

## CHAPTER LII

### World Ho!

Five suns rose and set. And Yillah pining for the shore, we turned our prow due west, and next morning came in sight of land.

It was innumerable islands; lifting themselves bluey through the azure air, and looking upon the distant sea, like haycocks in a hazy field. Towering above all, and mid-most, rose a mighty peak; one fleecy cloud sloping against its summit; a column wreathed. Beyond, like purple steps in heaven at set of sun, stretched far away, what seemed lands on lands, in infinite perspective.

Gliding on, the islands grew more distinct; rising up from the billows to greet us; revealing hills, vales, and peaks, grouped within a milk-white zone of reef, so vast, that in the distance all was dim. The jeweled vapors, ere-while hovering over these violet shores, now seemed to be shedding their gems; and as the almost level rays of the sun, shooting through the air like a variegated prism, touched the verdant land, it trembled all over with dewy sparkles.

Still nearer we came: our sail faintly distended as the breeze died away from our vicinity to the isles. The billows rolled listlessly by, as if conscious that their long task was nigh done; while gleamed the white reef, like the trail of a great fish in a calm. But as yet,

no sign of paddle or canoe; no distant smoke; no shining thatch.

Bravo! good comrades, we've discovered some new constellation in the sea.

Sweet Yillah, no more of Oroolia; see you not this flowery land?

Nevermore shall we desire to roam.

Voyaging along the zone, we came to an opening; and quitting the firmament blue of the open sea, we glided in upon the still, green waters of the wide lagoon. Mapped out in the broad shadows of the isles, and tinted here and there with the reflected hues of the sun clouds, the mild waters stretched all around us like another sky. Near by the break in the reef, was a little island, with palm trees harping in the breeze; an aviary of alluring sounds, that seemed calling upon us to land. And here, Yillah, whom the sight of the verdure had made glad, threw out a merry suggestion. Nothing less, than to plant our mast, sail-set, upon the highest hill; and fly away, island and all; trees rocking, birds caroling, flowers springing; away, away, across the wide waters, to Oroolia! But alas! how weigh the isle's coral anchor, leagues down in the fathomless sea?

We glanced around; but all the islands seemed slumbering in the flooding light.

"A canoe! a canoe!" cried Samoa, as three proas showed themselves

rounding a neighboring shore. Instantly we sailed for them; but after shooting to and fro for a time, and standing up and gazing at us, the Islanders retreated behind the headland. Hardly were they out of sight, when from many a shore roundabout, other proas pushed off. Soon the water all round us was enlivened by fleets of canoes, darting hither and thither like frightened water-fowls. Presently they all made for one island.

From their actions we argued that these people could have had but little or no intercourse with whites; and most probably knew not how to account for our appearance among them. Desirous, therefore, of a friendly meeting, ere any hostile suspicions might arise, we pointed our craft for the island, whither all the canoes were now hastening. Whereupon, those which had not yet reached their destination, turned and fled; while the occupants of the proas that had landed, ran into the groves, and were lost to view.

Crossing the distinct outer line of the isle's shadow on the water, we gained the shore; and gliding along its margin, passing canoe after canoe, hauled up on the silent beach, which otherwise seemed entirely innocent of man.

A dilemma. But I decided at last upon disembarking Jarl and Samoa, to seek out and conciliate the natives. So, landing them upon a jutting buttress of coral, whence they waded to the shore; I pushed off with Yillah into the water beyond, to await the event.

Full an hour must have elapsed; when, to our great joy, loud shouts were heard; and there burst into view a tumultuous crowd, in the midst of which my Viking was descried, mounted upon the shoulders of two brawny natives; while the Upoluan, striding on in advance, seemed resisting a similar attempt to elevate him in the world.

Good omens both.

"Come ashore!" cried Jarl. "Aramai!" cried Samoa; while storms of interjections went up from the Islanders who with extravagant gestures danced about the beach.

Further caution seemed needless: I pointed our prow for the shore. No sooner was this perceived, than, raising an applauding shout, the Islanders ran up to their waists in the sea. And skimming like a gull over the smooth lagoon, the light shallop darted in among them. Quick as thought, fifty hands were on the gunwale: and, with all its contents, lifted bodily into the air, the little Chamois, upon many a dripping shoulder, was borne deep into the groves. Yillah shrieked at the rocking motion, and when the boughs of the trees brushed against the tent.

With his staff, an old man now pointed to a couple of twin-like trees, some four paces apart; and a little way from the ground conveniently crotched.

And here, eftsoons, they deposited their burden; lowering the Chamois  
gently between the forks of the trees, whose willow-like foliage  
fringed the tent and its inmate.