bands of daring retainers to other trails throughout the neighbourhood, to blockade every passage to the beach. The siege of the highways is kept up with vigour for a month or more by these black Rob Roys and Robin Hoods, until a sufficient number of traders may be trapped to constitute a valuable caravan, and give importance to its leader. While this is the main purpose of the forest adventure, the occasion is taken advantage of to collect a local tribute, due by small tribes to the Ali, which could not be obtained otherwise. The despotic officer, moreover, avails himself of the blockade to stop malefactors and absconding debtors. Goods that are seized in the possession of the latter may be sequestered to pay his creditors; but if their value is not equal to the debt, the delinquent, if a pagan, is sold as a slave, but is let off with a *bastinado* if he proves to be "one of the faithful."

It is natural to suppose that every effort is made by the small traders of the interior to avoid these savage press-gangs. The poor wretches are not only subjected to annoying vassalage by ruffian princes, but the blockade of the forest often diverts them from the point

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they originally designed to reach—forces them to towns or factories they had no intention of visiting—and, by extreme delay, wastes their provisions and diminishes their frugal profits.

While Ahmah-de-Bellah tarried at Bangalang, it was my habit to visit him every night to hear his interesting chat, as it was translated by an interpreter. Sometimes, in return, I would recount the adventures of my seafaring life, which seemed to have a peculiar flavour for this child of the wilderness, who now gazed for the first time on the ocean. Among other things, I strove to convince him of the world's rotundity ; but, to the last, he smiled incredulously at my daring assertion, and closed the argument by asking me to prove it from the Koran. He allowed me the honours due a traveller and " book-man " ; but a mind that had digested and remembered every text of Mahomet's volume was not to be deceived by such idle fantasies. He undertook to conquer my ignorance of his creed by a careful exposition of its mysteries, and I was so patient a listener that I believe Ahmah was entirely satisfied of my conversion.

My seeming acquiescence was well repaid by the Fullah's confidence. He returned my nightly calls with interest ; and, visiting me in the warehouse during hours of business, became so fervently wrapped up in my spiritual salvation that he would spout Mahometanism for hours through an interpreter. To get rid of him one day, I promised to follow the Prophet with pleasure if he consented to receive me ; but I insisted

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on entering the "fold of the faithful" *without* submitting to the peculiar rite of Mussulman baptism !

Ahmah-de-Bellah took the jest kindly, laughing like a good fellow, and from that day forward, we were sworn cronies. The Fullah at once wrote down a favourite prayer in Arabic, requiring, as my spiritual guide, that I should commit it to memory for constant and ready use. After a day or two, he examined me in the ritual ; but, finding I was at fault after the first sentence, reproached me pathetically upon my negligence and exhorted me to repentance, much to the edification of our interpreter, who was neither Jew, Christian, nor Mussulman.

But the visit of the young chieftain, which began in trade and tapered off in piety, drew to a close. Ahmah-de-Bellah began to prepare for his journey homeward. As the day of departure approached, I saw that my joke had been taken seriously by the Fullah, and that he *relied* upon my apostasy. At the last moment, Ahmah tried to put me to a severe test, by suddenly producing the holy book, and requiring me to seal our friendship by an oath that I would never abandon Islamism. I contrived, however, adroitly to evade the affirmation by feigning an excessive anxiety to acquire more profound knowledge of the Koran, before I made so solemn a pledge.

It came to pass that, out of the forty slaves brought in the caravan, the Mongo rejected eight. After some altercation, Ahmah-de-Bellah consented to discard seven ; but he insisted that the remaining veteran

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should be shipped, as he could neither *kill* nor send him back to Foota-Yallon.

I was somewhat curious to know the crime this culprit had committed, which was so heinous as to demand his perpetual exile, though it spared his life. The chief informed me that the wretch had slain his son; and, as there was no punishment for such an offence assigned by the Koran, the judges of his country condemned him to be sold a slave to Christians,—a penalty they considered worse than death.

Another curious feature of African law was developed in the sale of this caravan. I noticed a couple of women drawn along with ropes around their necks, while others of their sex and class were suffered to wander about without bonds. These females, the chief apprised us, would have been burnt in his father's domains for witchcraft, had not his venerable ancestor been so much distressed for powder that he thought their lives would be more valuable to his treasury than their carcasses to outraged law.

It was a general complaint among the companions of Ahmah-de-Bellah that the caravan was scant of slaves in consequence of this unfortunate lack of powder. The young chieftain promised better things in future. Next year, the Mongo's *barracoons* should teem with his conquests. When the "rainy season" approached, his father meant to carry on a "great war" against a variety of small tribes, whose captives would replenish the herds that, two years before, had been carried off by a sudden blight.

I learned from my intelligent Fullah, that while

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the Mahometan courts of his country rescued by law the people of their own faith from slavery, they omitted no occasion to inflict it, as a penalty, upon the African "unbelievers" who fell within their jurisdiction. Among these unfortunates, the smallest crime is considered capital, and a "capital crime" merits the profitable punishment of slavery. Nor was it difficult, he told me, for a country of "true believers" to acquire a multitude of bondsmen. They detested the institution, it is true, among themselves, and among their own caste, but it was both right and reputable among the unorthodox. The Koran commanded the "subjugation of the tribes to the true faith," so that, to enforce the Prophet's order against infidels, they resorted to the white man's cupidity, which authorized its votaries to enslave the negro! My inquisitiveness prompted me to demand whether these holy wars spoken of in the Koran were not somewhat stimulated, in our time, at least, by the profits that ensued; and I even ventured to hint that it was questionable whether the mighty chief of Foota-Yallon would willingly storm a Kaffir fortification, were he not prompted by the booty of slaves!

Ahmah-de-Bellah was silent for a minute, when his solemn face gradually relaxed into a quizzical smile, as he replied that, in truth, Mahometans were no worse than Christians, so that it was quite likely—if the white elect of heaven, who knew how to make powder and guns, did not tempt the black man with their weapons—the commands of Allah would be followed with less zeal, and implements not quite so dangerous!

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I could not help thinking that there was a good deal of quiet satire in the gossip of this negro prince. According to the custom of his country, we "exchanged names" at parting; and, while he put in my pocket the gift of a well-thumbed Koran, I slung over his shoulder a double-barrelled gun. We walked side by side for some miles into the forest, as he went forth from Bangalang; and as we "cracked fingers" for farewell, I promised, with my hand on my heart, that the "next dry season" I would visit his father in his realm of Foota-Yallon.

CHAPTER FOUR

SECRETS OF MY PROFESSION

I WAS a close watcher of Mongo John whenever he engaged in the purchase of slaves. As each negro was brought before him, Ormond examined the subject, without regard to sex, from head to foot. A careful manipulation of the chief muscles, joints, armpits and groins was made, to assure soundness. The mouth, too, was inspected, and if a tooth was missing, it was noted as a defect liable to deduction. Eyes, voice, lungs, fingers and toes were not forgotten ; so that when the negro passed from the Mongo's hands without censure, he might have been readily adopted as a good " life " by an insurance company.

Upon one occasion, to my great astonishment, I saw a stout and apparently powerful man discarded by Ormond as utterly worthless. His full muscles and sleek skin, to my unpractised eye, denoted the height of robust health. Still, I was told that he had been medicated for the market with bloating drugs, and sweated with powder and lemon-juice to impart a gloss to his skin. Ormond remarked that these jockey-tricks are as common in Africa as among horse-dealers in Christian lands ; and desiring me to feel the negro's pulse, I immediately detected disease or excessive

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excitement. In a few days I found the poor wretch, abandoned by his owner, a paralysed wreck in the hut of a villager at Bangalang.

When a slave becomes useless to his master in the interior, or exhibits signs of failing constitution, he is soon disposed of to a peddler or broker. These men call to their aid a quack, familiar with drugs, who, for a small compensation, undertakes to refit an impaired body for the temptation of greenhorns. Sometimes the cheat is successfully effected ; but experienced slavers detect it readily by the yellow eye, swollen tongue, and feverish skin.

After a few more lessons, I was considered by the Mongo sufficiently learned in the slave traffic to be entrusted with the sole management of his stores. This exemption from commerce enabled him to indulge more than ever in the use of ardent spirits, though his vanity to be called " king " still prompted him to attend faithfully to all the " country-palavers " ; and, let it be said to his credit, his decisions were never defective in judgment or impartiality.

After I had been three months occupied in the multifarious intercourse of Bangalang and its neighbourhood, I understood the language well enough to dispense with the interpreter, who was one of the Mongo's confidential agents. When my companion departed on a long journey, he counselled me to make up with Unga-golah, as she suspected my intimacy with Esther, who would doubtless be denounced to Ormond, unless I purchased the beldame's silence.

Indeed, ever since the night of warning, when the

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beautiful *quartermoon* visited my hovel, I had contrived to meet this charming girl, as the only solace of my solitude. Amid all the wild, passionate, and savage surroundings of Bangalang, Esther was the only link that still seemed to bind me to humanity and the lands beyond the seas. On that burning coast, I was not excited by the stirring of an adventurous life, nor was my young heart seduced and bewildered by absorbing avarice. Many a night, when the dews penetrated my flesh, as I looked towards the west, my soul shrank from the selfish wretches around me, and went off in dreams to the homes I had abandoned. When I came back to myself—when I was forced to recognize my doom in Africa—when I acknowledged that my lot had been cast, perhaps, unwisely, by myself, my spirit turned, like the worm from the crushing heel, and found nothing that kindled for me with the light of human sympathy, save this outcast girl. Esther was to me as a sister, and when the hint of her harm or loss was given, I hastened to disarm the only hand that could inflict a blow. Unga-golah was a woman, and a rope of sparkling coral for her neck smothered all her wrongs.

The months I had passed in Africa without illness—though I went abroad after dark, and bathed in the river during the heat of the day—made me believe myself proof against malaria. But, at length, a violent pain in my loins, accompanied by a swimming head, warned me that the African fever held me in its dreaded grip. In two days I was delirious. Ormond visited me ; but I knew him not, and in my madness, called

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on Esther, accompanying the name with terms of endearment. This, I was told, stirred the surprise and jealousy of the Mongo, who forthwith assailed the matron of his *harem* with a torrent of inquiries and abuse. But Unga-golah was faithful. The beads had sealed her tongue ; so that, with the instinctive adroitness peculiar to ladies of her colour, she fabricated a story which not only quieted the Mongo, but added lustre to Esther's character.

The credulous old man finding Unga so well disposed towards his watchful clerk, restored the warehouse to her custody. This was the height of her avaricious ambition ; and, in token of gratitude for my profitable malady, she contrived to let Esther become the nurse and guardian of my sick-bed.

As my fever and delirium continued, a native doctor, renowned for his skill, was summoned, who ordered me to be cupped in the African fashion by scarifying my back and stomach with a hot knife, and applying plantain leaves to the wounds. The operation allayed my pulse for a few hours ; but as the fever came back with new vigour, it became necessary for my attendants to arouse the Mongo to a sense of my imminent danger. Yet Ormond, instead of springing with alacrity to succour a friend and retainer in affliction, sent for a young man, named Edward Joseph, who had formerly been in his employment, but was now settled on his own account in Bangalang.

Joseph proved a good Samaritan. As soon as he dared venture upon my removal, he took me to his establishment at Kambia, and engaged the services of

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another Mandingo doctor, in whose absurdities he believed. But all the charms and incantations of the savage would not avail, and I remained in a state of utter prostration and apparent insensibility until morning. As soon as day dawned, my faithful Esther was again on the field of action ; and this time she insisted upon the trial of her judgment, in the person of an old white-headed woman, who accompanied her in the guise of the greatest enchantress of the coast. A slave, paid in advance, was the fee for which she undertook to warrant my cure.

No time was to be lost. The floor of a small and close mud hut was intensely heated, and thickly strewn with moistened lemon leaves, over which a cloth was spread for a couch. As soon as the bed was ready, I was borne to the hovel, and, covered with blankets, was allowed to steam and perspire, while my medical attendant dosed me with half a tumbler of a green disgusting juice which she extracted from herbs. This process of drinking and barbecuing was repeated during five consecutive days, at the end of which my fever was gone. But my convalescence was not speedy. For many a day, I stalked about, a useless skeleton, quivering with ague, and afflicted by an insatiable appetite, until a French physician restored me to health by the use of cold baths at the crisis of my fever.

When I was sufficiently recovered to attend to business, Mongo John desired me to resume my position in his employment. I heard, however, from Esther that, during my illness, Unga-golah used her opportunities so profitably in the warehouse that there would be sad

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deficiencies, which, doubtless, might be thrown on me, if the crone were badly disposed at any future period. Accordingly, I thought it decidedly most prudent to decline the clerkship, and requested the Mongo to recompense me for the time and attention I had already bestowed on him. This was refused by the indolent voluptuary ; so we parted with coolness, and I was once more adrift in the world.

In these great outlying colonies and lodgments of European nations in the East Indies and Africa, a stranger is commonly welcome to the hospitality of every foreigner. I had no hesitation, therefore, in returning to the house of Joseph, who, like myself, had been a clerk of Ormond, and suffered from the pilferings of the matron.

My host, I understood, was a native of London, where he was born of continental parents, and came to Sierra Leone with Governor Turner. Upon the death or return of that officer—I do not recollect which—the young adventurer remained in the colony, and, for a time, enjoyed the post of harbour master. His first visit to the Rio Pongo was in the capacity of supercargo of a small coasting craft, laden with valuable merchandise. Joseph succeeded in disposing of his wares, but was not equally fortunate in collecting their avails. It was, perhaps, an ill-judged act of the supercargo, but he declined to face his creditors with a deficient balance-sheet ; and quitting Sierra Leone for ever, accepted service with Ormond. For a year he continued in this employment ; but, at the end of that period, considering himself sufficiently informed of the

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trade and language of the river, he sent a message to his creditors at the British settlement that he could promptly pay them in full, if they would advance him capital enough to commence an independent trade. The terms were accepted by an opulent Israelite, and in a short time Edward Joseph was numbered among the successful factors of Rio Pongo.

The 15th of March 1827 was an epoch in my life. I remember it well, because it became the turning-point of my destiny. A few weeks more of indolence might have forced me back to Europe or America, but the fortune of that day decided my residence and dealings in Africa.

At dawn of the 15th, a vessel was descried in the offing, and, as she approached the coast, she initiated soon ascertained her to be a Spanish slaver. But, what was the amazement of the river grandees when the captain landed and consigned his vessel *to me*.

La Fortuna, the property, chiefly, of my old friend the Regla grocer, was successor of the *Areostatico*, which she exceeded in size as well as comfort. Her captain was charged to pay me my wages in full for the round voyage in the craft I had abandoned, and handed me, besides, a purse of thirty doubloons as a testimonial from his owners for my defence of their property on the dreadful night of our arrival. The *Fortuna* was despatched to me for an "assorted cargo of slaves," while 200,000 cigars and 500 ounces of Mexican gold were on board for their purchase. My commission was fixed at ten per cent., and I was

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promised a command whenever I saw fit to abandon my residence on the African coast.

Having no factory, or *barracoon* of slaves, and being elevated to the dignity of "a trader" in so sudden a manner, I thought it best to summon all the factors of the river on board the schooner, with an offer to divide the cargo, provided they would pledge the production of the slaves within thirty days. Despatch was all-important to the owners, and so anxious was I to gratify them, that I consented to pay fifty dollars for every slave that should be accepted.

After some discussion my offer was taken, and the cargo apportioned among the residents. They declined, however, receiving any share of the cigars in payment, insisting on liquidation in gold alone.

As this was my first enterprise, I felt at a loss to know how to convert my useless tobacco into merchantable doubloons. In this strait, I had recourse to the Englishman Joseph, who hitherto traded exclusively in produce; but, being unable to withstand the temptation of gold, had consented to furnish a portion of my required negroes. As soon as I stated the difficulty, he proposed to send the havanas to his Hebrew friend in Sierra Leone, where, he did not doubt, they would be readily exchanged for Manchester merchandise. That evening a canoe was despatched to the English colony with the cigars; and, on the tenth day after, the trusty Israelite appeared in the Rio Pongo with a cutter laden to the deck with superior British fabrics. The rumour of five hundred doubloons disturbed his rest in Sierra Leone! So much gold

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could not linger in the hands of natives as long as Manchester and Birmingham were represented in the colony ; and, accordingly, he coasted the edge of the surf, as rapidly as possible, to pay me a profit of four dollars a thousand for the cigars, and to take his chances at the exchange of my gold for the sable cargo ! By this happy hit I was enabled to pay for the required balance of negroes, as well as to liquidate the schooner's expenses while in the river. I was amazingly rejoiced and proud at this happy result, because I learned from the captain that the invoice of cigars was a malicious trick, palmed off on the *Areostatico's* owners by her captain, in order to thwart or embarrass me, when he heard I was to be entrusted with the purchase of a cargo on the coast.

At the appointed day, *La Fortuna* sailed with 220 human beings packed in her hold. Three months afterwards, I received advices that she safely landed 217 in the bay of Matanzas, and that their sale yielded a clear profit on the voyage of forty-one thousand four hundred and thirty-eight dollars.

As I am now fairly embarked in a trade which absorbed so many of my most vigorous years, I suppose the reader will not be loth to learn a little of my experience in the alleged " cruelties " of this commerce ; and the first question, in all likelihood, that rises to his lips is a solicitation to be apprised of the embarkation and treatment of slaves on the dreaded voyage.

An African factor of fair repute is ever careful to select his human cargo with consummate prudence, so as not only to supply his employers with athletic

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labourers, but to avoid any taint of disease that may affect the slaves in their transit to Cuba or the American main. Two days before embarkation, the head of every male and female is neatly shaved; and if the cargo belongs to several owners, each man's brand is impressed on the body of his respective negro. This operation is performed with pieces of silver wire, or small irons fashioned into the merchant's initials, heated just hot enough to blister without burning the skin. When the entire cargo is the venture of but one proprietor, the branding is always dispensed with.

On the appointed day, the *barracoon* or slave-pen is made joyous by the abundant "feed" which signalizes the negro's last hours in his native country. The feast over, they are taken alongside the vessel in canoes; and as they touch the deck, they are entirely stripped, so that women as well as men go out of Africa as they came into it—*naked*. This precaution, it will be understood, is indispensable; for perfect nudity, during the whole voyage, is the only means of securing cleanliness and health. In this state, they are immediately ordered below, the men to the hold and the women to the cabin, while boys and girls are, day and night, kept on deck, where their sole protection from the elements is a sail in fair weather, and a tarpaulin in foul.

At meal time they are distributed in messes of ten. Thirty years ago, when the Spanish slave-trade was lawful, the captains were somewhat more ceremoniously religious than at present, and it was then a universal habit to make the gangs say grace before meat, and

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give thanks afterwards. In our days, however, they dispense with this ritual, and content themselves with a "*Viva la Habana*," or "hurrah for Havana," accompanied by a clapping of hands.

This over, a bucket of salt water is served to each mess, by way of "finger glasses" for the ablution of hands, after which a *kidd*, either of rice, farina, yams, or beans, according to the tribal habit of the negroes, is placed before the squad. In order to prevent greediness or inequality in the appropriation of nourishment, the process is performed by signals from a monitor, whose motions indicate when the darkies shall dip and when they shall swallow.

It is the duty of a guard to report immediately whenever a slave refuses to eat, in order that his abstinence may be traced to stubbornness or disease. Negroes have sometimes been found in slavers who attempted voluntary starvation; so that, when the watch reports the patient to be "shamming," his appetite is stimulated by the medical antidote of a "cat." If the slave, however, is truly ill, he is forthwith ticketed for the sick-list by a bead or button around his neck, and despatched to an infirmary in the forecastle.

These meals occur twice daily—at ten in the morning and four in the afternoon—and are terminated by another ablution. Thrice in each twenty-four hours they are served with half a pint of water. Pipes and tobacco are circulated economically among both sexes; but as each negro cannot be allowed the luxury of a separate bowl, boys are sent round with an ade-

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quate supply, allowing a few whiffs to each individual. On regular days—probably three times a week—their mouths are carefully rinsed with vinegar, while, nearly every morning, a dram is given as an antidote to scurvy.

Although it is found necessary to keep the sexes apart, they are allowed to converse freely during day while on deck. Corporal punishment is never inflicted save by order of an officer, and, even then, not until the culprit understands exactly why it is done. Once a week, the ship's barber scrapes their chins without assistance from soap; and, on the same day, their nails are closely pared, to ensure security from harm in those nightly battles that occur, when the slave contests with his neighbour every inch of plank to which he is glued. During afternoons of serene weather, men, women, girls, and boys are allowed to unite in African melodies, which they always enhance by an extemporaneous *tom-tom* on the bottom of a tub or tin kettle.

In every well-conducted slaver, the captain, officers, and crew are alert and vigilant to preserve the cargo. It is their personal interest, as well as the interest of humanity, to do so. The boatswain is incessant in his patrol of purification, and disinfecting substances are plenteously distributed. The upper deck is washed and swabbed daily; the slave deck is scraped and holy-stoned; and, at nine o'clock each morning, the captain inspects every part of his craft; so that no vessel, except a man-of-war, can compare with a slaver in systematic order, purity, and neatness. I am not

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aware that the ship-fever, which sometimes decimates the emigrants from Europe, has ever prevailed in these African traders.

At sundown, the process of stowing the slaves for the night is begun. The second mate and boatswain descend into the hold, whip in hand, and range the slaves in their regular places; those on the right side of the vessel facing forward, and lying in each other's lap, while those on the left are similarly stowed with their faces towards the stern. In this way each negro lies on his right side, which is considered preferable for the action of the heart. In allotting places, particular attention is paid to size, the taller being selected for the greatest breadth of the vessel, while the shorter and younger are lodged near the bows. When the cargo is large and the lower deck crammed, the supernumeraries are disposed of on deck, which is securely covered with boards to shield them from moisture. The *strict* discipline of nightly stowage is, of course, of the greatest importance in slavers, else every negro would accommodate himself as if he were a passenger.

In order to ensure perfect silence and regularity during night, a slave is chosen as constable from every ten, and furnished with a "cat" to enforce commands during his appointed watch. In remuneration for his services, which, it may be believed, are admirably performed whenever the whip is required, he is adorned with an old shirt or tarry trousers. Now and then, billets of wood are distributed among the sleepers, but this luxury is never granted until the good temper of the negroes is ascertained, for slaves have often been

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tempted to mutiny by the power of arming themselves with these pillows from the forest.

Many of my readers will consider it barbarous to make slaves lie down naked upon a board, but native Africans are not familiar with the use of feather-beds, nor do any but the free and rich in their mother country indulge in the luxury even of a mat or raw-hide. Among the Mandingo chiefs—the most industrious and civilized of Africans—the beds, divans, and sofas are heaps of mud, covered with untanned skins for cushions, while logs of wood serve for bolsters ! I am of opinion, therefore, that emigrant slaves experience very slight inconvenience in lying down on the deck.

Ventilation is carefully attended to. The hatches and bulkheads of every slaver are grated, and apertures are cut about the deck for ampler circulation of air. Wind-sails, too, are constantly pouring a steady draught into the hold, except during a chase, when, of course, every comfort is temporarily sacrificed for safety. During calms or in light and baffling winds, when the suffocating air of the tropics makes ventilation impossible, the gratings are always removed, and portions of the slaves allowed to repose at night on deck, while the crew is armed to watch the sleepers.

Handcuffs are rarely used on shipboard. It is the common custom to secure slaves in the *barracoons*, and while shipping, by chaining *ten* in a gang ; but as these platoons would be extremely inconvenient at sea, the manacles are immediately taken off and replaced by leg-irons, which fasten them in pairs by the feet.

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Shackles are never used but for full-grown men, while women and boys are set at liberty as soon as they embark. It frequently happens that when the behaviour of male slaves warrants their freedom, they are released from all fastenings long before they arrive. Irons are altogether dispensed with on many Brazilian slavers, as negroes from Anjuda, Benin, and Angola are mild, and unaddicted to revolt like those who dwell east of the Cape or north of the Gold Coast. Indeed, a knowing trader will never use chains but when compelled, for the longer a slave is ironed the more he deteriorates; and as his sole object is to land a healthy cargo, pecuniary interest, as well as natural feeling, urges the sparing of metal.

My object in writing this palliative description is not to exculpate the slavers or their commerce, but to correct those exaggerated stories which have so long been current in regard to the *usual* voyage of a trader.

CHAPTER FIVE

I AM MARRIED BY PROXY

THE prompt despatch I gave the schooner *Fortuna* started new ideas among the traders of the Rio Pongo, so that it was generally agreed my method of dividing the cargo among different factors was not only most advantageous for speed, but prevented monopoly, and gave all an equal chance. At a "grand palaver" or assemblage of the traders on the river, it was resolved that this should be the course of trade for the future. All the factors, except Ormond, attended and assented; but we learned that the Mongo's people, with difficulty, prevented him from sending an armed party to break up our deliberations.

The knowledge of this hostile feeling soon spread throughout the settlement and adjacent towns, creating considerable excitement against Ormond. My plan and principles were approved by the natives as well as foreigners, so that warning was sent the Mongo, if any harm befell Joseph and Theodore, it would be promptly resented. Our native landlord, a Foulah by descent, told him boldly, in presence of his people, that the Africans were "tired of a mulatto Mongo"; and from that day his power dwindled away visibly

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though a show of respect was kept up in consequence of his age and ancient importance.

During these troubles, the *Areostatico* returned to my consignment, and in twenty-two days was despatched with a choice cargo of Mandingoes, a tribe which had become fashionable for house servants among the Havanese. But the vessel was never heard of, and it is likely she went down in the dreadful gales that scourged the coast immediately after her departure.

I had now grown to such sudden importance among the natives that the neighbouring chiefs and kings sent me daily messages of friendship, with trifling gifts that I readily accepted. One of these bordering lords, more generous and insinuating than the rest, hinted several times his anxiety for a closer connection in affection as well as trade, and, at length, insisted upon becoming my father-in-law !

I had always heard in Italy that it was something to receive the hand of a princess, even after long and tedious wooing ; but now that I was surrounded by a mob of kings, who absolutely thrust their daughters on me, I confess I had the bad taste not to leap with joy at the royal offering. Still, I was in a difficult position, as no graver offence can be given a chief than to reject his child. It is so serious an insult to refuse a wife, that high-born natives, in order to avoid quarrels or war, accept the tender boon, and as soon as etiquette permits, pass it over to a friend or relation. As the offer was made to me personally by the king, I found the utmost difficulty in escaping. Indeed, he would receive no excuse. When I declined on account of the

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damsel's youth, he laughed incredulously. If I urged the feebleness of my health and tardy convalescence, he insisted that a regular life of matrimony was the best cordial for an impaired constitution. In fact, I was on the point of yielding myself, a patient sacrifice, when Joseph came to my relief with the offer of his hand as a substitute.

Prince Yungee in reality did not care so much who should be his son-in-law as that he obtained one with a white skin and plentiful purse. Joseph or Theodore, Saxon or Italian, made no difference to the chief; and as is the case in all Oriental lands, the opinion of the lady was of no importance whatever.

I cannot say that my partner viewed this project with the disgust that I did. Perhaps he was a man of more liberal philosophy and wider views of human brotherhood; at any rate, his residence in Africa gave him a taste not only for its people, habits, and superstitions, but he upheld practical amalgamation with more fervour and honesty than a regular abolitionist. He admired the women, the men, the language, the cookery, the music. He would fall into ecstasies over the discord of a bamboo *tom-tom*. I have reason to believe that even African barbarities had charms for the odd Englishman; but he was chiefly won by the *dolce far niente* of the natives, and the Oriental licence of polygamy. In a word, Joseph had the same taste for a full-blooded *cuffee* that an epicure has for the *haut goût* of a stale partridge, and was in ecstasies at my extrication. He neglected his siestas and his accounts; he wandered from house to house with the

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rapture of an impatient bridegroom ; and, till everything was ready for the nuptial rites, no one at the factory had a moment's rest.

As the bride's relations were eminent folks on the upper part of the river, they insisted that the marriage ceremony should be performed with all the formalities due to the lady's rank. Esther, my mentor in every "country-question," suggested that it would be contrary to the Englishman's interest to ally himself with a family whose only motive was sordid. She strongly urged that if he persisted in taking the girl, he should do so without a "*colungee*," or ceremonial feast. But Joseph was obstinate as a bull ; and as he doubted whether he would ever commit matrimony again, he insisted that the nuptials should be celebrated with all the fashionable splendour of high life in Africa.

When this was decided, it became necessary, by a fiction of etiquette, to ignore the previous offer of the bride, and to begin anew, as if the damsel were to be sought in the most delicate way by a desponding lover. She must be demanded formally, by the bridegroom from her reluctant mother ; and accordingly, the most respectable matron in our colony was chosen by Joseph from his coloured acquaintances to be the bearer of his valentine. The selected was the principal wife of our native landlord, Ali-Ninpha ; and as Africans as well as Turks love by the pound, the dame happened to be one of the fattest, as well as most respectable, in our parish. Several female *attachés* were added to the suite of the ambassadress, who forthwith departed to make a proper "*dantica*."

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The gifts selected were of four kinds. First of all, two demijohns of *trade* rum were filled to gladden the community of Mongo-Yungée's town. Next, a piece of blue cotton cloth, a musket, a keg of powder, and a demijohn of *pure* rum were packed for papa. Thirdly, a youthful virgin dressed in a white "*tontongee*,"¹ a piece of white cotton cloth, a white basin, a white sheep, and a basket of white rice were put up for mamma, in token of her daughter's purity. And lastly, a German looking-glass, several bunches of beads, a coral necklace, a dozen of turkey-red handkerchiefs, and a spotless white country-cloth were presented to the bride; together with a decanter of white palm oil for the anointment of her ebony limbs after the bath, which is never neglected by African *belles*.

While the missionary of love was absent, our sighing swain devoted his energies to the erection of a bridal palace; and the task required just as many days as were employed in the creation of the world. The building was finished by the aid of bamboos, straw, and a modicum of mud; and as Joseph imagined that love and coolness were secured in such a climate by utter darkness, he provided an abundance of that commodity by omitting windows entirely. The furnishing of the domicile was completed with all the luxury of native taste. An elastic four-poster was

¹ A *tontongee* is a strip of white cotton cloth, three inches wide and four feet long, used as a virgin African's only dress. It is wound round the limbs, and, hanging partly in front and partly behind, is supported from the maiden's waist by strands of *showee-beads*.

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constructed of bamboos ; some dashing crockery was set about the apartment for display ; a cotton quilt was cast over the matted couch ; an old trunk served for bureau and wardrobe ; and as negresses adore looking-glasses, the largest in our warehouse was nailed against the door, as the only illuminated part of the edifice.

At last all was complete, and Joseph snapped his fingers with delight, when the corpulent dame waddled up asthmatically, and announced with a wheeze that her mission was prosperous. If there had ever been doubt, there was now no more. The oracular "*feitich*" had announced that the delivery of the bride to her lord might take place "on the tenth day of the new moon."

As the planet waxed from its slender sickle to the thicker quarter, the impatience of my Cockney waxed with it ; but at length the firing of muskets, the twang of horns, and the rattle of *tom-toms* gave notice from the river that Coomba, the bride, was approaching the quay. Joseph and myself hastily donned our clean shirts, white trousers, and glistening pumps ; and, under the shade of broad *sombreros* and umbrellas, proceeded to greet the damsel. Our fat friend, the matron ; her husband ; our servants, and a troop of village ragamuffins accompanied us to the water's brink, so that we were just in time to receive the five large canoes bearing the escort of the king and his daughter. Boat after boat disgorged its passengers ; but, to our dismay, they ranged themselves apart, and were evidently displeased. When the last canoe,

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decorated with flags, containing the bridal party, approached the strand, the chief of the escort signalled it to stop and forbade the landing.

In a moment there was a general row—a row, conceivable only by residents of Africa, or those whose ears have been regaled with the chattering of a “wilderness of monkeys.” Our lusty *factotum* was astonished. The Cockney aspirated his *h*’s with uncommon volubility. We hastened from one to the other to inquire the cause; nor was it until near half an hour had been wasted in palaver that I found they considered themselves slighted, first of all because we had not fired a salvo in their honour, and secondly, because we failed to spread mats from the beach to the house, upon which the bride might place her virgin feet without defilement!

Here, then, was a sad dilemma. The guns could be fired instantly; but where, alas! at a moment’s notice, were we to obtain mats enough to carpet the five hundred yards of transit from the river to the house? The match must be broken off!

My crestfallen Cockney immediately began to exculpate himself by pleading ignorance of the country’s customs, assuring the strangers that he had not the slightest inkling of the requirement. Still, the stubborn “master of ceremonies” would not relax an iota of his rigorous behests.

At length, our bulky dame approached the master of the bridal party, and, squatting on her knees, confessed her neglectful fault. Then, for the first time, I saw a gleam of hope. Joseph improved the moment

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by alleging that he employed this lady patroness to conduct everything in the sublimest style imaginable, because it was presumed no one knew better than she all that was requisite for so admirable and virtuous a lady as Coomba. Inasmuch, however, as he had been disappointed by her unhappy error, he did not think the blow should fall on *his* shoulders. The negligent matron ought to pay the penalty; and, as it was impossible now to procure the mats, she should forfeit the value of a slave to aid the merry-making, and carry the bride on her back from the river to her home!

A clapping of hands and a quick murmur of assent ran through the crowd, telling me that the compromise was accepted. But the portorage was no sinecure for the delinquent, who found it difficult at times to get along over African sands even without a burden. Still, no time was lost in further parley or remonstrance. The muskets and cannon were brought down and exploded; the royal boat was brought to the landing; father, mother, brothers, and relations were paraded on the strand; *tom-toms* and horns were beaten and blown; and, at last, the suffering missionary waddled to the canoe to receive the veiled form of the slender bride.

The process of removal was accompanied by much merriment. Our porter groaned as she "larded the lean earth" beneath her ponderous tread; but, in due course of labour and patience, she sank with her charge on the bamboo couch.

As soon as the bearer and the burden were relieved

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from their fatigue, the maiden was brought to the door, and as her long concealing veil of spotless cotton was unwrapped from head and limbs, a shout of admiration went up from the native crowd that followed us from the quay to the hovel. As Joseph received the hand of Coomba, he paid the princely fee of a slave to the matron.

Coomba had certainly not numbered more than sixteen years, yet, in that burning region, the sex ripen long before their pallid sisters of the North. She belonged to the Soosoo tribe, but was descended from Mandingo ancestors, and I was particularly struck by the uncommon symmetry of her tapering limbs. Her features and head, though decidedly African, were not of that coarse and heavy cast that marks the lineaments of her race. The grain of her shining skin was as fine and polished as ebony. A melancholy languor subdued and deepened the blackness of her large eyes, while her small and even teeth gleamed with the brilliant purity of snow. Her mouth was rosy and even delicate; and, indeed, had not her ankles, feet, and wool manifested the unfortunate types of her kindred, the daughter of Mongo-Yungee might have passed for a *chef d'œuvre* in black marble.

The scant dress of the damsel enabled me to be so minute in this catalogue of her charms; and, in truth, had I not inspected them closely, I would have violated matrimonial etiquette as much as if I failed to admire the trousseau and gifts of a bride at home. Like all maidens of her country, she had beads round her ankles, beads round her waist, beads round her neck,

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while an abundance of bracelets hooped her arms from wrist to elbow. The white *tontongee* still girdled her loins ; but Coomba's climate indicated more necessity for ornament than drapery.

As soon as the process of unveiling was over, and time had been allowed the spectators to behold the damsel, her mother led her gently to the fat ambassadress, who, with her companions, bore the girl to a bath for ablution, anointment, and perfuming. While Coomba underwent this ceremony at the hands of our matron, flocks of sable dames entered the apartment ; and, as they withdrew, shook hands with her mother, in token of the maiden's purity, and with the groom in compliment to his luck.

As soon as the bath and oiling were over, six girls issued from the hut, bearing the glistening bride on a snow-white sheet to the home of her spouse. The transfer was soon completed, and the burden deposited on the nuptial bed. The dwelling was then closed and put in charge of sentinels ; when the plump plenipotentiary approached the Anglo-Saxon, and handing him the scant fragments of the bridal dress, pointed to the door, and, in a loud voice, exclaimed : " White man, this authorizes you to take possession of your wife ! "

It may naturally be supposed that our radiant Cockney was somewhat embarrassed by so public a display of matrimonial happiness, at six o'clock in the afternoon, on the thirtieth day of a sweltering June. Joseph could not help looking at me with a blush and a laugh, as he saw the eyes of the whole

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crowd fixed on his movements ; but, nerving himself like a man, he made a profound *salaam* to the admiring multitude, and shaking my hand with a convulsive grip, plunged into the darkness of his abode. A long pole was forthwith planted before the door, and a slender strip of white cotton, about the size of a *tontongee*, was hoisted in token of privacy, and floated from the staff like a pennant, giving notice that the commodore is aboard.

No sooner were these rites over than the house was surrounded by a swarm of women from the adjacent villages, whose incessant songs, screams, chatter, and *tom-tom* beatings drowned every mortal sound. Meanwhile, the men of the party—whose merriment around an enormous bonfire was augmented by abundance of liquor and provisions—amused themselves in dancing, shouting, yelling, and discharging muskets in honour of the nuptials.

Such was the ceaseless serenade that drove peace from the lovers' pillow during the whole of that memorable night. At dawn, the corpulent matron again appeared from among the wild and reeling crowd, and concluding her functions by some mysterious ceremonies, led forth the lank groom from the dark cavity of his hot and sleepless oven, looking more like a bewildered wretch rescued from drowning than a radiant lover fresh from his charmer. In due time, the bride also was brought forth by the matrons for the bath, where she was anointed from head to foot with a vegetable butter—whose odour is probably more agreeable to Africans than Americans—and fed

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with a bowl of broth made from a young and tender pullet.

The marriage *fêtes* lasted three days, after which I insisted that Joseph should give up nonsense for business, and sobered his ecstasies by handing him a wedding-bill for five hundred and fifty dollars.

My colleague's honeymoon did not last long, although it was not interrupted by domestic discord. One of his Sierra Leone creditors, who had not been dealt with as liberally as the rest, called on the colonial governor of that British establishment, and alleged that a certain Edward Joseph, an Englishman, owned a factory on the Rio Pongo, in company with a Spaniard, and was engaged in the slave-trade !

An expedition was forthwith fitted out to descend upon our little establishment ; and, in all likelihood, the design would have been executed, had not our friendly Israelite in Sierra Leone sent us timely warning. No sooner did the news arrive than Joseph embarked in a slaver, and, packing up his valuables, together with sixty negroes, fled from Africa. His disconsolate bride was left to return to her parents.

As the hostile visit from the British colony was hourly expected, I did not tarry long in putting a new face on Kambia. Fresh books were made out in my name exclusively ; their dates were carefully suited to meet all inquiries ; and the townspeople were prepared to answer impertinent questions ; so that when Lieutenant Findlay, of Her Britannic Majesty's naval service, made his appearance in the river, with three boats bearing the cross of St. George,

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no man in the settlement was less anxious than Don Téodore, the *Spaniard*.

When the lieutenant handed me an order from the governor of Sierra Leone and its dependencies, authorizing him to burn or destroy the property of Joseph, as well as to arrest that personage himself, I regretted that I was unable to facilitate his projects, inasmuch as the felon was afloat on salt water, while all his property had long before been conveyed to me by a regular bill of sale. In proof of my assertions, I produced the instrument and the books; and when I brought in our African landlord to sustain me in every particular, the lieutenant was forced to relinquish his hostility and accept an invitation to dinner. His conduct during the whole investigation was that of a gentleman; which, I am sorry to say, was not always the case with his professional countrymen.

CHAPTER SIX

I RECEIVE A CARAVAN

DURING the rainy season, which begins in June and lasts till October, the stores of provisions in establishments along the Atlantic coast often become sadly impaired. The Fullah and Mandingo tribes of the interior are prevented by the swollen condition of intervening streams from visiting the beach with their produce. In these straits, the factories have recourse by canoes to the smaller rivers, which are neither entered by seagoing vessels nor blockaded for the caravans of interior chiefs.

When the rains began to slacken, a petty caravan now and then straggled towards the coast ; but as I was only a newcomer in the region, and not possessed of abundant means, I enjoyed a slender share of the trade. Still, I consoled myself with the hope of better luck in the dry season.

In the meantime, however, I not only heard of Joseph's safe arrival at Matanzas, but received a clerk whom he despatched to dwell in Kambia while I visited the interior. Moreover, I built a boat, and sent her to Sierra Leone with a cargo of palm oil, to be exchanged for British goods ; and finally, during my perfect leisure, I went to work with diligence to

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study the trade in which fortune seemed to have cast my lot.

It would be a task of many pages if I attempted to give a full account of the origin and causes of slavery in Africa. As a national institution, it seems to have existed always. Africans have been bondsmen everywhere: and the oldest monuments bear their images linked with menial toils and absolute servitude. Still, I have no hesitation in saying that three-fourths of the slaves *sent abroad* from Africa are the fruit of native wars, fomented by the avarice and temptation of our own race. I cannot exculpate any commercial nation from this sweeping censure. We stimulate the negro's passions by the introduction of wants and fancies never dreamed of by the simple native, while slavery was an institution of domestic need and comfort alone. But what was once a luxury has now ripened into an absolute necessity; so that Man, in truth, has become the coin of Africa, and the "legal tender" of a brutal trade.

England, to-day, with all her philanthropy, sends, under the cross of St. George, to convenient magazines of *lawful commerce* on the coast, her Birmingham muskets, Manchester cottons, and Liverpool lead, all of which are righteously swapped at Sierra Leone, Accra, and on the Gold Coast, for Spanish or Brazilian bills on London. Yet, what British merchant does not know the traffic on which those bills are founded, and for whose support his wares are purchased? France despatches her Rouen cottons, Marseilles brandies, flimsy taffetas, and indescribable variety of

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tinsel gewgaws. Germany demands a slice for her looking-glasses and beads ; while multitudes of our own worthy traders, who would hang a slaver as a pirate *when caught*, do not hesitate to supply him indirectly with tobacco, powder, cotton, Yankee rum, and New England notions, in order to bait the trap in which he *may* be caught. It is the temptation of these things, I repeat, that feeds the slave-making wars of Africa, and forms the human basis of those admirable bills of exchange.

The month of November 1827 brought the wished-for "dry season" ; and with it came a message from the leader of a caravan, that, at the full of the moon, he would halt in my village with all the produce he could impress. The runner represented his master as bearing a missive from his beloved nephew Ahmah-de-Bellah, and declared that he only lingered on the path to swell his caravan for the profit of my coffers.

I did not let the day pass before I sent an interpreter to greet my promised guest with suitable presents ; while I took advantage of his delay to build a neat cottage for his reception, inasmuch as no Fullah Mahometan will abide beneath the same roof with an infidel. I furnished the establishment, according to their taste, with green hides and several fresh mats.

This was the first caravan and the first leader of absolutely royal pretensions that visited my settlement ; so I lined my piazza with mats, put a body-guard under arms behind me, decorated the front with fancy flags, and opposite the stool where I took my seat, caused a pure white sheepskin of finest wool

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to be spread for the accommodation of the noble savage. Advancing to the steps of my dwelling, I stood uncovered as the Fullah approached and tendered me a silver-mounted gazelle-horn snuff-box—the credential by which Ahmah-de-Bellah had agreed to certify the mission. Receiving the token with a *salaam*, I carried it reverently to my forehead, and passed it to Ali-Ninpha, who, on this occasion, played the part of my scribe. The ceremony over, we took him by the hands and led him to his allotted sheepskin, while, with a bow, I returned to my stool.

According to “country custom,” Mami-de-Yong then began the *dantica*, or exposition of purposes, first of all invoking Allah to witness his honour and sincerity. “Not only,” said the Mussulman, “am I the bearer of a greeting from my dear nephew Ahmah-de-Bellah, but I am an envoy from my royal master the Ali-Mami of Foota-Yallon, who, at his son’s desire, has sent me with an escort to conduct you on your promised visit to Timbo. During your absence, my lord has commanded us to dwell in your stead at Kambia, so that your property may be safe from the Mulatto Mongo of Bangalang, whose malice towards your person has been heard of even among our distant hills !”

The latter portion of this message somewhat surprised me, for though my relations with Mongo John were by no means amicable, I did not imagine that the story of our rupture had spread so far, or been received with so much sympathy.

Accordingly, when Mami-de-Yong finished his mes-

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sage, I approached him with thanks for his master's interest in my welfare, and swore to accept the invitation of the great king of Foota-Yallon.

This terminated the ceremonial reception, after which I hastened to conduct Mami-de-Yong to his quarters, where I presented him with a sparkling new kettle and an inkstand, letting him understand, moreover, I was specially anxious to know that all the wants of his attendants in the caravan were completely satisfied.

Next morning early, I remembered the joy of his nephew Ahmah-de-Bellah, when I first treated him to *coffee*; and determined to welcome the chief, as soon as he came forth from his ablutions to prayers, with a cup distilled from the fragrant berry. I could not have hit upon a luxury more gratifying to the old gentleman. Thirty years before had he drunk it in Timbuctoo, where it is used, he said, by the Moses-people (meaning the Hebrews), with milk and honey; and its delicious aroma brought the well-remembered taste to his lips ere they touched the fluid.

Long before Mami-de-Yong's arrival, his fame as a learned "book-man" and extensive traveller preceded him, so that when he mentioned his travel to Timbuctoo, I begged him to give me some account of that "capital of capitals," as the Africans call it. The royal messenger promised to comply as soon as he finished the morning lessons of the caravan's children. His quarters were filled with a dozen or more of young Fullahs and Mandingoes squatted around a fire, while the prince sat apart in a corner with inkstand, writing

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reeds, and a pile of old manuscripts. Ali-Ninpha, our backsliding Mahometan, stood by, pretending devoted attention to Mami's precepts and the Prophet's verses. The sinner was a scrupulous follower in the presence of the faithful; but when their backs were turned, I know few who relished a porker more lusciously, or avoided water with more scrupulous care.

Mami had visited many of the European colonies and Moorish kingdoms on the north coast of Africa, so that he enjoyed the advantage of comparison, and, of course, was not stupefied by the untravelled ignorance of Africans who consider Timbuctoo a combination of Paris and paradise. Indeed, he did not presume like most of the Mandingo chiefs, to prefer it to Senegal or Sierra Leone. He confessed that the royal palace was nothing but a vast enclosure of mud walls, built without taste or symmetry, within whose labyrinthine mesh there were numerous buildings for the wives, children, and kindred of the sovereign. If the royal palace of Timbuctoo was of such a character, "What," said he, "were the dwellings of nobles and townsfolk?" The streets were paths; the stores were shops; the suburb of a European colony was superior to their best display! The markets of Timbuctoo, alone, secured his admiration. Every week they were thronged with traders, dealers, peddlers and merchants, who either dwelt in the neighbouring kingdoms or came from afar with slaves and produce. Moors and Israelites, from the north-east, were the most eminent and opulent merchants.

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The prince had no mercy on the government of this influential realm. Strangers were watched and taxed. In fact, I found that, despite of its architectural meanness, Timbuctoo was a great central mart for exchange, and that commercial men, as well as the innumerable petty kings, frequented it not only for the abundant mineral salt in its vicinity, but because they could exchange their slaves for foreign merchandise. I asked the Fullah why he preferred the markets of Timbuctoo to the stores of European settlements on a coast which was reached with much more ease than this core of Africa? "Ah!" said the astute trafficker, "no market is a good one for the genuine African in which he cannot openly exchange his blacks for whatever the original owner or importer can sell."

CHAPTER SEVEN

I VISIT THE NATIVE CHIEFS

HAVING completed the mercantile negotiations of the caravan, and made my personal arrangements for a protracted absence, I put the noble Fullah in charge of my establishment, with special charges to my retainers, clerks, runners, and villagers, to regard the Mami as my second self. I thought it well, moreover, before I plunged into the wilderness—leaving my worldly goods and worldly prospects in charge of a Mussulman stranger—to row down to Bangalang for a parting chat with Mongo John, in which I might sound the veteran as to his feeling and projects. Ormond was in trouble as soon as I appeared. He was willing enough that I might perish by treachery on the roadside, yet he was extremely reluctant that I should penetrate Africa and make alliances which should give me superiority over the monopolists of the beach. I saw these things passing through his jealous heart as we talked together with uncordial civility. At parting I told the Mongo, for the first time, that I was sure my establishment would not go to decay or suffer harm in my absence, inasmuch as that powerful Fullah, the Ali-Mami of Foota-Yallon, had deputed a lieutenant to watch Kambia while I

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travelled, and that he would occupy my village with his warriors. The mulatto started with surprise, and abruptly left the apartment in silence.

I slept well that night, notwithstanding the Mongo's displeasure. My confidence in the Fullah was perfect. Stranger as he was, I had an instinctive reliance on his protection of my home, and his guardianship of my person through the wilderness.

At day-dawn I was up. It was a fresh and glorious morning. As nature awoke in the woods of that primitive world, the mists stole off from the surface of the water; and as the first rays shot through the glistening dew of the prodigious vegetation, a thousand birds sent forth their songs.

By ten o'clock my caravan was in motion. It consisted of thirty individuals deputed by Ahmah-de-Bellah, headed by one of his relations as captain. Ten of my own servants were assigned to carry baggage, merchandise, and provisions; while Ali-Ninpha, two interpreters, my body-servant, a waiter, and a hunter composed my immediate guard. In all, there were about forty-five persons.

When we were starting, Mami-de-Yong approached to "snap fingers," and put in my hands a verse of the Koran in his master's handwriting—"hospitality to the wearied stranger is the road to heaven"—which was to serve me as a passport among all good Mahometans. The Fullah chief stooped to the earth, and filling his hands with dust, sprinkled it over our heads in token of a prosperous journey. Then, prostrating himself with his head on the ground, he bade us "go our way!"

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Even the best of African roads are no better than goat-paths, and barely sufficient for the passage of a single traveller. Accordingly, our train marched off in single file. Two men, cutlass in hand, armed, besides, with loaded muskets, went in advance not only to scour the way and warn us of danger, but to cut the branches and briers that soon impede an untravelled path in this prolific land. They marched within hail of the caravan, and shouted whenever we approached bee-trees, ant-hills, hornet-nests, reptiles, or any of the Ethiopian perils that are unheard of in our American forests. Behind these pioneers came the porters with food and luggage; the centre of the caravan was made up of women, children, guards, and followers; while the rear was commanded by myself and the chiefs, who, whips in hand, found it sometimes beneficial to stimulate the steps of stragglers. As we crossed the neighbouring Soosoo towns, our imposing train was saluted with discharges of musketry, while crowds of women and children followed their white man, to bid him farewell on the border of the settlement.

For a day or two our road passed through a rolling country, interspersed with forests, cultivated fields, and African villages, in which we were welcomed by the chiefs with trifling gifts, in token of amity. Used to the scant exercise of a lazy dweller on the coast, whose migrations are confined to a journey from his house to the landing, and from the landing to his house, it required some time to habituate me once more to walking. By degrees, however, I overcame

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the foot-sore weariness that wrapped me in perfect lassitude when I sank into my hammock on the first night of travel. However, as we became better acquainted with each other and with wood-life, we tripped along merrily in the shadowy silence of the forest, singing, jesting, and praising Allah. Even the slaves were relaxed into familiarity never permitted in the towns; while masters would sometimes be seen relieving the servants by bearing their burdens. At nightfall the women brought water, cooked food, and distributed rations; so that, after four days' pleasant wayfaring in a gentle trot, our dusty caravan halted at sunset before the closed gates of a fortified town belonging to Ibrahim Ali, the Mandingo chief of Kya.

It was some time before our shouts and beating on the gates aroused the watchman to answer our appeal, for it was the hour of prayer, and Ibrahim was at his devotions. At last, pestered by their dalliance, I fired my double-barrelled gun, whose loud report I knew was more likely to reach the ear of a praying Mussulman. Hardly had the echoes died away before the great war-drum of the town was rattled, while a voice from a loophole demanded our business. I left the negotiation for our entry to the Fullah chief, who forthwith answered that "the Ali-Mami's caravan, laden with goods, demanded hospitality"; while Ali-Ninpha informed the questioner that the "white man of Kambia" craved admittance.

In a short time the wicket creaked, and Ibrahim himself put forth his head to welcome the strangers,

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and to admit them, one by one, into the town. His reception of myself and Ali-Ninpha was extremely cordial ; but the Fullah chief was addressed with cold formality, for the Mandingoes have but little patience with their national rivals.

Ali-Ninpha had been Ibrahim's playmate before he migrated to the coast. Their friendship still existed in primitive sincerity, and the chieftain's highest ambition was to honour the companion and guest of his friend. Accordingly, his wives and females were summoned to prepare my quarters with comfort and luxury. The best house was chosen for my lodging. The earthen floor was spread with mats. Hides were stretched on *adobe* couches, and a fire was kindled to purify the atmosphere. Pipes were furnished my companions ; and while a hammock was slung for my repose before supper, a henchman was despatched to seek the fattest sheep for that important meal.

Ibrahim posted sentinels around my hut, so that my slumbers were uninterrupted, until Ali-Ninpha roused me with the news that the bowls of rice and stews were smoking on the mat in the chamber of Ibrahim himself. Ninpha knew my tastes and superintended the cook. He had often jested at the "white man's folly," when my stomach turned at some disgusting dish of the country ; so that the pure roasts and broils of well-known pieces slipped down my throat with the appetite of a trooper. While these messes were under discussion, the savoury steam of a rich stew with a creamy sauce saluted my nostrils, and, without asking leave, I plunged my spoon into a

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dish that stood before my entertainers, and seemed prepared exclusively for themselves. In a moment I was invited to partake of the *bonne-bouche*; and so delicious did I find it that, even at this distance of time, my mouth waters when I remember the forced-meat balls of mutton, minced with roasted ground-nuts, that I devoured that night in the Mandingo town of Kya.

But the best of feasts is dull work without an enlivening bowl. Water alone—pure and cool as it was in this hilly region—did not quench our thirst. Besides this, I recollected the fondness of my landlord, Ali-Ninpha, for strong distillations, and I guessed that his playmate might indulge, at least privately, in a taste for similar libations. I spoke, therefore, of “cordial bitters”—a name not unfamiliar even to the most temperate Christians, in defence of flatulent stomachs—and at the same time producing my travelling canteen, applied it to the nostrils of the pair.

By degrees, the brandy did its work on the worthy Mahometans. While it restored Ali-Ninpha to his early faith, and brought him piously to his knees with prayers to Allah, it had a contrary effect on Ibrahim, whom it rendered wild and generous. Everything was mine—house, lands, slaves, and children. He dwelt rapturously on the beauty of his wives, and kissed Ali-Ninpha in mistake for one of them. This only rendered the apostate more devout than ever, and set him roaring invocations like a muezzin from a minaret. In the midst of these orgies, I stole off at

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midnight, and was escorted by my servant to a delicious hammock.

It was day-dawn when the caravan's crier aroused me, as he stood on a house-top calling the faithful to prayer previous to our departure. Before I could stir, Ali-Ninpha, haggard, sick, and crest-fallen from his debauch, rolled into my chamber, and begged the postponement of our departure, as it was impossible for *Ibrahim Ali* to appear, being perfectly vanquished by "the bitters." The poor devil hiccupped between his words, and so earnestly and with so many bodily gyrations implored my interference with the Fullah guide, that I saw at once he was in no condition to travel.

As the caravan was my personal escort and designed exclusively for my convenience, I did not hesitate to command a halt, especially as I was in some measure the cause of my landlord's malady. Accordingly, I tied a kerchief round my head, covered myself with a cloak, and leaning very lackadaisically on the edge of my hammock, sent for the Fullah chief.

I moaned with pain as he approached, and, declaring that I was prostrated by sudden fever, hoped he would indulge me by countermanding the order for our march. I do not know whether the worthy Mussulman understood my case or believed my fever, but he assented to my request like a gentleman, and expressed the deepest sympathy with my sufferings. The chief immediately brought his Koran, and turning over the leaves attentively for some time, at last hit on the appropriate verse, which he wrote down on a board

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with gunpowder ink, which he washed off into a bowl with clean water. This was given me to swallow, and the Mahometan left me to the operation of his religious charm, with special directions to the servant to allow no one to disturb my rest.

I have no doubt that the Fullah was somewhat of a quiz, and thought a chapter in his Bible a capital lesson after a reckless debauch; so I ordered my door to be barricaded, and slept until Ibrahim and Ali-Ninpha came thundering at the portal long after midday. Penitence spoke from their aching brows; nor do I hesitate to believe they were devoutly sincere when they forswore "bitters" for the future.

When I sallied forth into the town with the suffering sinners, I found the sun fast declining in the west, and, although my fever had left me, it was altogether too late to depart from the village on our journey.

Ere we set forth next morning, my noble host caused a generous meal to be dispensed among the caravan. The breakfast consisted of boiled rice dried in the sun, and then boiled again with milk or water after being pounded finely in a mortar. This nutritive dish was liberally served; and, as a new Mongo, I was tendered an especial platter, flanked by copious bowls of cream and honey.

It is Mandingo etiquette, at the departure of an honoured friend, for the lord of the town to escort him on his way to the first brook, drink of the water with the wayfarer, toast a prompt return, invoke Allah for a prosperous voyage, shake hands, and snap fingers, in token of friendly adieu. The host then,

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fixing his eyes on the departing guest, never stirs till the traveller is lost in the folds of the forest, or sinks behind the distant horizon.

Such was the conduct of my friend Ibrahim on this occasion ; nor was it all. When I sallied forth from the gate of the town, I noticed a horse, ready caparisoned and groomed as for a journey. Being accompanied by Ibrahim on foot, I supposed the animal was designed for his return after our complimentary adieus. But when we had passed at least a mile beyond the parting brook, I *again* encountered the beast, whose leader approached Ali-Ninpha, announcing the horse as a gift from his master to help me on my way. Ere I backed the blooded animal, an order was directed to my clerk at Kambia for two muskets, two kegs of powder, two pieces of blue cotton, and one hundred pounds of tobacco. I advised my official, moreover, to enclose in the core of the tobacco the stoutest flask he could find of our fourth proof "bitters."

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE KING OF FOOTA-YALLON

It required three days for our refreshed caravan to reach the dry and precipitous bed of the Sanghu, which I found impossible to pass with my horse, in consequence of jagged rocks and immense boulders that covered its channel. But the men were resolved that my convenient animal should not be left behind. Accordingly, all hands went to work with alacrity on the trees, and in a day they bridged the ravine with logs bound together by ropes made from twisted bark. Across this frail and swaying fabric I urged the horse with difficulty ; but hardly had he reached the opposite bank, and recovered from his nervous tremor, when I was surprised by an evident anxiety in the beast to return to his swinging pathway. The guides declared it to be an instinctive warning of danger from wild beasts with which the region is filled ; and, even while we spoke, two of the scouts who were in advance selecting ground for our camp, returned with the carcasses of a deer and leopard. Though meat had not passed our lips for five days, we were in no danger of starvation ; the villages teemed with fruits and vegetables. Pineapples, bananas and a pulpy globe resembling the peach in form and flavour, quenched our thirst and satisfied our hunger.

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Besides these, our greedy natives foraged in the wilderness for nourishment unknown, or at least unused, by civilized folks. They found comfort in barks of various trees, as well as in buds, berries, and roots, some of which they devoured raw, while others were either boiled or made into palatable decoctions with water that gurgled from every hill. The broad valleys and open country supplied animal and vegetable "delicacies" which a white man would pass unnoticed. Many a time I found my vagabonds in a nook of the woods, luxuriating over a stew copiously filled with snails, lizards, iguanas, frogs and alligators!

Four days brought us to Tamisso from our last halt. We camped on the copious brook that ran near the town-walls, and while Ali-Ninpha thought proper to compliment the chief, Mohamedoo, by a formal announcement of our arrival, the caravan made ready for reception by copious, but *needed*, ablutions of flesh and raiment. The women, especially, were careful in adorning and heightening their charms. Wool was combed to its utmost rigidity; skins were greased till they shone like polished ebony; ankles and arms were restrung with beads; and loins were girded with snowy waistcloths. Ali-Ninpha knew the pride of his old Mandingo companions, and was satisfied that Mohamedoo would have been mortified had we surprised him within the precincts of his court, squatted, perhaps, on a dirty mat with a female scratching his head! Ali-Ninpha was a prudent gentleman, and knew the difference between the private and public lives of his illustrious countrymen!

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Half-way to the town our turbulent mob was met by a troop of musicians sent out by the chief to greet us with song and harp. I was quickly surrounded by the singers, who chanted the most fulsome praise of the opulent Mongo, while a court-fool or buffoon insisted on leading my horse, and occasionally wiping my face with his filthy handkerchief!

I lost no time in the lull, while relieved from the mob, to pass onward to "the palace" of Mohamedoo, which, like all royal residences in Africa, consisted of a mud-walled quadrangular enclosure, with a small gate, a large court, and a quantity of *adobe* huts, surrounded by shady verandahs. The furniture, mats, and couches were of cane, while wooden platters, brass kettles, and common wash-basins were spread out in every direction for show and service.

We tarried in Tamisso three days to recruit, during which I was liberally entertained on the prince's hospitable mat, where African stews of relishing flavour, and tender fowls smothered in snowy rice, regaled me at least twice in every twenty-four hours. Mohamedoo fed me with a European silver spoon, which, he said, came from among the effects of a traveller who, many years before, died far in the interior. In all his life he had seen but *four* of our race within the walls of Tamisso. Their names escaped his memory; but the last, he declared, was a poor and clever youth, probably from Senegal, who followed a powerful caravan, and "read the Koran like a *mufti*."

The parting between Mohamedoo and myself was

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friendly in the extreme. Provisions for four days were distributed by the prince to the caravan, and he promised that my return should be welcomed by an abundant supply of slaves.

As our caravan approached the Fullah country, and got into the higher lands, where the air was invigorating, I found its pace improved so much that we often exceeded twenty miles in our daily journey. The next important place we were to approach was Jallica. For three days, our path coasted the southern edge of a mountain range, whose declivities and valleys were filled with rivers, brooks, and streamlets, affording abundant irrigation to fields teeming with vegetable wealth. The population was dense. Frequent caravans, with cattle and slaves, passed us on their way to various marts. Our supplies of food were plentiful. A leaf of tobacco purchased a fowl; a charge of powder obtained a basin of milk or a dozen of eggs; and a large sheep cost only six cents, or a quart of salt.

Five days after quitting Tamisso, our approach to Jallica was announced; and here, as at our last resting-place, it was deemed proper to halt half a day for notice and ablution before entering a city, whose chief—Suphiana—was a kinsman of Ali-Ninpha.

The distance from our encampment to the town was about three miles; but an hour had hardly elapsed after our arrival, when the deep boom of the war-drum gave token that our message had been received with welcome. I was prepared, in some measure, for a display of no ordinary character at Jallica, because

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my Mandingo friend, Ali-Ninpha, inhabited the town in his youth, and had occupied a position which gave importance to his name throughout Soolimana. The worthy fellow had been absent many years from Jallica, and wept like a child when he heard the sound of the war-drum. Its discordant beat had the same effect on the savage that the sound of their village bells has on the spirit of returning wanderers in civilized lands. When the rattle of the drum was over, he told me that for five years he controlled that very instrument in Jallica, during which it had never sounded a retreat or betokened disaster. In peace it was never touched, save for public rejoicing ; and the authorities allowed it to be beaten *now* only because an old commander of the tribe was to be received with the honours due to his rank and service.

When the caravan got within fifty yards of the walls, a band of shouting warriors marched forth, and lifting Ali-Ninpha on their shoulders, bore him through the gates, singing war-songs, accompanied by all sorts of music and hubbub.

Jallica was a fairer town than any I had hitherto encountered in my travels. Its streets were wider, its houses better, its people more civil. No one intruded on the friend of Ali-Ninpha, and guest of Suphiana. I bathed without visits from inquisitive females. My house was my castle ; and, when I stirred abroad, two men preceded me with rattans to keep my path clear from women and children.

After lounging about quietly for a couple of days, wearing away fatigue, and getting rid of the stains of

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travel, I thought it advisable to drop in one morning, unannounced, after breakfast, at Suphiana's with the presents that are customary in the East. As the guest—during my whole journey—of the Ali-Mami, or King of Foota-Yallon, I was entirely exempt by customary law from this species of tax, nor would my Fullah protector have allowed me to offer a tribute had he known it; yet, I always took a secret opportunity to present a voluntary gift, for I wished my memory to smell sweet along my track in Africa. Suphiana fully appreciated my generosity under the circumstances, and returned the civility by an invitation to dinner at the house of his principal wife.

Some superstitious notions about the state of the moon prevented my Fullah guide from departing as soon as I desired; but while we were dallying with the planet, Ali-Ninpha became so ill that he was compelled to halt and end the journey in his favourite Jallica. I rather suspected the Mandingo to feign more suffering than he really experienced, and I soon discovered that his malady was nothing but a sham. In truth, Ali-Ninpha had duped so many Fullah traders on the beach, and owed them the value of so many slaves, that he found it extremely inconvenient, if not perilous, to enter the domain of the Ali-Mami of Foota-Yallon!

A messenger was despatched from Jallica, in advance of our departure, to announce our approach to Timbo. For six days more, our path led over hill and dale, and through charming valleys, fed by gentle

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streamlets that nourished the vigorous vegetation of a mountain land.

As we crossed the last summits that overlooked the territory of Foota-Yallon, a broad *plateau*, whence a wide range of country might be beheld, was filled with bands of armed men, afoot and on horseback, while a dozen animals were held in tether by their gaily dressed attendants. I dashed to the head of the caravan on my jaded beast, and reached it to find the arms of Ahmah-de-Bellah opening to greet me ! The generous youth, surrounded by his friends and escorted by a select corps of soldiers and slaves, had come thus far on the path to offer the prince's welcome !

The surprise of this complimentary reception was not only delightful as an evidence of African character among these more civilized tribes of the Mahometan interior, but it gave me an assurance of security and trade, which was very acceptable to one so far within the bowels of the land. We were still a day's journey from the capital. Ahmah-de-Bellah declared it impossible, with all the diligence we could muster, to reach Timbo without another halt. Nevertheless, as he was extremely solicitous to bring us to our travel's end, he not only supplied my personal attendants with fresh horses, but ordered carriers from his own guard to charge themselves with the entire luggage of our caravan.

Thus relieved of burden, our party set forth on the path in a brisk trot, and resting after dark for several hours in a village, we entered Timbo unceremoniously before daybreak while its inhabitants were still asleep.

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I was immediately conducted to a house specially built for me, surrounded by a high wall to protect my privacy from intrusion. Within, I found a careful duplicate of all the humble comforts in my domicile on the Rio Pongo. Tables, sofas, plates, knives, forks, tumblers, pitchers, basins had all been purchased by my friend, and forwarded for this establishment from other factories without my knowledge; while the centre of the main apartment was decorated with an American rocking-chair, which the natives had ingeniously contrived of rattans and bamboo! Such pleasant evidences of refined attention were more remarkable and delicate, because most of the articles are not used by Mahometans.

Ahmah-de-Bellah intimated that the Ali-Mami would soon be prepared to receive me without ceremony. The old gentleman was confined by dropsy in his lower extremities, and found it uncomfortable to sustain the annoyance of public life except when absolutely necessary. Accordingly, when I felt perfectly refreshed, I arose from my matted sofa, and dressing for the first time in more than a month in a perfectly clean suit, I donned a snowy shirt, a pair of dashing drills, Parisian pumps, and a Turkish *fez*, tipped with a copious tassel. Our interpreters were clad in fresh Mandingo dresses adorned with extra embroidery. My body-servant was ordered to appear in a cast-off suit of my own; so that, when I gave one my double-barrelled gun to carry, and armed the others with my pistols, and a glittering regulation-sword—designed as a gift for the Ali-Mami—I presented a very respectable

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and picturesque appearance for a gentleman abroad on his travels in the East. The moment I issued with my train from the house, a crowd of Fullahs was ready to receive me with exclamations of chattering surprise; still, I was not annoyed, as elsewhere, by the unfailing concourse that followed my footsteps or clogged my pathway.

The "palace" of the Ali-Mami of Foota-Yallon, like all African palaces in this region, was an *adobe* hovel, surrounded by its portico shed, and protected by a wall from the intrusion of the common herd. In front of the dwelling, beneath the shelter of the verandah, on a fleecy pile of sheepskin mats, reclined the veteran, whose swollen and naked feet were undergoing a cooling process from the palm-leaf fans of female slaves. I marched up boldly in front of him with my military *suite*, and, making a profound *salaam*, was presented by Ahmah-de-Bellah as his "white brother." The Ali at once extended both hands, and, grasping mine, drew me beside him on the sheepskin. Then, looking intently over my face and into the very depth of my eyes, he asked gently with a smile—"what was my name?"

"Ahmah-de-Bellah!" replied I, after the fashion of the country. As I uttered the Mahometan appellation, for which I had exchanged my own with his son at Kambia, the old man, who still held my hands, put one of his arms round my waist, and pressed me still closer to his side.

This was followed by a grand inquest in regard to myself and history. Who was my father? Who was

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my mother? How many brothers had I? Were they warriors? Were they "book-men"? Why did I travel so far? What delay would I make in Foota-Yallon? Was my dwelling comfortable? Had I been treated with honour, respect and attention on my journey? And, last of all, the prince sincerely hoped that I would find it convenient to dwell with him during the whole of the "rainy season."

Several times, in the midst of these interrogations, the patriarch groaned, and I could perceive, from the pain that flitted like a shadow over the nerves and muscles of his face, that he was suffering severely, and, of course, I cut the interview as short as Oriental etiquette would allow.

My trip to Timbo was one of business. Still, while I was there, I thought I might as well see all that was visible. I strolled repeatedly through the town. I became excessively familiar with its narrow streets, low houses, mud walls, cul-de-sacs, and mosques. I saw no fine bazaars, market-places, or shops. The chief wants of life were supplied by peddlers. Platters, jars, and baskets of fruit, vegetables, and meat were borne around twice or thrice daily. Horsemen dashed about on beautiful steeds towards the fields in the morning, or came home at nightfall at a slower pace. *I never saw man or woman bask lazily in the sun.* Females were constantly busy over their cotton and spinning-wheels when not engaged in household occupations; and often have I seen an elderly dame quietly crouched in her hovel at sunset reading the Koran. Nor are the men of Timbo less thrifty. Their city

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wall is said to hem in about ten thousand individuals, representing all the social industries. They weave cotton, work in leather, fabricate iron from the bar, engage diligently in agriculture, and, whenever not laboriously employed, devote themselves to reading and writing, of which they are excessively fond.

But I was tired of Timbo ; I was perfectly refreshed from my journey ; and I was anxious to return to my factory on the beach. Two " moons " only had been originally set apart for the enterprise, and the third was already waxing towards its full. I feared the Ali-Mami was not yet prepared with *slaves* for my departure, and I told the king that a vessel or two, with abundant freights, would be waiting me on the river, and that I must hasten thither with his choicest gangs if he hoped to reap a profit.

War parties and scouts were forthwith despatched to blockade the paths, while press-gangs made recruits among the villages, and even in Timbo. Sulimani-Ali himself sallied forth, before daybreak, with a troop of horse, and at sundown came back with forty-five splendid fellows, captured in Findo and Furo !

The personal dread of me in the town itself was augmented. If I had been a Pestilence before, I was Death now ! When I took my usual morning walk the children ran from me screaming. Since the arrival of Sulimani with his victims, all who were under the yoke thought their hour of exile had come. The poor regarded me as the devil incarnate. Once or twice, I caught women throwing a handful of dust or ashes towards me, uttering an invocation from the

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Koran to avert the demon or save them from his clutches.

In the midst of the general dismay, caused by the court of Timbo and myself, my coloured brother lost no chance of lecturing me about my soul ! We kidnapped the Africans all day and spouted Islamism all night ! We spared Mahometans and enslaved only " the heathen " ; so that, in fact, we were merely obedient to the behests of Mahomet when we subdued " the infidel " !

This process of proselytism, however, was not altogether successful. Still, we were very good friends when the Ali-Mami summoned us for a final interview.

The king's relations presented me with bullocks, cows, goats, and sheep. His majesty sent me five slaves. Sulimani-Ali offered a splendid white charger. The king's wife supplied me with an African quilt ingeniously woven of red and yellow threads unravelled from Manchester cottons ; while Ahmah-de-Bellah, like a gentleman of taste, despatched, for my consolation, the two prettiest handmaidens he could buy or steal in Timbo !



CHAPTER NINE

A PRINCESS SOLD FOR SALT

I SHALL not weary the reader with a narrative of my journey homeward over the track I had followed on my way to Timbo. A grand Mahometan service was performed at my departure, and Ahmah-de-Bellah accompanied me as far as Jallica, whence he was recalled by his father in consequence of a serious family dispute that required his presence. Ali-Ninpha was prepared, in this place, to greet me with a welcome, and a copious supply of gold, wax, ivory, and slaves. At Tamisso, the worthy Mahomedoo had complied with his promise to furnish a similar addition to the caravan ; so that when we set out for Kya, our troop was swelled to near a thousand strong, counting men, women, children and ragamuffins.

At Kya I could not help tarrying four days with my jolly friend Ibrahim, who received the tobacco, charged with "bitters," during my absence, and was delighted to furnish a nourishing drop after my long abstinence. As we approached the coast, another halt was called at a favourable encampment, where Ali-Ninpha divided the caravan in four parts, reserving the best portion of slaves and merchandise for me. The division, before arrival, was absolutely necessary,

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in order to prevent disputes or disastrous quarrels in regard to the merchantable quality of negroes on the beach.

I hoped to take my people by surprise at Kambia ; but when the factory came in sight from the hill-tops back of the settlement, I saw the Spanish flag floating from its summit, and heard the cannon booming forth a welcome to the wanderer. Everything had been admirably conducted in my absence. The Fullah and my clerk preserved their social relations and the public tranquillity unimpaired. My factory and warehouse were as neat and orderly as when I left them, so that I had nothing to do but go to sleep as if I had made a day's excursion to a neighbouring village.

Within a week I paid for the caravan's produce, despatched Mami-de-Yong, and made arrangements with the captain of a slaver in the river for the remainder of his merchandise. But the Fullah chief had not left me more than a day or two, when I was surprised by a traveller who dashed into my factory, with a message from Ahmah-de-Bellah at Timbo, whence he had posted in twenty-one days.

Ahmah was in trouble. He had been recalled, as I said, from Jallica by family quarrels. When he reached the paternal mat, he found his sister Beeljie bound hand and foot in prison, with orders for her prompt transportation to my factory as a slave. These were the irrevocable commands of his royal father, and of her half-brother, Sulimani. All his appeals, seconded by those of his mother, were unheeded. She must be *shipped* from the Rio Pongo ; and no one

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could be trusted with the task but the Ali-Mami's son and friend, the Mongo Téodore !

To resist this dire command, Ahmah charged the messenger to appeal to my heart by our brotherly love, *not* to allow the maiden to be sent over sea ; but, by force or stratagem, to retain her until he arrived on the beach.

The news amazed me. I knew that African Mahometans never sold their caste or kindred into foreign slavery, unless their crime deserved a penalty severer than death. I reflected a while on the message, because I did not wish to complicate my relations with the leading chiefs of the interior, but, in a few moments, natural sensibility mastered every selfish impulse, and I told the envoy to hasten back on the path of the suffering brother, and assure him I would shield his sister, even at the risk of his kindred's wrath.

About a week afterwards I was aroused one morning by a runner from a neighbouring village over the hill, who stated that a courier reached his town the night before from Sulimani-Ali—a prince of Timbo—conducting a Fullah girl, who was to be sold by me *immediately* to a Spanish slaver. The girl, he said, resisted with all her energy. She refused to walk. For the last four days she had been borne along in a litter. She swore never to “ see the ocean ” ; and threatened to dash her skull against the first rock in her path, if they attempted to carry her further. The stanch refusal embarrassed her Mahometan conductor, inasmuch as his country's law forbade him to use extra-

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ordinary compulsion, or degrade the maiden with a whip.

I saw at once that this delay and hesitation afforded an opportunity to interfere judiciously in behalf of the spirited girl, whose sins or faults were still unknown to me. Accordingly, I imparted the tale to Ali-Ninpha ; and, with his consent, despatched a shrewd dame from the Mandingo's *harem*, with directions for her conduct to the village. I warned her to seize a secret moment when she might win the maiden's confidence, to inform her that I was the sworn friend of Ahmah-de-Bellah, and would save her if she followed my commands implicitly. She must cease resistance at once. She must come to the river, and she must allow her jailers to fulfil all the orders they received from her kinsmen. Muffled in the messenger's garments, I sent the manuscript Koran of Ahmah-de-Bellah as a token of my truth, and bade the dame assure Beeljie that her brother was already far on his journey to redeem her in Kambia.

The mission was successful, and, early next day, the girl was brought to my factory, *with a rope round her neck*. The preliminaries for her purchase were tedious and formal. As her sale was compulsory, there was not much question as to quality or price. Still, I was obliged to promise a multitude of things I did not intend to perform. In order to disgrace the poor creature as much as possible, her sentence declared she should be "sold for salt," the most contemptuous of all African exchanges, and used in the interior for the purchase of *cattle* alone.

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Poor Beeljie stood naked and trembling before us while these ceremonies were performing. A scowl of indignation flitted like a shadow over her face, as she heard the disgusting commands. Tenderly brought up among the princely brood of Timbo, she was a bright and delicate type of the classes I described at the brookside. Her limbs and features were stained by the dust of travel, and her expression was clouded with the grief of sensible degradation: still, I would have risked more than I did, when I beheld the mute appeal of her face and form, to save her from the doom of Cuban exile.

When the last tub of salt was measured, I cut the rope from Beeljie's neck, and, throwing over her shoulders a shawl—in which she instantly shrank with a look of gratitude—called the female who had borne my cheering message, to take the girl to her house and treat her as the sister of my Fullah brother.

As I expected, this humane command brought the emissary of Sulimani to his feet with a bound. He insisted on the restitution of the woman! I then softly told him that *the girl should be put on board a slaver in his presence*. Nevertheless, I continued, while the sister of Ahmah was under my roof, her blood must be respected, and she should be treated in every respect as a royal person.

I was quite as curious as the reader may be to know the crime of Beeljie, for, up to that moment, I had not been informed of it. Dismissing the Fullah as speedily as possible, I hastened to Ali-Ninpha's dwelling and heard the sufferer's story.

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The Mahometan princess, whose age surely did not exceed eighteen, had been promised by the king and her half-brother, Sulimani, to an old relative, who was not only accused of cruelty to his *harem's* inmates, but was charged by Mussulmen with the heinous crime of eating "unclean flesh." The girl, who seemed to be a person of masculine courage and determination, resisted this disposal of her person; but, while her brother Ahmah was away, she was forced from her mother's arms and given to the filthy dotard.

It is commonly supposed that women are doomed to the basest obedience in Oriental lands; yet it seems there is a Mahometan law—or at least a Fullah custom—which saves the purity of an unwilling bride. The delivery of Beeljie to her brutal lord kindled the fire of an ardent temper. She furnished the old gentleman with specimens of violence to which his *harem* had been a stranger, save when the master himself chose to indulge in wrath. In fact, the Fullah damsel—half acting, half in reality—played the virago so finely, that her husband, after exhausting arguments, promises and supplications, sent her back to her kindred with an insulting message.

It was a sad day when she returned to the paternal roof in Timbo. Her resistance was regarded by the dropsical despot as rebellious disobedience to father and brother; and as neither authority nor love would induce the outlaw to repent, her barbarous parent condemned her to be "a slave to Christians."

Her story ended, I consoled the poor maiden with every assurance of protection and comfort; for, now

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that the excitement of sale and journey was over, her nerves gave way, and she sank on her mat, completely exhausted. I commended her to the safeguard of my landlord and the especial kindness of his women. Esther, too, stole up at night to comfort the sufferer with her fondling tenderness, for she could not speak the Fullah language ; and, in a week, I had the damsel in capital condition ready for a daring enterprise that was to seal her fate.

When the Spanish slaver, whose cargo I had just completed, was ready for sea, I begged her captain to aid me in the shipment of " a princess " who had been consigned to my wardship by her royal relations in the interior, but whom I dared not put on board his vessel until she was beyond the Rio Pongo's bar. The officer assented ; and when the last boat-load of slaves was despatched from my *barracoon*, he lifted his anchor and floated down the stream till he got beyond the furthest breakers. Here, with sails loosely furled, and everything ready for instant departure, he again laid to.

In the meantime, I hurried Beeljie with her friends and Fullah jailer to the beach, so that when the slaver threw his sails aback and brought his vessel to the wind, I lost not a moment in putting the girl in a canoe, with five Kroomen to carry her through the boiling surf.

" Allah be praised ! " sighed the Fullah, as the boat shot ahead into the sea ; while the girls of the *harem* fell on the sand with wails of sorrow. The Kroomen, with their usual skill, drove the buoyant skiff swiftly towards the slaver ; but as they approached the

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breakers south of the bar, a heavy roller struck it on the side, and instantly its freight was struggling in the surge.

In a twinkling, the Fullah was on the earth, his face buried in the sand ; the girls screamed and tore their garments ; Ali-Ninpha's wife clung to me with the grasp of despair ; while I, stamping with rage, cursed the barbarity of the maiden's parent, whose sentence had brought her to this wretched fate.

I kicked the howling hypocrite beneath me, and bade him hasten with the news to Timbo, and tell the wicked patriarch that the Prophet himself had destroyed the life of his wretched child sooner than suffer her to become a Christian's slave.

The Spanish vessel was under full sail, sweeping rapidly out to sea, and the Kroomen swam ashore without their boat, as the grieving group slowly and sadly retraced their way along the river's bank to Kambia.

There was wailing that night in the village, and there was wailing in Timbo when the Fullah returned with the tragic story. In fact, such was the distracted excitement both on the sea-shore and in the settlement that none of my companions had eyes to observe an episode of the drama which had been played that evening.

Kroomen are altogether unaware of any difference between a smooth river and the angriest wave. I took advantage of this amphibious nature, to station a light canoe immediately on the edge of the breakers, and to order the daring swimmers it contained to grasp

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the girl the moment her canoe was purposely upset ! I promised the divers a liberal reward if they lodged her in their boat, or swam with her to the nearest point of the opposite beach ; and so well did they perform their secret task that when they drew ashore her fainting body, it was promptly received by a trusty Bager, who was in waiting on the beach. Before the girl recovered her senses she was safely afloat in the fisherman's canoe. His home was in a village on the coast below ; and, perhaps, it still remains a secret to this day, how it was that, for years after, a girl, the image of the lost Beeljie, followed the footsteps of Ahmah, the Fullah of Timbo.

CHAPTER TEN

A PRISONER ON A FRENCH SCHOONER

AFTER my toilsome journey to the interior, my despatch of a slaver, and my adventurous enterprise in behalf of a Fullah princess, I thought myself entitled to a long siesta; but my comfortable desires and anticipations were doomed to disappointment. I was suddenly stirred from this willing lethargy by a salute of twenty-one guns in the offing. Our wonder was almost insupportable as to the character of the ceremonious stranger who wasted powder so profusely, while a boy was despatched to the top of the look-out tree to ascertain his character. He reported a schooner anchored opposite Bangalang, sporting a long pendant at the main, and a white ensign at her peak. I took it for granted that no man-of-war would salute a native chief, and so concluded that it was some pretentious Frenchman, unacquainted with the customs of our demure coast.

The conjecture was right. At nightfall Mr. Ormond—whose humour had somewhat improved since my return—apprised me that a Gallic slaver had arrived to his consignment with a rich cargo, and hoped I would join him at breakfast on board, by invitation of the commander.

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Next morning, at sunrise, the Mongo and myself met for the first time after our rupture with apparent cordiality on the deck of *La Perouse*, where we were welcomed with all that cordiality of grimace for which a half-bred Frenchman is so justly celebrated. Captain Brulôt could not speak English, nor could Mr. Ormond express himself in French ; so we wasted the time till breakfast was served in discussing his cargo and prospects, through my interpretation. Fine samples of gaudy calicoes, French guns, and superior brandy were exhibited and dwelt on with characteristic eloquence ; but the Gaul closed his catalogue with five hundred doubloons. The scent of gold has a peculiar charm to African slavers, and it will readily be supposed that our appetite was not a little stimulated. As rapidly as we could, we summed up the doubloons and his merchandise ; and, estimating the entire cargo at about \$17,000, offered him 350 negroes for the lot. The bid was no sooner made than accepted. Our private boats were sent ashore in search of canoes to discharge the goods, and with a relish and spirit I never saw surpassed, we sat down to a piquant breakfast, spread on deck beneath the awning.

When the last bumper was quaffed in honour of *La Perouse* and *belle France*, Captain Brulôt called for his writing-desk ; when, at the instant, four men sprung up as if by enchantment behind the Mongo and myself, and grasping our arms with the grip of a vice, held us in their clutches till the carpenter riveted a shackle on our feet.

When our limbs were perfectly secure, the French

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scoundrel, approaching Mr. Ormond with a sarcastic simper, apprised him that the *petite comédie* in which he took part had been enacted for the collection of a trifling debt which his excellency the Mongo owed a beloved brother, who, alas ! was no longer on earth to collect it for himself !

Monsieur le Mongo, he said, would have the kindness to remember that, several years ago, his brother had left some two hundred slaves in his hands until called for ; and he would also please to take the trouble to recollect that the said slaves had been twice sent for, and twice refused. *Monsieur le Mongo* must know, he continued, that there was not much law on the coast of Africa ; and that, as he had *Monsieur le Mongo's* promissory note, or due-bill, for the negroes, he thought this charming little *ruse* would be the most amiable and practical mode of enforcing it ! Did his friend, *le Mongo*, intend to honour this draft ? It was properly endorsed, he would see, in favour of the bearer ; and if the *esclaves* were quickly forthcoming, the whole affair would pass off as agreeably and quickly as the bubbles from a champagne glass.

By this time Ormond was so perfectly stupefied by drink, as well as the atrocity, that he simply burst into a maudlin laugh, when I looked at him for an explanation of the charge. *I*, surely, was not implicated in it ; yet, when I demanded the cause of the assault upon *my* person, in connection with the affair, Brulôt replied, with a shrug, that as I was Ormond's clerk when the note was signed, I must have had a finger in the pie ; and, inasmuch as I now possessed a

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factory of my own, it would doubtless be delightful to aid my ancient patron in the liquidation of a debt that I knew to be lawful.

It was altogether useless to deny my presence in the factory, or knowledge of the transaction, which, in truth, had occurred long before my arrival on the Rio Pongo, during the clerkship of my predecessor. Still, I insisted on immediate release. An hour flew by in useless parley. But the Frenchman was firm, and swore that nothing would induce him to liberate either of us without payment of the bill. While we were talking, a crowd of canoes was seen shoving off from Bangalang, filled with armed men ; whereupon the excited Gaul ordered his men to quarters, and double-shotted his guns.

As the first boat came within striking distance, a ball was fired across her bows, which not only sent back the advance, but made the entire fleet tack ship and steer homeward in dismay. Soon after, however, I heard the war-drum beating in Bangalang, and could see the natives mustering in great numbers along the river banks ; yet, what could undisciplined savages effect against our six-pounders ? At sunset, however, my clerk came off, with a white flag, and the captain allowed him to row alongside to receive our orders in his presence. Ormond was not yet in a state to consult as to our appropriate means of rescue from the trickster's clutches ; so I directed the young man to return in the morning with changes of raiment ; but, in the meanwhile, to desire the villagers of both settlements to refrain from interference in our behalf. An

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excellent meal, with abundance of claret, was served for our entertainment, and, on a capital mattress, we passed a night of patient endurance in our iron stockings.

At daylight, water and towels were served for our refreshment. After coffee and cigars were placed on the board, Brulôt demanded whether we had come to our senses and intended to pay the debt? I said nothing. Ormond, however—now entirely sober, and who was enjoying a cigar with the habitual *insouciance* of a mulatto—replied quietly that he could make no promises or arrangements whilst confined on board, but if allowed to go ashore, he would fulfil his obligation in two or three days. An hour was spent by the Frenchman in pondering on the proposal; when it was finally agreed that the Mongo should be set at liberty, provided he left, as hostages, four of his children and two of the black chiefs who visited him in my boat. The compact was sealed by the hoisting of a flag under the discharge of a blank cartridge; and, in an hour, the pledges were in the cabin, under the eye of a sentry, while the Mongo was once more in Bangalang.

These negotiations, it will be perceived, did not touch *my* case, though I was in no manner guilty; yet I assented to the proposal because I thought that Ormond would be better able than myself to find the requisite number of slaves at that moment. I ordered my clerk, however, to press all the indifferent and useless servants in my factory, and to aid the Mongo with every slave at present in my *barracoon*.

Before sunset of that day, this young man came

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aboard with fifty negroes from my establishment, and demanded my release. It was refused. Next day forty more were despatched by the Mongo ; but still my liberty was denied.

It was a task of difficulty to collect the remaining 110 slaves among factories which had been recently drained by Cuban vessels. Many domestic menials escaped to the forest when the story became known, as they did not wish to take the place of their betters in the " French service."

Thrice had the sun risen and set since I was a prisoner. Never did I cease to pray for the arrival of some well-armed Spanish slaver ; and, towards evening of the fourth day, the boon was granted ! That afternoon a boat manned by negroes passed with the Spanish flag ; but as there was no white man aboard, Brulôt took it for a *ruse* of the Mongo, designed to alarm him into an unconditional release of his captives.

I slept soundly that night ; but the sun was not clear of the forest when I hobbled on deck in my shackles, and was searching the seaward horizon for my beloved Castilian. Presently the breeze began to freshen, and the tall, raking masts of a schooner were seen gliding above the tops of the mangroves that masked the Rio Pongo's mouth. Very soon the light wind and tide drifted her clear of the bends, and an anchor was let go within musket-shot of my prison, while springs were run out to the bushes to give range to her broadside. I saw at once from her manœuvres that Ormond had communicated with the craft during the night.

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Brulôt felt that his day was over. The Spaniard's decks were crowded with an alert, armed crew ; four little bull-dogs showed their muzzles from port-holes ; while a large brass swivel amidships gave token of its readiness to fight or salute. For a minute or two the foiled Frenchman surveyed the scene through his glass ; then, throwing it over his shoulder, ordered the mate to strike off my " darbies." As the officer obeyed, a voice was heard from the Spaniard, commanding a boat to be sent aboard, under penalty of a shot if not instantly obeyed. The boat was lowered ; but who would man her ? The chief officer refused ; the second declined ; the French sailors objected ; the creoles and mulattoes from St. Thomas went below ; so that no one was left to fulfil the slaver's order but Brulôt or myself.

By this time the Spaniard had lighted his matches, levelled his guns, and, under the aim of his musketry, repeated the order for a boat. Seeing the danger of our party, I leaped to the bulwarks, and hailing my deliverer in Spanish, bade him desist. The request was obeyed as I threw myself into the yawl, cut the rope, and, alone, sculled the skiff to the slaver.

A shout went up from the deck of my deliverer as I jumped aboard and received the cordial grasp of her commander. Ali-Ninpha, too, was there to greet and defend me with a chosen band of his people. While I was absorbed in the joy of welcome and liberation, the African stole with his band to the Frenchman's boat, and was rapidly filling it to board the foe, when my clerk apprised me of the impending danger. I was

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fortunate enough to control the enraged savage, else I know not what might have been the fate of Brulôt and the officers during the desertion of his mongrel and cowardly crew.

The captain desired his mates to keep an eye on the Gaul while we retired to the cabin for consultation ; and here I learned that I was on board the *Esperanza*, consigned to me from Matanzas. In turn, I confirmed the account they had already heard of my mishap from the Mongo's messengers ; but hoped the Cuban captain would permit me to take pacific revenge after my own fashion, inasmuch as my captor—barring the irons—had behaved with uncommon civility. I had no trouble, of course, in obtaining the commander's assent to this request, though he yielded it under the evident displeasure of his crew, whose Spanish blood was up against the Frenchman, and would willingly have inflicted a signal punishment on this neutral ground.

After these preliminaries, Captain Escudero and myself returned to the *La Perouse* with two boat-loads of armed followers, while our approach was covered by the cannons and small arms of the *Esperanza*. Brulôt received us in moody silence on the quarter-deck. His officers sat sulkily on a gun to leeward, while two or three French seamen walked to and fro on the fore-castle.

My first command was to spike the vessel's guns. Next, I decreed and superintended the disembarkation of the stolen slaves ; and lastly, I concluded the morning call with a request that Brulôt would produce

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the 500 doubloons and his "promissory note" for 200 slaves.

The document, duly endorsed, was quickly delivered, but no persuasion or threat induced the angry Gaul to show his gold, or a manifest of the cargo.

After ample indulgence, I despatched a man to seek his writing-desk, and discovered that 600 doubloons had in reality been shipped in St. Thomas. Of course their production was imperiously demanded; but Brulôt swore they had been landed, with his super-cargo, in the neighbouring Rio Nunez. I was near crediting the story, when a slight sneer I perceived flickering over the steward's face put me on the *qui vive* to request an inspection of the log-book, which, unfortunately for my captor, did not record the disembarkation of the cash. This demonstrated Brulôt's falsehood, and authorized a demand for his trunk. The knave winced as the steward descended to bring it; and he leaped with rage as I split it with a hatchet, and counted 250 Mexican doubloons on the deck. *His cargo, however, proved to be a sham of samples.*

Turning innocently to Escudero, I remarked that he must have been put to considerable trouble in rescuing me from this outlaw, and hoped he would suffer his men to be recompensed for their extra toil under the rays of an African sun. I would not venture to judge the value of such devoted services; but requested him to fix his own price and receive payment on the spot.

Escudero very naturally supposed that *about* 250 Mexican ounces would compensate him, and, accord-

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ingly, the 250 shiners, glistening on the deck, forthwith returned to their bag and went overboard into his boat.

La Esperanza discharged her cargo rapidly, but, before I was ready to send back a living freight, poor Escudero fell a victim to African fever.

I had seen much of the country ; I had made some money ; my clerk was a reliable fellow ; I was growing somewhat anxious for a change of scene ; and, in fact, I only wanted a decent excuse to find myself once more aboard a " skimmer of the seas," for a little relaxation after the oppressive monotony of a slaver's life. Escudero's death seemed to offer the desired opportunity. His mate was an inexperienced seaman ; his officers were unacquainted with the management of a slave cargo ; and, upon a view of the whole field of interest, I thought it best to take charge of the schooner and pay a visit to my friends in Cuba. In the meantime, however, a Danish brig arrived for negroes, so that it became necessary for me, with my multiplied duties, to bestir myself in the collection of slaves.

Whilst I was dining one afternoon at Ormond's factory with the Danish captain of the trader, the boom of a gun, followed rapidly by two or three more, announced the arrival of another craft. We drank a toast to his advent, and were beginning to condole a little over our difficulty in procuring blacks, when the look-out ran into our room with the report that my Spaniard was firing into the Dane. We rushed to the piazza whence the scene of action might be beheld, and another shot from my vessel seemed to

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indicate that she was the aggressor. The Dane and myself hurried aboard our respective schooners, but when I reached the *Esperanza*, my crew were weighing anchor, while the quarter-deck was strewn with fire-arms. The mate stood on the heel of the bowsprit, urging his men to alacrity ; the sailors hove at the windlass with mingled shouts of passion and oaths of revenge ; on a mattress lay the bleeding form of my second officer, while a seaman groaned beside him with a musket ball in his shoulder.

My arrival was the signal for a pause. As quickly as possible, I inquired into the affray, which had originated like many a sailor's dispute, on a question of precedence at the watering-place in a neighbouring brook. The Danes were seven, and we but three. Our Spaniards had been driven off, and my second-mate, in charge of the yawl, received a blow from an oar-blade, which cut his skull and felled him senseless on the sand.

Of course, the watering was over for the day, and both boats returned to their vessels to tell their stories. The moment the Danes got on board, they imprudently ran up their ensign ; and as this act of apparent defiance occurred just as the *Esperanza* was receiving the lifeless form of her officer, my excited crew discharged a broadside in reply to the warlike token. Gun followed gun, and musketry rattled against musketry. The Dane miscalculated the range of the guns, and his grape fell short of my schooner, while our sixes made sad havoc with his bulwarks and rigging.

I had hardly learned the facts of the case and thought

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of a truce, when the passionate Northman sent a round shot whistling over my head. Another and another followed in its wake, but they aimed too high for damage. At twenty-four our blood is not so diplomatically pacific as in later years. I slipped my cable and ran up the jib and mainsail, so as to swing the schooner into a raking position at short quarters; and before the Dane could counteract my manoeuvre, I gave him a dose of grape and cannister which tore his ensign to ribbons and spoiled the looks of his hull materially. My second shot splintered the edge of his mast; but while I was making ready for a third, to tickle him betwixt wind and water, down tumbled his impertinent pendant and the day was won.

For a while there was a dead silence between the warriors. Neither hailed nor sent a boat on board of the other. Ormond perceived this cessation of hostilities from his piazza at Bangalang, and coming out in a canoe, rowed to the Dane after hearing my version of the battle.

I waited anxiously either for his return or a message, but as I was unadvised of the Mongo's views and temper in regard to the affray, I thought it well, before dark, to avoid treachery by quitting the river and placing my schooner in a creek with her broadside to the shore. Special charge was then given to the mate and men to be alert all night long; after which, I went on shore to protect the rear by placing my factory in a state of defence.

But my precautions were needless. At daylight the guard brought us news of the Dane's departure,

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and when I descended the river to Bangalang, Ormond alleged that the slaver had sailed for Sierra Leone to seek succour either from a man-of-war or the British Government.

It may be supposed that I was not so "green" in Africa as to believe this story. No vessel, equipped for a slave cargo, would dare to enter the imperial colony. Yet the Northman had bitter cause for grief and anger. His vessel was seriously harmed by my grape-shot; his carpenter was slain during the action; and three of his seamen were lingering with desperate wounds. In a few days, however, he returned to the Rio Pongo from his airing on the Atlantic, where his wrath had probably been somewhat cooled by the sea-breeze. His craft was anchored higher up the river than my Spaniard, and thus our crews avoided intercourse for the future.

But this was not the case with the captains. The Mongo's table was a sort of neutral ground, at which we met with cold salutations but without conversation. Ormond and the Dane, however, became exceedingly intimate. Accordingly, I made it "worth the while" of Ormond's body-servant to sift the secret of this sudden devotion; and in a few days the faithless slave, who spoke English remarkably well, told me that the Dane, by dint of extra pay and the secret delivery of all his spare provisions and the balance of his cargo, had induced the Mongo to promise the delivery of his slaves before mine.

Now, Ormond, by a specific contract—made and paid for before the Dane's arrival—owed me 200

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negroes on account of the *Esperanza's* cargo. The Dane knew this perfectly, but my severe chastisement rankled in his heart, and made him seek revenge in the most effectual way on the coast of Africa. He was bent upon depriving me of 100 negroes, in the hands of Mr. Ormond.

I kept my eye on Ormond's *barracoon* until I found his stock had gradually augmented to 300. Thereupon, I dropped in one morning unceremoniously, and, in a gentle voice, told him of his treacherous design. My ancient patron was so degraded by debauchery that he not only avoided a passionate outburst when I made the charge, but actually seemed to regard it as a sort of capital joke, or recompense for the damage I had inflicted on the Dane! I resolved to *outbid* the Dane, for I thought I possessed a card that could take him. Accordingly, I offered to surrender a bond for 100 slaves he owed me on account of the *Esperanza*; I promised, moreover, 150 negroes, to be delivered that evening—and I tendered Brulôt's promissory note for the missing 200—if he would pledge himself to load the Dane during the succeeding night!

Ormond took the hint like tinder, and grasped my hand on the bargain. The Dane was ordered to prepare his vessel to receive cargo without delay, and was specially desired to drop down about fifteen miles towards the bar, so as to be off the moment his slaves were under hatches.

Night came on. My long boat was quickly filled with ten men, armed with pistol and cutlass; and in a short time, the canoes from Bangalang hove in sight

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with their burden. I boarded the first one myself, commanding the rowers to pull for my Spaniard. The second was seized by the mate, who followed in my wake. The third, fourth, fifth and sixth shared the same fate in rapid succession ; so that, in an hour, 375 negroes were safe beneath the *Esperanza's* deck. Thereupon, I presented the headman of each canoe a document acknowledging the receipt of his slaves, and wrote an order on the Mongo *in favour of the Dane*, for the full amount of the darkies I had borrowed !

The land wind sprang up and the tide turned when daylight warned me it was time to be off ; and as I passed the Dane at anchor just inside the bar, I called all hands to give three cheers.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

AN ENCOUNTER WITH JOHN BULL

WHEN the land breeze died away, it fell entirely calm, and the sea continued an unruffled mirror for three days, during which the highlands remained in sight, like a faint cloud in the east. The glaring sky and the reflecting ocean acted and reacted on each other until the air glowed like a furnace. During night a dense fog enveloped the vessel with its clammy folds. When the vapour lifted on the fourth morning, our look-out announced a sail from the mast-head, and every eye was quickly sweeping the landward horizon in search of the stranger. Our spies along the beach had reported the coast clear of cruisers when I sailed, so that I hardly anticipated danger from men-of-war; nevertheless, we held it discreet to avoid intercourse, and accordingly, our double-manned sweeps were rigged out to impel us slowly towards the open ocean. Presently, the mate went aloft with his glass, and, after a deliberate gaze, exclaimed: "It is only the Dane—I see his flag." At this my crew swore they would sooner fight than sweep in such a latitude; and, with three cheers, came aft to request that I would remain quietly where I was until overhauled.

The prudent slaver, as soon as he finds himself in

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the neighbourhood of unwholesome canvas, puts out his fire, nails his forecastle, sends his negroes below, and secures the gratings over his hatches. All these preparations were quietly made on board the *Esperanza*; and, in addition, I ordered a supply of small arms and ammunition on deck, where they were instantly covered with blankets. Every man was next stationed at his post, or where he might be most serviceable. The cannons were sponged and loaded with care; and, as I desired to deceive our new acquaintance, I ran up the Portuguese flag.

I paced the deck for half an hour beneath the awning, when, seizing a telescope and mounting the rigging, I saw, or fancied I saw, a row of ports, which the Dane had not: then sweeping the horizon a little astern of the craft, I distinctly made out three boats, fully manned, making for us with ensigns flying. In fact, our antagonist was unquestionably a British cruiser of ten or twelve guns, from whose clutches there was no escape, unless we repulsed the boats.

I found my crew as confident in the face of augmented risk as they had been when we expected the less perilous Dane. Collecting their votes for fight or surrender, I learned that all but two were in favour of resistance. I threw overboard several water-casks that encumbered the deck, and hoisted our boat to the stern-davits to prevent boarding in that quarter. Things were perfectly ship-shape all over the schooner, and I congratulated myself that her power had been increased by two twelve-pound carronades, the ammunition, and part of the crew of a Spanish slaver, aban-

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doned on the bar of Rio Pongo a week before my departure. We had in all seven guns, and abundance of musketry, pistols and cutlasses, to be wielded and managed by thirty-seven hands.

By this time the British boats, impelled by oars alone, approached within half a mile, while the breeze sprang up in cat's-paws all round the eastern horizon, but without fanning us with a single breath. Taking advantage of one of these slants, the cruiser had followed her boats, but now, about five miles off, was again as perfectly becalmed as *we* had been all day. Presently, I observed the boats converge within the range of my swivel, and lay on their oars as if for consultation. I seized this opportunity, while the enemy was huddled together, to give him the first welcome ; and, slewing the schooner round with my sweeps, I sent him a shot from my swivel. But the ball passed over their heads, while, with three cheers, they separated, the largest boat making directly for our waist, while the others steered to cross our bow and attack our stern.

During the chase my weapons, with the exception of the pivot gun, were altogether useless, but I kept a couple of sweeps ahead and a couple astern to play the schooner. The larger boat, bearing a small caronade, was my best target, yet we contrived to miss each other completely until my sixth discharge, when a double-headed shot raked the whole bank of starboard oar-blades, and disabled the rowers by the severe concussion. This paralysed the launch's advance, and allowed me to devote my exclusive attention

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to the other boats ; yet, before I could bring the schooner in a suitable position, a signal summoned the assailants aboard the cruiser to repair damages. I did not reflect until this moment of reprieve that, early in the day, I had hoisted the Portuguese ensign to deceive the Dane, and imprudently left it aloft in the presence of *John Bull* ! I struck the false flag at once, unfurled the Spanish, and refreshing the men with a double allowance of grog and grub, put them again to the sweeps. When the cruisers reached their vessels, the men instantly re-embarked, while the boats were allowed to swing alongside, which convinced me that the assault would be renewed as soon as the rum and roast-beef of Old England had strengthened the heart of the adversary. Accordingly, noon had not long passed when our pursuers again embarked. Once more they approached, divided as before, and again we exchanged ineffectual shots. I kept them at bay with grape and musketry until near three o'clock, when a second signal of retreat was hoisted on the cruiser, and answered by exultant *vivas* from my crew.

I was sure that the lion retreated to make a better spring, nor was I less disheartened when the mate reported that nearly all the ammunition for our cannons was exhausted. Seven kegs of powder were still in the magazine, though not more than a dozen rounds of grape, cannister, or balls remained in the locker. There was still an abundance of cartridges for pistols and musketry, but these were poor defences against resolute Englishmen whose blood was up and who would unquestionably renew the charge with

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reinforcements of vigorous men. Fore and aft, high and low, we searched for missiles. Musket balls were crammed in bags; bolts and nails were packed in cartridge paper; slave shackles were formed with rope yarns into chain-shot; and, in an hour, we were once more tolerably prepared.

When these labours terminated, I turned my attention to the relaxed crew, portions of whom refused wine, and began to sulk about the decks. As yet only two had been slightly scratched by spent musket balls; but so much discontent began to appear among the passenger-sailors of the wrecked slaver that my own hands could, with difficulty, restrain them from revolt. Violence was clearly not my rôle, but persuasion was a delicate game in such straits among men whom I did not command with the absolute authority of a master. I cast my eye over the taffrail, and seeing that the British boats were still afar, I followed my first impulse, and calling the whole gang to the quarter-deck, tried the effect of palaver and Spanish gold. I spoke of the perils of capture and of the folly of surrendering *a slaver* while there was the slightest *hope* of escape. I painted the unquestionable result of being taken after such resistance as had already been made. I drew an accurate picture of a tall and dangerous instrument on which piratical gentlemen have sometimes been known to terminate their lives; and finally, I attempted to improve my oratory by a couple of golden ounces to each combatant, and the promise of a slave apiece at the end of our voyage.

My suspense was terrible, as there—on the deck of

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a slaver, amid calm, heat, battle, and mutiny, with a volcano of 375 imprisoned devils below me—I awaited a reply, which, favourable or unfavourable, I must hear without emotion. Presently, three or four came forward and accepted my offer. I shrugged my shoulders, and took half a dozen turns up and down the deck. Then, turning to the crowd, I doubled my bounty, and offering a boat to take the recusants on board the enemy, swore that I would stand by the *Esperanza* with my unaided crew in spite of the *dastards* !

The offensive word with which I closed the harangue seemed to touch the right string of the Spanish guitar, and in an instant I saw the dogged heads spring up with a jerk of mortified pride, while the steward and cabin-boy poured in a fresh supply of wine, and a shout of union went up from both divisions. I lost no time in confirming my converts ; and, ramming down my eloquence with a wad of doubloons, ordered every man to his post, for the enemy was again in motion.

But he did not come alone. New actors had appeared on the scene during my engagement with the crew. The sound of the cannonade had been heard, it seems, by a consort of His Britannic Majesty's brig ; and, although the battle was not within her field of vision, she despatched another squadron of boats under the guidance of the reports that boomed through the silent air.

The first division of my old assailants was considerably in advance of the reinforcement ; and, in perfect

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order, approached us in a solid body, with the apparent determination of boarding on the same side. Accordingly, I brought all my weapons and hands to that quarter, and told both gunners and musketeers not to fire without orders. Waiting their discharge, I allowed them to get close ; but the commander of the launch seemed to anticipate my plan by the reservation of his fire till he could draw mine, in order to throw his other boat-loads on board under the smoke of his swivel and small arms. It was odd to witness our mutual forbearance, nor could I help laughing, even in the midst of danger, at the mutual checkmate we were trying to prepare. However, my Britons did not avoid pulling though they omitted firing, so that they were already rather perilously close when I thought it best to give them the contents of my pivot, which I had crammed almost to the muzzle with bolts and bullets. The discharge paralysed the advance, while my carronades flung a quantity of grape into the companion boats. In turn, however, they plied us so deftly with balls from swivels and musketry that five of our most valuable defenders writhed in death on the deck.

The rage of battle at closer quarters than heretofore, and the screams of bleeding comrades beneath their feet, roused to its fullest extent the ardent nature of my Spanish crew. They tore their garments ; stripped to their waists ; called for rum ; and swore they would die rather than yield !

By this time the consort's reinforcement was rapidly approaching ; and, with hurrah after hurrah, the

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five fresh boats came on in double column. As they drew within shot, each cheer was followed with a fatal volley, under which several more of our combatants were prostrated, while a glancing musket ball lacerated my knee with a painful wound. For five minutes we met this onset with cannon, muskets, pistols, and enthusiastic shouts; but in the despairing confusion of the hour, the captain of our long gun rammed home his ball before the powder, so that when the priming burnt, the most reliable of our weapons was silent for ever! At this moment a round shot from the launch dismounted a carronade; our ammunition was wasted; and in this disabled state, the Britons prepared to board our crippled craft. Muskets, bayonets, pistols, swords, and knives for a space kept them at bay, even at short quarters; but the crowded boats tumbled their enraged fighters over our fore-castle like surges from the sea, and, cutlass in hand, the victorious furies swept everything before them. The cry was to "spare no one!" Down went sailor after sailor, struggling with the frenzied passion of despair. Presently an order went forth to split the gratings and release the slaves. I clung to my post and cheered the battle to the last; but when I heard this fatal command, which, if obeyed, might bury assailant and defender in common ruin, I ordered the remnant to throw down their arms, while I struck the flag and warned the rash Englishman to beware.

The senior officer of the boarding party belonged to the division from the cruiser's consort. As he reached the deck, his clement eye fell sadly on the

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scene of blood, and he commanded "quarter" immediately. It was time. The excited boarders from the repulsed boats had mounted our deck brimming with revenge. Everyone that opposed was cut down without mercy; and in another moment, it is likely I would have joined the throng of the departed.

All was over! There was a hushed and panting crowd of victors and vanquished on the bloody deck, when the red ball of the setting sun glared through a crimson haze and filled the motionless sea with liquid fire. For the first time that day I became sensible of personal sufferings. A stifling sensation made me gasp for air as I sat down on the taffrail of my captured schooner, and felt that I was—a prisoner!

My boat, though somewhat riddled with balls, was lowered, and I was commanded to go on board the captor, with my papers and servant, under the escort of a midshipman. The captain stood at the gangway as I approached, and, seeing my bloody knee, ordered me not to climb the ladder, but to be hoisted on deck and sent below for the immediate care of my wound. It was hardly more than a severe laceration of flesh, yet was quite enough to prevent me from bending my knee, though it did not deny locomotion with a stiff leg.

The dressing over—during which I had quite a pleasant chat with the amiable surgeon—I was summoned to the cabin, where numerous questions were put, all of which I answered frankly and *truly*. Thirteen of my crew were slain, and nearly all the rest wounded. My papers were next inspected, and found

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to be Spanish. "How was it, then," exclaimed the commander, "that you fought under the Portuguese flag?"

Here was the question I always expected, and for which I had in vain taxed my wit and ingenuity to supply a reasonable excuse! I had nothing to say for the daring violation of nationality; so I resolved to tell the truth boldly about my dispute with the Dane, and my desire to deceive him early in the day, but I cautiously omitted the adroitness with which I had deprived him of his darkies. I confessed that I forgot the flag when I found I had a different foe from the Dane to contend with, and I flattered myself with the hope that, had I repulsed the first unaided onset, I would have been able to escape with the usual sea-breeze.

The captain looked at me in silence a while, and in a sorrowful voice asked if I was aware that my defence under the Portuguese ensign, no matter what tempted its use, could only be construed as an act of *piracy*!

This took place before the surgeon, whose looks and expressions denoted his cordial sympathy with my situation. "Yes," said Captain —, "it is a pity for a sailor who fights as bravely as you have done, in defence of what he considers his property, to be condemned for a combination of mistakes and forgetfulness." I was then directed to remain where I was till further orders, while my servant came below with an abundant supply of provisions. The captain went on deck, but the doctor remained. Presently, I saw

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the surgeon and the commander's steward busy over a basket of biscuits, meat and bottles, to the handle of which a cord, several yards in length, was carefully knotted. After this was arranged, the doctor called for a lamp, and unrolling a chart, asked whether I knew the position of the vessel. I replied affirmatively, and, at his request, measured the distance, and noted the course to the nearest land, which was Cape Verga, about thirty-seven miles off.

“ Now, if I were in your place, with the prospect of a noose and tight-rope before me, I would make an attempt to know what Cape Verga is made of before twenty-four hours were over my head ! And see, my good fellow, how Providence, accident, or fortune favours you ! First of all, your own boat *happens* to be towing astern beneath these very cabin windows ; secondly, a basket of provisions, water and brandy stands packed on the transom, almost ready to slip into the boat by itself ; next your boy is in the neighbourhood to help you with the skiff ; and, finally, it is pitch dark, perfectly calm, and there isn't a sentry to be seen aft the cabin door. Now, good night, my clever fighter, and let me never have the happiness of seeing your face again ! ”

As he said this, he rose, shaking my hand with the hearty grasp of a sailor, and, as he passed my servant, slipped something into his pocket, which proved to be a couple of sovereigns. Meanwhile, the steward appeared with blankets, which he spread on the locker ; and, blowing out the lamp, went on deck with a “ good night.”

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It was very still, and unusually dark. There was dead silence in the corvette. Presently, I crawled softly to the stern window, and lying flat on my stomach over the transom, peered out into night. There, in reality, was my boat towing astern by a slack line! As I gazed, someone on deck above me drew in the rope with softest motion, until the skiff lay close under the windows. Patiently, slowly, cautiously—fearing the sound of his fall, and dreading almost the rush of my breath in the profound silence—I lowered my boy into the boat. The basket followed. The negro fastened the boat-hook to the cabin window, and on this, lame as I was, I followed the basket. Fortunately, not a splash, a crack, or a footfall disturbed the silence. I looked aloft, and no one was visible on the quarter-deck. A slight jerk brought the boat-rope softly into the water, and I drifted away into the darkness.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE DEATH OF MONGO JOHN

I DRIFTED without a word or motion, and almost without breathing, until the corvette was perfectly obliterated against the hazy horizon. When everything was dark around me, save the guiding stars, I put out the oars and pulled quietly towards the east. At day-dawn I was apparently alone on the ocean.

My appetite had improved so hugely by the night's exercise that my first devotion was to the basket, which I found crammed with bologna sausages, a piece of salt junk, part of a ham, abundance of biscuit, four bottles of water, two of brandy, a pocket compass, a jack-knife, and a large tablecloth or sheet, which the generous doctor had no doubt inserted to serve as a sail.

The humbled slaver and the slave, for the first time in their lives, broke bread from the same basket, and drank from the same bottle! The day before, he was the most servile of menials; to-day he was my equal, and, probably, my superior in certain physical powers, without which I would have perished!

As the sun ascended in the sky, my wound became irritated by exercise, and the inflammation produced a feverish torment in which I groaned as I lay extended in the stern-sheets. By noon a breeze sprang up from

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the south-west, so that the oars and tablecloth supplied a square sail which wafted us about three miles an hour, while my boy rigged an awning with the blankets and boat-hooks. Thus, half reclining, I steered landward till midnight, when I took in the sail and lay-to on the calm ocean till morning. Next day the breeze again favoured us ; and, by sundown, I came up with the coasting canoe of a friendly Mandingo, into which I at once exchanged my quarters, and falling asleep, never stirred till he landed me on the Islands de Loss.

My wound kept me a close and suffering prisoner in a hut on the isles for ten days, during which I despatched a native canoe some thirty-five or forty miles to the Rio Pongo with news of my disaster, and orders for a boat with an equipment of comforts. As my clerk neglected to send a suit of clothes, I was obliged to wear the Mandingo habiliments till I reached my factory.

There was rejoicing that night in Kambia among my people, for it is not necessary that a despised slaver should always be a cruel master. I had many a friend among the villagers, both there and at Bangalang, and when the *barker* came from the Isles de Loss with the news of my capture and misery, the settlement had been keenly astir until it was known that Mongo Téodore was safe and sound among his protectors.

I had a deep, refreshing sleep after a glorious bath. Esther stole over the palisades of Bangalang to hear the story from my own lips ; and gave me an account of the river gossip during my adventure. The Dane was off after a quarrel with Ormond, who gave him but

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100 negroes for his cargo ; and a Spanish brig was waiting my arrival. Next morning, bright and early, I was again in my boat, sweeping along towards the *Feliz* from Matanzas, which was anchored within a bowshot of Bangalang. As I rounded a point in sight of her, the Spanish flag was run up, and as I touched the deck, a dozen cheers and a gun gave token of a gallant reception in consequence of my battle with the British, which had been magnified into a perfect Trafalgar.

The *Feliz* was originally consigned to me from Cuba, but in my absence from the river her commander thought it best not to entrust so important a charge to my clerk, and addressed her to Ormond. When my arrival at the Isles de Loss was announced on the river, his engagement with the Mongo had neither been entirely completed nor had any cargo been delivered. Accordingly, the skipper at once taxed his wit for a contrivance by which he could escape the bargain. In Africa such things are sometimes done with ease on small pretexts, so that when I reached Kambia my 140-ton brig was ready for her original consignee.

I found that remittances in money and merchandise covered the value of 350 slaves, whom I quickly ordered from different traders ; but when I applied to the Mongo to furnish his share, the gentleman indignantly refused under the affront of his recalled assignment. I tried to pacify and persuade him ; yet all my efforts were unavailing. Still, the results of this denial did not affect the Mongo personally and alone. When a

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factor either declines or is unable to procure trade at an African station, the multitude of hangers-on, ragamuffins, servants and villagers around him suffer, at least, for a time. They cannot understand and are always disgusted when "trade is refused." In this case the people of Bangalang seemed peculiarly dissatisfied with their Mongo's obstinacy. They accused him of indolent disregard of their interests. They charged him with culpable neglect. Several free families departed forthwith to Kambia. His brothers, who were always material sufferers in such cases, upbraided him with arrogant conceit. His women, headed by Fatimah—who supplied herself and her companions with abundant presents out of every fresh cargo—rose in open mutiny, and declared they would run off unless he accepted a share of the contract. Fatimah was the orator of the *harem* on this as well as on all other occasions of display or grievance, and, of course, she did not spare poor Ormond. Age and drunkenness had made sad inroads on his constitution and looks during the last half-year. His fretful irritability sometimes amounted almost to madness, when thirty female tongues joined in the chorus of their leader's assault. They boldly charged him, singly and in pairs, with every vice and fault that injured matrimony habitually denounces. They boasted of their infidelities, lauded their lovers, and producing their children, with laughs of derision, bade him note the astounding resemblance!

The poor Mongo was sorely beset by these African witches, and summoned his villagers to subdue the

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revolt ; but many of the townsfolk were pets of the girls, so that no one came forth to obey his bidding.

I visited Ormond at his request on the evening of this rebellion, and found him not only smarting with the morning's insult, but so drunk as to be incapable of business. His revengeful eye and nervous movements denoted a troubled mind. When our hands met, I found the Mongo's cold and clammy. I refused wine under a plea of illness ; and when, with incoherent phrases and distracted gestures, he declared his willingness to retract his refusal and accept a share of the *Feliz's* cargo, I thought it best to adjourn the discussion until the following day. Whilst on the point of embarking, I was joined by the faithless servant, whom I bribed to aid me in my affair with the Dane, and was told that Ormond had drugged the wine in anticipation of my arrival. He bade me be wary of the Mongo, who in his presence had threatened my life. That morning, he said, while the women were upbraiding him, my name had been mentioned by one with peculiar favour, when Ormond burst forth with a torrent of passion, and accusing me as the cause of all his troubles, felled the girl to the earth with his fist.

That night I was roused by my watchman to see a stranger, and found Esther at my gate with three of her companions. Their tale was brief. Soon after dark, Ormond entered the *harem* with loaded pistols, in search of Fatimah and Esther ; but the wretch was so stupefied by liquor and rage that the women had little trouble to elude his grasp and escape from Banga-

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lang. Hardly had I bestowed them for the night, when another alarm brought the watchman once more to my chamber, with the news of Ormond's death. He had shot himself through the heart !

I was in no mood for sleep after this, and the first streak of dawn found me at Bangalang. There lay the Mongo as he fell. No one disturbed his limbs or approached him till I arrived. He never stirred after the death-wound.

Bad as this man was, I could not avoid a sigh for his death. He had been my first friend in Africa, and I had forfeited his regard through no fault of mine. Besides this, there are so few on the coast of Africa in these lonely settlements among the mangrove swamps who have tasted European civilization, and can converse like human beings, that the loss even of the worst is a dire calamity. Ormond and myself had held each other for a long time at a wary distance ; yet business forced us together now and then, and during the truce, we had many a pleasant chat and joyous hour that would henceforth be lost for ever.

Slaves dropped in slowly at Kambia and Bangalang, though I still had half the cargo of the *Feliz* to make up. Time was precious, and there was no foreigner on the river to aid me. In this strait, I resolved on a foray among the natives on my own account ; and equipping a couple of my largest canoes with an ample armament, as well as a substantial store of provisions and merchandise, I departed for the Matacan river, a short stream, unsuitable for vessels of con-

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siderable draft. I was prepared for the purchase of fifty slaves.

I reached my destination without risk or adventure. After a proper delay, the king called a regular "palaver" of his chiefs and headmen, before whom I stated my *dantica* and announced the terms. Very soon several young folks were brought for sale, who, I am sure, never dreamed at rising from last night's sleep that they were destined for Cuban slavery! My merchandise revived the memory of peccadilloes that had been long forgotten and sentences that were forgiven. Jealous husbands, when they tasted my rum, suddenly remembered their wives' infidelities, and sold their better halves for more of the oblivious fluid. In truth I was exalted into a magician, unroofing the village, and baring its crime and wickedness to the eye of *justice*. Law became profitable, and virtue had never reached so high a price! Before night the town was in a turmoil, for every man cudgelled his brain for an excuse to kidnap his neighbour, so as to share my commerce. As the village was too small to supply the entire gang of fifty, I had recourse to the neighbouring settlements, where my *barkers*, or agents, did their work in a masterly manner. Traps were adroitly baited with goods to lead the unwary into temptation, when the unconscious pilferer was caught by his ambushed foe, and an hour served to hurry him to the beach as a slave for ever. In fact, five days were sufficient to stamp my image permanently on the Matacan settlements, and to associate my memory with anything but blessings in at least fifty of their families.

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The *Esperanza's* capture made it absolutely necessary that I should visit Cuba, so that, when the *Feliz* was preparing to depart, I began to put my factory and affairs in such order as would enable me to embark in her and leave me master of myself for a considerable time. I may as well record the fact here that the unlucky *Esperanza* was sent to Sierra Leone, where she was, of course, condemned as a slaver, while the officers and crew were despatched by order of the Admiralty, in irons, to Lisbon, where a tribunal condemned them to the galleys for five years. I understand they were subsequently released by the clemency of Don Pedro de Braganza when he arrived from Brazil.

Everything was ready for our departure. My rice was stored and about to be sent on board, when, about three o'clock in the morning of the 25th of May 1828, the voice of my servant roused me to fly for life! I sprang from the cot to the door, where the flickering of a bright flame, reflected through the thick, misty air, gave token of fire. The roof of my house was in a blaze, and 150 kegs of powder were close at hand beneath a thatch! They could not be removed, and a single spark from the frail and tinder-like materials sent the whole in an instant to the skies.

Sad as was the wreck of my property, the conflagration was fraught with a misfortune that affected my heart far more deeply than the loss of merchandise. Ever since the day of my landing at Ormond's factory, a gentle form had flitted like a fairy among my fortunes, and always as the minister of kindness and hope. Skilled in the ways of her double blood, she was my

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discreet counsellor in many a peril ; and, tender as a well-bred dame of civilized lands, she was ever disposed to promote my happiness by disinterested offices. But, when we came to number the survivors of the ruin, Esther was nowhere to be found.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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OF course, I had very little beside my domestics to leave in charge of anyone at Kambia, and entrusting them to the care of Ali-Ninpha, I went in my launch to Sierra Leone, where I purchased a schooner that had been condemned by the Mixed Commission.

In 1829, vessels were publicly sold, and, with very little trouble, equipped for the coast of Africa. The captures in that region were somewhat like playing a hand—taking the tricks, reshuffling the same cards, and dealing again to take more tricks ! Accordingly, I fitted the schooner to receive a cargo of negroes immediately on quitting port. My crew was made up of men from all nations, captured in prizes ; but I guardedly selected my officers from Spaniards exclusively.

Our voyage was unchecked by any occurrence worthy of recollection, save the loss of the mate in a dark and stormy night, until we approached the Antilles. Here, where everything on a slaver assumes the guise of pleasure and relief, I remarked not only the sullenness of my crew, but a disposition to disobey or neglect. The second mate—shipped in the Rio Nunez, and who replaced my lost officer—was noticed

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occasionally in close intercourse with the watch, while his deportment indicated dissatisfaction, if not mutiny.

A slaver's life on shore, as well as at sea, makes him wary when another would not be even apprehensive. The sight of land is commonly the signal for merriment, for a well-behaved cargo is invariably released from shackles and allowed free intercourse between the sexes during daytime on deck. Water tanks are thrown open for unrestricted use. The "cat" is cast into the sea. Strict discipline is relaxed. The day of danger or revolt is considered over, and the captain enjoys a new and refreshing life till the hour of landing. Sailors, with a proverbial generosity, share their biscuits and clothing with the blacks. The women, who are generally without garments, appear in costume from the wardrobes of tars, petty officers, mates and even captains. Sheets, tablecloths and spare sails are torn to pieces for raiment, while shoes, boots, caps, oil-cloths and monkey-jackets contribute to the gay masquerade of the "emigrants."

It was my sincere hope that the first glimpse of the Antilles would have converted my schooner into a theatre for such a display; but the moodiness of my companions was so manifest that I thought it best to meet rebellion half-way, by breaking the suspected officer and sending him forward, at the same time that I threw his "dog-house" overboard.¹

¹ The forecastle and cabin of a slaver are given up to the living freight, while officers sleep on deck in kennels, technically known as "dog-houses."

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I was now without a reliable officer, and was obliged to call two of the youngest sailors to my assistance in navigating the schooner. I knew the cook and steward—both of whom messed aft—to be trustworthy; so that, with four men at my back and the blacks below, I felt competent to control my vessel. From that moment I suffered no one to approach the quarter-deck nearer than the mainmast.

It was a sweet afternoon when we were floating along the shores of Porto Rico, tracking our course upon the chart. Suddenly, one of my new assistants approached with the sociability common among Spaniards, and, in a quiet tone, asked whether I would take a *cigarillo*. As I never smoked, I rejected the offer with thanks, when the youth immediately dropped the twisted paper on my lap. In an instant, I perceived that the *cigarillo* was, in fact, a *billet* rolled to resemble one. I put it in my mouth, and walked aft until I could throw myself on the deck, with my head over the stern, so as to open the paper unseen. It disclosed the organization of a mutiny under the lead of the broken mate. Our arrival in sight of St. Domingo was to be the signal of its rupture, and for my immediate landing on the island. Six of the crew were implicated with the villain, and the boatswain, who was ill in the slave-hospital, was to share my fate.

My resolution was promptly made. In a few minutes I had cast a hasty glance into the arm-chest, and seen that our weapons were in order. Then, mustering ten of the stoutest and cleverest of my negroes on the quarter-deck, I took the liberty to invent a little

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strategic fib, and told them, in the Soosoo dialect, that there were bad men on board who wanted to run the schooner ashore among rocks and drown the slaves while below. At the same time I gave each a cutlass from the arm-chest, and supplying my trusty whites with a couple of pistols and a knife apiece, without saying a word I seized the ringleader and his colleagues! Irons and double-irons secured the party to the mainmast or deck, while a drum-head court martial, composed of the officers and presided over by myself, arraigned and tried the scoundrels in much less time than regular boards ordinarily spend in such investigations. During the inquiry we ascertained beyond doubt that the death of the mate was due to false play. He had been wilfully murdered as a preliminary to the assault on me, for his colossal stature and powerful muscles would have made him a dangerous adversary in the seizure of the craft.

There was, perhaps, a touch of the old-fashioned Inquisition in the mode of our judicial researches concerning this projected mutiny. Whenever the culprit manifested reluctance or hesitation his memory was stimulated by a "cat." Accordingly, at the end of the trial, the mutineers were already pretty well punished; so that we sentenced the six accomplices to receive an additional flagellation and continue ironed till we reached Cuba. But the fate of the ringleader was not decided so easily. Some were in favour of dropping him overboard, as he had done with the mate; others proposed to set him adrift on a raft, ballasted with

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chains ; but I considered both these punishments too cruel, notwithstanding his treachery, and kept his head beneath the pistol of a sentry till I landed him in shackles on Turtle Island with three days' food and abundance of water.

After all these adventures I was very near losing the schooner before I got to land by one of the perils of the sea, for which I blame myself that I was not better prepared.

It was the afternoon of a fine day. For some time I had noticed on the horizon a low bank of white cloud, which rapidly spread itself over the sky and water, surrounding us with an impenetrable fog. I apprehended danger ; yet, before I could make the schooner snug to meet the squall, a blast—as sudden and loud as a thunderbolt—prostrated her nearly on her beam. The shock was so violent and unforeseen that the unrestrained slaves, who were enjoying the fine weather on deck, rolled to leeward till they floundered in the sea that inundated the scuppers. There was no power in the tiller to “keep her away” before the blast, for the rudder was almost out of water ; but, fortunately, our mainsail burst in shreds from the bolt-ropes, and, relieving us from its pressure, allowed the schooner to right under control of the helm. The West Indian squall abandoned us as rapidly as it assailed, and I was happy to find that our entire loss did not exceed two slave children who had been carelessly suffered to sit on the rail.

My voyage was an *impromptu* speculation, without

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papers, manifest, register, consignees or destination. It became necessary, therefore, that I should exercise a very unusual degree of circumspection, not only in landing my cargo, but in selecting a spot from which I might communicate with proper persons. I had never been in Cuba, save on the occasion already described, nor were my business transactions extended beyond the Regla association, by which I was originally sent to Africa.

The day after the "white squall" I found our schooner drifting with a leading breeze along the southern coast of Cuba, and as the time seemed favourable I thought I might land my cargo in a secluded cove about nine miles east of Sant' Iago. If I had been consigned to the spot I could not have been more fortunate in my reception. Some sixty yards from the landing I found the comfortable home of a *ranchero* who proffered the hospitality usual in such cases, and devoted a spacious barn to the reception of my slaves.

I learned that a cargo had recently been "run" in the neighbourhood of Matanzas, and that its disposal was most successfully managed by a Señor—from Catalonia. It flashed through my mind to trust this man without further inquiry, and I confess that my decision was based exclusively upon his nationality. I am partial to the Catalans.

Accordingly, I presented myself at the counting-room of my future consignee in due time, and "made a clean breast" of the whole transaction, disclosing the destitute state of my vessel. In a very short period,

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his Excellency the Captain-General was made aware of my arrival and furnished a list of "the Africans," by which name the Bosal slaves are commonly known in Cuba. Nor was the captain of the port neglected. A convenient blank page of his register was inscribed with the name of my vessel as having sailed from the port six months before, and this was backed by a register and muster-roll in order to secure my unquestionable entry into a harbour.

Before nightfall everything was in order with Spanish despatch when stimulated either by doubloons or the smell of African blood ; and twenty-four hours afterwards, I was again at the landing with a suit of clothes and blanket for each of my "domestics." The schooner was immediately put in charge of a clever pilot, who undertook the formal duty and *name* of her commander, in order to elude the vigilance of all the minor officials whose conscience had not been lulled by the golden anodyne.

In the meanwhile every attention had been given to the slaves by my hospitable *ranchero*. The "head-money" once paid, nobody—civil, military, foreign, or Spanish—dared interfere with them. Forty-eight hours of rest, ablution, exercise and feeding served to recruit the gang and steady their gait when the march towards Sant' Iago began.

The brokers made very little delay in finding purchasers at retail for the entire venture. The returns were, of course, in cash ; and so well did the enterprise turn out, that I forgot the rebellion of our mutineers, and allowed them to share my bounty with the rest

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of the crew. In fact, so pleased was I with the result on inspecting the balance sheet, that I resolved to divert myself with Cuban country life for a month at least.

But while I was making ready for this delightful repose, a slight breeze passed over the calmness of my mirror. I had given, perhaps imprudently, but certainly with generous motives, a double pay to my men in recompense of their perilous service on the Rio Nunez. With the usual recklessness of their craft, they lounged about Havana, boasting of their success, while a Frenchman of the party—who had been swindled of his wages at cards—appealed to his Consul for relief. By dint of cross questions the official extracted the tale of our voyage from his countryman, and took advantage of the fellow's destitution to make him a witness against a certain Don Téodore Canot, who was alleged to be a native of France! Besides this, the punishment of my mate was exaggerated by the recreant Frenchman into a most unjustifiable as well as cruel act.

Of course the story was promptly detailed to the Captain-General, who issued an order for my arrest. But I was too wary and flush to be caught so easily. No person bearing my name could be found in the island; and as the schooner had entered port with Spanish papers, Spanish crew, and was regularly sold, it became manifest to the stupefied Consul that the sailor's "yarn" was an entire fabrication. That night a convenient press-gang, in want of recruits for the royal marine, seized the braggadocio crew, and as there

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were no witnesses to corroborate the Consul's complaint it was forthwith dismissed.

Things are managed very cleverly in Havana—when you know how !

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PLAGUE STALKS THE DECK

BEFORE I went to sea again, I took a long holiday with full pockets among my old friends at Regla and Havana. I thought it possible that a residence in Cuba for a season, aloof from traders and their transactions, might wean me from Africa ; but three months had hardly elapsed before I found myself sailing out of the harbour of St. Jago de Cuba to take, in Jamaica, a cargo of merchandise for the coast, and then to return and refit for slaves in Cuba.

My voyage began with a gale, which for three days swept us along on a tolerably good course, but on the night of the third, after snapping my mainmast on a lee shore, I was forced to beach the schooner in order to save our lives and cargo from destruction. Fortunately, we effected our landing with complete success, and at dawn I found my gallant little craft a total wreck on an uninhabited key. A large tent or pavilion was quickly built from our sails, sweeps and remaining spars, beneath which everything valuable and undamaged was stored before nightfall. Parties were sent forth to reconnoitre, while our remaining foremast was unshipped and planted on the highest part of the sandbank with a signal of distress. The

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scouts returned without consolation. Nothing had been seen except a large dog, whose neck was encircled with a collar; but as he could not be made to approach by kindness I forbade his execution. Neither smoke nor tobacco freed us of the cloudy swarms of mosquitoes that filled the air after sunset, and so violent was the irritation of their innumerable stings that a delicate boy among the crew became utterly insane, and was not restored till long after his return to Cuba.

Vessel after vessel passed the reef, but none took notice of our signal. At last, on the tenth day of our imprisonment, a couple of small schooners fanned their way in a nonchalant manner towards our island, and knowing that we were quite at their mercy, refused our rescue unless we assented to the most extravagant terms of compensation. After a good deal of chaffering, it was agreed that the salvors should land us and our effects at Nassau, New Providence, where the average should be determined by the lawful tribunal. The voyage was soon accomplished, and our liberators obtained a judicial award of seventy per cent. for their extraordinary trouble.

The wreck and the wreckers made so formidable an inroad upon my finances that I was very happy when I reached Cuba once more, to accept the berth of sailing-master in a slave brig, which was fitting out at St. Thomas's under an experienced Frenchman.

My new craft, the *San Pablo*, was a trim Brazil-built brig of rather more than 300 tons. Her hold contained sixteen twenty-four carronades, while her magazine was stocked with abundance of ammunition, and her

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kelson lined, fore and aft, with round shot and grape. Captain —— received me with much affability, and seemed charmed when I told him that I conversed fluently not only in French but in English.

I had hardly arrived and begun to take the dimensions of my new equipage, when a report ran through the harbour that a Danish cruiser was about to touch at the island. Of course, everything was instantly afloat, and in a bustle to be off. Stores and provisions were tumbled in pell-mell, tanks were filled with water during the night ; and, before dawn, fifty-five ragamuffins of all castes, colours, and countries were shipped as crew. By " six bells," with a coasting flag at our peak, we were two miles at sea with our main-topsail aback, receiving six kegs of specie and several chests of clothing from a lugger.

When we were fairly on " blue water," I discovered that our voyage, though a slaver's, was not of an ordinary character. On the second day, the mariners were provided with two sets of uniform, to be worn on Sundays or when called to quarters. Gold-laced caps, blue coats with anchor buttons, single epaulettes and side-arms were distributed to the officers, while a brief address from the captain on the quarter-deck apprised all hands that, if the enterprise resulted well, *a bounty* of \$100 would be paid to each adventurer.

That night our skipper took me into council and developed his plan, which was to load in a port in the Mozambique channel. To effect his purpose with more security he had provided the brig with an armament sufficient to repel a man-of-war of equal size (a

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fancy I never gave way to); and on all occasions, except in presence of a French cruiser, he intended to hoist the Bourbon lilies, wear the Bourbon uniform, and conduct the vessel in every way as if she belonged to the royal navy. Nor were the officers to be less favoured than the sailors in regard to double salary, certificates of which were handed to me for myself and my two subordinates. A memorandum book was then supplied, containing minute instructions for each day of the ensuing week, and I was specially charged, as second in command, to be cautiously punctual in all my duties and severely just towards my inferiors.

I took some pride in acquitting myself creditably in this new military phase of a slaver's life. Very few days sufficed to put the rigging and sails in perfect condition, to mount my sixteen guns, to drill the men with small arms as well as artillery, and, by paint and sea-craft, to disguise the *Saint Paul* as a very respectable cruiser.

In twenty-seven days we touched at the Cape de Verds for provisions, and shaped our way southward without speaking a single vessel of the multitude we met until off the Cape of Good Hope we encountered a stranger who was evidently bent upon being sociable. Nevertheless, our inhospitable spirit forced us to hold our course unswervingly, till from peak and main we saw the white flag and pennant of France unfurled to the wind.

Our drum immediately beat to quarters, while the flag chest was brought on deck. Presently, the French

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transport demanded our private signal ; which out of our ample supply was promptly answered, and the royal ensign of Portugal set at our peak.

As we approached the Frenchman everything was made ready for all hazards—our guns were double-shotted, our matches lighted, our small arms distributed. The moment we came within hail, our captain—who claimed precedence of the lieutenant of a transport—spoke the Frenchman ; and, for a while, carried on quite an amiable chat in Portuguese. At last the stranger requested leave to send his boat aboard with letters for the Isle of France ; to which we consented with the greatest pleasure, though our captain thought it fair to inform him that we dared not prudently invite his officers on deck, inasmuch as there were “several cases of smallpox among our crew, contracted, in all likelihood, at Angola.”

The discharge of an unexpected broadside could not have struck our visitor with more dismay or horror. The words were hardly spoken when her decks were in a bustle, her yards braced sharply to the wind, and her prow boiling through the sea, without so much as a “*bon voyage !*”

Ten days after this ruse we anchored at Quillimane, among a lot of Portuguese and Brazilian slavers, whose sails were either clewed up or unbent as if for a long delay. We fired a salute of twenty guns and ran up the French flag. The salvo was quickly answered, while our captain, in the full uniform of a naval commander, paid his respects to the Governor. Meantime

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orders were given me to remain carefully in charge of the ship ; to avoid all intercourse with others ; to go through the complete routine and show of a man-of-war ; to strike the yards, haul down signal, and fire a gun at sunset ; but especially to get under way and meet the captain at a small beach off the port the instant I saw a certain flag flying from the fort.

I have rarely seen matters conducted more skilfully. Next morning early, the Governor's boat was sent for the specie ; the fourth day disclosed the signal that called us to the beach ; the fifth, sixth, and seventh supplied us with 800 negroes ; and, on the ninth, we were under way for our destination.

The success of this enterprise was more remarkable because fourteen vessels, waiting cargoes, were at anchor when we arrived, some of which had been detained in port over fifteen months. To such a pitch had their impatience risen, that the masters made common cause against all new-comers, and agreed that each vessel should take its turn for supply according to date of arrival. But the astuteness of my veteran circumvented all these plans. His anchorage and non-intercourse *as a French man-of-war* lulled every suspicion or intrigue against him, and he adroitly took advantage of his kegs of specie to win the heart of the authorities and factors who supplied the slaves.

Our captain returned in high spirits to his vessel ; but we hardly reached the open sea before he was prostrated with an ague which refused to yield to ordinary remedies, and finally ripened into fever that deprived him of reason. Other dangers thickened around us.

PLAGUE STALKS THE DECK

We had been several days off the Cape of Good Hope, buffeting a series of adverse gales, when word was brought me after a night of weary watching that several slaves were ill of smallpox. Of all calamities that occur in the voyage of a slaver, this is the most dreaded and unmanageable. The news appalled me. Impetuous with anxiety I rushed to the captain, and regardless of fever or insanity, disclosed the dreadful fact. He stared at me for a minute as if in doubt ; then opening his bureau and pointing to a long coil of combustible material, said that it communicated through the decks with the powder magazine, and ordered me to—" blow up the brig ! "

I lost no time in securing both the dangerous implement and its perilous owner, while I called the officers into the cabin for inquiry and consultation as to our desperate state.

The gale had lasted nine days without intermission, and during all this time with so much violence that it was impossible to take off the gratings, release the slaves, purify the decks, or rig the windsails. When the first lull occurred, a thorough inspection of the 800 was made, and a death announced. As life had departed during the tempest, a careful inspection of the body was made, and it was this that first disclosed the pestilence in our midst. The corpse was silently thrown into the sea, and the malady kept secret from crew and negroes.

When breakfast was over on that fatal morning I determined to visit the slave deck myself, and ordering an abundant supply of lanterns, descended to the

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cavern, which still reeked horribly with human vapour, even after ventilation. Here, I found nine of the negroes infected by the disease. We took counsel as to the use of laudanum in ridding ourselves speedily of the sufferers—a remedy that is seldom and secretly used in desperate cases to preserve the living from contagion. But it was quickly resolved that it had already gone too far, when nine were prostrated, to save the rest by depriving them of life. Accordingly, these wretched beings were at once sent to the fore-castle as a hospital, and given in charge to the vaccinated or inoculated as nurses. The hold was then ventilated and limed ; yet, before the gale abated, our sick-list was increased to thirty. The hospital could hold no more. Twelve of the sailors took the infection, and fifteen corpses had been cast in the sea !

All reserve was now at an end. Body after body fed the deep, and still the gale held on. At last, when the wind and waves had lulled so much as to allow the grating to be removed from our hatches, our consternation knew no bounds when we found that nearly all the slaves were dead or dying with the distemper. Twelve of the stoutest survivors were ordered to drag out the dead from among the ill, and though they were constantly drenched with rum to brutalize them, still we were forced to aid the gang by reckless volunteers from our crew, who, arming their hands with tarred mittens, flung the foetid masses of putrefaction into the sea !

At length death was satisfied, but not until the 800 beings we had shipped in high health had dwindled to

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497 skeletons ! A few days after, our cargo was safely ensconced in the *hacienda* nine miles east of St. Jago de Cuba, while the *San Pablo* was sent adrift and burned to the water's edge.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

REVOLT

My finances were at low-water mark when I strolled one morning into Matanzas, and, after some delay, again obtained command of a slaver through the influence of my old and trusty friends. The new craft was a dashing schooner of 120 tons, fresh from the United States, and intended for Whydah on the Gold Coast. It was calculated that we might bring home at least 450 slaves, for whose purchase I was supplied plentifully with rum, powder, English muskets and rich cottons from Manchester.

In due time we sailed for the Cape de Verds, the usual "port of despatch" on such excursions; and at Praya exchanged our flag for the Portuguese before we put up our helm for the coast. A British cruiser chased us fruitlessly for two days off Sierra Leone, and enabled me to test the sailing qualities of the *Estrella*.

I consigned the *Estrella* to one of the most remarkable traders that ever expanded the African traffic by his genius.

Señor Da Souza—better known on the coast and interior as Cha-cha—was said to be a native mulatto of Rio Janeiro. I do not know how he reached Africa,

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but it is probable the fugitive made part of some slaver's crew, and fled from his vessel, as he had previously abandoned the military service of Brazil. For a while his days are said to have been full of misery and trouble, but the Brazilian slave-trade happened to receive an extraordinary impetus about that period ; and, gradually, the adventurous refugee managed to profit by his skill in dealing with the natives or by acting as broker among his countrymen.

He loved the customs of the people. He spoke their language with the fluency of a native. He won the favour of chief after chief. He strove to be considered a perfect African among Africans ; though, among whites, he still affected the graceful address and manners of his country. In this way, little by little, Cha-cha advanced in the regard of all he dealt with, and secured the commissions of Brazil and Cuba, while he was regarded and protected as a prime favourite by the warlike king of Dahomey. Indeed, it is alleged that this noted sovereign formed a sort of devilish compact with the Portuguese factor, and supplied him with everything he desired during life in consideration of inheriting his wealth when dead.

But Cha-cha was resolved, while the power of enjoyment was still vouchsafed him, that all the pleasure of human life, accessible to money, should not be wanting in Whydah. He built a large and commodious dwelling on a beautiful spot, near the site of an abandoned Portuguese fort. He filled his establishment with every luxury and comfort that could please the fancy or gratify the body. Wines, food, delicacies and

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raiment were brought from Paris, London and Havana. The finest women along the coast were lured to his settlement. Billiard tables and gambling halls spread their wiles or afforded distraction for detained navigators. When he sallied forth, his walk was always accompanied by considerable ceremony. An officer preceded him to clear the path, a fool or buffoon hopped beside him, a band of native musicians sounded their discordant instruments, and a couple of singers screamed, at the top of their voices, the most fulsome adulation of the mulatto.

Numbers of vessels were, of course, required to feed this African nabob with doubloons and merchandise. Sometimes commanders from Cuba or Brazil would be kept months in his perilous nest, while their craft cruised along the coast in expectation of human cargoes. At such seasons, no expedient was left untried for the entertainment and pillage of wealthy or trusted idlers. If Cha-cha's board and wines made them drunkards it was no fault of his. If *rouge et noir*, or *monte*, won their doubloons and freight at his saloon, he regretted but dared not interfere with the amusements of his guests. If the sirens of his *harem* betrayed a cargo for their favour over cards, a convenient fire destroyed the frail warehouse after its merchandise was secretly removed!

Cha-cha was exceedingly desirous that I should accept his hospitality. As soon as I read my invoice to him—for he could not do it himself—he became almost irresistible in his *empressement*. Yet I declined the invitation with firm politeness, and took up my quarters

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on shore at the residence of a native *manfuca* or broker. I was warned of the allurements before I left Matanzas, and resolved to keep myself and property so clear of his clutches that our contract would either be fulfilled or remain within my control. Thus, by avoiding his table, his "hells," and the society of his dissipated sons, I maintained my business relations with the slaver, and secured his personal respect so effectually that, at the end of two months, 480 prime negroes were in the bowels of *La Estrella*.

I have always regretted that I left Whydah on my homeward voyage without interpreters to aid in the necessary intercourse with our slaves. There was no one on board who understood a word of their dialect. Many complaints from the negroes that would have been dismissed or satisfactorily adjusted, had we comprehended their vivacious tongues and grievances, were passed over in silence or hushed with the lash. Indeed, the whip alone was *La Estrella's* discipline; and in the end it taught me the saddest of lessons.

From the beginning there was manifest discontent among the slaves. I endeavoured at first to please and accommodate them by a gracious manner; but manner alone is not appreciated by untamed Africans. A few days after our departure, a slave leaped overboard in a fit of passion, and another choked himself during the night. These two suicides, in twenty-four hours, caused much uneasiness among the officers, and induced me to make every preparation for a revolt.

We had been at sea about three weeks without further disturbance, and there was so much merriment

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among the gangs that were allowed to come on deck that my apprehensions of danger began gradually to wear away. Suddenly, however, one fair afternoon, a squall broke forth from an almost cloudless sky ; and as the boatswain's whistle piped all hands to take in sail, a simultaneous rush was made by the confined slaves at all the after-gratings, and, amid the confusion of the rising gale, they knocked down the guard and poured up on deck. The sentry at the *fore-hatch* seized the cook's axe, and, sweeping round him like a scythe, kept at bay the band that sought to emerge from below him. Meantime, the women in the cabin were not idle. Seconding the males, they rose in a body, and the helmsman was forced to stab several with his knife before he could drive them below again.

About forty stalwart devils, yelling and grinning with all the savage ferocity of their wilderness, were now on deck, armed with staves of broken water-casks, or billets of wood, found in the hold. The suddenness of this outbreak did not appal me, for, in the dangerous life of Africa, a trader must never be off his guard. The blow that prostrated the first white man was the earliest symptom I detected of the revolt ; but, in an instant, I had the arm-chest open on the quarter-deck, and the mate and steward beside me to protect it. Matters, however, did not stand so well forward of the mainmast. Four of the hands were disabled by clubs, while the rest defended themselves and the wounded as well as they could with hand-spikes, or whatever could suddenly be clutched. I had always charged the cook, on such an emergency, to distribute

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from his coppers a liberal supply of scalding water upon the belligerents ; and, at the first sign of revolt, he endeavoured to baptize the heathen with his steaming slush. But dinner had been over for some time, so that the lukewarm liquid only irritated the savages, one of whom laid the " doctor " bleeding in the scuppers.

All this occurred in perhaps less time than I have taken to tell it ; yet, rapid as was the transaction, I saw that, between the squall with its flying sails and the revolt with its raving blacks, we would soon be in a desperate plight, unless I gave the order to shoot. Accordingly, I told my comrades to aim low and fire at once.

Our carabines had been purposely loaded with buck-shot, to suit such an occasion, so that the first two discharges brought several of the rebels to their knees. Still, the unharmed neither fled nor ceased brandishing their weapons. Two more discharges drove them forward amongst the mass of my crew, who had retreated towards the bowsprit ; but, being reinforced by the boatswain and carpenter, we took command of the hatches so effectually that a dozen additional discharges among the ebony legs drove the refractory to their quarters below.

It was time ; for sails, ropes, tacks, sheets, and blocks were flapping, dashing, and rolling about the masts and decks, threatening us with imminent danger from the squall. In a short time, everything was made snug, the vessel put on our course, and attention paid to the mutineers, who had begun to fight among themselves in the hold !

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I perceived at once, by the infuriate sounds proceeding from below, that it would not answer to venture in their midst by descending through the hatches. Accordingly, we discharged the women from their quarters under a guard on deck, and sent several resolute and well-armed hands to remove a couple of boards from the bulkhead that separated the cabin from the hold. When this was accomplished, a party entered, on hands and knees, through the aperture, and began to press the mutineers forward towards the bulkhead of the forecastle. Still, the rebels were hot for fight to the last, and boldly defended themselves with their staves against our weapons.

By this time, our lamed cook had rekindled his fires, and the water was once more boiling. The hatches were kept open but guarded, and all who did not fight were suffered to come singly on deck, where they were tied. As only about sixty remained below engaged in conflict, or defying my party of sappers and miners, I ordered a number of auger-holes to be bored in the deck, as the scoundrels were forced forward near the forecastle, when a few buckets of boiling water, rained on them through the fresh apertures, brought the majority to submission. Still, however, two of the most savage held out against water as well as fire. I strove as long as possible to save their lives, but their resistance was so prolonged and perilous that we were obliged to disarm them for ever by a couple of pistol shots.

So ended the sad revolt of *La Estrella*, in which two of my men were seriously wounded, while twenty-eight

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balls and buck-shot were extracted, with sailors' skill, from the lower limbs of the slaves. One woman and three men perished of blows received in the conflict ; but none were deliberately slain except the two men, who resisted unto death.

I could never account for this mutiny, especially as the blacks from Ayudah and its neighbourhood are distinguished for their humble manners and docility. There can be no doubt that the entire gang was not united or concerned in the original outbreak, else we should have had harder work in subduing them, amid the risk and turmoil of a West Indian squall.

There was very little comfort on board *La Estrella*, after the suppression of this revolt. We lived with a pent-up volcano beneath us, and, day and night, we were ceaselessly vigilant. Terror reigned supreme, and the lash was its sceptre.

At last we made land at Porto Rico, and were swiftly passing its shores when the inspector called my attention to the appearance of one of our attendant slaves, whom we had drilled as a sort of cabin-boy. He was a gentle, intelligent child, and had won the hearts of all the officers.

His pulse was high, quick and hard ; his face and eyes red and swollen ; while, on his neck, I detected half a dozen rosy pimples. He was sent immediately to the fore-castle, free from contact with anyone else, and left there, cut off from the crew, till I could guard against pestilence. It was smallpox !

The boy passed a wretched night of fever and pain, developing the malady with all its horrors. It is very

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likely that I slept as badly as the sufferer, for my mind was busy with his doom. Daylight found me on deck in consultation with our veteran boatswain, whose experience in the trade authorized the highest respect for his opinion. Hardened as he was, the old man's eye's filled, his lips trembled, and his voice was husky, as he whispered the verdict in my ear. I guessed it before he said a word; yet I hoped he would have counselled against the dread alternative. As we went aft to the quarter-deck, all eyes were bent upon us, for everyone conjectured the malady and feared the result, yet none dared ask a question.

I ordered a general inspection of the slaves, yet, when a *favourable* report was made, I did not rest content, and descended to examine each one personally. It was true; the child was *alone* infected.

For half an hour, I trod the deck to and fro restlessly, and caused the crew to subject themselves to inspection. But my sailors were as healthy as the slaves. I was disappointed again. A single case—a single sign of peril in any quarter—would have spared the poison!

That evening, in the stillness of night, a trembling hand stole forward to the afflicted boy with a potion that knows no waking. In a few hours, all was over. Life and pestilence were crushed together; for a necessary murder had been committed, and the poor victim was beneath the blue water!

Incessant gales and head-winds, unusual in this season and latitude, beset us so obstinately that it became doubtful whether our food and water would last

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till we reached Matanzas. To add to our risks and misfortunes, a British corvette espied our craft, and gave chase off Cape Maize. All day long she dogged us slowly, but, at night, I tacked off shore, with the expectation of eluding my pursuer. Day-dawn, however, revealed her again on our track, though this time we had unfortunately fallen to leeward. Accordingly, I put *La Estrella* directly before the wind, and ran till dark with a fresh breeze, when I again dodged the cruiser, and made for the Cuban coast. But the Briton seemed to scent my track, for sunrise revealed him once more in chase.

The wind lulled that night to a light breeze, yet the red clouds and haze in the east betokened a gale from that quarter before meridian. A longer pursuit must have given considerable advantage to the enemy, so that my best reliance, I calculated, was in making the small harbour near St. Jago, now about twenty miles distant, where I had already landed two cargoes. The corvette was then full ten miles astern.

My resolution to save the cargo and lose the vessel was promptly made; orders were issued to strike from the slaves the irons they had constantly worn since the mutiny; the boats were made ready; and every man prepared his bag for a rapid launch.

On dashed the cruiser, foaming at the bows, under the impetus of the rising gale, which struck him some time before it reached us. We were not more than seven miles apart when the first increased pressure on our sails was felt, and everything was set and braced to give it the earliest welcome. Then came the race

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for the beach, three miles ahead. Three miles against seven were too much odds ; and, with a slight move of the helm, and " letting all fly," as we neared the line of surf, to break her headway, *La Estrella* was fairly and safely beached.

The sudden shock snapped her mainmast like a pipe-stem, but, as no one was injured, in a twinkling the boats were overboard, crammed with women and children, while a stage was rigged from the bows to the strand, so that the males, the crew and the luggage were soon in charge of my old *haciendado*.

Prompt as we were, we were not sufficiently so for the cruiser. Half our cargo was ashore when she backed her topsails off the mouth of the little bay, lowered her boats, filled them with boarders, and steered towards our craft. The delay of half a mile's row gave us time to cling still longer to the wreck, so that, when the boats and corvette began to fire, we wished them joy of their bargain over the remnant of our least valuable negroes. The rescued blacks are now, in all likelihood, citizens of Jamaica ; but, under the influence of the gale, *La Estrella* made a very picturesque bonfire that night.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

I LOSE MY LIBERTY

DISASTROUS as was this enterprise, both on the sea and in the counting-house, a couple of months found me on board a splendid clipper, of the name of *Aguila de Oro*, or *Golden Eagle*, and spinning out of the Cape de Verds on a race with a famous West Indian privateer. I entered the Rio Salum, an independent river between the French island of Goree and the British possessions on the Gambia. No slaver had haunted this stream for many a year, so that I was obliged to steer my mosquito pilot-boat full forty miles in the interior, through mangroves and forests, till I struck the trading ground of "the king."

After three days' parley I had just concluded my bargain with his breechless majesty, when a *barker* greeted me with the cheerless message that the *Aguila* was surrounded by man-of-war boats! It was true; but the mate refused an inspection of his craft *on neutral ground*, and the naval folks departed. Nevertheless, a week after, when I had just completed my traffic, I was seized by a gang of the treacherous king's own people; delivered to the second lieutenant of a French corvette, and my lovely little *Eagle* caged as her lawful prey!

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I have never been able to understand the legal merits of this seizure, so far as the act of the French officers was concerned, as no treaty existed between France and Spain for the suppression of slavery. There was a very loud explosion of wrath among my men when they found themselves prisoners; nor was their fury diminished when our whole band was forced into a dungeon at Goree, which, for size, gloom, and closeness, vied with the celebrated black hole of Calcutta.

For three days were we kept in this filthy receptacle, in a burning climate, without communication with friends or inhabitants, and on scanty fare, till it suited the local authorities to transfer us to San Luis, on the Senegal, in charge of a file of marines, on board our own vessel!

San Luis is the residence of the governor and the seat of the colonial tribunal, and here again we were incarcerated in a military *cachôt*, till several merchants who knew me on the Rio Pongo interfered, and had us removed to better quarters in the military hospital. I soon learned that there was trouble among the natives. A war had broken out among some of the Moorish tribes, some two hundred miles up the Senegal, and my *Aguila* was a godsend to the Frenchmen, who needed just such a light craft to guard their returning flotilla with merchandise from Gatam. Accordingly, the craft was armed, manned, and despatched on this expedition without waiting the decree of a court as to the lawfulness of her seizure!

Meanwhile, the sisters of charity—those angels of devoted mercy, who do not shun even the heats and

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pestilence of Africa—made our prison life as comfortable as possible ; and had we not seen gratings at the windows, or met a sentinel when we attempted to go out, we might have considered ourselves valetudinarians instead of convicts.

A month oozed slowly away in these headquarters of suffering, before a military sergeant apprised us that he had been elevated to the dignity of the long-robe, and appointed our counsel in the approaching trial. No other lawyer was to be had in the colony for love or money, and, perhaps, our military man might have acquitted himself as well as the best, had not his superiors often imposed silence on him during the argument.

By this time the nimble *Aguila* had made two most serviceable trips under the French officers, and proved so valuable to the Gallic government that no one dreamed of recovering her. The colonial authorities had two alternatives under the circumstances—either to pay for or condemn her—and as they knew I would not be willing to take the craft again after the destruction of my voyage, the formality of a trial was determined to legalize the condemnation. It was necessary, however, even in Africa, to show that I had violated the territory of the French colony by trading in slaves, and that the *Aguila* had been caught in the act.

After various outrages and absurdities, a Mahometan *slave* was allowed to be sworn as a witness against me. The foregone conclusion was formally announced. The *Aguila de Oro* became King Louis Philippe's property,

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while my men were condemned to two, my officers to five, and Don Téodore himself to ten years' confinement in France.

My sentence aroused the indignation of many respectable merchants at San Luis. It was found to be entirely useless to attack the sympathy of the tribunal, either to procure a rehearing of the case or mitigation of the judgment. Presently, a generous friend introduced a saw suitable to iron bars, and hinted that on the night when my window gratings were severed, a boat might be found waiting to transport me to the opposite shore of the river, whence an independent chief would convey me on camels to Gambia.

The government got wind of my projected flight, and we were sent on board a station ship lying in the stream. Still my friends did not abandon me. I was apprised that a party—bound on a shooting frolic down the river on the first *foggy* morning—would visit the commander of the hulk, and while the vessel was surrounded by a crowd of boats, I might slip overboard amid the confusion. Under cover of the dense mist that shrouds the surface of an African river at dawn, I could easily elude a ball sent after me, and when I reached the shore a canoe would be ready to convey me to a friendly ship.

The scheme was peculiarly feasible, as the captain allowed me unlimited liberty about his vessel. Accordingly, I called my officers apart, and proposed their participation in my escape. The project was fully discussed by the fellows; but the risk of swimming, even in a fog, under the muzzles of muskets, was a

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danger they feared encountering. I perceived at once that it would be best to free myself entirely from the encumbrance of such chicken-hearted lubbers, so I bade them take their own course, but divided three thousand francs in government bills among the gang, and presented my gold pocket chronometer to the mate.

Next morning an impervious fog laid low on the bosom of the Senegal, but through its heavy folds I detected the measured beat of approaching oars, till five boats, with a sudden rush, dashed alongside us with their noisy and clamorous crews.

Just at this very moment a friendly hand passed through my arm, and a gentle tone invited me to a quarter-deck promenade. It was our captain ! When we were perfectly alone, he frankly declared that I had been betrayed to his sergeant of marines ! I was taken perfectly aback, as I imagined myself almost free, yet the loss of liberty did not paralyse me as much as the perfidy of my men.

My friends were entreated not to risk further attempts, which might subject me to severe restraints ; and my base comrades were forthwith summoned to the cabin, where, in presence of the merchants, they were forced to disgorge the three thousand francs and the chronometer.

For fifteen days more the angry captive bit his thumbs on the taffrail of the guard-ship, and gazed either at vacancy or the waters of the Senegal. At the end of that period, a gunboat transferred our convict party to the frigate *Flora*, whose first lieutenant, to whom I had been privately recommended, separated

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me immediately from my men. The scoundrels were kept close prisoners during the whole voyage to France, while my lot was made as light as possible, under the severe sentence awarded at San Luis.

The passage was short. At Brest they landed me privately, while my men and officers were paraded through the streets at mid-day, under a file of *gens d'armes*.

My men were distributed among the cells with common malefactors; but as the appearance of the officers indicated the possession of cash, the turnkey offered "*la salle de distinction*" for our use, provided we were satisfied with a monthly rent of ten francs. On reflection, I concluded to accept the offer, hard as it was, and, accordingly, we took possession of a large apartment, with two grated windows looking upon a narrow and sombre courtyard.

We had hardly entered the room when a buxom woman followed with the deepest curtseys, and declared herself "most happy to have it in her power to supply us with beds and bedding, at ten *sous* per day." She apprised us, moreover, that the daily prison fare consisted of two pounds and a half of black bread, with water à *discretion*, but if we wished, she might introduce the *vivandière* of the regiment stationed in the chateau, who would supply our meals twice a day from the mess of the petty officers. I did not hesitate to strike a bargain, and at once proceeded to arrange the diet of our future prison life. We were to have two meals a day of three dishes, for each of which we were to pay fifteen *sous* in advance.

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As I before said, the *regular ration* consisted exclusively of black bread and water. Nine pounds of straw were allowed weekly to each prisoner for his *lair*. Neither blankets nor covering were furnished, even in the winter, and as the cells are built without stoves or chimneys, the wretched convicts were compelled to huddle together in heaps to keep from perishing. Besides this, the government denied all supplies of fresh raiment, so that the wretches who were destitute of friends or means were alive and hideous with vermin in a few days after incarceration. No amusement was allowed in the fresh air save twice a week, when the prisoners were turned out on the flat roof of the tower, where they might sun themselves for an hour or two under the muzzle of a guard.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE NOTORIOUS DON PEDRO

SOON I heard from a relative in Paris that my petition had been presented to Louis Philippe, whose reception of it encouraged a hope for my pardon. At length my pardon and freedom came ; but this was the sole reparation I received at the hands of Louis Philippe, for the unjust seizure and appropriation of my vessel in the neutral waters of Africa. Next day a vessel, by order of the king, was to bear me, a willing exile, from France for ever.

Our concern is now with Gallinas. Nearly one hundred miles north-west of Monrovia, a short and sluggish river, bearing this well-known name, oozes lazily into the Atlantic ; and, carrying down in the rainy season a rich alluvion from the interior, sinks the deposit where the tide meets the Atlantic, and forms an interminable mesh of spongy islands. To one who approaches from sea, they loom up from its surface, covered with reeds and mangroves, like an immense field of *fungi*. A spot like this possessed, of course, no peculiar advantages for agriculture or commerce ; but its dangerous bar, and its extreme desolation, fitted it for the haunt of the outlaw and slaver.

Such, in all likelihood, were the reasons that induced

THE NOTORIOUS DON PEDRO

Don Pedro Blanco, a well-educated mariner from Malaga, to select Gallinas as the field of his operations. Don Pedro visited this place originally in command of a slaver ; but failing to complete his cargo, sent his vessel back with one hundred negroes, whose value was barely sufficient to pay the mates and crew. Blanco, however, remained on the coast with a portion of the cargo, and, on its basis, began a trade with the natives and slaver-captains, till, four years after, he remitted his owners the product of their merchandise, and began to flourish on his own account. The honest return of an investment long given over as lost was perhaps the most active stimulant of his success, and for many years he monopolized the traffic of the Vey country, reaping enormous profits from his enterprise.

I heard many tales on the coast of Blanco's cruelty, but I doubt them quite as much as I do the stories of his pride and arrogance. I have heard it said that he shot a sailor for daring to ask him for permission to light his cigar at the *puro* of the Don. Upon another occasion, it is said that he was travelling the beach some distance from Gallinas, near the island of Sherboro, where he was unknown, when he approached a native hut for rest and refreshment. The owner was squatted at the door, and on being requested by Don Pedro to hand him fire to light his cigar, deliberately refused. In an instant Blanco drew back, seized a carabine from one of his attendants, and slew the negro on the spot. It is true that the narrator apologized for Don Pedro by saying that to deny a Castilian fire for his tobacco was the gravest insult that can be offered him ; yet,

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from my knowledge of the person in question, I cannot believe that he carried etiquette to so frightful a pitch, even among a class whose lives are considered of trifling value *except in market*. On several occasions during out subsequent intimacy, I knew him to chastise with rods, even to the brink of death, servants who ventured to infringe the sacred limits of his *seraglio*. But, on the other hand, his generosity was proverbially ostentatious, not only among the natives, whom it was his interest to suborn, but to the whites who were in his employ, or needed his kindly succour. I have already alluded to his mental culture, which was decidedly *soigné* for a Spaniard of his original grade and time. His memory was remarkable. I remember one night while several of his *employés* were striving unsuccessfully to repeat the Lord's Prayer in Latin, upon which they had made a bet, that Don Pedro, taking up the wager, went through the petition without faltering. The slaver insisted on receiving the slave which was the stake, and immediately bestowed him in charity on a captain who had fallen into the clutches of a British cruiser !

Such is a rude sketch of the great man-merchant of Africa, the Rothschild of slavery, whose bills on England, France, or the United States were as good as gold in Sierra Leone and Monrovia !

The day after our arrival within the realm of this great spider—who, throned in the centre of his mesh, was able to catch almost every fly that flew athwart the web—I landed at one of the minor factories, and sold a thousand quarter kegs of powder to Don José Ramon. But, next day, when I proceeded in my capacity of

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interpreter to the establishment of Don Pedro, I found his Castilian plumage ruffled, and, though we were received with formal politeness, he declined to purchase, because we had failed to address *him* in advance of any other factor on the river.

The character manifested by Blanco on this occasion, and the admirable management of his factory, induced me to seize a favourable moment to offer my services to the mighty trader. They were promptly accepted, and in a short time I was employed as principal in one of Don Pedro's branches.

The Vey natives on this river and its neighbourhood were not numerous before the establishment of Spanish factories, but since 1813, the epoch of the arrival of several Cuban vessels with rich merchandise, the neighbouring tribes flocked to the swampy flats, and greedily acquired the habit of hunting their own kind and abandoned all other occupations but war and kidnapping. The thousands and tens of thousands annually sent abroad from Gallinas, soon began to exhaust the neighbourhood; but the appetite for plunder was neither satiated nor stopped by distance, when it became necessary for the neighbouring natives to extend their forays and hunts far into the interior. In a few years war raged wherever the influence of this river extended. The slave factories supplied the huntsmen with powder, weapons, and enticing merchandise, so that they fearlessly advanced against ignorant multitudes, who, too silly to comprehend the benefit of alliance, fought the aggressors singly, and, of course, became their prey.

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Still, however, the demand increased. Don Pedro had struck a vein richer than the Gold Coast. New factories were established, as branches, north and south of the parent den. Mana-Rock, Sherboro, Sugarei, Cape Mount, Little Cape Mount, and even Digbay, at the door of Monrovia, all had depots and *barracoons* of slaves belonging to the whites of Gallinas. But this prosperity did not endure. A civil war, which was designed for revengeful murder rather than slavery, was kindled by a Paris who had deprived his uncle of an Ethiopian Helen.

The geographical configuration of the country, as I have described it, isolated almost every family of note on various branches of the river, so that nearly all were enabled to fortify themselves within their islands or marshy flats. The principal parties in this family feud were the Amarars and Shiakars. Amarar was a native of Shebar, and, through several generations, had Mandingo blood in his veins; Shiakar, born on the river, considered himself a noble of the land, and being aggressor in this conflict, disputed his prize with the wildest ferocity of a savage. The whites, who are ever on the watch for native quarrels, wisely refrained from partisanship with either of the combatants, but continued to purchase the prisoners brought to their factories by both parties. Many a vessel bore across the Atlantic two inveterate enemies shackled to the same bolt, while others met on the same deck a long-lost child or brother who had been captured in the civil war.

I might fill a volume with the narrative of this horrid

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conflict before it was terminated by the death of Amarar. For several months this savage had been blockaded in his stockade by Shiakar's warriors. At length a sortie became indispensable to obtain provisions, but the enemy were too numerous to justify the risk. Upon this, Amarar called his soothsayer, and required him to name a propitious moment for the sally. The oracle retired to his den, and, after suitable incantations, declared that the effort should be made as soon as the hands of Amarar were stained in the blood of his own son. It is said that the prophet intended the victim to be a youthful son of Amarar, who had joined his mother's family, and was then distant; but the impatient and superstitious savage, seeing a child of his own, two years old, at hand, when the oracle announced the decree, snatched the infant from its mother's arms, threw it into a rice mortar, and, with a pestle, mashed it to death!

The sacrifice over, a sortie was ordered. The infuriate and starving savages, roused by the oracle and inflamed by the bloody scene, rushed forth tumultuously. Amarar, armed with the pestle, still warm and reeking with his infant's blood, was foremost in the onset. The besiegers gave way and fled; the town was re-provisioned, the fortifications of the enemy demolished, and the soothsayer rewarded with a slave for his barbarous prediction!

At another time, Amarar was on the point of attacking a strongly fortified town, when doubts were intimated of success. Again the wizard was consulted, when the mysterious oracle declared that the chief

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“could not conquer till he returned once more to his mother’s womb.” That night Amarar committed the blackest of incests ; but his party was repulsed, and the false prophet stoned to death.

These are faint incidents of a savage drama which lasted several years, until Amarar, in his native town, became the prisoner of Shiakar’s soldiery. Mana, his captor, caused him to be decapitated ; and while the blood still streamed from the severed neck, the monster’s head was thrust into the fresh-torn bowels of his mother !

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

I AM CHRISTENED "POWDER"

THE first expedition upon which Don Pedro Blanco despatched me revealed a new phase of Africa to my astonished eyes. I was sent in a small Portuguese schooner to Liberia for tobacco ; and here the trader who had never contemplated the negro on the shores of his parent country except as a slave or a catcher of slaves, first beheld the rudiments of an infant state, which in time may become the wedge of Ethiopian civilization. The comfortable government house, neat public warerooms, large emigration home, designed for the accommodation of the houseless ; clean and spacious streets, with brick stores and dwellings ; the twin churches with their bells and comfortable surroundings ; the genial welcome from well-dressed negroes ; the regular wharves and trim craft on the stocks, and last of all, a visit from a coloured collector with a *printed* bill for twelve dollars " anchor dues," all convinced me that there was, in truth, something more in these ebony frames than an article of commerce and labour. I paid the bill eagerly, considering that a document printed in Africa by negroes, under North American influence, would be a curiosity among the infidels of Gallinas !

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My engagements with Blanco had been made on the basis of familiarity with the slave-trade in all its branches, but my independent spirit and impatient temper forbade, from the first, the acceptance of any subordinate position at Gallinas. Accordingly, as soon as I returned from the new republic, Don Pedro desired me to prepare for the establishment of a branch factory, under my exclusive control, at New Sestros, an independent principality in the hands of a Bassa chief.

I lost no time in setting forth on this career of comparative independence, and landed with the trading cargo provided for me at the Kroomen's town, where I thought it best to dwell till a factory could be built.

An African, as well as a white man, must be drilled into the traffic. It is one of those things that do not "come by nature": yet its mysteries are acquired, like the mysteries of commerce generally, with much more facility by some tribes than others. I found this signally illustrated by the prince and people of New Sestros, and very soon detected their great inferiority to the Soosoos, Mandingoes, and Veys. For a time their conduct was so silly, arrogant, and trifling, that I closed my chests and broke off communication. Besides this, the slaves they offered were of an inferior character and held at exorbitant prices. Still, as I was commanded to purchase rapidly, I managed to collect about seventy-five negroes of medium grades, all of whom I designed sending to Gallinas in the schooner that was tugging at her anchor off the beach.

At the proper time I sent for the black prince to assist me in shipping the slaves, and to receive the head money

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which was his export duty on my cargo. The answer to my message was an illustration of the character and insolence of the ragamuffins with whom I had to deal. "The prince," returned my messenger, "don't like your sauciness, and won't come till you beg his pardon by a present!"

It is very true that after my visit to their republic, I began to entertain a greater degree of respect than was my wont for black men, yet my contempt for the original, unmodified race was so great that when the prince's son, a boy of sixteen, delivered this reply on behalf of his father, I did not hesitate to cram it down his throat by a back-handed blow, which sent the sprig of royalty bleeding and howling home.

It may be easily imagined what was the condition of the native town when the boy got back to the "palace." In less than ten minutes another messenger arrived with an order for my departure from the country "before next day at noon"—an order which, the envoy declared, would be *enforced* by the outraged townsfolk unless I willingly complied.

Now, I had been too long in Africa to tremble before a negro prince, and though I really hated the region, I determined to disobey in order to teach the upstart a lesson. Accordingly, I made preparations for resistance, and, when my hired servants and *barracooniers* fled in terror at the prince's command, I landed some whites from my schooner to aid in protecting our slaves.

My house had been constructed of the frail bamboos and matting which are exclusively used in the buildings of the Bassa country. I had added a cane verandah

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or piazza to mine, and protected it from the pilfering natives by a high palisade that effectually excluded all intruders. Within the area of this enclosure was slung my hammock, and here I ate my meals, read, wrote, and received "princes" as well as the mob.

At nightfall, I loaded twenty-five muskets, and placed them inside my sofa, which was a long trade-chest. I covered the deal-table with a blanket, beneath whose pendant folds I concealed a keg of powder with the head out. Hard by, under a broad-brimmed *sombrero*, lay a pair of double-barrelled pistols. With these dispositions I swung myself asleep in the hammock, and leaving the three whites to take turns in watching, never stirred till an hour after sunrise, when I was roused by the war-drum and bells from the village, announcing the prince's approach.

In a few minutes my small enclosure of palisades was filled with armed and gibbering savages, while his majesty, in the red coat of a British drummer, but without any trousers, strutted pompously into my presence. I assumed an air of humble civility, and leading the potentate to one end of the guarded piazza, where he was completely isolated from his people, I stationed myself between the table and the *sombrero*. Some of the prince's relations attempted to follow him within my enclosure, but, according to established rules, they dared not advance beyond an assigned limit.

When the formalities were over, a dead silence prevailed for some minutes. I looked calmly and firmly into the prince's eyes, and waited for him to speak. Still he was silent. At last, getting tired of dumb-

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show, I asked the negro if he had "come to assist me in shipping my slaves; the sun is getting rather high," said I, "and we had better begin without delay!"

"Did you get my message?" was his reply, "and why haven't you gone?"

"Of course I received your message," returned I; "but as I came to New Sestros at my leisure, I intend to go away when it suits me. Besides this, Prince Freeman, I have no fear that you will do me the least harm, especially as I shall be before you in any capers of that sort."

Then, by a sudden jerk, I threw off the blanket that hid the exposed powder, and, with pistols in hand, one aimed at the keg and the other at the king, I dared him to give an order for my expulsion.

It is inconceivable how *moving* this process proved, not only to Freeman, but to the crowd comprising his bodyguard. The poor blusterer, entirely cut off from his companions, was in a laughable panic. His tawny skin became ashen, as he bounded from his seat and rushed to the extremity of the piazza; and in a few minutes he was as penitent and humble as a dog.

I was, of course, not unforgiving, when Freeman advanced to the rail, and warning the blacks that he had "changed his mind," ordered the odorous crowd out of my enclosure. Before the negroes departed, however, I made him swear eternal fidelity and friendship in their presence, after which I sealed the compact with a couple of demijohns of New England rum.

Before sunset, seventy-five slaves were shipped for me in his canoes, and ever after, Prince Freeman

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was a model monument of the virtues of gunpowder physic !

The summary treatment of this potentate had the best effect on the adjacent inland as well as the immediate coast. The free blacks not only treated my person and people with more respect, but began to supply me with better grades of negroes ; so that when Don Pedro found my success increasing, he not only resolved to establish a permanent factory, but enlarged my commission to ten slaves for every hundred I procured. Thereupon, I at once commenced the erection of buildings suitable for my personal comfort and the security of slaves. I selected a pretty site closer to the beach. A commodious two-story house, surrounded by double verandahs, was topped by a lookout which commanded an ocean-view of vast extent, and flanked by houses for all the necessities of a first-rate factory. There were stores, a private kitchen, a rice house, houses for domestic servants, a public workshop, a depot for water, a slave-kitchen, huts for single men, and sheds under which gangs were allowed to recreate from time to time during daylight. The whole was surrounded by a tall hedge-fence, thickly planted, and entered by a double gate, on either side of which were long and separate *barracoons* for males and females. The entrance of each slave-pen was commanded by a cannon, while in the centre of the square I left a vacant space, whereon I have often seen seven hundred slaves, guarded by half a dozen musketeers, singing, drumming and dancing, after their frugal meals.

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It is a pleasant fancy of the natives, who find our surnames rather difficult of pronounciation, while they know very little of the Christian calendar, to baptize a newcomer with some title, for which any chattel or merchandise that strikes their fancy is apt to stand godfather. My exploit with the prince christened me “ Powder ” on the spot ; but when they saw my magnificent establishment, beheld the wealth of my warehouse, and heard the name of “ store,” I was forthwith whitewashed into “ *Storee*.”

In a few months New Sestros was alive. The isolated beach, which before my arrival was dotted with half a dozen Kroo hovels, now counted a couple of flourishing towns, whose inhabitants were supplied with merchandise and labour in my factory. The neighbouring princes and chiefs, confident of selling their captives, struggled to the sea-shore through the trackless forest ; and in a very brief period, Prince Freeman, who “ no likee war ” over my powder-keg, sent expedition after expedition against adjacent tribes, to redress imaginary grievances, or to settle old bills with his great-grandfather’s debtors.

During the favourable season, I had been deprived of three vessels by British cruisers, and, for as many months, had not shipped a single slave, 500 of whom were now crowded in my *barracoons*, and demanded our utmost vigilance for safe keeping. In the gang, I found a family consisting of a man, his wife, three children and a sister, all sold under an express obligation of exile and slavery among Christians. The

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luckless father was captured by my blackguard friend Prince Freeman in person, and the family had been secured when the parent's village was subsequently stormed. Barraah was an outlaw and an especial offender in the eyes of an African, though his faults were hardly greater than the deeds that bestowed honour and knighthood in the days of our ancestral feudalism. Barraah was the discarded son of a chief in the interior, and had presumed to blockade the public path towards the beach, and collect duties from transient passengers or caravans. This interfered with Freeman and his revenues ; but, in addition to the pecuniary damage, the alleged robber ventured on several occasions to defeat and plunder the prince's vagabonds, so that, in time, he became rich and strong enough to build a town and fortify it with a regular stockade, *directly on the highway*. All these offences were so heinous in the sight of my beach prince that no foot was suffered to cool till Barraah was captured. Once within his power, Freeman would not have hesitated to kill his implacable enemy as soon as delivered at New Sestros ; but the interference of friends, and, perhaps, the laudable conviction that a live negro was worth more than a dead one, induced his highness to sell him under pledge of Cuban banishment.

Barraah made several ineffectual attempts to break my *barracoon* and elude the watchfulness of my guards, so that they were frequently obliged to restrict his liberty, deprive him of comforts, or add to his shackles. In fact, he was one of the most formidable savages I ever encountered, even among the thousands who

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passed in terrible procession before me in Africa. One day he set fire to the bamboo-matting with which a portion of the *barracoon* was sheltered from the sun, for which he was severely lashed ; but next day, when allowed, under pretence of ague, to crawl with his heavy irons to the kitchen fire, he suddenly dashed a brand into the thatch, and, seizing another, sprang towards the powder-house, which his heavy shackles did not allow him to reach before he was felled to the earth.

Freeman visited me soon afterwards, and, in spite of profit and liquor, insisted on taking the brutal savage back ; but in the meantime, the Bassa chief, to whom my prince was subordinate, heard of Barrah's attempt on my magazine, and demanded the felon to expiate his crime, according to the law of his country, at the stake. No argument could appease the infuriate judges, who declared that a cruel death would alone satisfy the people whose lives had been endangered by the robber. Nevertheless, I declined delivering the victim for such a fate, so that, in the end, we compromised the sentence by shooting Barrah in the presence of all the slaves and townsfolk—the most unconcerned spectators among whom were his wife and sister !

I was quite afloat at New Sestros on the tide of success when the cruiser that for a while had annoyed me with a blockade became short of food, and was obliged to bear away for Sierra Leone. My well-paid spy—a Krooman who had been employed by the cruiser—soon apprised me of the brig's departure and

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its cause ; so that in an hour the beach was in a bustle, despatching a swift canoe to Gallinas with a message to Don Pedro : " The coast is clear ; send me a vessel."

Forty-eight hours were hardly over when the twin masts of a clipper brig were seen scraping along the edge of the horizon, with the well-known signal for "embarkation." I was prepared to welcome my guest, for Kroos, Fishes, Bushmen, Bassas and all had been alert since daybreak, ready to hail the craft and receive their fees. There had been a general embargo on all sea-going folks for a day before, so that there was not a fish to be had for love or money in the settlement. Minute precautions like these are absolutely necessary for all prudent slavers, for it was likely that the cruiser kept a spy in her pay among *my* people as well as I did among *hers* !

The moon was full, and the African surf at such periods is terrific. My watchful enemy had been several days absent, and I expected her return from hour to hour. The shipment, though extremely perilous, was, therefore, indispensable ; and four short hours of daylight alone remained to complete it. I saw the risk, yet, taking counsel with the head Kroo and Fishmen, I persuaded them, under the provocation of triple reward, to attempt the enterprise with the smallest skiffs and stoutest rowers, while a band of youths stood by to plunge in whenever the breakers capsized a canoe.

We began with females, as the most difficult cargo for embarkation, and seventy reached the brig safely. Then followed the stronger sex ; but by this time a sea

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breeze set in from the south-west like a young gale, and driving the rollers with greater rapidity, upset almost every alternate cockleshell set adrift with its living freight. It was fortunate that our sharks happened that evening to be on a frolic elsewhere, so that negro after negro was rescued from the brine, though the sun was rapidly sinking when but two-thirds of my slaves were safely shipped.

I ran up and down the beach, in a fever of anxiety, shouting, encouraging, coaxing, appealing, and *refreshing* the boatmen and swimmers ; but as the gangs came ashore, they sank exhausted on the beach, refusing to stir. Rum, which hitherto roused them like electricity, was now powerless. Powder they did not want, nor muskets, nor ordinary trade stuff, for they never engaged in kidnapping or slave wars.

As night approached the wind increased. *There* was the brig with topsails aback, signalling impatiently ; but I was on the eve of giving up in despair when a bright flash brought to recollection a quantity of Venetian beads of mock coral which I had stowed in my chest. They happened, at that moment, to be the rage among the girls of our beach, and were irresistible keys to the heart of every *belle*. Now the offer of a coral bunch for each head embarked, brought all the dames and damsels of Sestros to my aid, by coaxing or commanding their respective gentlemen ; and, before the sun's rim dipped below the horizon, a few strands of false coral, or the kiss of a negro wench, sent one hundred more of the Africans into Spanish slavery.

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But this effort exhausted my people. Three slaves found a tomb in the sharks, or in the deep, while the brig took flight in the darkness without the remaining one hundred and twenty I had designed for her hold.

Next morning the cruiser loomed once more in the offing.



CHAPTER NINETEEN

CARGOES PAID IN BLOOD

ABOUT this time, a Spanish vessel from the Canaries, laden with fruit, the greater part of which had been sold at Goree, Sierra Leone, Gallinas, and Cape Mesurado, dropped anchor opposite my little roadstead with a letter from Blanco. The Spaniard had been chartered by the Don to bring from the Grain Coast a cargo of rice, which he was to collect under my instructions.

My *barracoons* happened to be just then pretty bare, and as the season did not require my presence in the factory for trade, it struck me that I could not pass a few weeks more agreeably than by purchasing the cargo myself.

In the prosecution of this little adventure, I called along the coast with cash at several English factories, where I obtained rice; and on my return anchored off the river to purchase sea-stores. Here I found Governor Findley, chief of the colony,¹ labouring under a protracted illness which refused yielding to

¹ This Finley, a white American of the Mississippi Colonization Society, was in charge of the small Liberian settlement at Sino; his name has been misspelt through a confusion with Findlay, the contemporary Governor of Sierra Leone.—[EDITOR.]

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medicine, but might probably be relieved by a voyage, even of a few days, in the pure air. Slaver as I was, I contrived never to omit a civility to gentlemen on the coast of Africa ; and I confess I was proud of the honourable service, when Governor Findley accepted the *Brilliant* for a trip along the coast. He proposed visiting Monrovia and Bassa ; and after landing at some port in that quarter to await the captain's return from windward.

I fanned along the coast as slowly as I could, to give the Governor every possible chance to recruit his enervated frame by change of air ; but, as I looked in at New Sestros in passing, I found three trading vessels with cargoes of merchandise to my consignment, so that I was obliged to abandon my trip and return to business. I left the Governor, however, in excellent hands, and directed the captain to land him at Bassa, await his pleasure three days, and finally, to bear him to Monrovia, the last place he desired visiting.

The Rio San Juan, or Grand Bassa, is only fourteen miles north-west of New Sestros, yet it was near night-fall when the *Brilliant* approached the river landing. The Spaniard advised his guest not to disembark till next morning, but the Governor was so restless and anxious about delay that he declined our captain's counsel, and went ashore at a native town with the design of crossing on foot the two miles of beach to the American settlement.

As Findley went over the *Brilliant's* side into the Krooman's canoe, the jingle of silver was heard in his pocket, and warning was given him either to hide

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his money or leave it on board. But the Governor smiled at the caution, and disregarding it entirely, threw himself into the African skiff.

Night fell. The curtain of darkness dropped over the coast and sea. Twice the sun rose and set without word from the Governor. At last, my delayed mariner became impatient if not anxious, and despatched one of my servants who spoke English in search of Mr. Findley at the American Settlement. No one had seen or heard of him. But, hurrying homeward from his fruitless errand, my boy followed the winding beach, and half-way to the vessel found a human body, its head gashed with a deep wound, floating and beating against the rocks. He could not recognize the features of the battered face; but the well-remembered garments left no doubt in the servant's mind that the corpse was Findley's.

The frightful story was received with dismay on the *Brilliant*, whose captain, unfamiliar with the coast and its people, hesitated to land, with the risk of treachery or ambush, even to give a grave to his wretched passenger. In this dilemma he thought best to run the fourteen miles to New Sestros, where he might counsel with me before venturing ashore.

Whatever personal anxiety may have flashed athwart my mind when I heard of the death of a colonial governor while enjoying the hospitality of myself—a slaver—the thought vanished as quickly as it was conceived. In an instant I was busy with detection and revenge.

It happened that the three captains had already

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landed the cargoes to my consignment, so that their empty vessels were lying at anchor in the roads, and the officers ready to aid me in any enterprise I deemed feasible. My colleagues were from three nations : one was a Spaniard, another a Portuguese, and the last American.

Next morning I was early aboard the Spaniard, and sending for the Portuguese skipper, we assembled the crew. I dwelt earnestly and heartily on the insult the Castilian flag had received by the murder of an important personage while protected by its folds. I demonstrated the necessity there was for prompt chastisement of the brutal crime, and concluded by informing the crowd that their captains had resolved to aid me in vindicating our banner. When I ventured to hope that the men would not hesitate to back their officers, a general shout went up that they were ready to land and punish the negroes.

As soon as the enterprise was known on board the American, her captain insisted on volunteering in the expedition ; and by noon our little squadron was under way, with fifty muskets in the cabins.

The plan I roughly proposed was, under the menacing appearance of this force, to demand the murderer or murderers of Governor Findley, and to execute them, either on his grave or the spot where his corpse was found. Failing in this, I intended to land portions of the crews, and destroy the towns nearest the theatre of the tragedy.

While I had been planning and executing these manœuvres, the colonial settlers had heard of the

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catastrophe, and found poor Findley's mangled corpse. At the moment of our arrival off the river's mouth, an anxious council of resolute men was discussing the best means of chastising the savages. When my servant inquired for the governor he had spoken of him as a passenger in the Spanish craft, so that the parade of our vessels alongshore and in front of the native towns betokened, they thought, co-operation on the part of the Mongo of New Sestros.

Accordingly, we had not been long at anchor before Governor Johnson despatched a Krooman to know whether I was aboard a friendly squadron; and, if so, he trusted I would land at once, and unite with his forces in the intended punishment.

In the interval, however, the cunning savages, who soon found out that we had no cannons, flocked to the beach, and as they were beyond musket shot, insulted us by gestures, and defied a battle.

Of course no movement was made against the blacks that night, but it was agreed in council at the American settlement that the expedition, supported by a field-piece, should advance next day by the beach, where I could reinforce it with my seamen a short distance from the towns.

Punctual to the moment, the colonial flag, with drum and fife, appeared on the sea-shore at nine in the morning, followed by some forty armed men, dragging their cannon. Five boats filled with sailors instantly left our vessels to support the attack, and, by this time, the colonists had reached a massive rock which blocked the beach like a bulwark, and was

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already possessed by the natives. My position, in flank, made my force most valuable in dislodging the foe, and of course I hastened my oars to open the passage. As I was altogether ignorant of the numbers that might be hidden and lurking in the dense jungle that was not more than fifty feet from the water's edge, I kept my men afloat within musket shot, and with a few rounds of ball cartridge purged the rock of its defenders, though but a single savage was mortally wounded.

Upon this the colonists advanced to the vacant bulwark, and were joined by our reinforcement. Wheeler, who commanded the Americans, proposed that we should march in a compact body to the towns, and give battle to the blacks if they held out in their dwellings. But his plan was not executed, for, before we reached the negro huts, we were assailed from the bushes and jungle. Their object was to keep hidden within the dense underwood; to shoot and run; while we, entirely exposed on the open shore, were obliged to remain altogether on the defensive by dodging the balls, or to fire at the smoke of an unseen enemy. Occasionally, large numbers of the savages would appear at a distance beyond musket range, and tossing their guns and lances, or brandishing their cutlasses, would present their naked limbs to our gaze, slap their shining flanks, and disappear! But this diverting exercise was not repeated very often. A sturdy colonist, named Bear, who carried a long and heavy old-fashioned rifle, took rest on my shoulder, and, when the next party of annoying jokers displayed

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their personal charms, laid its leader in the dust by a Yankee ball. Our cannon and blunderbusses were next brought into play to scour the jungle and expel the marksmen, who, confident in the security of their impervious screen, began to fire among us with more precision than was desirable. A Krooman of our party was killed, and a colonist severely wounded. Small sections of our two commands advanced at a run, and fired a volley into the bushes, while the main body of the expedition hastened along the beach towards the towns. By repeating this process several times we were enabled, without further loss, to reach the first settlement.

Here, of course, we expected to find the savages arrayed in force to defend their roof-trees, but when we entered the place cautiously, and crept to the first dwelling in the outskirt, it was empty. So with the second, third, fourth—until we overran the whole settlement and found it utterly deserted—its furniture, stock, implements, and even *doors* carried off by the deliberate fugitives. The guardian *fetiché* was alone left to protect their abandoned hovels. But the superstitious charm did not save them. The brand was lighted; and, in an hour, five of these bamboo confederacies were given to the flames.

We discovered while approaching the towns that our assault had made so serious an inroad on the slim supply of ammunition, that it was deemed advisable to send a messenger to the colony for a reinforcement. By neglect or mishap, the powder and ball never reached us; so that when the towns were

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destroyed, no one dreamed of penetrating the forest to unearth its vermin with the remnant of cartridges in our chest and boxes. I never was able to discover the cause of this unpardonable neglect, or the officer who permitted it to occur in such an exigency ; but it was forthwith deemed advisable to waste no time in retreating after our partial revenge.

Till now, the Africans had kept strictly on the defensive, but when they saw our faces turned towards the beach, or colony, every bush and thicket became alive again with aggressive foes. For a while, the cannon kept them at bay, but its grape soon gave out ; and while I was in the act of superintending a fair division of the remaining ball cartridges, I was shot in the right foot with an iron slug. At the moment of injury I scarcely felt the wound, and did not halt, but as I trudged along in the sand and salt water my wound grew painful, and the loss of blood which tracked my steps soon obliged me to seek refuge in the canoe of my Kroomen.

The sight of my bleeding body borne to the skiff was hailed with shouts and gestures of joy and contempt by the savages. As I crossed the last breaker and dropped into smooth water my eyes reverted to the beach, where I heard the exultant war-drum and war-bells, while the colonists were beheld in full flight, leaving their artillery in the hands of our foe ! It was subsequently reported that the commander of the party had been panic-struck by the perilous aspect of affairs, and ordered the precipitate and fatal retreat, which that very night emboldened the negroes to

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revenge the loss of their towns by the conflagration of Bassa-Cove.

Next day, my own men, and the volunteers from our Spanish, Portuguese and American vessels, were sent on board, eight of them bearing marks of the fray, which fortunately proved neither fatal nor dangerous. The shameful flight of my comrades not only gave heart to the blacks, but spread its cowardly panic among the resident colonists. The settlement, they told me, was in danger of attack, and although my wound and the disaster both contributed to excite me against the fugitives, I did not quit the *San Juan* without reinforcing Governor Johnson with twenty muskets and some kegs of powder.

I have dwelt rather tediously perhaps on this sad occurrence—but I have a reason. Governor Findley's memory was, at this time, much vilified on the coast, because that functionary had accepted the boon of a passage in the *Brilliant*, which was falsely declared to be "a Spanish slaver." There were some among the over-righteous who even went so far as to proclaim his death "a judgment for venturing on the deck of such a vessel."

I took the earliest opportunity to apprise Don Pedro Blanco of the mishap that had befallen his factor's limb, so that I might receive the prompt aid of an additional clerk to attend the more active part of our business. Don Pedro's answer was extremely characteristic. The letter opened with a draft for five hundred dollars, which he authorized me to bestow on the widow and orphans of Governor Findley, if he

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left a family. The slaver of Gallinas then, in gentle terms, intimated a decided censure for my immature attempt to chastise the negroes. He did not disapprove my *motives*; but considered any revengeful assault on the natives unwise, unless every precaution had previously been taken to ensure complete success. Don Pedro hoped that, henceforth, I would take things more coolly, so as not to hazard either my life or his property: and concluded the epistle by superscribing it:

“ To
“ *Señor* POWDER,
“ *at his Magazine,*
“ NEW SESTROS.”

The slug that struck the upper part of my foot, near the ankle joint, tore my flesh and tendons with a painfully dangerous wound, which, for nine months, kept me a prisoner on crutches. During the long and wearying confinement which almost broke my restless heart, I had little to do save to superintend the general fortunes of our factory. Now and then an incident occurred to relieve the monotony of my sick chair, and make me forget, for a moment, the pangs of my crippled limb. One of these events flashes across my memory as I write, in the shape of a letter which was mysteriously delivered at my landing by a coaster, and came from poor Joseph, my ancient partner on the Rio Pongo. The ungrateful scamp, though forgetful of my own appeals from Brest, did not hesitate to claim my aid. Captured in a Spanish slaver, and

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compromised beyond salvation, Joseph had been taken into Sierra Leone, where he was now under sentence of transportation. The letter hinted that a liberal sum might purchase his escape ; and when I thought of old times I forgave his neglect. A draft on Don Pedro was readily cashed at Sierra Leone, notwithstanding the paymaster was a slaver ; so that, in less than a month, Joseph and the bribed turnkey were on their way to the Rio Pongo.

By this time the sub-factory of New Sestros was somewhat renowned in Cuba and Porto Rico. Our dealings with commanders, the character of my cargoes, and the rapidity with which I despatched a customer and his craft were proverbial in the islands. Indeed, the third year of my lodgment had not rolled over before the slave-demand was so great, that in spite of rum, cottons, muskets, powder, kidnapping and Prince Freeman's wars, the country could not supply our demand.

To aid New Sestros, I had established several *nurseries*, or junior factories, at Little Bassa and Digby ; points a few miles from the limits of Liberia. These " chapels of ease " furnished my parent *barracons* with young and small negroes, mostly kidnapped, I suppose, in the neighbourhood of the beach.

When I was perfectly cured of the injury I sustained in my first philanthropic fight, I loaded my spacious cutter with a choice collection of trade-goods, and set sail one fine morning for this outpost at Digby. I designed also, if advisable, to erect another receiving *barracoon* under the lee of Cape Mount.

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But my call at Digby was unsatisfactory. The pens were vacant, and our merchandise squandered *on credit*; so I refused landing a single yard of merchandise, and hoisted sail for the next village.

There, in five days, nineteen darkies were exchanged for London muskets, Yankee grog, and Manchester cottons.

My cutter, though but twenty-seven feet long, was large enough to stow my gang, considering that the voyage was short, and the slaves but boys and girls; so I turned my prow homeward with contented spirit and promising skies. Yet, before night, all was changed. Wind and sea rose together. The sun sank in a long streak of blood. After a while it rained in terrible squalls till, finally, darkness caught me in a perfect gale. So high was the surf and so shelterless the coast that it became utterly impossible to make a lee of any headland where we might ride out the storm in safety. Our best hope was in the cutter's ability to keep the open sea without swamping; and, accordingly, under the merest patch of sail, I coasted the perilous breakers, guided by their roar, till day dawned. But when the sun lifted over the horizon—peering for an instant through a rent in the storm-cloud, and then disappearing behind the grey vapour—I saw at once that the coast offered no chance of landing our blacks at some friendly town. Everywhere the bellowing shore was lashed by surf, impracticable even for the boats and skill of Kroomen. On I dashed, therefore, driving and almost burying the cutter, with loosened reef, till we came opposite

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Monrovia ; where, safe in the absence of cruisers, I crept at dark under the lee of the cape, veiling my cargo with our useless sails.

Sunset "killed the wind," enabling us to be off again at dawn ; yet hardly were we clear of the cape, when both gale and current freshened from the old quarter, holding us completely in check. Nevertheless, I kept at sea till evening, and then sneaked back to my protecting anchorage.

By this time my people and slaves were wellnigh famished, for their sole food had been a scant allowance of raw *cassava*. Anxiety, toil, rain, and drenching spray broke their spirits. The blacks, from the hot interior, and now for the first time off their mother earth, suffered not only from the inclement weather, but groaned with the terrible pangs of sea-sickness. I resolved, therefore, if possible, to refresh the drooping gang by a hot meal ; and, beneath the shelter of a tarpaulin, contrived to cook a mess of rice. Warm food comforted us astonishingly ; but, alas ! the next day was a picture of the past ! A slave—cramped and smothered amid the crowd that soaked so long in the salt water at our boat's bottom—died during the darkness. Next morning, the same low, leaden, coffin-lid sky hung like a pall over sea and shore. Wind in terrific blasts, and rain in deluging squalls, howled and beat on us. Come what might, I resolved not to stir ! All day I kept my people beneath the sails, with orders to move their limbs as much as possible, in order to overcome the benumbing effect of moisture and packed confinement. The incessant

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drenching from sea and sky to which they had been so long subjected, chilled their slackened circulation to such a degree that death from torpor seemed rapidly supervening. Motion, motion, motion was my constant command ; but I hoarded my alcohol for the last resource.

I saw that no time was to be lost, and that nothing but a bold encounter of hazard would save either lives or property. Before dark my mind was made up as to the enterprise. I would land in the neighbourhood of the colony, and cross its territory during the shadow of night !

I threw my stiffened crew on the beach, and revived them with copious draughts of brandy ; midnight did not strike before my cargo, under the escort of Kroo guides, was boldly marched through the colonial town, and safe on its way to New Sestros. Fortunately for my dare-devil adventure, the tropical rain poured down in ceaseless torrents, compelling the unsuspecting colonists to keep beneath their roofs. Indeed, no one dreamed of a forced march by human beings on that dreadful night of tempest, else it might have gone hard had I been detected in the desecration of colonial soil. Still, I was prepared for all emergencies. I never went abroad without the two great keys of Africa—gold and fire-arms ; and had it been my lot to encounter a colonist, he would either have learned the value of silence or have been carried along, under the muzzle of a pistol, till the gang was in safety.

While it was still dark, I left the caravan advancing

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by an interior path to Little Bassa, where one of my branches could furnish it with necessaries to cross the other colony of Bassa San Juan, so as to reach my homestead in the course of three days. Meanwhile I retraced my way to Monrovia, and, reaching it by sunrise, satisfied the colonists that I had just taken shelter in their harbour, and was fresh from my dripping cutter. It is very likely that no one in the colony to the present day knows the story of this adventure.

CHAPTER TWENTY

CANNIBAL ORGIES

DURING my first visit to Digby, I promised my trading friends—perhaps rather rashly—that I would either return to their settlement or, at least, send merchandise and a clerk to establish a factory. This was joyous news for the traffickers, and, accordingly, I embraced an early occasion to despatch, in charge of a clever young sailor, such stuffs as would be likely to tickle the negro taste.

There were two towns at Digby, governed by cousins who had always lived in harmony. My mercantile venture, however, was unhappily destined to be the apple of discord between these relatives. The establishment of so important an institution as a slave-factory within the jurisdiction of the younger savage gave umbrage to the elder. His town could boast neither of “merchandise” nor a “white man”; there was no profitable tax to be levied from foreign traffic; and, in a very short time, this unlucky partiality ripened the noble kinsmen into bitter enemies.

It is not the habit in Africa for negroes to expend their wrath in harmless words, so that preparations were soon made in each settlement for defence as

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well as hostility. Both towns were stockaded and carefully watched by sentinels, day and night. At times, forays were made into each other's suburbs, but as the chiefs were equally vigilant and alert, the extent of harm was the occasional capture of women or children, as they wandered to the forest and stream for wood and water.

This dalliance, however, did not suit the ardour of my angry favourite. After wasting a couple of months, he purchased the aid of certain *bushmen*, headed by a notorious scoundrel named Jen-ken, who had acquired renown for his barbarous ferocity throughout the neighbourhood. Jen-ken and his chiefs were *cannibals*, and never trod the war-path without a pledge to return laden with human flesh to gorge their households.

Several assaults were made by this savage and his *bushmen* on the dissatisfied cousin, but as they produced no significant results, the barbarians withdrew to the interior. A truce ensued. Friendly proposals were made by the younger to the elder, and again a couple of months glided by in seeming peace.

Just at this time business called me to Gallinas. On my way thither I looked in at Digby, intending to supply the displeased chieftain with goods and an agent if I found the establishment profitable.

It was sunset when I reached the beach ; too late, of course, to land my merchandise, so that I postponed furnishing both places until the morning. As might fairly be expected, there was abundant joy at

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my advent. The neglected rival was wild with satisfaction at the report that he, too, at length was favoured with a "white man." His "town" immediately became a scene of unbounded merriment. Powder was burnt without stint. Gallons of rum were distributed to both sexes; and dancing, smoking and carousing continued till long after midnight, when all stole off to maudlin sleep.

About three in the morning, the sudden screams of women and children aroused me from profound torpor! Shrieks were followed by volleys of musketry. Then came a loud tattoo of knocks at my door, and appeals from the negro chief to rise and fly. "The town was besieged: the head-men were on the point of escaping: resistance was vain: they had been betrayed: there were no fighters to defend the stockade!"

I was opening the door to comply with this advice when my Kroomen, who knew the country's ways even better than I, dissuaded me from departing, with the confident assurance that our assailants were unquestionably composed of the rival townsfolk, who had only temporarily discharged the bushmen to deceive my entertainer. The Kroos insisted that I had nothing to fear. We might, they said, be seized and even imprisoned; but after a brief detention, the captors would be glad enough to accept our ransom. If we fled, we might be slaughtered by mistake.

I had so much confidence in the sense and fidelity of the band that always accompanied me—partly as

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boatmen and partly as bodyguard—that I experienced very little personal alarm when I heard the shouts as the savages rushed through the town murdering everyone they encountered. In a few moments our own door was battered down by the barbarians, and Jen-ken, torch in hand, made his appearance, claiming us as prisoners.

Of course, we submitted without resistance, for although fully armed, the odds were so great in those ante-revolver days that we would have been overwhelmed by a single wave of the infuriated crowd. The barbarian chief instantly selected our house for his headquarters, and despatched his followers to complete their task. Prisoner after prisoner was thrust in. At times the heavy mash of a war-club and the cry of strangling women gave notice that the work of death was not yet ended. But the night of horror wore away. The grey dawn crept through our hovel's bars, and all was still save the groans of wounded captives and the wailing of women and children.

By degrees, the warriors dropped in around their chieftain. A *palaver-house*, immediately in front of my quarters, was the general rendezvous ; and scarcely a *bushman* appeared without the body of some maimed and bleeding victim. The mangled but living captives were tumbled on a heap in the centre, and soon every avenue to the square was crowded with exulting savages. Rum was brought forth in abundance for the chiefs. Presently, slowly approaching from a distance, I heard the drums, horns, and war-bells ;

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and, in less than fifteen minutes, a procession of women, whose naked limbs were smeared with chalk and ochre, poured into the palaver-house to join the beastly rites. Each of these devils was armed with a knife, and bore in her hand some cannibal trophy. Jen-ken's wife—a corpulent wench of forty-five—dragged along the ground, by a single limb, the slimy corpse of an infant ripped alive from its mother's womb. As her eyes met those of her husband, the two fiends yelled forth a shout of mutual joy, while the lifeless babe was tossed in the air and caught as it descended on the point of a spear. Then came the *refreshment*, in the shape of rum, powder, and blood, which was quaffed by the brutes till they reeled off, with linked hands, in a wild dance around the pile of victims. As the women leaped and sang, the men applauded and encouraged. Soon the ring was broken, and, with a yell, each female leaped on the body of a wounded prisoner and commenced the final sacrifice with the mockery of lascivious embraces !

In my wanderings in African forests I have often seen the tiger pounce upon its prey, and, with instinctive thirst, satiate its appetite for blood and abandon the drained corpse ; but these African negresses were neither as decent nor as merciful as the beast of the wilderness. Their malignant pleasure seemed to consist in the invention of tortures that would agonize but not slay. There was a devilish spell in the tragic scene that fascinated my eyes to the spot. A slow, lingering, tormenting mutilation was practised on the

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living, as well as on the dead ; and, in every instance, the brutality of the women exceeded that of the men. I cannot picture the hellish joy with which they passed from body to body, digging out eyes, wrenching off lips, tearing the ears, and slicing the flesh from the quivering bones ; while the queen of the harpies crept amid the butchery gathering the brains from each severed skull as a *bonne bouche* for the approaching feast !

After the last victim yielded his life, it did not require long to kindle a fire, produce the requisite utensils, and fill the air with the odour of *human flesh*. Yet, before the various messes were half broiled, every mouth was tearing the dainty morsels with shouts of joy, denoting the combined satisfaction of revenge and appetite ! In the midst of this appalling scene, I heard a fresh cry of exultation, as a pole was borne into the apartment, on which was impaled the living body of the conquered chieftain's wife. A hole was quickly dug, the stave planted and faggots supplied ; but before a fire could be kindled the wretched woman was dead, so that the barbarians were defeated in their hellish scheme of burning her alive.

I do not know how long these brutalities lasted, for I remember very little after this last attempt, except that the bushmen packed in plantain leaves whatever flesh was left from the orgie, to be conveyed to their friends in the forest. The butchery made me sick, dizzy, paralysed. I sank on the earth benumbed with stupor ; nor was I aroused till nightfall,

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when my Kroomen bore me to the conqueror's town, and negotiated our redemption for the value of twenty slaves.

NOTE.—The late Sir Harry Johnston pointed out (in his most interesting book, *Liberia*) that the Vai tribesmen of Digbi, negroes with a Berber admixture, have never indulged in cannibalism, to judge by the records of several centuries, so that this whole episode is probably an invention of Canot's, dressed up to suit the popular taste for horrors.—[EDITOR.]

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

MY TRADE DISGUSTS ME

"DON PEDRO BLANCO had left Gallinas—a retired *millionaire*!" When I heard this announcement at the factory, I could with difficulty restrain the open expression of my sorrow. It confirmed me in a desire that for some time had been strengthening in my mind. Years rolled over my head since, first of all, I plunged accidentally into the slave-trade. My passion for a roving life and daring adventure was decidedly cooled. The late barbarities inflicted on the conquered in a war of which I was the involuntary cause appalled me with the traffic; and humanity called louder and louder than ever for the devotion of my remaining days to honest industry.

As I sailed down the coast to restore a child to his father—the King of Cape Mount—I was particularly charmed with the bold promontory, the beautiful lake, and the lovely islands that are comprised in this enchanting region. When I delivered the boy to his parent, the old man's gratitude knew no bounds for his offspring's redemption from slavery. Everything was tendered for my recompense; and, as I seemed especially to enjoy the delicious scenery of his realm, he offered me its best location as a gift, if I desired

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to abandon the slave-trade and establish a *lawful* factory.

I made up my mind on the spot that the day should come when I would be lord and master of Cape Mount ; and, nestling under the lee of its splendid headland, might snap my fingers at the cruisers. Still, I could not, at once, retreat from my establishment at New Sestros. Don Pedro's departure was a sore disappointment, because it left my accounts unliquidated and my release from the trade dependent on circumstances. Nevertheless, I resolved to risk his displeasure by quitting the factory for a time, and visiting him at Havana after a trip to England.

It was in the summer of 1839 that I arranged my affairs for a long absence, and sailed for London in the schooner *Gil Blas*. Two months slipped by delightfully in Great Britain when a sense of duty called me to Havana ; yet, before my departure, I resolved, if possible, to secure the alliance of some opulent Englishman to aid me in the foundation and maintenance of lawful commerce at Cape Mount. Such a person I found in Mr. George Clevering Redman, of London, who owned the *Gil Blas*, which, with two other vessels, he employed in trade between England and Africa.

I had been introduced to this worthy gentleman as "a lawful trader on the coast." Still, as I did not think that business relations ought to exist between us while he was under so erroneous an impression, I seized an early opportunity to unmask myself. At

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the same time, I announced my unalterable resolution to abandon a slaver's life for ever ; to establish a trading post at some fortunate location ; and, while I recounted the friendship and peculiar bonds between the king and myself, offered to purchase Cape Mount from its African proprietor, if such an enterprise should be deemed advisable.

Redman was an enterprising merchant. He heard my proposal with interest, and, after a few days' consideration, assented to a negotiation, as soon as I gave proofs of having abandoned the slave traffic for ever. It was understood that no contract was to be entered into, or document signed, till I was at liberty to withdraw completely from Don Pedro Blanco and all others concerned with him. This accomplished, I was to revisit England and assume my lawful functions.

I found Don Pedro in no humour to accede to these notions. An American vessel had been recently chartered to carry a freight to the coast ; and, accordingly, instead of receiving a release from servitude, I was ordered on board the craft as supercargo of the enterprise ! In fact, on the third day after my arrival at Havana, I was forced to re-embark for the coast without a prospect of securing my independence.

The reader may ask why I did not free myself at a word from a commerce with which I was disgusted. I had too large an unliquidated interest at New Sestros, and while it remained so, I was not entitled to demand from my employer a final settlement for my years of labour. In other words I was in his power, so far as

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my means were concerned, and my services were too valuable to be surrendered by him voluntarily.

A voyage of forty-two days brought me once more to New Sestros, accompanied by a couple of negro women, who paid their passage and were lodged very comfortably in the steerage. The elder was about forty and extremely corpulent, while her companion was younger as well as more comely.

This respectable dame, after an absence of twenty-four years, returned to her native Gallinas, on a visit to her father, King Shiakar. At the age of fifteen, she had been taken prisoner and sent to Havana. A Cuban confectioner purchased the likely girl, and, for many years, employed her in hawking his cakes and pies. In time she became a favourite among the townsfolk, and, by degrees, managed to accumulate a sufficient amount to purchase her freedom. Years of frugality and thrift made her proprietor of a house in the city and an egg-stall in the market, when chance threw in her way a cousin, lately imported from Africa, who gave her news of her father's family. A quarter of a century had not extinguished the natural fire in this negro's heart, and she immediately resolved to cross the Atlantic and behold once more the savage to whom she owed her birth.

I sent these adventurous women to Gallinas by the earliest trader that drifted past New Sestros, and learned that they were welcomed among the islands with all the ceremony common among Africans on such occasions. Several canoes were despatched to the vessel, with flags, *tom-toms*, and horns, to receive

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and welcome the ladies. On the shore, a procession was formed, and a bullock offered to the captain in token of gratitude for his attention.

When her elder brother was presented to the retired egg-merchant, he extended his arms to embrace his kinswoman ; but, to the amazement of all, she drew back with a mere offer of her hand, refusing every demonstration of affection till he should appear dressed with becoming decency. This rebuke, of course, kept the rest of her relatives at bay, for there was a sad deficiency of trousers in the gang, and it was the indispensable garment that caused so unsisterly a reception.

But Shiakar's daughter, travelled as she was, could neither set the fashions nor reform the tastes of Gallinas. After a sojourn of ten days, she bade her kindred an eternal adieu, and returned to Havana, disgusted with the manners and customs of her native land.

Whilst I was abroad in England and Cuba, my *chargé d'affaires* at New Sestros sent off a cargo of three hundred negroes, nearly all of whom were safely landed in the West Indies, bringing us a profit of nine thousand dollars. There were, however, still one hundred and fifty in our *barracoons* to be shipped ; and, as the cargo from the *Crawford* was quickly exchanged with the natives for more slaves, in two months' time I found my pens surcharged with six hundred human beings. Two other neighbouring factories were also crammed ; while, unfortunately, directly in front of us, a strong

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reinforcement of British men-of-war kept watch and ward to prevent our depletion.

No slaver dared show its topsails above the horizon. The season did not afford us supplies from the interior. Very few coasters looked in at New Sestros ; and, as our stock of grain and provisions began to fail, the horrors of famine became the sole topic of conversation among our alarmed factors.

It will readily be supposed that every effort was made, not only to economize our scanty stores, but to increase them through the intervention of boats that were sent far and wide to scour the coast for rice and cassava. Double and triple prices were offered for these articles, yet our agents returned without the required supplies. In fact, the free natives themselves were in danger of starvation, and while they refused to part with their remnants, even under the temptation of luxuries, they sometimes sent deputations to my settlement in search of food.

By degrees I yielded to the conviction that I must diminish my mouths. First of all, I released the old and feeble from the *barracoon*. This, for a few days, afforded ample relief ; but, as I retained only the staunchest, the remaining appetites speedily reduced our rations to a single meal *per diem*. At last, the steward reported that even this allowance could be continued for little more than a week. In twelve days, at farthest, my resources would be utterly exhausted.

In this extremity, I summoned a council of neighbouring chiefs, and exposing my situation, demanded

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their opinion as to a fitting course on the dreaded day. I had resolved to retain my blacks till the last measure was distributed, and then to liberate them to shift for themselves.

But the idea of releasing six hundred famishing foemen struck the beach people with horror. It would, they said, be a certain source of war and murder ; and they implored me not to take such a step till they made every effort to ease my burden. As a beginning, they proposed at once relieving the *barracoon* of a large portion of females and of all the male youths, who were to be fed and guarded by them, on my account, till better times.

By this system of colonizing I got rid of the support of two hundred and twenty-five negroes ; and, as good luck would have it, a visit from a friendly coaster enabled me, within ten days, to exchange my beautiful cutter *Ruth* for a cargo of rice from the colony at Cape Palmas.

It was fortunate that in a week after this happy relief the British cruisers left our anchorage for a few days. No sooner were they off, than a telegraph of smoke, which, in those days, was quite as useful on the African coast as the electric is on ours, gave notice to the notorious *Volador*. There was joy in the teeming factories when her signal was descried in the offing ; and, before the following dawn, seven hundred and forty-nine human beings, packed within her one hundred and sixty-five tons, were on their way to Cuba.

This was the last cargo of slaves I ever shipped.

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When the thought struck me of abandoning the slave-trade, I established a store in the neighbourhood of my old *barracoons* with the design of trafficking in the produce of industry alone. This concern was entrusted to the management of a clever young colonist.

It was about this time that the British brig of war *Termagant* held New Sestros in permanent blockade, forbidding even a friendly boat to communicate with my factory. Early one morning, I was called to witness a sturdy chase between my scolding foe and a small sail which was evidently running for the shore in order to save her crew by beaching. The British bulldog, however, was not to be deterred by the perils of the surf, and pursued the stranger till he discovered a large reinforcement of armed natives on the strand ready to protect the fugitives. Accordingly, the Englishmen refrained from assailing the mariners, and confined their revenge to the destruction of the craft.

As this affray occurred within gunshot of my lawful factory, I hastened to the beach under the belief that some of my *employés* had unluckily fallen into a difficulty with the natives. But on my arrival I was greeted by a well-known emissary from our headquarters at Gallinas, who bore a missive imparting the *Volador's* arrival in Cuba with six hundred and eleven of her people. The letter furthermore apprised me that Don Pedro, who persisted in sending merchandise to my slave factory, still declined my resignation as his agent, but acknowledged a credit in his chest of thirteen thousand dollars for my commissions on the *Volador's* slaves. Here, then, were Confidence and Temptation,

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both resolutely proffered to lure me back to my ancient habits !

I was busily engaged on the sands, enforcing from the negroes a restitution of clothes to the plundered postman, when the crack of a cannon, higher up the beach, made me fear that an aggression was being committed against my homestead. Before I could depart, however, two more shots in the same quarter left me no room to doubt that the *Termagant* was talking with my factory.

I reached the establishment with all convenient speed, only to find it full of natives, who had been brought to the spot from the interior by the sound of a cannonade. The following letter from the captain of the man-of-war, it seems, had been landed in a fishing canoe very soon after my departure in the morning, and the shots, I suppose, were discharged to awake my attention to its contents.

HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S SHIP *TERMAGANT*,
Off NEW SESTROS, Nov. 5, 1840.

SIR,

The natives or Kroomen of your settlement having this day fired on the boats of Her B. M. ship under my command, while in chase of a Spanish boat with seven men going to New Sestros, I therefore demand the persons who fired on the boats to answer for the same ; and, should this demand not be complied with, I shall take such steps as I deem proper to secure satisfaction.

I have addressed you on this occasion, judging by the

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interference of those blacks in your behalf, that they are instigated by you.

I have the honour to be, sir, your obed't serv't,

H. F. SEAGRAM,

Lieut.-Com.

TO MR. T. CANOT,

NEW SESTROS.

When this cartel fell into my hands it lacked but an hour of sunset. The beach was alive with angry rollers, while the *Termagant* was still under easy sail, hovering up and down the coast before my factory, evidently meditating the propriety of another pill to provoke my notice.

I sat down at once and wrote a model response, promising to come on board next morning to satisfy the lieutenant of my innocence ; but there was not a Krooman to be found willing to face either the surf or the British sailor. Accordingly, there was no alternative but to suffer my bamboo *barracoons* and factory to be blown about my ears, or to face the danger, in person, and become the bearer of my own message.

The proposal sounded oddly enough in the ears of the Kroomen, who, in spite of their acquaintance with my hardihood, could scarcely believe I would thrust my head into the very jaws of the lion. Still, they had so much confidence in the judgment displayed by white men on the coast, that I had little difficulty in engaging the boat and services of a couple of sturdy chaps ; and, stripping to my drawers, so as to be ready to swim in the last emergency, I committed myself to their care.

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We passed the surf in safety, and in a quarter of an hour were alongside the *Termagant*. Dry raiment and a consoling glass were speedily supplied; and with reassured stamina, I was not long in satisfying the worthy Mr. Seagram that I had no concern in the encounter betwixt the natives and his boats. To clinch the argument I assured the lieutenant that I was not only guiltless of the assault, but had made up my mind irrevocably to abandon the slave-trade.

I suppose there was as much rejoicing that night on board the *Termagant* over the redeemed slaver, as there is in most churches over a rescued sinner. It was altogether too late and too dark for me to repeat the perils of the surf and sharks, so that I willingly accepted the offer of a bed, and promised to accompany Seagram in the morning to the prince.

Loud were the shouts of amazement and fear when the negroes saw me landing next day with an officer who, eighteen hours before, had been busy about my destruction. It was beyond their comprehension how an Englishman could visit my factory under such circumstances, nor could they divine how I escaped, after my voluntary surrender on board a cruiser. When the prince saw Seagram seated familiarly under my verandah, he swore that I must have some powerful *fetiché* or *ju-ju* to compel the confidence of enemies; but his wonder became unbounded when the officer proposed his abandonment of the slave-trade, and I supported the lieutenant's proposal.

I have hardly ever seen a man of any hue or character so sorely perplexed as our African was by this singular

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suggestion. To stop the slave-trade, unless by compulsion, was, in his eyes, the absolute abandonment of a natural appetite or function. At first, he believed we were joking. It was inconceivable that I, who for years had carried on the traffic so adroitly, could be serious in the idea. For half an hour the puzzled negro walked up and down the verandah, muttering to himself, stopping, looking at both of us, hesitating, and laughing, till at last, as he afterwards confessed, he concluded that I was only deceiving the Englishman, and came forward with an offer to sign a treaty on the spot for the extinction of the traffic. I allowed the prince to mislead himself through his natural duplicity on this occasion, as I was thereby enabled to secure the support of British officers for my own purposes.

In a few days the slave-trade at New Sestros was formally abolished by the prince and myself. As I was the principal mover in the affair, I voluntarily surrendered to the British officer on the day of signature one hundred slaves ; in return for which I was guaranteed the safe removal of my valuable merchandise and property from the settlement.

It was a very short time after I had made all snug at New Sestros that misfortune fell suddenly on our parent nest at Gallinas. The Hon. Joseph Denman, who was senior officer of the British squadron on the coast, unexpectedly landed two hundred men, and burnt or destroyed all the Spanish factories amid the lagunes and islets. The natives of the neighbourhood were enabled to gorge themselves with property that was valued at a very large sum. An event like this

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could not escape general notice along the African coast, and in a few days I began to hear it rumoured and discussed among the savages in *my* vicinity.

For a while it was still a mystery why *I* escaped while Gallinas fell ; but at length the sluggish mind of Prince Freeman began to understand my diplomacy, and, of course, to repent the contract that deprived him of a right to rob me. Vexed by disappointment, the scoundrel assembled his minor chiefs, and named a day during which he knew the *Termagant* would be absent to plunder me. The meeting took place without my knowledge, though it was disclosed to all my domestics, whose silence the prince had purchased. Indeed, I would have been completely surprised had it not been for the friendly warning of the negro whose life I had saved from the saucy-wood ordeal.

I still maintained in my service five white men, and four sailors who were wrecked on the coast and awaited a passage home. With this party and a few household negroes on whom reliance might be placed, I resolved to defend my quarters. My cannons were loaded, guards placed, muskets and cartridges distributed, and even the domestics supplied with weapons ; yet, on the night after the warning, every slave abandoned my premises.

When I went my rounds next morning, I was somewhat disheartened by appearances ; but my spirits were quickly restored by Seagram.

The *Termagant's* unlooked-for return somewhat dismayed the prince and his ragamuffins, though he had contrived to assemble quite two thousand men about

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my premises. Towards noon, however, there were evident signs of impatience for the expected booty ; still, a dread of my cannon and small-arms, together with the cruiser's presence, prevented an open attack. After a while I perceived an attempt to set my stockade on fire, and as a conflagration would have given a superb opportunity to rob, I made the concerted signal for our British ally. In a twinkling, three of the cruiser's boats landed an officer with twenty-five musketeers, and before the savages could make the slightest show of resistance, I was safe under the bayonets of Saint George !

The prince and his poltroons were panic-struck ; and in three or four days my large stock of powder and merchandise was embarked without loss for Monrovia.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

I FOUND A NEW TOWN

MY *barracoons* and trading establishments were now totally destroyed, and I was once more afloat in the world. It occurred to me that no opportunity would be more favourable to carry out my original designs upon Cape Mount, and Seagram was not only willing to carry me there in his cruiser, but desired to witness my treaty with the prince for a cession of territory.

On the evening of the same day the *Termagant* hove to off the hills of Cape Mount. As the breeze and sun sank together, leaving a brilliant sky in the west, we descried from deck a couple of tall, raking masts relieved like cobwebs against the azure. From aloft, still more of the craft was visible, and from our lieutenant's report after a glance through his glass, there could be no doubt that the stranger was a slaver.

Light as was the breeze, not a moment elapsed before the cruiser's jib was turned towards her natural enemy. For a while an ebb from the river and the faint night wind off shore, forced us seaward, yet at daylight we had gained so little on the chase, that she was still full seven miles distant.

Nothing was heard about decks but prayers for a puff and whistling for a breeze. Meanwhile, Seagram, the surgeon, and purser were huddled together on the

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quarter, cursing a calm which deprived them of prize-money if not of promotion. Our master's mate and passed midshipman were absent in some of the brig's boats cruising off Gallinas or watching the roadstead of New Sestros.

The trance continued till after breakfast, when our officers' impatience could no longer withstand the bait, and, though short of efficient boats, the yawl and lieutenant's gig were manned for a hazardous enterprise. The former was crammed with six sailors, two marines, and a supernumerary mate ; while the gig, a mere fancy craft, was packed with five seamen and four marines under Seagram himself. Just as this flotilla shoved off, a rough boatswain begged leave to fit out my nutshell of a native canoe ; and embarking with a couple of Kroomen, he squatted amidships, armed with a musket and cutlass !

This expedition exhausted our stock of *nautical* men so completely, that as Seagram crossed the gangway he commended the purser and surgeon to *my* care.

No sooner did the chase perceive our manoeuvre, than, running in her sweeps, she hoisted a Spanish flag and fired a warning cartridge. A faint hurrah answered the challenge. Presently, however, the boom of another gun, followed by repeated discharges, rolled through the quiet air from the Spaniard, and the look-out aloft reported our boats in retreat. Just at this moment a light breeze gave headway to the *Termagant*, so that I was enabled to steer towards the prize, but before I could overhaul our warriors, the enemy had received the freshening gale, and, under every stitch of canvas, stood rapidly to sea.

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When Seagram regained his deck, he was bleeding profusely from a wound in the head received from a handspike while attempting to board. Besides this, two men were missing, while three had been seriously wounded by a shot that sunk the yawl. My gallant boatswain, however, returned unharmed, and, if I may believe the commander of the *Serea*—whom I encountered some time after—this daring sailor did more execution with his musket than all the marines put together. The Kroo canoe dashed alongside with the velocity of her class, and, as a petty officer on the Spaniard bent over to sink the skiff with a ponderous top-block, our boatswain cleft his skull with a musket-ball, and brought home the block as a trophy ! In fact, Seagram confessed that the Spaniard behaved magnanimously ; for the moment our yawl was sunk, Olivares cut adrift his boat, and bade the struggling swimmers return in it to their vessel.

Next day we recovered our anchorage opposite Cape Mount, and wound our way eight or ten miles up the river to the town of Toso, the residence of King Fana-Toro. It did not require long to satisfy his majesty of the benefits to be derived from my plan. The news of the destruction of Gallinas, and of the voluntary surrender of my quarters at New Sestros, had spread like wildfire along the coast ; so that when the African princes began to understand they were no longer to profit by unlawful traffic, they were willing enough not to lose *all* their ancient avails, by compromising for a legal commerce, under the sanction of national flags. I explained my projects to Fana-Toro, offering him the

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most liberal terms. My propositions were forcibly supported by Prince Gray ; and a cession of the Mount and its neighbouring territory was finally made, under a stipulation that the purchase-money should be paid in presence of the negro's council, and the surrender of title witnessed by the *Termagant's* officers.

I paid King Fana-Toro and his chiefs in council the following merchandise in exchange for his territory : six casks of rum ; twenty muskets ; twenty quarter-kegs powder ; twenty pounds tobacco ; twenty pieces white cottons ; thirty pieces blue cottons ; twenty iron bars ; twenty cutlasses ; twenty wash-basins ; and twenty *each* of several other articles of trifling value.

As soon as the contract was signed, making Mr. Redman and myself proprietors of this beautiful region, I hastened in company with my naval friends to explore my little principality for a suitable town site. We launched our boat on the lake at Toso, and after steering north-eastwardly for two hours under the pilotage of Prince Gray, entered a winding creek and penetrated its thickets of mangrove and palm, till the savage landed us on decayed steps and pavement made of *English brick*. At a short distance through the under-wood, our conductor pointed out a denuded space which had once served as the foundation of an English slave factory ; and confirmed it by pointing out, deeply carved in the bark of a neighbouring tree, the name of :

T. WILLIAMS,

1804

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Next day we recommenced our exploration by land, and, in order to obtain a comprehensive view, I proposed an ascent of the promontory of the Cape which lifts its head quite twelve hundred feet above the sea. A toilsome walk of hours brought us to the summit, but so dense was the foliage and so lofty the magnificent trees, that even by climbing the tallest my scope of vision was hardly increased. As we descended the slopes, however, towards the strait between the sea and lake, I suddenly came upon a rich, spacious level, flanked by a large brook of delicious water, and deciding instantly that it was an admirable spot for intercourse with the ocean as well as interior, I resolved that it should be the site of my future home. A tar was at hand to climb the loftiest palm, to strip its bushy head, and hoist the union-jack. Before sundown, I had taken solemn territorial possession, and baptized the future town "New Florence," in honour of my Italian birth-place.

New Florence prospered in everything but *farming* and *trade*. At first it was my hope that two or three years of perseverance would enable me to open a lawful traffic with the interior; but I discovered that the slave-trade was alone thought of by the natives, who only bring the neighbouring produce to the beach when their captives are ready for a market. I came, moreover, to the conclusion that the interior negroes about Cape Mount had no commerce with Eastern tribes except for slaves, and consequently that its small river will never create marts like those which have direct communication by water with the heart of a rich

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region, and absorb its gold, ivory, wax, and hides. To meet these difficulties, I hastened the building of my vessel as a coaster.

About this time, an American craft called the *A*—— arrived in my neighbourhood. She was loaded with tobacco, calicoes, rum, and powder. Her captain, who was unskilled in coast-trade, and ignorant of Spanish, engaged me to act as super-cargo for him to Gallinas. In a very short period I disposed of his entire investment. The trim and saucy rig of this clipper bewitched the heart of a Spanish trader who happened to be among the *lagunes*, and an offer was forthwith made, through me, for her purchase. The bid was accepted at once, and the day before Christmas fixed as the period of her delivery, after a trip to the Gaboon.

In contracting to furnish this slaver with a craft and the necessary apparatus for his cargo, it would be folly for me to deny that I was dipping once more into my ancient trade; yet, on reflection, I concluded that in covering the vessel for a moment with my name, I was no more amenable to rebuke than the respectable merchants of Sierra Leone and elsewhere who passed hardly a day without selling, to notorious slavers, such merchandise as could be used *alone* in slave-wars or slave-trade.

The appointed day arrived, and my smoking semaphores announced the brigantine's approach to Sugarei, three miles from Cape Mount. The same evening the vessel was surrendered to me by the American captain, who landed his crew and handed over his flag and papers. As soon as I was in charge, no delay was made

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to prepare for the reception of freight ; and by sunrise I resigned her to the Spaniard, who immediately embarked seven hundred negroes, and landed them in Cuba in twenty-seven days.

Till now the British cruisers had made Cape Mount their friendly rendezvous, but the noise of this shipment in my neighbourhood, and my refusal to explain or converse on the subject, gave umbrage to officers who had never failed to supply themselves from my grounds and larder. In fact, I was soon marked as an enemy of the squadron, while our intercourse dwindled to the merest shadow. In the course of a week, the commander on the African station himself hove to off the Cape, and summoning me on board, concluded a petulant conversation by remarking that " a couple of men like Monsieur Canot would make work enough in Africa for the whole British squadron ! "

When I felt that the rupture between the British and myself was irreparable, I had less difficulty in deciding my policy as to the natives ; and, chiefly under the impulse of self-protection, I resolved to serve the cause of my ancient ally. I made whatever fortifications could be easily defended, and, by way of show, mounted some cannon on a boat which was paraded about the waters in a formidable way. My judgment taught me from the outset that it was folly to think of joining actively in the conflict ; for, while I had but three white men in my quarters, and the colonists had returned to Monrovia, my New Sestros experience taught me the value of bondsmen's backing.

Numerous engagements and captures took place by

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both parties, so that my doors were daily besieged by a crowd of wretches sent by Fana-Toro to be purchased *for shipment*. I declined the contract, but so importunate was the chief that I could not resist his desire that a Spanish factor might come within my limits with merchandise from Gallinas to purchase his prisoners. "He could do nothing with his foes," he said, "when in his grasp, but slay or sell them." The king's enemy, on the opposite shore, disposed of his captives to Gallinas, and obtained supplies of powder and ball, while Fana-Toro, who had no vent for his prisoners, would have been destroyed without my assistance.

Matters continued in this way for nearly two years, during which the British kept up so vigilant a blockade at Cape Mount and Gallinas, that the slavers had rarely a chance to enter a vessel or run a cargo. In time, the *barracoons* became so gorged that the slavers began to build their own schooners. When the *A*—— was sold, I managed to retain her long-boat in my service ; but such was now the value of every egg-shell on the coast, that her owner despatched a carpenter from Gallinas, who, in a few days, decked, rigged, and equipped her for sea. She was twenty-three feet long, four feet deep, and five feet beam, so that when afloat her measurement could not have exceeded four tons. Yet, on a dark and stormy night, she dropped down the river, and floated out to sea through the besieging lines, with thirty-three black boys, two sailors, and a navigator. In less than forty days she transported the whole of her living freight across the Atlantic to Bahia. The negroes almost perished from thirst, but the daring example

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was successfully followed during the succeeding year, by skiffs of similar dimensions.

If I am conscious of anything during my domicile at Cape Mount, it is of a sincere desire to prosper by lawful and honourable thrift. But, between the native wars, the turmoil of intruding slavers, and the suspicions of the English, everything went wrong. The friendship of the colonists at Cape Palmas and Monrovia was still unabated ; appeals were made by missionaries for my influence with the tribes ; coasters called on me as usual for supplies ; yet, with all these encouragements for exertion, I must confess that my experiment was unsuccessful.

I lost my cutter, laden with stores and merchandise for my factory. A vessel, filled with rice and lumber for my shipyard, was captured *on suspicion*, and, though sent across the Atlantic for adjudication, was dismissed uncondemned. The sudden death of a British captain from Sierra Leone deprived me of three thousand dollars. Fana-Toro made numerous assaults on his foes, all of which failed ; and, to cap the climax of my ills, on returning after a brief absence, I found that a colonist, whom I had rescued from misery and employed in my forge, had fled to the enemy, carrying with him a number of my most useful servants.

It was about this time that circumstances obliged me to make a rapid voyage to New York and back to Africa. During my absence our ancient king was compelled to make a treaty with his rival, who, under the name of George Cain, dwelt formerly among the

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American colonists, and acquired our language. It was by treachery alone that Fana-Toro had been dragooned into an arrangement, by which my blacksmith, who married a sister of Cain, was elevated to the dignity of George's *premier*.

Both these scamps, with a troop of their followers, planted themselves on my premises near the beach, and immediately let me understand that they were my sworn enemies. Cain could not pardon the aid I gave to Fana-Toro in his earlier conflicts, nor would the renegade colonist forsake his kinsman or the African barbarism, into which he had relapsed.

By degrees, these varlets, whom I was unable, in my crippled condition, to dislodge, obtained the ears of the British commanders, and poured into them every falsehood that could kindle their ire. The Spanish factory of Fana-Toro's agent was reported to be *mine*. The shipment in the *A*—— and the adventure of her boat were said to be *mine*. Another suspected clipper was declared to be *mine*. These, and a hundred lies of equal baseness, were adroitly purveyed to the squadron, and, in less than a month, my fame was as black as the skin of my traducers. Still, even at this distant day, I may challenge my worst enemy on the coast to prove that I participated, after 1839, in the purchase of a single slave for transportation beyond the sea.¹

¹ From the moment that the first dwelling was erected at New Florence, I carefully enforced the most rigid decorum between the sexes throughout my jurisdiction. It was the boast of our friends at Cape Palmas and Monrovia, that my grounds were free from the debauchery which, elsewhere in

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After a brief sojourn at my quarters to repair *The Chancellor*, in which I had come with a cargo from the United States, I hastened towards Gallinas to dispose of our merchandise. We had been already boarded by an American officer, who reported us to his superior as a regular merchantman ; yet, such were the malicious representations on the beach against the vessel and myself, that the *Dolphin* tarried a month at the anchorage to watch our proceedings. When I went to the old mart of Don Pedro, a cruiser dogged us ; when I sailed to leeward of Cape Palmas for oil and ivory, another took charge of our movements, anchoring where we anchored, getting under way when we did, and following us into every nook and corner. At Grand Buttoa, I took *The Chancellor* within a reef of rocks, and here I was left to proceed as I pleased, while the British cruiser returned to Cape Mount.

The 15th of March 1847 is scored in my calendar with black. It was on the morning of that day that the commander who escorted me so warily as far at Buttoa, landed a lieutenant and sailors at New Florence, and proceeded to search my premises for slaves. As none

Africa, was unhappily too common. I have had the honour to entertain at my table at Cape Mount, not only the ordinary traders of the coast, but commodores of French squadrons, commanders of British and American cruisers, governors of colonies, white and coloured missionaries, as well as innumerable merchants of the first respectability, and I have yet to meet the first of them, in any part of the world, who can redden my cheek with a blush.

But such was not the case at the Cape after Cain and Curtis became the pets of the cruisers, and converted the beach into a brothel.

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were found, the captors seized a couple of handcuffs, like those in use everywhere to secure refractory seamen, and carried them on board to their commander. Next day, several boats, with marines and sailors, led by a British captain and lieutenant, landed about noon, and, without notice, provocation, or even allowing my clerk to save his raiment, set fire to my brigantine, store-houses, and dwelling.

As I was absent, I cannot vouch for every incident of this transaction, but I have the utmost confidence in the circumstantial narrative which my agent, Mr. Horace Smith, soon after prepared under oath at Monrovia. The marines and Kroomen were permitted to plunder at will. Cain and Curtis revelled in the task of philanthropic destruction. While the sailors burnt my houses, these miscreants and their adherents devoted themselves to the ruin of my garden, fruit trees, plantations, and waterworks. My cattle, even, were stolen, to be sold to the squadron ; and, ere night, New Florence was a smouldering heap !

To this hour, I am ignorant of any lawful cause, or of anything but suspicion, that may be alleged in palliation of the high-handed wrong. Not a line or word was left, whereby I could trace a pretext for my ruin.



THE END

