

CHAPTER XXVIII

ATONEMENT

Seven months had gone by, seven of the most dreadful months ever lived through by human beings. For all this space of time, through the frosts and snows and fogs of winter, through the icy winds of spring, and now deep into the heart of summer, the city of Haarlem had been closely beleaguered by an army of thirty thousand Spaniards, most of them veteran troops under the command of Don Frederic, the son of Alva, and other generals. Against this disciplined host were opposed the little garrison of four thousand Hollanders and Germans aided by a few Scotch and English soldiers, together with a population of about twenty thousand old men, women and children. From day to day, from week to week, from month to month, the struggle was waged between these unequal forces, marked on either side by the most heroic efforts and by cruelties that would strike our age as monstrous. For in those times the captive prisoner of war could expect no mercy; indeed, he was fortunate if he was not hung from a gibbet by the leg to die slowly within eyeshot of his friends.

There were battles without number, men perished in hecatombs; among the besieging armies alone over twelve thousand lost their lives, so that the neighbourhood of Haarlem became one vast graveyard, and the fish in the lake were poisoned by the dead. Assault, sortie, ambuscade, artifice

of war; combats to the death upon the ice between skate-shod soldiers; desperate sea fights, attempts to storm; the explosion of mines and counter-mines that brought death to hundreds--all these became the familiar incidents of daily life.

Then there were other horrors; cold from insufficient fuel, pestilences of various sorts such as always attend a siege, and, worse of all for the beleaguered, hunger. Week by week as the summer aged, the food grew less and less, till at length there was nothing. The weeds that grew in the street, the refuse of tanneries, the last ounce of offal, the mice and the cats, all had been devoured. On the lofty steeple of St. Bavon for days and days had floated a black flag to tell the Prince of Orange in Leyden that below it was despair as black. The last attempt at succour had been made. Batenburg had been defeated and slain, together with the Seigneurs of Clotingen and Carloo, and five or six hundred men. Now there was no more hope.

Desperate expedients were suggested: That the women, children, aged and sick should be left in the city, while the able-bodied men cut a way through the battalions of their besiegers. On these non-combatants it was hoped that the Spaniard would have mercy--as though the Spaniard could have mercy, he who afterwards dragged the wounded and the ailing to the door of the hospital and there slaughtered them in cold blood; aye, and here and elsewhere, did other things too dreadful to write down. Says the old chronicler, "But this being understood by the women, they assembled all together, making the most pitiful cries and

lamentations that could be heard, the which would have moved a heart of flint, so as it was not possible to abandon them."

Next another plan was formed: that all the females and helpless should be set in the centre of a square of the fighting men, to march out and give battle to the foe till everyone was slain. Then the Spaniards hearing this and growing afraid of what these desperate men might do, fell back on guile. If they would surrender, the citizens of Haarlem were told, and pay two hundred and forty thousand florins, no punishment should be inflicted. So, having neither food nor hope, they listened to the voice of the tempter and surrendered, they who had fought until their garrison of four thousand was reduced to eighteen hundred men.

It was noon and past on the fatal twelfth of July. The gates were open, the Spaniards, those who were left alive of them, Don Frederic at their head, with drums beating, banners flying, and swords sharpened for murder, were marching into the city of Haarlem. In a deep niche between two great brick piers of the cathedral were gathered four people whom we know. War and famine had left them all alive, yet they had borne their share of both. In every enterprise, however desperate, Foy and Martin had marched, or stood, or watched side by side, and well did the Spaniards know the weight of the great sword Silence and the red-headed giant who wielded it. Mother Martha, too, had not been idle. Throughout the siege she had served as the lieutenant of the widow Hasselaer, who

with a band of three hundred women fought day and night alongside of their husbands and brothers. Even Elsa, who although she was too delicate and by nature timid and unfitted to go out to battle, had done her part, for she laboured at the digging of mines and the building of walls till her soft hands were rough and scarred.

How changed they were. Foy, whose face had been so youthful, looked now like a man on the wrong side of middle age. The huge Martin might have been a great skeleton on which hung clothes, or rather rags and a rent bull's hide, with his blue eyes shining in deep pits beneath the massive, projecting skull. Elsa too had become quite small, like a child. Her sweet face was no longer pretty, only pitiful, and all the roundness of her figure had vanished--she might have been an emaciated boy. Of the four of them Martha the Mare, who was dressed like a man, showed the least change. Indeed, except that now her hair was snowy, that her features were rather more horse-like, that the yellow, lipless teeth projected even further, and the thin nervous hands had become almost like those of an Egyptian mummy, she was much as she always had been.

Martin leaned upon the great sword and groaned. "Curses on them, the cowards," he muttered; "why did they not let us go out and die fighting? Fools, mad fools, who would trust to the mercy of the Spaniard."

"Oh! Foy," said Elsa, throwing her thin arms about his neck, "you will not let them take me, will you? If it comes to the worst, you will kill

me, won't you? Otherwise I must kill myself, and Foy, I am a coward, I am afraid--to do that."

"I suppose so," he answered in a harsh, unnatural voice, "but oh! God, if Thou art, have pity upon her. Oh! God have pity."

"Blaspheme not, doubt not!" broke in the shrill voice of Martha. "Has it not been as I told you last winter in the boat? Have you not been protected, and shall you not be protected to the end? Only blaspheme not, doubt not!"

The niche in which they were standing was out of sight of the great square and those who thronged it, but as Martha spoke a band of victorious Spaniards, seven or eight of them, came round the corner and caught sight of the party in the nook.

"There's a girl," said the sergeant in command of them, "who isn't bad looking. Pull her out, men."

Some fellows stepped forward to do his bidding. Now Foy went mad. He did not kill Elsa as she had prayed him, he flew straight at the throat of the brute who had spoken, and next instant his sword was standing out a foot behind his neck. Then after him, with a kind of low cry, came Martin, plying the great blade Silence, and Martha after him with her long knife. It was all over in a minute, but before it was done there were five men down, three dead and two sore wounded.

"A tithe and an offering!" muttered Martha as, bounding forward, she bent over the wounded men, and their comrades fled round the corner of the cathedral.

There was a minute's pause. The bright summer sunlight shone upon the faces and armour of the dead Spaniards, upon the naked sword of Foy, who stood over Elsa crouched to the ground in a corner of the niche, her face hidden in her hands, upon the terrible blue eyes of Martin alight with a dreadful fire of rage. Then there came the sound of marching men, and a company of Spaniards appeared before them, and at their head--Ramiro and Adrian called van Goorl.

"There they are, captain," said a soldier, one of those who had fled; "shall we shoot them?"

Ramiro looked, carelessly enough at first, then again a long, scrutinising look. So he had caught them at last! Months ago he had learned that Elsa had been rescued from the Red Mill by Foy and Martin, and now, after much seeking, the birds were in his net.

"No," he said, "I think not. Such desperate characters must be reserved for separate trial."

"Where can they be kept, captain?" asked the sergeant sulkily.

"I observed, friend, that the house which my son and I have taken as our quarters has excellent cellars; they can be imprisoned there for the present--that is, except the young lady, whom the Senor Adrian will look after. As it chances, she is his wife."

At this the soldiers laughed openly.

"I repeat--his wife, for whom he has been searching these many months," said Ramiro, "and, therefore, to be respected. Do you understand, men?"

Apparently they did understand, at least no one made any answer. Their captain, as they had found, was not a man who loved argument.

"Now, then, you fellows," went on Ramiro, "give up your arms."

Martin thought a while. Evidently he was wondering whether it would not be best to rush at them and die fighting. At that moment, as he said afterwards indeed, the old saying came into his mind, "A game is not lost until it is won," and remembering that dead men can never have another chance of winning games, he gave up the sword.

"Hand that to me," said Ramiro. "It is a curious weapon to which I have taken a fancy."

So sword Silence was handed to him, and he slung it over his shoulder. Foy looked at the kneeling Elsa, and he looked at his sword. Then an

idea struck him, and he looked at the face of Adrian, his brother, whom he had last seen when the said Adrian ran to warn him and Martin at the factory, for though he knew that he was fighting with his father among the Spaniards, during the siege they had never met. Even then, in that dire extremity, with a sudden flash of thought he wondered how it happened that Adrian, being the villain that he was, had taken the trouble to come and warn them yonder in Leyden, thereby giving them time to make a very good defence in the shot tower.

Foy looked up at his brother. Adrian was dressed in the uniform of a Spanish officer, with a breast-plate over his quilted doublet, and a steel cap, from the front of which rose a frayed and weather-worn plume of feathers. The face had changed; there was none of the old pomposity about those handsome features; it looked worn and cowed, like that of an animal which has been trained to do tricks by hunger and the use of the whip. Yet, through all the shame and degradation, Foy seemed to catch the glint of some kind of light, a light of good desire shining behind that piteous mask, as the sun sometimes shines through a sullen cloud. Could it be that Adrian was not quite so bad after all? That he was, in fact, the Adrian that he, Foy, had always believed him to be, vain, silly, passionate, exaggerated, born to be a tool and think himself the master, but beneath everything, well-meaning? Who could say? At the worst, too, was it not better that Elsa should become the wife of Adrian than that her life should cease there and then, and by her lover's hand?

These things passed through his brain as the lightning passes through

the sky. In an instant his mind was made up and Foy flung down his sword at the feet of a soldier. As he did so his eyes met the eyes of Adrian, and to his imagination they seemed to be full of thanks and promise.

They took them all; with gibes and blows the soldiers haled them away through the tumult and the agony of the fallen town and its doomed defenders. Out of the rich sunlight they led them into a house that still stood not greatly harmed by the cannon-shot, but a little way from the shattered Ravelin and the gate which had been the scene of such fearful conflict--a house that was the home of one of the wealthiest merchants in Haarlem. Here Foy and Elsa were parted. She struggled to his arms, whence they tore her and dragged her away up the stairs, but Martin, Martha and Foy were thrust into a dark cellar, locked in and left.

A while later the door of the cellar was unbarred and some hand, they could not see whose, passed through it water and food, good food such as they had not tasted for months; meat and bread and dried herrings, more than they could eat of them.

"Perhaps it is poisoned," said Foy, smelling at it hungrily.

"What need to take the trouble to poison us?" answered Martin. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

So like starving animals they devoured the food with thankfulness and

then they slept, yes, in the midst of all their misery and doubts they slept.

It seemed but a few minutes later--in fact it was eight hours--when the door opened again and there entered Adrian carrying a lantern in his hand.

"Foy, Martin," he said, "get up and follow me if you would save your lives."

Instantly they were wide awake.

"Follow you--you?" stammered Foy in a choked voice.

"Yes," Adrian answered quietly. "Of course you may not escape, but if you stop here what chance have you? Ramiro, my father, will be back presently and then----"

"It is madness to trust ourselves to you," interrupted Martin, and Adrian seemed to wince at the contempt in his voice.

"I knew that you would think that," he answered humbly, "but what else is to be done? I can pass you out of the city, I have made a boat ready for you to escape in, all at the risk of my own life; what more can I do? Why do you hesitate?"

"Because we do not believe you," said Foy; "besides, there is Elsa. I will not go without Elsa."

"I have thought of that," answered Adrian. "Elsa is here. Come, Elsa, show yourself."

Then from the stairs Elsa crept into the cellar, a new Elsa, for she, too, had been fed, and in her eyes there shone a light of hope. A wild jealousy filled Foy's heart. Why did she look thus? But she, she ran to him, she flung her arms about his neck and kissed him, and Adrian did nothing, he only turned his head aside.

"Foy," she gasped, "he is honest after all; he has only been unfortunate. Come quickly, there is a chance for us; come before that devil returns. Now he is at a council of the officers settling with Don Frederic who are to be killed, but soon he will be back, and then----"

So they hesitated no more, but went.

They passed out of the house, none stopping them--the guard had gone to the sack. At the gate by the ruined Ravelin there stood a sentry, but the man was careless, or drunken, or bribed, who knows? At least, Adrian gave him a pass-word, and, nodding his head, he let them by. A few minutes later they were at the Mere side, and there among some reeds lay the boat.

"Enter and be gone," said Adrian.

They scrambled into the boat and took the oars, while Martha began to push off.

"Adrian," said Elsa, "what is to become of you?"

"Why do you trouble about that?" he asked with a bitter laugh. "I go back to my death, my blood is the price of your freedom. Well, I owe it to you."

"Oh! no," she cried, "come with us."

"Yes," echoed Foy, although again that bitter pang of jealousy gripped his heart, "come with us--brother."

"Do you really mean it?" Adrian asked, hesitating. "Think, I might betray you."

"If so, young man, why did you not do it before?" growled Martin, and stretching out his great, bony arm he gripped him by the collar and dragged him into the boat.

Then they rowed away.

"Where are we going?" asked Martin.

"To Leyden, I suppose," said Foy, "if we can get there, which, without a sail or weapons, seems unlikely."

"I have put some arms in the boat," interrupted Adrian, "the best I could get," and from a locker he drew out a common heavy axe, a couple of Spanish swords, a knife, a smaller axe, a cross-bow and some bolts.

"Not so bad," said Martin, rowing with his left hand as he handled the big axe with his right, "but I wish that I had my sword Silence, which that accursed Ramiro took from me and hung about his neck. I wonder why he troubled himself with the thing? It is too long for a man of his inches."

"I don't know," said Adrian, "but when last I saw him he was working at its hilt with a chisel, which seemed strange. He always wanted that sword. During the siege he offered a large reward to any soldier who could kill you and bring it to him."

"Working at the hilt with a chisel?" gasped Martin. "By Heaven, I had forgotten! The map, the map! Some wicked villain must have told him that the map of the treasure was there--that is why he wanted the sword."

"Who could have told him?" asked Foy. "It was only known to you and me and Martha, and we are not of the sort to tell. What? Give away the secret of Hendrik Brant's treasure which he could die for and we were

sworn to keep, to save our miserable lives? Shame upon the thought!"

Martha heard, and looked at Elsa, a questioning look beneath which the poor girl turned a fiery red, though by good fortune in that light none could see her blushes. Still, she must speak lest the suspicion should lie on others.

"I ought to have told you before," she said in a low voice, "but I forgot--I mean that I have always been so dreadfully ashamed. It was I who betrayed the secret of the sword Silence."

"You? How did you know it?" asked Foy.

"Mother Martha told me on the night of the church burning after you escaped from Leyden."

Martin grunted. "One woman to trust another, and at her age too; what a fool!"

"Fool yourself, you thick-brained Frisian," broke in Martha angrily, "where did you learn to teach your betters wisdom? I told the Jufvrouw because I knew that we might all of us be swept away, and I thought it well that then she should know where to look for a key to the treasure."

"A woman's kind of reason," answered Martin imperturbably, "and a bad one at that, for if we had been finished off she must have found it

difficult to get hold of the sword. But all this is done with. The point is, why did the Jufvrouw tell Ramiro?"

"Because I am a coward," answered Elsa with a sob. "You know, Foy, I always was a coward, and I never shall be anything else. I told him to save myself."

"From what?"

"From being married."

Adrian winced palpably, and Foy, noting it, could not resist pushing the point.

"From being married? But I understand--doubtless Adrian will explain the thing," he added grimly--"that you were forced through some ceremony."

"Yes," answered Elsa feebly, "I--I--was. I tried to buy myself off by telling Ramiro the secret, which will show you all how mad I was with terror at the thought of this hateful marriage"--here a groan burst from the lips of Adrian, and something like a chuckle from those of Red Martin. "Oh! I am so sorry," went on Elsa in confusion; "I am sure that I did not wish to hurt Adrian's feelings, especially after he has been so good to us."

"Never mind Adrian's feelings and his goodness, but go on with the

story," interrupted Foy.

"There isn't much more to tell. Ramiro swore before God that if I gave him the clue he would let me go, and then--then, well, then, after I had fallen into the pit and disgraced myself, he said that it was not sufficient, and that the marriage must take place."

At this point Foy and Martin laughed outright. Yes, even there they laughed.

"Why, you silly child," said Foy, "what else did you expect him to say?"

"Oh! Martin, do you forgive me?" said Elsa. "Immediately after I had done it I knew how shameful it was, and that he would try to hunt you down, and that is why I have been afraid to tell you ever since. But I pray you believe me; I only spoke because, between shame and fear, I did not know right from wrong. Do you forgive me?"

"Lady," answered the Frisian, smiling in his slow fashion, "if I had been there unknown to Ramiro, and you had offered him this head of mine on a dish as a bribe, not only would I have forgiven you but I would have said that you did right. You are a maid, and you had to protect yourself from a very dreadful thing; therefore who can blame you?"

"I can," said Martha. "Ramiro might have torn me to pieces with red-hot pincers before I told him."

"Yes," said Martin, who felt that he had a debt to pay, "Ramiro might, but I doubt whether he would have gone to that trouble to persuade you to take a husband. No, don't be angry. 'Frisian thick of head, Frisian free of speech,' goes the saying."

Not being able to think of any appropriate rejoinder, Martha turned again upon Elsa.

"Your father died for that treasure," she said, "and Dirk van Goorl died for it, and your lover and his serving-man there went to the torture-den for it, and I--well, I have done a thing or two. But you, girl, why, at the first pinch, you betray the secret. But, as Martin says, I was fool enough to tell you."

"Oh! you are hard," said Elsa, beginning to weep under Martha's bitter reproaches; "but you forget that at least none of you were asked to marry--oh! I mustn't say that. I mean to become the wife of one man;" then her eyes fell upon Foy and an inspiration seized her; here, at least, was one of whom she could make a friend--"when you happen to be very much in love with another."

"Of course not," said Foy, "there is no need for you to explain."

"I think there is a great deal to explain," went on Martha, "for you cannot fool me with pretty words. But now, hark you, Foy van Goorl, what

is to be done? We have striven hard to save that treasure, all of us; is it to be lost at the last?"

"Aye," echoed Martin, growing very serious, "is it to be lost at the last? Remember what the worshipful Hendrik Brant said to us yonder on that night at The Hague--that he believed that in a day to come thousands and tens of thousands of our people would bless the gold he entrusted to us."

"I remember it all," answered Foy, "and other things too; his will, for instance," and he thought of his father and of those hours which Martin and he had spent in the Gevangenhuis. Then he looked up at Martha and said briefly: "Mother, though they call you mad, you are the wisest among us; what is your counsel?"

She pondered awhile and answered: "This is certain, that so soon as Ramiro finds that we have escaped, having the key to it, he will take boat and sail to the place where the barrels are buried, knowing well that otherwise we shall be off with them. Yes, I tell you that by dawn, or within an hour of it, he will be there," and she stopped.

"You mean," said Foy, "that we ought to be there before him."

Martha nodded and answered, "If we can, but I think that at best there must be a fight for it."

"Yes," said Martin, "a fight. Well, I should like another fight with Ramiro. That fork-tongued adder has got my sword, and I want to get it back again."

"Oh!" broke in Elsa, "is there to be more fighting? I hoped that at last we were safe, and going straight to Leyden, where the Prince is. I hate this bloodshed; I tell you, Foy, it frightens me to death; I believe that I shall die of it."

"You hear what she says?" asked Foy.

"We hear," answered Martha. "Take no heed of her, the child has suffered much, she is weak and squeamish. Now I, although I believe that my death lies before me, I say, go on and fear not."

"But I do take heed," said Foy. "Not for all the treasures in the world shall Elsa be put in danger again if she does not wish it; she shall decide, and she alone."

"How good you are to me," she murmured, then she mused a moment. "Foy," she said, "will you promise something to me?"

"After your experience of Ramiro's oaths I wonder that you ask," he answered, trying to be cheerful.

"Will you promise," she went on, taking no note, "that if I say yes and

we go, not to Leyden, but to seek the treasure, and live through it, that you will take me away from this land of bloodshed and murder and torments, to some country where folk may live at peace, and see no one killed, except it be now and again an evil-doer? It is much to ask, but oh! Foy, will you promise?"

"Yes, I promise," said Foy, for he, too, was weary of this daily terror. Who would not have been that had passed through the siege of Haarlem?

Foy was steering, but now Martha slipped aft and took the tiller from his hand. For a moment she studied the stars that grew clearer in the light of the sinking moon, then shifted the helm a point or two to port and sat still.

"I am hungry again," said Martin presently; "I feel as though I could eat for a week without stopping."

Adrian looked up from over his oar, at which he was labouring dejectedly, and said:

"There are food and wine in the locker. I hid them there. Perhaps Elsa could serve them to those who wish to eat."

So Elsa, who was doing nothing, found the drink and victuals, and handed them round to the rowers, who ate and drank as best they might with a thankful heart, but without ceasing from their task. To men who have

starved for months the taste of wholesome provender and sound wine is a delight that cannot be written in words.

When at length they had filled themselves, Adrian spoke.

"If it is your good will, brother," he said, addressing Foy, "as we do not know what lies in front, nor how long any of us have to live, I, who am an outcast and a scorn among you, wish to tell you a story."

"Speak on," said Foy.

So Adrian began from the beginning, and told them all his tale. He told them how at the first he had been led astray by superstitions, vanity, and love; how his foolish confidences had been written down by spies; how he had been startled and terrified into signing them with results of which they knew. Then he told them how he was hunted like a mad dog through the streets of Leyden after his mother had turned him from her door; how he took refuge in the den of Hague Simon, and there had fought with Ramiro and been conquered by the man's address and his own horror of shedding a father's blood. He told them of his admission into the Roman faith, of the dreadful scene in the church when Martha had denounced him, of their flight to the Red Mill. He told them of the kidnapping of Elsa, and how he had been quite innocent of it although he loved her dearly; of how at last he was driven into marrying her, meaning her no harm, to save her from the grip of Ramiro, and knowing at heart that it was no marriage; of how, when the flood burst upon them,

he had been hustled from the mill where, since she could no longer be of service to him and might work him injury, as he discovered afterwards, Ramiro had left Elsa to her fate. Lastly, in a broken voice, he told them of his life during the long siege which, so he said, was as the life of a damned spirit, and of how, when death thinned the ranks of the Spaniards, he had been made an officer among them, and by the special malice of Ramiro forced to conduct the executions and murders of such Hollanders as they took.

Then at last his chance had come. Ramiro, thinking that now he could never turn against him, had given him Elsa, and left him with her while he went about his duties and to secure a share of the plunder, meaning to deal with his prisoners on the morrow. So he, Adrian, a man in authority, had provided the boat and freed them. That was all he had to say, except to renounce any claim upon her who was called his wife, and to beg their forgiveness.

Foy listened to the end. Then, dropping his oar for a moment, he put his arm about Adrian's waist and hugged him, saying in his old cheery voice:

"I was right after all. You know, Adrian, I always stood up for you, notwithstanding your temper and queer ways. No, I never would believe that you were a villain, but neither could I ever have believed that you were quite such an ass."

To this outspoken estimate of his character, so fallen and crushed was

he, his brother had not the spirit to reply. He could merely tug at his oar and groan, while the tears of shame and repentance ran down his pale and handsome face.

"Never mind, old fellow," said Foy consolingly. "It all went wrong, thanks to you, and thanks to you I believe that it will all come right again. So we will cry quits and forget the rest."

Poor Adrian glanced up at Foy and at Elsa sitting on the thwart of the boat by his side.

"Yes, brother," he answered, "for you and Elsa it may come right, but not for me in this world, for I--I have sold myself to the devil and--got no pay."

After that for a while no one spoke; all felt that the situation was too tragic for speech; even the follies, and indeed the wickedness, of Adrian were covered up, were blotted out in the tragedy of his utter failure, yes, and redeemed by the depth of his atonement.

The grey light of the summer morning began to grow on the surface of the great inland sea. Far behind them they beheld the sun's rays breaking upon the gilt crown that is set above the tower of St. Bavon's Church, soaring over the lost city of Haarlem and the doomed patriots who lay

there presently to meet their death at the murderer's sword. They looked and shuddered. Had it not been for Adrian they would be prisoners now, and what that meant they knew. If they had been in any doubt, what they saw around must have enlightened them, for here and there upon the misty surface of the lake, or stranded in its shallows, were the half-burnt out hulls of ships, the remains of the conquered fleet of William the Silent; a poor record of the last desperate effort to relieve the starving city. Now and again, too, something limp and soft would cumber their oars, the corpse of a drowned or slaughtered man still clad perchance in its armour.

At length they passed out of these dismal remains of lost men, and Elsa could look about her without shuddering. Now they were in fleet water, and in among the islands whereon the lush summer growth of weeds and the beautiful marsh flowers grew as greenly and bloomed as bright as though no Spaniard had trampled their roots under foot during all those winter months of siege and death. These islets, scores and hundreds of them, appeared on every side, but between them all Martha steered an unerring path. As the sun rose she stood up in the boat, and shading her eyes with her hand to shut out its level rays, looked before her.

"There is the place," she said, pointing to a little bulrush-clad isle, from which a kind of natural causeway, not more than six feet wide, projected like a tongue among muddy shallows peopled by coots and water-hens with their red-beaked young.

Martin rose too. Then he looked back behind him and said;

"I see the cap of a sail upon the skyline. It is Ramiro."

"Without doubt," answered Martha calmly. "Well, we have the half of an hour to work in. Pull, bow oar, pull, we will go round the island and beach her in the mud on the further side. They will be less likely to see us there, and I know a place whence we can push off in a hurry."