

stern-sheets. A white shirt at the end of an oar served as flag of truce ; and the men, by direction, and to give it the better chance to be observed, pulled with extreme slowness. The isle shook before them like a place incandescent ; on the face of the lagoon blinding copper suns, no bigger than sixpences, danced and stabbed them in the eyeballs ; there went up from sand and sea, and even from the boat, a glare of scathing brightness ; and as they could only peer abroad from between closed lashes, the excess of light seemed to be changed into a sinister darkness, comparable to that of a thundercloud before it bursts.

The captain had come upon this errand for any one of a dozen reasons, the last of which was desire for its success. Superstition rules all men ; semi-ignorant and gross natures, like that of Davis, it rules utterly. For murder he had been prepared ; but this horror of the medicine in the bottle went beyond him, and he seemed to himself to be parting the last strands that united him to God. The boat carried him on to reprobation, to damnation ; and he suffered himself to be carried passively consenting, silently bidding farewell to his better self and his hopes.

Huish sat by his side in towering spirits that were not wholly genuine. Perhaps as brave a man as ever lived, brave as a weasel, he must