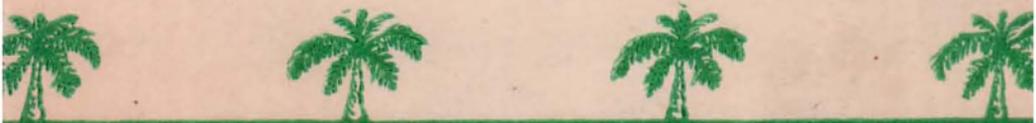


THE ARAWAK GIRL

By Herbert G. de Lisser

Author of "The White Witch of Rose Hall"



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FOREWORD

In addition to a great volume of work as a newspaper editor, the late Herbert George de Lisser was Jamaica's first novelist. Others had produced a romance or two, but he was a professional who published regularly here and abroad. His character-drawing was admirable, and he had a strong sense of story values.

de Lisser's novels fall into three groups:

1: His early tales in dialect, **Jane's Career** and **Susan Proudleigh**, which many regard as his most artistic books.

2: His studies of contemporary life, such as **Triumphant Squalitone** and **Under the Sun**.

3: A long series of novels based upon Jamaican history, of which **The White Witch of Rose Hall** is the best known, has reached several editions, and still sells well. Other titles in this third classification are **Psyche**, **Morgan's Daughter** and **Revenge**.

The author founded the successful annual **Planter's Punch** in 1920, and with incredible energy he wrote each year a book-length fiction feature for the magazine. All his important later writings were issued first in **Planter's Punch**. Some were then published promptly in London, others appeared posthumously, while a few remain in the files of the annual, inaccessible to the average reader.

Pioneer Press is happy to be able to offer one of the most colourful of de Lisser's short novels, hitherto unpublished in book form. The scene is laid among Arawak Indians and Spaniards at the time of the discovery of Jamaica by Christopher Columbus, with emphasis on the year

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that the Admiral spent as a castaway on the beach at Seville close to St. Ann's Bay, which he had named Santa Gloria. A fascinating chapter in our history is skilfully dramatised.

There is a strong love interest centring about a cacique's daughter, an Arawak girl called Anacanoa. de Lisser must have learned that this was the Jamaican variation of a name which occurred among the aborigines of Hispaniola as Anacaona. Certainly it is easier to pronounce in the form he uses.

Anacanoa should become memorable on the roll of Caribbean fictional heroines.

W. ADOLPHE ROBERTS,

General Editor.

THE ARAWAK GIRL



ARAWAK GIRL
From 18th-century Engraving by Capt. J. G. Stedman

CHAPTER 1

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 1494.

Anacanoa sprang lightly out of the hammock that swung suspended from two of the crossbeams of her hut, yawned slightly, stretching her lithe body with a little tremor of luxurious enjoyment. She was completely nude, a girlish figure light brown in hue and pretty, even if judged by conventional European standards. She ran over to the other hammock in the room and shook the young fellow in it into wakefulness. "It is light," she said, "and we have much to do."

He woke with a bound, came down to earth, and stood beside her. They were still almost children, he fifteen, she a year younger; but they had reached adult state in their little Arawak Indian community and had now been married for about three months. This hut was theirs, he had built it with the aid of his wife's relatives. A frail structure, yet in a semi-conscious fashion he was proud of it. He was proud of himself too, for his girl-wife was the daughter of the village cacique or chief, and it was admitted that she was the most beautiful girl to be found for miles around.

"Come, Cotaban," she said, and caught him by the hand.

Together they ran down to the seashore, where already a number of other people were assembled. None of these wore a stitch of clothing. None was aware of any feeling of strangeness or immodesty because of this; none gave it a thought, for it was the custom of the country.

With loud, joyous cries the village folk dashed into the water that seethed into silver as the waves came on one after another to perish with a hiss upon the white and yellow sands. The morning air was cool and stimulating, a light breeze wandered down from the mountains to the south, stirring the leaves of the dense woods that clothed hill and vale save where clearings had been made for the settlement, with its houses of reed and thatch and its patches of cultivation. The village stood adjacent to the shore, but protected from the occasional heavy winds or "northers" by a belt of trees that screened it from anyone approaching by the sea. But it was well within the sound of voices on the shore, and those older members of the tribe who were now preparing to join their younger friends and kinsfolk could with little effort convey a message to anyone standing on the edge of the vast spread of water which now, momentarily, was flushing into delightful colours as the sun's level rays darted along its surface.

Inland and higher up clouds of mist were rolling hither and yon. The mighty backbone of the mountains seemed to tower into a blue and opal sky adorned with golden streamers; thick underbrush fought about monster roots and trunks for space in which to live. Palms sprang gracefully into the air, slim bodies crowned with green and glittering fronds. Silk cotton trees of enormous height and bulk, huge giants from whose limbs depended parasitic plants that lived upon them from generation to generation, dominated the rest of the encircling forest. Through that forest ran narrow trails, communicating with neighbouring villages inland, but it was the sea coast and the sea itself that the villagers most used to visit one another, and in their canoes these people could go swiftly and safely from point to point.

Anacanoa and her boy husband swam steadily out to sea.

They took no notice of the water's wonderful colouring, its deep and pale blues, subtle pinks, its heavy, dazzling bars of silver. They had no word for all this beauty, yet they enjoyed it as part of their lives; the vivid green and the grandeur of the mountains that formed the background of their home they looked at daily as something which had always been and would always be there: these, too, had become a part and parcel of their existence which they would not willingly do without. Life was easy for them on the whole, though there would be sickness now and then, and death, and famine when a drought happened, and destruction when one of the terrible West Indian hurricanes swept down upon the land. There had been such a hurricane three years before. Cotaban and Anacanoa remembered it well. It had come from the east, it had torn up stout trees by the roots, had lashed the sea into mad, angry waves that thundered on the shore; it had levelled every house, had smashed into splinters some of the smaller canoes that had not been properly sheltered, and then had passed on to some other land with its menace of death and ruin. Some men and women had been killed by that hurricane, all had suffered. But since then the frail villages had been rebuilt, and the cassava and maize replanted, and these were crops that gave a quick and bounteous return. And the fish and the turtle were still in the sea to be caught, and coney could be trapped or speared for food. The hurricane was evil; but at the worst it came only now and then; and as far back as these people could remember their island had not been visited by that strange inimical race of men, the cannibal Caribs, from whom their ancestors had fled to Jamaica so long, long ago. These Caribs were worse than the hurricane; but there seemed nothing to dread from them now. They were almost forgotten, had become but a tradition, a tale told by the elders who had heard it from their fathers. They were far away. So Anacanoa and her husband and the rest of the villagers swam and sported on that morning of Sunday, May 4, in

1494, thinking of the feast and of the dance that would be held that night. And in the rays of the rising sun, far to north and east, Christopher Columbus and his men approached the island of Jamaica.

"It is the island of which we were told in Juana," said the Admiral to a man who stood beside him, as the pale outlines of the distant Jamaica highlands broke upon his eyes.

"Yes; it probably is," this man answered, "and they say it is full of gold."

"That may or may not be," said the Admiral thoughtfully. He had heard the same story about Juana, as he called Cuba, and about Espanola, as he had named Haiti, and bitter had been his disappointment. But he had disguised his feelings. To the sovereigns of Spain he had promised riches in abundance and he must not be thought now to have become disillusioned in regard to his expectations. He did not believe he would find much gold in the country they were now approaching: why, he could not have said. It was a conviction that he had. Still, it was a new land to be discovered, part of that great eastern territory of China and Japan to which he was convinced he had found a new route by sailing west. He would take possession of it in the name of Spain, and later on would see to it that its inhabitants became Christians. And if there should be any gold, he could claim it in exchange for the toys and bells and pretty caps he had brought with him for purposes of barter. But whatever he found, this country would become a portion of Spain's possessions, though at first its present owners would not be aware of that.

Slowly his three caravels drew nearer. They sailed before the wind at a leisurely pace, for their bottoms were foul with weed and shellfish, and they were leaky also. They needed to be scraped and pitched; he would see to that on some suitable beach shortly. His men lounged about the decks, over fifty of them, and wondered whether the women in the new land to which they were going were

well favoured and would be as complaisant as were the women of Juana and Espanola. And would the men be as hospitable as had been the savages of those other places? If not, they must be taught to show proper respect for their new masters—that is, if the Admiral would permit of a proper show of authority. But Master Christopher was inclined to be too easy with these people; he believed in softsoap and nonsense of that sort; he was not sharp and strong enough. Still, something could always be done behind his back. Even an Admiral could not have eyes to see everywhere and everyone . . .

On, on, the three small vessels came that fateful Sunday, but no one on the distant shore observed them yet. No one peered out to see, expectant or foreboding: there was nothing to worry about this bright May morning. The hurricanes never happened at this time of the year, the fishing had been good. And there was to be a big feast tonight, and all night long there would be dancing. People from the surrounding villages had been invited, and soon they would come trooping in. Most of them would bring their own food; but their hosts must give them drink. Well, that had been prepared; there was any amount of the piwari, the liquor made of fermented cassava and water. All the wooden troughs and the large burnt-clay pots of the village were filled with the intoxicating stuff. And the calabashes to serve as cups were ready. Nevertheless there were always some last preparations to be made, and now that the bathing was over the women went back to the village to see to what remained to be done for the approaching festivities. And the young men went out in their canoes to catch some more fish and turtle. And the older men tried out their musical instruments of reeds and trumpet-tree wood, their simple fifes and drums. It would be a great dance tonight. Things were going well with all the people: never had existence seemed more bright.

Shrieks rent the air, cries of excitement, of wild apprehension; the children came flying into the settlement from the beach, babbling something about great high canoes that were bearing down upon the land.

The feast had been over for hours, the dance ended. Nearly all night long rows of men had stood facing each other in a piece of open ground in the village, prancing and gesticulating towards one another; nearly all night long there had been an eating of broiled fish and cassava cake, a drinking of strong cassava beer, and towards the morning the exhausted merry-makers had thrown themselves into hammocks or prone upon the ground to sleep off their exhaustion. When the sun came up, they were still in slumber; but the children, who had fallen asleep early last night, had awakened at their usual hour this morning and had trooped down to the sea for their daily gambol in the water. It was one of these, a child of eight, who had been the first to observe something strange against the horizon, and had called his companions' attention to it. They had stood erect, up to their knees in water, watching the peculiar objects for a while. These grew larger, more distinct, even as they gazed; suddenly panic had assailed the youngsters and they had run screaming to acquaint their elders with the news. These elders, still a little tipsy from last night's long debauch, were at first inclined to scoff at what they heard. But the children were compelling, and, anyhow, all were now awake and it was time to bathe.

The whole village was on the seashore now. And there was no doubting the evidence of one's eyes. There, one, two, three, came high canoes with things above them that looked like wings, strange canoes such as these folk had never seen before, could never have imagined. What could they be? As one man, the people turned their faces towards their chief.

The cacique felt that something decisive was expected of him. He was believed to be a man of superior powers, he had always taken himself and his position seriously, though no particular test of his qualities of leadership had ever risen before. He must act now. He must assert himself. These might be the dreaded Caribs, the enemy who would descend suddenly on an island, kill and eat some of the inhabitants, seize some of the women to take away

as wives, then disappear once more. But they could be fought if those they assailed were brave enough. And perhaps they could be frightened . . . Could they be frightened? . . .

The exhilarating effect of the cassava beer had not yet entirely evaporated. It lingered, it stimulated the cacique and his men to a show of courageous action. He barked an order:

“Man the canoes!”

His own villagers turned to obey: he now addressed himself to his guests.

“These who come,” said he, “may be friends or enemies; we do not know. If they are friends, we have nothing to fear from them. If they are enemies, they will not attack me and my people alone, but all of you. Will you help me to meet them?”

Many hesitated. They had their own settlements to think of, they lived under their own chiefs, they never had regarded themselves as one nation with all the people of the island, had no sort of conception of such unity. They would have to go and warn their chiefs, they pointed out, and they must go at once. It sounded reasonable. So away they went to spread the news of the appearance of the huge canoes with wings that had appeared out of the vast nothingness beyond. A few of the guests, however, decided to remain and act under the cacique's orders. These thronged with the villagers into a few canoes and boldly pulled out to sea to meet the oncoming caravels.

Some of them paddled, others brandished long spears tipped with bone or with points hardened by fire, and they shouted loudly to scare Columbus and his men. These laughed, understanding well the meaning of the noise they heard. “They think to frighten us,” said one sailor; “I would hear a shout of a different kind if I got my sword into one of them. And I may before the day is over.”

"No!" a quietly commanding voice rang out, and the speaker realised that he had been overheard by the Admiral, whose proximity to him he had not noticed. "There will be no bloodshed if we can avoid it. You see," the Admiral was now addressing all those who could hear his voice on the ship — and everyone could — "we are but few in number, and we need food and may have to return to this place. We must pacify, not antagonise, these savages; by pacific methods we shall bring them to do whatever we wish."

"But if they attack us, Admiral?" demanded one fellow, glancing from the deck of the *Niña* down to where the Indians in the canoes were brandishing their spears.

"That is another matter; then indeed we shall have to teach them a lesson they will not speedily forget. But, remember, we are Christians, and we are here, among other things, to spread the doctrine of Holy Church. We must forgive our enemies." At the moment it did not occur to Don Christopher that he and his were really the enemy, and that the people of the island could have no need of forgiveness from them. But then, the Admiral already looked upon the Indians as his King's subjects, and therefore necessarily obedient to the governance of himself as His Majesty's Viceroy in these parts.

As the caravels came on, the Indians drew back. Deep blue water backed by lofty hills faced Columbus, but he saw before him no land-locked sloping beach where he might clean his ships. The bay was wide and beautiful, even eyes already accustomed to gorgeous tropical scenery rested with delight upon the entrancing scene as it revealed itself. "Santa Gloria!" exclaimed the Admiral, "Holy Glory — so shall this place be known in the future. Never have I seen anything more charming, no, not even in Spain." Santa Gloria, a beautiful name for a beautiful spot that had hitherto, probably, been nameless. Long afterwards it was to be known as St. Ann's Bay.

Tall, with long face, deep blue eyes, well fashioned, slightly aquiline nose, with ruddy beard already grizzled and

hair already almost white, though he was now but 44 years of age, Columbus was a man to attract attention as he stood upon his deck. He had already made one journey to the New World, and returned to Spain to receive the compliments of his sovereigns, and now he moved about with conscious dignity, as one aware that he had done great things. As was customary with him when he was nearing land, he had donned on this occasion his finest raiment, and to the Indians in the canoes must have looked a resplendent figure. His eyes roved over the shouting people in the water below; scanned their painted bodies and faces, their straight coarse hair decked over with parrot feathers; presently, with unerring instinct, he singled out the cacique who had come out in the largest of the canoes.

"Tell that chief," he said to his interpreter, an Arawak from Haiti who had been in his service for nearly two years now, "that we come as friends and mean him and his people no harm. And give them some presents."

The interpreter shouted to the cacique, while Columbus turned to Francisco Nino, his pilot.

"You will observe in the chief's canoe, Francisco, two women. These people did not come out to fight, or they would have left their womankind at home."

"Jolly fine specimens of the breed, too," laughed Francisco, but Columbus, who had small sense of humour and a great regard for his position, did not like this comment upon his speech.

The two girls referred to were Anacanoa and her younger sister, and now they were standing in the canoe to see more clearly the strange men who had so strangely invaded the island's life. The girls were stark naked, save for a girdle of bright coloured stones round their waists. The men in the canoe were naked too; but painted white, black, yellow, red, as they had been on the previous night for the feasting and the dance. The nudity of these people did not seem peculiar to the Spaniards; it was the same in the other West Indian lands which they had found.

Christians, some of them argued, should be clothed; but did it matter much what heathen did, so long as they worked hard and brought food, and surrendered their gold, and their women too, when these were needed, and obeyed implicitly every command delivered to them by the conquering Spanish? What was a savage man or woman, anyway?

Anchors out! The order was given, the anchors were dropped, the caravels swung idly to the motion of the waves. But here was no sufficiently sheltered place for cleaning the vessels; here they would remain only for tonight, and tomorrow they would go farther west to look for a spot for their careening. The crew murmured; there were some of them who had seen the cacique's daughters and wanted to go ashore to make play with them. But the Admiral was obdurate.

He saw Anacanoa make a motion with her arm, thought she was waving farewell to him, and courteously waved his arm in return. She understood and was delighted; she hoped that these pale-faced strangers would come ashore, would stay some time with them; would at any rate return some day. But they remained on their ships all that afternoon and night, and the next morning it was up anchor at dawn and away farther west, where some of the guests at the Santa Gloria village dance had already arrived the day before. These had spread the tidings of the white man's coming, and, because they feared much and had not remained to witness, they said that these strangers had acted with cruelty, and were clearly Caribs who had changed their faces and had built them winged canoes. Therefore the Indians at this new harbour boldly set out to repel Columbus as he drew near to their village, and threw their poor, ineffective spears at his ships, and did their best to frighten him with noise. "I must teach them a lesson," said the Admiral, "so that they will never dare attack us again."

He gave an order. His men received it with a cheer.

Down into their boats tumbled the Spaniards. One or two of them fired their arquebuses; their cross-bows spoke, sharp arrows pierced the soft flesh of the shouting savages; in a few moments these were pulling madly for the beach. Laughing, crying out in derision, the Spaniards followed, still sending arrows into the packed canoes. These grounded, their paddlers scuttling towards the woods, but the lesson had to be taught more sharply. A bloodhound had been brought in one of the caravels and had been lowered into a boat. It was set upon the fleeing Indians as soon as the boat touched land, and among them it sprang, snarling, biting, tearing one after another to the ground. It had been taught to mangle and to kill.

“Good sport, by'r Lady, good sport!” shrieked some of the invaders, but time was short and the dog had to be called off at length. It came back to its masters proudly; it felt itself the victor of the day. It was received with howls of wild approval.

“These people have not shown a good spirit,” admitted the Admiral to Nino, his pilot, “but then they have not yet been baptised. We shall see about that when we return.”

“You remain how long, Admiral?”

“Three or four days. We shall draw up our ships on that beach yonder, and scrape their bottoms. Then, if no embassy comes from the Indians, I shall send an armed party inland, with the dog, and endeavour to force them to sell us some food. We must have water too. I hope they will not compel us to take strong measures against them.”

The Indians, however, showed themselves reasonable, or desperately afraid, for the next day a small band of them came to make peace with the newcomers, and they brought presents of food. The Admiral was most gracious.

“But there seems to be no gold,” said Juan de la Cosa, the chartmaker, to him later on. “I see none.”

"I thought not from the first," replied Columbus sadly. He made an effort, brightened up, and added: "But we shall find plenty of gold elsewhere shortly. I feel sure of it."

Two days later he sailed for Cuba.

When would he and his men return, wondered Anacanoa for some weeks after, and then the memory of them began to grow dim and yet dimmer.

The ordinary life of an Arawak Indian village continued as before.

CHAPTER 2

THE RETURN

"Anacanoa, Anacanoa!"

The girl standing by the seashore heard the voice but paid no attention. It was a voice familiar, that of her husband; but her eyes were fixed upon two approaching objects, strange and yet seen before, and her memory suddenly recalled the coming of similar huge canoes with great wings, something that had occurred so long ago that at times the thought of them had seemed to her like a dream.

"Anacanoa!"

This time she answered.

"Come quick, Cotaban; the pale strangers who came so many, many moons ago are returning; come quick!"

Cotaban heard and came running to the beach. With him ran also a number of men and women, youths and maidens, attracted by the cry of Anacanoa, some of them too young to remember when Columbus and his caravels had sailed into Santa Gloria nine years before. But they had heard of that event, had heard also that because the strangers had been treated hospitably they had given pres-

ents and had been kind. They were friends, their chief had said, to those of the land who were friendly, but terrible to those who received them with hostile demonstrations.

It was June, and a brilliant sun lighted up sea and country, bringing into radiant relief the lovely colours of dancing waves and the varied greens of the thickly wooded shore. Out of a sky of blue and gold, the summer sky of the West Indian tropics, the ardent rays of the god of day, to whom these Indians vaguely attributed power over men and animals and life, poured dazzling down upon the world. The crowded ships drew closer to the land, labouring heavily, deep-sunk in the water, but they were not making for exactly the same spot where Columbus had anchored so many years before. They were moving, almost drifting, a little way farther west towards a cove. From the beach the gazing Indians could see this clearly. At a sign from Anacanoa they too began moving quickly in the direction of the cove.

"If they are inimical we are done for," said Columbus grimly to a young man beside him; "if they fight like those savages we encountered on the mainland we shall starve and die. These ships are finished. We must beach them."

"But you have given an order to all your men, Admiral; and surely they will obey. They will not molest these creatures."

"I can always depend upon you, Diego," replied Columbus kindly, "and on some of the others. But what of the rest? You know what has happened in Espanola and elsewhere. They disobey and defy me when they can. And they turn the natives into enemies instead of into useful workers."

"But all will know better than to indulge in such folly here," protested Diego Mendez. He was still young, with a frank, handsome countenance, a resolute countenance also: out of his clear blue eyes looked courage and determination. He bore himself erect. He knew that the

Admiral depended upon him as on no other of the many score of men on these two small ships, save his own brother and his little son, and he was resolved to be true to the man he followed and with whom he sympathized. He realised too that the Admiral was right, for he had heard ugly rumours among the crew of adventurers again and again. But he must encourage the discoverer, whose heart was now almost broken by discouragement and disappointment; who, if he had found a new world for Spain, had not yet found gold in sufficient quantities to satisfy the expectations and cupidity of his masters at home.

“Will they know better?” questioned Columbus bitterly. “Well, we shall see. The ships must lie side by side on the beach, Diego, and we shall live on them all the time we may have to remain here. We must lash them together and build a shelter for ourselves upon their decks. No one must go ashore without leave; no one must take anything by force; above all, no one must interfere with the Indian women. Impress it upon our people that it will be easy at any hour for these Indians to set fire to the thatch with which we shall roof our rude cabins on the decks.”

Diego nodded comprehension, then hurried off. He scanned the desperate faces of the adventurers who had left Spain some time ago to find wealth, and who now saw themselves likely to be marooned forever in a wild and savage land. For the caravels on which they had come would never sail again. The sea worms had seen to that. They were sinking even now.

Side by side, the wind favouring, the two vessels were driven on the beach. The glinting blue water lapped them gently, the jutting land on either side, rising clear out of the sea, seemed to embrace them, the Indians on the shore were crying out a welcome. These had made the journey to this place quickly; and although Columbus could not recognise a single face, he guessed that among these women and men must be some whom he had seen nine years before. One woman especially was waving to him; but her he did not know. He could not possibly recognise in the full-

grown figure, with the little cotton apron hung in front of her, the girl who had stood up stark nude in the chief's canoe on his first visit to this country and had made to him a friendly gesture with her arm.

He had but given her a glance at that time, had forgotten her almost immediately afterwards. But even had he been able to fix her form and features in his memory, that would not have helped him now. For Anacanoa had changed, had grown from budding girlhood into womanhood, had developed in body, though still retaining a slightness of physique rare in the Arawak woman, and was more pleasing to look at now than when she was a child. She wore the cotton apron sometimes affected by the matrons of her people; but her rounded breasts were exposed, and her supple flanks and body showed none of that soft flabbiness so common among the Indian women of more than twenty years of age. She was athletic, was this girl, had always loved walking and running and swimming, and so had kept herself in excellent condition. She had preferred a fish to a cassava diet, which merely fattened; and she had borne Cotaban but one child. Other young women of her age had already had six or seven children, perhaps more, most of whom had died in infancy, and by the time that they were eighteen they had lost all pretensions to such good looks as they might once have boasted of.

With Anacanoa it had been different. She was twenty-three—she seemed far younger. Something in her mind had impressed itself upon her face and figure, for thought moulds flesh, and the spirit manifests itself in walk and carriage and facial aspect. She had always thought of herself as a chief's daughter, his eldest, his favourite, and that increased the pride and self-regard with which she had been born. She thought highly of herself, was, in a way, a great lady in a village community essentially democratic. The other girls and women looked mean beside her. In her father's absence she might easily assume, and without rivalry, the leadership of her tribe.

But if Columbus did not recognise her, neither did she know him. At most she had had but a glimpse of him quite long ago; but then he had seemed a godlike, commanding figure. Now it was an old man that stood at the prow of a beached, half-sunken caravel and looked down upon the welcoming people below. An old and broken man, though not yet fifty-five, with beard as snow-white as his hair, face lined with care and thin, with body bowed and no longer decked out in gallant and gay attire. While the crews of the two vessels were busy lashing them together, he ordered a ladder to be lowered, and called Diego Mendez. Diego, like himself, now spoke some Arawak learnt in Espanola. They could understand and make themselves understood by the people of the western islands.

As Columbus and Diego waded ashore the crowd shrank back a little. Not so Anacanoa, who stood erect waiting for the strangers to approach. Her father was away at a neighbouring village, having been invited there, with some of his comrades, to a feast; he had no son or nephew; it seemed quite natural to all that Anacanoa should function in his absence. As for Columbus, knowing that an Indian woman had once queened it in Espanola, he saw nothing strange in this apotheosis of the pretty girl who stood calmly waiting for them. But his quick eyes noted one thing. Her gaze was fixed upon young Mendez, not upon the old sick leader who was already known as the great discoverer.

But he spoke first. Christopher Columbus was never the man to forget what was due to himself, or willingly take second place to another.

"Lady," he said in her language, "we have come back again as friends. We were here long ago, and we gave you presents. We established here the sovereignty of our master and mistress, the King and Queen of Spain, and you are now their subjects. But they ensure you through me the full possession of your lands and all the privileges you enjoy. You must, however, provide us with food, for which we will pay you liberally."

He repeated this latest sentence slowly and emphatically, well aware that most of the other part of his speech would fall upon uncomprehending ears. But it had, he felt, to be made, for the taking of a land that did not belong to him or to Spain must be done always in proper form and with the dignity due to the greatest nation on the earth.

She caught the gist of some of the words, though the accent was queer. Then Diego struck in.

"Queen," said he with a winning smile, "we want food and water and your friendship. My master was here before, and perhaps you saw him then. You know how good he was" — Diego hoped she had heard nothing about the fight farther west upon the coast — "and you may trust him to treat you all exceedingly well. You will be friends with us, won't you?"

Anacanoa understood this better. More than that, she saw a handsome face smiling in hers, heard a strong, pleasant voice speaking in kindly tones (for Diego had been instantly attracted to her), and her heart went out to him. What a man this was! and he spoke, however peculiarly, her language. A slow smile broke over her face, and she answered:

"My father, the chief, is not here; but you can have food and water till he comes. And shelter. Will you live ashore?"

"We live on our canoes," he replied, "but we shall be among you often. We shall be friends."

"You," she said eagerly, "can have a hammock in my house. I like you. My husband will like you also."

Diego laughed.

"But your husband would not like me to live in the same house with you," he pointed out. "You are beautiful. He would be jealous."

"He won't be jealous if I like you. He does what I say. Don't you like me?"

"Very much indeed; but I must be careful. And see, my master grows impatient. Let your people begin to get us food. I will return later."

"She seems to have taken a fancy to you, my son," remarked Columbus, as they walked thoughtfully back to the beached ships, upon which the men were already, in spite of their weariness and hunger, beginning to erect a shelter on the decks. "That should help us."

"But her husband, Admiral! He—"

"He didn't come forward, I observed," said Columbus; "he is evidently a person who doesn't count for much, while she is the chief's daughter. He is not important, but she is. They are heathen people, you know, and a husband here is not like a husband in a Christian country; though," he added with a half-smile, "I have known some spouses in Spain and Portugal who seemed strangely complaisant. Do nothing that you think wrong, Diego, but don't offend the girl. I see that she can be of much use to us. Humour her as much as you can."

"Do you mean that I should share her habitation?"

"No; that might cause the others on our ships to demand the right to sleep ashore and mix with these people. But you can be nice to her without doing that."

"There won't be any difficulty about being nice to her, Admiral. I like her; she is the finest looking girl I have met in these parts. And above them all in intelligence."

"Yes. I think you had better join her now to see that the food supplies come in quickly."

Diego turned back; the Admiral went on to his ship. Anacanoa, who had been watching them, ran to meet Diego, and with her came her husband. Cotaban had developed

into a fat and slouchy person, with dull intellect and sluggish habits. Anacanoa had already told him of her invitation to Diego, and he had raised not the slightest objection.

"My husband wants you to live with us," she exclaimed eagerly.

"I may later on," he gravely replied; "but at once it is impossible. The Great God," he pointed reverently towards the skies, "would not approve." He wondered how she would take his supernatural reference.

"Later then? Very well. I am getting food for you all. My father returns next sunrise, and then he will say what shall next be done. But I will advise him to let you have what you want—for *your* sake.

"You are very good, and lovely and desirable," he exclaimed. "Your husband too—"

She cut him short. "He cares only for piwari, for drink." She made a gesture of contempt. "Come and let me show you my child."

They entered her thatched hut together. There, in a little hammock swung beside that in which she slept, cuddled a little girl of about eight years of age.

She favoured Anacanoa, having but the slightest resemblance to her father. She would grow to be the image of her mother.

"Her name?" Diego enquired.

"Anacanoa."

"And yours?"

"Anacanoa."

"It is right she should have your name, she is so much like you." He fell into a brown study for an instant. "I wonder what will become of her," he mused, half audibly.

"You say?"

"Oh nothing—nothing much. Your daughter is nearly as pretty as you, Anacanoa."

"Yes; and if I should have a son by you, it would be more handsome still. Don't you think so?"

"I should hope so," he laughed, being accustomed by now to the primitive freedom of the Arawaks; "but suppose that all the men in my party were to want wives from your people. What would your men say? There would be fighting, and we must avoid that. You agree, don't you?"

"I am the chief's daughter. The chief is different from other men, and his daughter is different from other women. You say we must wait: isn't that what you mean?"

"Yes," he answered, that being the most diplomatic way he could think of out of what threatened to be a kind of amatory imbroglio. But he looked at her with deep admiration. He liked her immensely. He saw nothing to blame in her simple directness of speech and purpose. Somehow it fitted in with the surroundings of these strange people.

He took her in his arms and kissed her.

Anacanoa had never been kissed before. The caressing salutation was strange to her, startling, but she knew it for a love token. She clung to Diego warmly, nestling against him; now, she fancied, she knew why, as a girl, she had looked so yearningly at the fair strangers who had so suddenly appeared one day before her village when she had just been married; she had wanted one of them, the handsomest, the best. And he had come at last. Later on he would be her husband and they would have a son. They must wait for some sunrises, perhaps even for one moon: something of the sort he had said. That would be hard; but meanwhile he would be with her day after day and she would help him, and his also because of him.

When they went outside the hut they saw that the Arawaks were already taking food to the ship. Cakes of

cassava, maize, dried fish, birds brought down with bow and arrow, turtle speared as they swam or drifted in the sea—a goodly quantity, but there was a large number of men to be fed. Columbus knew that the Indians never kept a great store of provisions against any future demand; their present supply would soon be exhausted. But of this he said nothing at the moment. It was enough that a few days' needs might be sufficed.

That night, a rough shelter having been constructed on the vessels lashed side by side, and covered with dried thatch which some of the men had been sent ashore to gather, leave was given to the Spaniards to take a walk along the beach and stretch their sea-weary legs. "But have a care that you do not offend the people," was the Admiral's solemn injunction, "otherwise not one of us may be alive when succour arrives from Espanola."

They were a queer looking crew, a band of ill-kept tatterdemalions. A lengthy voyage, much fighting and great hardships on the Central American coast, short rations and, in the main, a brutal disposition, set them forth to the eye in an unlovely and disreputable light; and had the villagers been more sophisticated they would have shuddered with horror and fear. And though the Indians spoke of these adventurers as fair men, most of them were deeply tanned and swarthy, most unshaven, nearly all loud and boisterous, with bold acquisitive look and ravenous eyes. Ill-visaged birds of prey would a casual European observer of even that time have described them; only a few stood out as conspicuously different in habiliment and behaviour.

Columbus, Diego Mendez, Bartholomew the brother of Columbus, and perhaps half a dozen others. These considered themselves to be gentlemen, and were resolved to appear as befitted their status, as much as possible, even if so far away from Spain.

"And if you remain we shall have a son," insisted Anacanoa, as she and Diego Mendez walked along the beach together that night, to the west of the cove, with

the waves breaking in surf upon the shore. "And if you ever go away you must return to see him. Will you have to go at all?"

"Only today the Admiral was saying something of the sort to me, Anacanoa; but I do not leave your land. I shall travel towards the sunrise."

"And if you go you will come back?"

"Assuredly."

"To me?"

"Without a doubt."

"And I will think of you as my husband until you really become that. And I will tell my father, and he will be good to you and to your chief. And Cotaban must find a new house."

Diego was silent.

"But I don't see why you should wait till you come back," she added plaintively, then fell silent.

Had she pressed him further then, the young Spaniard would have taken her point of view.

CHAPTER 3

DIEGO CONSENTS

Diego Mendez had dressed in some clean linen underwear he had saved for ceremonial or special occasions; he wore his hose but had discarded his doublet and cloak. He had shaved this morning; his face shone with good humour and vivacity, the face of a young, good-looking, courageous fellow devoted to his chief.

Anacanoa was clothed in a tiny white apron which hung from a string of hand-woven cotton tied about her waist. Round her neck she had put some ropes of bright-coloured beads that the strangers had given to her the day before. Her long black hair was wound about her head and fringed her forehead. She was now with Diego in a canoe, in which sat six paddlers who were to send the light craft speeding silently towards the quarry they hunted.

There were many people in the shallow water of the beach; ragged Spaniards bathing, while some of their comrades watched over them with ready cross-bows in case the Indians should attempt treachery; Indians, too, of both sexes, innocent of any clothing; and the scene might have seemed to be a picnic, and was indeed really something of the sort.

For the newcomers and the natives were fraternising; there was peace and harmony between them. From the thatch-covered deck of the half-submerged Nina Columbus watched them thoughtfully. The village cacique stood next to him, deferential, but wondering at the change in the appearance of the white man who had seemed so magnificent when first he had come to these parts. It was an old, sick man to whom the cacique, who had arrived this morning, was talking now.

The canoe in which were Diego and Anacanoa was fast disappearing from sight beyond the cove. The cacique called the Admiral's attention to it.

"My daughter likes that young stranger," he said with a slow smile. "Her husband is no good; he drinks the piwari all day now; they have only one child. If you stay here long she may take your man and have other children." He spoke as one making a commonplace remark about the weather or the fishing.

Columbus answered diplomatically. "How long we stay I cannot say now; but my men must respect your women and not injure their husbands, Becchio; I am here to protect, not to harm you."

The chief did not quite understand how Columbus could be there to protect him, since it was the strangers who were the weaker in numbers, with their winged canoes out of action. But he agreed that the rights of his people should be respected. In regard to his daughter, however, both she and he could determine on her conduct.

"It would be all right if she put away her husband and took your man," he assured the Admiral; "I could give her to him. I could give many of you wives."

"If a woman is already married she belongs to her husband forever," returned the Admiral gravely, nothing loath to spread Christian doctrine at the moment, but even more immediately concerned with keeping Diego free from any foreign entanglements. Diego was too precious a

subaltern to tie himself up with even a chief's daughter within a day or two of his landing. There was some important work for him to do: there always was. He must be friendly with Anacanoa, but intimacy might be dangerous.

Becchio did not press the point; he was not in the habit of thinking much or deeply on any subject. Doubtless he felt that Diego and Anacanoa would settle their affairs for themselves, without ostentation, if they were so inclined.

Meanwhile the canoe was being paddled towards the open sea, eastward, where the Arawaks believed that turtle would be found basking in the sun.

In a large gourd of calabash, filled with water, Anacanoa carefully nursed a curiously shaped fish nearly a foot in length, whose underside was flat and deeply serrated. About the head and fins of this creature a cotton net was attached, and a long string of cotton, strongly woven, was fastened to this net. Diego already knew the purpose of this sucking fish, or remorra as it was called, and watched with the interest of a sportsman as Anacanoa threw it into the water when one of the Indians, pointing to a dark object floating on the water's surface, indicated that the prey which they had been seeking was found.

The huge amphibian, with a carapace more than three feet long and almost as broad, floated sleeping, its back slightly awash. Swiftly the sucking fish darted towards it, slipped upon the shell, pressed its underside or suckers down and clung with a tenacity more powerful than that of any leach. The men in the canoe raised a shout of delight, and began to paddle back to land. Anacanoa held in a firm hand the string by which the remorra was fastened, and before the turtle was awake it was being drawn towards the cove. It made no resistance; suffering no pain, there was no adverse reaction on its part to the pull exerted on it. It was only when the canoe had arrived in shallow water that it drew close to the animal: then one of the paddlers exchanged his paddle for a long stone-tipped spear

and made a skilful thrust at the turtle's eye. The weapon sank deep, the maddened creature almost leaped out of the water, a desperate struggle began. But by this the other men had jumped out of the canoe and soon had turned their victim on its back. Thus with all its softer parts exposed, it was easily vulnerable to the stabs from the stone-tipped spears. Presently they were hauling it ashore, dead, to be presented to the strangers for whom so large an amount of food was needed.

Diego would have gone with the men, but Anacanoa detained him. She called to some other Indians and signalled to them to take the paddles. "Let's go there," she said, indicating somewhere towards the east.

Diego agreed. This might mean more food, and only the night before the Admiral had expressed his fear that the local food supply would not be adequate. Which would mean suffering, and mutiny perhaps, unless the deficiency were made good.

So eastward they went, the sun beating down fiercely, but the heat tempered by the coolness of a wind that came from the thickly wooded land upon their right. Now and then the shore curved into long graceful indentations; here and there, there was no beach and the trees came down in serried ranks to the very water's edge, a waving barrier of green against whose base lapped blue waves of sparkling water. Sometimes great rocks stood out into the sea; against these spray and spume broke high. Elsewhere little streams could be spied murmuring unceasingly and emptying themselves into the Caribbean that twenty years before had been unknown.

After they had gone some way, hugging the shore as they paddled, Diego noticed a trail of flowing white that issued from between long lines of trees, a river as he saw directly that came swiftly down to join the sea. At once Anacanoa motioned with an arm, and the paddlers turned the nose of the canoe to the right bank of this river. It grounded; she and Diego leaped to the beach, and she

began to climb upwards, pushing her way along a trail which had been trodden out by generations of naked feet.

And now they were in the forest, with a dense umbrageous canopy above their heads and moist heat all about them. He saw high trees with leaves of burnished green on one surface, of glistening brown on the other; he saw trees bearing a light mauve flower; he saw palms that sprang upright into the sky, their heads in the fire of the sun. He heard a steady roar. It was the thunder of falling water, the voice of a cascade somewhere in front of them, and presently, as they turned leftwards to the river's edge, and came out upon clearer ground, a tumbling mass of water burst upon their view.

It fell slantingly towards them, over rocks and ridges, between massive century-old trees; it slid down terraces formed by its own action, and in the shower of sunlight that streamed down upon it it flashed into azure and white as though turquoise and diamonds had been splintered and flung into it by careless, generous hands. The sound of it was a melodious roar, not deafening or terrifying; enchanting rather; and the spray from it flung itself into the faces of the two that watched it. Diego thought that it was one of the loveliest waterfalls he had ever seen. This Indian girl must have loved it too or she would never have brought him here.

She sat down upon a rock and drew him to sit beside her. She began to talk quickly, but soon realised that he was not following her words. She spoke more slowly. He understood her now to say that here was the boundary of her father's jurisdiction, that just beyond it was another tribe, friendly but independent. Some of her people were thinking of building a village about here; she had urged them to do that; she would like to be with them. "And you could live here, too, with me," she added simply.

He knew now that she had brought him here to show him the site of what should be their future home if he would take her as a wife.

"It is very beautiful," he said, "and we may live here." He himself did not believe this, but he was being diplomatic; the Admiral wanted peace and a good understanding with these people.

"And the rest of you will live in Jamaica also," she said; for already she knew that the two ships could not sail again, so badly damaged were they, and she did not see how in even the biggest of the Indian canoes they would dare put out into the distant sea.

Diego was moved to candour, stirred by a sentiment of pity for his pretty, confiding girl.

"Some of us," he said, "are not good men. Your women should avoid them."

"They don't eat men and women?" she enquired anxiously.

He laughed. "No, that you need not fear. But sometimes they can be very cruel."

"You will prevent them," she assured him confidently, leaning against him. "We have no fear with you among them. Besides, we could beat them."

"Once, long, long ago, a big canoe of man-eaters came here. They came from there;" she pointed vaguely in the direction of Haiti, where a colony of Caribs had established themselves, hailing originally from one of the small, distant Carib islands. "My people fought them and killed them all except one. She was a woman, and very beautiful, and my father's father's father's father's father married her. The man-eaters never came back again."

"So you are, in part, a descendant of the man-eaters?" he smiled.

This puzzled her at first; but presently she understood. "But I am not a man-eater," she cried in horror.

"I know that; I only meant to say that you have some of their blood in your veins, Anacanoa"; and to himself he

said that that perhaps explained why she seemed much braver, more intrepid, than most of her people; why perhaps she was somewhat taller too than they.

"The man-eaters never came back, but we shall come again and again," he spoke aloud, with a touch of regret in his voice. "That is certain."

"That is good," she laughed gleefully.

He replied nothing; but rose from his seat.

"Let us go back to the canoe," he counselled.

He was strange, this man, she thought. Why did he not immediately make her his own? What was there to prevent him? But she was very intelligent; so she concluded that he was restrained for the present by some custom which he must respect. She did not observe the sadness in his face when he looked at her.

Three days later, at dawn, Diego stood with three Indians ready to set off on a journey round the coast on foot, to the eastern part of the island. Already the food supplies were falling off. Other tribes must be persuaded to send in provisions, and the Admiral had already selected Diego for this mission.

"Let me go with you," pleaded Anacanoa.

"It cannot be," he said. "But I will not be long away. You can help me differently."

"How?"

"Get your father and your people to bring all the food they can gather to the ships; the Admiral will pay them well. And tell your women folk to keep away from our men, and warn your men not to quarrel with ours. You understand? You will do what I ask?"

"Yes; and when you return?"

"Then you may become my wife, Anacanoa," he answered; and this time he meant it.

Such an alliance might help, he had already concluded; indeed, the matter had been discussed by him and Don Christopher. The latter saw himself in desperate plight. No one in Epanola knew where he was; no Spaniard in all the world except those here. And now some of his men, rested and fed, were beginning to grumble, being only kept in awe by the loyalty of the majority, a loyalty, however, which might not always endure.

The immediate need was supplies and peace; Diego was about to set off to arrange with different caciques for the former, and it might be that if Diego took this village chief's daughter to wife, as she wanted and her father wanted, peace with the Indians might be secured. After all, a heathen marriage was no marriage; and even if it was, this was not the time to cavil over morals.

Columbus watched Diego and his Indian attendants paddle off upon their venture; Anacanoa watched them also. Then, when the canoe had faded from sight, she went to her hut and explained to Cotoban that she was no longer his wife. He was drinking cassava beer, which he loved, and for which he now seemed to live, and it had bloated his body and half-poisoned his brain. When she informed him of this primitive divorce, he raised no objection. He saw no reason to object. He must give up the hut, she explained to him, since she would have no time to build a new one against the return of her new husband; this also seemed quite reasonable to him, especially as she would take care of their child. He could go to his mother's hut, he resolved. He would be happy there. On the whole, if he had any emotion about the matter at all, it was one of satisfaction and relief.

Anacanoa made the interior of the hut as attractive as she could, instinct telling her that her new man would not wish to be reminded of the habits of his predecessor. Then she settled down to wait.

And now the days seemed lengthy; she scanned the sea hour after hour from one of the arms of the narrow cove;

saw the sun go down evening after evening, and no sign of the man she loved. At last one afternoon as to the west, in a blaze of scarlet and saffron, of purple and pink, the horizon and the sea lighted up in the swift-passing twilight of the tropics, a canoe with Diego was descried. She hurried to meet him; he embraced her kindly, then went straight to the Admiral on his ship to make his report. But the Admiral knew already of his success, for food in sufficient quantities, bought with trumpery things, had been coming in from the eastern villages with which Diego had traded. Don Christopher shook Diego by the hand warmly, and thanked him.

"The girl, Admiral," said the young man: "she is waiting for me. I promised her. . ."

"It is best so, as I told you the other day, my son, before you went away," said Columbus calmly. "Neither you nor I wanted this, and we strove against it. But it cannot be helped. You may stay ashore."

"It won't be for long," thought the Admiral, but would not put this thought into words.

With mixed feelings, for present gladness was tinged with fear and doubt as to what the future might bring, Diego hastened back to Anacanoa.

There was no sort of Arawak wedding feast.

Already she looked upon herself as his wife.

CHAPTER 4

DIEGO GOES

"There is no other way," said the Admiral

Diego was thoughtful. Much was being asked of him, but he was pledged to duty. Then he glanced at Anacanoa, and his heart sank.

It was night, and the great moon of the tropics silvered forest and sea, dimming the flashes of emerald light from the fireflies that flitted among the thick trees beneath whose branches the two adventurers stood, with the girl not far from them. They spoke in Spanish, so that she should not understand. They had drawn away from the rest of their own men, for these the Admiral did not wish to know the idea he had in mind.

"There is no other way, Diego, and this is a desperate one enough, God knows. Yet who can succeed, if not you? You could sail in one of our best canoes to the eastern tip of this island, then push off to Espanola; by Our Lady's help you will arrive safely. The chief here will give us paddlers; Anacanoa will assist in that. Then you must get the Governor in Espanola to send me a ship, otherwise we all must perish here.

"I repeat, there is no other way."

"I see that, Lord Admiral," replied Diego slowly; "but you say I am not to return, but to go on to Spain with your letters. Why shouldn't I return?"

"Because, Diego, you are the only man, except my own brother, whom I can trust to take my letters to Spain. And my brother is older than you are and not as likely to succeed on such a mission. Tell me, my son, is it not because of this woman that you wish to come back?"

"I care for her, Admiral, and she loves me. And now it would be a crime to leave her forever. Look, she is staring at us now as though she knew what we are talking about, though that is not possible."

And, indeed, Anacanoa was gazing at them anxiously, a presentiment of something concerning her being in her heart.

"Take her with you," said Don Christopher, suddenly; "she may be of help. I feel that she will gladly go."

"There is her child," murmured Diego, "her little daughter."

"The child has grandparents, and you will come back to this country from Spain, Diego, you and she. I shall see that you have a position here; our sovereigns will not refuse me that. But if you wish to leave her behind. . ."

"I will give her the choice, Admiral; and I will leave it to your men to say if any of them will go to Espanola instead of me. You do not object?"

"No," said the Admiral with a little smile, for he knew that when Diego put the question to the others there would be none to choose the peril of a long sea voyage in an open canoe to Espanola. They would gladly leave the honour and the danger to the intrepid young man. And so it was as Columbus had thought, when, next day, Diego asked who would sail on the Admiral's mission. But he, too, had known beforehand what the decision would be.

Anacanoa had guessed that something was afoot; but had asked no questions. These strangers were queer; but her lord was great among them—she saw that and her heart swelled with pride. When their son was born he would be great among the strangers' sons and her own people also; he would rule the villages from west to east and their chiefs would be subject to him. She had begun to think imperially, had this girl. Something was stirring in her blood—the fighting, conquering Carib strain—and it affected her brain.

Diego came to her after his speech to his comrades: he took her aside, to a little glade among the trees, and put his arm around her waist and drew her to him.

"I am going away, Anacanoa," he said to her; "I am going across the seas, to get help for my chief. I may be many, many moons away."

"Do you come back with the help?" she queried, a frightened look creeping into her face.

He could not lie to her, would not. He felt in his heart the sickness of shame.

"No; but I shall come back some time after he leaves; I and many others."

"And me; what about me? Do I remain here alone?"
"But—"

"Why can't I come with you, Diego? Why do you wish to leave me?"

"I do not wish to leave you, Anacanoa; but the way is long and over the water, and the perils are many. I may die."

"I shall want to die, too, if you do. And if you go alone I shall never know what has become of you. Take me, Diego."

"And your little girl?"

"She will be safe with my father. And I love you better than I love her."

"It shall be as you say, querida," he replied, and though she did not know what this last word meant, she felt and believed it was a term of endearment.

The next day they started. There were six Indians with them to do the paddling. Her father took stoical leave of her, as did her mother. There was, indeed, no fuss whatever about her going, among her own people. As for the Spaniards, they thought it only natural that Diego should take his woman with him, since she was so good-looking; but there was one of them, Captain Francisco de Porras, who showed jealousy.

"Why not stay behind with me?" he asked Anacanoa, as she was waiting to embark; "surely I am as good as Diego?"

He had seized her by the arm and was laughing lewdly in her face. She wrenched herself free of him, and then before he could seize her again he found himself in the grip of Diego Mendez.

"Look, Francisco," Diego growled: "I am the Admiral's servant, and he wants no brawling among us. Besides, we may never meet again. But if I had to remain here and you again insulted this princess and myself, I would let your blood out sufficiently to cool your insolence."

"Indeed, Master Diego?" sneered Francisco: "but two can play at that game. And we may meet again, here or in Espanola or in Spain, and the girl may be there too—who knows? Until then—"

"You are mere carrion," scoffed Diego, and walked away.

Indians and Spaniards alike watched his canoe disappear from sight.

The Admiral, worried, disappointed, looked haggard when he was told some days later that Diego and his canoe were entering the sheltered cove. So Diego, had not gone to Espanola after all! This was terrible. He hurried out of his improvised cabin to see the party land, and in a few minutes his emissary was telling him a story of frustration and failure.

"We sailed to the east," said Diego; "but we were captured by a powerful cacique and his men, on one of our landings. That night they were debating what should be done with the stores we had, and they had made up their minds to kill us. Anacanoa overheard them. She crept out of the hut into which they had put us; they guarded the entrance only, and so I cut a hole in the rear wall with my knife for her to creep through. She insisted on it: she is a brave and loyal girl, Admiral."

"Yes, my son, I know; but go on with your story."

"She listened outside the chief's house and heard them talking. She came back and told us their plan; it seems that they could not all agree about the details of it. We waited for no more. We stole out of the hut by the hole, and went quickly but quietly to where I had left my canoe when I landed in that part of the country. It was safe. We embarked; and here we are. I have failed."

"It is not your fault, Diego. You can always be trusted to do your best."

The young man flushed with pleasure at this praise. "I have a plan, Admiral," he said.

"Yes?"

"I will go again to the eastern end of the island by water, and from there I will strike across to Espanola. But along the coast land you should send a body of armed men to prevent any of these savages from putting out to capture me before I am well away from the Jamaica shore. Can this be done?"

"Admirably suggested," cried Don Christopher. "Without you, Diego, we should not be saved. It shall be as you say."

"Another thing, Admiral."

"Yes, my son?"

"Anacanoa. . ."

"Whatever you wish."

"She must not go with us this time. It is going to be terribly hard for men; it would be much worse for a woman. She will understand that now. But I am asking you to promise me two things: one is that you will see she is not molested by any of our people—I would especially mention Francisco de Porras."

"A villain at heart, Diego; he and his brother."

"You know it! The next thing is that when you leave this country you shall bring her with you. Bring her to Spain, her and her little child. I shall be there if, through the good intercession of Our Lady of the Sea, I am successful. In any case she must not be left behind when you go, Admiral, for she would pine and probably die. You will promise?"

"Readily, Diego, and all the more so because she was not really married to that fellow Cotaban." Which remark showed the Admiral to be something of a casuist.

Diego left his presence with a feeling of relief. It would be some time before Anacanoa could join him in Spain, but that reunion was now certain if he should achieve the hazardous journey to Espanola. And he was too brave and young and hopeful to doubt that he would.

What would he do with Anacanoa in his own country? He did not yet face that question squarely; but at the back of his mind was the idea that they would not be long in Spain, that they would return to this part of the world, that he might then be given a high position in and over this island, as the Admiral had promised. He might be its

governor, and she, a chief's daughter, would make the submission of the people all the easier. And if she had the son she was always prophesying? Vaguely he wondered what the little creature would look like.

He went straight to her to tell her of his plan. And this time Anacanoa had to yield to his decision without much argument.

He would not risk her life on an expedition which even he would find hard and difficult, he assured her; she would follow him with the Admiral, whose word could be trusted. There was only one little bother. Francisco de Porras—

"Is nothing!" she exclaimed. "He is nothing here. He is under your great chief, and if he attempted to lay hands on me my own people would beat him, even though they are not brave like you. I am safe; it is you, my heart, who will be in peril."

"I, too, will be safe; and in a little while will come the great winged canoe to bear my people away, and you and the child with them. And now, until we meet again. . ."

He kissed her fervently, and she passionately returned his kisses. Then he stepped into the canoe, while a band of armed Spaniards, commanded by the Admiral's brother, marched off towards the east.

"Vaya con Dios, hijo!" cried Don Christopher; "Go with God my son!"

"Hasta luego, Diego!" shouted the Spaniards left behind, delighted that another effort was being made to bring them succour and a rescue from this country, of which they were growing weary.

Diego waved a reply, but his eyes were fixed on a solitary figure which, standing on the edge of the little promontory that formed one side of the Cove, stared at him without uttering a sound. He passed almost directly beneath this figure; he saw tears streaming down Anacanoa's

cheeks. He had never seen her weep before; now her eyes overflowed, but she spoke no word, only dumbly gazed upon him as she wept. He tried to smile cheerfully; found, surprised at the instant, that his tears were answering hers, that man though he was, he, too, was weeping. But he found his voice as the canoe slipped by and called out to her: "We shall meet again in a little while, querida de mi alma!"

He heard no answer.

Days passed, the Admiral's brother and his band of armed men returned.

"We saw them depart safely from the extreme eastern end of the island," reported Bartholomew Columbus; "we waited until there was no possibility of their being pursued. Then we came back."

"You spoke to Diego before he sailed for Espanola?" questioned Don Christopher.

"I did. He hadn't much to say. But he bade me remind you to take good care of Anacanoa."

"He seems to love her," mused the Admiral. "I must ask the friar with us to instruct her in the principles of our holy faith, and to baptize her. She will thus leave this country a Christian."

"That will be splendid," agreed Bartholomew.

"I shall see to it at once. Happily, the good father knows enough of her language."

So when Francisco de Porras approached Anacanoa a couple of days after, intent upon courtship, he found her under the tutelage of a priest who frowned at his interruption. He laughed and swaggered away. There were other girls in the village and the neighbourhood. And some of the Spaniards were already, though surreptitiously, forming liaisons with these.

CHAPTER 5

THE MUTINY

"My child, I cannot tell you. But I believe that though we have heard nothing these many moons, Diego is safe and well. He is under the special protection of our Blessed Mother."

"It is weary waiting," moaned Anacanoa.

"For both of us," sighed the Admiral. "And I am sick and old."

He was lying on his bed in the thatched structure on the Niña's deck which he called his cabin. Fever had prostrated him, and gout; and some five months had elapsed since Diego Mendez had sailed in a frail vessel for the shores of Espanola. No word had come from him. And the men outside were saying that Mendez was dead.

He might be. Who could be certain he was not? But who could be certain that he was, thought the man whose faith and indomitable perseverance had led to the discovery of a new world. So long as there was a glimmer of hope he would not despair. Besides, there was this girl to comfort; and during these months she had in her turn been a comfort to him.

She was the one woman allowed to enter the Admiral's cabin as he lay confined within its narrow space. He looked upon her in the light of a daughter now.

"There is something I have to tell you," said Anacanoa; "there is danger being prepared for you."

I seem to have known hardly anything else these many years, my child: what is it?"

She lowered her voice. "Francisco Porras and his brother plan to take your canoes, with some of the men, and set off to the place they call Espanola. They may attack you. They have been talking about it for some days."

How do you know this?" harshly demanded the Admiral, half rising from his recumbent position.

"Francisco had been drinking much piwari; he came boasting to me today what he was going to do. He said I should go with him. I spurned him. He warned me that he would kill me if I told you what he had said. He swore that Diego is dead."

"Diego is *not* dead," cried Columbus; "but Francisco and his worthless brother may be if they persist in their treason. Go back now to your father's house, Anacanoa, and quickly; you must not be here when I deal with these men. I will send for you when I want you. And when the ship comes for me, you will go with me as my daughter. Send my brother here."

She left the Admiral at this command. It was New Year's Day, though she knew nothing of the white man's holidays and festivals. The sky was brilliant with great stars which seemed more thickly strewn about the floor of heaven in these cooler months than when the summer's heat was smiting the land and the sun ruled with fiery splendour. The atmosphere was cool, delicious, and the odour of the pimento, the all-spice indigenous to the country, pervaded everything, its very leaves aromatic. She turned her eyes towards a spot where a group of men stood talking.

She could distinguish the figure of Francisco de Porras from where she was. She walked in that direction. They let her come near, confident that she could not understand what they said, and careless now if even she should. Francisco was haranguing the group, his hawklike nose and fierce eyes dominating it. He was tall and lean, reckless in appearance, with an evil, cruel mouth not completely hidden by the black moustache and short pointed beard he wore. Many of those about him had reckless countenances also, and all the hardness in their souls seemed to have come uppermost at last. Francisco saw her, and pointed her out with a few whispered words to two of the men. These laughed, and she turned back hurriedly, not liking his gesture and the sound of their raucous voices. She went to her father's hut, as the Admiral had advised.

Early next day she was startled by a great clamour. "For Spain, for Spain; we are for Spain!" a band of desperadoes were crying, as they swarmed about the beach by the stranded caravels and demanded that the Admiral should see them. Anacanoa caught the note of menace in the tumult of voices and hurried to the ship. But a man at the foot of the ladder leading to its deck pushed her roughly off with an oath, while some others standing about overawed the Indians who had assembled astonished at all this wild confusion.

Francisco de Porras, his sword unsheathed, was already on the Niña's deck. "I must see the Admiral at once," he thundered, "I have to tell him—"

"What, Francisco?"

The white-haired discoverer had appeared at the doorway of his cabin. With a mighty effort he had risen from his bed of illness. "Is this mutiny, Francisco?" he demanded, his eyes narrowed and his tones suffused with indignation.

"We want to return to Spain," blustered Porras. "We have been here six months, and there is no word from Espanola. Diego Mendez is either dead, or has left us in

the lurch. You have canoes; we can get away in them. You are staying here because you are in disgrace in Castile and are afraid to go back: you want us to live and die here. I give you a chance to come with us; but if you choose to stay, we go. Speak at once!"

"Francisco—"

"For Spain, for Spain!" shouted Francisco de Porras, who wished for nothing less than that Don Christopher should sail with him. His plot was to represent the Admiral as desirous of keeping them forcibly in the island. He beckoned to a few of his men who now sprang on the ship at his gesture crying, "We are for Castile! we are for Castile!" Don Christopher was at that moment very near to death.

But now his brother, Bartholomew, came hurrying from the other caravel, and Bartholomew, like Francisco, held a drawn sword in his hand. "Take the Admiral inside," he shouted to three or four loyal men, and swung to face Francisco. "And you get to hell from this deck, or I send you there," he snarled to the leader of the mutineers. "Off now, off you go, you sweepings of the gutter! Por Dios, I will split you as you stand if you say another word, you dog!"

Francisco sprang back; he knew that Bartholomew was in deadly earnest. He would deal with him another day, he thought; would kill him by torture, burn him; but he would not fight him now. "For Spain, for Spain!" he cried again, and scrambled overboard. Some fifty men swarmed to his side. "Seize the canoes," he ordered, "and take as much food and water as we can carry. Let us leave the sick and the fools behind."

"Let them go," said Bartholomew to the Admiral who lay prostrate on his bed, listening to the wild cries without; "we are better without them. I hope they drown."

The rest of the crew looked on, some angry, some in consternation, most with indifference, for many were sick

in body and sick in mind also. Food to which they were not well accustomed, strange fevers, weariness, above all a gnawing despair brought about by dreary months of waiting for a deliverance that did not come, had broken the spirit of most of them, so that they cared little about what Francisco de Porras might do. He and his following had already seized ten canoes and had hastily filled them with provisions. They were starting eastward, taking the route which Mendez had taken; one, two, three of them pushed off, then Francisco signalled to two of his men.

These had not yet embarked. Suddenly they ran towards a body of Arawaks standing not far from them, scattered them with a few rough blows, and swung Anacanoa off her feet. The surprise was complete. Before she quite knew what had happened she was dumped into a canoe in which sat Francisco de Porras, and his strong arms were holding her down.

"Off!" he commanded, and then laughed wolfishly. "So it seems that I have got you at last, Senora Mendez," he mocked.

A long piercing scream broke from Anacanoa; she had no doubt what this outrage meant; she uttered the Admiral's name. The Admiral heard her, knew her voice.

"Good God, Bartholomew," he gasped, "they are injuring Anacanoa or taking her away! I promised Diego to have care of her; and her father is chief of this place. This is terrible. You must stop it, brother; you must rescue this girl at once."

"It is useless," protested Bartholomew. "We cannot fight these men for an Indian girl; even our loyal followers would not do that. They will shed no blood for her."

"I think of her as a child of mine," said Columbus bitterly, "and I promised Diego to bring her with me to Spain."

"You have nothing to blame yourself for, Christopher. And it may be that none of us will ever see Spain again."

He walked out of the cabin. The Admiral struggled to rise again, but fell back exhausted.

Francisco, meantime, was struggling with the girl. She was strong, she fought like a wildcat, biting, scratching, and soon he divined that if once she got free of his hold she would throw herself into the water, dive, and swim hell-for-leather to the shore. He laughed as he grasped her intention; but he must still her violent movements or the canoe might overturn. So he bade one of his men pass him a long coil of cotton rope they had in the canoe, and with this, literally sitting on Anacanoa's body, he tied first her legs together, and then her hands behind her. So bound, and stretched out, and held down, she was helpless. True, she could curse him, rail at him, threaten him with the vengeance of Diego. "Diego is dead," he jeered, "and I am sorry for it for this reason: I could wish him to know that I have got you at last, and I could wish to treat him like the dog he is. I must be content with you alone, as things are.

He was explicit enough for her understanding. And as his men laughed at his sally, Anacanoa realised her utter helplessness.

They paddled for miles. At this time of the year muscular exertion in the open was not unpleasant, and these men were glad of labour which they might consider exercise. They knew there was a village in the vicinity of a waterfall which already they called the Roaring River, and to which Anacanoa had taken her white lover many months before. For this settlement they now made, and when they reached it Francisco at once assumed the air of a master.

He had untied Anacanoa's feet, but her hands were still bound, and she was led by the cotton rope, a captive. Just before entering the village he bound a piece of coarse native cotton cloth across her mouth.

He summoned the chief man of the place before him: this cacique was independent of Anacanoa's father, just on

the border, but outside, of his jurisdiction. "I need huts for my people to sleep in tonight," explained Francisco, "and food, and women for those who want them. Do you understand?"

The cacique glanced at Anacanoa, whom he knew, observed her plight, stared at the armed strangers and perceived that they meant mischief. Women had never been demanded from his people before, and food had always been paid for. He would protest.

"The Big Chief," he began, referring to Columbus, but Porras cut him short.

"The Big Chief," he said, with a wicked laugh, "has sent me; I am obeying his commands. This will make it hot in time for Master Christopher," he called out in Spanish to his gang, and they too laughed. It was in for a penny, in for a pound with them, and they were bent upon making things as unpleasant as possible for the Admiral and their comrades whom they had deserted.

"I see you don't believe me," he went on, addressing the chief. "Very well, men, let us give him a touch of discipline. Tie him to that tree!"

They grasped the bewildered, startled Indian; in a trice he was lashed to a tree and blows from a heavy stick were showered on his body. "That's how they use 'em, and worse, in Espanola," laughed one of the Spaniards; "shall we light a fire under his feet, Captain Francisco?"

"It might be as well to set a good example at once," agreed Francisco slowly, seeing the eager flame of cruelty lighting up the faces of the brutes who had mutinied with him. He knew he must please them if he were to retain the leadership, and he himself was sadistic at heart. It would be fine fun to see this fool Indian squirm as the fire roasted him, and to hear his howls.

They ran like merry schoolboys to bind the unfortunate man more securely; they tied him to the tree-trunk round his neck and under his arms and across his middle.

Then, though he screamed for mercy and promised to do whatever they wished, they heaped dry wood and grass under his feet and about his legs, and lit a fire, and gloated while he underwent the hideous torture that many another Indian of the island was to know. All the people of the settlement were there, staring, dumbfounded. When some of them would have fled, they were beaten back by the Spaniards, or menaced by the cross-bows to which arrows were fitted. Some of the men had arquebuses, and one of these was fired to scare the crowd. The thunder of it terrified the people, a few of them falling prone to earth in their fright. It was not until later that they discovered that the weapon had shot one woman dead.

The chief was not burned to death; Francisco hadn't enough time for a thorough execution by fire. When he was but half-roasted—he died that night—the Spaniards marched away, signalling to the people to go before them. They selected a number of the best huts that were close to one another, arranged for sentries to stand watch alternately, each man doing his share, then sent the women to bring them food. They were given what the villages possessed, with quantities of cassava beer, which they swallowed for its intoxicating effects, and then they stretched themselves out in the shade of the trees to rest and doze. The sentries watched, the sleepers rested with their hands on their arms, the Indians trembled and wondered what would befall them next. The night the Spaniards took what women they desired to be with them, and the girls went obediently. The Indian men were silent and submissive. That was better than being roasted alive.

A hut was reserved for the captain's use alone. Into it he dragged Anacanoa, and to its centre post he attached her with a chain he had carefully brought away from the ship of which he had been in charge, the sister ship that lay stranded in the Cove. He had been in command of her; and he had bethought him of this chain before his desertion, and for the very purpose to which he put it now. He knew that Anacanoa would endeavour to escape, and would gnaw through even a stout cotton rope. But she

could not gnaw through iron. He had her fast. She would be his leman until he wearied of her; her very repugnance for him, her wild efforts to escape him, stimulated his desire for her. Perhaps that desire had been one of the motives of his mutiny. He did not question himself about this, was not given to self-analysis. He had simply wanted her, had planned to take her, and now she was wholly in his power.

He took good care that she should not get within reach of sharp instruments, for he guessed she might try to kill him or herself.

He took all the precautions he could think of.

They stayed in that village for three days, roustering, making the girls their playthings, and the terrified savages obeyed them as though they were gods.

Then they set off again in the canoes, leaving the gentle roar of the falling water behind them, and taking Anacanoa along like a captive dog.

CHAPTER 6

"I WILL LEAD THEM"

She watched their preparations with a listless air. They were going away, these men, and would leave her here, in a part of Jamaica she had never known before, but it was not this that mattered to her. She could get back safely to her own place and people. But they might find Diego and tell him lies about her, and he might never want to see her more.

She was crouching near the shore, sheltered from sight by the tree ferns that grew profusely in the dark, dank spot she had chosen. Francisco had given up leading her in leash by now; after a while she had followed blindly. For she had heard talk that they intended to go to Espanola, where Diego had gone, and the mere sound of that word had drawn her like a magnet.

She heard a step on the ground just beyond her shelter. Peeping out, she saw it was made by a Spaniard, one Fernandez, a middle-aged man of kinder disposition than most of the other desperadoes. He knew some Arawak, and she had by this picked up some words of Spanish. They had now and then talked with one another; he had long known she loved Diego. She could count upon his sympathy.

She called to him softly, and he came to her.

"What is it, little chieftainess?" he asked with a fatherly smile. Whenever he looked at her he remembered the daughter he had left at home, and his heart went out to her.

"I am going back to my people," she answered, "but do me this kindness, *senor*. Should you see Diego, my husband, will you tell him how I have been treated, but how, within me, I have been true to him, and will be till I die?"

"I shall," he promised, for he did not know that the Admiral had commissioned Diego to go on to Spain after reaching the island of Espanola, and he did not care to tell her that Diego might have been drowned at sea.

"I may never see him again," she mused, "never hear his voice. Besides, would he want me now? Look at me, what I am, what I have become. . . Better perhaps that we never meet again, but, O *Senor Fernandez*, I love him so!"

"I know it, I know it," this rough man of fifty replied softly, sick at seeing her misery. "Por Dios, I would help you if I could. Ah, I have it! Why not go with us? Then you may meet Diego again, and I hope he avenges your wrongs!"

"Go with you?" she cried, her face suddenly lighting up, her renunciation of but a moment before forgotten. "But how, how? They will not take me with them. How?"

"Easy enough. You are strong, you can paddle as well as any of these Indians here. Tell the captain that you would like to be a paddler in one of the canoes, and I guess he will jump at the offer. Anyway, there's no reason why he should refuse."

"Yes," she breathed excitedly, "he may take me if I go to labour. Come with me; I will ask him now."

Together they hurried to where Francisco and some of his men stood overlooking the final preparations for their

embarkation for Espanola. Indians were sullenly loading the canoes with water and provisions; they knew that they had been impressed to paddle the strangers a long way over to an island of which they had heard but never seen, and they dare not disobey. At first there had been a refusal; but one of the Spaniards had drawn his sword and swept from his shoulders the head of the man who had first voiced objections. And then, out of sheer deviltry, three other Spaniards had tried the edges of their blades on the necks of some other Arawaks as these had run by them yelling. Six dead bodies had testified to the power and the ruthlessness of the masters; after that a feeling of impotent dread and terror had settled upon the people of this village. They were slaves; they must obey any command delivered to them. They were toiling now in utter silence, but their eyes were like those of animals haunted by the fear of death.

"I want to go with you," said Anacanoa, boldly approaching Francisco.

"You do, do you?" he answered, staring at her. "But I don't think I need you any longer. Where we are going there are a lot of other girls quite as pretty as you used to be, and they will be glad if I smile at them.

"So here you stay, my girl, which is the place for you. I wonder that you should want to come with me!"

"I can paddle as well as any man; and I have heard how Ayty is to be reached: you haven't."

"I don't believe you. You have another reason for wanting to go. Santa Maria, I know it!"

He turned with a great burst of laughter to his friends. "She is thinking of joining up with Diego Mendez. I always hated that fellow! I wonder what he would say if I took her along. That might show him that I have been more than a match for him, and if he attempted to kick up a row about how I took her from him—well, he would

only get laughed at. I think I'll show him: it will take him down a peg; and if he still wants to have her now that I have done with her, he may."

He turned to Anacanoa and spoke in halting Arawak. "Very well, you can come along; but understand, you will paddle like any man."

Without a word she ran towards one of the canoes, and, by chance, it was the one in which Francisco himself was to embark, and her friend Fernandez also.

In another hour's time they were off. From the eastern extremity of Jamaica they set out, a little fleet of canoes manned mainly by Indian paddlers, though some of the Spaniards gave a hand as well. Mile after mile they pulled, and the sun shone fiercer and fiercer, and sea and sky were a blaze of gold and blue. It was gruelling work, with over a hundred miles to go. And when the land behind them had sunk out of sight they found themselves in a welter of waves that ran tumultuously in all directions, as it seemed, and threatened to swamp the frail craft to which they had entrusted their lives.

The canoes tried to keep close together. But now and then some heavy wave mightier than the rest, would strike and scatter them, and from one canoe to another would come shouts and ejaculations—curses, prayers, even screams, for now these men began to fear that they were faced with death by drowning. Looking about them as far as they could see, the water's surface was one broken heaving mass of foam and spray. "My God!" exclaimed Francisco de Porras at last, "we shall die if we dare venture farther."

"Turn about," he signalled to his paddlers, and the poor creatures were glad to obey. His manoeuvre was soon perceived by the men who had set out with him: one by one the canoes turned again towards the shore. But steadily the wind rose, and now it was a race between them and what appeared to be a gathering storm. And

the canoes laboured heavily as though they might founder at any moment.

"There are too many people on board," growled Francisco. "We must save ourselves."

As he spoke he seized an Arawak paddler, tore from him his paddle, and, lifting him bodily, hurled him into the sea. Three others followed; and now the signal had been given for a general drowning. Pitched into the water, the frightened wretches screamed, swam frantically landwards, never losing touch with the canoes. The Spaniards paddled desperately; in Francisco de Porras' canoe Anacanoa sat with pinched lips awaiting death. Indeed, she might have been the first to be thrown overboard, as a woman of less use than a man, but that she was near to Fernandez who had kept a hand upon her shoulder and had glared at those who would have sacrificed her with murder in his eyes.

She stared at her people swimming and struggling in the water. She had never thought of them as her people before; they were from another part of the island, strangers, foreigners, to her. But now she had a sense of oneness with them; a feeling that had been growing within her all these weeks came fully to life at last. She and they were one, and these brutal pale-faced men were of another breed altogether. They were bad, vile, terrible. . . . except Diego. And the old man who had been chief of them all. And this other old man, too (so she thought of Fernandez), who was so strangely kind to her. But all the rest—

Suddenly she screamed. One of the struggling Indians exhausted, on the point of sinking, had seized the gunwale of the canoe. He hoped by that means to be dragged through the water to safety. One or two others had instantly followed his example. Swiftly a Spanish sword rose and a clinging hand was severed, then another and another; and with agonised cries the frantic wretches sank out of sight, the spurting blood immediately obliterated by the resurgent waves. All around a similar tragedy was being enacted. Anacanoa dropped her paddle and buried her face in her hands.

"Send her to join the others!" roared a rough, harsh voice; it was that of a man who sat near to Fernandez.

"Touch her, and you go first, you cowardly hound," snapped Fernandez; "no harm comes to her in this boat while I live."

They left her alone after that, and pulled vigorously for the shore, and as they approached it the waves became less boisterous, and the wind died down. When they landed, they fell to earth, worn out, exhausted, maddened by the thought that they had had to abandon their enterprise. They paid no attention to Anacanoa, who walked from among them and went to crouch again in her damp shelter of tree fern. One awful feeling, a conviction, obsessed her mind and tore her soul with grief.

Diego. Diego had gone the way these men had attempted, and had never come back, he and those who went with him. What had happened to them? She could see them with her mind's eye, braving wind and wave, fighting a hopeless battle against the raging elements, upset, struggling for a few desperate moments in the water, sinking forever. It must have been so; had she, too, not nearly lost her life on this same sea? She rocked her body in grief and despair. He was dead, and all her hopes had died with him.

By a curious twist of mind, she connected his death with these men who had injured her, and then with all the strangers. He had gone away on their behalf; had he not been sent he would be with her now. He might, he would have remained with her forever. They had sent him to his end, had deprived her of him, just as they were slaying her people, working havoc in the country, and had degraded her, the daughter of a chief, into a thing of no value. And this was only a beginning: she felt it. Swiftly her thoughts turned to suicide, as were to turn the thoughts of so many of these primitive Jamaicans in the days to come.

But no, she concluded; one could always escape that way if one wished. Surely one should strike a blow at these enemies first. But how?

If only her people would fight, all would be well. She would try to make them do that; at the very least they could starve the greater part of the strangers by not sending in any more food to the stranded ships: the others could be dealt with afterwards. It was Diego who had worked so that they should have food, and they had made him go to his death. If she could, she would undo his work, and he would be pleased if only he could know of it.

That evening she stole out of the village, no one seeing her. She was rested; even otherwise she would have gone. Her mind was inflamed with her self-imposed mission of vengeance.

That night she slept under the shelter of a great tree some miles away; the next morning early she set out for one of the settlements that Francisco had harassed on his journey to the eastern side of the country. She asked for the chief, and he took her to his hut. He was visibly relieved that the white men were not with her.

"Chief," she began abruptly, "I have escaped from those evil ones. They tried to go to Ayty, but failed. They will come this way again, and will make slaves of your men and will use your women as they please, unless you resist them. That is the only way of safety for you."

"But we are weak and they are strong," wailed the chief. "They will burn us or cut us to pieces. We are helpless."

"They are few and we are many, and they are divided. Some are there"—she pointed east—"the others are at my village, and many of them are ill. If our people gathered together and attacked each party in turn they would disappear."

"My men have not fought an enemy for ever so long, chieftainness. Not since the man-eaters came long ago have we done battle with anyone. And these men are not like us they are so powerful that we fear to look them in the face. They cannot be conquered."

"I have been with them, and I know that they feel fear as you do; I have heard them scream in terror of the waters. Send out some of your men to other chiefs, and bid them say that these chiefs should meet you to talk about the saving of themselves. If you don't, you will perish every one of you."

The man made a gesture of impotence. Energetic action and concerted effort was something clearly beyond his compass.

Anacanoa saw it. "Very well, then," she continued; "but why continue to supply the strangers at my village with food? Stop that, and your example will be followed. I will go to the other chiefs and tell them what you have resolved to do, and they will do likewise. Then, when the men who live where my father lives have starved to death, it will be easy to deal with those who are nearer to you."

The chief knew that his people were already grumbling at having to supply the strangers with food, and a policy of ceasing supplies, a purely negative policy, appealed to his lethargic mind. "I could do that," he agreed; "but I have heard that the big chief at your place is a good man, and kind. Would you have him starve to death?"

"Yes," she answered firmly, "if that is the only way of saving ourselves. But he is kind, and many of his own men hate him. And he is sick. He may die at any time. He, however, can secretly be supplied with food; I will see to that. And there is one man over there—again she pointed east—whom I would save. But all this you can leave to me. Remember, too, that even if all the strangers die, it is better that they should than that we should. We must not stop at anything."

"They say that long ago, Anacanoa, your mother's mother's mother's mother was a man-eater from Ayty," remarked the chief with a glint of respect and admiration in his eyes. "And you talk as she might have talked."

"I want to act as she might have acted. Had your fathers been only a little bold no man-eaters could ever have taken them for a meal. I will stay here for the rest of this day, and tonight, and then go on to the next village. If you will not fight the strangers, starve them. Perhaps the men elsewhere in Jamaica will fight."

"They have no leader," said the chief.

"I, the man-eating woman, will lead them," replied Anacanoa proudly.

The next morning she started again on her long journey. And now, day after day, she trudged it from one settlement to another, always suggesting active measures, answered always with words of hopelessness and despair. They had no idea of combination. They were timid, afraid, physically weak also, and imbued with the belief that the Spaniards were unconquerable. But they could cease to supply foodstuffs to the Admiral and his men on the stranded ships; they could say that their stores were exhausted. They would be glad to do that. They were emphatic in their repetition of this promise.

That was something, thought Anacanoa; much. When many of the strangers began to die, the people of the island would see that the rest could be fought, after all.

On and on, alone, she pursued her object. Rumours came to her by wandering Indians, or men sent purposely to tell her what was happening. The Spaniards had made a second attempt to leave the country by canoe, but had failed again. They were moving about now, taking what they wanted, seizing the women in the face of the men, ill-treating, killing, at the faintest suspicion of resistance. They were spreading the report that all that they did was

done at the orders of the Admiral. They were even advising the Indians to sweep down upon him and kill him!

That determined Anacanoa.

She made straight for her own settlement, arriving there after dark one night. She went to the Nina and asked to see the Admiral. He was ill, in bed, she was told. She asked a man on the deck to send in her name to him. In another minute she was beckoned on to the ship.

She stood before the Admiral. She was startled at his appearance. His cheeks were paler and more drawn than they had been before; his eyes were pools of suffering. He, too, had difficulty in recognising the pretty, merry, dashing girl he had known but so short a time before. Her face had grown hard and thin and set; there was now something wild and cruel about it. But she looked at him kindly enough.

She told him what she had heard about the mutineers, what she herself had seen. She did not tell him it was she who had been inducing her people to starve the Spaniards. The erstwhile ingenuous savage had been rapidly transformed into a woman with a subtle, calculating mind.

"Leave this canoe, Admiral, and come with me. I can hide you," she advised. "Bring your brother and your son; they will be safe. Otherwise, you will all die." She spoke vehemently.

"We are in God's hands, my daughter, and, besides, I am the chief of all these people, even of those who have dared to wander away from me," returned the Admiral. "I am not afraid of their threats of intended violence: the Blessed Virgin protects me. But they have angered your people, and these are sending in no more food. That is my main trouble now."

She was silent.

"Do you know, Anacanoa, how your people can be brought to let us have food again?"

"No. They will not give you any more food. But you yourself, and your son, and—"

"We stay here," replied Columbus firmly, "until help comes from Espanola—Ayty as you call it."

"Help will never come. Diego was drowned." She spoke with a sob.

"Help will come. Diego was not drowned." Columbus asserted this in a confident tone of voice. "I had a dream of him last night. Do you never dream of him, Anacanoa?"

"Yes," she answered softly.

"And isn't it always of a man alive and in good health?"

"Yes."

"Then why doubt?"

"I know I shall never see him again. In my dreams he has told me so."

"Hum!" The Admiral changed the subject brusquely. "So you think we shall get no more food, do you?"

"I am sure of it, chief; but you can be saved, and—"

"You can aid me much, Anacanoa. You say that my deserters are plotting to attack me. I am not surprised. Can you or any of your people keep in touch with them so as to gain knowledge of their movements and get me word of them? They are not far from here now. Could you do this?"

"Perhaps. I will try. I will try to warn you in time when they are marching against you."

"You are a good Christian, my daughter; I am glad I had you taught our faith, and baptised."

"But you will starve all the same."

"We shall not starve: you will see. And now go back to your house and sleep. I have some work to do."

She left him, impressed by the certitude of the old man; yet when she had gone there crept over his face a look akin to despair. The men with him were on short rations now; in a little while they would be almost entirely without food, and then they would mutiny as the others had done, and would spread through the island burning and robbing. They would kill him too. There was only one chance left to him on earth.

He dragged himself to a rough shelf in his cabin and took from it a book; it was the astronomical calculations of a German who called himself Regiomontanus. This man had calculated that there would be a total eclipse of the moon on the night of February 29, 1504. That was five nights away. Was Regiomontanus correct? If he was not, the end of him, Christopher Columbus, was at hand. Pray God and the blessed saints that the German had made no mistake! Everything depended now on the coming of that predicted eclipse.

CHAPTER 7

THE MOON AND DARKNESS

The moon sailed vivid through a dark blue, irradiated sky, and the long rollers of the outer sea flashed back a reflection of its silver light. On distant mountain tops and lowland clearings great trees sprang into clear relief in the midst of all that shimmering, heatless illumination from above. The lofty background of the coast reared itself into a prominence impressive and distinct; the little winds that whispered through the trees stirred them but gently, as though aware that the occasion was one for watchful silence, for almost breathless expectancy.

Thousands of people were clustered on and about the ground fronting the half-sunken caravels of Columbus, thousands of savages, hate in their hearts, bitter fear, a feeling of awe and superstitious terror also, for had not the strangers' chief sent out to say that this night he would ask his god to blot out the light of the moon because the people of the land would let him and his men all starve to death? That was the warning and the threat that had been circulated by his messengers these last few days; these had hurried from village to village inviting the people to be present at this astonishing proof of the white man's power, and the villagers had now obeyed the call. They had doubted, they doubted still. Who could blot out the

moon? Yet the older ones amongst them had a dim recollection of some such eclipse in the past, and they remembered it had been claimed by their priests that only because of the latter's supplication had light been given to the people again. Their priests, however, could not avail against these strangers should they succeed in taking away the brightness at night which in their own dumb way the savages loved. And—dread thought—if the light of the moon could be put out, might not that of the sun be obliterated also?

Anacanoa had been one of the first to hear of what the Admiral intended. The very next morning after her return to Santa Gloria, and but a few hours after she had seen him, Columbus had sent for her, intending to make her his chief emissary to her countrymen. He had by this thought out his plan. He must act now by stratagem, using a calculated eclipse to terrorise the savages, as others were to use other eclipses for the same purpose hereafter, both in fiction and in fact.

"Anacanoa," he had said gravely, "since your people have determined to starve us, I must punish them. But I will not do so by means of weapons though I easily could—"

"Most of your men are sick," she swiftly interrupted, "and if the strong ones die you will be at the mercy of Porras and his friends."

"A keen brain," thought Columbus; "possibly even a dangerous one. But she has cause to be dangerous, poor child."

Outwardly, he appeared to treat her interruptions as irrelevant and absurd. He continued without taking overt notice of it.

"Without killing any of them, I will punish them. On the night of four sunrises from now I will pray to my God to take from you the moon; later on I may cause everlasting darkness to prevail."

"Because we won't feed you so that you may make us to be less than the dirt you tread upon? Is that just, great chief? Are you, too, no better than the men I have escaped from and who seek to kill you? Are you all alike?"

She choked with indignation. But behind it was also apprehension.

"Was Diego like Francisco de Porras?" asked the Admiral softly.

"No! He was different; but he was only one."

"There are others, daughter. But just as you do not wish your people to be killed and enslaved, so I cannot wish to see mine starved to death. Go now and tell them what I have said, go as far as you can, but be back in time to witness for yourself. I have sent for your father and others."

"You cannot put out the moon," she stormed.

"We shall all see," he answered gravely, then turned away to indicate that she must leave him.

She wanted to disbelieve in his power. For if he should succeed, what hope could she have of ridding her country of these terrible pests? She had witnessed with her own eyes what they had done in the east; and that, she felt, was but the beginning. If they proved now that they could kill the moon, her people would die like dogs beneath their yoke without lifting a hand in their own defence.

She dashed out of the cabin; and in a flash of revelation it came to the Admiral that it was not so much the thousands of simple-minded creatures that he had to fear as this one girl who, through some strange freak of inheritance or soul, had a brain to think, perhaps to devise plans, and might even succeed in time in getting her plans put into execution. It came to him suddenly that it might be she, that indeed it was she, more than anyone else, who was responsible for his perilous plight. She was his friend,

yet she was also his enemy. She would save him and two or three others, if they agreed, but she was bent on slaying the rest. That was the inner meaning of all that she had said the night before, of her tempestuous anger now. A bold idea on her part, and if the German astronomer should prove wrong and the eclipse fail of realisation, this young woman would of a surety be able to laugh the Spaniards to scorn, call upon her people to strike at them, and lead them to the attack in person.

Why had all this not occurred to him before? If it had he would have retained her by force; prevented her further machinations: now she was gone—but perhaps not far. He hurried out on deck and swept the shore with his eyes, but saw nothing of the girl. He called to two of his men and sent them to bring her back if they could find her, but not in such a way as to arouse her suspicions or create a demonstration among her tribe. Once she was aboard, he could find some excuse for holding her there. But if she suspected his design before she was locked away, there might be serious trouble at once.

The men found her talking to her father and some other of the elders; they told her the Admiral wished to see her. Impulsively she started to follow them, then paused. Why did he wish to see her? He had declared that he must assist his own people and punish hers for protecting themselves; what more could he now say, what else could there be between them? Yet...but again she paused. Why two men instead of one only? Were they to drag her to the big canoe if she refused to go? If not, why two instead of only one?

And so an idea which was in the dim recesses of the Admiral's mind, and which had expressed itself partly, even though partially repressed, became vaguely apparent to the girl. Had but one messenger been sent, she would have heeded the message. Columbus realised this when his men returned with her refusal.

So she had become an open enemy, and she looked upon him as one. What a pity, yet his duty was clear. He would not spare her life even, if by her death his purposes could be accomplished. She was making war upon him, and she was but a subject. This was rank rebellion! "And she is a Christian too," mused Columbus, for the moment genuinely astonished at such backsliding from the faith. But this feeling did not persist. After all, were not the Porras brothers also Christians, and Christians from birth, and was their behaviour in accordance with the teachings of Holy Church? The Admiral did not proceed to ask himself whether *his* policy was also strictly Christian. The truth is that he had no doubt it was.

She was standing tonight within the shadow of a ceiba tree, waiting for what might happen. She had gone among the villages as the Admiral had told her to do, telling of his threat, but she had also taken the opportunity to cast doubts upon his power to make good those threats and to incite hundreds of her people to strike then and there at the Spanish when they saw that the moon could not be blotted out. That they would follow her then she believed. Fear would turn to bitter rage, the hate in their hearts overflow and spur them to revenge, when it was apparent to them that these strangers from over the sea were but men like themselves and had no control over the heavens, even as those who had tried to get away to Haiti had shown her that they became desperately afraid when faced with drowning. Her people would know at last that they had only to strike and be free. They would follow her, and she would lead.

While she thought thus, the Admiral was thinking much the same in his own terms.

As he stood at the prow of the Niña, in full view of all upon the shore, he was certain that she was looking at him, that though she was invisible to him they were, in a manner of speaking, face to face at a tremendous moment of his career. Had he been able to accomplish it, he would have had her slain in that instant and would have justified his

action as something done for Spain. Could she on her part have achieved his death just then, he would not have lived another second.

He stood there, in clear relief, in a histrionic posture, looking at the moon. In his mind was a wild anxiety, his countenance showed nothing of it. He wished them to believe that he was waiting impassively, confidently, for a manifestation of the terrible power of his God; in his heart he was uttering fervent prayers to the Blessed Virgin, to every saint he could remember; and on the lashed decks of the caravels his men were arranged armed to the teeth to repel a rush of the Indians if that should come. And now the silence grew oppressive, the silence of tense waiting, of an expectation that shook the stoutest savage heart. Anacanoa found herself trembling violently. She wanted to scream aloud.

Would the shadow of the earth never steal across the surface of the moon? Mother of God, would everything end tonight in an orgy of bloodshed?

Suddenly Columbus stiffened. Surely the light from above had grown a trifle dim, surely the luminosity of the earth had faded slightly? He stared: was not that a thin line of darkness on the hither edge of the moon? Was not that—

A low wail, rising to a panic shriek, the heavy sound of hundreds, thousands of human bodies falling prone upon the earth, a deafening clamour where but a moment before there had been an appalling stillness, broke and rent and shattered the circumambient air. The moon was dying! The strange chief from over the sea was putting out the light of the world. A great cry of supplication arose, an invocation of mercy: he should have whatever he wanted did he but spare them now.

Anacanoa too had fallen, but not upon her face. She was kneeling, her mind was a prey to fright, but even then it retained some grasp on reason. She did not doubt that the Admiral had done this thing through means that he

commanded; but had it not happened before? she cried to herself. And if the moon died, would it not die for the white men as well as for the others? And this great chief—did not Porras and his friends defy him, laugh at him, and say openly that he could and should be killed? Why did he not bring his rebels back to him if he were so all-powerful? If set upon now, if attacked and slain, surely his power over the moon would end and light would return and the people would be free. Could they be got to understand anything of this?

Her questioning restored her courage. She had taken a grip upon herself again.

She rose to her feet, the one erect figure in that vast crowd that night. All around her were men and women writhing, waiting, screaming, begging, promising anything. How to rouse these to an onslaught, to inspire them to one great act of courage that should save them? Hopeless. She knew it could never be done. Sickened, she turned away.

Darker and darker it grew, and soon the world was shrouded in sepulchral gloom save for the glitter from the stars overhead. Columbus relaxed. There was laughter in his heart, but his mien was solemn, though he knew he was not seen. His voice rang out to the chiefs, who had all been gathered very close to his ships. He would accept their submission, he assured them, would pray to his God to send back the light, but there must be no further disobedience, no failure on their part to do their duty. Gravely he retired to his cabin. He did not believe that from the Indians of the island he had anything more to fear.

They waited, still wailing; presently their lamentations changed to a new note, for something was happening in the heavens. The light was coming again. The white chief had been merciful and they were saved! With a heavy heart Anacanoa walked to her hut. Nothing mattered now.

For a long time, because she was industrious and loved action, she had been weaving out of the wild cotton of the country a long plain rope, not sure that she would find any use for it. She took it up now, handling it curiously. Only the other day, in one of the villages that Francisco de Porras had invaded, she had seen an Indian dangling from a tree-branch; the man had hanged himself. That, he had felt, was the only way of escape for him. Perhaps it was the only way of escape for her also, she thought; the only way now, and the best. Her child stirred in its hammock.

She walked over to the hammock and gazed at the little girl. The very image of her, Diego had said, and bearing her own name.

The child would be cared by her parents if she died; she knew that. But might it not be better if the child too died with her? She had seen enough in the eastern villages to guess what would be the fate later on of girls like this one; they would be ravished, made use of for a while, then put incessantly to work. Swiftly they would fail under the burden. There was no hope for them. The rope and the tree might be their only means of escape.

But she could not find it in her to hang her little one with her own hands. And she would not leave it alone—not yet. She would have gone without it to Diego; she loved Diego better than anything else in this life; but when he was here she had seen nothing to fill her with dread, with terror and with loathing; the strangers had not yet shown themselves for what they were. Diego would have been able to prevent them, she felt sure, but he was dead. The old chief on the winged canoe had lied to her: he knew that Diego was dead.

She crouched, sleepless, by the child's hammock. She was still there when her father came in to see her at day-break.

"The chief spoke truth," said he, "but he gave us back the light."

"If you had killed him in the darkness the light would have returned," she answered miserably; "but you only begged."

"He would have slain us all," retorted the old man, shocked. "We are as nothing before him."

"You are as fools, and he knows it."

"He may have heard that you tried to stir the tribes against him; is it safe for you to stay here?"

"I stay. I do not fear him—or any with him. It is all over now, for me, for you, for all of us. Look at me." She rose slowly to full height. "I was beautiful once. Am I beautiful now? What have Porras and his men made of me, your daughter, the daughter of a chief? I am as nothing to them, and so it is and will be with all of us. We are finished."

But her father could not think in terms of the future and of the fate of a people. He only believed that she was in danger from the Admiral's vengeance, and wished her to escape if that could be. But he knew her. If she would not go, he could not make her.

And she would not go. Day after day she saw her kinsfolk and others, others from distant parts of the island taking food to Columbus and his men. They walked with humble propitiatory demeanour; unused to strenuous toil, they worked with feverish anxiety; and already some of them were breaking beneath their task. But she did nothing, and she made no effort to avoid the eyes of Columbus, though she did not go near his ships. He saw her now and then. But her power was shattered, he knew, and now that he was safe from anything she might attempt, now that he had ceased to fear her, his old liking and commiseration for her returned.

Genuinely he pitied her, wished that he could help. Though he could not foresee it, there was to be erected in his memory a great bronze statue of him with his arm

thrown in protective gesture over the shoulders of an Indian girl. This statue would stand near the entrance to the Panama Canal, a mute testimony to the fact that he at least had had pity for the people he discovered. He would not allow them to baulk him, but he would not wantonly destroy them. He felt thus towards Anacanoa now. She was broken, in her very walk he could read her utter humiliation and despair. It hurt him. But he made no move towards her. Something told him that that would be of no effect.

And he, too, on his part, was being attacked by a somewhat similar feeling of despair.

What had become of Diego? Was he dead? Or had he reached Espanola? He had been gone some eight months now; did the Governor of Espanola intend that the Admiral of the Indies should be abandoned for ever and left to perish? Mother of God, it seemed like that!

Then one day a word went round that roused to wild enthusiasm the desperate Spaniards and brought Anacanoa flying with delirious joy to the shore.

On the sea, in the middle distance, distinct and growing clearer every moment, sailed towards the little cove a Spanish ship.

CHAPTER 8

“I WONDER...”

A quarter of a mile from the cove in which lay the stranded ships the caravel came to a stop and a boat was let down from her into the sea. It pulled towards the ships; the Admiral watched it anxiously, Anacanoa, from the beach, gazed at it with straining eyes. It reached the Niña, stopped, and a Spaniard in it rose up and began talking to Columbus, who stood on the deck above him. He handed the Admiral two letters; presently a cask of wine was hoisted from the boat to the deck, and a side of bacon. The Admiral, on receiving his letter, retired to his cabin to answer it; he soon re-appeared, passed the reply down to the messenger from Espanola and began a conversation. Would not Captain Escobar change his mind and come on board? Escobar would not. Then the boat suddenly pushed off. That was all.

Diego was not in the boat. Was he in the big canoe out yonder, Anacanoa wildly asked herself, though she could not believe that her lover would have come back and not have sought her. But she must make certain, she must leave no room for doubt. She ran to a little canoe, and, scrambling into it, seized the paddles and began to pull vigorously towards the ship in the offing. Columbus, still

standing on deck, saw her action and divined its purpose. His voice rang out, commanding.

"Anacanoa!"

She heard, looked in his direction, paused, and he spoke to her.

"Diego is not on that ship. And you must not trust yourself to those men. Diego has sent you a message. Come up to me, and I will give you what he has sent to you."

She detected a kindly note in his voice; it was a friend, not an enemy, who spoke. In a few minutes she was standing before him; in spite of her own distress she could perceive that he was troubled.

"Come with me," he said briefly.

He took her to his cabin, and at once lay down in the bunk from which he had by an effort of will risen some time before. His face was pale, his hands trembling.

"Diego has sent you this," he said, handing to her a piece of paper on which was drawn in ink a portrait of Diego. There was no mistaking the face: the man in Espanola who had done the sketch had in him the makings of an artist. There were some marks scrawled on the paper which meant nothing to the girl; but Diego knew that the Admiral would tell her what they said. "From Diego to Anacanoa. We shall meet soon," the Admiral read. "You see, daughter," he went on in a tired voice, "I was right: Diego is not dead."

"Why has he not come?"

"Didn't he tell you he was going on a long journey for me?" Have you forgotten?"

"No; but much time has gone since then. He could have returned."

"There have been difficulties. There still are. I expected two ships at least to take me away from this island,

and I would have taken you with me, as I have promised. But you see how it is, Anacanoa. One little ship comes and it sails tonight. The white chief of the next island is an enemy of mine, and the man you saw me talking to just now is another enemy. He came to see how I stood, perhaps hoping to find me dead. I shall not die. The holy saints will preserve me. Diego will see that I am rescued; I can depend upon him. He is good and true."

"Yes," sobbed Anacanoa.

"And he loves you and remembers you. He has sent you a picture of himself."

Her eyes had never wandered from the portrait; it seemed to her something wonderful, though she knew, of course, that some men of her own people could carve crude representations of the human face on wood and stone, that there were rock drawings here and there in her own village which were the work of the primitive artists of her race. But this was so lifelike! And it was done on a flimsy sheet of something like stiffened, woven cotton, and sent to her from over the sea!

"He remembers me and loves me," she whispered softly. "You spoke the truth, Admiral, when you told me this long ago."

"And now we are friends again, Anacanoa, though I know well that we were enemies when I had to blot out the moon. But I forgive you, for you have had much wrong at the hands of some of my people. So have I. We shall be friends now until the end, and I may still want your help as I have wanted it before. I shall try again to bring Francisco and his men back to me; if I fail it will probably mean war between them and me. You must still seek to find out their intentions and let me know."

"Cannot you kill them at a stroke, as you blotted out the moon?" she asked.

"It was God, really, who blotted out the moon; I should have made that plainer. And God would not wish men

to be killed without being given a chance to repent. You understand that, don't you?"

She shook her head, puzzled.

"I see that you don't; you need further instruction in our faith. Meanwhile find out everything you can about Francisco. That may save our lives—yours as well as mine."

She left him, taking her precious drawing with her. It was bitter that Diego had not returned, though he had never promised to do so. On the other hand a great weight seemed lifted from her heart, and as she walked towards the village there was a new spirit in her, a new feeling; the gloom that had settled down upon her was dissipated. Diego remembered her, Diego loved her.

He had sent her a message. He had sent her his face.

She would make a pouch for his portrait; she would carry it with her whithersoever she went. That night she wove a tiny receptacle and slung it by a bit of cotton cord around her neck so that it rested just under her left bosom. She felt then that, in some sort of way, she had Diego with her.

Next morning she went to the Admiral's ship and showed him what she had done. He smiled kindly, paternally. With a sudden gesture she sank on her knees before him and exclaimed—

"I love you, too."

"Yes, now. I understand, child."

"I love you, as I love my father. Better. But not as I love Diego."

"I understand. It is queer, isn't it, that you would have killed me, and I you, only a little time ago?"

"Why speak of that now?" she asked.

"You are right; we shall speak of it no more. We shall forget it. Thanks to the Blessed Virgin, we are like father and daughter again. I have no daughter of my own, Anacanoa."

* * * *

The light came through the umbrageous trees a luminous green, and the subdued roar of the waterfall was in their ears.

They stood together, Anacanoa and Fernandez, the friend who had saved her from death in the boat some time before, and who had stood by her when she was little better than a slave in Francisco's camps. Francisco de Porras was still steadily moving towards the Admiral's quarters. He was nearer now than he had been a month ago.

Fernandez liked to meet Anacanoa now and then. He would have liked also to go back to Columbus, but the desertion of himself alone would win him, he feared, the bitter contempt of both sides. He had mutinied with Francisco; to desert Francisco by himself would brand him as a double traitor, and the Admiral might still suspect him. So where he was he felt he must remain. His position sickened him. His chief pleasure these days was to meet the young Arawak chieftainess, as he called her, and this he did in secret always.

She would watch for him in the woods, knowing his fashion of taking solitary walks. She invariably saw him first. But now he walked where he fancied she might be, which was always the farthest place possible from the village in which the Spaniards were, but within reach of anyone there whom she wanted to meet. Now and then, too, an Arawak Indian would bring Fernandez a message and he would follow the man quietly. He was always led to Anacanoa.

Today Fernandez was visibly unhappy.

He had ever respected the Admiral, though he had allowed himself to be seduced from his allegiance by the

Porrasses. These he now loathed. And these had determined at last to strike at the Admiral.

"The old chief," he told Anacanoa, "has been trying to make peace with Francisco de Porras. But Porras doesn't want peace. He is going on to Santa Gloria—your place—in a day or two. There will be murder done."

"I know."

"It's a shame," muttered Fernandez.

"Leave Porras. Come with me."

"I dare not. I would be jeered at. And somehow, my child, I fancy that I shall never leave this country. I have a feeling that way."

"You feel...?"

"I see you don't understand what I mean. No matter. You could warn the Admiral if you wished. Have you thought of that?"

"I have been warning him, Fernandez."

"You don't tell me! So that is why you have been so much about Porras's camps! Well, I can't blame you. He treated you like nothing."

"And the Admiral has been kind. He is now my father. I will ask him to forgive you."

"It's no use, amiga mia; I think my time has come. I have been feeling so for weeks. I wish I could see a priest, but we haven't one with us, we are such a heathen lot in this camp. I must have caught one of your fevers."

"So Porras is going to fight very soon?" she asked.

"The sunrise after the next he will attack," answered Fernandez, and she slipped away from him.

She made no pause on the long way until she stood in Columbus' presence. Very briefly she told him what

would happen so shortly. She was positive. He could not doubt her words.

He sent for his brother, his chief lieutenant.

"I think you had better see Porras once more, Bartholomew," said the sick commander, "and try to bring him to reason. We must avoid bloodshed if possible."

"It is no longer possible, Christopher; Anacanoa knows that. The day after tomorrow, at dawn, I march against Francisco."

"He is stronger than we are."

"There will be fifty of us against his fifty; only our hale men will I take."

"And I will show you a way through the woods that will be safe for you," interposed Anacanoa, "and some of my people will be present to help you, should you need help."

Bartholomew withdrew, to make preparations; Anacanoa looked down upon the Admiral lying recumbent in his bunk.

"We shall defeat them," she said.

"Doubtless," he replied, "the holy saints will be on our side. But Spanish lives will be lost, and I wished to avoid that. I will send my priest with my men, however, and at the last he may save souls. You are going too, Anacanoa?"

"I will be there."

She left him with his thoughts, and went to her father. Quickly she told him of what was impending; she asked that on the morrow a band of the younger men of his and the neighbouring villages should be collected to aid the Chief Bartholomew. This, she put it cunningly, would ensure that never again would the moon be blotted out.

Sixty Arawaks were assembled, a sufficient number. Anacanoa declared herself their leader. Then, with these going in advance, she took Bartholomew and his band through the secret, sheltered ways she knew.

They climbed a gentle slope, where the land came down to the seashore in easy gradation. They forded a river which a little farther down became the waterfall she loved so well. They were now on the other side of this waterfall and before them was an open space, a green dell shadowed by great trees, a place of sylvan beauty, with the voice of the falling water singing in their ears. The attacking force would come this way. As they emerged from the opposite track into the open they could be taken by surprise.

"You would make a good general, my girl," said Bartholomew Columbus, with admiration. "If her people were like her," he said to himself, "we should not be long here."

She drew her own men apart to another side of the open space and hid them among the trees. Within an hour the sound of tramping was heard, and the first pitched battle on Jamaica soil, an early hostile encounter between rival bands of Spaniards in the New World, was about to begin.

But Francisco de Porras had made his arrangements also. He and five others were to launch themselves on Bartholomew and kill him as soon as he came in sight: everything else was secondary to that. Francisco had been certain that there would be a fight, and that Bartholomew would be in command of the Admiral's men; there was no one else to be. And if Bartholomew were killed, he shrewdly calculated, the Admiral's followers, most of whom were sick of their inactivity and of their marooning on this island, would accept Francisco de Porras as their leader. Everything, then, depended on one fighter's life. The one great, necessary tactic was to kill Bartholomew Columbus.

But, unknown to Francisco, Bartholomew had moved to meet him.

Out from among the trees came Francisco with his picked bodyguard, and behind them marched the others. Before these had time to emerge, a wild shout rang out and Bartholomew and his soldiers were racing across the clearing to launch themselves on Francisco and his people. Completely taken by surprise, these nevertheless remembered what they had to do. The six chosen fighters hurled themselves upon Bartholomew. In an incredibly short space of time he had struck three of these in blood to the earth.

Then every armed man on both sides threw himself into the fight. The air resounded with their yells, and with the sound of swords striking against shields. Men who had once been friends were now at one another's throats in death grips; hate glared from infuriated eyes, curses flew from hideous, snarling, twisted mouths. Anacanoa had now brought part of her own force into the open, armed with spears, with stone hatchets and with clubs, and these looked fearfully on, wondering to see the strangers at war among themselves. They stared amazed, and the girl, glancing at them, realised once again with a sickened heart that she might call upon them in vain for resolute action. They were not warriors. They shrank from striking a defensive blow, though they could die by their own hands in despair, as she had known them do. They stood behind her, shrinking, timid, ready to flee away. They were in utter awe of the white men. She could have struck the nearest to her in the face.

Bartholomew realised that he was in great danger. He grasped the tactics of his enemy. Fighting desperately, he nevertheless was obliged to give way, three men attacking him at once, and his desperate retreat brought him close to those trees about which clustered the Arawaks led by Anacanoa. He struck at Francisco with his sword and missed. Francisco whooped in glee and brought down his sword with full force on Bartholomew's shield. The blow

half-split the shield, but the weapon stuck; Francisco wrenched fiercely at it, but vainly. It was now Bartholomew's turn; but quick as lightning Francisco sprang backwards and drew his dagger. He would rush in under his own shield and pierce Bartholomew to the heart. It all occupied a few seconds of time; and as Francisco sprang forward Anacanoa did likewise. He was within two yards of her. In her hand she bore a heavy wooden club. This she brought down upon the head of the rebel leader who, as he staggered in her direction, turned against her the dagger he had intended for Bartholomew. It pierced the girl's side, ripping through the little pouch in which she carried the picture of Diego Mendez. She sank to the earth.

Fernandez, fighting half-heartedly with the Porras faction, was a witness of Anacanoa's fall. With an angry cry he threw himself towards her, to save her if he could. His one wish was to put himself between her and any of the avenging Francisco party, whose leader was now surrounded. Bartholomew saw his move, misunderstood it, lunged forward and plunged his sword into Fernandez. The stricken man tumbled prone beside the dying girl he loved.

She saw him, raised her right arm and laid it upon him as if in benediction. He knew she understood.

And now, because Francisco de Porras was a prisoner, his men turned swiftly to flee in wild disorder. They disappeared like lightning, and the victors let them go. The battle was over.

It had been a matter of minutes.

Bartholomew knelt beside Anacanoa, and the priest he had brought with him, and who had a rude understanding of what is called first aid in these days, came hurrying up. He had taken no part in the fighting. His work was now to begin.

He turned to Fernandez first, but Fernandez pointed faintly to Anacanoa. Her wound was staunched with strips of cloth the priest had brought with him. Then he gave his attention once more to Fernandez. There was no hope that Fernandez could live to be carried to Santa Gloria; and none of Bartholomew's followers was in such need of immediate attention.

The man made his confession, with Anacanoa's arm still resting lovingly on his body, received absolution, looked at her and muttered, "It's adios for me, chieftainess."

"And for me, too, Fernandez," she said, with a sob in her voice. "I shall never see Diego again."

"In heaven you will, my daughter," the priest interrupted. "You are a Christian; I will hear your confession and absolve you. Your last act was to save our commander's life."

She had little to say, her conversion had been perfunctory, her instruction elementary; but the priest was satisfied. "God will forgive her much, because she has loved much," he muttered. He had understood far more than had been thought.

"We will take her with us," commanded Bartholomew; "make a palanquin for her."

"Tell Diego," she whispered, and Bartholomew nodded, not trusting himself to speak. "And the Admiral," she added.

"Tell my father to look after my little child, and remind Diego of her. I wonder..."

What was in her mind? No one about her could guess at that moment or ever afterwards, for those were her final words. Fernandez died before they lifted her up to bear her away. She died as they did so.

They took Francisco de Porras a prisoner with them. They took also the dead body of Anacanoa. That night

she was buried by the seashore with Christian rites, and the sick Admiral himself stood beside her grave: "it is the least I can do," he had said to his brother. He looked like a man who had suffered an intimate loss.

He had taken from her the bloodstained pouch containing Diego's portrait. "Please God," he said, "I will give this to Diego with my own hand."

And so he did when he met Diego Mendez again in Spain. Francisco de Porras had been set free by the Governor of Espanola. The other rebels, too, had gone unpunished. All but the Admiral had forgotten Anacanoa. And Diego. He never forgot.

Diego remained unmarried. Years after, his nephew, another Diego Mendez, was to go out to Jamaica. And he was to land at Santa Gloria and meet there an Arawak maiden called Anacanoa; but this Columbus could not guess.

When the young man was setting forth for the West Indies, his uncle bade him seek out the girl whose mother had been Anacanoa, and who had saved Don Bartholomew's life. "Tell her I knew and loved her mother," said the older Diego. He looked at his nephew thoughtfully.

"I wonder..." were the words that passed through his mind.

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