

THE CASTAWAY'S STORY

“What with the knowledge of his wrongs, and the beauty and intelligence of the child, with his innocent, unknowing joy in life, unfolding so strangely and darkly before him, there grew up in our hearts a mighty love for him, such as I believe fathers and mothers in the happy outside world never know. Yet was this love commingled with such fear for his future, and such hopeless anger at his fate, that it was more like bitter pain than like joy; it caused me to fall into strange fits of gloom and anger, and my wife to weep womanwise, at which the child marveled and was often sad as he grew older, being at a loss to understand the temper of our affections.

“But all this was after we came to live on the island. We were removed thither early in the second year of our imprisonment, with the same precautions and secrecy to which in a measure we had now grown accustomed. Of our life there I need not speak in detail, you have all seen the place and know how quietly and monotonously, yet withal in a way happily, our days and years may have glided away. We had every comfort, every luxury that could be devised. We were safe, we were peaceful, the world troubled us not. I could have been almost content had it not been for my wife; her's was a stormy, restless spirit, and although as the years passed she became more tranquil, she never lost the hope that one day would see this great wrong righted. This the more since the child had grown almost before we were aware of it into a man. His education had been my care, and it was an alternate joy and pain to me to observe the unfolding of his brilliant mind. Ah! what a ruler he would have made, bold, brave, yet tender as a woman, and endowed with such genius as the world has rarely seen.