

Chapter 9: Sails From The Island For The Brazils

It now came into my thoughts that I had hinted to my friend the clergyman that the work of converting the savages might perhaps be set on foot in his absence to his satisfaction, and I told him that now I thought that it was put in a fair way; for the savages, being thus divided among the Christians, if they would but every one of them do their part with those which came under their hands, I hoped it might have a very good effect.

He agreed presently in that, if they did their part.

But how," says he, "shall we obtain that of them?" I told him we would call them all together, and leave it in charge with them, or go to them, one by one, which he thought best; so we divided it - he to speak to the Spaniards, who were all Papists, and I to speak to the English, who were all Protestants; and we recommended it earnestly to them, and made them promise that they would never make any distinction of Papist or Protestant in their exhorting the savages to turn Christians, but teach them the general knowledge of the true God, and of their Saviour Jesus Christ; and they likewise promised us that they would never have any differences or disputes one with another about religion.

When I came to Will Atkins's house, I found that the young woman I have mentioned above, and Will Atkins's wife, were become intimates; and this

prudent, religious young woman had perfected the work Will Atkins had begun; and though it was not above four days after what I have related, yet the new-baptised savage woman was made such a Christian as I have seldom heard of in all my observation or conversation in the world. It came next into my mind, in the morning before I went to them, that amongst all the needful things I had to leave with them I had not left them a Bible, in which I showed myself less considering for them than my good friend the widow was for me when she sent me the cargo of a hundred pounds from Lisbon, where she packed up three Bibles and a Prayer-book. However, the good woman's charity had a greater extent than ever she imagined, for they were reserved for the comfort and instruction of those that made much better use of them than I had done.

I took one of the Bibles in my pocket, and when I came to Will Atkins's tent, or house, and found the young woman and Atkins's baptised wife had been discoursing of religion together - for Will Atkins told it me with a great deal of joy - I asked if they were together now, and he said, "Yes"; so I went into the house, and he with me, and we found them together very earnest in discourse. "Oh, sir," says Will Atkins, "when God has sinners to reconcile to Himself, and aliens to bring home, He never wants a messenger; my wife has got a new instructor: I knew I was unworthy, as I was incapable of that work; that young woman has been sent hither from heaven - she is enough to convert a whole island of savages." The young woman blushed, and rose up to go away, but I desired her to sit-still; I told her she had a good work

upon her hands, and I hoped God would bless her in it.

We talked a little, and I did not perceive that they had any book among them, though I did not ask; but I put my hand into my pocket, and pulled out my Bible.

Here," said I to Atkins, "I have brought you an assistant that perhaps you had not before." The man was so confounded that he was not able to speak for some time; but, recovering himself, he takes it with both his hands, and turning to his wife, "Here, my dear," says he, "did not I tell you our God, though He lives above, could hear what we have said? Here's the book I prayed for when you and I kneeled down under the bush; now God has heard us and sent it." When he had said so, the man fell into such passionate transports, that between the joy of having it, and giving God thanks for it, the tears ran down his face like a child that was crying.

The woman was surprised, and was like to have run into a mistake that none of us were aware of; for she firmly believed God had sent the book upon her husband's petition. It is true that providentially it was so, and might be taken so in a consequent sense; but I believe it would have been no difficult matter at that time to have persuaded the poor woman to have believed that an express messenger came from heaven on purpose to bring that individual book. But it was too serious a matter to suffer any delusion to take place, so I turned to the young woman, and told her we did not

desire to impose upon the new convert in her first and more ignorant understanding of things, and begged her to explain to her that God may be very properly said to answer our petitions, when, in the course of His providence, such things are in a particular manner brought to pass as we petitioned for; but we did not expect returns from heaven in a miraculous and particular manner, and it is a mercy that it is not so.

This the young woman did afterwards effectually, so that there was no priestcraft used here; and I should have thought it one of the most unjustifiable frauds in the world to have had it so. But the effect upon Will Atkins is really not to be expressed; and there, we may be sure, was no delusion. Sure no man was ever more thankful in the world for anything of its kind than he was for the Bible, nor, I believe, never any man was glad of a Bible from a better principle; and though he had been a most profligate creature, headstrong, furious, and desperately wicked, yet this man is a standing rule to us all for the well instructing children, viz. that parents should never give over to teach and instruct, nor ever despair of the success of their endeavours, let the children be ever so refractory, or to appearance insensible to instruction; for if ever God in His providence touches the conscience of such, the force of their education turns upon them, and the early instruction of parents is not lost, though it may have been many years laid asleep, but some time or other they may find the benefit of it. Thus it was with this poor man: however ignorant he was of religion and Christian knowledge, he found he had some to do with now more ignorant than

himself, and that the least part of the instruction of his good father that now came to his mind was of use to him.

Among the rest, it occurred to him, he said, how his father used to insist so much on the inexpressible value of the Bible, and the privilege and blessing of it to nations, families, and persons; but he never entertained the least notion of the worth of it till now, when, being to talk to heathens, savages, and barbarians, he wanted the help of the written oracle for his assistance. The young woman was glad of it also for the present occasion, though she had one, and so had the youth, on board our ship among their goods, which were not yet brought on shore. And now, having said so many things of this young woman, I cannot omit telling one story more of her and myself, which has something in it very instructive and remarkable.

I have related to what extremity the poor young woman was reduced; how her mistress was starved to death, and died on board that unhappy ship we met at sea, and how the whole ship's company was reduced to the last extremity. The gentlewoman, and her son, and this maid, were first hardly used as to provisions, and at last totally neglected and starved - that is to say, brought to the last extremity of hunger. One day, being discoursing with her on the extremities they suffered, I asked her if she could describe, by what she had felt, what it was to starve, and how it appeared? She said she believed she could, and told her tale very distinctly thus:-

"First, we had for some days fared exceedingly hard, and suffered very great hunger; but at last we were wholly without food of any kind except sugar, and a little wine and water. The first day after I had received no food at all, I found myself towards evening, empty and sick at the stomach, and nearer night much inclined to yawning and sleep. I lay down on the couch in the great cabin to sleep, and slept about three hours, and awaked a little refreshed, having taken a glass of wine when I lay down; after being about three hours awake, it being about five o'clock in the morning, I found myself empty, and my stomach sickish, and lay down again, but could not sleep at all, being very faint and ill; and thus I continued all the second day with a strange variety - first hungry, then sick again, with retchings to vomit. The second night, being obliged to go to bed again without any food more than a draught of fresh water, and being asleep, I dreamed I was at Barbados, and that the market was mightily stocked with provisions; that I bought some for my mistress, and went and dined very heartily. I thought my stomach was full after this, as it would have been after a good dinner; but when I awaked I was exceedingly sunk in my spirits to find myself in the extremity of family. The last glass of wine we had I drank, and put sugar in it, because of its having some spirit to supply nourishment; but there being no substance in the stomach for the digesting office to work upon, I found the only effect of the wine was to raise disagreeable fumes from the stomach into the head; and I lay, as they told me, stupid and senseless, as one drunk, for some time. The third day, in the morning, after a night of strange, confused, and inconsistent dreams, and rather dozing than sleeping, I awaked ravenous

and furious with hunger; and I question, had not my understanding returned and conquered it, whether if I had been a mother, and had had a little child with me, its life would have been safe or not. This lasted about three hours, during which time I was twice raging mad as any creature in Bedlam, as my young master told me, and as he can now inform you.

"In one of these fits of lunacy or distraction I fell down and struck my face against the corner of a pallet-bed, in which my mistress lay, and with the blow the blood gushed out of my nose; and the cabin-boy bringing me a little basin, I sat down and bled into it a great deal; and as the blood came from me I came to myself, and the violence of the flame or fever I was in abated, and so did the ravenous part of the hunger. Then I grew sick, and retched to vomit, but could not, for I had nothing in my stomach to bring up. After I had bled some time I swooned, and they all believed I was dead; but I came to myself soon after, and then had a most dreadful pain in my stomach not to be described - not like the colic, but a gnawing, eager pain for food; and towards night it went off with a kind of earnest wishing or longing for food. I took another draught of water with sugar in it; but my stomach loathed the sugar and brought it all up again; then I took a draught of water without sugar, and that stayed with me; and I laid me down upon the bed, praying most heartily that it would please God to take me away; and composing my mind in hopes of it, I slumbered a while, and then waking, thought myself dying, being light with vapours from an empty stomach. I recommended my soul then to God, and then earnestly wished that somebody would throw me

into the into the sea.

"All this while my mistress lay by me, just, as I thought, expiring, but she bore it with much more patience than I, and gave the last bit of bread she had left to her child, my young master, who would not have taken it, but she obliged him to eat it; and I believe it saved his life. Towards the morning I slept again, and when I awoke I fell into a violent passion of crying, and after that had a second fit of violent hunger. I got up ravenous, and in a most dreadful condition; and once or twice I was going to bite my own arm. At last I saw the basin in which was the blood I had bled at my nose the day before: I ran to it, and swallowed it with such haste, and such a greedy appetite, as if I wondered nobody had taken it before, and afraid it should be taken from me now. After it was down, though the thoughts of it filled me with horror, yet it checked the fit of hunger, and I took another draught of water, and was composed and refreshed for some hours after. This was the fourth day; and this I kept up till towards night, when, within the compass of three hours, I had all the several circumstances over again, one after another, viz. sick, sleepy, eagerly hungry, pain in the stomach, then ravenous again, then sick, then lunatic, then crying, then ravenous again, and so every quarter of an hour, and my strength wasted exceedingly; at night I lay me down, having no comfort but in the hope that I should die before morning.

"All this night I had no sleep; but the hunger was now turned into a disease; and I had a terrible colic and griping, by wind instead of food having found

its way into the bowels; and in this condition I lay till morning, when I was surprised by the cries and lamentations of my young master, who called out to me that his mother was dead. I lifted myself up a little, for I had not strength to rise, but found she was not dead, though she was able to give very little signs of life. I had then such convulsions in my stomach, for want of some sustenance, as I cannot describe; with such frequent throes and pangs of appetite as nothing but the tortures of death can imitate; and in this condition I was when I heard the seamen above cry out, 'A sail! a sail!' and halloo and jump about as if they were distracted. I was not able to get off from the bed, and my mistress much less; and my young master was so sick that I thought he had been expiring; so we could not open the cabin door, or get any account what it was that occasioned such confusion; nor had we had any conversation with the ship's company for twelve days, they having told us that they had not a mouthful of anything to eat in the ship; and this they told us afterwards - they thought we had been dead. It was this dreadful condition we were in when you were sent to save our lives; and how you found us, sir, you know as well as I, and better too."

This was her own relation, and is such a distinct account of starving to death, as, I confess, I never met with, and was exceeding instructive to me. I am the rather apt to believe it to be a true account, because the youth gave me an account of a good part of it; though I must own, not so distinct and so feeling as the maid; and the rather, because it seems his mother fed him at the price of her own life: but the poor maid, whose constitution was

stronger than that of her mistress, who was in years, and a weakly woman too, might struggle harder with it; nevertheless she might be supposed to feel the extremity something sooner than her mistress, who might be allowed to keep the last bit something longer than she parted with any to relieve her maid. No question, as the case is here related, if our ship or some other had not so providentially met them, but a few days more would have ended all their lives. I now return to my disposition of things among the people. And, first, it is to be observed here, that for many reasons I did not think fit to let them know anything of the sloop I had framed, and which I thought of setting up among them; for I found, at least at my first coming, such seeds of division among them, that I saw plainly, had I set up the sloop, and left it among them, they would, upon every light disgust, have separated, and gone away from one another; or perhaps have turned pirates, and so made the island a den of thieves, instead of a plantation of sober and religious people, as I intended it; nor did I leave the two pieces of brass cannon that I had on board, or the extra two quarter-deck guns that my nephew had provided, for the same reason. I thought it was enough to qualify them for a defensive war against any that should invade them, but not to set them up for an offensive war, or to go abroad to attack others; which, in the end, would only bring ruin and destruction upon them. I reserved the sloop, therefore, and the guns, for their service another way, as I shall observe in its place.

Having now done with the island, I left them all in good circumstances and

in a flourishing condition, and went on board my ship again on the 6th of May, having been about twenty-five days among them: and as they were all resolved to stay upon the island till I came to remove them, I promised to send them further relief from the Brazils, if I could possibly find an opportunity. I particularly promised to send them some cattle, such as sheep, hogs, and cows: as to the two cows and calves which I brought from England, we had been obliged, by the length of our voyage, to kill them at sea, for want of hay to feed them.

The next day, giving them a salute of five guns at parting, we set sail, and arrived at the bay of All Saints in the Brazils in about twenty-two days, meeting nothing remarkable in our passage but this: that about three days after we had sailed, being becalmed, and the current setting strong to the ENE., running, as it were, into a bay or gulf on the land side, we were driven something out of our course, and once or twice our men cried out, "Land to the eastward!" but whether it was the continent or islands we could not tell by any means. But the third day, towards evening, the sea smooth, and the weather calm, we saw the sea as it were covered towards the land with something very black; not being able to discover what it was till after some time, our chief mate, going up the main shrouds a little way, and looking at them with a perspective, cried out it was an army. I could not imagine what he meant by an army, and thwarted him a little hastily.

Nay, sir," says he, "don't be angry, for 'tis an army, and a fleet too: for I

believe there are a thousand canoes, and you may see them paddle along, for they are coming towards us apace."

I was a little surprised then, indeed, and so was my nephew the captain; for he had heard such terrible stories of them in the island, and having never been in those seas before, that he could not tell what to think of it, but said, two or three times, we should all be devoured. I must confess, considering we were becalmed, and the current set strong towards the shore, I liked it the worse; however, I bade them not be afraid, but bring the ship to an anchor as soon as we came so near as to know that we must engage them. The weather continued calm, and they came on apace towards us, so I gave orders to come to an anchor, and furl all our sails; as for the savages, I told them they had nothing to fear but fire, and therefore they should get their boats out, and fasten them, one close by the head and the other by the stern, and man them both well, and wait the issue in that posture: this I did, that the men in the boats might be ready with sheets and buckets to put out any fire these savages might endeavour to fix to the outside of the ship.

In this posture we lay by for them, and in a little while they came up with us; but never was such a horrid sight seen by Christians; though my mate was much mistaken in his calculation of their number, yet when they came up we reckoned about a hundred and twenty-six canoes; some of them had sixteen or seventeen men in them, and some more, and the least six or

seven. When they came nearer to us, they seemed to be struck with wonder and astonishment, as at a sight which doubtless they had never seen before; nor could they at first, as we afterwards understood, know what to make of us; they came boldly up, however, very near to us, and seemed to go about to row round us; but we called to our men in the boats not to let them come too near them. This very order brought us to an engagement with them, without our designing it; for five or six of the large canoes came so near our long-boat, that our men beckoned with their hands to keep them back, which they understood very well, and went back: but at their retreat about fifty arrows came on board us from those boats, and one of our men in the long-boat was very much wounded. However, I called to them not to fire by any means; but we handed down some deal boards into the boat, and the carpenter presently set up a kind of fence, like waste boards, to cover them from the arrows of the savages, if they should shoot again.

About half-an-hour afterwards they all came up in a body astern of us, and so near that we could easily discern what they were, though we could not tell their design; and I easily found they were some of my old friends, the same sort of savages that I had been used to engage with. In a short time more they rowed a little farther out to sea, till they came directly broadside with us, and then rowed down straight upon us, till they came so near that they could hear us speak; upon this, I ordered all my men to keep close, lest they should shoot any more arrows, and made all our guns ready; but being so near as to be within hearing, I made Friday go out upon the deck, and

call out aloud to them in his language, to know what they meant. Whether they understood him or not, that I knew not; but as soon as he had called to them, six of them, who were in the foremost or nighest boat to us, turned their canoes from us, and stooping down, showed us their naked backs; whether this was a defiance or challenge we knew not, or whether it was done in mere contempt, or as a signal to the rest; but immediately Friday cried out they were going to shoot, and, unhappily for him, poor fellow, they let fly about three hundred of their arrows, and to my inexpressible grief, killed poor Friday, no other man being in their sight. The poor fellow was shot with no less than three arrows, and about three more fell very near him; such unlucky marksmen they were!

I was so annoyed at the loss of my old trusty servant and companion, that I immediately ordered five guns to be loaded with small shot, and four with great, and gave them such a broadside as they had never heard in their lives before. They were not above half a cable's length off when we fired; and our gunners took their aim so well, that three or four of their canoes were upset, as we had reason to believe, by one shot only. The ill manners of turning up their bare backs to us gave us no great offence; neither did I know for certain whether that which would pass for the greatest contempt among us might be understood so by them or not; therefore, in return, I had only resolved to have fired four or five guns at them with powder only, which I knew would frighten them sufficiently: but when they shot at us directly with all the fury they were capable of, and especially as they had killed my

poor Friday, whom I so entirely loved and valued, and who, indeed, so well deserved it, I thought myself not only justifiable before God and man, but would have been very glad if I could have overset every canoe there, and drowned every one of them.

I can neither tell how many we killed nor how many we wounded at this broadside, but sure such a fright and hurry never were seen among such a multitude; there were thirteen or fourteen of their canoes split and overset in all, and the men all set a-swimming: the rest, frightened out of their wits, scoured away as fast as they could, taking but little care to save those whose boats were split or spoiled with our shot; so I suppose that many of them were lost; and our men took up one poor fellow swimming for his life, above an hour after they were all gone. The small shot from our cannon must needs kill and wound a great many; but, in short, we never knew how it went with them, for they fled so fast, that in three hours or thereabouts we could not see above three or four straggling canoes, nor did we ever see the rest any more; for a breeze of wind springing up the same evening, we weighed and set sail for the Brazils.

We had a prisoner, indeed, but the creature was so sullen that he would neither eat nor speak, and we all fancied he would starve himself to death. But I took a way to cure him: for I had made them take him and turn him into the long-boat, and make him believe they would toss him into the sea again, and so leave him where they found him, if he would not speak; nor

would that do, but they really did throw him into the sea, and came away from him. Then he followed them, for he swam like a cork, and called to them in his tongue, though they knew not one word of what he said; however at last they took him in again., and then he began to be more tractable: nor did I ever design they should drown him.

We were now under sail again, but I was the most disconsolate creature alive for want of my man Friday, and would have been very glad to have gone back to the island, to have taken one of the rest from thence for my occasion, but it could not be: so we went on. We had one prisoner, as I have said, and it was a long time before we could make him understand anything; but in time our men taught him some English, and he began to be a little tractable. Afterwards, we inquired what country he came from; but could make nothing of what he said; for his speech was so odd, all gutturals, and he spoke in the throat in such a hollow, odd manner, that we could never form a word after him; and we were all of opinion that they might speak that language as well if they were gagged as otherwise; nor could we perceive that they had any occasion either for teeth, tongue, lips, or palate, but formed their words just as a hunting-horn forms a tune with an open throat. He told us, however, some time after, when we had taught him to speak a little English, that they were going with their kings to fight a great battle. When he said kings, we asked him how many kings? He said they were five nation (we could not make him understand the plural 's), and that they all joined to go against two nation. We asked him what made them come up to us? He

said, "To makee te great wonder look." Here it is to be observed that all those natives, as also those of Africa when they learn English, always add two e's at the end of the words where we use one; and they place the accent upon them, as makee, takee, and the like; nay, I could hardly make Friday leave it off, though at last he did.

And now I name the poor fellow once more, I must take my last leave of him. Poor honest Friday! We buried him with all the decency and solemnity possible, by putting him into a coffin, and throwing him into the sea; and I caused them to fire eleven guns for him. So ended the life of the most grateful, faithful, honest, and most affectionate servant that ever man had.

We went now away with a fair wind for Brazil; and in about twelve days' time we made land, in the latitude of five degrees south of the line, being the north-easternmost land of all that part of America. We kept on S. by E., in sight of the shore four days, when we made Cape St. Augustine, and in three days came to an anchor off the bay of All Saints, the old place of my deliverance, from whence came both my good and evil fate. Never ship came to this port that had less business than I had, and yet it was with great difficulty that we were admitted to hold the least correspondence on shore: not my partner himself, who was alive, and made a great figure among them, not my two merchant-trustees, not the fame of my wonderful preservation in the island, could obtain me that favour. My partner, however, remembering that I had given five hundred moidores to the prior of

the monastery of the Augustines, and two hundred and seventy-two to the poor, went to the monastery, and obliged the prior that then was to go to the governor, and get leave for me personally, with the captain and one more, besides eight seamen, to come on shore, and no more; and this upon condition, absolutely capitulated for, that we should not offer to land any goods out of the ship, or to carry any person away without licence. They were so strict with us as to landing any goods, that it was with extreme difficulty that I got on shore three bales of English goods, such as fine broadcloths, stuffs, and some linen, which I had brought for a present to my partner.

He was a very generous, open-hearted man, although he began, like me, with little at first. Though he knew not that I had the least design of giving him anything, he sent me on board a present of fresh provisions, wine, and sweetmeats, worth about thirty moidores, including some tobacco, and three or four fine medals of gold: but I was even with him in my present, which, as I have said, consisted of fine broadcloth, English stuffs, lace, and fine holland; also, I delivered him about the value of one hundred pounds sterling in the same goods, for other uses; and I obliged him to set up the sloop, which I had brought with me from England, as I have said, for the use of my colony, in order to send the refreshments I intended to my plantation.

Accordingly, he got hands, and finished the sloop in a very few days, for she was already framed; and I gave the master of her such instructions that he

could not miss the place; nor did he, as I had an account from my partner afterwards. I got him soon loaded with the small cargo I sent them; and one of our seamen, that had been on shore with me there, offered to go with the sloop and settle there, upon my letter to the governor Spaniard to allot him a sufficient quantity of land for a plantation, and on my giving him some clothes and tools for his planting work, which he said he understood, having been an old planter at Maryland, and a buccaneer into the bargain. I encouraged the fellow by granting all he desired; and, as an addition, I gave him the savage whom we had taken prisoner of war to be his slave, and ordered the governor Spaniard to give him his share of everything he wanted with the rest.

When we came to fit this man out, my old partner told me there was a certain very honest fellow, a Brazil planter of his acquaintance, who had fallen into the displeasure of the Church.

I know not what the matter is with him," says he, "but, on my conscience, I think he is a heretic in his heart, and he has been obliged to conceal himself for fear of the Inquisition." He then told me that he would be very glad of such an opportunity to make his escape, with his wife and two daughters; and if I would let them go to my island, and allot them a plantation, he would give them a small stock to begin with - for the officers of the Inquisition had seized all his effects and estate, and he had nothing left but a little household stuff and two slaves; "and," adds he, "though I hate his

principles, yet I would not have him fall into their hands, for he will be assuredly burned alive if he does." I granted this presently, and joined my Englishman with them: and we concealed the man, and his wife and daughters, on board our ship, till the sloop put out to go to sea; and then having put all their goods on board some time before, we put them on board the sloop after she was got out of the bay. Our seaman was mightily pleased with this new partner; and their stocks, indeed, were much alike, rich in tools, in preparations, and a farm - but nothing to begin with, except as above: however, they carried over with them what was worth all the rest, some materials for planting sugar-canes, with some plants of canes, which he, I mean the Brazil planter, understood very well.

Among the rest of the supplies sent to my tenants in the island, I sent them by the sloop three milch cows and five calves; about twenty-two hogs, among them three sows; two mares, and a stone-horse. For my Spaniards, according to my promise, I engaged three Brazil women to go, and recommended it to them to marry them, and use them kindly. I could have procured more women, but I remembered that the poor persecuted man had two daughters, and that there were but five of the Spaniards that wanted partners; the rest had wives of their own, though in another country. All this cargo arrived safe, and, as you may easily suppose, was very welcome to my old inhabitants, who were now, with this addition, between sixty and seventy people, besides little children, of which there were a great many. I found letters at London from them all, by way of Lisbon, when I came back

to England.

I have now done with the island, and all manner of discourse about it: and whoever reads the rest of my memorandums would do well to turn his thoughts entirely from it, and expect to read of the follies of an old man, not warned by his own harms, much less by those of other men, to beware; not cooled by almost forty years' miseries and disappointments - not satisfied with prosperity beyond expectation, nor made cautious by afflictions and distress beyond example.