

CHAPTER LXXI

They Land Upon The Island Of Juam

Crossing the lagoon, our course now lay along the reel to Juam; a name bestowed upon one of the largest islands hereabout; and also, collectively, upon several wooded isles engulfing it, which together were known as the dominions of one monarch. That monarch was Donjalolo. Just turned of twenty-five, he was accounted not only the handsomest man in his dominions, but throughout the lagoon. His comeliness, however, was so feminine, that he was sometimes called "Fonoo," or the Girl.

Our first view of Juam was imposing. A dark green pile of cliffs, towering some one hundred toises; at top, presenting a range of steep, gable-pointed projections; as if some Titanic hammer and chisel had shaped the mass.

Sailing nearer, we perceived an extraordinary rolling of the sea; which bursting into the lagoon through an adjoining breach in the reef, surged toward Juam in enormous billows. At last, dashing against the wall of the cliff; they played there in unceasing fountains. But under the brow of a beetling crag, the spray came and went unequally. There, the blue billows seemed swallowed up, and lost.

Right regally was Juam guarded. For, at this point, the rock was pierced by a cave, into which the great waves chased each other like lions; after a hollow, subterraneous roaring issuing forth with manes disheveled.

Cautiously evading the dangerous currents here ruffling the lagoon, we rounded the wall of cliff; and shot upon a smooth expanse; on one side, hemmed in by the long, verdent, northern shore of Juam; and across the water, sentineled by its tributary islets.

With sonorous Vee-Vee in the shark's mouth, we swept toward the beach, tumultuous with a throng.

Our canoes were secured. And surrounded by eager glances, we passed the lower ends of several populous valleys; and crossing a wide, open meadow, gradually ascending, came to a range of light-green bluffs. Here, we wended our way down a narrow defile, almost cleaving this quarter of the island to its base. Black crags frowned overhead: among them the shouts of the Islanders reverberated. Yet steeper grew the defile, and more overhanging the crags till at last, the keystone of the arch seemed dropped into its place. We found ourselves in a subterranean tunnel, dimly lighted by a span of white day at the end.

Emerging, what a scene was revealed! All round, embracing a circuit of some three leagues, stood heights inaccessible, here and there, forming buttresses, sheltering deep recesses between. The bosom of

the place was vivid with verdure.

Shining aslant into this wild hollow, the afternoon sun lighted up its eastern side with tints of gold. But opposite, brooded a somber shadow, double-shading the secret places between the salient spurs of the mountains. Thus cut in twain by masses of day and night, it seemed as if some Last Judgment had been enacted in the glen.

No sooner did we emerge from the defile, than we became sensible of a dull, jarring sound; and Yoomy was almost tempted to turn and flee, when informed that the sea-cavern, whose mouth we had passed, was believed to penetrate deep into the opposite hills; and that the surface of the amphitheater was depressed beneath that of the lagoon. But all over the lowermost hillsides, and sloping into the glen, stood grand old groves; still and stately, as if no insolent waves were throbbing in the mountain's heart.

Such was Willamilla, the hereditary abode of the young monarch of Juam.

Was Yillah immured in this strange retreat? But from those around us naught could we learn.

Our attention was now directed to the habitations of the glen; comprised in two handsome villages; one to the west, the other to the east; both stretching along the base of the cliffs.

Said Media, "Had we arrived at Willamilla in the morning, we had found Donjalolo and his court in the eastern village; but being afternoon, we must travel farther, and seek him in his western retreat; for that is now in the shade."

Wending our way, Media added, that aside from his elevated station as a monarch, Donjalolo was famed for many uncommon traits; but more especially for certain peculiar deprivations, under which he labored.

Whereupon Braid-Beard unrolled his old chronicles; and regaled us with the history, which will be found in the following chapter.