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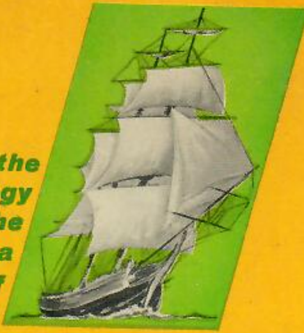
CARDINAL EDITION C·457

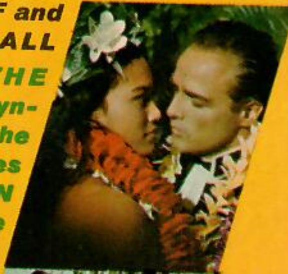
THE COMPLETE BOOK



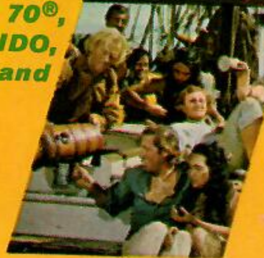
Part of the Bounty Trilogy "One of the greatest sea stories of all time"

PITCAIRN'S ISLAND

CHARLES NORDHOFF and JAMES NORMAN HALL



From MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has made one of the most lavish motion pictures of all time—MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY. Filmed in the South Seas in Technicolor® and Ultra-Panavision 70®, it stars MARLON BRANDO, TREVOR HOWARD and RICHARD HARRIS



"*Listen to me,*" Fletcher Christian said to the men gathered around him. "We are not English seamen in good standing. We are fugitives from justice, guilty of the double crime of mutiny and piracy. Should we be discovered and taken, death will be the portion of every man of us.

"To me this island seems an ideal spot, and Mr. Young agrees that we might have searched the Pacific over without having found one better suited to men in our position. Shall we make our home here or shall we not?"

The matter was discussed at some length. When the question was put to a vote the show of hands was unanimous. By then the sun had set and the silence of the land seemed to flow outward to where the *Bounty* rocked gently on the sea. Christian turned from the rail and said: "It is a peaceful spot. God grant that we may keep it so."

PITCAIRN'S ISLAND
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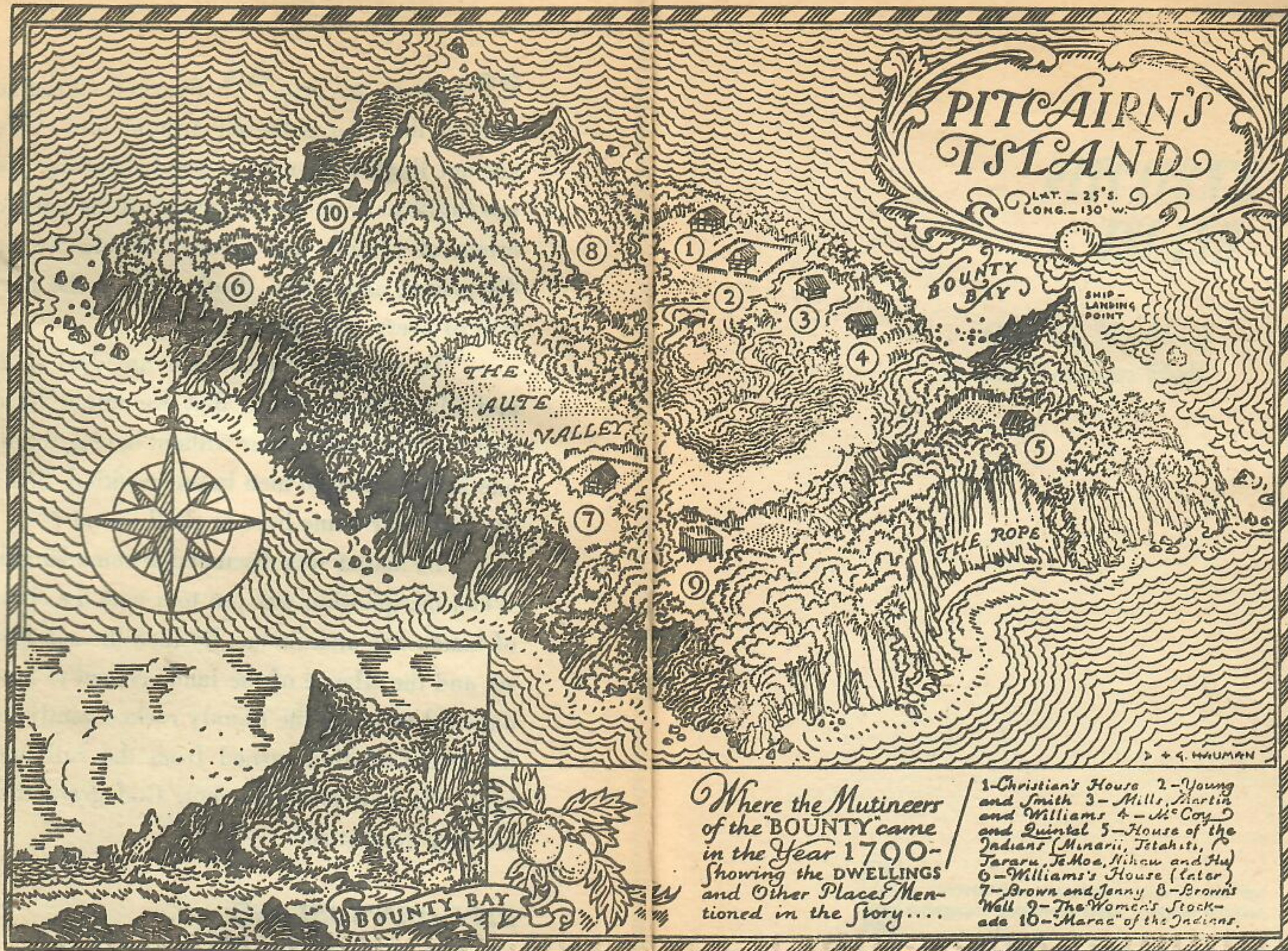
Little, Brown & Company.


PITCAIRN'S ISLAND
LAT. — 25° S.
LONG. — 130° W.
BOUNTY BAY
SHIP-LANDING POINT
THE AUTE VALLEY
THE ROPE
BOUNTY BAY
D + G. HAUMAN
Where the Mutineers of the "BOUNTY" came in the Year 1790 — Showing the DWELLINGS and Other Places Mentioned in the Story....
1—Christian's House 2—Young and Smith 3—Mills, Martin and Williams 4—McCoy and Quintal 5—House of the Indians (Minarii, Tetahiti, Tararu, TeMoa, Nihau and Hu) 6—Williams's House (later) 7—Brown and Jenny 8—Brown's Well 9—The Women's Stockade 10—"Marae" of the Indians.

PITCAIRN'S ISLAND

Charles Nordhoff
James Norman Hall

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TO
ELLERY SEDGWICK

AUTHORS' NOTE

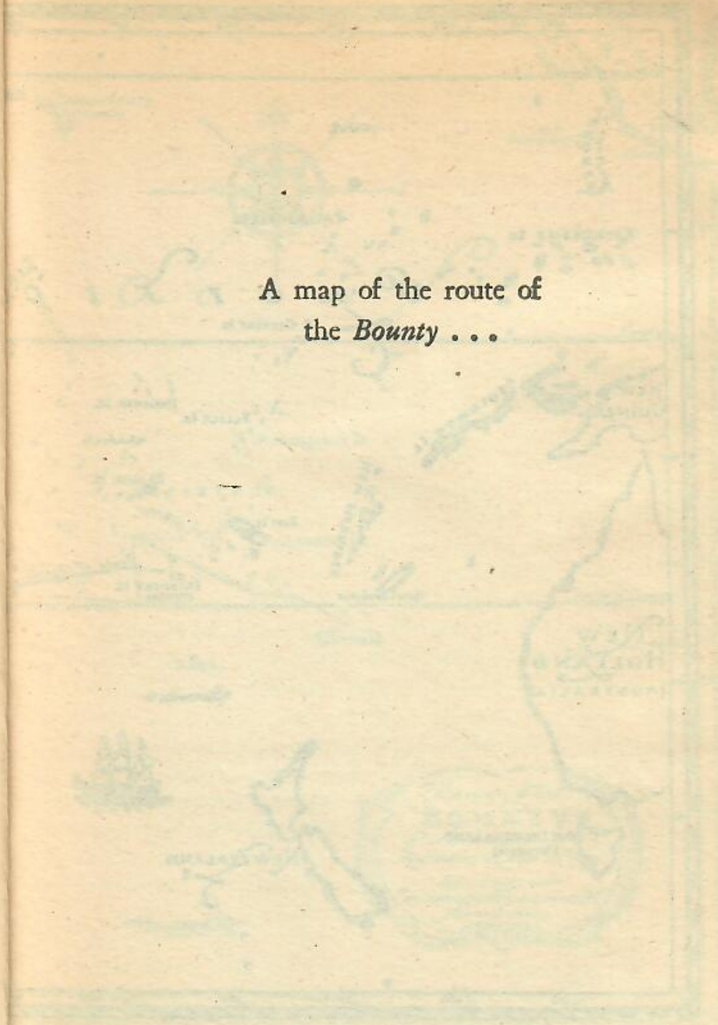
THE *Bounty* mutineers settled on Pitcairn Island in the year 1790. In 1808, their refuge was discovered and made known to the world by Captain Mayhew Folger, of the American sealing vessel *Topaz*.

Various and discrepant accounts have been preserved concerning the events of the eighteen years between these dates. The source of them all, direct or indirect, was Alexander Smith (or John Adams, as he later called himself), the only surviving mutineer at the time of Folger's visit. He told the story first to Folger, then to Captains Staines and Pipon, in 1814, then to Captain Beechey, in 1825, and finally, in 1829, to J. A. Moerenhout, author of *Voyages aux Îles du Grand Océan*. Later accounts were recorded by Walter Brodie, who set down, in 1850, a narrative obtained from Arthur, Matthew Quintal's son; and by Rosalind Young, in her *Story of Pitcairn Island,* which gives certain gruesome details retained in the memory of Eliza, daughter of John Mills, who reached the advanced age of ninety-three.

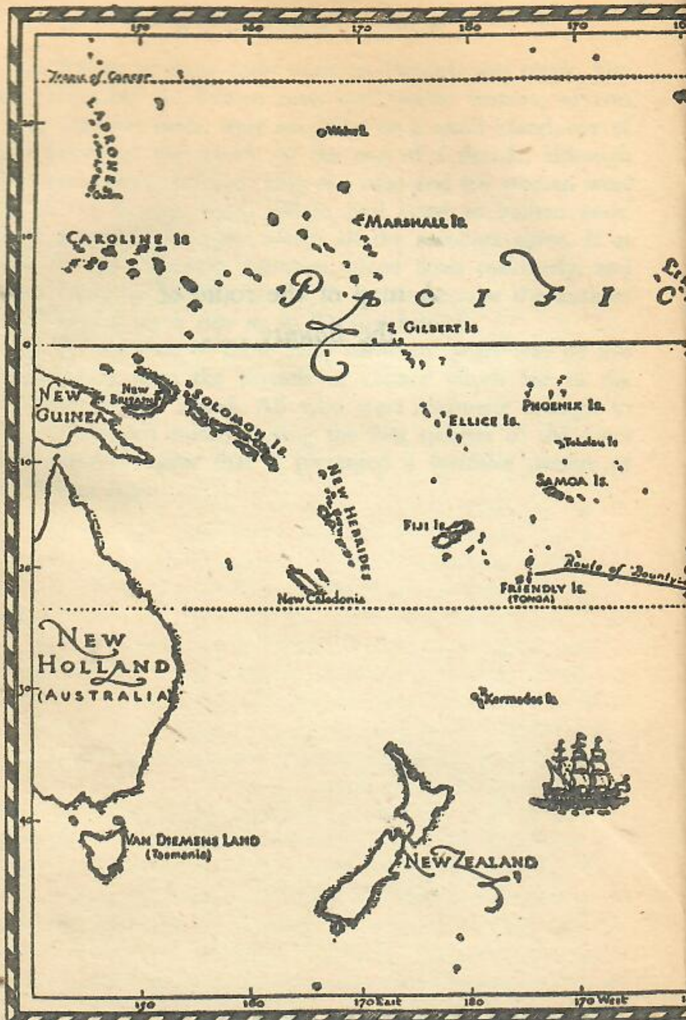
Each of these accounts is remarkable for its differences from the others, if for nothing else, and all contain discrepancies and improbabilities of human behaviour which can scarcely be in accordance with the facts. The authors, therefore, after a careful study of every existing account, have adopted a chronology and selected a sequence of events which seem to them to render more plausible the play of cause and effect. Certain details which would add nothing to the narrative and are too revolting for the printed page have been omitted.

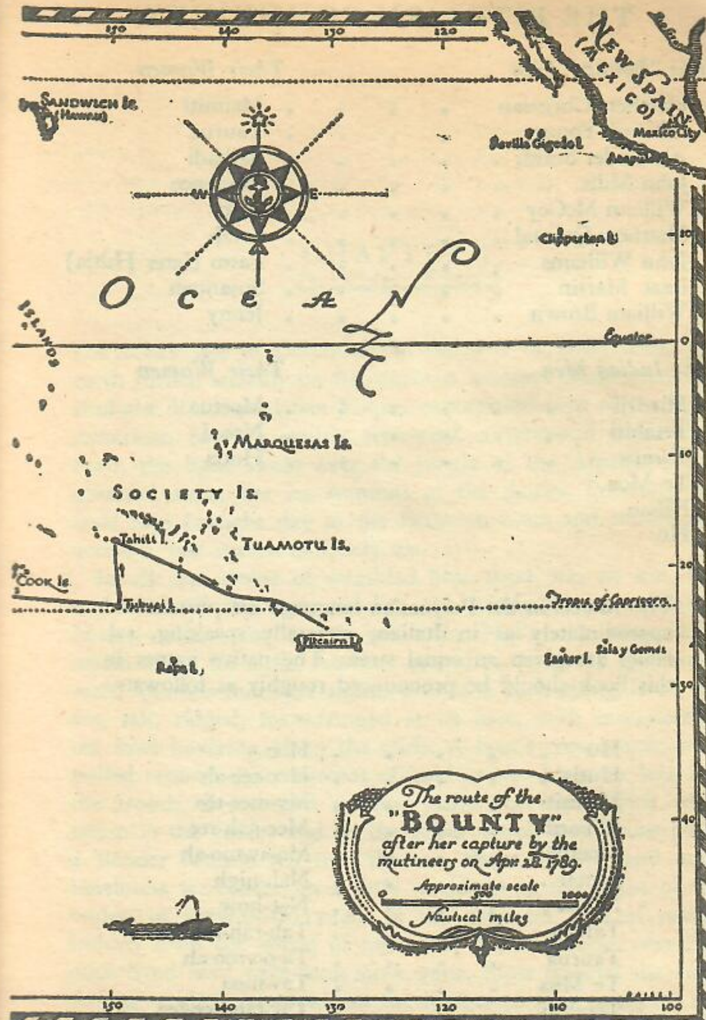
The history of those early years on Pitcairn was tragic, perhaps inevitably so. Fifteen men and twelve women, of two widely different races, were set down on a small island, one of the loneliest in the world. At the end of a decade, although there were many children, only one man and ten women were left; of the sixteen dead, fifteen had come to violent ends. These are the facts upon which all the accounts agree. If at times, in the following narrative, blood flows overfreely, and horror seems to pile on horror, it is not because the authors would have it so: it *was* so, in Pitcairn history.

But the outcome of those early turbulent years was no less extraordinary than the threads of chance which led to the settlement of the island. All who were fortunate enough to visit the Pitcairn colony during the first quarter of the nineteenth century agree that it presented a veritable picture of the Golden Age.



A map of the route of the *Bounty* . . .


Tropic of Cancer
LADRONES
Wake I.
MARSHALL Is.
CAROLINE Is.
PACIFIC
GILBERT Is.
NEW GUINEA
New Britain
SOLOMON Is.
ELLICE Is.
PHOENIX Is.
Tokelau Is.
SAMOA Is.
NEW HEBRIDES
FIJI Is.
Route of "Bounty"
FRIENDLY Is.
(TONGA)
New Caledonia
NEW HOLLAND
(AUSTRALIA)
Kermadec Is.
VAN DIEMENS LAND
(Tasmania)
NEW ZEALAND
170 East
170 West


SANDWICH Is.
(Hawaii)
NEW SPAIN
(MEXICO)
Mexico City
Revilla Gigedo I.
Acapulco
Clipperton I.
OCEAN
Equator
MARQUESAS Is.
SOCIETY Is.
Tahiti I.
TUAMOTU Is.
COOK Is.
Tubuai I.
Pitcairn I.
Rapa I.
Tropic of Capricorn
Sala y Gomez
Easter I.
The route of the "BOUNTY" after her capture by the mutineers on Apr. 28. 1789.
Approximate scale
0
500
1000
Nautical miles

THE PITCAIRN COMMUNITY

The "Bounty" Men	*Their Women*
Fletcher Christian	Maimiti
Edward Young	Taurua
Alexander Smith	Balhadi
John Mills	Prudence
William McCoy	Mary
Matthew Quintal	Sarah
John Williams	Fasto (later Hutia)
Isaac Martin	Susannah
William Brown	Jenny

The Indian Men	*Their Women*
Minarii	Moetua
Tetahiti	Nanai
Tararu	Hutia
Te Moa	
Nihau	
Hu	

The vowels in the Polynesian language are pronounced approximately as in Italian; generally speaking, syllables are given an equal stress. The native names in this book should be pronounced roughly as follows:—

Hu	Hoo
Hutia	Hoo-tee-ah
Maimiti	My-mee-tee
Minarii	Mee-nah-ree
Moetua	Mo-ay-too-ah
Nanai	Nah-nigh
Nihau	Nee-how
Tararu	Tah-rah-roo
Taurua	Ta-oo-roo-ah
Te Moa	Tay-moa
Tetahiti	Tay-tah-hee-tee

CHAPTER I

ON A DAY late in December, in the year of 1789, while the earth turned steadily on its course, a moment came when the sunlight illuminated San Roque, easternmost cape of the three Americas. Moving swiftly westward, a thousand miles each hour, the light swept over the jungle of the Amazons, and glittered along the icy summits of the Andes. Presently the level rays brought day to the Peruvian coast and moved on, across a vast stretch of lonely sea.

In all that desert of wrinkled blue there was no sail, nor any land till the light touched the windy downs of Easter Island, where the statues of Rapa Nui's old kings kept watch along the cliffs. An hour passed as the dawn sped westward another thousand miles, to a lone rock rising from the sea, tall, ridged, foam-fringed at its base, with innumerable sea fowl hovering along the cliffs. A boat's crew might have pulled around this fragment of land in two hours or less, but the fronds of scattered coconut palms rose above rich vegetation in the valleys and on the upper slopes, and at one place a slender cascade fell into the sea. Peace, beauty, and utter loneliness were here, in a little world set in the midst of the widest of oceans—the peace of the deep sea, and of nature hidden from the world of men. The brown people who had once lived here were long since gone. Moss covered the rude paving of their temples, and the images of their gods, on the cliffs above, were roosting places for gannet and frigate bird.

The horizon to the east was cloudless, and, as the sun rose,

flock after flock of birds swung away toward their fishing grounds offshore. The fledglings, in the dizzy nests where they had been hatched, settled themselves for the long hours of waiting, to doze, and twitch, and sprawl in the sun. The new day was like a million other mornings in the past, but away to the east and still below the horizon a vessel—the only ship in all that vast region—was approaching the land.

His Majesty's armed transport *Bounty* had set sail from Spithead, two years before, bound for Tahiti in the South Sea. Her errand was an unusual one: to procure on that remote island a thousand or more young plants of the breadfruit tree, and to convey them to the British plantations in the West Indies, where it was hoped that they might provide a supply of cheap food for the slaves. When her mission on Tahiti had been accomplished and she was westward bound, among the islands of the Tongan Group, Fletcher Christian, second-in-command of the vessel, raised the men in revolt against Captain William Bligh, whose conduct he considered cruel and insupportable. The mutiny was suddenly planned and carried swiftly into execution, on the morning of April 28, 1789. Captain Bligh was set adrift in the ship's launch, with eighteen loyal men, and the mutineers saw them no more. After a disastrous attempt to settle on the island of Tupuai, the *Bounty* returned to Tahiti, where some of the mutineers, as well as a number of innocent men who had been compelled to remain with the ship, were allowed to establish themselves on shore.

The *Bounty* was a little ship, of about two hundred tons burthen, stoutly rigged and built strongly of English oak. Her sails were patched and weather-beaten, her copper sheathing grown over with trailing weed, and the paint on her sides, once a smart black, was now a scaling, rusty brown. She was on the starboard tack, with the light southwesterly wind abaft the beam. Only nine mutineers were now on board, including Fletcher Christian and Midshipman Edward Young. With the six Polynesian men and twelve women whom they had persuaded to accompany them, they were searching for a permanent refuge: an island so little known, so remote, that even the long arm of the Admiralty would never reach them.

Goats were tethered to the swivel stocks; hogs grunted disconsolately in their pens; cocks crowed and hens clucked in the crates where several score of fowls were confined. The two cutters, chocked and lashed down by the bulwarks, were filled to the gunwales with yams, some of them of fifty pounds' weight. A group of comely girls sat on the main hatch, gossiping in their musical tongue and bursting into soft laughter now and then.

Matthew Quintal, the man at the wheel, was tall and immensely strong, with sloping shoulders and long arms covered with tattooing and reddish hair. He was naked to the waist, and his tanned neck was so thick that a single unbroken line seemed to curve up from his shoulder to the top of his small head. His light blue eyes were set close together, and his great, square, unshaven chin jutted out below a slit of a mouth.

The light southwesterly air was dying; presently the ship lost way and began to roll gently in the calm, her sails hanging slack from the yards. Clouds were gathering on the horizon to the north. Quintal straightened his back and turned to glance at the distant wall of darkness, rising and widening as it advanced upon the ship.

Christian came up the ladderway. He was freshly shaven and wore a plain blue coat. The tropical sun had burned his face to a shade darker than those of the girls on the hatch. The poise of his strong figure and the moulding of his mouth and jaw were the outward signs of a character instant in decision, resolute, and quick to act. His black eyes, deep-set and brilliant, were fixed on the approaching squall.

"Smith!" he called.

A brawny young seaman, who had been standing by the mainmast, hastened aft, touching his turban of bark cloth.

"Clew up the courses, and make ready to catch what water you can."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

Smith went forward, shouting: "All hands, here! Shorten sail!"

A group of white seamen appeared from the forecastle. The brown men turned quickly from the rail, and several of the girls stood up.

"To your stations!" Smith ordered. "Fore and main courses —let go sheets and tacks! Clew lines—up with the clews!"

The lower extremities of the two large sails rose to the quarters of the yards, the native men and half a dozen lusty girls shouting and laughing as they put their backs into the work. Smith turned to the seaman nearest him.

"McCoy! Take Martin and rig the awning to catch water. Look alive!"

Christian had been pacing the quarter-deck, with an eye on the blackening sky to the north. "To the braces, Smith!" he now ordered. "Put her on the larboard tack."

"Braces it is, sir."

Edward Young, the second-in-command, was standing in the ladderway—a man of twenty-four, with a clear, ruddy complexion and a sensitive face, marred by the loss of several front teeth. He had gone off watch only two hours before and his eyes were still heavy with sleep.

"It has a dirty look," he remarked.

"Only a squall; I'm leaving the topsails on her. By God! It will ease my mind to fill our casks! I can't believe that Carteret was mistaken in his latitude, but it is well known that his timekeeper was unreliable. We're a hundred miles east of his longitude now."

Young smiled faintly. "I'm beginning to doubt the existence of his Pitcairn's Island," he remarked. "When was it discovered?"

"In 1767, when he was in command of the *Swallow,* under Commodore Byron. He sighted the island at a distance of fifteen leagues, and described it as having the appearance of a great rock, no more than five miles in circumference. It is densely wooded, he says in his account of the voyage, and a stream of fresh water was observed, coursing down the cliffs."

"Did he land?"

"No. There was a great surf running. They got soundings on the west side, in twenty-five fathoms, something less than a mile from the shore. . . . The island must be somewhere hereabout. I mean to search until we find it." He was silent for a moment before he added: "Are the people complaining?"

"Some of them are growing more than restless."

Christian's face darkened. "Let them murmur," he said. "They shall do as I say, nevertheless."

The squall was now close, concealing the horizon from west to north. The air began to move uneasily; next moment the *Bounty* lurched and staggered as the first puff struck her. The topsails filled with sounds like the reports of cannon: the sun was blotted out and the wind screamed through the rigging in gusts that were half air, half stinging, horizontal rain.

"Hard a-starboard!" Christian ordered the helmsman quietly. "Ease her!"

Quintal's great hairy hands turned the spokes rapidly. In the sudden darkness and above the tumult of the wind, the voices of the native women rose faint and thin, like the cries of sea fowl. The ship was righting herself as she began to forge ahead and the force of the wind diminished. In ten minutes the worst was over, and presently the *Bounty* lay becalmed once more, this time in a deluge of vertical rain. It fell in blinding, suffocating streams, and the sound of it, plashing and murmuring on the sea, was enough to drown a man's voice. Fresh water spouted from the awnings, and as fast as one cask was filled another was trundled into its place. Men and women alike, stripped to their kilts of tapa, were scrubbing one another's backs with bits of porous, volcanic stone.

Within an hour the clouds had dispersed, and the sun, now well above the horizon, was drying the *Bounty's* decks. A line of rippling dark blue appeared to the southwest. The yards

were braced on the other tack, and the ship was soon moving on her course once more.

Young had gone below. Christian was standing at the weather rail, gazing out over the empty sea with an expression sombre and stern beyond his years. In the presence of others, his features were composed, but oftentimes when alone he sank into involuntary reflections on what was past and what might lie ahead.

A tall young girl came up the ladderway, walked lightly to his side, and laid a hand on his shoulder. Maimiti was not past eighteen at this time. Of high lineage on Tahiti, she had left lands, retainers, and relatives to share the dubious fortunes of her English lover. The delicacy of her hands and small bare feet, the lightness of her complexion, and the contours of her high-bred face set her apart from the other women on the ship. As she touched his shoulder, Christian's face softened.

"Shall we find the land to-day?" she asked.

"I hope so; it cannot be far off."

Leaning on the bulwarks at Christian's side, Maimiti made no reply. Her mood at the moment was one of eager anticipation. The blood of seafaring ancestors was in her veins, and this voyage of discovery, into distant seas of which her people preserved only legendary accounts, was an adventure to her taste.

Forward, in the shadow of the windlass, where they could converse unobserved, two white men sat in earnest talk. McCoy was a Scot who bore an Irish name—a thin, bony man with thick reddish hair and a long neck on which the Adam's apple stood out prominently. His companion was Isaac Martin, an American. Finding himself in London when the *Bounty* was fitting out, Martin had managed to speak with her sailing master in a public house, and had deserted his own ship for the prospect of a cruise in the South Sea. He was a dark brutish man of thirty or thereabouts, with a weak face and black brows that met over his nose.

"We've give him time enough, Will," he said sourly. "There's no such bloody island, if ye ask me! And if there is, it's nowheres hereabout."

"Aye, we're on a wild-goose chase, and no mistake."

"Well, then, it's time we let him know we're sick o' drifting about the like o' this! Mills says so, and Matt Quintal's with us. Brown'll do as we tell him. Ye'll never talk Alex over; Christian's God Almighty to him! I reckon Jack Williams has had enough, like the rest. That'll make six of us to the three o' them. What's the name o' that island we raised, out to the west?"

"Rarotonga, the Indians said."

"Aye. That's the place! And many a fine lass ashore, I'll warrant. If we do find this Pitcairn's Island, it'll be nothing but a bloody rock, with no women but them we've fetched with us. Twelve for fifteen men!"

McCoy nodded. "We've no lasses enough. There'll be trouble afore we're through if we hae no more."

"In Rarotonga we could have the pick o' the place. It's time we made him take us there, whether he likes it or not!"

"Make him! God's truth! Ye're a brave-spoken fellow, Isaac, when there's none to hear ye!"

Martin broke off abruptly as he perceived that Smith had come up behind him unaware. He was a powerfully made man in his early twenties, under the middle stature, and with a face slightly pitted with smallpox. His countenance was, nevertheless, a pleasing one, open and frank, with an aquiline nose, a firm mouth, and blue eyes set widely apart, expressing at the same time good humour and self-confident strength. He stood with brawny tattooed arms folded across his chest, gazing at his two shipmates with an ironic smile. Martin gave him a wry look.

"Aye, Alex," he grumbled, "it's yourself and Jack Williams has kept us drifting about the empty sea this fortnight past. If he'd backed us up, we'd ha' forced Christian to take us out o' this long since."

Smith turned to McCoy. "Hearken to him, Will! Isaac's the man to tell Mr. Christian his business. *He* knows where we'd best go! What d' ye say, shall we make him captain?"

"There's this must be said, Alex," remarked McCoy apologetically, "we're three months from Tahiti, and it's nigh three weeks we've spent looking for this Pitcairn's Island! How does he know there's such a place?"

"Damn your eyes! D' ye think Mr. Christian'd be such a fool as to search for a place that wasn't there? I'll warrant he'll find it before the week's out."

"And if he don't, what then?" Martin asked.

"Ask him yourself, Isaac. I reckon he'll tell 'ee fast enough."

The conversation was interrupted by a hail from aloft, where the lookout stood on the fore-topmast crosstrees.

"Aye, man, what d' ye see?" roared Smith.

"Birds. A cloud of 'em, dead ahead."

Pacing the after deck with Maimiti, Christian halted at the words.

"Run down and fetch my spyglass," he said to the girl.

A moment later he was climbing the ratlines, telescope in hand. One of the native men had preceded him aloft. His trained eyes made out the distant birds at a glance and then swept the horizon north and south. "Terns," he said, as Christian lowered his glass. "There are albacore yonder. The land will be close."

Christian nodded. "The ship sails slowly," he remarked. "Launch a canoe and try to catch some fish. You and two others."

The native climbed down swiftly to the deck, calling to his companions: "Fetch our rods, and the sinnet for the outrigger!"

The people off watch gathered while the Polynesian men fetched from the forecastle their stout rods of bamboo, equipped with handmade lines and curious lures of mother-of-pearl. The cross-booms were already fast to the outrigger float; they laid them on the gunwales of the long, sharp dugout canoe, and made them fast with a few quick turns of cord. They lowered her over the side, and a moment later she glided swiftly ahead of the ship.

The *Bounty* held her course, moving languidly over the calm sea. The canoe drew ahead fast, but at the end of an hour the ship was again abreast. One man was angling while the two paddlers drove the light vessel back and forth in the midst of a vast shoal of albacore. A cloud of sea birds hovered overhead, the gannets diving with folded wings, while the black noddy-terns fluttered down in companies each time the fish drove the small fry to the surface. Schools of tiny mullet and squid skipped this way and that in frenzied fear, snapped at by the fierce albacore below and the eager beaks of the birds. The angler stood in the stern of the canoe, trailing his lure of pearl shell far aft in the wake. Time after time the watchers on the ship saw the stiff rod bend suddenly as he braced himself to heave a struggling albacore of thirty or forty pounds into the canoe.

While the people of the *Bounty* gazed eagerly on this spectacle, one of the native men began to kindle a fire for cooking the fish. It was plain that there would be enough and to spare for all hands. Presently the canoe came alongside and two or three dozen large albacore were tossed on deck. Alexander Smith had relieved the man at the masthead, and now, while all hands were making ready for a meal, he hailed the deck exultantly: "Land ho-o-o!"

Men and women sprang into the rigging to stare ahead. Christian again went aloft, to settle himself beside Smith and focus his telescope on the horizon before the ship. The southerly swell caused an undulation along the line where sea met sky, but at one point, directly ahead, the moving line was interrupted. A triangle, dark and so infinitely small that none but the keenest of eyes could have made it out, rose above the sea. With an arm about the mast and his glass well braced, Christian gazed ahead for some time.

"By God, Smith!" he remarked. "You've a pair of eyes!"

The young seaman smiled. "Will it be Pitcairn's Island, sir?" he asked.

"I believe so," replied Christian absently.

The land was still far distant. The wind freshened toward midday, and after their dinner of fish all hands gazed ahead at the rugged island mounting steadily above the horizon. The natives, incapable of concern over the future, regarded the spectacle with pleased interest, but among the white men there was more than one sullen and gloomy face.

While the island changed form as it rose higher and higher before the ship, Christian sat in his cabin on the lower deck. With him were two of the Polynesian men, leaders of the others, whom he had asked to meet him there.

Minarii, a native of Tahiti, was a man of huge frame, with a bold, stern countenance and the assured, easy bearing of a man of rank. His voice was deep and powerful, his body covered with tattooing in curious and intricate designs, and his thick, iron-grey hair confined by a turban of white bark cloth. His companion, Tetahiti, was a young chief from Tupuai, who had left his island because of the friendship he felt for Christian, and because he knew that this same friendship would have cost him his life had he remained behind when the ship set sail. The people of Tupuai were bitterly hostile to the whites; good fortune alone had enabled the mutineers to leave the island without loss of life. Tetahiti was a powerfully made man, though of slighter build than Minarii; his features were more gently moulded, and his expression less severe. Both had been told that the *Bounty* was seeking an island where a settlement might be formed; now Christian was explaining to them the true state of affairs. They waited for him to speak.

"Minarii, Tetahiti," he said at last, "there is something I want you two and the other Maoris to know. We have been shipmates; if the land ahead of us proves hospitable, we shall soon be close neighbours ashore. For reasons of policy, I have

not felt free to tell you the whole truth till now. Too much talk is not good on shipboard. You understand?"

They nodded, waiting for him to proceed.

"Bligh, who told the people of Tahiti that he was Captain Cook's son, lied to them. He was not a chief in his own land, nor had he the fairness and dignity of a chief. Raised to a position of authority, he became haughty, tyrannical, and cruel. You must have heard tales in Tahiti of how he punished his men by whipping them till the blood ran down their backs. His conduct to all grew unbearable. As captain, he drew his authority direct from King George, and used it to starve his crew in the midst of plenty, and to abuse his officers while the men under them stood close by."

Minarii smiled grimly. "I understand," he said. "You killed him and took the ship."

"No. I resolved to seize the ship, put him in irons, and let our King judge between us. But the men had suffered too much at Bligh's hands. For sixteen moons they had been treated as no Maori would treat his dog, and their blood was hot. To save Bligh's life, I put the large boat overboard and sent him into her, with certain men who wished to go with him. We gave them food and water, and I hope for the sake of the others that they may reach England. As for us, our action has made us outlaws to be hunted down, and when our King learns of it he will send a ship to search this sea. You and the others knew that we were looking for an island, remote and little known, on which to settle; now you know the reason. We have found the island. Minarii, shall you be content to remain there? If the place is suitable, we go no further."

The chief nodded slightly. "I shall be content," he said.

"And you, Tetahiti?"

"I can never return to my own land," the other replied. "Where you lead, I shall follow."

Four bells had sounded when Christian came on deck, and

the *Bounty* was drawing near the land. At a distance of about a league, it bore from east-by-north to east-by-south, and presented the appearance of a tall ridge, with a small peak at either end. The southern peak rose to a height of not less than a thousand feet and sloped more gently to the sea; its northern neighbour was flanked by dizzy precipices, against which the waves broke and spouted high. Two watercourses, smothered in rich vegetation, made their way down to the sea, and midway between the peaks a slender thread of white marked where a cascade plunged over a cliff. The coast was studded with forbidding rocks, those to the north and south rising high above the spray of breaking seas. Clouds of sea fowl passed this way and that above the ship, regarding the intruders on their solitude with incurious eyes. Everywhere, save on the precipices where the birds reared their young, the island was of the richest green, for vegetation flourished luxuriantly on its volcanic soil, watered by abundant rains. No feature of the place escaped the native passengers, and exclamations of surprise and pleasure came from where they were grouped at the rail.

The leadsman began to call off the depths as the water shoaled. They had thirty fathoms when the northern extremity of the island was still half a mile distant, and Christian ordered the sails trimmed so that the ship might steer southeast along the coast. The wind was cut off as she drew abreast of the northern peak; the *Bounty* moved slowly on, propelled by the cat's-paws that came down off the land. The shore, about four cables distant, rose steeply to a height of two hundred feet or more, and there was scarcely a man on board who did not exclaim at the prospect now revealed. Between the westerly mountains and others perceived to the east lay a broad, gently sloping hollow, broken by small valleys and framed on three sides by ridges and peaks. Here were many hundreds of acres of rich wooded land, sheltered on all sides but the northern one.

The sea was calm. Before an hour had passed, the sails

were clewed up and the *Bounty* dropped anchor in twenty fathoms, off a cove where it seemed that a boat might land and the steep green bluffs be scaled.

Standing on the quarter-deck, Christian turned to Young. "I fancy we shall find no better landing place, though we have not seen the southern coast. I shall take three of the Indians and explore it now. Stand offshore if the wind shifts; we can fend for ourselves."

The smaller canoe was soon over the side, with Tetahiti and two other men as paddlers. Christian seated himself in the bow, and the natives sent the little vessel gliding swiftly away from the ship. Passing between an isolated rock and the cape at the eastern extremity of the cove, the canoe skirted the foot of a small wooded valley, where huge old trees rose above an undergrowth of ferns and flowering shrubs. The pandanus, or screw pine, grew everywhere above the water's edge, its thorny leaves drenched in salt spray and its blossoms imparting a delicious fragrance to the air. Presently they rounded the easternmost cape of the island, which fell precipitously into the sea, here studded with great rocks about which the surges broke.

As the canoe turned westward, a shallow, half-moon bay revealed itself to Christian's eyes. The southerly swell broke with great violence here, on a narrow beach of sand at the foot of perpendicular cliffs, unscalable without the aid of ropes let down from above. A cloud of sea fowl hovered along the face of the cliffs, so high overhead that their cries were inaudible in the lulls of the breakers.

"An ill place!" said Tetahiti, as the canoe rose high on a swell and the beach was seen, half veiled by smoking seas. "No man could climb out, though a lizard might."

"Keep on," ordered Christian. "Let us see what is beyond."

The southern coast of the island was iron-bound everywhere, set with jagged rocks offshore and rising in precipices scarcely less stupendous than those flanking the half moon bay. On the western side there was a small indentation where

a boat might have effected a landing in calm weather, but when they had completed the circuit of the island Christian knew that the cove off which the ship lay at anchor offered the only feasible landing place.

The sun was setting as he came on board the *Bounty;* he ordered the anchor up and the sails loosed to stand off to windward for the night.

CHAPTER II

AT DAWN the following morning the island bore north, distant about three leagues. Close-hauled, on the larboard tack, the ship slid smoothly through the calm sea, and toward seven o'clock she passed the southeastern extremity of the island. About half a mile to the northwest, after rounding this point, was the shallow indentation where the *Bounty* had been anchored the previous day. Sounding continuously, with lookouts aloft and in the bows, she approached the land and again came to anchor half a mile from the beach, in seventeen fathoms.

Christian and Young stood together on the quarter-deck while the sails were clewed up and furled. With his spyglass Christian examined the foreshore carefully. Presently he turned to his companion.

"I shall be on shore the greater part of the day," he said. "In case of any change in the weather, heave short and be ready to stand off."

"Yes, sir."

"We are fortunate in having this southwesterly breeze; I only pray that it may hold."

"It will, never doubt it," Young replied. "The sky promises that."

"Be good enough to have one of the Indian canoes put into the water."

This order was quickly complied with, and a few minutes later Christian, taking with him Minarii, Alexander Smith, Brown, the gardener, and two of the women, Maimiti and Moetua, set off for the beach. Minarii sat at the steering paddle. The bay was strewn with huge boulders against which the sea broke violently. To the right and left, walls of rock fell all but sheer to the cove, but midway along it they discovered a ribbon of shingly beach, the only spot where a boat might be landed in safety. Steering with great skill, directing the movements of the paddlers and watching the following seas, Minarii guided the canoe toward this spot. They waited for some time just beyond the break of the surf, then, seizing a favourable opportunity, they came in on the crest of a long wave, and, immediately the canoe had grounded, they sprang out and drew it up beyond reach of the surf.

Directly before them rose a steep, heavily wooded slope, the broken-down remnant of what must once have been a wall of rock. Casuarina trees, some of them of immense size, grew here and there, the lacy foliage continually wet with spray. Coconut palms and the screw pine raised their tufted tops above the tangle of vegetation, and ferns of many varieties grew in the dense shade. For a moment the members of the party gazed about them without speaking; then Maimiti, with an exclamation of pleasure, made her way quickly to a bush that grew in a cleft among the rocks. She returned with a branch covered with glossy leaves and small white blossoms of a waxlike texture. She held them against her face, breathing in their delicate fragrance.

"It is the *tefano,*" she said, turning to Christian. Moetua was equally delighted, and the two women immediately gathered an armful of the blossoms and sat down to make wreaths for their hair.

"We shall be happy in this place," said Moetua. "See! There

are pandanus trees and the *aito* and *purau* everywhere. Almost it might be Tahiti itself."

"But when you look seaward it is not like Tahiti," Maimiti added wistfully. "There is no reef. We shall miss our still lagoons. And where are the rivers? There can be none, surely, on so small an island that falls so steeply to the sea."

"No," said Christian. "We shall find no rivers like those of Tahiti; but there will be brooks in some of these ravines. What do you think, Minarii?"

The Tahitian nodded. "We shall not lack for water," he said. "It is a good land; the thick bush growing even here among the rocks proves that. Our taro and yams and sweet potatoes will do well in this soil. We may even find them growing here in a wild state; and there are sure to be plantains in the ravines."

Christian threw back his head, gazing at the green wall of vegetation rising so steeply above them. "We shall have work and to spare in clearing the land for our plantations," he said.

"I'll take to it kindly, for one," Smith replied warmly. "It does my heart good to smell the land again. Brown and me is a pair will be pleased to quit ship here, if that's your mind, sir. Eh, Will?"

The gardener nodded. "Shall we stop, sir?" he asked. "Is this Pitcairn's Island, do ye think?"

"I'm convinced of it," Christian replied. "It is far off the position marked for it on Captain Carteret's chart, but it must be the island he sighted. Whether we shall stay remains to be seen."

The women had now finished making their wreaths. They pressed them down over their thick black hair, which hung loosely over their shoulders. Christian gazed at them admiringly, thinking he had never seen a more beautiful sight than those two made in their kirtles of tapa cloth, with flecks of sunlight and shadows of leaves moving as the wind would have it across their faces and their slim brown bodies. Maimiti

rose quickly. "Let us go on," she said. "I am eager to see what lies beyond."

The party, led by Minarii, was soon toiling up the ridge, the natives, Smith among them, far in advance. Christian and Brown followed at a more leisurely pace, stopping now and then to examine the trees and plants around them. The ascent was steep indeed, and in places they found it necessary to pull themselves up by the roots of trees and bushes. Two hundred feet of steady climbing brought them to a gentler slope. Here the others were awaiting them.

Before them stretched a densely wooded country that seemed all but level, at first, after the steep climb to reach it. Far below was the sea, its colour of the deepest blue under the cloudless sky. In a southerly direction the land rose gently for a considerable distance, then with a steeper ascent as it approached the ridge which bounded their view on that side. To the northwest another ridge could be seen, culminating at either end in a mountain peak green to the summit, but the one to the north showed sections of bare perpendicular wall on the seaward side. The land before them was like a great plateau rather than a valley, traversed by half a dozen ravines, and lying at an angle, its high side resting upon the main southern ridge of the island, its lower side upon the cliffs that fronted the sea. The ridges to the west and south rose, as nearly as they could judge, five or six hundred feet above the place where they stood.

"The peak to the southwest must be all of a thousand feet above the sea," said Christian.

"Aye, sir," Smith replied. "We'll be high and safe here, that's sure. Ye'd little think, from below, there's such good land."

At a little distance before them the ground fell away to a small watercourse so heavily shaded by great trees that scarcely a ray of sunlight penetrated. Here they found a tiny stream of clear water and gladly halted to refresh themselves. Christian now divided his party.

"Minarii, do you and Moetua bear off to the left and climb the main ridge yonder. Smith, you and Brown follow the rise of the land to the westward; we must know what lies beyond. I will proceed along this northern rim of the island. Let us meet toward midday, farther along, somewhere below the peak you see before us. The island is so small that we can hardly go astray."

They then separated. Keeping the sea within view on the right, Christian proceeded with Maimiti in a northwesterly direction. Now and then they caught glimpses through the foliage of the mountain that rose before them, heavily wooded to the topmost pinnacle, but descending in sheer walls of rock on the seaward side. Save for the heavy booming of the surf, far below, the silence of the place seemed never to have been broken since the beginning of time; but a few moments later, as they were resting, seated on the trunk of a fallen tree, they heard a faint bird-call, often repeated, that seemed to come from far away. They were surprised to discover the bird itself, a small dust-coloured creature with a whitish breast, quite near at hand, darting among the undergrowth as it uttered its lonely monotonous cry. They saw no other land birds, no living creatures, in fact, save for a small brown rat, and a tiny iridescent lizard scurrying over the dead leaves or peering at them with bright eyes from the limbs of trees. Of a sudden Maimiti halted.

"There have been people here before us," she said.

"Here? Nonsense, Maimiti! What makes you think so?"

"I know it," she replied gravely. "It must have been long ago, but there was once a path where we are now walking."

Christian smiled incredulously. "I can't believe it," he said.

"Because you are not of our blood," the girl replied. "But Moetua would know, or Minarii. I felt this as we were climbing up from the landing place. Now I am sure of it. People of my own race have lived here at some time."

"Why have they gone, then?"

"Who knows?" she replied. "Perhaps it is not a happy place."

"Not happy? An island so rich and beautiful?"

"The people may have brought some old unhappiness with them. It is not often the land that is to blame; it is those who come."

"You can't be right, Maimiti," Christian said, after a moment of silence. "What could have brought them so far from any other land?"

"It is not only you white men with your great ships who make long voyages," she replied. "There is no land in all this great ocean that people of my blood have not found before you. Even here they have come."

"Perhaps. . . . Don't you think we shall be happy here?" he asked presently. "You're not sorry we came?"

"No . . ." She hesitated. "But it is so far away. . . . Shall we never go back to Tahiti?"

Christian shook his head. "Never. I told you that before we came," he added gently.

"I know. . . ." She glanced up with a wistful smile, her eyes misted with tears. "You must not mind if I think of Tahiti sometimes."

"Mind? Of course I shall not mind! . . . But we shall be happy here, Maimiti. I am sure of it. The land is strange to us now; but soon we shall have our houses built, and when our children come it will be home to us. You will never be sad, then."

The relationship between Christian and this daughter of Polynesian aristocrats was no casual or superficial one. It was an attachment that had its beginning shortly after the *Bounty's* first arrival at Tahiti, and which had deepened day by day during the months the vessel remained there, assembling her cargo of young breadfruit trees. During the long sojourn on the island, Christian had made a serious effort to learn the native speech, with such success that he was now able to converse in it with considerable fluency. The language

difficulty overcome, he had discovered that Maimiti was far more than the simple, unreflecting child of nature that he had, at first, supposed; but it was not until the time came when it was necessary for her to choose between him and giving up, forever, family and friends and all that had hitherto made life dear to her that he realized the depth of her loyalty and affection. There had been no hesitation on her part in deciding which it should be.

Presently she turned toward him again, making an attempt to smile. "Let us go on," she said. She took Christian's hand, as though for protection against the strangeness and silence of the place, and they proceeded slowly, peering into the thickets on either side, stopping frequently to explore some small glade where the dense foliage of the trees had prevented the undergrowth from thriving. Of a sudden Maimiti halted and gazed overhead. "Look!" she exclaimed. "*Itatae!*"

Coming from seaward, outlined in exquisite purity against the blue sky, were two snow-white terns. They watched them in silence for a moment.

"These are the birds I love most of all," said Maimiti. "Do you remember them at Tahiti? Always you see two together."

Christian nodded. "How close they come!" he said. "They seem to know you."

"Of course they know me! Have I never told you how I chose the *itatae* for my own birds when I was a little girl? Oh, the beautiful things! You will see: within a week I shall have them eating out of my hand."

She now looked about her with increasing interest and pleasure, pointing out to Christian various plants and trees and flowers familiar to her. Presently a parklike expanse, shaded by trees immemorially old, opened before them. On their right hand stood a gigantic banyan tree whose roots covered a great area of ground. Passing beyond this and descending the slope for a little way, they came to a knoll only a short distance above the place where the land fell steeply to the sea. It was an enchanting spot, fragrant with the odours

of growing, blossoming things, and cooled by the breeze that rustled through the foliage of great trees that hemmed it in on the seaward side. Beyond, to the north, they looked across a narrow valley to the mountain which cut off the view in that direction. Christian turned to his companion.

"Maimiti, this is the spot I would choose for our home."

She nodded. "I wished you to say that! It is the very place!"

"All of our houses can be scattered along this northern slope," he added, "and we are certain to find water in one of these small valleys."

Maimiti was now as light-hearted as she had been sad a little time before. They sat down on a grassy knoll and talked eagerly of plans for the future, of the precise spot where their house should stand; of the paths to be made through the forests, of the gardens to be planted, and the like.

At length they rose, and, crossing the deeply shaded expanse above, they came to a breadfruit tree which towered above the surrounding forest. It was the first they had seen. Another smaller tree had sprung from one of its roots, and by means of this Maimiti climbed quickly to the lower branches of the great one, which was loaded with fruit. She twisted off a dozen or more of the large green globes, tossing them down to Christian.

"We shall have a feast to-day," she called down. "Did you bring your fire-maker?"

Christian brought forth his flint and steel; they gathered twigs and leaves and dry sticks, and when the fire was burning briskly they placed the fruit in the midst of it to roast. When the rough green rinds had been blackened all round, they left the breadfruit among the hot ashes and again set out to explore further. Upon returning, an hour later, they found Minarii and Moetua squatting by the fire roasting sea birds' eggs which they had collected along the tops of the cliffs beyond the southern ridge. And Minarii had brought a cluster of green drinking coconuts and a bunch of fine plantains he had found in the depths of the valley.

"We shall eat well to-day," he said. "It is a rich land we have found. We have no need to seek further."

"So I think," Christian replied. "Did you climb the ridge to the south'ard?"

"Yes. There is good land beyond, better even than that in this valley. I was surprised to find it so; but on this side is where we should live."

"That is good news, Minarii," Christian replied. "I, too, supposed that the sea lay directly below the southern ridge. How wide are the lands beyond?"

"In some places they extend for all of five or six hundred paces, sloping gently down from the ridge to the high cliffs that front the sea."

"Have you found any streams?"

"One. It is small, but the water is good."

"We shall not lack for sea fowls' eggs," said Moetua. "All the cliffs on that southern side are filled with crannies where they nest. I collected these in little time, but there is danger in gathering them; it made my eyes swim to look below."

It was now getting on toward midday, but the lofty trees spread for them their grateful shade, and the breeze, though light, was refreshingly cool. While preparations for the meal went forward, Christian again strolled to the seaward side of the plateau, where he had a view of the full half-circle of the horizon. Far below, to the east, he could see the *Bounty*, looking small indeed under the cliffs, against the wide background of empty sea. Her anchors were holding well. Having satisfied himself that the ship had maintained her position, he seated himself with his back to a tree, hands clasped around his knees, and remained thus until he heard Maimiti's voice calling him from above. He rose and went slowly back to the others.

Their meal was under way before Smith and Brown appeared. Both were enthusiastic over what they had found.

"It's as fine a little place as ever I see, Mr. Christian," Smith said, warmly. "We climbed to the top of that peak, yonder."

"How much land is there beyond the western ridge?"

"Little enough, sir, and what there is, is all rocks and gullies."

Christian turned to Brown. "What have you found in the way of useful plants and trees?"

"I needn't speak of the coconut palms and the pandanus, sir. Ye've seen for yourself that there's more than enough for our needs. Then there's *miro* and sandalwood, and the *tutui* . . ."

"The candlenut? There is a useful find indeed!"

"There's a good few scattered about; and the *miro*, as ye know, is a fine wood for house-building. As for food plants, it's as well we've a stock on board. We've found wild yams and a kind of taro, but little else."

"You could overlook the whole of the island from the peak?"

"Aye, sir," Smith replied.

"What would you say of its extent, judging roughly?"

"It can't be much over two miles long, sir, if that; and about half as wide. What do ye think, Will?"

"Aye, it's about that," the gardener replied. "There's a fine grove of breadfruit on the shelf of land ye can see from here, sir, but I'm as glad we brought some young trees with us. We've varieties I didn't see, here, in looking about this morning."

"Have you found any evidence that people have been here before us?"

"To say the truth, sir, I never even thought of that," Brown replied.

"Ye don't mean white men, Mr. Christian?" Smith asked.

"No. We are the first, I am sure, who have ever landed here; but Maimiti thinks Indians have once inhabited the place."

"If they did, it must have been long ago. Never a trace did we see of anything of the kind."

Christian now turned to Minarii, addressing him in the native tongue. "Minarii, is it possible, do you think, that Maoris have ever visited this land?"

"É," he remarked, quietly. "There has been a settlement here, where we now are. It is the place that would have been chosen for a village, and that great banyan tree has been planted. The breadfruit as well."

Maimiti turned to Christian. "You see?" she said. "Did I not tell you so?"

Christian smiled, incredulously. "I have great respect for your judgment, Minarii," he said, "but in this case I am sure you are wrong. Before us sea birds alone have inhabited this land."

Minarii inserted his hand into the twist of tapa at his waist and drew forth a small stone adze, beautifully made and ground to perfect smoothness. "Then the sea fowl brought that?" he asked.

It was late afternoon when the party returned to the ship. Smith and Brown went forward, where they were surrounded at once by the other seamen, eager for a report of conditions ashore. Christian retired to his cabin and supped there, alone. Toward sunset he joined Young on deck. For some time he paced up and down, then halted by his companion, who stood at the rail gazing at the high slopes before them, all golden now in the light of the sinking sun.

"We will call this 'Bounty Bay,' Mr. Young, unless you have a better suggestion?"

"I was thinking that 'Christian's Landing' would be a suitable name, sir."

Christian shook his head. "I wish my name to be attached to nothing here," he said, "not even to one of those rocks offshore. Tell me," he added, "now that we have found the place, how do you feel about it?"

"That we might have searched the Pacific over without having discovered a more suitable one."

"There is no real anchorage here," Christian went on. "The place where we lie is the best the island affords. You can imagine what this cove will be in a northerly blow. No ship would be safe for ten minutes in such an exposed position. You realize what a decision to remain here means? Our voyages are over until our last day."

"That is of course, sir," Young replied, quietly.

"And you are content that it shall be so?"

"Quite."

Christian turned his head and gave him a swift, scrutinizing glance. When he spoke again it was not as the *Bounty's* captain addressing an inferior officer. There was a friendly gleam in his eyes, and a note of appeal in his voice.

"Old friend," he said, "from this time on, let there be no more ship's formality between us. The success or failure of the little colony we shall plant here depends largely upon us. I shall need your help badly, and it may be that you will need mine. Whatever happens, let us stand by each other."

"That we shall," Young replied warmly, "and there is my hand upon it."

Christian seized and pressed it cordially. "We have rough men to handle," he continued. "It was to be expected that the more unruly ones should have come here with me. . . . Tell me frankly, why did you come? There was no need. You took no part in the mutiny; you might have remained on Tahiti with the other innocent men to wait for a ship to take you home. Once there, a court-martial would certainly have vindicated you."

"Let me assure you of this," Young replied, "I have never regretted my decision."

Christian turned again to look at him. "You mean that," he said, "I can see that you do. And yet, when I think what you have given up to throw in your lot with me . . ."

"Do you remember Van Diemen's Land," Young asked, "where Bligh had me seized up at one of the guns and flogged?"

"I am not likely to forget that," Christian replied, grimly.

"I was a mutineer at heart from that day," Young went on. "I have never told you of this, but, had there been an opportunity, I would have deserted the ship before we sailed from Tahiti—for home, as we then thought. As you know, I slept through the whole of the mutiny. When I was awakened and ordered on deck, the thing was done, Bligh and those who went with him had been cast adrift, and the launch was far astern. Had I known in advance what you meant to do . . ." He paused. "I will not say, Christian, that I would have given you my active support. I think I should have lacked the courage . . ."

"Let us speak no more of that," Christian interrupted. "You are here. You little know what comfort that thought brings me. . . . I was thinking," he added presently, "what a paradise Pitcairn's Island might prove, could we have chosen our companions here. We have an opportunity such as chance rarely grants to men—to form a little world cut off from the rest of mankind, and to rear our children in complete ignorance of any life save what they will find on this small island."

Young nodded. "Whom would you have chosen, could you have had your wish, from the *Bounty's* original company?"

"I prefer not to think of the matter," Christian replied, gloomily. "We must do what we can with those we have. The Indians are fine fellows, with one or, perhaps, two exceptions. I have few regrets concerning them. As for the men of our own blood . . ." He broke off, leaving the sentence unfinished.

"Brown and Alex Smith might have been chosen in any event," Young remarked.

"I should have accepted them. They are good men, both."

"And their respect and admiration for you are very near idolatry," Young added, with a faint smile. "That of Smith in particular; you've a loyal henchman there."

"I'm glad you think so. I've a great liking for Smith. What do you know of him? Where does he come from?"

"I've learned more about him these past three months than I did during the whole of the voyage out from England. He was a lighterman on the Thames at the time Bligh was signing on the *Bounty* men, but he hated the business and was only waiting for a suitable opportunity to go to sea again. He has told me that his true name is Adams, John Adams, and that he was born and reared in a foundling home near London."

"Adams, you say? That's curious! Why did he change his name?"

"He volunteered no information on that score, and I didn't feel free to question him."

"No, naturally not. Well, whatever scrape he may have been in, I'll warrant there was nothing mean or underhanded in his share of it."

"I'd be willing to take my oath on that," Young replied, heartily. "He's rough and uncouth, but you can depend upon him. He hasn't a tricky or a dishonest bone in his body."

"There is a decision we must make soon," Christian said, after a moment of silence. "It concerns the vessel."

"You mean to destroy her?"

"Yes. Do you agree to the plan?"

"Heartily."

"There is nothing else we can do, the island being what it is; but I want the suggestion to come from the men themselves. They must soon see the necessity, if they have not already."

"Supposing there were a safe anchorage?"

"Not even then should I have wanted to keep her. No, we must burn all bridges behind us. I fancy there is not a lonelier island in the Pacific, and yet the place is known, and there is always the possibility of its being visited. A ship can't be concealed, but once we are rid of the *Bounty* we can so place our settlement that no evidence of it will appear from

the sea. The landing is a dangerous one and not likely to be attempted by any vessel that may pass this way; certainly not if the place is thought to be uninhabited. We shall have little to fear, once we are rid of the vessel."

"May I make a suggestion?"

"Please do. Speak your mind to me at all times."

"The men are impatient, I know, to learn of your plans. Would it not be well to tell them, to-night, how the island impresses you?"

Christian reflected for a moment. "Good. I agree," he said. "Call them aft, will you?"

He paced the quarter-deck while Young was carrying out this order. The men, both white and brown, gathered in a half-circle by the mizzenmast to await Christian's pleasure. The women assembled behind them, peering over their shoulders and talking in subdued voices. It was a strange ship's company that gathered on the *Bounty's* deck to listen to the words of their leader.

"Before anything more is done," he began, "I wish to be sure that you are satisfied with this island as a home for us. You were all agreed that we should search for the place, and that, if we found it suitable, we should settle here. You will have learned from your shipmates who went ashore with me what the island has to offer us. Remember, if we go ashore, we go to stay. If any object, now is the time to speak."

There was an immediate response from several of the men.

"I'm for stopping, Mr. Christian."

"It's a snug little place. We couldn't wish for better, sir."

Mills was the first of the dissenting party to speak.

"It's not my notion of a snug little place."

"Why not?" Christian asked.

Addressed thus directly by his commanding officer, Mills shifted from one foot to the other, scowling uneasily at his companions.

"I've spoke my mind, Mr. Christian; it ain't my notion of a place, and I'll stand by that."

"But that's no reason, man! You must know why you're not satisfied. What is it that you object to?"

"He'd be satisfied with no place, Mr. Christian; that's the truth of it," Williams, the blacksmith, put in.

"You prefer Tahiti. Is that it?" Christian asked.

"I'm not sayin' I'd not go back if the chance was offered."

Christian regarded him in silence for a moment.

"Listen to me, Mills," he proceeded. "And the rest of you as well. I have spoken of this matter before. I will repeat what I've said, and for the last time. We are not English seamen in good standing, in our own ship, free to do as we choose and to go where we choose. We are fugitives from justice, guilty of the double crime of mutiny and piracy. That we will be searched for, as soon as the fact of the mutiny is known, is beyond question."

"Ye don't think old Bligh'll ever reach England, sir?" Martin interrupted.

Christian paused and glanced darkly at him.

"I could wish that he might," he said, "for the sake of the innocent men who went with him. As matters stand, it is not likely that any of them will ever again be heard of. Nevertheless, His Majesty will not suffer one of his vessels to disappear without ordering a wide and careful search to be made, to learn, if possible, her fate. A ship-of-war will be sent out for that purpose, and Tahiti will be her destination. There she will learn of the mutiny from those of our company who remained on that island. The Pacific will then be combed for our hiding place; every island considered at all likely as our refuge will be visited. Should we be discovered and taken, death will be the portion of every man of us. For my own part, I mean never to be taken."

"Nor I, sir!" Smith put in. Others of the mutineers added their voices to his. There was no doubt as to the general feeling concerning the necessity for a safe hiding place.

"Very well," Christian continued. "It is agreed, apparently, by all, or most of you, that you have no wish to swing at a

yardarm from one of His Majesty's ships-of-war. What, then, is best to be done? Surely it is to seek out some island unlikely to be visited for as long as we may live. We have found such an island; it lies before us. We are distant, here, more than a thousand miles from Tahiti, and far from the tracks of any vessel likely to cross the Pacific in whatever direction. It is a fertile and pleasant place; that you can see for yourselves. Our Indian friends, whose judgment I trust more than my own in such matters, say that it is capable of supplying all our needs. There are no inhabitants to molest us; our experiences at Tupuai will not be repeated here. To me it seems an ideal spot, and Mr. Young agrees that we might have searched the Pacific over without having found one better suited to men in our position. Now, then, reflect carefully. Shall we make our home here or shall we not? And those who are opposed must give better reasons than that of Mills."

"Is this to be for good, Mr. Christian?" McCoy asked.

"Yes. Let there be no mistake about that. I have already said that if we go ashore we go to stay."

"Then I don't favour it."

"For what reason?"

"The place is too sma'. We'd do better for ourselves on that island we raised after the mutiny, on our way to Tupuai."

"Rarotonga, you mean."

"Aye. It's a likelier place."

Christian reflected for a moment.

"I will say this, McCoy. I seriously considered taking the vessel to Rarotonga, but there are the best of reasons why I decided against the plan. The place is known to those of the *Bounty's* company who remained on Tahiti, and amongst them are men who will be sure to speak of it to the officers of whatever vessel may be sent in search of us. Furthermore, it is but little more than a hundred leagues from Tahiti. We could never feel safe there. . . . Have you anything further to say?"

He waited, glancing from one to another of the mutineers.

Mills avoided his gaze and stood with his arms folded, scowling at vacancy. Martin looked at Quintal and kicked him with his bare foot as though urging him to speak, but no further objections were offered.

"Very well, then. Those who favour choosing Pitcairn's Island as our home, show hands."

Five hands were lifted at once. McCoy, after a moment of hesitation, joined the affirmative vote. Martin followed.

"Well, Mills?" said Christian, sharply.

The old seaman raised his hand with an effort. "I can see it's best, Mr. Christian, but I deem it hard to be cut off for life on a rock the like o' this."

"You would find it harder still to be cut off at a rope's end," Christian replied, grimly.

"What's to be done with the ship, sir?" Martin asked.

"Burn her, I say." It was Smith who spoke.

"Aye, burn and scuttle her, Mr. Christian," said Williams. "There's no other way."

There was immediate dissent to this proposal on the part of both Martin and Mills, and for a moment all the seamen were shouting at once. Christian waited, then gave an order for silence.

"Not a man of you but is seaman enough to know that we can't keep the ship here," he said, quietly. "She must be dismantled and burned. What else could we do with her?"

The matter was discussed at some length, but it was plain to all that no other possibility offered itself, and when the question was put to a vote the show of hands was again unanimous.

"I have only one other thing to add," Christian said. "In matters of importance that concern us as a community, every man, from this day on, shall have his vote. All questions shall be decided by the will of the majority. Are you agreed to this?"

All were in favour of the proposal, and Christian, having admonished them to remember this in the future, dismissed

them. When they had gone, Young turned to his commander.

"For their own good, Christian, you have been too generous."

"In granting them a voice in our affairs?"

"Yes. I think ultimate decisions should rest with you."

"I well realize the danger," Christian replied; "but there is no alternative. I alone am the cause of their being here. Had I not incited them to mutiny, the *Bounty* would now be nearing England—home." He broke off, staring gloomily at the land. "That thought must be often in their minds."

"They were your eager assistants," Young replied. "Not one of them joined you against his will."

"I know. Nevertheless, I swept them into action on the spur of the moment. They had no time to reflect upon the consequences. No, Edward, I owe the meanest man among them whatever compensation is now possible. Justice demands that I give each of them a voice in our affairs; yes, even though I know it to be to their own hurt. But you and I, together, can, I hope, direct them to wise decisions."

The sun had now set and the silence of the land seemed to flow outward to meet the silence of the sea. High overhead, sea birds in countless numbers floated to and fro with lonely cries in the still air, their wings catching the light streaming up from beyond the horizon. The *Bounty* rocked gently over the long smooth undulations sweeping in from the open sea.

At length Christian turned from the rail. "It is a peaceful spot, Edward," he said. "God grant that we may keep it so!"

CHAPTER III

THE *Bounty's* people were astir with the first light of day, and preparations for disembarking supplies went rapidly forward. The mutineers, with the exception of Brown, the gardener, were to remain on board under Young's charge, sending the supplies ashore. This done, they were to proceed with the dismantling of the vessel. The native men and most of the women were to constitute the beach party, transporting cargo to the landing place by means of the ship's cutters and two canoes brought from Tahiti. As soon as a path had been made, they were to carry the stores on to the site above the cove selected for the temporary settlement. Williams, the blacksmith, had converted some cutlasses into bush knives by filing off the upper part of the long blades. Provided with these, and with axes, mattocks, and spades, Minarii and two of his native companions were soon hard at work on shore, hacking through the dense thickets and digging out a zigzag trail to the level ground above.

Although the *Bounty's* stores had been shared with the mutineers who remained on Tahiti, there was still a generous amount on board: casks of spirits, salt beef and pork, dried peas and beans, an abundant supply of clothing, kegs of powder and nails, iron for blacksmith work, lead for musket balls, and the like. There were also fourteen muskets and a number of pistols. The livestock consisted of half a dozen large crates of fowls, twenty sows, two of which had farrowed during the voyage, five boars, and three goats. The island being small, it was decided to free both the fowls and the animals and let them fend for themselves until the work of housebuilding was under way.

The weather was all that could be desired; the sky cloudless, the breeze light and from the southwest. So it remained for five days. By the end of that time the precious stock of plants and animals had been carried ashore as well as most of the ship's provisions, and shelters made of the *Bounty's* spare sails had been erected on a spot overlooking the cove.

An incident occurred at this time which aroused intense excitement among the Maori members of the company. It was an immemorial custom, among the Polynesians, when migrating from one land to another, to carry with them several sa-

cred stones from their ancestral *maraes,* or temples, to be used to consecrate their temples in a new land. The Tahitians had brought with them two such stones from the *marae* of Fareroi, on the northern coast of their homeland. Minarii, the chief in whose charge they were, had brought them on deck to be taken ashore, and Martin, seeing them at the gangway and knowing little and caring less of their significance to the natives, had thrown them overboard. The native men were all ashore at the time, but Martin's act had been witnessed by some of the women, who were horrified at what he had done. One of them leaped overboard and swam to the beach, informing the men of what had happened. They returned in all haste, and the white seamen, forward, resolved to brazen out the sacrilegious act performed by Martin. A pitched battle was averted only by the quick-wittedness of Maimiti and the tactfulness of Young, who had the liking and respect of the native men. Fortunately, the stones could still be dimly seen lying on the white sand below the vessel, and it was the work of only a few minutes to dive, secure them with lines, and draw them up. This done, peace was restored and the natives returned to their work ashore.

On the morning of the fifth day the wind shifted to the northeast and blew freshly into the cove. All had agreed that the vessel was to be beached as soon as the wind favoured, and Young now put everything in readiness for the *Bounty's* last brief voyage. Christian, who had spent the night ashore, returned at once. Most of the native women were aboard at this time and the mutineers were at their stations, waiting, talking in low voices among themselves. Christian clambered over the rail, glanced briefly around, and went to the wheel.

"It could not have happened better for us, Ned," he said quietly. "There's been no trouble aboard?"

"Thus far, no," Young replied. "We'll have her ashore before Mills gathers his wits together. I've kept Martin working aft with me until a moment ago."

Christian called to the men forward. "Stand by to back the fore-topmast staysail!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Break out the anchors!"

The men at the windlass heaved lustily, their sunburned backs gleaming with sweat. The stronger of the women assisted at this task, while others ran aloft to loose the foretopsail. With her staysail backed, the vessel swung slowly around, the topsail filled, and, while the anchors were catted, the ship gathered way and drove quietly on toward the beach.

The spot selected for running the vessel ashore lay under the lofty crag, later called Ship-Landing Point, on the left side of the cove. Yielding the wheel to Young, Christian now went forward to direct the vessel's course. It was a tense moment for all the *Bounty's* company; men and women alike lined the bulwarks, gazing ahead across the narrowing strip of water. Martin, McCoy, and Quintal stood together on the larboard side.

Martin shook his head, gloomily. "Mark my word, mates! Many's the time we'll rue this day afore we're done!"

Quintal thumped him on the back. "Over the side with 'ee, Isaac, and swim back to Tahiti if ye've a mind that way. I'm for stoppin'."

"Aye, ye was easy won over, Matt Quintal," Martin replied. "It's all for the best, is it? We'll see afore the year's out. . . . God a mercy! There's bottom!"

The vessel, still a quarter of a mile from shore, struck lightly. The rock could be seen, but it was at such a depth that it no more than scraped the hull gently; in a few seconds she was clear of it, but her end was near. Riding more and more violently to the onshore swell, she approached two rocks, barely awash and about four fathoms apart. A moment later the ground swell carried her swiftly forward, lifting her bow high, and she struck heavily.

The impact was both downward and forward; with her own movement and the sea to help her, she slid on until her

bow was lifted two or three feet. There, by a lucky chance, she stuck, so firmly wedged that the sea could drive her no further. The broken water foamed around her, and now and then a heavier swell, breaking under her counter, showered her decks with spray.

No time was lost in making the vessel as secure as possible. The rocks where she struck lay at about thirty yards from the beach, and were protected in a southeasterly direction by the cliff that formed that side of the cove. Two hawsers were now carried from the bow to the shore and made fast to trees. The vessel remained in the position in which she had struck, canted at a slight angle to starboard. Christian, having satisfied himself that she was as secure as he could make her, set the men to work at once at the task of dismantling.

There was no respite for anyone during the following week. The topgallant masts were sent down as soon as the ship was beached. The topmasts now followed, whereupon the fore, main, and mizzenmasts were cut into suitable lengths for handling and for use as lumber ashore. Most of the men were employed on board, and the women, excellent swimmers, helped to raft the timbers through the surf. So steep was the slope above the landing beach that it was necessary to dig out the hillside and bank up the earth so that the timbers and planking might be stacked beyond reach of the sea until such time as they could be carried on to the settlement. Realizing the need for haste, all worked with a will. Fortunately, the shift in wind had been no forerunner of heavy weather. The breeze remained light and the sea fairly calm.

At length the vessel had been gutted of cabins, lockers, and storerooms, the deck planking had been removed, and the men were ripping off the heavy oaken strakes. Their task being so nearly finished, a day of rest was granted, and for the first time since the *Bounty* had left England, no one was aboard the vessel. An abundance of fish was caught during the morning, and with these, fresh breadfruit, plantains, and

wild yams the native men had found, the *Bounty's* people made the most satisfying meal they had enjoyed since leaving Tahiti. Never before had they eaten together, and the feeling of constraint was apparent to all. Christian and Young tried to put the men at ease, but the meal passed in silence for the most part. The women, according to Polynesian custom, waited until the men had finished before partaking of the food. Their hunger satisfied, the men drew apart and lay in the shade, some sleeping, some talking in desultory fashion. Early in the afternoon, Martin, Mills, and McCoy, who had seen little of the island thus far, set out to explore it with Alexander Smith as their guide.

They toiled slowly on into the depths of the valley, making their way with difficulty through the dense forests and vine-entangled thickets. An hour had passed before they reached the ridge overlooking the western side of the island. The breeze was refreshingly cool at that height, and they seated themselves in a shady spot overlooking the wild green lands below. No sound was heard save their own laboured breathing and the gentle rustling of the wind through the trees that shaded them. Mills sat with his arms crossed on his knees, gazing morosely into the depths of the thickets beneath them.

"And this is what Christian's brought us to!" he said. "There's what we can see from here, and no more."

"There's room enough," said McCoy.

"Room? Ye're easy pleased," Martin put in, gloomily. "A bloody rock, I call it!"

"Aye, Tahiti's the place," said Smith, scornfully. "Ye'd have us all go back there to be took by the first ship that comes out from England. Ye're perishin' to be choked off at a rope's end, Isaac. None o' that for me!"

McCoy nodded. "It's no such a grand place for size, this Pitcairn's Island; but Christian's right—it's safe. We'll never be found."

"And here we'll bide to our last day!" said Mills. "Have 'ee thought o' that, shipmates?" He smote his horny palms to-

gether. "God's curse on the pack of us! What fools we've been to break up the ship!"

McCoy sat up abruptly. "Hearken to me, John. Ye and Isaac had your chance to stay at Tahiti, but I mind me weel ye was all for comin' awa' with the rest of us to a safer place. And now we've found it, ye'll nae hae it. And what would ye hae done with the ship? Hoist her three hunnerd feet up the rocks? Where could we keep her?"

"It's as Christian says," Smith added. "We're not free to go where we like."

"And whose fault is that?" Mills replied. "If he'd minded his own bloody business . . ."

"Aye," said Martin, "we'd ha' been home by now, or near it. We've a deal to be thankful for to Mr. Fletcher Christian!"

"I'd like well to hear ye tell him that," said Smith. "Ye'll be sayin' next he drove us into the mutiny. There was no man more willin' than yerself, Isaac Martin, to seize the ship."

"That's truth," said McCoy. "Give Christian his due. We was all of a mind, there."

"The man's clean daft. Is there one of ye can't see it?"

"Daft! . . ."

"Sit ye quiet, Alex. So he is, and we've all been daft with him. He's queer by nature, that's my belief, and since we took the ship he thinks the world ain't big enough to hide him and us in. He's a master talker when he's a mind to talk; that I'll say, else he'd never coaxed a man of us off Tahiti. What if a ship did come there? Couldn't we ha' hid in the mountains? There's places aplenty where God himself couldn't ha' found us. Or if we was afeared o' that, we'd only to take a big Indian canoe and sail to Eimeo or one of them islands to leeward, a good hundred miles from Tahiti. We could ha' played hide-and-seek with a dozen King's ships till they got sick o' the chase and went off home. Then we'd live easy for ten or fifteen years till the next one came. Ain't that common sense? Speak up, Will!"

"Aye," McCoy replied, uneasily. "Like enough we might hae done it."

"Might! Damn my eyes! I've spoke o' ships because Christian's got ships on the brain, but I'll warrant them as stayed on Tahiti is as safe as we'll be here. Bligh'll never get home; Christian himself knows that. Does anyone but him think they'll send a ship out from England, halfway round the world, to see what's become of a little transport? Bloody likely! They'll mark her down as lost by the act o' God, and that'll be the end of it."

"Damn your blood!" said Mills, scowling at him. "Why couldn't ye ha' spoke like this to Christian? What's the good o' talkin' of it now?"

"Didn't I say we was daft, the lot of us? He's made us believe what he told us, and now we're done for."

"I'd like to see ye with a rope around your neck, waitin' to be hoisted aloft," said Smith. "It's not Christian ye'd be callin' daft then."

"Leave all that, lads," said McCoy. "We're to stop here now, and there's an end of it."

"And Christian's always to have his way, is he, whatever's done?" Martin asked.

"No, damn my eyes if he is!" Mills exclaimed. "We're jack-tars no longer, mates! Don't forget it! We're to have a say here as good as his own. He's promised it."

"There's no need to fash yersel'," said McCoy. "Wasn't it Christian that made the offer? And he'll bide by it; that we know."

"Who's sayin' he won't? But I want us to mind what he's said. . . . There's the rum, now. He's promised us our grog as long as it lasts, and we've had none these two days."

"Curse ye, John, for mindin' us o' that," said McCoy with a wry smile.

"And how would we have it with us workin' aboard and the spirits ashore?" said Smith.

"Aye, we're no settled yet," said McCoy. "Gie him time. We'll have our tot afore the evening."

"There's Alex would 'a had us go without altogether," said Mills.

"Ye've a thick skull, John. I was for makin' it last a good few years, and, as Christian says, ye can't do that and claim seamen's rations now. How much do we have? Ye know as well as myself, there's but the two puncheons—that's 164 gallons—and the three five-gallon cags."

"There's but eight of us to drink it, Alex. Brown's an abstainer."

"Aye," said McCoy, fervently. "God be thanked for Brown and the Indians! If they was fond o' grog . . ."

"Like it or not, none the Indians would have. We could see to that," said Mills.

"What I say is this," Smith continued. "Christian's give ye yer choice with the rum, and ye was all for yer half-pint a day. With eight of us to drink it, there's three and a half gallons a week. Afore the year's out, where'll we be for grog? And mind ye, there's no Deptford stores here. When it's gone, it's gone, and we'll do without for the rest of our lives."

"We'll no think of that, Alex," said McCoy. "We'll just relish what we've got and thank God it's no less. Mon, but I'd like my dram this minute!"

"What would ye say, messmates, to better than a dram for the four of us within the half-hour?" Martin asked. McCoy turned his head quickly.

"What's that ye say, Isaac? How should we hae it, and the rum stored in Christian's tent?"

"Oh, it's rum ye must have, is it?" Martin replied, with a sly smile. "Ye wouldn't look at brandy, I doubt? And fine old brandy, too?"

"What are ye drivin' at, man?" asked Mills, harshly. "Can't ye speak out plain? There's no brandy in the stores."

"Have I said it was in the stores?"

"Hark 'ee, Isaac! If ye've been thievin' from the medicine chest . . ."

"I've done no such thing. I'll tell 'ee, mates," he proceeded, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees. "A few days back while we was rippin' out the cabin partitions, I found eight quarts o' brandy under what was Old Sawbones' bedplace. I reckon he'd hid it away for his own use on a thirsty day. Anyway, there it was, packed careful in a canvas bag. Sez I when I found it: 'This'll belong to nobody but Isaac Martin. It's not ship's stores, it's finder's luck'; so I hid it away, and last night, after we'd come ashore, I found a safe place to stow it. But I'd no mind to be greedy with it. Ye'll allow that, for I've told what there was no need to tell if I'd meant to keep it."

"That's plain truth, God bless ye!" said McCoy. "If I'd found it I doubt but I'd been hog enough to drink the lot of it on the sly."

"Ye would so, Will," said Mills. "Ye've your good points, but sharin' anything in the way o' grog's not one of 'em. Where's this brandy now, Isaac?"

"We passed where I hid it on the way up here. It's a good piece from the camp. We can drink it somewheres thereabout and the rest none the wiser. What do ye say, Alex? Must I give it up as ship's stores?"

"That's no called for," McCoy put in earnestly.

"To my thinkin' it belongs to the ship and calls to be shared by all."

"There's three of us to say no to that," said Mills.

Smith rose. "Do as ye please," he said, "but it's a bad beginning ye're makin'. I'll go along and leave ye to it."

For a moment his companions looked after him in silence; then Martin called out, "If we're asked for, Alex, tell 'em we're walkin' the island and will sleep the night out."

Smith turned and waved his hand. A moment later he was lost to view in the forest, below.

McCoy shook his head admiringly. "He's a grand stub-

born character. And there's no man fonder of his grog; there's the wonder of it."

"If we'd the brandy with us we could ha' won him over for all his fine notions o' what's fair to the rest," Martin replied. He rose to his feet. "Well, shipmates?"

"Aye, lead on, Isaac," said McCoy, eagerly. "We'll no be laggin' far behind."

Once below the ridge they lost the breeze and sweat streamed from their half-naked bodies as they pushed their way through the tall fern into the thickets below. At length they reached the depths of the valley, where the air was moist and cool. Martin led the way, walking in the bed of a small stream. Presently he stopped and looked about him uncertainly. McCoy gave him an anxious glance. "Ye've not lost yer bearin's, Isaac?"

"It's somewhere hereabout," said Martin.

"Curdle ye, Isaac! Don't ye *know?* What like was the place where ye hid it?" said Mills.

"It was by just such a tree as this. There was a hollow by the roots and I put it there. . . . No, it'll be a step farther down."

They proceeded slowly, Martin glancing from side to side. Presently his face lighted up. "Yon's the one," he said, hurrying forward. A wide-spreading hibiscus tree that looked as ancient as the land itself overhung the stream, its branches filled with lemon-coloured blossoms. Martin knelt by the trunk and reached to his arm's length among the gnarled and twisted roots. The eyes of his companions glistened as he drew out, one by one, eight bottles. He sat back on his heels, glancing triumphantly up at them.

"God love ye, Isaac!" McCoy exclaimed, in an awed voice.

"And it's Old Sawbones' best brandy, mind ye that! Whereabout shall we go to drink it? We can't sit comfortable-like here."

McCoy and Martin carrying three bottles each, and Mills with two, they proceeded down the valley for another fifty

yards until they came to a little glade carpeted with fern and mottled with sunlight and shadow. At this point the tiny stream made a bend, and in the hollow against the further bank was a pool of still water, two or three yards wide. Here they seated themselves with grunts of satisfaction. Martin, taking a heavy clasp knife which he carried at his belt, knocked off the neck of a bottle with one clean even blow.

"Ye needna be so impatient as all that," said McCoy. "Bottles'll be handy things here."

Martin took a long pull before replying. "If there was one, there was fifteen dozen empties took ashore from the spirit room," he said. His companions were not far behind him in enjoying their first drink. McCoy, replacing the cork in his bottle, leaned it carefully against the tree beside him.

"Isaac, I'll never forget ye for this," he said. "It fair sickens me to think I could nae hae done the same if I'd found the brandy."

"Enjoy yourself hearty, Will. There's a plenty for all. I'll be blind drunk afore I've finished my second."

"We needna be hasty, there's a blessing," McCoy replied. "We've the night before us, and there's water close by to sober us up now and again."

"I'm as willin' Matt Quintal's not with us," said Mills.

"Aye," Martin replied. "There's a good shipmate when he's sober, but God spare me when he's had a drop too much!"

McCoy nodded. "There's no demon worse. D'ye mind his wreckin' the taproom at the Three Blackamoors the week we left Portsmouth? When it took five of us to get him down?"

"Mind! I've the marks on me yet," said Mills. . . . "God strike me! What's this?"

A tiny bouquet of flowers and fern, attached to a slender ribbon of bark, came dropping down through the foliage of the tree that shaded them. After dangling in front of Mills's nose for a moment, it was jerked up again. A ripple of laughter was heard, and, looking up quickly, they could see an elfin-like face peeping down from among the green leaves.

"It's your own wench, Mills! Damme if it's not!" said Martin.

Mills's rugged face softened. "So it is! Come out o' that, ye little witch! What are ye doin' here?" he called.

The girl descended to the lowest branch and perched there, out of reach, smiling down at them.

"She's a rare lass for roamin' the woods and mountains," said Mills, fondly. He held out his arms. "Jump, ye little mischty!" The girl leaped and he caught her in his arms. She was dressed in a kirtle of bark cloth reaching to her knees, and her thick hair fell in a rippling mass over her bare breasts and shoulders. Mills held her off at arm's length, gazing at her admiringly.

"Ye've spoke truth, John," said Martin. "She's a proper little witch."

"Aye," said McCoy, "ye've the prettiest lass o' the lot. I wonder she'd come awa' from her kinfolks and a' with a dour old stick the like o' yersel'."

Mills stroked her hair with his great rough hand. "Ye'll allow this, Will: ye've not seen her weepin' her eyes out for Tahiti like some o' the women."

"Nay, I'll grant that," said McCoy. "She seems a contented little body."

"I'd be pleased to say the like o' my wench, Susannah," said Martin, glumly. "She was willin' enough to come away with us, but now we're here she's fair sick to be home again. I've had no good of her since we beached the ship."

"It's in reason she should be, Isaac," McCoy replied. "My woman's the same way. Gie 'em time; they'll joggle down well enough. Mills's lass here'll learn 'em how to make the best of things, won't 'ee, Prudence?"

The girl's lips parted in a ready smile, revealing her small white teeth.

"How d'ye manage with her, John?" Martin asked. "Ye're the dumbest o' the lot for speakin' the Indian lingo. Is it sign talk ye use with her?"

"Never ye mind about that," Mills replied gruffly. "I've no call to learn their heathen jabber. Prudence takes to English like a pigeon picks up corn."

"They're a queer lot, all these Indian wenches," said Martin. "Why is it, now, they make such a fuss about cookin' the food?"

"It's against their heathen notions," said McCoy. "Young's told me how it is. Indian men won't have their womenfolks fussin' with their vittles. It's contrary to their religion, he says."

"I'll learn mine better'n that, once we're settled," Martin replied. "She'll bloody well do as I tell her."

"There's no need to beat it out of 'em, Isaac. They'll come around well enough, once they see how it is with us."

"Aye, give 'em time; they'll follow our ways," said Mills. "It ain't in reason to expect it at the start."

"And the men with 'em, if they know what's good for 'em."

"Ye'll go easy there, Isaac," said McCoy, "else we'll have a fine row on our hands one o' these days. Minarii and Tetahiti's a pair not to be trifled with."

"Say ye so, Will?" Mills replied grimly. "They'd best learn at the start who's masters here."

"Christian and Young treat 'em like they was as good as ourselves," said Martin.

"There's three we can do as we like with, but mind the others!" said McCoy. "Will the lass ken what we say, John?"

"She's not that far along. Will 'ee sing 'em a song, Prudence?" he asked.

The girl laughed and shook her head.

"It strikes me she knows more 'n she lets on," said Martin.

"I've been learnin' her one," Mills went on proudly, "Come, now, lass:—

> We hove our ship to when the wind was sou'west, boys,
> We hove our ship to for to strike soundings clear . . .

Ye mind how it goes? Come, there's a good wench."

After considerable urging the girl began singing in a soft, clear voice and a quaint pronunciation of the English words that delighted her listeners. She broke off and they cheered her heartily.

"Damme if that ain't pretty, now!" said Martin. "Give her a sup o' brandy, there's nothin' better to wet the whistle."

"Will 'ee have a taste, sweetheart?" said Mills, holding out the bottle. Prudence shook her head. "She don't fancy the stuff," he said, "and I ain't coaxed her to relish it."

"And it's right ye are," said McCoy, "seeing there's none too much for oursel's. If the women learned to booze we'd be bad off in no time for grog."

"What! A wench not drink with her fancy-man?" said Martin. "That's not jack-tar's fashion. Give her a sup."

"Aye, ye're right, Isaac," Mills replied. "It ain't natural on a spree. Come, lass, just a drop now."

He put his arm around her shoulders and drew her to him, holding the bottle to her lips. Thus urged, the girl closed her eyes and took two or three resolute swallows. Choking and sputtering, she pushed the bottle away and ran to the near-by stream. The three men laughed heartily.

"Fancy a dolly-mop at home makin' such a face as that over good brandy," said Martin.

"My old woman could drink her half-pint in two ticks, not winkin' an eye," said McCoy. . . . "There's an odd thing," he added; "I doubt I've thought of her twice this past twelve-month."

"Was ye wedded to her, Will?"

"Aye; all shipshape and Bristol-fashion. I liked her well enough, too."

"If I know women she'll not be sleepin' cold the nights ye've been away," said Mills.

"Aye, she'll hae dragged her anchor long afore this," McCoy replied. He raised his bottle. "Well, here's luck to her wherever she is."

Prudence returned from the brook and seated herself again at Mills's side.

"How is it with ye, lass?"

She laughed and pointed to the bottle. "More," she replied.

"There's a proper wench, John," said Martin, admiringly. "Damn my eyes if she won't make a proper boozer, give her time. All she needs is a sup o' water to follow."

Mills smiled down at her, proudly. "She'll do," he said. "Here, darlin', drink hearty."

"Ahoy there, mates!"

The three men looked up quickly to find Quintal standing behind them.

"God love us! It's Matt himself," said McCoy, uneasily.

"Come aboard, Matt; we was wishin' for ye," Martin put in with an attempt at heartiness.

Quintal squatted on the balls of his feet, his brawny hands on his knees, and grinned at them accusingly. "I've no doubt o' that," he said, "and searchin' for me far and wide. And where did ye find all this?"

"Never ye mind, Matt. We ain't thieved it. It's private stock. Would ye relish a taste?"

Quintal looked longingly at the bottle. "Ye know damned well I would. No, don't coax me, Isaac. I'd best leave it alone."

"That's common sense, lad," said McCoy. "Ye ken yer weakness. We'll no think the less o' ye for standin' out against it."

Quintal seated himself in the fern with his back to a tree. "Go on with your boozin'," he said. "What's this, Mills? The little wench ain't shakin' a cloth?"

"She's havin' her first spree," said Mills. "She's took to brandy that easy. Where's Jack Williams?"

"I've not seen him these two hours."

"Not alone, I'll warrant, wherever he is. And it won't be Fasto that's with him."

"Aye, he's fair crazed over that—what's her name? Hutia?"

"Why can't he keep to his own?" Mills growled.

"Where's the need, John?" Martin asked. "I mean to take a walk with Hutia myself, once we're well ashore."

"Aye, ye'll be a proper trouble-maker, Isaac, give ye half a chance," said Quintal. "The Indians can play that game as well as ourselves. I'm with John. Let each man keep to his own."

"Aye, aye, to that!" said McCoy. "Once there was trouble started 'twixt us and the Indians, there'd be the de'il and a' to pay. We've the chance, here, to live quiet and peaceful as ever we like. I say, let's take it and hold fast by it."

"And how long will the Indians hold by it, think ye?" asked Martin. "There's three without women. They'll be snoopin' after ours, fast enough."

"They'll leave mine alone," said Mills. "That I'll promise!"

"Say ye so, John? She'll be amongst the first. I'll warrant some of 'em 's had her before now."

Mills sprang to his knees and grasped Martin by the shoulders, shaking him violently.

"What d' ye say, ye devil? Speak up if ye've seen it! Tell me who, or I'll throttle ye!"

"Let me go, John! God's name! I've seen naught! I was only havin' a game wi' ye."

Mills glared at him suspiciously, but upon being reassured by the others he released him and resumed his place.

"Christian's gone aboard again," said Quintal; "him and Young."

"There, lads, we can take it easy," said McCoy in a relieved tone. "Prudence, will 'ee gie us a dance?" He turned to Mills: "Ye don't mind, John? It's a joy to see her."

"Mind? Why should he?" said Martin. "Come, Prudence, up wi' ye, wench!"

The fumes of the brandy had already mounted to the girl's brain and she was ready enough to comply. The men well understood the quick rhythmic slapping of hands upon knees that marked the time for the dances of the Maori women. Prudence danced proudly, with the natural abandon of the young savage, pausing before each of the men in turn, her slim bare arms akimbo, gazing tauntingly into their eyes as she went through the provocative movements of the dance. Of a sudden she broke off with a peal of laughter and ran lightly away into the thickets.

The men cheered heartily. "Come back, ye little imp," Martin called. "We'll have more o' the same."

"That we will," said McCoy. "John, I'll trade wenches wi' ye any day ye like."

"Keep your own," said Mills, with a harsh laugh. "I'm well pleased with what I got. Come back, ye little mischty! We've not done wi' ye yet."

The girl feigned reluctance for a moment; then, running back to Mills, she seized the bottle from his hands and drank again. Quintal watched her with fascinated eyes, nervously clasping and unclasping his great hairy hands. By this time the others were in the mellow state of the first stages of a spree.

"Matt Quintal," Martin exclaimed, "I'll see no man sit by with a dry gullet! Ye're perished for a drink, that's plain. Come, have a sup."

He passed over a bottle which Quintal accepted, hesitatingly. "Thank 'ee, Isaac. I'll have a taste and no more."

It was a generous taste that called for another, and yet another, freely offered by Mills and Martin. A few moments later Quintal reached across and seized the partly emptied bottle at McCoy's side.

"Damn yer blood, Matt!" McCoy exclaimed anxiously. "Easy, now! There's but eight quarts for the lot of us!" Quintal held him off with one hand while he drank. "D' ye grudge me a drink, ye hog?" he said, grinning. "Ye've another full bottle beside ye. I'll take that if ye'll like it better."

"It's nae that I grudge ye a drink, Matt, but there's enough in the bottle wi' what ye've had to make ye mad drunk, and well ye know it."

"Aye," said Mills. "Drink slow, Matt, and water it aplenty. It'll last the night if ye do that."

The afternoon was now well advanced, and the shadow of the high ridge to the westward had already crept beyond the little glade where the men were seated. They drank and lolled at their ease. There was no need, now, to urge Prudence to dance. Martin, Quintal, and McCoy slapped their knees and cheered her on as her gestures and postures became more and more wanton and provocative, but the expression on Mills's face was increasingly sullen. "That'll do, lass," he said, at length. "Off wi' ye, now. Go back wi' the others." But the girl laughed without heeding and, as though with intent to enrage him, passed him by without a glance, dancing before Quintal, gazing into his eyes with a sultry smile. Of a sudden Quintal seized her by the arm, pulling her into his lap, and gave her a bearlike hug, kissing her heartily. Mills sprang to his feet.

"Let her go, damn yer blood! Let her go, I say!"

The girl, sobered a little, began to struggle, but Quintal held her fast. He turned to Mills with a drunken leer. "She knows who's the best man, don't 'ee, wench?" Pinioning her arms, he kissed her again and again, but as Mills strode forward he got to his feet just in time to receive a blow in the face, delivered with all the strength of Mills's arm. The blood streamed from his nose and he staggered back, but recovered himself. An insane light came into his closely set blue eyes. He tossed the girl aside and clenched his enormous fists.

"Ye bloody bastard! I'll kill ye for that!" He gave Mills a blow on the chest that knocked him full length, but he was up again in a second. Rushing forward, he grappled Quintal around the waist. McCoy and Martin were both on their feet by this time, looking anxiously on.

"Stop it, lads!" McCoy called, earnestly. "Matt, think what ye do."

Glaring wildly, Quintal turned his head and gave McCoy a backhanded blow that sent him sprawling. Mills, for all his strength, was no match for the younger man, and in a moment Quintal had him down, with a knee on his chest and his fingers around his throat. Mills's eyes started from their sockets and his tongue protruded from his mouth.

"He'll kill him, Isaac! Pitch in!" McCoy shouted. The two men sprang upon his back, tugging and straining with all their strength. Quintal loosed one hand to seize Martin's arm, giving it such a wrench that he cried out with pain. Meanwhile, with the pressure partly relieved from his throat, Mills gave a desperate heave and, with the others to help him, managed to topple Quintal over. The three men were upon him at once, but their combined strength was not sufficient to keep him down. Breaking Mills's hold on his legs, he struggled to his feet, the others clinging to him desperately.

"God be praised! Here's Alex," McCoy panted. "Quick, mon!"

Before Quintal had time to turn his head, Smith's burly form was upon him with the others. He fought like a demon, but the odds were now too great. Presently he lay helpless, breathing heavily, his face streaming with sweat and blood, his eyes glaring insanely. "Will ye give in, ye devil?" said Smith. With a bellow of rage Quintal resumed the struggle, and his four antagonists needed all their strength to hold him. "Is there a bit o' line amongst ye?" Smith panted. "We must seize him up." "Prudence!" Mills called; "fetch some *purau* bark!" The girl, who had been looking on in terror, understood at once. Running to a near-by hibiscus tree, she bit through the tough smooth bark of some of the low-hanging branches and quickly ripped it down, in long strips. After a prolonged struggle the four men had Quintal bound, hand and foot. Presently his eyes closed and he fell into a heavy sleep.

"Ye was needed, Alex," said McCoy, in a weak voice. "He'd ha' done for the three of us. . . . Ye'll not let on ye've seen us?" he added. "We can booze quiet now Matt's asleep."

"I was sent to look for ye," said Smith. "Mr. Christian's

decided to burn the ship. Ye can stay, or go to see her fired, as ye've a mind, but he wanted ye to know."

"Burn and be damned to her, now," said Mills.

"He reckons what timbers there is left in her will be more trouble to get out than they're worth."

"I could ha' told him that three days back," said Martin. "See here, Alex! We've got a good sup o' brandy left. Ye'd best stay and have a share."

He held out a bottle while Smith stood irresolutely, looking from one to another of them. Of a sudden he threw himself on the ground beside them. "So I will, Isaac!" he said, as he seized the bottle. "We're hogs for drinkin' it on the sly, but away with that!"

Dusk deepened into night. Quintal was snoring loudly, and Martin had now reached the maudlin stage of drunkenness. His thoughts had turned to home and he blubbered half to himself, half to his companions, cursing Christian the while, and the hard fate that had left them stranded forever on a rock in mid-ocean. Smith and McCoy, having vainly tried to quiet him, at length gave it up and paid no further heed to him. Mills drank in silence; when deep in his cups he became more and more dour and taciturn. Prudence was asleep with her head in his lap.

"Ye're a marvel for drink, Will," Smith was saying. "I'll warrant ye've had twice as much as Martin, but there's none would know it from yer speech."

"I've a good Scotch stomach and a hard Scotch head," McCoy replied. "Ye maun go north o' the Tweed, mon, if ye'd see an honest toper. We've bairns amangst us could drink the best o' ye English under a table, and gang hame to their mithers after, and think nae mair aboot it."

Smith grinned. "Aye, ye're grand folk," he replied, "and well ye know it."

"We've reason to, Alex; but aboot this burnin' o' the ship . . ."

"Christian's aboard of her now, with Young and Jack Williams. They'll be firin' her directly."

Presently a faint reddish glow streamed up from behind the seaward cliffs to the east. It increased from moment to moment until the light penetrated even to where they sat.

Smith got to his feet. "We'd best go and see the last of her, Will. I'll cut Matt loose; there's no harm in him now. What'll ye do, John, stay or come with us?"

Mills rose and took the native girl up in his arms. "Go past the tents," he said. "I'll leave her there."

Martin was asleep. McCoy took up the bottle beside him and held it up to the light. "Isaac's a good sup left here, lads."

"Leave that," Mills growled. "It's his, ain't it?"

"Will it be safe, think ye? Matt might wake . . ."

"So he might; there's a good Scotch reason," said Smith. "Pass it round, Will."

Having emptied the bottle, they left it at Martin's side, and the men proceeded slowly down the valley, Smith leading the way. They found no one at the tents; Mills left Prudence there and they went along the roughly cleared path to the lookout point above the cove. The ship was burning fiercely, flames and sparks streaming high in the air. In the red glare they could plainly see the other members of the *Bounty's* company seated among the rocks on the narrow foreshore.

"She makes a grand light," said McCoy, glumly.

"Aye," said Smith.

They were silent after that.

CHAPTER IV

A DEEPER awareness of their isolation from the world of men now came home to them. The empty sea walled them round, and the ship, burned to the water's edge but still lying where

she had been driven upon the rocks, was an eloquent reminder to all of the irrevocable nature of their fate. For some of the white men, in particular, the sight of the blackened hulk, washed over by the sea, had a gloomy fascination not to be resisted. In the evening when work for the day was over, they would come singly, or in groups of two or three, to the lookout point above the cove and sit there until the last light had left the sky, gazing down upon all that remained of the vessel as though they could not yet realize that she was lost to them forever.

Among the mutineers, Brown was the one most deeply affected by the nature of their fate. He was a small, shy man of thirty years, with a gentle voice and manner, in marked contrast with those of some of the companions chance had forced upon him. Curiously enough, his presence among them was due to that very mildness of his character, and to his inability to make immediate decisions for himself. He had sailed in the *Bounty* in the capacity of assistant to Mr. Nelson, the botanist of the expedition, and had spent five happy months on Tahiti, studying the flora of the island and helping to collect and care for the young breadfruit trees. Upon the morning of the mutiny he had been shaken from sleep by Martin, who had thrust a musket into his hands and ordered him on deck. There he had stood with his weapon, during the uproar which followed, completely bewildered by what was taking place, appalled by what he had unwittingly done, and incapable of action until the opportunity for it had been lost. Christian had been as surprised as grieved when, later, he discovered Brown among the members of his own party; and Brown of necessity transferred to Christian his dependence for the protection and guidance furnished up to that time by his chief, Mr. Nelson. He knew nothing of ships or the sea, but he had a profound knowledge of soils and plants, and his love of nature compensated him, in a measure, for hours of desperate homesickness.

He suffered no more from this cause than did many of the women of the *Bounty's* company. They longed for the comfort of numbers; for the gaiety of their communal life at Tahiti; for the quiet lagoons lighted at night by the torches of innumerable fishermen; for the clear, full-running mountain streams where they had bathed at evening. They longed for the friends and kindred whom they knew, now, they could never hope to see again; for the voices of children; for the authority of long-established custom. Conditions on this high, rock-bound island were as strange to them as the ways of their white lords, and the silence, the loneliness, awed and frightened them.

Two only of their numbers escaped, in part, the general feeling of forsakenness: the young girl whom Mills had taken, and whom he had named, with unconscious irony, "Prudence," and Jenny, the consort of Brown. Jenny was a slender, active, courageous woman of Brown's own age, with all the force of character he lacked. She was the oldest of the women, but she was sprung from the lower class of Tahitian society, and, although of resolute character, she maintained toward Maimiti and Taurua, the consorts of Christian and Young, the deference and respect which their birth and blood demanded that she should. To Moetua, as well, the same deference was extended; for she too was of the kindred of chiefs, and her husband, Minarii, had been a man of authority on Tahiti.

Gradually the sense of loneliness, common at first to all, gave place to more cheerful feelings, and men and women alike set themselves with a will to the work before them. A tract of land near the temporary settlement was chosen for the first garden, and for the period of a week most of the company was engaged in clearing and planting. This task finished, the garden was left to the charge of Brown and some of the women, while the others, under Christian's direction, were occupied with house-building.

The site chosen for the permanent settlement lay beneath the mountain which they called the "Goat-House Peak," a lit-

tle to the eastward of a narrow valley whose western wall was formed by the mountain itself. By chance or by mutual agreement they had divided themselves into households, and all save Brown and Jenny, who wished to live inland, had chosen sites for their dwellings on the seaward slope of the main valley. Christian's house was building below the gigantic banyan tree where he and Maimiti had halted to rest on the day of their first visit ashore. The second household was that of Young and Alexander Smith, with their women, Taurua and Balhadi. Mills, Martin, and Williams formed the third, with Prudence, Susannah, and Fasto; Quintal and McCoy, Sarah and Mary, the fourth; and the native men, the fifth. This latter was the largest household, of nine members: Minarii, Tetahiti, Tararu, Te Moa, Nihau, and Hu, with the wives of the three first, Moetua, Nanai, and Hutia. Te Moa, Nihau, and Hu were the three men unprovided with women.

The white men, with the exception of Brown, were erecting wooden houses made partly of the *Bounty* materials and partly of island timber, and the roofs were to be of pandanus-leaf thatch. The dwelling for the native men was situated in a glade a quarter of a mile inland from Bounty Bay. Quintal and McCoy lived nearest to the landing place. The houses of the other mutineers were closer together, but hidden from one another in the forest that covered the valley.

The native men, helped by the stronger of the women, were allotted the task of carrying the supplies to the settlement while the white men were building a storehouse to contain them. Christian, with the general consent, grudgingly given by some of the men, took the stores into his own charge and kept the keys to the storehouse always on his person.

He ruled the little colony with strict justice, granting white men and brown complete liberty in their personal affairs so long as these did not interfere with the peace of the community. An equitable division of labour was made. Williams was employed at his forge, with the native, Hu, as his helper. Mills and Alexander Smith had charge of the saw pit; Quintal and McCoy looked after the livestock, building enclosures near the settlement for some of the fowls and the brood sows. Brown was relieved of all other employment so that he might give his full time to the gardens. The native men were employed as occasion demanded, and during the early months of the settlement it was they who did the fishing for the community and searched for the wild products of the island—plantains, taro, candlenuts for lighting purposes, and the like. Christian and Young had general supervision of all, and set an example to the others by working, with brief intervals for meals, from dawn until dark. As for the women, they had work and to spare while the houses were building, in collecting and preparing the pandanus leaves for thatch. These had first to be soaked in the sea, then smoothed and straightened and the long, thorn-covered edges removed; after which they were folded over light four-foot segments of split canes and pinned thus with slender midribs from the leaves of palm fronds. Some two thousand canes of these *raufara,* as they were called, each of them holding about forty pandanus leaves, were needed for the thatching of each dwelling.

From the beginning Christian had set aside Sunday as a day of rest, in so far as the community work was concerned. Neither he nor Young was of religious turn of mind, and the other white men even less so; therefore no service was held and each man employed himself as he pleased.

Late on a Sunday afternoon toward the end of February, Christian and Young had climbed to the ridge connecting the two highest peaks of the island. It was an impressive lookout point. To the eastward the main valley lay outspread. On the opposite side the land fell away in gullies and precipitous ravines to the sea. Several small cascades, the result of recent heavy rains, streamed down the rocky walls, arching away from them, in places, as they descended. Small as the island was, its aspect from that height had in it a quality of savage grandeur, and the rich green thickets on the gentler slopes,

lying in the full splendour of the westering sun, added to the solemnity of narrow valleys already filling with shadow, and the bare precipices that hung above them. The view would have been an arresting one in the most frequented of oceans; it was infinitely more so here where the vast floor of the sea, which seemed to slope down from the horizons, lay empty to the gaze month after month, year after year.

The ridge at that point was barely two paces in width. Christian seated himself on a rock that overhung the mountain wall; Young reclined in the short fern at his side. Sea birds were beginning to come home from their day's fishing far offshore. As the shadows lengthened over the land their numbers increased to countless thousands, circling high in air, their wings flashing in the golden light. The two friends remained silent for a long time, listening to the faint cries of the birds and the thunder of the surf against the bastions of the cliffs nearly a thousand feet below.

The spirit of solitude had altered both of these men, each in a different way. Brief as their time on the island had been, the sense of their complete and final removal from all they had known in the past had been borne in upon them swiftly, and had now become an accepted and natural condition of their lives.

Christian was the first to speak.

"A lonely sound, Ned," he said at length. "Sometimes I love it, but there are moments when the thought that I can never escape it drives me half frantic."

Young turned his head. "The booming of the surf?" he asked. "I have already ceased to hear it in a conscious way. To me it has become a part of the silence of the place."

"I wish I could say as much. You have a faculty I greatly admire. What shall I call it? Stillness of mind, perhaps. It is not one that you could have acquired. You must have had it always."

Young smiled. "Does it seem to you such a valuable faculty?"

"Beyond price!" Christian replied, earnestly. "I have often observed you without your being aware of the fact. I believe that you could sit for hours on end without forethought or afterthought, enjoying the beauty of each moment as it passes. What would I not give for your quiet spirit!"

"Allow me to say that I have envied you, many's the time, for having the reverse of my quietness, as you call it. There is all too little of the man of action in my character. When I think what a sorry aide I am to you here . . ."

"A sorry aide? In God's name, Ned, what could I do without you? Supposing . . ." He broke off with a faint smile. "Enough," he added. "The time has not come when we need begin paying one another compliments."

They had no further speech for some time; then Christian said: "There is something I have long wanted to ask you. . . . Give me your candid opinion. . . . Is it possible, do you think, that Bligh and the men with him could have survived?"

Young gave him a quick glance. "I have waited for that question," he replied. "The matter is not one I have felt free to open, but I have been tempted to do so more than once."

"Well, what do you think?"

"That there is reason to believe them safe."

Christian turned to him abruptly. "Say it again, Ned! Make me believe it! But, no. . . . What do I ask? Could nineteen men, unarmed, scantly provided with food and water, crowded to the point of foundering in a ship's boat, make a voyage of full twelve hundred leagues? Through archipelagoes peopled with savages who would ask nothing better than to murder them at sight? Impossible!"

"It is by no means impossible if you consider the character of the man who leads them," Young replied, quietly. "Remember his uncanny skill as a navigator; his knowledge of the sea; his prodigious memory. I doubt whether there is a known island in the Pacific, or the fragment of one, whose precise latitude and longitude he does not carry in his head.

Above all, Christian, remember his stubborn, unconquerable will. And whatever we may think of him otherwise, you will agree that, with a vessel under him, though it be nothing but a ship's launch, Bligh is beyond praise."

"He is; I grant it freely. By God! You may be right! Bligh could do it, and only he! What a feat it would be!"

"And it may very well be an accomplished fact by now," Young replied. "Nelson, Fryer, Cole, Ledward, and all the others may be approaching England at this moment, while we speak of them. They would have had easterly winds all the way. They may have reached the Dutch East Indies in time to sail home with the October fleet."

"Yes, that would be possible. . . . If only I could be sure of it!"

"Try to think of them so," Young replied earnestly. "Let me urge you, Christian, to brood no longer over this matter. You are not justified in thinking of them as dead. Believe me, you are not. I say this not merely to comfort you; it is my reasoned opinion. The launch, as you know, was an excellent sea boat. Think of the voyages we ourselves have made in her, in all kinds of weather."

"I know . . ."

"And bear this in mind," Young continued: "there are, as you say, vast archipelagoes known to exist between the Friendly Islands and the Dutch settlements. It is by no means unlikely that Bligh has been able to land safely, at various places, for refreshment. How many small uninhabited islands have we ourselves seen where a ship's boat might lie undiscovered by the savages for days, or weeks?"

He broke off, glancing anxiously at his companion. Christian turned and laid a hand on his shoulder. "Say no more, Ned. It has done me good to speak of this matter, for once. Whatever may have happened, there is nothing to be done about it now."

"And if Bligh reaches home?"

Christian smiled, bitterly. "There will be a hue and cry

after us such as England has not known for a century," he replied. "And the old blackguard will be lifted, for a time at least, to a level with Drake. And what will be said of me . . ."

He put the palms of his hands to his eyes in an abrupt gesture and kept them there for a moment; then he turned again to his companion. "It is odd to think, Ned, that you and I may live to be old men here, with our children and grandchildren growing up around us. We will never be found; I am all but certain of that."

Young smiled. "What a strange colony we shall be, fifty years hence! What a mixture of bloods!"

"And of tongues as well. Already we seem to be developing a curious speech of our own, part English, part Indian."

"English, I think, will survive in the end," Young replied. "Men like Mills and Quintal and Williams have a fair smattering of the Indian tongue, but they will never be able to speak it well. It interests me to observe how readily some of the women are acquiring English. Brown's woman and that girl of Mills's are surprisingly fluent in it, even now."

"Do you find that you sometimes think in Tahitian?"

"Frequently. We are being made over here quite as much as the Indians themselves."

"I feel encouraged, Ned, sincerely hopeful," Christian remarked presently. "Concerning the future, I mean. The men are adjusting themselves surprisingly well to the life here. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, they are."

"If we can keep them busy and their minds occupied . . . For the present there is little danger. That will come later when we've finished house-building and are well settled."

"Let's not anticipate."

"No, we shan't borrow our troubles, but we must be prepared for them. Have you noticed any friction between ourselves and the Indian men?"

"I can't say that I have. Nothing serious, at least, since the

day when Martin chucked their sacred temple stones into the sea."

Christian's face darkened. "There is a man we must watch," he said. "He is a bully and a coward at heart. The meanest Maori in the South Sea is a better man. Martin will presume as far as he dares on his white skin."

"It is not only Martin who will do so," Young replied; "Mills and Quintal have much the same attitude toward the Indians."

"But there is a decency about those two lacking in Martin. I have explained him to Minarii and Tetahiti. I have told them that Martin belongs to a class, in white society, that is lower than the serfs among the Maoris. They understand. In fact, they had guessed as much before I told them."

Young nodded. "There is little danger of Martin's presuming with either of them," he said. "It is Hu and Tararu and Te Moa whom he will abuse, if he can."

"And his woman, Susannah," Christian added. "I pity that girl from my heart. I've no doubt that Martin makes her life miserable in countless small ways." He rose. "We'd best be going down, Ned. It will be dark soon."

They descended the steep ridge to the gentler slopes below and made their way slowly along, skirting the dense thickets of pandanus and rata trees, and crossing glades where the interlaced foliage, high overhead, cut off the faint light of the afterglow, making the darkness below almost that of night.

In one of these glades two others of the *Bounty's* company had passed that afternoon. Scarcely had Christian and Young crossed it when a screen of thick fern at one side parted and Hutia glanced after the retreating figures. She was a handsome girl of nineteen with small, firm breasts and a thick braid of hair reaching to her knees. She stood poised as lightly as a fawn ready for flight, all but invisible in the shadows; then she turned to someone behind her.

"Christian!" she exclaimed in an awed voice. "Christian and Etuati!"

Williams was lying outstretched in the thick fern, his hands clasped behind his head.

"What if it was?" he replied gruffly. "Come, sit ye down here!" Seizing her by the wrist, he drew her to him fiercely. The girl pushed herself back, laughing softly. "*Aué,* Jack! You want too much, too fast. I go now. Tararu say, 'Where Hutia?' And Fasto say, 'Where my man?'"

Williams took her by the shoulders and held her at arm's length.

"Never ye mind about Fasto, ye little minx! Which d'ye like best, Tararu or me?"

The girl gave him a sly smile. "You," she said. Of a sudden she slipped from his grasp, sprang to her feet, and vanished in the darkness.

CHAPTER V

A PATH, growing daily more distinct, and winding, picturesquely among the trees, led from Bounty Bay along the crest of the seaward slopes as far as Christian's house, at the western extremity of the settlement. Close to his dwelling a second path branched inland, along the side of a small valley. This led to Brown's Well, a tiny, spring-fed stream which descended in a succession of pools and slender cascades, shaded by great trees and the fern-covered walls of the ravine itself. The uppermost pool had been transformed into a rock cistern where the drinking water for the settlement was obtained. A larger one, below, was used for bathing, and during the late afternoon was reserved for the exclusive use of the women. This was the happiest hour of the day for them.

At the bathing pool they cast off, with the strange English names bestowed on some of them by the mutineers, the constraint they felt in the presence of the white men. But in the

midst of their laughter and cheerful talk there were moments when a chance remark concerning Tahiti, or a passing reference to something connected with their old life there, would cast a shadow on their spirits, passing slowly, like the shadow of a cloud on the high slopes of the valley.

One afternoon several of the women were sunning themselves on a great rock which stood at the brink of the pool. Their bath was over and they were combing and drying their hair, while some of them twined wreaths of sweet fern. Moetua had spoken of the *tiare maohi,* the white, fragrant Tahitian gardenia.

"Say no more!" said Sarah, her eyes glistening with tears. "We know that we shall never see it again. Alas! I can close my eyes and smell its perfume now!"

"Tell me, Moetua, if all were to do again, would you leave Tahiti?" Susannah asked.

"Yes. Minarii is here, and am I not his wife? This is a good land, and it pleases him, so I must be content. Already I think less often than I did of Tahiti. Do not you others find it so?"

"Not I!" exclaimed Susannah bitterly. "I would never come again. Never! Never!"

"But we were told before we left that the ship was not to return," remarked Balhadi quietly. "Christian made that known to all of us."

"Who could have believed it!" said Sarah. "And Mills and the others said it was not so, that we would surely return. . . . Do you remember, you others, the morning after we set sail from Matavai, when the wind changed and the ship was steered to the westward?"

"And we passed so close to the reefs of Eimeo?" Susannah put in. "Do I not remember! Martin stood with me by the rail with his arm tight around me. He knew that I would leap into the sea and swim ashore if given the chance!"

"Quintal held me by the two hands," remarked Sarah, "else I should have done the same."

"Why did the ship leave so quickly?" asked Nanai. "No one in Matavai knew that she was to sail that night."

"They feared that you would change your minds at the last moment," Moetua replied.

"That is how I was caught," said Prudence. "Mills went to my uncle with his pockets filled with nails, the largest kind; he must have had a score of them. My uncle's eyes were hungry when he saw them. 'You shall spend the night on the ship, with the white man,' he told me. So he was given the nails and I went with Mills. When I awoke at daybreak, the vessel was at sea."

"And you like him now, your man?" Hutia asked.

Prudence shrugged her shoulders. "He is well enough."

"He is mad about you," said Susannah. "That is plain."

"He is like a father and a lover in one," the girl replied. "I can do as I please with him."

"For my part," observed Moetua, "I would not change places with any of you. I prefer a husband of our own race. These white men are strange; their thoughts are not like ours. We can never understand them."

"I do not find it so," said Balhadi. "My man, Smith, might almost be one of us. I can read his thoughts even when his speech is not clear to me. White men are not very different from those of our blood."

"It may be so," replied Moetua, doubtfully. "Maimiti says the same. She seems happy with Christian."

"It is different with Maimiti," Sarah put in. "Christian speaks our tongue like one of us. The others learn more slowly."

Prudence had finished combing her hair and was beginning to plait it rapidly, with skillful fingers. She glanced up at Sarah: "How is it with you and Quintal?" she asked.

"How is he as a lover, you mean?"

"Yes, tell us that."

Sarah glanced at the others with a wry smile. "Night comes. He sits with his chin on his great fists. What are his

thoughts? I do not know. Perhaps he has none. He is silent. How could it be otherwise when he is only beginning to learn our speech? He pays no heed to me. I wait, well knowing what is to come. At last it comes. When he is wearied, he rolls on his back and snores. *Atira!* There is no more to tell."

Prudence threw back her head and burst into laughter. The others joined in and the glade rang with their mirth. Sarah's smile broadened; a moment later she was laughing no less heartily than the rest.

"What a strange man!" said Nanai, wiping the tears of mirth from her eyes.

Sarah nodded. "He thinks only of himself. I shall never understand his ways."

"What of the men who have no wives?" asked Moetua, presently.

"How miserable they are!" said Hutia, laughing. "Who is to comfort them?"

"Not I," remarked Balhadi. "I am content with my man, and will do nothing to cause him pain or anger."

"Why should he be angry for so small a thing?" asked Nanai.

"You know nothing of white men," said Prudence. "They consider it a shameful thing for the woman of one man to give herself to another. Nevertheless, I will be one of those to be kind to the wifeless men."

"And I!" exclaimed Susannah. "I fear Martin as much as I hate him, but I shall find courage to deceive him. To make a fool of him will comfort me."

"This matter can be kept among ourselves," said Moetua. "The white men need never know of it."

"Christian would be angry, if he knew," remarked Balhadi gravely. "It is as Prudence says: the white men regard their women as theirs alone. Trouble may easily come of this."

"Then Christian should have brought more women, one for each," replied Moetua. "He must know that no man can be deprived of a woman his life long."

"He knows," said Susannah. "He is a chief, like Minarii, and would protect me from Martin, if it came to that."

"And it *will* come to that," observed Prudence.

"Yes," put in Nanai. "You should go to Christian now, and tell him how you are treated. Martin is a *nohu*."

"He is worse than one," Susannah replied gloomily. "I believe that he has not once bathed since we came here. I can endure his cruelty better than his filth. . . . Alas! Let us speak of something more pleasant. I try to forget Martin when here with you."

All of these women were young, with the buoyant and happy dispositions common to their race. A moment later they were chatting and laughing as gaily as though they had not a care in the world.

The garden was now in a flourishing condition. The red, volcanic soil was exceedingly rich, and the beds of yams, sweet potatoes, and the dry-land taro called *tarua* gave promise of an early and abundant harvest. The pale green shoots of the sugar cane were beginning to appear, and young suckers of the banana plants were opening in the sun. An abundance of huge old breadfruit trees had been found in the main valley, but Brown had, nevertheless, carefully planted the young trees brought from Tahiti, clearing a few yards of land here and there in favoured spots.

Like the plants, the livestock loosed on the island throve well. The hogs grew fat on the long tubers of the wild yam, and the place was a paradise for the fowls, with neither bird nor beast of prey to molest them, and food everywhere to be had for the picking. The small, brown, native rat had, as yet, no taste for eggs and did not harm the young chicks. The fowls began to increase rapidly, and the cheerful crowing of the cocks was a welcome sound, relieving the profound silence which had been so oppressive to all during the first days on shore. On the further side of the high peak, to the west of the

settlement, a house and a pen had been made for the goats, where they were fed and watered each day.

From the main ridge of the island to the cliffs on the southern side the land sloped gently, forming an outer valley as rich as that on the northern side. This was named the Auté Valley, from the circumstance that the first gardens of the *auté,* or cloth-plant, fetched from Tahiti, were set out here.

Brown had chosen to live on this southern slope, remote from the others; his little thatched house stood in a sunny glade, embowered in the foliage of lofty trees and near a trickle of water sufficient for one family's needs. He and Jenny had cleared a path through the thickets behind and above them, over the ridge and down to join another path which led through the heart of the Main Valley to the settlement.

Jenny, Brown's girl, though small and comely, had all the resolution the gardener lacked. They had lived together on shore during the long months at Tahiti while Captain Bligh was collecting his cargo of breadfruit plants, and the thought of returning to her had been Brown's only solace after his involuntary part in the mutiny. Her feeling toward him was that of a mother and protectress, for Jenny was one of those women of exceptionally strong character who choose as husbands small, mild men, in need of sterner mates.

Like Brown, Minarii had a deep love of nature and of growing things. Nearly every evening he came to exchange a word with Jenny and to mark the growth of the young plants; little by little, a curious friendship sprang up between the stern war-chief and the lonely English gardener. A man of few words in his own tongue, Brown was incapable of learning any other, but Jenny spoke English by this time, and with her as interpreter he spent many an evening listening to Minarii's tales of old wars on Tahiti, and of how he had received this wound or that.

One evening late in February, Minarii and Moetua, his wife, came to Brown's house. The native set down a heavy basket, and his grim face relaxed as he took Brown's hand.

"We have been down over the southern cliffs," Moetua told Jenny. "The birds are beginning to lay. Here are eggs of the *kaveka* and *oio,* which nest on the face of the cliff. You will find them good. Minarii made a rope fast at the top and we clambered down. Fasto came as well."

"Thank them," Brown put in to Jenny. "I shudder to think of any man, to say nothing of women, taking such risks!"

Minarii turned to his wife. "Go and eat, you two, while I prepare our part."

While Brown went to fetch some wild yams, Minarii kindled a fire, heated several stones, and dropped them into a calabash of water, which began to boil at once. Eggs were then dropped in till the calabash was full, and the yams hastily scraped and roasted on the coals. The two men made a hearty meal.

The moon came up presently and the visitors rose to leave. When they were gone, Jenny spread a mat before the doorstep and sat down to enjoy the beauty of the night. She patted the mat beside her, and Brown stretched himself out, with his head on her knee. The night was windless; the moonlight softened the outlines of the house and lay in pools of silver on the little clearing. Smoothing Brown's hair absently, Jenny recounted the gossip of the settlement.

"I have been talking with Moetua," she said. "There is trouble coming, and Williams is the cause of it. Do you know why he sent Fasto with them to-day?"

"I suppose he wanted some eggs," said the gardener, drowsily.

"Perhaps he likes eggs, but he likes Hutia better. He meets her in the bush each time he can get Fasto out of the way. And Tararu is a jealous husband, though a fool. Jealous! Yet he would like to be the lover of Mills's girl!"

"Of Prudence? That child?"

"Child!" Jenny gazed down at him, shaking her head wonderingly. "You yourself are only a child," she said. "You understand only your plants and trees."

John Williams was working alone on his house, while Martin and Mills carried plank up the path from Bounty Bay. The framing of the two-story dwelling was now finished, and he was sawing and notching the rafters. The three women had worked well in preparing the thatch, and he planned to finish the roof before beginning on the walls and floor. It was close to midday and the sun was hot in the clearing. Williams was naked to the waist; the sweat streamed down his chest, matted with coarse black hair. He put down his saw and dashed the perspiration from his eyes. "Fasto!" he called.

A short, dark, sturdy woman stepped out of the shed where their cooking was done. She was of humble birth, silent, docile, and industrious. Williams appreciated to the full her devotion to him, as well as her skill in every native pursuit.

"Dinner ready?" he asked. "Fetch me a pail of water."

She dashed the water over his head and shoulders, while he scrubbed the grime from his face. Then she brought his dinner of roasted breadfruit, yams, and a dozen tern's eggs, spreading broad green leaves for a tablecloth beside him on the ground. He squeezed her arm as she leaned over him. "Hard as nails! Sit ye down and eat with me, old girl." She shook her head. "Oh, damn yer heathen notions! . . . Any more eggs? No?"

Ignorant of the native tongue, which he held in contempt, Williams had forced the woman to learn a few words of English. Tears came into her eyes, for she felt that she had been remiss in her wifely duty. Struggling to express herself, she murmured: "Fetch more eggs, supper."

"Aye. There's a good lass. Work hard and eat hearty, that's Jack Williams."

As he rose, he gave her a kiss and a pat on the back. Fasto smiled with pleasure as she went off to the cookhouse with the remnants of the meal.

Toward mid-afternoon, when he paused once more in his work, the blacksmith had put in nine hours on the house and accomplished much. Fasto had gone off an hour earlier with her basket, toward the cliffs on the south side of the island. Martin and Mills were still engaged in their task at the cove. Scrubbing himself clean, Williams hitched up the kilt of tapa around his waist and glanced quickly up and down the path. Sounds of hammering came from McCoy's house, but no one was in sight. Crossing the path, he disappeared into the bush.

A quarter of a mile south of the settlement, in the midst of the forest, an old pandanus tree spread its thorny leaves to the sun. Its trunk, supported on a pyramid of aerial roots, rose twenty feet without a branch. Hutia was descending cautiously, taking advantage of every roughness of the bark. The ground was littered with the leaves she had plucked for thatch. She sprang down lightly from the tree and began to gather up her leaves in bundles, working mechanically as she glanced this way and that and stopped to listen from time to time. Then suddenly she dropped her work and stepped into the shadow of a thick-spreading *purau* tree close by. Williams appeared, walking softly through the bush. He glanced aloft at the pandanus tree and down at the bundles of leaves on the ground. Peering about uncertainly, he heard the sound of soft laughter. Next moment the girl was in his arms.

"Where is Fasto?" she asked apprehensively.

"Never ye mind about her; she'll not be back till dark."

While Williams lingered in the bush and his mates toiled up from the cove with the day's last load of plank, Prudence sat by the house, stripping thorns from a heap of pandanus leaves beside her. She was scarcely sixteen, small of stature and delicately formed, with a pale golden skin and copper-red hair.

She turned her head as she heard the sound of a footfall on the path. From the corner of her eye she saw Tararu approaching. Bending over her work as if unaware of his coming, she gave a little start when he spoke.

"Where are the others?" he asked.

"*Auē!* You frightened me!"

Tararu smiled, seating himself at her side. "Afraid of me?

I must teach you better, some day when Mills is not so close. . . . Where are the other women?"

"Collecting leaves."

"You have worked well. How many reeds of *raufara* are needed?"

"Two thousand," said Prudence. "One thousand eight hundred and seventy are done."

With eyes cast down upon her work, she began to sing softly, a rhythmic and monotonous little melody sung in Tahiti by the strolling players of the *arioi* society. Tararu bent his head to listen, chuckling silently at the broad double-meaning in the first verse. She began the second verse, and as he listened to the soft, childish voice, the man regarded her intently.

> "A bird climbs the cliffs,
> Robbing the nests of other birds,
> Seeking eggs to feed her mate.
> But the mate is not building a nest. No!
> He is hiding in a thicket with another bird."

Prudence sang on as if unaware that she had a listener, making no further mention of the doings of birds. After a futile attempt to catch her eye, Tararu rose and walked away inland. Like many philanderers, he felt the most tender solicitude concerning the virtue of his own wife.

Hutia was making her way down to the settlement with a heavy bundle of leaves on her back. She moved silently through the bush, with eyes alert, and was aware of her husband a full ten seconds before he knew of her approach. Her gait and posture changed at once, and she looked up wearily as the man drew near.

"Lay down your burden," Tararu ordered.

She dropped the bundle of leaves with a sigh. "It was good of you to come."

Tararu gazed down at her without a smile, but she returned his glance so calmly that his suspicions were shaken.

He was deeply enamoured of her, though always ready for a flirtation with another girl, and he desired nothing more than to be convinced of her innocence. No guilty wife, he thought, could meet her husband so fearlessly. He smiled at last, took up the bundle, and led the way to the settlement.

One evening in early March, Hutia was making her way to the bathing pool. She had had words with Tararu, who had knocked her down while two of the native men stood by, and, wishing to nurse her anger alone, she had delayed her bath until an hour when the other women should have returned to the settlement.

She had no eyes for the beauty of the glade. Hedged in by thick bush, which made a green twilight at this hour, the place was deserted save for Prudence at her bath. The girl stood knee-deep in the water, her back to Hutia and enveloped to the waist in her unbound hair. She had a small calabash in her hand and was bending to take up water when Hutia spoke.

"Make haste!" she said harshly. "I wish to bathe by myself."

Prudence glanced coolly at the other girl. "Who are you? Queen of this island? Am I your servant, me with a white man for husband?"

"Husband!" exclaimed Hutia angrily. "Aye, and you'd like to have mine as well. Take care! I have seen you looking at him with soft eyes!"

"Keep him!" Prudence said jeeringly, turning to face the other. "Keep him if you can!"

"What do you mean?"

"What I say!" Prudence laughed softly. "*You* keep him! A black-haired loose woman like you!"

She was of the *ehu,* or fair Maoris, and her words stung Hutia to the quick. "Red dog!"

"Sow!"

Hutia sprang on the smaller girl fiercely, seized her by the

hair, and after a short tussle succeeded in throwing her down in the pool. There, astride of her enemy's back and with hands buried in her hair, she held her under water, jerking at her head savagely till the younger girl was half drowned. At last she was satisfied. She stood up, turned her back scornfully, and began to bathe.

Prudence rose from the pool, donned her kilt and mantle with trembling hands, took up her calabash, and disappeared into the bush. Stopping to compose herself and to arrange her hair before she reached the settlement, she went straight to the cookhouse where she knew that Fasto would be at work.

"There is something I must tell you," she said to the elder woman, who sat on a little three-legged stool as she grated a coconut for her fowls. "You have been kind to me. I am young and you have been like a mother. Now I must tell you, before the others begin to mock."

"Aye, child, what is it?" said Fasto.

This simple and industrious woman had a soft heart, and the girl's youth appealed to the mother in her. She took her hand and stroked it. "What is it, child?" she repeated.

Prudence hesitated before she spoke. "It is hard to tell, but will come best from one who loves you. Open your eyes! Williams is a good man and loves you, but all men are weak before women's eyes. Hutia has desired him long. Now they meet each day in the bush, while you and Tararu are blind. . . . You do not believe me? Then go and see for yourself. Hide yourself near the great pandanus tree at the hour when Williams goes inland to bathe. Your man will come, and Hutia will steal through the bush to meet him."

Fasto sat in silence, with bowed head and eyes filling with tears as she continued to stroke the girl's hand.

"I cannot believe it, child, but I will do as you say. Should I find my husband with that woman . . . There will be no sleep for me this night."

When the moon rose on the following evening, Williams was striding along the path that led to McCoy's house. Most of the inmates were already in bed, but Mary sat cross-legged on the floor, plaiting a mat of pandanus by the light of a taper of candlenuts. She was a woman of twenty-five, desperately homesick for Tahiti. Williams called to her softly.

"Mary! Eh, Mary! Is Will asleep?"

McCoy rose from his bed of tapa and crossed the dim-lit room to the door. "Jack? I was only resting. We're dead beat, Matt and me."

"Come outside. . . . Have 'ee seen Fasto?"

"No. What's up?"

"She went off to fetch eggs; before I had my bath, that was, and not a sign o' her since. I was cursing her for a lazy slut at suppertime, but, by God, I'm afeared for her now! Her lazy! The best wench on the island, pretty or not!"

"I've seen naught of her," said McCoy. "Wait, I'll ask Mary."

He went into the house, and Williams heard them whispering together. Presently he returned. "Aye, Mary's seen her; she passed this way late in the afternoon. Mary gave her a hail, but she never turned her head. She'd her egging basket. Like enough she was making for the Rope."

The blacksmith stood irresolute for some time before he spoke. "Thank 'ee, Will. I'll be getting home. If she's not back by morning, I'll make a search."

His heart was heavy and his thoughts sombre as he trudged home through the moonlit bush. Though he lay down on his sheets of clean tapa, smoothed by Fasto's hands, he could not sleep.

At daybreak he set out with Martin and one of the native men. They launched the smaller canoe and ran her out through the breakers. The morning was calm, with a light air from the west, and as they paddled around Ship-Landing Point, they scanned the declivities above. Beyond the easternmost cape of the island, flanked by jagged rocks offshore, they entered the half-moon cove at the foot of the Rope. As the

canoe rose high on a swell, the native gave an exclamation and pointed to the beach of sand at the base of the cliffs, where something lay huddled beneath a small pandanus tree.

"Steer for the shore!" the blacksmith ordered gruffly.

They had a near thing as a feathering sea swept them between two boulders, but Williams paddled mechanically, face set and eyes staring at the beach ahead. He was out of the canoe before it grounded; while the others held it against the backwash, he hastened across the narrow beach to the pandanus tree.

The cove was a lonely, eerie place, hemmed in by precipices many hundreds of feet in height. The western curve of the cliffs lay in full sunlight, which glinted on the plumage of a thousand sea fowl, sailing back and forth at a great height. Williams came trudging back, took from the canoe a mantle of native cloth, and returned to spread it gently over the bruised and bloodstained body of Fasto. He knelt down on the sand beside her. Hearing Martin's step behind him, he motioned him away.

The others stared in silence for a moment, then walked quickly away along the foot of the cliffs. After a long interval, Williams hailed them. He was standing by the canoe with Fasto's body, wrapped in tapa, in his arms. He laid her gently in the bilges; at a word from the native steersman, the little vessel shot out through the surf. Williams dropped his paddle and sat with shoulders bowed, silent and brooding, while the canoe rounded the cape and headed northwest for Bounty Bay.

CHAPTER VI

A FEW days after the burning of the *Bounty*, Minarii had chosen a site for the temple he and the other Polynesian men

were to build. A homeless wanderer might worship kneeling in the wash of the sea, the great purifier and source of all holiness, but settled men must erect a temple of their own. The six native men were worshipers of the same god, Ta'aroa, and their *marae* would be dedicated to him.

Sometimes alone, sometimes in company with Tetahiti, Minarii had made a leisurely exploration of those parts of the island least likely to attract the whites, and at last, on a thickly wooded slope to the west of the ridge connecting the two peaks, he had found the spot he was searching for. He was alone on the afternoon when he began his clearing, and had not long plied his axe when he perceived that other worshipers had assembled here in the past. As he made his way through the dense undergrowth he discovered a platform of moss-grown boulders, set with upright stones before which men had once kneeled. Close by, on rising ground, stood two images of gross human form and taller than a man, and before one of them was a slab of rock which he stooped to raise. The task required all of his strength, but he was rewarded by the sight of a skeleton laid out in the hollow beneath, with hands crossed on the ribs and the mouldering skull pillowed on a large mother-of-pearl shell.

"Ahé!" he exclaimed under his breath. "A man of my own race, and from a land where the pearl-oyster grows!"

He gazed at it for some time, then replaced the heavy slab carefully and descended from the *marae*. Religion entered into every act of a Polynesian's life, and save in time of war they held the dead and the beliefs of others in deep respect. The bones would lie in peace, and no stone of the old temple would be employed to build the new.

Minarii chose another site that lay a stone's throw distant, and measured off a square six fathoms each way. There was a plentiful supply of boulders in the ravine below. Here the leisurely task began, all six of the natives working at it whenever they had an hour to spare. Little by little the temple of Ta'aroa took form—a rocky platform set with kneeling stones

and surrounding a small pyramid three yards high, made sacred by the two stones brought from the ancestral temple at Tahiti. The clearing was shaded by majestic trees, and a neat fence enclosed the whole, bordered with a hedge of flowering shrubs.

On a morning early in April, Minarii and his companions were sweeping the pavement and tidying the enclosure in preparation for the ceremony of awakening the god. The shoulders of all six were bared in sign of respect. Presently while the others waited in deep silence, Minarii stepped aside to put on the sacred garments of his office. The flush of dawn was in the east when he returned, clad in flowing lengths of tapa, dyed black. His companions knelt by their stones, their faces now clearly revealed in the increasing light, while their priest turned toward the still hidden sun, holding his hands aloft as he chanted:—

"The clouds are bordering the sky; the clouds are awake!
The rising clouds that ascend in the morning,
Wafted aloft and made perfect by the Lord of the Ocean,
To form an archway for the sun.
The clouds rise, part, condense, and reunite
Into a rosy arch for the sun."

Bowing his head, he awaited in silence until the sun began to touch the heights with golden light. He then made a sign to Tetahiti, who stepped behind the little pyramid and returned with a small casket, curiously carved and provided with handles like a litter. This was the dwelling place of the god, now believed to be present. Minarii addressed him solemnly:—

"Hearken to us, Ta'aroa!
Grant our petitions.
Preserve the population of this land.
Preserve us, and let us live through thee.
Preserve us! We are men. Thou art our god!"

The chanting ceased, and a moment of profound silence followed; then the priest concluded: "O Ta'aroa, we have awakened thee. Now sleep!"

The ceremony was over. The casket had been conveyed to its niche at the base of the pyramid, and Minarii had returned to the small hut near by to resume his customary garments, when voices were heard from the thicket and a moment later Mills and McCoy appeared at the edge of the clearing. They halted at the sight of the native men and then came forward to the fenced enclosure. McCoy gazed at the stonework admiringly.

"A braw bit o' work," he remarked. "And the six of ye built this, Tetahiti?"

The native regarded him gravely. "This is our *marae*," he explained, "where we come to worship our god."

"What's that he says?" Mills asked, contemptuously. Without waiting for a reply, he passed through the gate and stood surveying the *marae*. He was about to mount the stone platform when Minarii, who had now returned, laid a hand on his arm.

"Your shoulders! Bare your shoulders before you set foot there!"

Knowing scarcely a dozen words of the native tongue, Mills shook him off and was about to proceed when McCoy called out anxiously: "Are ye horn-mad, John? Bare yer shoulders, he says. It's their kirk, mon! Would ye enter a kirk wi' a covered head?"

Mills gave a harsh laugh. "Kirk, ye call it? It's a bloody heathen temple, that's what it is! I'll have a look, and I'll peel my shirt for no Indian!"

Before he had mounted three steps Minarii seized him by the arm and threw him to the ground so fiercely that he lay half stunned.

"Ye fool!" McCoy exclaimed. "Ye've slashed a het haggis now!"

Minarii stood over the prostrate Englishman threateningly,

his eyes blazing with anger. The faces of the other native men expressed the horror they felt at this act of desecration. Fortunately for Mills, McCoy, who spoke the native tongue with considerable fluency, was able to smooth matters over.

"Let your anger cool, Minarii," he said, rapidly. "You are in the right, but this man meant no harm. He is ignorant, that is all."

"Take him away!" ordered Minarii. "Come here no more. This is our sacred place."

Mills struggled to his feet, dazed and enraged, and stood with clenched fists, eyeing the native while McCoy spoke.

"Pull yersel' together, John! Say naught and get out o' this afore there's blood shed! Come along, now. They've right on their side, and he's an unchancy loon to meddle with."

Mills was in middle age, and Minarii's stern face and gigantic figure might have intimidated a far younger man. He turned aside and permitted McCoy to lead him away. The natives gazed after them in silence as they climbed the ridge and disappeared on the path leading to the settlement.

"Go you others," said Minarii, "and let no more be thought of this. The man was ignorant. As McCoy said, he meant no desecration."

Tetahiti remained behind and the two men lingered outside the enclosure surveying their handiwork with deep satisfaction.

"The building was auspicious," said Minarii, after a long silence. "The sacredness is in the stones."

Tetahiti nodded. "Did you not feel the god lighten the heavy boulders as we worked?" he asked.

"They were as nothing in our hands. Ta'aroa is well pleased with his dwelling place. Here we can offer prayers for our crops and for fishing, and dedicate the children who will come. Now for the first time my heart tells me that this is indeed my land—our land."

Minarii was silent for some time before he asked: "You know these white men better than I; have they no god?"

"Christian has never spoken to me of these things and I do not like to ask; but I would say that they worship none."

"It is strange that they should be godless. Captain Cook came three times to Matavai; I remember his visits well. He and his men were of the same race as these, but they worshiped their god every seventh day, in ceremonies not unlike our own. They bowed their heads; they knelt and listened in silence while one of them chanted. Our white men do none of these things."

"It must be that they have no god," Tetahiti replied.

Minarii shook his head gravely. "Little good can come to godless men. It would be well if we were alone here with our women. The ways of these whites are as strange to us as our ways to them."

"There are good men among them," said Tetahiti.

"Aye, but not all. Some yearn for Maori slaves."

"Martin, you mean? *Tihē!* He is slave-born!"

"It is not Martin alone," Minarii remarked, gravely. "Humble folk like your man Te Moa and my Hu rely upon us to protect them, and yet already Quintal and Williams and Mills treat them as little better than slaves. We want no bad blood here. We must be patient for the good of all, but the day may come . . ." He broke off, gazing sombrely before him.

"Christian knows nothing of this," said Tetahiti. "Shall I open his eyes?"

"It would be well if he knew, but these things he must learn for himself. We must wait and say nothing."

For a month or more after the burial of Fasto, Williams had seen nothing of Hutia. The girl was fond of him, in her way, and was wise enough to bide her time. Strive as he might, the blacksmith could not rid his mind of the thought that Fasto had learned of the intrigue, and that in her chagrin she had thrown herself from the cliffs. Though rough and forthright, he was by no means an unkindly man. For a time he had gone about his work in silence, without a glance

at Hutia when she passed, but little by little his remorse was dulled, and the old desire for the girl overpowered him. Once more their meetings in the bush had begun, conducted, on her part at least, with greater discretion than at first.

But Williams was far from satisfied; he wanted the girl for his own. What had begun as mere philandering gradually became an obsession. On many a night he lay awake far into the morning hours, torturing his brain in attempts to conjure up some means of obtaining Hutia. Now at last he felt that he could endure no more. One afternoon when he was working with Mills at the forge he put down his hammer.

"Stand by for a bit, John," he said.

Mills straightened his back with a grunt. "What's up?" he asked, incuriously.

"I can't go on the like o' this. Every man of ye has his woman. I've none."

"Ye'll not get mine," growled Mills. "Take a girl from one of the Indians."

"Aye, Hutia'd do."

The other gave a dry laugh. "Ye should know! A pretty wench, but an artful one, Prudence reckons."

"I'm thinkin' what Christian would say; and Minarii . . ."

"Damn the Indians! Call for a show of hands. Ye've the right. Where'd we be without Jack Williams and his forge?"

Christian's house was the most westerly in the settlement, and stood on rising ground close to the bluffs, which sloped more gently here than at Bounty Bay. To the west, a deep ravine led the waters of Brown's Well to the shingle, three hundred feet below. A belt of trees and bush along the verge of the bluffs screened the house from the sea.

The dwelling was of two stories, heavily framed and planked with the *Bounty's* oaken strakes; the bright russet of its thatch contrasted pleasantly with the weathered oak. The upper story was a single large, airy room, with windows on all sides, which could be opened or closed against the weather

by means of sliding shutters. It was reached by an inside ladder which led through a hatchway in the floor. It was here that Christian and Maimiti slept.

A partition divided the lower floor into two rooms. One was reserved for Christian's use. A roughly fashioned chair stood by a table of oak which held a silver-clasped Bible and a Book of Common Prayer, the *Bounty's* azimuth compass, and a fine timekeeper by Kendall, of London. Christian wound the instrument daily, and checked it from time to time by means of lunar observations, taken with the help of Young.

Christian had finished his noonday meal and was seated with Maimiti on a bench by the door, on the seaward side of the house. The sun was hot, and the sea, visible through a gap in the bush below, stretched away, calm, blue, and lonely, to the north. Looking up, presently, Christian observed Williams approaching.

The blacksmith touched his forelock to Christian, and saluted Maimiti as though she had been an English lady. "Might I speak with ye a moment, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. What is it, Williams? Do you wish to see me alone?"

"Aye."

The blacksmith remained standing, after the girl had gone, and hesitated for some time before he spoke.

"I doubt but ye'll think the less of me for what I have to say, but I must out with it. Men are fashioned in different ways—some hot, some cold, some wise, some fools. I reckon ye'll admit I'm no laggard and know my trade; but I've a weakness for the women, if weakness that be. . . . It's this, sir: I've lost my girl, and must have another."

He waited, clasping and unclasping his hands nervously. Christian reflected for a moment and said, slowly: "I foresaw this. It was bound to come. I don't blame you, Williams; your desire is a reasonable one. But surely you can see that no man is likely to give up his woman to you. What I propose might seem abhorrent at home, but the arrangement was an honour-

able one in ancient times. Have you no friend who would share his girl with you?"

Williams shook his head. "It won't do, sir; I'm not that kind. I must have one for myself."

"Which would you have?"

"Hutia."

"Tararu's wife? And what of Tararu?"

"He's but an Indian, and should give way."

"He's a man like ourselves. Consider your own feelings, were the situation reversed."

"I know, sir," Williams replied stubbornly, "but I must have her!" He clenched his fists and looked up suddenly. "Damn the wench! I believe she's cast a spell on me!"

"Well, it has come, with a vengeance," Christian said, as though to himself. He raised his head. "Your seizure of another man's wife might have the gravest consequences for all of us. My advice is, do nothing of the kind."

"Ye're right, sir; I know that well enough. But I'm past taking advice."

"You mean that you would seize the woman regardless of the trouble you may cause the rest of us? Come, Williams! You're too much of a man for that!"

"I can't help it, Mr. Christian; but I'll do this, if ye'll agree. Put it to a vote. If there's more say I shan't have her, I'll abide by that."

"You've no right to ask for a show of hands over such a matter," Christian replied, sternly; "the less so since you are not denied the favours of this woman as matters stand." He paused to reflect. "Nevertheless, this is a question that does concern us all, and I will do as you ask. We'll have it out tonight. Fetch the others here when you have supped."

The evening was windless, after the long calm afternoon, and the stars were bright as the mutineers assembled before Christian's house. Brown was the last to arrive. When he had joined the group, Christian rose and the murmur of conversation ceased.

"Williams, have you told the others why we are gathered here?"

"No, sir; I reckoned that would come best from ye."

Christian nodded. "A question has arisen that concerns every man and woman on the island. Williams has lost his girl. He says that he must have another." He paused, and a voice in the starlight growled, "He'll have none of ours!"

"He wants Hutia," Christian explained, "Tararu's wife."

"He's had her times enough," Quintal put in.

Williams sprang up, angrily, and was about to speak when Christian checked him.

"That is no business of ours. He wants her in his house. He wishes her to leave her husband and live openly with him, and has asked me to put the question to a vote. His desire for a woman is a natural one; under other circumstances it would concern him alone, but not as we are situated. Differences over women are dangerous at all times, and in a small community like ours they may have fatal consequences. The girl's husband is a nephew of Minarii, whom you know for a proud man and a chief among his own people. Is it likely that he would stand by while Tararu's wife was seized? And what of Tararu himself? Justice is universal; the Indian resents injustice as the Englishman does. We are of two races here; so far there has been no bad blood between us. To stir up racial strife would be the ruin of all."

He paused, and a murmur of assent went up from the men on the grass. But Mills spoke up for his friend.

"I'm with Jack. Ain't we to be considered afore the Indians?"

"Aye, well spoke!" said Martin.

"Well spoke?" said McCoy. "I winna say that! I'm wi' Mr. Christian. It's no fault o' Jack's there's not been trouble afore now. I'm nae queasy. I'll share my Mary wi' him."

"Keep your Mary!" growled Williams.

"Are you ready for the vote?" Christian said. "Remember, this is to decide the matter, once and for all. We are agreed to abide by the result. Those who would allow Williams to take Tararu's wife, show hands." He peered into the darkness; the hands of Mills and Martin alone were lifted.

"We're six to three against you, Williams," said Christian. "I believe you'll be glad of this one day."

"I'll abide by the vote, sir," the blacksmith replied in a gruff voice.

May passed and June ushered in the austral winter, with cold southwest winds and tempestuous seas. The evenings grew so chill that the people were glad to remain indoors after sundown, natives and whites alike.

Those evenings were far from cheerful in the blacksmith's house. Since the night of the meeting he had become more and more gloomy and taciturn. Mills tried in vain to draw him into talk; at last he gave up and turned to Prudence for company. Williams avoided Hutia. He had given his word, and he knew that if he were to keep it their meetings must cease. He found no peace save in the exhaustion of hard work.

In the dusk of a morning late in June, Mills rose to find Williams already up and gone. He felt mildly surprised, for the blacksmith brooded and paced the floor so late that he seldom wakened while it was still dark. Williams had been busy with a pair of the *Bounty's* chain plates, converting them into fish spears for the Indian men, and during the early forenoon, while Mills worked at clearing a bit of land not far off, he was again surprised, as he rested from his labour, to hear no cheerful clink of hammer on anvil. Toward nine o'clock his vague feeling of uneasiness grew so strong that he wiped the sweat from his face and dropped his axe. Martin limped out of the house as he approached. For a moment Mills forgot the blacksmith.

"Damn 'ee!" he exclaimed. "Ye've done naught but lie abed, I'll warrant!"

"It's all I can do to walk, man!" said Martin. "Work? With an old musket ball in me leg, and the nights perishin' cold? Let the Indians work! That's what we fetched 'em for."

"Where's Jack?" Mills asked.

"That's what I want to know."

"Ye've not seen him?"

"No. And the large cutter's gone. Alex Smith came up from the cove an hour back. He and Christian are on the mountain now. Not a doubt of it: Jack's took the boat and made off."

Mills turned to take the path that led past Christian's house and on to the Goat-House Peak. Halfway to the ridge he met the others coming down. "Is it true that Jack's made off with the boat?" Christian nodded, and led the way down the mountainside at a rapid walk.

They halted at Christian's house while he acquainted Maimiti with the situation and sent for some of the Indian men. He then hastened on to the landing place. The little crowd on the beach watched in silence while Christian had the larger of the two canoes dragged to the water's edge. With Minarii in the stern, they shot the breakers and passed the blackened wreck of the ship, wedged between the rocks. Christian waved to the northeast, took up a paddle, and plied it vigorously.

The wind had died away two hours before, and the sun shone dimly through a veil of high cloud. The sea was glassy calm, with a gentle southerly swell. Before an hour had passed, Minarii pointed ahead. The cutter's masthead and the peak of her lugsail were visible on the horizon, though the boat was still hull-down.

Williams sat on the cutter's after-thwart, his chin propped in his hands. From time to time he raised his head to glance back toward the land. He feared pursuit, but hoped the wind might make up before it came. It was useless to row, he had

discovered; with only one man at the oars, the heavy boat would scarcely move.

One of the *Bounty's* compasses lay in the stern sheets, with Williams's musket, a small store of provisions, and several calabashes filled with water. The blacksmith had some idea of where Tahiti lay, and knew that he would have a fair wind, once he could work his way into the region of the trades. But the thought that obsessed him was to get away from Pitcairn; as a destination, any other island would do. He might fetch Tahiti, he thought vaguely, or pick up one of the coral islands which they had passed in the *Bounty*. He cared little, in fact, where he went, or whether he died of thirst or was drowned on the way.

Presently he stood on a thwart, peering ahead with narrowed eyes for signs of wind. Then, turning to glance backward, he perceived the canoe, scarcely a mile away. He stepped down from the thwart, took up his musket, measured a charge from his powderhorn, and rammed the wad home. With sombre eyes, he selected a ball from his pouch. The canoe came on fast. When it was half a cable's length distant, the blacksmith stood up and leveled his piece. "Stop where ye are!" he ordered, hoarsely.

Christian rose to his feet, waving the paddlers on. "Williams!" he ordered sternly, "lay down your musket!"

Slowly, as if in a daze, the black-bearded man in the boat obeyed, slumping down on the thwart with shoulders bowed. The canoe lost way, riding the swell lightly alongside, and Christian sprang aboard the cutter.

"Are you mad?" he asked, with the sternness gone from his voice. "Where could you hope to fetch up?"

"Aye, Jack," put in Mills, "ye must be clean daft!"

"Leave be, Mr. Christian," muttered Williams. "I'll not go on as I have. Where I fetch up is my own concern."

Christian seated himself beside him. "Think, Williams," he said kindly. "This boat is common property. And how would we fare without a blacksmith? Tahiti lies three hundred leagues from here. You would be going to certain death. . . . Come, take yourself in hand!"

Williams sat gazing at his bare feet for a long time before he spoke. "Aye, sir, I'll go back," he said reluctantly, without raising his head. "I've done my best. If trouble comes o' this, let no man hold me to account."

CHAPTER VII

From now on Williams spent most of his time away from the settlement. On a lonely wooded plateau, on the western side of the island, he set to work to clear a plot of land and to build a cabin. Through the cold months of July, August, and September, he left the house each morning before the others were awake, returning at dusk. Mills respected his silence, and Martin, after one or two rebuffs, ceased to question him. In early October he announced that he was leaving for his new home, and, with Mills to help him, he carried his belongings over the ridge and down to the distant clearing where his cabin stood.

Though small, the cabin was strong and neatly built, with walls of split pandanus logs, set side by side. The floor alone was of plank, and the few articles of furniture had been put together with a craftsman's skill. Mills had not seen the place before. He glanced around admiringly.

"Ye've a snug little harbour here, Jack," he said as he set down his burden. "All Bristol-fashion, too! So ye're bound to live alone?"

"Aye."

Mills shrugged his shoulders. "I've no cause to meddle, but if it's Hutia ye're still pinin' for, why don't ye take her and be damned to the Indians?"

"I've no wish to stir up trouble. Christian's been fair with

us. I'll do what I can to be fair in my turn. I'll try living alone away from the sight of her, but I'm not sayin' how this'll end. Thank 'ee for the lift, John," he added. "Tell the lads I'll come over when there's work for the forge."

The shadows were long in the clearing, for it was late afternoon. Grass was already beginning to hide the ashes about the blackened stumps. As he sat on the doorstep of his house, the slope of the ground to the west gave Williams a view of the sea above the tree-tops. Snow-white terns, in pairs, sailed back and forth overhead. It was their mating season and they were pursuing one another, swooping and tumbling in aerial play. No wind was astir; the air, saturated with moisture, was difficult to breathe. Williams rose, cursing the heat, went to the small cookhouse behind his cabin, and kindled a fire to prepare his evening meal. At last the sun set angrily, behind masses of banked-up clouds, dull crimson and violet. It was not a night for sleep. The blacksmith was on foot before dawn, and the first grey of morning found him crossing the ridge, on his way to Christian's house.

Alexander Smith wakened at the same hour. Like Williams, he had tossed and cursed the heat all night, between snatches of fitful sleep. He opened the door, rubbed his eyes with his knuckles, stretched his arms wide, and yawned.

The moon, nearly at the full, was still up, though veiled by clouds in the west. The big red rooster in the *purau* tree flapped his wings, crowed, and regarded the ground with down-stretched neck and deep, explosive cackles. With a prodigious noise of wings, he left his perch and landed with a heavy thump. One after the other, the hens followed, and each in turn was ravished as she touched the ground. The last hen shook herself angrily, the cock made a final sidewise step with lowered wing, glanced up at his master as if to say: "Well, *that's* over with! Now for breakfast!" Smith grinned.

The fowls followed him in a compact little flock to the cookhouse, where the coconut-grater stood. Seating himself astride the three-legged stool to which the grater of pearl shell

was lashed, he began to scrape out the coconut meat, a crinkled, snowy shower that soon filled his wooden bowl.

He stopped once to fill his own mouth, and chuckled, as he munched, at the impatience of the fowls, standing in a wistful circle about the bowl. He rose, calling, as the natives did, in a high-pitched, ringing cry, and while the fowls came running with outstretched wings he scattered grated coconut this way and that.

Hearing the familiar call, the pigs in their sty under the banyan tree burst into eager grunts. *"Mai! Mai! Mai!"* responded Smith, gruntingly, and strolled across to empty the half of his coconut into their trough. He had the seaman's love of rural things.

It was now broad daylight. Balhadi came to the door, greeted her husband with a smile, and went to the cookhouse to prepare his breakfast. Smith stripped off his shirt and dipped a large calabashful from the water barrel for his morning wash. After scrubbing his face vigorously with a bit of tapa, he made the morning round of his plants. A fenced enclosure, of about half an acre, surrounded his house, and he derived keen pleasure from the garden he had laid out inside, with its stone-bordered paths and beds of flowering shrubs. Spring was coming on fast. He walked slowly, stooping often to examine the new growth or to inhale the perfume of some waxen flower. Now and again, as he straightened his back, he paused to glance at his newly completed house. Young was not a strong man, nor clever with his hands, and Smith had put up the building almost alone. He still derived from the sight of his handiwork a deep and inarticulate satisfaction. It was a shipshape job—stoutly built, weatherproof, and sightly, with its bright new thatch. The Indians said that such a thatching would last ten years.

Balhadi was calling him to eat. She was a short, strongly-made woman, wholesome and still youthful, with a firm, good-humoured face. Smith felt a real affection for her, expressed in robust fashion. He pulled her down to his knee,

gave her a resounding kiss, and fell to on his breakfast. Ten minutes later he shouldered his axe and strode away to his morning's work in the bush.

"Alex! Alex O!"

Tetahiti was hailing him from the path. He and Smith were good friends, and both loved fishing. "I came to fetch you," said the native. "Can you leave your work till noon? There is wind on the way, but the morning will be calm. I have discovered where the albacore sleep."

Smith nodded, and stood his axe against the fence. He followed Tetahiti down the path that led to Bounty Bay. They passed Mills's house, and McCoy's, and halted at the dwelling of the natives, not far from the landing place. The men had gone to their work in the bush; Smith chaffed with Moetua while his companion fetched the lines. Hutia was nowhere to be seen.

"Look," said Tetahiti, "we've octopus for bait. I speared two last night."

The sea was fairly calm in the cove, sheltered from the westerly swell. The native selected a dozen longish stones, weighing three or four pounds each, and tossed them into the smaller of the two canoes. They were soon outside the breakers and paddling to the northwest, while Tetahiti glanced back frequently to get his bearings from the land. At a distance of about a mile, he gave the word to cease paddling.

"This is the place," he said, as the canoe lost way and floated idly on the long, glassy swell. "I have been studying the birds for many days; this is where the fish cease to feed on the surface, and go down to sleep in the depths."

Each man had a ball of line two hundred fathoms or more in length. One end was tied to the outrigger boom; to the other, running out from the centre of the ball, the hook was attached. They now baited their hooks and made fast their sinkers, with a hitch that permitted the stones to be released by a sharp jerk.

"Let us try at one hundred fathoms," said Tetahiti.

Smith lowered his sinker over the side and allowed the line to run out for a long time, until a knot appeared. He pulled sharply and felt the hitch unroll and the release of the sinker's weight. Then, moving his line up and down gently, to attract the attention of the fish six hundred feet below, he settled himself to wait.

The sun was well up by now, but the horizon to the north was ominous. There was not the faintest breath of wind; even at this early hour the heat was oppressive.

"We shall have a storm," remarked the native. "The moon will be full to-night."

Smith nodded. "Christian thinks so, too."

"Your ears are opened," said Tetahiti. "You are beginning to speak our tongue like one of us!"

"I have learned much from you. What day is this—what night, I mean?"

"*Maitu*. To-night will be ***hotu***, when the moon rises as the sun sets."

Smith shook his head, admiringly. "I can never remember. We whites have only the names of the seven days of our week to learn. Your people must learn the twenty-eight nights of the moon!"

"Yes, and more; I will teach you the sayings concerning ***maitu***: 'A night for planting taro and bamboo; an auspicious night for love-making. Crabs and crayfish shed their shells on this night; albacore are the fish at sea. Large-eyed children and children with red hair are born on this night.' . . . *Mau!*"

He shouted the last word suddenly as he struck to set the hook and allowed his line to run hissing over the gunwale. Smith watched eagerly, admiring the skill with which Tetahiti handled the heavy fish. Next moment it was his turn to shout. For a full half-hour the two men sweated in silence as they played their fish. Smith's was the first to weaken. It lay alongside the canoe, half dead from its own exertions—a huge burnished creature of the tunny kind. Holding his tight line

with one hand, Tetahiti seized the catch by the tail while Smith clenched his fingers in the gills. A word, a heave in unison, and the albacore lay gasping in the bilges—a magnificent fish of a hundred pounds or more. Smith clubbed it to death before lending Tetahiti a hand.

The sea grew lumpy and confused as they paddled back to the cove. A swell from the north was now rolling into Bounty Bay, making their landing a difficult one. Minarii was awaiting them on the shingle. He helped them pull the canoe up into the shade.

"You come none too soon," he said. "The sea is making up fast. You are weary; let me carry your fish."

He fastened the tails of the albacore together, hoisted the burden of more than two hundredweight to one shoulder, and led the way up the steep path.

It was nearly noon. The workers had returned from the bush, and smoke went up from the cookhouses of the little settlement. Minarii set down his burden at the native house, and made a sign to his man Hu to cut up the fish. The women gathered about, exclaiming at sight of the catch. There was neither buying nor selling among the Polynesians. When fish was caught, it was shared out equally among all members of the community, high and low alike, a custom already firmly rooted on Pitcairn.

"I will carry Brown's share to him," said Minarii. Hu and Te Moa slung the remaining shares between them on a pole, and walked up the path, followed by Smith. McCoy's Mary stood before her house. She was great with child and had trouble in stooping to take up the cut of fish dropped on the grass at her feet.

"Hey, Will!" called Smith. "Here's a bit of fish for 'ee."

McCoy and Quintal appeared in the doorway. "Thank 'ee, Alex, ye're a lucky loon. Albacore!"

"Aye," put in Quintal. "Next best to a collop of beef!"

After a stop at the house of Mills, Smith dismissed the two natives at his own door and went on to Christian's house, Balhadi accompanying him. She carried a gift of a taro pudding, done up in fresh green leaves.

"For Maimiti," she explained. "This may tempt her to eat."

"When does she expect her child?"

"Her time is very close—to-day or to-morrow, I think."

Christian met them at the door and Balhadi carried the fish and her pudding to the cookhouse.

"A fine albacore, Smith!"

"I reckon he'd go a hundredweight, sir!" said Smith with a fisherman's pride. "And Tetahiti got one might have been his twin brother. All hands'll have a feed of 'em."

"Stop to dine with us."

"I hate to bother ye, sir, at a time like this."

Christian shook his head. "No, no! Jenny's here, and Nanai, to lend a hand. They'll make a little feast of it, with your girl. They're funny creatures, brown or white; birth and death are what they love. Come in."

"Thank 'ee, sir. I've a cut of fish for Jack; I'll just hang it up in the shade."

"He left not ten minutes gone. Come in and rest before we dine. They'll be giving us some of your fish. Do you like it raw, in the Indian style?"

"Aye, sir, that I do!"

"And I, when prepared with their sauce of coconut. We think of the Indians as savages, yet we have much to learn from them."

"I don't know what we'd do without 'em, here. We'd get no fish without the men to teach us how to catch 'em, and as for the girls, I reckon we'd starve but for them!"

They were sitting by the table in Christian's room, for Maimiti could no longer climb the ladder to the apartment upstairs, and the dining room was set aside for her use. The two men were silent for a time while the chronometer beside them ticked loudly and steadily. Christian glanced at its dial, which registered the hour in Greenwich, and the sight set his thoughts to wandering back through the past—to his boyhood

in Cumberland and on the Isle of Man, to his early days at sea.

"Had that old timekeeper a voice," he remarked, "it could tell us a rare tale! It was Captain Cook's shipmate on two voyages, traveling thousands of leagues over seas little known even now. It began life in London; now it will end its days on Pitcairn's Island."

Smith nodded. "Like me, sir!" he said.

"Were you born in London? I took you for a countryman."

"Aye, Mr. Christian; born there and reared in a foundling's home. I'm under false colors here. My real name is John Adams; the lads used to call me 'Reckless Jack.' I got into a bit of trouble and thought best to sign on as Alexander Smith."

Christian nodded, and asked after a brief pause: "Tell me, Smith, are you contented here?"

"That I am, sir! My folk were countrymen, till my dad was fool enough to try his fortune in London. It's in my blood. Happy? If ye was all to leave, and give me the chance, I'd stop here with my old woman to end my days."

Christian smiled. "I am glad, since I fetched you here. It would be curious, were we able to look ahead twenty years. There will be broad plantations, new houses, and children—many of them—I hope."

"And yours'll be the first-born, sir!"

Jenny appeared in the doorway, carrying a platter of fish. She smiled at the two men, and beckoned Balhadi in to help set the table. An hour later Smith rose to take his leave.

"Ask Williams to come down to the cove this afternoon," said Christian. "We shall need all hands to get the boats up out of reach of the sea."

A heavy swell from the north was bombarding the cliffs as Smith made his way over the ridge. The heat was sultry, though the sky was now completely overcast, and he knew that the wind could not be far off. Williams met him at the cottage door.

"Come in, Alex. Set ye down. What's that—fish? A monster he must have been, eh? Here, let me hang it up; Puss has smelt it already."

The blacksmith's cat, a fine tabby whose sleekness proved her master's care, was mewing eagerly, and Williams paused to cut off a small piece for her.

"She's spoiled," he remarked. "D'ye think she'd look at a rat? But I hate rusty tools and scrawny living things."

As they entered the cottage, Smith observed, on the floor close to the bed, a round comb of bamboo, such as the women used. Next moment, out of the corner of his eye, he saw Williams kick it hastily under the bed. He glanced about the neat little dwelling appreciatively.

"Ye've the best-built house of the lot," he said, "and the prettiest to look at. Aye, it's small, but all the better for that."

"What d'ye think of the weather, Alex?" Williams asked.

"It'll be blowing a gale by night. I'd best be getting back. Mr. Christian wants all hands at Bounty Bay. He's afeared for the boats."

The blacksmith nodded. "I'll come along with ye," he said.

The wind was making up from the northwest, with heavy squalls of rain, and before the two men reached the cove it hauled to the north, blowing with ever-increasing force.

It was late afternoon when the people began to straggle back, up the steep path to the settlement. The boats and the two canoes had been conveyed to the very foot of the bluff, far above where they were usually kept, and it seemed that no wave, no matter how great, could reach them there.

But at nightfall the gale blew at hurricane force. The deep roar of the wind and the thunder of breaking seas increased as the night wore on. The rocky foundations of the island trembled before the onslaught of wind and wave. There was little sleep for anyone, and there were moments when it seemed that only a miracle could preserve the houses from being carried away. Daybreak came at last.

Toward seven o'clock Smith went trudging up the path to Christian's house. The wind was abating, he thought, though the coconut palms along the path still bent low to the gusts, their fronds streaming like banners in the gale. Smith glanced up apprehensively from time to time as a heavy nut came whacking to the ground. Once, in a place where the path was somewhat exposed, he staggered and leaned to windward to keep his feet. Each time a great comber burst at the foot of the cliffs, he felt the ground tremble underfoot. At last he reached Christian's house.

The sliding shutters on the weather side were closed, but the door was open in the lee. Smith found Christian in the room, with Jenny and Taurua.

"Balhadi is with her," Christian said, drawing the new-comer aside and raising his voice to make it heard. "The pains have begun. What of the boats?"

"Gone, sir, all but the large cutter," replied Smith regretfully. "The sea's higher'n ye'd believe! All was snug an hour back. Then a roarin' great sea came in and carried away both canoes and the small cutter. And when the wind had cleared the air of spray, we looked out, sir, and the old *Bounty* was gone!"

Christian paced the floor nervously for a minute or two, stopping once to listen at the door of the other room. Then, halting suddenly, he addressed Taurua: "Go in to her, you and Jenny; say that I am going down to the landing place and shall not be long." He turned to Smith. "Come, there is nothing I can do here at such a time."

They found Young and a group of men and women at the verge of the bluffs, crouching to escape the full force of the wind while they watched with fascinated eyes the towering seas that ran into Bounty Bay. Speech was impossible, but Young took Christian's arm and pointed out to where the blackened hulk of the ship had lain wedged among the rocks. No trace of her remained.

The waves were breaking high among the undergrowth at

the foot of the path, and during the brief lulls, when the spray was blown ashore, Christian saw that the cove was a mass of floating rubbish and uprooted trees, and that avalanches had left raw streaks of earth where the sea had undermined the steep slopes toward Ship-Landing Point.

The gale was abating when at last the three men turned to make their way back to Christian's house. At the door they heard faintly, between gusts of wind, the wail of a newborn child. The door of the other room opened, and Jenny and Taurua came in, with the smiles of women who have assisted at a happy delivery. Balhadi appeared behind them. She beckoned to Christian.

"Ē tamaroa!" she said. "A man-child!"

As she closed the door behind him, Christian saw Maimiti on a couch covered with many folds of tapa; and close beside her, swathed to the eyes in the same soft native cloth, an infant who stirred and wailed from time to time. Maimiti looked pale and worn, but in her eyes there was an expression of deep happiness. Balhadi pulled back the tapa that muffled the baby's face.

"Look!" she said proudly. "Was ever a handsomer boy? And auspiciously born! You know our proverb: 'Born in the hurricane, the child shall live in peace.'"

Young smiled when Christian came out of the room. "It is fitting that your child should be our first-born," he remarked, as he held out his hand. "What shall you name him?"

"Nothing to remind me of England," replied Christian. "Smith, Balhadi has proven herself a true friend to-day. You shall be the child's godfather. Give him a name."

The seaman grinned and scratched his head. "Ye'll have naught to remind 'ee of England? I have it, sir. Ye might name him for the day, if ye know what day it is."

The father smiled grimly as he consulted his calendar. "It's a good suggestion, Smith. The day is Thursday, and the month October. Thursday October Christian he shall be!" He

glanced out through the doorway. "Here come the others; set out the benches."

The other mutineers and their women were approaching the house. One after another, the men shook Christian's hand, while the women filed in to seat themselves on the floor by Maimiti's couch. When the benches were full, Christian raised his voice above the roar of the wind.

"There's a question that calls for a show of hands. Shall we issue an extra grog ration to-day, and drink it here and now?"

Every hand went up, but McCoy asked anxiously: "How much ha' we left, sir?"

Christian drew a small, worn book from his pocket and turned the pages. "Fifty-three gallons."

McCoy shook his head gloomily. "A scant four months' supply!"

When the glasses were full, the men toasted the child in the next room:—

"A long life to him, sir!"

"May he be as good a man as his father!"

McCoy was the last to drink. He watched the filling of his glass with deep interest, and sniffed at the rum luxuriously before he took a sip.

"I'll nae drink it clean caup out," he said apologetically, and then, as he held the glass aloft, "Tae our first bairn! I've run 'ee a close race, sir. My Mary'll hae her babe within the week!"

CHAPTER VIII

With the warm spring rains of November, the planting of the cleared lands began. The weather was too sultry for hard work when the sun was overhead; the men went out to their plantations at daybreak, rested through the hot noon hours,

and worked once more from mid-afternoon till evening dusk.

Smith, Young, and Christian had joined forces in clearing a considerable field in the Auté Valley. Now the rubbish had been burned and the smaller stumps pulled, and the volcanic soil, rich and red, lay ready to nourish a crop of yams.

On a morning toward the middle of the month, the three men set out well before sunrise, taking the path that led south, up the long slope of the plateau, and over the ridge. No wind was astir, a light mist hung over the treetops, and the fresh spring verdure was beaded with dew. A party of women, ahead, took the path that branched off to the east. Presently, with Christian leading the way, the men toiled up the steep trail to the ridge, and came to a halt. Dropping the heavy basket of lunch, Smith was the last to seat himself. The place commanded a wide prospect to the north—over the rich plateau, christened the Main Valley, to the misty greyish-blue of the sea beyond. It was a custom, well established by now, to rest here for a few minutes each morning before descending to work in the Auté Valley.

The upper rim of the sun was touching the horizon, gilding the small, fluffy, fair-weather clouds. The clearings in the Main Valley were not as yet extensive enough to be visible from the ridge. From the sea to the bare summits of the ridges, virgin forest clothed the land. Here and there, the silvery foliage of a clump of candlenut trees contrasted with the dark green of the bush, and scattered coconut palms curved up gracefully to their fronded tops, sixty or seventy feet above the earth.

In the valley below, the women were at work beating out bark cloth. Each tapa-maker had her billet of wood, fashioned from the heart of an ironwood tree, and adzed flat on the upper surface. They varied from a fathom to a fathom and a half in length, and were supported on flat-topped stones set in the earth, so spaced that no two beams gave forth the same note when struck. They were, in fact, rude xylophones; the women derived great pleasure from the musical notes of

their mallets, and the measured choruses produced when several of them worked together. "Tonk, tink, tonk, tonk; tinka-tonk, tink!"—the deliberate notes were sweet, measured, and musical. Young loved the sound of them, which expressed to him the very spirit of rustic domesticity, of the dreamy happiness of the islands, of morning in the dewy bush.

Presently the men rose and made their way down the slope of the Auté Valley, to the glade where Brown's cottage stood. The seed yams, fetched from Tahiti, had been planted early in February in a good-sized clearing near by. The gardener and Jenny had tended them till they were ready to be dug, weeding the rows carefully, and watering the young plants in times of drought. They had been left in the ground until October, and stored on platforms in the shade, out of the reach of rats and wandering swine.

A slender column of smoke rose from Jenny's cookhouse. The gardener was on his knees, absorbed in potting a young breadfruit plant which he had just severed from the parent tree. Christian approached so softly that Brown started at the sound of his voice. He rose stiffly, dusting the earth from his hands. "Morning, sir." He smiled at Young and gave Smith a friendly nod. "What's to be planted to-day, Mr. Christian?"

"Have you many more of the long yams? The *tahotaho?*"

"Aye. There's a-plenty. To my way of thinking, they're the best of the lot."

He led the way to a large raised platform, under a spreading tree. It held two or three tons of sprouted yams, all of the same variety, and averaging no less than fifty pounds in weight. While Christian chatted with the gardener, his companions went to the cookhouse and returned with half a dozen bags of coarse netting and three carrying poles. Each bag was now filled with yams, handled gently in order not to injure the sprouts. Young's load was made light, but Smith and Christian balanced a hundredweight at either end of their poles. In a land where wheels and beasts of burden were unknown, no other method of transport was possible.

Christian squatted, settled the stout pole on his shoulder, raised himself upright with a grunt, and led the way to the new clearing. It lay about four hundred yards distant from Brown's cottage, in a westerly direction, and the feet of the three men had already worn a discernible path through the bush. The land sloped gently to the south, hemmed in by high green walls of virgin forest. Christian dashed the sweat from his eyes when he had set down his load.

The hills were to be about a yard apart, and all had been well lined and staked the day before. Young set to work at cutting up the yams, so large that many of them sufficed to plant twenty-five or thirty hills. Side by side on two rows, Christian and Smith began to ply their mattocks, digging a hole at each stake, filling it in with softened earth and decaying vegetation. Their companion was soon planting the sprouted bits of yam, pressing the earth down carefully over each.

The two men worked doggedly till nearly ten o'clock, striving to keep ahead of Young, never halting, save to spit on their hands and take fresh grips on their mattock hafts. They had cast their shirts aside, and the sweat streamed from their shoulders and backs. The sun was high overhead when Christian flung down his mattock and wiped his face with his bare forearm.

"Avast digging!" he said to Smith.

"Aye, sir; I've had enough."

Young followed them to a shady spot where they sluiced their bodies with water from a large calabash. Smith wandered away into the bush and was back before long, with a cluster of drinking coconuts and a broad leaf of the plantain, to serve as a cloth for their rustic meal. He drew the sheath knife at his belt, cut the tops from a pair of nuts, and offered them to his companions.

Christian threw back his head and finished the cool, sweet liquor at a draught. He smiled as he tossed the empty nut away.

"We've a rare island," he remarked, "where grog grows on the trees!"

"What have the girls given us to-day?" inquired Young, glancing at the basket hungrily. Smith spread the plantain leaf on the ground and began to remove the contents of the basket, displaying a large baked fish, the half of a cold roast suckling pig, cooked breadfruit, scraped white and wrapped in leaves, and a small calabash filled with the delicious coconut sauce called *taioro*. The three men seated themselves on the grass and were beginning their meal when Jenny appeared, carrying a large wooden bowl which she set down before them.

"A pudding," she explained. "I made two."

When she was gone, they fell to heartily, dining with the relish only hard work can impart. The fish disappeared, and the crisp, browned suckling pig; the pudding of taro and wild arrowroot, covered with sweet coconut cream, soon went the same way. Smith sighed.

"I'm for a nap, sir," he said, as he rose to his feet with some difficulty; "I've stowed away enough for three!"

Five minutes later he was snoring gently in the shade of a *purau* tree, a stone's throw distant. Christian turned to Young.

"There's a good man, Ned," he remarked.

"Yes. I've come to know him well. Had he been reared under more fortunate circumstances . . ."

Christian nodded. "He's a fine type of Englishman, and a born leader, I suspect. Life's wasteful and damned unjust! What chance has a man in the forecastle? Who can blame him if he diverts himself with trollops or dulls his mind with drink? Not I! Smith deserved a better chance from life. He has the instincts of a gentleman."

They fell silent. The sun was now directly overhead, and presently they moved to a place of dense shade where they could sit with their backs to the trunk of an ancient candlenut tree. "Seamen are a strange lot," Christian remarked, presently. "You and I have been together since the *Bounty* left Spithead, and now we shall pass the remainder of our lives on this morsel of land. Yet I know nothing of you, nor you of me! Where was your home, Ned? Tell me something of your life before you went to sea."

"I was born in the West Indies, on St. Kitts, and lived there till I was twelve years old."

"I've been there! It was eight—no, nine years ago. We cast anchor at Basseterre to load sugar, and I had a run ashore. I was only a lad at the time."

"We lived just outside the town, at the foot of Monkey Hill. I loved the island, and was unhappy when sent away to school. Here in the South Sea I feel more at home than in England."

"Odd that we should both be islanders! My own boyhood was passed on the Isle of Man. My first speech was the Manx, not unlike the Gaelic of the Highlanders." Christian smiled, half sadly. "I can still hear the voice of our old nurse, singing the lament for Illiam Dhone."

"Who was he?"

"William Christian, my ancestor—'Fair-Haired Illiam' in our language. He was executed in 1663, for high treason against the Countess of Derby, then Queen of Man. He was innocent."

For two hours or more, till Smith wakened, they chatted idly of the past. Then, as the shadows began to extend eastward, the three men fell to work once more. It was dusk when they laid down their mattocks and filed homeward, past Brown's cottage and over the ridge.

The summer proved warm and rainy and the yams grew well. They were ready for digging when autumn had dried out the soil and June ushered in the winter of 1791.

Midway of the settlement, near the house of Mills, the communal storage platforms, called *pafatas,* had been set up. Supported on stout posts higher than a man's head, and floored

with a grating of saplings laid side by side, the four large platforms were designed to hold twenty tons or more of yams. As with the fish, so with the fruits of the earth; all hands were to share alike.

As the yams were dug, the men fetched them in on their carrying poles and passed them up to the women, one by one, to be stowed aloft. The long yams were laid crisscross, to allow a free circulation of air; day after day the piles grew higher, till at last, toward the middle of the month, it was announced that another day's work would see the harvest home.

Four large hogs were killed that night, scalded, scraped, and hung from the branches of a banyan tree. There was a sense of rejoicing in the houses, of deep satisfaction with a communal task performed, of happy anticipation of well-earned rest.

At daybreak the people began to assemble by the platforms, exchanging good-natured banter as they eyed the preparations for their evening feast. Hu and Te Moa had been appointed cooks, and were already engaged in scraping out pits for two large earth ovens, one for baking the hogs and one for ti roots, yams, taro, and other vegetables. McCoy slapped the smooth white flank of one of the hogs.

"Ye're forbid to Jews, and no true Scot'll eat 'ee, but bide here till Will McCoy comes back!" He turned to Quintal: "Vivers for all hands, Matt! Gin we'd ilk a tass o' grog!"

Quintal grinned, and at that moment Christian came around the turn of the path. He was carrying his small boy, now eight months old, and Maimiti followed him. McCoy caught his eye.

"Can't 'ee spare a sup o' grog for to-night, sir? Just a wee tassie all round?"

Christian shook his head. "We've but four bottles left. It was agreed to save that for medical stores."

"Aye, sir," replied McCoy regretfully. "So it was, I mind me; I'll say nae mair."

Presently the men took up their poles and bags of netting; several of the women accompanied them to lend a hand as they scattered to the different parts of the island where their plantations were situated. Christian handed young Thursday October to his mother, shouldered his pole, and took the path with Smith and Young to the Auté Valley.

All day long the yams came in and were stowed aloft, without a halt for dinner or a rest at noon. At sunset the *pafatas* were bending under their loads, and every soul on Pitcairn's Island, save Minarii and his wife, was there by the ovens, still covered with heaps of matting and breadfruit leaves.

Minarii had cleared and planted the largest field on the island, and his crop was the heaviest of all. Aided by Moetua, he had toiled like a Titan throughout the day. Now, in the dusk of evening, they were fetching in the last load. A shout went up from the natives as they came in sight. Minarii was in the lead, half running, half walking, with bent knees. His carrying pole was a mighty bludgeon of hardwood, but it curved and swayed with the man's movements, for no less than two hundredweight of yams was suspended from either end. Behind him came Moetua, trotting under a load Young or McCoy could not have lifted from the ground.

As the couple set down their burdens, several of the natives, men and women, sprang forward to lend a hand. Prudence and Nanai swarmed up the posts of the nearest *pafata* and squatted, clapping their hands. Up went the yams, of forty, fifty, and sixty pounds' weight, to be stowed amid shouting and much good-natured mirth. Tararu was about to heave up the last of them when Minarii laid a hand on his arm.

"For the god," he said. "Ta'aroa will be content with his first fruits."

Christian nodded to the two cooks. "Open the ovens!" he ordered.

When Minarii and his wife returned, bathed like the others, and the woman with a wreath of flowers on her hair, the feast had been spread on a stretch of level lawn. Christian sat at the head of the rustic table, and below him the men faced

each other in two lines. The women had their meal at a little distance, and a bright fire of coconut husks burned between.

Two hours later, when the last of the broken meats had been gathered up and the natives were drumming and dancing in the firelight, Christian took leave of the company. Maimiti followed him, with her sleeping child on her arm.

"A happy day," he said, as they strolled homeward in the starlight. "We have begun well here. Your people and mine were like brothers to-night!"

It was past midnight when the fire was allowed to die out and the people straggled back to their houses to sleep. The new day began to brighten the eastern sky, and one by one the fowls fluttered down from the trees. Still the doors of the houses remained closed, and the people slept. Only Minarii was afoot.

In the first grey of dawn he had taken the path to the *marae,* bearing a little offering of first fruits for his god. Uncovering his shoulders reverently, he had climbed to the rude platform of stone and laid the basket of food on Ta'aroa's altar. Then, after a brief prayer, supplicating the acceptance of the offering and the continued favour of the god, he had set out to return to his house, where he meant to rest throughout the morning.

Upon reaching the summit of the Goat-House Ridge, he seated himself on a flat rock to rest. The sun was above the horizon now; the sky was cloudless, and there was a light, cool breeze from the west. No music of tapa mallets came up from the wooded depths of the Main Valley; all was still save for the occasional long-drawn crowing of the cocks. He drew a deep breath. Life was good, he thought, and this island, to which the white captain had led him, was a good land. The fish from this sea were sweet; pigs throve here without attention; as for yams, who in Tahiti had seen the equal of these? He had had many wives, but Moetua was the best of them, though she had never borne him a child. A fine, strapping girl, a fit mate for a man like himself! And she had

no eyes for the other men. He rose, stretching his arms wide as he turned, and glanced casually and half instinctively around the half-circle of horizon to the west. Suddenly his easy pose became rigid. For a full minute or more he gazed westward, hands shading his eyes. Then he turned and plunged down the steep path toward Christian's house.

Christian, clad only in a loin cloth, was scrubbing himself by the water cask at the rear of the house when Minarii arrived. He hailed the native man cheerily, then paused, with the calabash in his hand, to give him a keen glance. "What is it, Minarii?" he asked.

"I have been on the ridge. Chancing to glance westward, I saw that something broke the line where sea and sky meet. It gleamed white when the rising sun shone upon it. Christian, it is a sail!"

Christian's face was impassive. "You are sure?" he asked.

Minarii nodded: "It is a white man's ship. Our sails of matting are brown."

"Is she steering this way?"

"I could not make out."

"Find Smith," said Christian. "Tell him to come to me at once."

Maimiti sat on the doorstep, suckling her eight months' boy. Christian stopped for a moment to caress her hair and to gaze down tenderly at his son. When he came out of the house, spyglass in hand, Alexander Smith was striding up the path. "We are going to the Goat-House," Christian told the girl.

As they walked away briskly, he informed Smith of Minarii's news. "We'll stop on the mountain till we make certain of her course. It is too early for a ship sent out from England to search for us, but a British vessel may have put in at Matavai by chance and learned of the mutiny from the others there. She would be on the lookout for us."

Both men were panting when they reached the summit, and both turned their eyes westward, where a speck of white broke

the line of the horizon. Christian rested his glass in the fork of a scrubby tree, focused it, and gazed out to the west. Three or four minutes elapsed before he lowered the glass.

"She's hull and courses down," he said. "I can make out topsails, topgallants, and royals when they catch the sun."

He handed the glass to Smith, who scrutinized the distant vessel long and earnestly. "She's steering this way, sir," he said at last. "Look again. Ye'll see her fore-topmast staysail."

Christian soon convinced himself of the truth of Smith's words, and they turned to go.

"With this westerly wind, she'll come on fast, sir," remarked Smith.

"Aye," replied Christian grimly, as he picked his way down the steep path. "She should be close in by one o'clock."

He said no more till they were approaching the house. Halting at the door, he turned to Smith. "Go at once to Brown and Williams, and tell any others you meet on the way. Every fire must be put out. I want all hands, men and women, to assemble at McCoy's house. Tell them to waste no time."

"A ship is coming," he told Maimiti, when Smith was gone. "Unless they make a landing, we have nothing to fear. I am going to warn the others. Do you stop here and gather together everything we possess from the ship—plates, knives, axes, tools. All must be well hidden. Should they land, we will conceal ourselves in the bush till they are gone."

At Young's house, Christian stopped to explain the situation and to give his orders. Half consciously, he had taken command of the island as if it had been a ship. All fires were extinguished and the mutineers set to work with their women collecting every article of European manufacture, in preparation for flight to the bush. When all were assembled before McCoy's house, Christian revealed his plan.

"She is making direct for the island," he said. "If the wind holds, she will fetch the land within a few hours. From the cut of her sails she is a small English frigate. She cannot have been sent out in search for us, but it is possible that she touched at Tahiti and learned of the mutiny there. Our course is clear in any case. If they pass without making a landing, they must not know that the island is inhabited. Should they land, we must take to the bush and remain hidden there, with everything that might betray us as white men." He paused, and the men spoke rapidly in low voices among themselves. "Williams and Mills," Christian went on, "I leave the smithy to you. See that the bellows, the forge, and the anvil are safely hidden, and every trace of Williams's work removed. Young, the path leading up from Bounty Bay must be wiped out and masked. Take the Indian men. Yours is the most important task of all! Pile stones in a natural manner here and there on the path, and plant young ironwood trees between; their foliage will not wilt for a day or two. McCoy, take charge of the houses, and see that nothing remains to betray us. Smith, you shall be our lookout, and report instantly should the ship change her course. And remember, no fires! If they land, we shall repair at once to the grove of banyan below the Indian temple. They will never find us there."

Mills slapped the stock of the musket in his hand. "Find us or not," he growled, "I don't mean to be taken. Not while I've powder and lead!"

"Are ye daft?" asked McCoy. "One shot'd be the ruin of us all!"

"Aye," said Christian sternly, "McCoy is right!"

The people dispersed to their tasks and Christian walked back to set his own house in order. Smith followed and stopped at the door while the spyglass was fetched.

Less than two hours had passed when Smith returned. "She's an English man-of-war, sir, not a doubt of it! A frigate of thirty-two, I reckon, and coming straight on for the land."

By early afternoon Christian's orders had been carried out, and the people were assembled not far from McCoy's house

and a quarter of a mile from the landing place. The path leading up from the cove had been masked so skillfully that no trace of it was visible, and after a final inspection by Christian the workers had made their way separately up the bluff.

The ship was now close in; Smith was stationed on a point that jutted out beyond a small ravine, to hail the others when she rounded the northern cape. Christian was admonishing the group of men and women on the grass.

"She is a man-of-war, and there will be a dozen spyglasses trained on shore. When she comes in sight, the women must remain here. Maimiti, you will see to that! The men shall go with me to the point, but once there, we must take care not to be seen."

There was a rapid murmur of conversation as he ceased to speak, broken by a hail from Smith. The ship had rounded Young's Rock and was now little more than a mile from Bounty Bay, and at a distance of about three cable lengths from shore. Her courses were clewed up; she came on slowly under her topsails, before the fair westerly wind. At a sign from Christian the men followed him down to Smith's lookout point.

The place was well screened by bush and about three hundred feet above the beach; the rise to the plateau was steep enough here to merit the name of cliff. Each man chose for himself a peephole through the foliage, and seated himself to watch the progress of the ship. There were exclamations from the mutineers:—

"She's English, not a doubt!"

"A smart frigate, eh, lads?"

Nearly an hour passed while the vessel coasted the island slowly, sounding as she approached the cove. The men peering through the bush could see the red coats of marines, and a stir and bustle amidships as she drew abreast of Bounty Bay. A boat was going over the side; presently, with two officers in the stern and a full crew at the oars, she began to pull toward the cove, while the frigate tacked and stood offshore.

Though the wind was westerly, there was a high swell from the north, and one of the officers astern rose to his feet as the boat drew near the breakers. At a sign from him, the men ceased rowing, and the cutter rose and fell just beyond the first feathering of the seas.

"They'll never chance it!" muttered Young. Christian nodded without taking his eyes from the boat.

"She's been to Tahiti," growled Mills, "ye can lay to that! Thank God for the swell!"

The taller of the officers, a lieutenant from his uniform, was raising his spyglass to scan the rim of the plateau. For a long time the glass moved this way and that while the officer examined the blank green face of the bush. At last he snapped his telescope together and made a sign to the rowers to return to the ship. Hove-to under her topsails, she was a good mile offshore by now, and the cutter was a long time pulling out to her. Through his glass Christian watched the falls made fast, and the sway of the men at the ropes as the boat went on board. Presently the courses were loosed and the frigate slacked away to bear off to the east.

CHAPTER IX

By the end of the year, the swine had multiplied to an extent which made it necessary to fence all the gardens against their depredations. The fowls, wandering off into the bush, had gone wild and regained the power of flight lost in domesticity. The women caught as many as they required in snares, baited with coconut; when a man wished to eat pork, half an hour's tramp with a musket sufficed to bring a fat hog to bag. Sometimes they shot a fierce old sow, ran down the squeaking pigs, and fetched them in to be tamed and fattened in the sties.

During the breadfruit season, from November till May, the

trees planted by the ancient inhabitants of the island produced more than enough to feed all hands. The pandanus abounded everywhere; its nuts, though somewhat laborious to extract, were rich, tasty, and nourishing. The long, slender, wild yams grew in all the valleys, and in the natural glades, where the sunlight warmed the fertile soil, were scattered patches of ti—a kind of dracæna, with a large root, very sweet when baked. *Pia maohi,* or wild arrowroot, indigenous to all the volcanic islands of the Pacific, was here, valuable for making the native puddings of which the white men soon grew fond. The coconuts would have been enough for ten times the population of the island. At the proper season, the cliffs provided the eggs and young of sea birds, the latter, when nearly full grown, being fat, tender, and far from ill-flavoured. Shellfish and crustaceans were to be gathered on the rocky shores when the weather was calm, and fish abounded in the sea. Once their houses were built, and the land cleared for plantations of yams and clothplant, the mutineers found themselves able to live with little labour.

There were two small Christians now—Thursday October and the baby, Charles; McCoy was the father of a boy and a girl, and Sarah had presented Quintal with an infant son. The adult population numbered twenty-six, now that Fasto was dead, and their island would have supported in comfort at least five hundred more. There had been little friction during the two years past, for the hard work together, the sense of sharing a common task, had bred good feeling between whites and Polynesians. Now, as the second anniversary of their settlement on the island approached, all began to take life more easily. Minarii and Tetahiti spent much time at sea in the cutter, fishing for albacore; certain of the white men took to loafing in the shade, while they forced the humbler natives to perform the daily tasks too heavy for womenfolk. Williams was seldom seen at the settlement, and McCoy, once the most sociable of men, was frequently absent from his house.

No one knew where he spent so many hours each day, and none cared save Quintal, who grumbled incuriously at times when he wished to chat with his friend. Mary suspected that her husband was tired of her and had found consolation elsewhere, but his absence brought her more relief than jealousy, for he had been a trial to her since the daily grog ration had ceased; his cuffs were far more frequent than his caresses. With two small children to occupy her, Mary would have been content had her husband moved away for good.

With the secretiveness of a Scot, and unknown to all the others, McCoy was conducting certain experiments in a narrow gorge on the unfrequented western slope of the island. In his youth he had been apprenticed to a distiller, and, while acquiring a rough knowledge of the distiller's art, he had also acquired an inveterate love of alcohol. Unlike most British seamen of his day, McCoy cared little for sprees and jovial drinking bouts, and under ordinary circumstances never went to excess. What he loved was the certainty of an unfailing supply of grog, the glow and gentle relaxation of a quiet glass or two by himself. When the last of the *Bounty's* rum was gone, save for the small amount preserved in case someone fell ill, McCoy's moods of gaiety had ceased, and he had grown silent and morose.

The idea had come in a flash, one afternoon when he was alone at Williams's forge. He was searching for a bit of wire, or a nail, to make a fishhook, and as he turned over the odds and ends of metal fetched from the ship he came on a few yards of copper tubing, coiled up and made fast with a bit of marline. A coil! With a coil, cooled in water, it would be no trick at all to set up a small still!

Hiding the tubing carefully, he strolled home deep in thought. The copper pot from the ship would be the very thing, but it was at Christian's house and not to be had without awkward explanations. There were a number of kettles which had been placed on board for trade with the Indians; he had two of his own, but they were too small to make more

than a pint a day; yet a pint a day would be ample for one. It would be best to keep the matter to himself. He suspected that Christian would scent danger and put an immediate stop to it. He might let Matt Quintal in. . . . No, Quintal always went mad when enough grog was on hand. What could he use? Sugar cane was not plentiful, and all of the people were fond of chewing it. He could never get enough without exciting suspicion. Why not ti? The roots would have to be baked to make them sweet, then mashed in water and allowed to ferment. There was plenty of ti; nearly everyone was heartily tired of it.

Deliberately, and with the greatest secrecy, McCoy went about his preparations. Musket on his arm, as if pig-hunting, he wandered about the island casually till he found a spot that suited him. Far off from Williams's cottage, and below the upper slopes frequented by the increasing flock of goats, he found a narrow, walled-in gorge, where a trickle of water wandered down from the peak. Little by little, carrying his light loads before sunrise or in the dusk of evening, he accumulated what he needed there—a kettle, the coil, a supply of the roots, a native pestle of stone for mashing them, and a keg in which to ferment the mash afterwards. Then, still without arousing curiosity, he fetched several bags of coconut shells, which burn with an intense and smokeless heat.

The kettle was of cast iron, and held about two gallons. McCoy set it up carefully on three stones, inserted one end of his coil in the spout, and made the joint tight with a plaster of volcanic clay. He bent the flexible coil so that it passed into a large calabash sawed in half, and out, through a watertight joint, after a dozen turns. A dam of stones and mud across the watercourse formed a little pool, from which the cold water could be dipped to fill the calabash. When all was ready, he cooked a large earth oven of the roots, mashed them with his pestle on a flat rock, and stirred up the mash with water in his keg.

The month was January, and the weather so hot that fer-

mentation was not long delayed. When McCoy lifted the lid of his keg, thirty-six hours after the first stirring, a yeasty froth covered the mash. He stirred it once more, replaced the lid, and strolled homeward, killing a fine yearling hog on the way.

He was so obsessed with his plans, so eager to see and to taste the results of the experiment, that he scarcely closed his eyes all through the night. Long before the others were awake, he took up his musket and stole out, past Mary, sleeping peacefully, with her two children at her side. The stars were bright overhead; the day promised well.

Striding along the starlit path, McCoy passed the house of Mills, passed Young's house, and turned inland along the near bank of the ravine that led down from Brown's Well. He halted for a moment to drink, where the rivulet ran into the upper end of the pool. Starlight was giving place to dawn as he climbed to the small plateau above and toiled up to the summit of the Goat-House Ridge.

Lack of breath forced him to rest for a moment here, where another man might have lingered to admire the wide prospect of land and sea. Beyond the sleeping settlement and the jagged peak of Ship-Landing Point, the sea stretched away, misty and indistinct in the morning calm. But in the east the sun announced its approach in a glory of colour among the low scattered clouds—blended gold and rose, shimmering like mother-of-pearl. McCoy shouldered his musket and took a dim goat-path leading down to the west.

He found the mash working powerfully; there was a rim of froth on the ground about the keg. He put a finger into the mess, tasted, and spat it out. Then, after a thorough stirring, he ladled the kettle full with half a coconut shell. Unwrapping his tinder carefully, he ignited the charred end with a stroke of flint on steel and blew up the dried leaves beneath the kettle to a flame. Soon a hot, smokeless fire of coconut shells was burning brightly.

The lid of the kettle was of heavy cast iron, and fitted

tightly, but McCoy now plastered it about with clay before he filled his sawn calabash with water and stood a pewter half-pint on a rock, where it would catch the drip from the coil. The kettle sang, and began to boil at last, while he poured more cool water over the coil from time to time. A drop formed at the end of the copper tube, grew visibly, and fell into the half-pint. Another drop formed and fell; another and another, while the man watched with eager eyes.

When there was an inch or more of spirit in the pot, McCoy could wait no longer. He built up his fire, replenished the mash in the kettle, and substituted his half coconut shell for the pewter pot. Then, after ladling more cool water into the calabash, he seated himself with his back to a tree. He passed the half-pint under his nose, sniffing at the contents critically.

"I've smelt waur!" he muttered, and took a preliminary sip.

McCoy made a wry face and swallowed violently. He opened his mouth wide and blew out his breath with all his force.

"Ouf! There's nae whiskey in Scotland can touch her for strength! I've tasted waur—het from the still, that is."

He took a more substantial sip this time, coughed, sputtered, and rose to his feet. "It's water she needs just now. Gie her time! Gie her time! Ouf! A glass o' this'd set old Matty daft!"

Mixed with a small measure of water, the spirit proved more palatable, though McCoy made many a wry face as he sipped. All through the morning he kept his fire going and the kettle full, drinking the raw spirit as fast as it condensed in the coil. The sun was overhead when he allowed the fire to die out and stretched himself to sleep in the shade, with flushed face and laboured and irregular snores.

He awoke late in the afternoon, and, though his head ached unmercifully, he made his way back to the settlement in deep content.

McCoy's supply of ti had been obtained from a natural glade not far inland from the house where Martin lived with

Mills. The plant, more or less rare elsewhere on the island, grew in great plenty here, and at the suggestion of the natives the glade had not been set out to yams, though it lay close in and there was no clearing to be done. In the beginning both natives and whites had eaten the sweet baked roots with relish, but the ti proved cloying after a time and the plants were allowed to flourish undisturbed.

Returning to his house in the cool of later afternoon, McCoy glanced through the scattered bush and perceived Martin in the distant glade, plying a mattock side by side with Hu. He left the path abruptly, and was surprised and displeased to see that they were grubbing up the roots of ti and casting them aside.

"What're ye up to, Isaac?" he asked angrily.

Martin halted in his work, and the native rested on his mattock-haft. "Get on with yer work, ye lazy lout!" exclaimed Martin. "Did I tell 'ee to rest." He turned to McCoy.

"What's that to you?"

"Damn yer eyes! Ye're grubbing up all the ti!"

"It's no more yours than mine! Who wants it, anyway? I'm going to make a yam patch here."

"*I* want it! There's others on the island beside yersel'! Yams? Ye've the whole place to plant 'em on."

"Aye. And walk half a mile out to work. If ye'd a musket ball in your leg like me, ye'd think different."

McCoy controlled his temper with difficulty. "Listen, Isaac," he said, "I've a tooth for sweets; not a day but I grub up a root or two. There's nae patch of ti on the island the like o' this. Ye've scarce made a start; be a good lad and plant the yams elsewhere!"

After considerable persuasion, Martin agreed to leave the glade undisturbed. He summoned the native in a manner brutal and contemptuous, and led the way to the house, mumbling his discontent. McCoy picked up his musket and went home.

Late the same evening he was reclining with Quintal on a

mat spread before the doorstep. The women and children had gone into the house to sleep. McCoy had been brooding over his argument with Martin. Sooner or later, he feared, someone more intelligent than Martin might preempt the ti patch, and put him in a position from which he would be unable to extricate himself without disclosing the secret of the still.

"Matt," he said, breaking a long silence, "did 'ee ever think o' dividing the land? We live like Indians here—sharing all hands alike; it ain't in white human natur to keep on so."

Quintal nodded.

"When I clear a bit o' land," McCoy went on, "and put in yams, or plantains, or what not, I'd like to think it's mine for good, and for little Sarah and Dan when I'm underground. Ye've young Matty to think on, and there'll be more bairns coming along."

"Aye," said Quintal, "I'm with 'ee there."

"Let every man gang his ain gait! If ye fancy yams, plant 'em for yersel'. Gin it's taro ye want, though it's nae white man's vivers to my mind, why, plant taro, and damn the rest! That's a Scot's way, and an Englishman's too."

Slow in thought and with no gift of words, Quintal had a high opinion of McCoy's sagacity. "Aye, Will," he said, "the land would divide up well. There's enough and to spare, for the nine of us. We could make a common of the west end, for the goats."

"Nine, ye swad! And the Indian men?"

Quintal grunted contemptuously. "Never mind them! Give 'em land, and they'll not work for us."

McCoy gave his companion a quick glance. "Matt! Ye're nae dowff as ye look! Aye . . . there's summat in that. But we must no put their beards in a blaze!"

One morning, about a fortnight after Quintal's talk with McCoy, Tararu was fishing from the rocks below Christian's house. The sea was calm, for this part of the coast was sheltered from the southerly swell.

Tararu was the nephew of Minarii, and well born in Tahiti, though neither his person nor his character was such as was usual among the native aristocracy. He was of low stature and slight build, and there was more cunning than determination in his face. An idle fellow, who preferred the company of women to that of men, he spent much of his time in solitary fishing excursions, which gave him an excuse to be absent when there was hard work to be done. The tuna-fishing offshore was too strenuous for his taste, and, though the others jeered at him for following a sport usually relegated to women, they were always glad to share his catch.

He squatted on a weed-covered rock, beside a shallow pool left by the receding tide. The water was deep, close inshore, at this place. Tararu's line was made of native flax, twisted on his naked thigh; his barbless hook was of pearl shell, and his sinker a pear-shaped stone, pierced at its small end to allow the line to be made fast. He baited his hook with a bit of white meat from the tail of a crayfish, whirled the sinker about his head, and cast out. The coiled line flew from his left hand, the sinker plunged into the sea twenty yards away. He drew in a fathom or two tentatively, till he felt the line taut from his stone, and squatted once more to wait for a bite.

The birds were beginning to nest, and many hundreds of them came and went about their business over the calm sea. The morning was so still that he could hear, very faintly, the clink of Williams's hammer at the forge, and the bleating of young goats on the ridge to the west. The sun was not yet high enough to be unpleasantly warm. Though his eyes were open, Tararu seemed to doze, as motionless as the black rock beneath his feet, and scarcely more animate.

But he was on the alert when at last a fish seized his bait. He did not strike as a white fisherman would have done; his incurved hook of pearl shell did not permit of that. Tararu kept a taut line, allowing the fish to run this way and that,

while the hook turned and worked ever deeper into its jaw. It was a large, blue-spotted fish of the rock-cod kind, called *rod,* and weighing ten pounds or more—a rare prize. Presently, he swung it up out of the sea, disengaged the hook, and slid the fish into the pool beside him, where it sank to the bottom with heaving gills. Slowly and methodically he baited his hook once more.

The sun was high overhead and the pool well stocked with fish when Tararu coiled his line and laid it on a ledge above him to dry. The last wave but one had wet him to the ankles and streamed hissing into the pool. He opened his knife, and began to sharpen it on a flat pebble. The blade was half worn away by long use.

"Tararu! Tararu O!"

One of his countrymen was approaching, clambering down over the rocks. Tararu greeted him with a lift of the eyebrows, and held out his knife.

"Look," he said, pointing to the pool, "I have been lucky! Clean and string them while I rest."

Hu was a small, humble, dark-skinned man, whose ancestors for many generations had been servants to those of Minarii. He grunted with pain and put a hand to his side as he stooped over the pool.

"Are you hurt?" asked Tararu. "Have you had a fall?"

"Not a fall," replied the other, beginning to clean the first fish that came to hand. "Martin again."

"Did he beat you?"

"Aye . . . with a club."

"What had you done?"

Hu shook his head. "Done? How can I say? Nothing I do pleases him. We went together to the yam field. He sat in the shade and directed me at the work. The holes I dug were not deep enough, or too deep. I put in too many dead leaves when I filled them; I cut up the seed yams too fine! I am your man, and your uncle's—not Martin's slave! I told him so; then he beat me."

His hands trembled as he worked, and he caught his breath in a sob of anger. "What can I do? Will you not protect me, you or Minarii?"

Tararu reflected for some time with downcast eyes. "There is only one way," he said at last. "I dare not stir Minarii too deeply, for if trouble comes with the whites, they will take their muskets and shoot us all. Kill Martin! Kill him in a way that none will suspect."

"Mea au roa!" exclaimed Hu, looking up from his task with gleaming eyes. "But how is it to be done?"

Tararu leaned over the pool, fumbled among the fish remaining there, and drew forth an odd creature, about a foot long, with a small mouth and a strange square body, checkered in black and white. "With this!" he said.

"A *huèhuè,"* remarked the other. "I have heard that there is poison in them."

"The flesh is sweet and wholesome if the gall bladder is removed entire. The gall is without colour and has no strong taste, yet four drops of it will kill a man. Squeeze out the bladder on a bit of yam or on a pudding. He will be dead before the setting of the sun."

Hu shook his head. "Leave poisoning to wizards and old women. Not even Martin could I kill in that way!"

Tararu shrugged his shoulders, and the other went on: "But it might be done on the cliffs. He has ordered me to go with him to the Rope this afternoon. The birds are beginning to lay."

When the fish were cleaned and scaled, Hu shouldered the heavy string and followed Tararu in the stiff climb to the plateau.

Toward mid-afternoon, Martin and Smith sauntered down the path to the house of the natives. They carried egging baskets and coils of rope, and found Hu waiting to accompany them. Smith led the way to the ridge, and a short walk brought them to the verge of the cliffs hemming in the little half-moon bay. The Rope was exposed to the full force of

the southerly swell, and the thunder of the breakers came up faintly from far below. Sea birds in thousands sailed back and forth along the face of the cliff.

Smith peered over the brink and dropped the coil of two-inch line from his shoulder. Making fast one end to the trunk of a stout pandanus tree, he tossed the coils over the cliff, slung his basket about his neck, and began to reconnoitre the ground. There were many nests in the scrub pandanus bushes that stood out almost horizontally from the wall of rock. Birds sat in some of them; in others, deserted temporarily during the heat of the day, he perceived the clutches of eggs. Martin was making fast his rope at a place about thirty yards away. It was his custom to take one of the natives on these egging excursions, to perform the task he had no stomach for.

Smith gripped the rope with both hands and scrambled over the brink of the cliff, pressing the soles of his bare feet against the rock. Little by little he lowered himself to a jutting rock fifty feet below, where he could rest at ease, and where he had spied two well-filled nests within reach. He had transferred the eggs to his basket when the sounds of a scuffle and angry shouting reached his ears. Smith listened for a moment, set his lips, and began to climb the rope rapidly, hand over hand, aiding himself with his feet. At the summit, he set down his basket before he rose from his knees. Then, half running through the scrub, he made for the sound of Martin's angry voice.

"Kill me, would 'ee? Take that, ye Indian bastard! And that, God damn 'ee!"

Martin stood over the bloody and prostrate form of Hu, kicking him savagely at each exclamation. He swung about as he felt Smith's hand on his shoulder, and said, still shouting: "The bastard! Tried to rush me over the cliff, he did!" He made as if to kick the native once more, but Smith's powerful grip held him back.

"Avast, Isaac!" ordered Smith, and then, glancing down, he asked: "Is this true?"

"Aye," groaned the prostrate man, who could scarcely speak, "it is true."

Martin wrenched himself free and aimed another kick at Hu. Smith sprang on him and pulled him back roughly. "I'll not stand by and see the like o' this!" he exclaimed.

"Damn your blood, Alex!" said Martin angrily. "I tell 'ee, he tried to push me over the cliff!"

"D'ye think I'm blind, man? Ye've given him cause, and to spare!"

Anger got the better of Martin's customary caution. Smith had released him, and now stood between him and the native, who was rising painfully to his feet.

Martin clenched his fists. "This is my lay! Stand by! Or d'ye want a clout on the jaw?"

Next moment, with a light of insane rage in his eyes, he sprang forward and struck Smith a heavy blow. The smaller man grunted without flinching, put up his hands, and lowered his head. The fight was over in two minutes; Martin lay on the ground with a bruised jaw and breathing heavily through his nose. When he sat up dazedly at last, Smith spoke.

"We'll say no more of this. . . . It's best so. Mind what I say, Isaac, it'll go hard with ye if I catch ye bullying this man again. And Hu—though I can't say I blame ye much —remember, no more such murderin' tricks!" He touched his lips. "*Mamu's* the word!"

CHAPTER X

It was a calm night in February 1792; the sky was cloudless and the rising moon low over the sea. The natives had supped and were reclining on the grass before their house, gossiping in subdued voices, broken by the occasional soft laughter of the women. Minarii lay in silence, hands behind his head.

Tararu stood alone at some little distance, gazing up the moonlit path. Though they spoke lightly of other things, one thought was in every mind, for Hutia had not returned.

In their love of decorum, the Polynesians resemble the Chinese; to their minds, an action is often less important than the manner in which it is performed, and the appearance of virtue more so than virtue itself. Like the others, Tararu had long known where the girl spent so many hours each day, but hitherto she had conducted her affairs with discretion, taking care to put no affront upon her husband's dignity. Now at last the persuasions of Williams had overcome her fear of a scene. Turning his head slightly Minarii perceived that Tararu was gone. He sat up, seemed to reflect for a moment, and lay down once more, his lips set in a thin, stern line.

The moon was well up when Tararu emerged from a thicket near the lonely cottage of Williams. Stepping lightly and keeping to the shadows, he reached the open door and listened for a moment before he peered into the house. His wife was asleep on a mat just inside, her head pillowed on the blacksmith's brawny arm. For an instant, passion overcame his fear of Williams; had he carried a weapon, he would have killed the blacksmith as he lay. Hutia's small naked foot was close to the door, and Tararu stretched out a shaking hand to rouse her. At first she only murmured incoherently in her sleep, but when he had nearly pulled her off the mat, she opened her eyes.

"Come outside!" he whispered fiercely.

Williams sat up. "What do you want?" he growled.

"My woman!" exclaimed Tararu, in a voice that broke with anger. "My woman, you white dog!"

The blacksmith sprang to his feet. His fists were clenched and his short black beard bristled within an inch of Tararu's chin. "She's my woman now! Clear out!"

Williams looked so formidable, so menacing, that the native cast down his eyes, but his sense of dignity would not permit him to turn away quickly enough to please the other man.

As he turned slowly, trembling with anger and humiliation, a kick delivered with all the strength of the blacksmith's sturdy leg sent him sprawling on all fours. He rose with some difficulty while Williams stood over him. "Now will you go?" he asked truculently.

Tararu clenched his teeth and limped away up the moonlit slope.

Though the others had gone into the house to sleep, Minarii still lay outside, wide awake, when Tararu returned. He sat up to listen impassively to a torrent of whispered words, and when the other fell silent his reply was a grunt of contempt.

"You call yourself a man," he remarked after a short pause, "and come to me with this woman's tale! *Atira!* If you want the woman, rouse her and fetch her home."

Tararu hesitated. "I did waken her," he admitted. Then emotion got the better of him, and he went on incoherently: "My words roused Williams—he kicked me and knocked me down!"

Minarii's deep voice interrupted him. "Were you not my sister's son . . ." He rose, with an expression of stern displeasure on his face. *"Tihé!* To think that I should take a hand in such affairs! Wait for me here; perhaps soft words will right the wrong. If not . . ." He shrugged his great shoulders as he turned away.

The night was warm and Alexander Smith was working in the little garden before his house. Young and Taurua had gone early to bed; Balhadi had been helping her man to water some ferns planted the day before, but drowsiness had overcome her, and she too had retired. The moon was so bright that Smith watered and raked and weeded as if it had been day. It was late when he stopped and sat down on the rustic bench by the path. He had been fishing with Tetahiti the day before, and a long siesta in the afternoon had left him with no desire to sleep.

The moon was nearly at the zenith when he raised his head

at the sound of a step on the path. It was Minarii, and Hutia walked behind him, bowed and sobbing. He halted at sight of Smith.

"It is fortunate that you are awake, Alex," he said. "There is trouble—trouble that may lead to graver things." He went on to recount the happenings of the night.

"Where is Williams?" Smith asked.

"On the floor of his house," replied Minarii grimly. "He fought like a man. . . . Look!" He pointed to a great black bruise on his jaw.

Smith thought for a moment before he spoke. "We must act quickly. Only Christian can handle this. Stop here while I rouse him."

When he was gone, Minarii seated himself with his back to a hibiscus tree and the girl crouched beside him. Presently his hand fell on her shoulder in a grip that made her wince. Concealed in the deep shadow of the tree, they watched the blacksmith move down the path toward the house of Mills.

Williams was in no mood for half-measures. He limped painfully, and halted from time to time to spit out a mouthful of blood. When he had wakened Mills, they walked side by side to the house of McCoy.

"Damn him, he was too much for me!" said the blacksmith, thickly. "Had you or Matt been there, we'd have murdered him!"

Mills grunted sympathetically. "Here we are," he remarked. "I'll go in and fetch 'em."

A moment later he came out with McCoy and Quintal, rubbing the sleep from their eyes. They listened attentively to what the blacksmith had to say.

"Where are they now?" asked Quintal.

"At the Indian house, I reckon."

McCoy smiled sourly. "This'll mean a fight. Curse ye, Jack! Ye have yer woman week days and Sabbaths to boot; must ye stir up the whole island because ye can nae sleep wi' her nights?"

Williams turned away angrily. "Then stop where ye are. Come along!" he said to Mills. "We'll fetch the muskets."

"Ne'er fash yersel', Jack," put in McCoy. "We'll help ye fast enough, but it's an unchancy business for all that!"

"We'd best get it over with," said Mills. "Teach the bloody Indians their place. . . . Who's this?"

Christian was striding rapidly down the moonlit path, followed by Smith and Minarii. Hutia brought up the rear, half trotting to keep pace with the men. She longed to slip into the bush and escape, but dared not. Williams moved forward truculently when he perceived Minarii, only to fall back at sight of Christian's face.

"What is all this?" Christian asked sternly, coming to a halt.

"I made up my mind last night, sir," Williams replied with a mingling of defiance and respect. "I told my girl to stop with me and leave her Indian for good. He came to fetch her when we were asleep. I woke and kicked him out. Then Minarii came." He drew a deep breath and spat out a mouthful of blood. "He was too much for me. When I came round, he was gone and my girl with him. What could I do but make haste down to the settlement and fetch the others to lend a hand?"

Minarii stood with head high and arms folded on his bare chest. His face was impassive and sternly set. Christian turned to him. "Shall I tell you what Williams says?"

"He has not lied."

Christian glanced down distastefully at Hutia, cowering on the grass with her head in her arms. "Is the peace of this land to be broken because of a loose girl and two men who forget their manhood?"

"Well spoken!" said Minarii. "On that point we see alike. But I cannot stand by while my sister's son is shamed before all, and cursed and kicked by a commoner, even though he be white."

"Then fetch Tararu. He must come at once."

As Minarii walked toward the natives' house, Christian turned to the four mutineers. "I'm going to settle this matter here and now!" he said. "We have had more than enough of it. The woman shall choose the man she wishes to live with, and there is to be no murmuring afterward. Let that be understood."

"I'm with ye, Mr. Christian!" exclaimed McCoy.

"Aye," muttered Quintal. "That's the way to settle it."

When Minarii returned, followed by his nephew, Christian spoke once more. "Tararu," he said, "stand forth! The woman shall choose between you. And let the man rejected keep the peace.

"Stand forth, Williams," he went on. "Minarii, tell her that she is to make her choice and abide by it."

The girl was still crouched on the grass, face hidden in her arms. Minarii spoke to her in a harsh voice before he pulled her roughly to her feet. With eyes cast down, but without a moment of hesitation, she walked to the blacksmith and linked her arm in his.

Autumn came on with strong winds from the west, and fine rains that drizzled down for days together. In early April the weather turned so cold that the people spent much of the time in their houses. Situated more than seven degrees of latitude to the south of Tahiti, Pitcairn's Island lay in the region of variable westerly winds, and its climate was far colder and more invigorating than that of the languorous isles to the north.

One night in April, the wind shifted from west to southwest and blew the sky clear. While the stars twinkled frostily, the sleepers in the house of Mills stirred with the cold, half wakening to pull additional blankets of tapa up to their chins. Mills and Prudence slept in the room upstairs, on a great standing bed-place filled with sweet fern and covered with many layers of soft bark cloth. Prudence lay on her side, her unbound hair half covering the pillow, and one arm thrown

protectingly over the tiny child who slumbered between her and the wall.

Presently the open window on the east side of the room became a square of grey in the dawn. The old red cock from Tahiti, roosting in the *tapou* tree, wakened, clapped his wings loudly, and raised his voice in a long-drawn challenging crow. Prudence stirred and opened her eyes. The baby was already awake, staring up gravely at the thatch. The young mother roused herself, leaned over to sniff fondly at the child's head, on which a copper-red down was beginning to appear, and sat up, shivering. Taking care not to waken Mills, she threw a sheet of tapa over her shoulders, picked up the child, and stepped lightly over the sleeping man.

With her baby on one arm, the girl climbed nimbly down the ladder, crossed the room where Martin snored beside Susannah, opened the door softly, and went out. It was broad daylight now and the glow of sunrise was in the east. Save for mare's-tails of filmy cloud, the sky was clear; the trees swayed as the strong southwest wind hummed through their tops. Prudence drew a long breath and threw back her head to shake the heavy hair over her shoulders.

In the maturity of young motherhood, she was among the handsomest of the women. Her brown eyes were set wide apart under slender, arched brows; though small, her figure was perfectly proportioned; her beautiful hair, of the strange copper color to be found occasionally among Maoris of unmixed blood, fell rippling to her knees. Her race was the lightest-skinned of all brown folk, and the chill, damp winds of Pitcairn's Isle had brought the glow of young blood to her cheeks.

Mills was deeply attached to her, in his rough way; she had been happy with the dour old seaman since the birth of their child. Eliza raised her voice in a wail and Prudence smiled down at her as she walked to the outdoor kitchen.

"There!" she said, as she deposited the baby in a rude cra-

dle Mills had made, and tucked her in carefully. "Lie still! You shall have your meal presently."

As if she understood, the child ceased to cry and watched her mother gravely as she struck a spark to her tinder and blew up the flame among some chips of wood. When the fire was burning well, Prudence filled the pot from the barrel of rain water and set it on to boil. She took up Eliza, seated herself on the stool used for grating coconuts, and teased the child for a moment with her breast, offered and withdrawn. Soon the baby was suckling greedily; after a time, before the kettle had boiled, her eyelids began to droop, and presently her mother rose to place her in the cradle once more, sound asleep.

Prudence now took some eggs and half a dozen plantains from a basket hanging out of reach of rats, and dropped them into the boiling water. From another basket she took a breadfruit, cooked the day before. She heard Mills at the water barrel, washing his face, and turned to greet him as he appeared at the kitchen door. He stooped over the cradle and touched the sleeping baby's head with a stubby thumb.

"Liza, little lass," he said, "ye've a soft life, eh? Naught but eat and sleep."

Prudence set food before him, and stood leaning on the table as he fell to heartily. "I am hungry for fresh meat," she said. "See, the weather has changed. Take your musket and kill a hog for us."

Mills swallowed half of an egg and took a sup of water before he replied. "Aye, that I will, lass. Fire up the oven, for I'll not fail. Ye must eat for two, these days."

When he was gone and she had eaten her light breakfast of fruits, she spread a mat in the shelter of the banyan tree by the forge, and fetched her sleeping child and an uncompleted hat she was weaving for Mills. Susannah was stirring in the kitchen, but Martin would not be on foot for another hour or two.

Prudence glanced up from her work at the sound of a footstep and saw Tararu approaching, an axe on his shoulder. She had scarcely laid eyes on him since the trouble with Williams; he had ceased his former gossiping and flirtatious way with the women, and spent most of his time in the bush. He caught her eye and made an attempt to smile. Polynesian etiquette demanded that some word be spoken, and he asked, in a hoarse voice: "Where is Mills?"

"Gone pig-hunting," she replied.

The *Bounty's* grindstone stood close by, near the forge. Tararu took the calabash from its hook, filled it at the water barrel, and replaced it so that a thin trickle fell on the stone. Picking up his axe, he set to work. Prudence bent over her plaiting, glancing at the man from time to time out of the corner of her eye. He ground on steadily, first one side of the blade and then the other, halting occasionally to test the edge with his thumb. An hour passed.

Something in Tararu's manner, and in the meticulous care with which he worked, struck the girl as out of the ordinary. He was a lazy, shiftless fellow as a rule.

"Never have I seen an axe so sharpened!" she remarked. He grunted, intent on his task, and she went on: "What is your purpose?"

He looked up and hesitated for a moment before he replied. "I have been clearing a field for yams. Yesterday I found a *purau* tree, tall, straight, and thick. To-morrow I shall fell it, and begin to shape a canoe."

As he went to work once more, Prudence's quick mind was busy. Canoe-building was practised in Tahiti only by a guild of carpenters called *tahu'a,* which included men of all classes, even high chiefs. Minarii was an adept, but Tararu knew no more of the art than a child of ten. Yet why should he lie to her?

After a long time the axe was sharpened to Tararu's satisfaction, bright and razor-edged. He shouldered it, gave Prudence a surly nod, and walked away into the bush. The girl

took up her child, gathered her work together absently, and went into the house, deep in thought.

When she reappeared, a mantle of tapa was thrown over her shoulders, and she carried her child, warmly wrapped against the wind, on one arm. She had plaited her hair in two long, thick braids, twisted them around her head, and pinned them in place with skewers of bamboo. Walking with the light and resilient step of youth, she took the path that led past Smith's house and Christian's, and up, over the summit of the Goat-House Ridge. Half an hour later, she was approaching Williams's lonely cottage. At some distance from the door she halted and gave the melodious little cry with which a Polynesian visitor announced his presence to the inmates of a house.

Hutia appeared at the door and greeted the other without a smile.

"Where is your man?" asked Prudence.

"At work in the bush."

"Hutia," said the younger girl earnestly, coming close to her old enemy, "you and I have not been friends, but should anything happen to Williams, my man would never cease his mourning, for the two are like brothers."

"Come into the house," Hutia said, her manner changing. "The wind is over cold for *aiu*."

She took the baby from the younger girl's arms and covered the little face with kisses before she closed the door. "Now tell me what is in your mind," she went on.

Prudence recounted at length how Tararu had sharpened his axe, how he had replied to her question, and her own suspicions. The other girl's expression turned grave.

"Aye," she said at last, "I fear you are right. He is a coward at heart and will come by night if he comes."

"So I think," replied Prudence. "Who knows? I may be wrong, but you will do well to warn your man."

"Guard him, rather; I shall tell him nothing. He would only mock me for a woman's fears. If I convinced him of danger, he would go in search of Tararu, bringing on more trouble with Minarii. No. We have two muskets here. I can shoot as straight as any man!"

Prudence stood up after a time and took her child. "I must return to light the oven," she remarked. "Mills has gone to shoot a pig."

"Let us be friends from now on," said Hutia. "There is no room for bad blood on this little land."

When the young mother was gone, Hutia set about her household tasks, and greeted Williams with her usual cheerful and casual manner at dinner time. But when he had supped that evening, and stretched himself out, dead-tired, she waited only until certain that he was in a sound sleep before making her preparations. In the light of a taper of candlenuts, smoking and sputtering by the wall, she loaded the two muskets, measuring the powder with great care, wadding it with bits of tapa, and ramming the bullets home with patches of the same material, greased with lard. The last skewered nut was ablaze when the task was finished, giving her time to see to the priming and wipe the flints carefully before the light flickered and winked out. With a heavy musket in each hand she stepped softly across the room and out into the starlit night. Like many of the women, Hutia understood firearms thoroughly.

The house had only one door. Shivering a little in the chill breeze, she stationed herself in a clump of bushes, one musket across her knees, the other standing close at hand. Even in the dim starlight, no one would be able to leave or enter the house unperceived, and she knew that two hours from now she could count on the light of the waning moon.

A long time passed while the girl sat alert and motionless. At last the sky above the ridge began to brighten and presently the moon rose, in a cloudless sky, over the wooded mountain. The shadow of the house took form sharply; the clearing was flooded with cold silvery light, bounded by the dark wall of the bush.

It was nearly midnight when Hutia turned her head suddenly. Pale and unsubstantial in the moonlight, the shadowy figure of a man was moving across the cleared land. The girl cocked her musket as she rose. Tararu approached the cottage slowly and softly. When he was within a dozen yards of her, Hutia stepped out into the moonlight.

"Faaea!" she ordered firmly, in a low voice. He gave a violent start and endeavored to conceal his axe behind him. "Come no closer," she went on, "and make no sound. If you waken Williams he will kill you. I know why you are here."

Tararu began to mumble some whispered protestation of innocence, but she cut him short, scornfully. "Waste no words! It is in my mind to shoot you as you stand."

Hutia's hands were shaking a little with anger. Her former husband was only too well aware of her high temper and determined recklessness when roused. With a suddenness that took her aback, he sprang to one side and bounded away across the clearing, axe in hand. She raised the musket and took aim between his shoulders. For five seconds or more she stood thus, her finger on the trigger she could not bring herself to pull. She lowered the weapon, watched the runner disappear into the bush, and turned toward the cottage.

When Williams rose next morning, he found Hutia up before him as usual and his morning meal ready.

"Ye've a weary look, lass," he remarked. "Sleep badly?"

"Aye—I had bad dreams." She looked up from her work. "The sea is calming down. I shall go fishing this morning, in the lee."

The blacksmith nodded. "Good luck to ye. I could do with a mess of fish!"

Toward noon of the same day, Tararu was at work on a small clearing in the Auté Valley. None of the men, save Martin perhaps, had a deeper dislike of work; his chief object in clearing the little yam field was to be alone. He was beginning to hate the house of the natives, where he now spent as

little as possible of his time. Their ideas of courtesy prevented an open display of contempt, but Minarii treated him coldly, and he could not face the disapproval in Tetahiti's eye. The morning was cool, and he plied his axe with more diligence than usual.

Tararu's basket of dinner hung from the low branch of a *purau* tree at the edge of the clearing, and he was working at some distance, unaware that he was not alone. Peeping through a screen of leaves, Hutia had reconnoitred the cleared land and was now approaching the basket cautiously, unseen and making no sound. She glanced at the man, whose back was turned to her, reached into the basket, took out a large baked fish, done up in leaves, and unwrapped it, crouching out of sight. Glancing up warily once more, she squeezed something which had the appearance of a few drops of water into the inside of the fish, holding it carefully to give the liquid time to soak in. A moment later the fish was wrapped up and returned to the basket, and Hutia disappeared, as quietly as she had come.

Ten minutes had passed when Tararu glanced up at the sun and dropped his axe. As he strolled across to where his basket hung, he heard a cheerful hail and saw Hu.

"You've not eaten?" asked the newcomer. "That is well. I've brought you some baked plantains; the women said you had none."

"Fetch a banana leaf to spread the food on, and you shall share my meal."

The servant was the only one of his countrymen whose manner toward him had not changed; Tararu was grateful for the little attention and glad of his company. They ate with good appetites, gossiping of island trivialities, and when the last of the food was gone both men lay down to sleep.