

cretions, or quarreled—and all these people quarrel, why, God knows—that Irish devil could hang many persons, even myself, or take vengeance on your worship."

Carlos was silent as if in a reverie. At last he said:

"But if affairs are like this, it would be well to have one more with us. The caballero, my cousin, is very strong and of great courage."

Castro grunted, "Oh, of a courage! But as the proverb says, 'If you set an Englishman by a hornet's nest they shall not remain long within.'"

After that I avoided any allusion to Cuba, because the thing, think as I would about it, would not grow clear. It was plain that something illegal was going on there, or how could "that Irish devil," whoever he was, have power to hang Tomas and be revenged on Carlos? It did not affect my love for Carlos, though.

I had noticed an intimacy spring up between the ship's second mate and Tomas, who was, it seemed to me, forever engaged in long confabulations in the man's cabin, and, as much to make talk as for any other reason, I asked Carlos if he had noticed his dependent's familiarity. It was noticeable because Castro held aloof from every other soul on board. Carlos answered me with one of his nervous and angry smiles.

"Ah, Juan mine, do not ask too many questions! I wish you could come with me all the way, but I cannot tell you all I know. I do not even myself know all. It seems that the man is going to leave the ship in Jamaica, and has letters for that Senor Ramon, the merchant, even as I have, Vaya; more I cannot tell you."

This struck me as curious, and a little of the whole mystery seemed from that time to attach to the second mate, who before had been no more to me than a long, sallow Nova Scotian, with a disagreeable intonation and rather offensive manners. I began to watch him, desultorily, and was rather startled by something more than a suspicion that he himself was watching me. On one occasion in particular I seemed to observe this. The second mate was lankily stalking the deck, his hands in his pockets. As he paused in his walk to spit into the sea beside me, Carlos said:

"And you, my Juan, what will you do in this Jamaica?"

I said that I was going to the Horton estates, Rooksty's, to learn planting under a Mr. Macdonald, the agent. Carlos shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah," he said, with his air of great wisdom and varied experience, of disillusionment, "it will be much the same as it has been at your home—after the first days. Hard work and a great sameness." He began to cough violently.

I said bitter enough, "Yes. It will be always the same with me. I shall never see life. You've seen all that there is to see, so I suppose you do not mind settling down with an old uncle in a palace."

He answered suddenly, with a certain darkness of manner, "That is as God wills. Who knows? Perhaps life, even in my uncle's palace, will not be so safe."

The second mate was bearing down on us again.

I said jocularly, "Why, when I get very tired of life at Horton Pen, I shall come to see you in your uncle's town."

Carlos looked at me with an expression of affection that a little shamed my lightness of tone.

"I love you much more than a kinsman, Juan," he said. "I wish you could come with me. I try to arrange it. Later, perhaps, I may be dead. I am very ill."

He was undoubtedly ill. Campaigning in Spain, exposure in England in a rainy time, and then the ducking when we came on board, had done him no good. He looked moodily at the sea.

"I wish you could come. I will try—" The mate had paused, and was listening quite unaffectedly, behind Carlos' back.

A moment after Carlos half turned and regarded him with a haughty stare. He whistled and walked away.

Carlos muttered something that I did not catch about "spies of that pestilent Irishman." Then:

"I will not selfishly take you into any more dangers," he said. "But life on a sugar plantation is not fit for you."

I felt glad and flattered that a personage so romantic should deem me a fit companion for himself. He went forward as if with some purpose.

Some days afterward the second mate sent for me to his cabin. He had been on the sick list, and he was lying in his bunk, stripped to the waist, one arm and one leg touching the floor. He raised himself slowly when I came in, and spat.

"Hallo!" I cried. "See hecyur, young Kemp, does your neck just itch to be stretched?"

I looked at him with eyes and mouth agape.

He spat again, and waved a claw toward the forward bulkhead.

"They'll do it for yeh," he said. "You're such a green goose, it makes me sick a bit. You hev'n't reckoned out the chances, not quite. It's a kind of dead reckoning yeh hev'n't had call to make. Eh?"

"What do you mean?" I asked, bewildered.

He looked at me, grinning, half naked, with amused contempt, for quite a long time, and at last offered sardonically to

open my eyes for me.

I said nothing.

"Do you know what will happen to you," he asked "if yeh don't get quit of that Carlos of yours?"

I was surprised into muttering that I didn't know.

"I can tell yeh," he continued. "Yeh will get langed."

By that time I was too amazed to get angry. I simply suspected the Blue Nose of being drunk. But he glared at me so soberly that next moment I felt frightened.

"Hanged by the neck," he repeated; and then added: "Young fellow, you scrot. Take a fool's advice, and scrot. That Castro is a blame fool, anyhow. Yeh want men for that job. Men, I tell you." He slapped his bony breast.

I had no idea that he could look so ferocious. His eyes fascinated me, and he opened his cavernous mouth as if to swallow me. His lantern jaws snapped without a sound. He seemed to change his mind.

"I am done with yeh," he said, with a sort of sinister restraint. He rose to his feet, and, turning his back to me, began to shave, squinting into a broken looking glass.

I had not the slightest inkling of his meaning. I only knew that going out of his berth was like escaping from the dark lair of a beast into a sunlit world.

We were entering harbor. A great ship, floating high on the water, black and gilt with the two broad yellow streaks of her double tier of guns, glided out slowly from beyond a cluster of shipping in the bay. She passed without a hail, going out under her topsails with a flag at the fore. Her lofty spars overtopped our masts immensely, and I saw the men in her rigging looking down on our decks. The only sounds that came out of her were the piping of boatswains' calls and the tramping of feet. Imagining her to be going home, I felt a great desire to be on board. Ultimately, as it turned out, I went home in that very ship, but then it was too late. I was a man by that time, with much queer knowledge and other desires. Whilst I was looking and longing I heard Carlos' voice behind me asking one of our sailors what ship it was.

"Don't you know a flagship when you see it?" a voice grumbled surlily. "Admiral Rowley's," it continued. Then it rumbled out some remarks about "pirates, vermin, coast of Cuba."

Carlos came to the side, and looked after the man-of-war in the distance.

"You could help us," I heard him mutter.

#### CHAPTER V.

A great bustle of shore-going, of leave-taking had sprung up all over the ship. Carlos and Castro entered our cabin with a tall, immobile, gold-spectacled Spaniard, dressed all in white, and with a certain air of noticing and attentive deference. It was Senor Ramon.

With a certain courtesy, touched with indifference, Carlos made him acquainted with me. Ramon turned his searching, quietly analytic gaze upon me.

"But is the caballero going over, too?" he asked.

Carlos said, "No; I think not, now."

And at that moment the second mate, shouldering his way through a white-clothed crowd of shore people, made up behind Senor Ramon. He held a letter in his hand.

"I am going over," he said, in his high nasal voice, and with a certain ferocity. Ramon looked around apprehensively.

Carlos said, "The senor, my cousin, wishes for a Mr. Macdonald. You know him, senor?"

Ramon made a dry gesture of perfect acquaintance. "I think I have seen him just now," he said. "I will make inquiries."

All three of them had followed him, and became lost in the crowd.

A couple of men began to talk loudly, every word coming plainly to my ears. One of them, new from home, was asking questions. Another answered:

"Oh, I lost half a serpon the last voyage—the old thing."

"Haven't they routed out the scoundrels yet?" the other asked.

The first man lowered his voice. I caught only that "the admiral was an old fool—no good for this job. He's found out the name of the place the pirates come from—Rio Medio. That's the place, only he can't get in at it with his three-deckers. You saw his flagship?"

Rio Medio was the name of the town to which Carlos was going—which his uncle owned. They moved away from above.

What was I to believe? What could this mean? But the second mate's "Scrot, young man," seemed to come to my ears like the blast of a trumpet. I became suddenly intensely anxious to find Macdonald—to see no more of Carlos.

From above came suddenly a gruff voice in Spanish. "Senor, it would be a great folly."

Tomas Castro was descending the ladder gingerly. He was coming to fetch his bundle.

"I want him very much," Carlos said. "I like him. He would be of help to us."

"It's as your worship wills," Castro said gruffly. They were both at the bottom of the ladder. "But an Englishman there

would work great mischief. And this youth—"

"I will take him, Tomas," Carlos said, laying a hand on his arm.

"Those others will think he is a spy. I know them," Castro muttered. "They will hang him, or work some devil's mischief. You do not know that Irish judge?"

I came suddenly forward. "I will not go with you," I said, before I had reached them even.

Castro started back as if he had been stung, and caught at the wooden hand that sheathed his steel blade.

Castro writhed his whole body, and I stepped backwards. "I know what Rio Medio is," I said, not very loudly. "It is a nest of pirates."

Castro crept toward me again on the point of his toes. "Senor Don Juan Kemp, child of the devil," he hissed, looking very much frightened, "you must die!"

Carlos gripped his hand around Castro's steel. He began to whisper in the other's hairy ear. I caught:

"You are a fool. He will not make us to be molested, he is my kinsman."

Castro made a reluctant gesture toward a chest that lay between us.

"We could cram him into that," he said.

"Oh, bloodthirsty fool," Carlos answered, recovering his breath; "is it always necessary to wash your hands in blood? Are we not in enough danger? Up—up! Go see if the boat is yet there. We must go quickly; up—up—" He waved his hand toward the scuttle.

"But still," Castro said. He was reluctantly lifting his wooden hand upon the blue steel. He sent a baleful yellow glare into my eyes and stooped to pick up his ragged cloak.

"Up—mount!" Carlos commanded.

Castro muttered, "Vamos," and began clumsily to climb the ladder, like a bale of rags being hauled from above. Carlos placed his foot on the steps, preparing to follow him. He turned his head around toward me, his hand extended, a smile upon his lips.

"Juan," he said, "let us not quarrel. You are very young; you cannot understand these things; you cannot weigh them; you have a foolish idea in your head. I wished you to come with us because I love you, Juan. Do you think I wish you evil? You are true and brave, and our families are united." He sighed suddenly.

"I do not want to quarrel," I said. "I don't."

"I did not want to quarrel; I wanted more to cry. I was very lonely, and he was going away. Romance was going out of my life."

He added musically, "You even do not understand. There is someone else who speaks for you to me, always—someone else. But one day you will, I shall come back for you—one day." He looked at me and smiled. It stirred unknown depths of emotion in me. I would have gone with him, then, had he asked me. "One day," he repeated, with an extraordinary cadence of tone.

His hand was grasping mine; it thrilled me like a woman's; he stood shaking it very gently.

"One day," he said, "I shall repay what I owe you. I wished you with me, because I go into some danger. I wanted you. Goodby Hasta mas ver."

He leaned over and kissed me lightly on the cheek, then climbed away. I felt that the light of Romance was going out of my life. As he reached the top of the ladder somebody began to call harshly, startingly. I heard my own name and the words, "mahn ye were speerin' after."

The light was obscured, the voice began clamoring insistently.

"Mr. Kemp, Mr. Kemp, noo. Here's the mahn ye were speerin' after. Here's Macdonald."

Macdonald's enormous body was enveloped rather than clothed in a great volume of ill-fitting white stuff; he held in his hand a great umbrella with a vivid green lining. His face was pale, and had the leaden transparency of a boiled artichoke; it was fringed by a red beard streaked with gray, as brown flood-water is with foam. He made a motion with one of his flabby white hands. I understood it to mean that I was to follow him aft.

In the pushing and hurrying, I came upon a little clear space beside a pile of boxes. Stooping over them was the angular figure of Nichols, the second mate. He looked up at me, screwing his yellow eyes together.

"Going ashore," he asked, "long of that Puffing Billy?"

"What business is that of yours?" I mumbled sulkily.

Sudden and intense threatening came into his yellow eyes.

"Don't you ever come to you know where," he said; "I don't want no spies on what I do. There's a man there'll crack your little backbone if he catches you. Don't yeh come now. Never."

#### PART SECOND.

##### CHAPTER I.

###### The Girl with the Lizard.

"Rio Medio?" Senor Ramon said to me nearly two years afterward. "The caballero is pleased to give me credit for a very great knowledge. What should I know of that town? There are, doubtless, good men there and very wicked, as in other towns. Who knows? Your worship

must ask the boat's crew that the admiral has sent to burn the town. They will be back very soon now."

I had come down from Horton Pen to Spanish Town, expecting a letter from Veronica, and, the stage not being in, had dropped in to chat with Ramon. It was just at the time when Admiral Rowley was understood to be going to make an energetic attempt upon the pirates who still infested the Gulf of Mexico, and nearly ruined the Jamaica trade of those days.

"But it is very certain," he went on, "that if your government had not recognized the belligerent rights of the rebellious colony of Mexico, there would now be no letters of marque, no accused Mexican privateers, every ship that traverses the Florida passage would not be looted by El Demonio, and I and everyone else in the island should not now be losing thousands of dollars every year."

That was the eternal grievance of every Spaniard on the island—and of not a few of the English and Scotch planters. Spain was still in the throes of losing the Mexican colonies when Great Britain had acknowledged the existence of a state of war and a Mexican government. Mexican letters of marque had immediately filled the gulf. No kind of shipping was safe from them, and Spain was quite honestly powerless to prevent their swarming on the coast of Cuba—the ever faithful island itself.

"What can Spain do," said Ramon, bitterly, "when even your Admiral Rowley, with his great ships, cannot rid the sea of them?" He lowered his voice. "I tell you, young senor, that England will lose this island of Jamaica over this business. You yourself are a separatist, are you not? \* \* \* No? You live with separatists. How could I tell? Many people say you are."

His words gave me a distinctly disagreeable sensation. I hadn't any idea of being a separatist; I was loyal enough. But I understood suddenly, and for the first time, how very much like one I might look. I hadn't much cared about either party—I was looking out for romance—but I inclined a little to the separatists, because Macdonald, with whom I lived for two years at Horton Pen, was himself a separatist, in a cool Scotch sort of way.

I used to buy island produce through Ramon, ship it to New Orleans, have it sold, and reimport parcels of "notions," making a double profit. He was always ready to help me, and as ready to talk, saying that he had an immense respect for my relations, the Riegos.

That was how, at the end of my second year in the island, I had come to talking to him. The stage should have brought a letter from Veronica, who was to have presented Rookaby with a son and heir, but it was unaccountably late. I had been twice to the coach office, and was making my way desultorily back to Ramon's. He was talking to the editor of the Buckator Journal—the man from next door—and to another who had, whilst I walked lazily across the blazing square, ridden furiously up to the steps of the arcade. The rider was talking to both of them with exaggerated gestures of his arms. He had ridden off, spurring, and the editor, a little gleaming-eyed hunchback, had remained in the sunshine, talking excitedly to Ramon.

I knew him well, an amusing, queer, warped, Satanic member of society, who was a sort of nephew to the Macdonalds and hand in glove with all the Scotch separatists of the island. He had started an extraordinary, scandalous paper that, to avoid sequestration, changed its name and offices every few issues, and was said by loyalists like the Topambos to have an extremely bad influence.

The horseman had brought news that the boats of Rowley's squadron had been beaten off with great loss, in their attack on Rio Medio.

Already there was panic on the island. I could see men coming together in little knots, talking eagerly. I walked across the King's Square, and the stage driving up just then, I went to the office and got my correspondence.

I read it in a little house of call, in a whitewashed room that contained a card-board cat labeled "The Best," for sole ornament. Four swarthy fellows, Mexican patriots, were talking noisily about their war of independence, and the exploits of a General Trapalucis, who had been defeating the Spanish troops over there. It was almost impossible to connect them with a world that included Veronica's delicate handwriting with the pencil lines erased at the base of each line of ink. They seemed to be infinitely more real. Even Veronica's interest in me seemed a little strange; her desire for my return irritated me. It was as if she had asked me to return to a state of bondage, after having found myself. Thinking of it made me suddenly aware that I had become a man, with a man's aims, and a disillusioned view of life. It suddenly appeared very wonderful that I could sit calmly there, surveying, for instance, those four sinister fellows with daggers, as if they were nothing at all. When I had been at home the matter would have caused me extraordinary emotions, as many as if I had seen an elephant in a traveling show. As for going back to my old life, it didn't seem to be possible.

(To be Continued.)