

prize. All had recovered their courage. They supped cheerfully, and when they were going to sleep on their beds of leaves, Mrs. Keppel said aloud a prayer and thanksgiving for their deliverance. Tarling cordially joined in it; William contented himself with taking off his hat; while George Ridler sat down, shrugging his shoulders.

The following day was devoted to their domestic arrangements, and in searching for new resources. The three men surveyed the accessible part of the island, and ascertained what they had to expect. The shipwreck had unfortunately thrown them upon one of the smallest and least fertile of the islands of the Bergh. Fruit trees were not numerous, and besides these they only found a few sea birds perched on the summits of the rocks.

Ridler hoped that they might supply what was wanting by fishing. He made some lines with the fibres of the cocoa-nut, fashioned some hooks out of the shell of the tortoise, and formed baskets with the leaves of the curcuma. But all these efforts scarcely sufficed to keep famine away from the colony. Ridler alone was strong and skillful, and all lived by his industry. He complained of this to Tarling, threatening to leave them to shift for themselves.

"Why should we maintain that old woman, who passes her time in singing hymns and weaving dry plants; and that rope-dancer, who sleeps all day in the shade, or loses his time in trying to tame a bird? A few cocoa-nuts only remain; the bread-fruit trees are completely stripped, and I have only caught three fish in eight days. Is it not folly to persist in feeding two useless mouths? I may even say three; for as to yourself, Mr. Tarling, what use is your knowledge of nature, except to make you spend the best

part of the day in useless researches in these woods? But I protest things cannot go on in this manner; every one must maintain himself."

"No," replied Arthur, mildly, "every one must live for the others, and promote the welfare of the whole. Have a little patience, Ridler; the hour will come which will show that our strength and abilities are worth something; for there are no persons useless here below but the selfish."

But, notwithstanding these promises, George continued to furnish almost the whole of the daily sustenance. At last, one evening, after having passed many hours in fishing, without having taken anything, his line was carried away by the only fish that had bitten. While endeavoring to pursue it, his foot was pierced by a coral rock, which made a deep wound, and he retired to the hut with great pain and difficulty.

On the other hand, William, who had just returned with his tame bird, brought nothing; and Tarling was absent: he was probably botanising on the other side of the hill.

Ridler gave vent to his anger in cursing himself as well as others. If he had only labored for his own wants, he would have had sufficient, and could even have made a reserve; but he had had the folly of making himself a purveyor for others; for then he had exhausted the resources of the island and his own strength, and now he was condemned to die of famine, as the consequence of his own generosity.

William and the invalid listened to these reproaches in silence: for they were suffering with hunger. Two months of suspense they themselves in the same situation at the time of the shipwreck, by a kind of divination. Mrs. Keppel had preserved them all from death. George continued to de-