

Then, turning towards Mrs. Keppel, he said, as he took her hand, "Come, cousin, we must make an effort to find shelter; we will make a chair for you with our arms; but pray make yourself as light as you can."

Light, indeed, she was; so reduced by illness, that they were scarcely conscious that they were carrying her, and soon rejoined Ridler, who had just entered the shaded portion of the island. Their progress, which was at first so easy, soon became difficult amidst the jungle. In spite of the foliage, the heat became every moment more oppressive, and, exhausted by thirst, they at last found themselves entangled in so thick a jungle that they were unable to perceive an opening on any side. William was the first to be tired; he remained with the invalid while George and Tarling pursued their researches; but, after some useless efforts, they returned to the others.

They found Mrs. Keppel and the mountebank extended on the ground, unable to continue their route.—George pointed them out to Tarling—"You see that it is all over with them," said he, abruptly; "they must die like dogs. As you are more robust you must think of assisting me, and perhaps, by our united efforts, we may force a passage through this infernal jungle."

"I will go with you on condition that you will return with me and fetch the others, when we have found water and shelter," replied Arthur.

"And what will you do with them?" interrupted the poacher, sternly; "if we are condemned to remain on this island, what assistance can we expect from such companions?—a sick woman and a juggler!"

"Even if they should prove useless it would not be less our duty to assist them," replied Tarling; "let us seek

an outlet through the jungle, as you propose; but whatever be the result of our attempts I shall return to them, that they may share our lot."

George and Arthur again tried to penetrate the thick herbage, but they soon met with a rock which closed the passage. Obligated to turn to the right, they were stopped by an impenetrable barrier, and at last returned, after desperate efforts, to the spot where they had left William and Mrs. Keppel.

They both sank on the ground, bathed with perspiration, their throats dry, and half dead with fatigue and thirst. All hope appeared to be lost; a burning fever consumed them; they had lost even the instinct of self-preservation, and waited for death to put an end to their sufferings.

Crouched together in the narrow space which was shaded by the branches from the burning sun, their faces resting upon their knees, all three maintained a despairing silence, when Mrs. Keppel raised her head and looked around her. Her delicate health had rendered her less sensible of the wants which tormented her companions; and having been accustomed to hot climates, she was enabled to bear the heat by which they had been overwhelmed. She half-raised herself upon her knees, and, inhaling the air, listened to the breeze. After having listened for some moments with a kind of indifference, Mrs. Keppel made a sudden movement; she raised herself more upright, and inclined her ear to the north. Nothing was heard but the raging of the sea, in the intervals of which the breeze whispered through the trees of the island; but the latter seemed especially to attract the attention of the invalid. All who love to listen to the "soughing" of the wind through the trees know these sounds vary according to the nature of the trees through