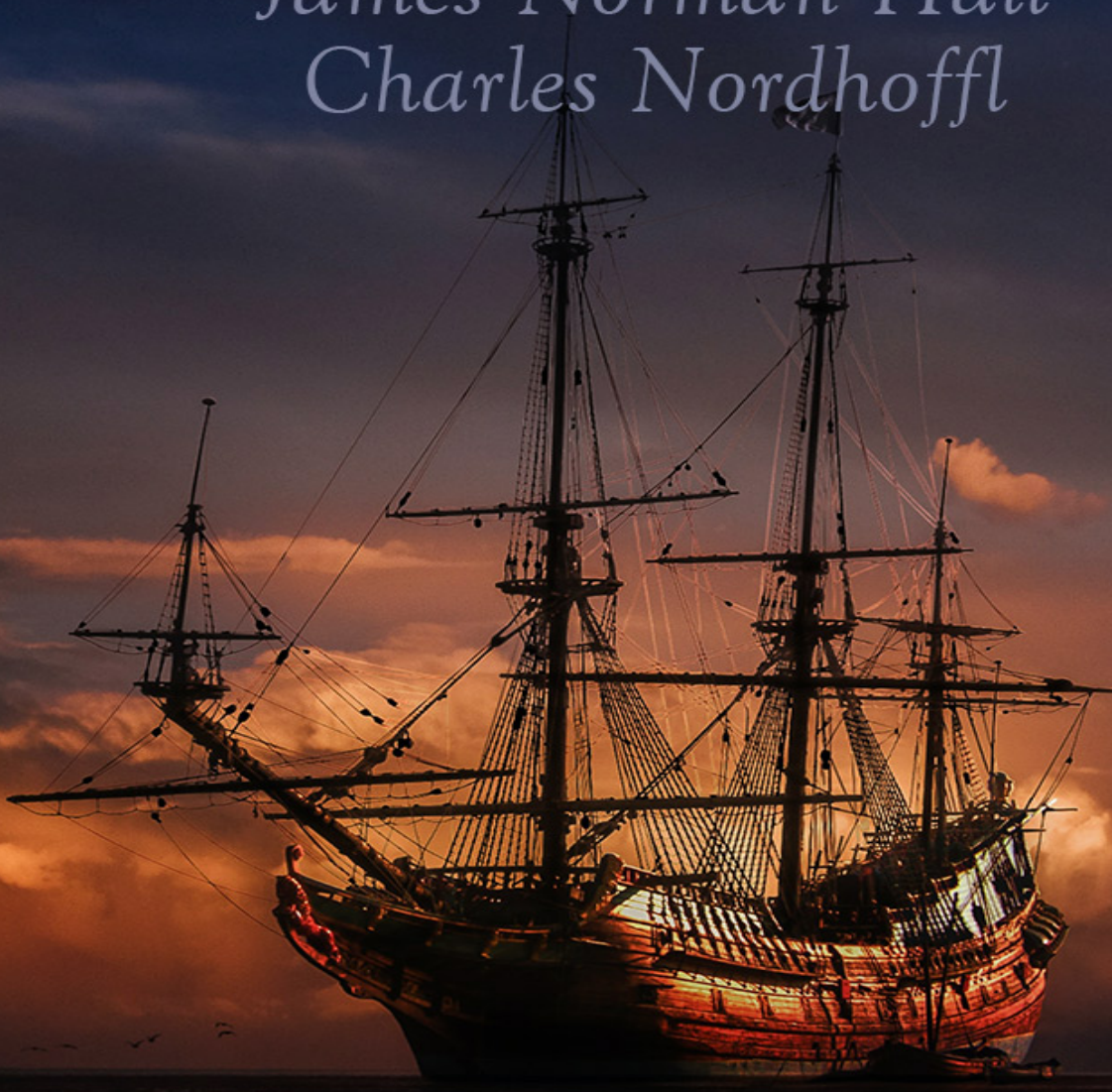


*James Norman Hall  
Charles Nordhoff*



# MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY

**James Norman Hall, Charles Nordhoff**

# **Mutiny on the Bounty**

**Sea Adventure Classic**

e-artnow, 2021

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The Trilogy of "The Bounty"

# FOREWORD

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They began it as buddies. Nordhoff was a graduate of the Ambulance Service. Norman Hall was a veteran of Kitchener's Army. Just by chance he was in London during the first August days of 1914, and when the mob which went swirling round Nelson's Column to the lilt of "Good-bye, Leicester Square" was hammered into the kernel of an army, he was part of it. Honorably discharged, he reenlisted, this time in the French aviation service, and found the berth he had been fashioned for in the Escadrille Lafayette. Flying was the thing for Charles Nordhoff, too, and when he joined the squadron two contributors to the *Atlantic Monthly* met each other for the first time, and interchanged compliments gracefully given and received. This chance friendship, springing from a common love for letters, was riveted by the comradeship of high adventure. Each found in the other a man whose silence and whose speech delighted and refreshed him. From that day to this, they have shared a common destiny as brothers.

Captain Hall and Lieutenant Nordhoff both distinguished themselves. Were I to lay stress on their military records I should outrage the modesty of both, but somewhere in Nordhoff's trunk under a pile of dungarees you will find a *croix de guerre* with star, and a citation which his children will preserve. As for Hall, I will gratify him by passing over the words that Pétain wrote, but of the dead it is seemly to speak with living praise, and I am justified in recording that

during one of his temporary deaths Hall was thus praised in public by the General of the VIIIth Army:

*Brillant pilot de chasse, modèle de courage et d'entrain qui a abattu récemment un avion ennemi, a trouvé une mort glorieuse dans un combat contre quatre monoplanes, dont un a été descendu en flammes.*

It is pleasant to remember that the writer of this sketch, mourning the same heroic death, was busily occupied in writing a memoir of the sort that might be well worth dying for, when he was interrupted by a cheerful letter from his resurrected hero, who had, it seemed, just made his breakaway from a German camp.

When both men were mustered from the service I saw them again on a memorable occasion. Each wrote to me without the other's knowledge, asking for advice. Both had lived with intensity lives high above the conflict, and to both the stridency and (as they felt) the vulgarity of post-war civilization was past endurance. Each had ambitions, talents, and memories of great price. To transmute these intangibles into three meals *per diem* was the prosaic problem put up to me. How well I remember the day they came to Boston. Reticent and illusive, there was something in each of them that in its pure essence I have not known elsewhere. Conrad called it Romance. When Romance and Chivalry come to refresh my cumbered mind, I see those two young men just as I saw them then.

We talked and we talked, and then we adjourned for counsel to a little Italian restaurant. Those were days when *vino rosso* was a legitimate dressing for a salad to be eaten with an omelette. We ate, drank, and speculated of those

places in the world where the dollar or its equivalent is not the sole essential medium of exchange. I called for a geography. We opened it at Mercator's projection, and hardly were the pages pinned down by twin cruets of oil and vinegar, when both the adventurers with a single swoop pointed to the route which Stevenson had taken. I called up Cook for information on prices, and while my companions chatted of palm trees and hibiscus—Loti seasoned with Conrad—I did several sums in addition and multiplication.

We planned with the resolution of genius. Then and there Hall and Nordhoff drew up the rough outline of a miraculous work on the South Seas, and when a day or two later the silent partner took it with him to New York, all the spices of the East were in the chapter headings. One publisher was pitted against another. For once in his life the salesman was a credit to his profession, and when he returned, the respectable firm of Hall and Nordhoff was incorporated with a capital of \$7,000—\$1,000 paid in. After all, there is more to literature than pretty words and an agile pen.

Historically, the first work of the firm was the official history of the Lafayette Flying Corps. Then came, I believe, the work on the South Seas which, as I have said, I had the honor to sell. Nordhoff wrote by himself a capital boy's story, "The Pearl Lagoon," based on his own early life in Lower California. Hall meantime turned out some admirably individual essays, stories, and poems, but the firm added enormously to its reputation when the story of the Escadrille was brilliantly retold as fiction under the title, "Falcons of France." Of all aerial narratives, this, in my judgment, takes the first place both in its thrilling realism and in that delicate

understanding of the co-ordination of mind, body, and spirit which is at once a flyer's inheritance and his salvation.

A play followed—"The Empty Chair"—accepted for production on the screen. Of this I know only at second-hand, and will not speak, though I cannot but remark how strange is that conjunction of the planets under whose influence Hall and Nordhoff are reborn in Hollywood.

Now comes the firm's latest and best bid for fame and fortune. Reader, have you ever heard of the strange history of His Majesty's Ship *Bounty*? If ever the sea cast up a saltier story, I should like to know it. A chronicle of its events, clumsy enough in the telling, appeared—Lord, how long since: "The Pitcairn Islanders," I think was the name of this particular volume. Anyway, it was bound in green and stamped in gold, and for all its heavy-footed style, a boy curled up on a sofa fifty years ago wore the pages through. There was mutiny on the good ship, as the world remembers. Lieutenant Bligh, the Commander, was lowered into his long boat to drift, God knows where, and the mutineers cracked on sail for Tahiti and Fate. At any rate, that story is of the primeval stuff Romance is made of, and if Captain Hall and Lieutenant Nordhoff are not the men to write it, then, thought I, Providence has been clean wrong in all the games she has played on them from the very beginning. I broached the idea to Hall, or perhaps he mentioned it first to me. Anyway, we both knew this was not a chance to be missed, though one thing we were certain of—that a story so perfect must be told with perfect accuracy. A whole literature has been burgeoning about it for a century, and if the ultimate account is to go into a novel,

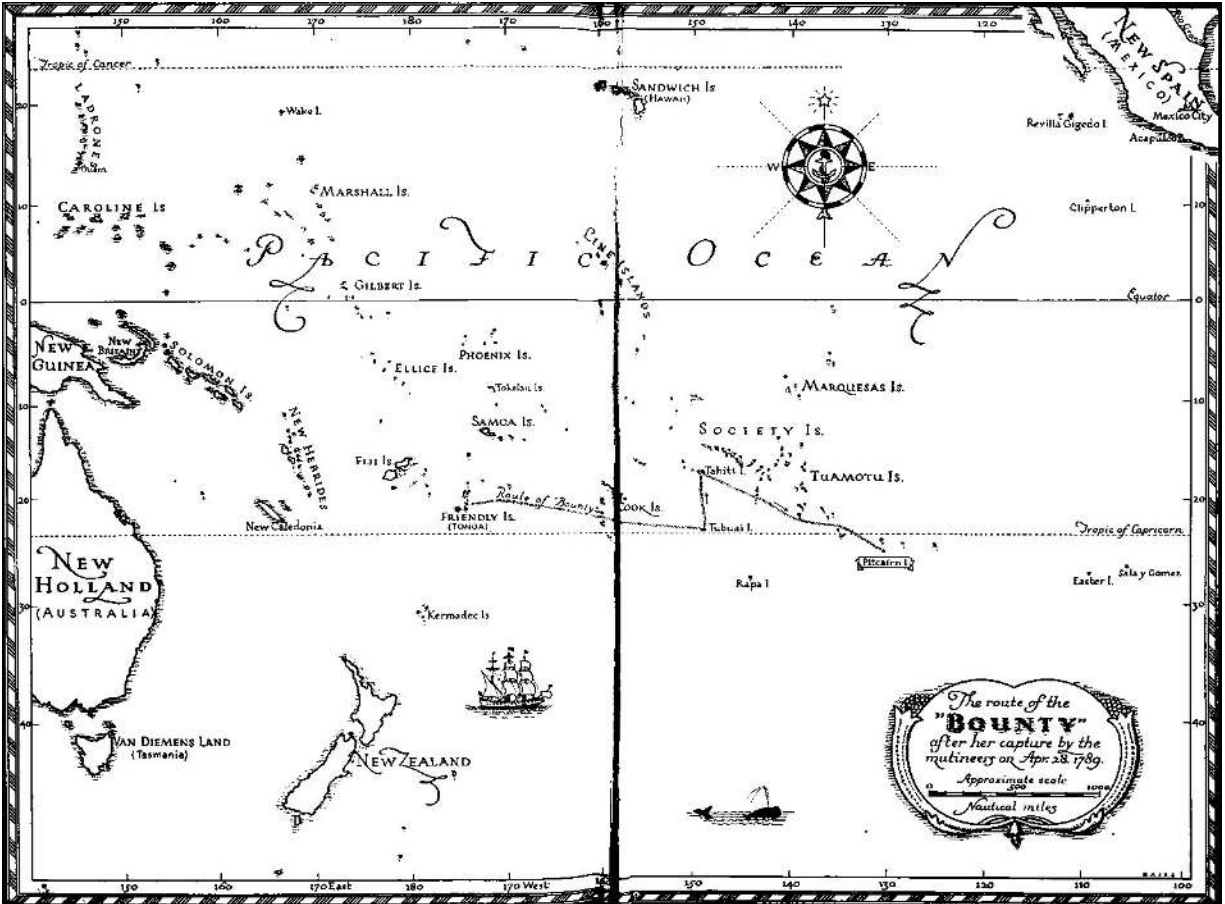


nothing of the truth must be sacrificed. For Romance is not capricious, it is an attitude of Fate, and Fate, my friends, is greatly to be respected. So on a visit to London in the Spring of 1931 I sought the assistance of Dr. Leslie Hotson, who knows the British Museum as if it were the lining of his trousers pocket. We hit on the perfect record worker, and in due time this lady and I laid hands on every scrap of pertinent evidence. We had photostatic copies of every page of the reports of the court-martial of the mutineers, hand written in beautiful copper plate. We assaulted the Admiralty, to which our bountiful thanks are due, for within its sacred precincts Commander E. C. Tufnell of His Majesty's Navy made copies of the deck and rigging plans of the *Bounty*, and in his goodness even made an admirably detailed model of the ship. Meanwhile, booksellers, the mouldier the better, were put on the trail for volumes of the British Navy of the period. Engravers' collections were searched for illustrations of Captain Bligh and of the rascals he set sail with. Item by item, a library unique in the annals of collecting was built, boxed, and shipped to Tahiti. The firm of Hall and Nordhoff hired by way of inspiration the first room that ever they lived in on the Islands. They pinned maps to the walls, stuck up deck and rigging plans, propped photographs of the model on the table in front of them, and, wonder of wonders, in spite of the fascination of their collection, in the face of the perfume blowing in at their windows, in defiance of the Heaven that Idleness is in the tropics, they fell to work!

Here is the book they have written. Read it, and you, too, will know that Romance has come into her own.

*Ellery Sedgwick*

Atlantic office, September 1st, 1932



The *Bounty* Route

# I. LIEUTENANT BLIGH

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*The* British are frequently criticized by other nations for their dislike of change, and indeed we love England for those aspects of nature and life which change the least. Here in the West Country, where I was born, men are slow of speech, tenacious of opinion, and averse—beyond their countrymen elsewhere—to innovation of any sort. The houses of my neighbours, the tenants' cottages, the very fishing boats which ply on the Bristol Channel, all conform to the patterns of a simpler age. And an old man, forty of whose three-and-seventy years have been spent afloat, may be pardoned a not unnatural tenderness toward the scenes of his youth, and a satisfaction that these scenes remain so little altered by time.

No men are more conservative than those who design and build ships save those who sail them; and since storms are less frequent at sea than some landsmen suppose, the life of a sailor is principally made up of the daily performance of certain tasks, in certain manners and at certain times. Forty years of this life have made a slave of me, and I continue, almost against my will, to live by the clock. There is no reason why I should rise at seven each morning, yet seven finds me dressing, nevertheless; my copy of the *Times* would reach me even though I failed to order a horse saddled at ten for my ride down to Watchet to meet the post. But habit is too much for me, and habit finds a powerful ally in old Thacker, my housekeeper, whose

duties, as I perceive with inward amusement, are lightened by the regularity she does everything to encourage. She will listen to no hint of retirement. In spite of her years, which must number nearly eighty by now, her step is still brisk and her black eyes snap with a remnant of the old malice. It would give me pleasure to speak with her of the days when my mother was still living, but when I try to draw her into talk she wastes no time in putting me in my place. Servant and master, with the churchyard only a step ahead! I am lonely now; when Thacker dies, I shall be lonely indeed.

Seven generations of Byams have lived and died in Withycombe; the name has been known in the region of the Quantock Hills for five hundred years and more. I am the last of them; it is strange to think that at my death what remains of our blood will flow in the veins of an Indian woman in the South Sea.

If it be true that a man's useful life is over on the day when his thoughts begin to dwell in the past, then I have served little purpose in living since my retirement from His Majesty's Navy fifteen years ago. The present has lost substance and reality, and I have discovered, with some regret, that contemplation of the future brings neither pleasure nor concern. But forty years at sea, including the turbulent period of the wars against the Danes, the Dutch, and the French, have left my memory so well stored that I ask no greater delight than to be free to wander in the past.

My study, high up in the north wing of Withycombe, with its tall windows giving on the Bristol Channel and the green distant coast of Wales, is the point of departure for these travels through the past. The journal I have kept, since I

went to sea as a midshipman in 1787, lies at hand in the camphor-wood box beside my chair, and I have only to take up a sheaf of its pages to smell once more the reek of battle smoke, to feel the stinging sleet of a gale in the North Sea, or to enjoy the calm beauty of a tropical night under the constellations of the Southern Hemisphere.

In the evening, when the unimportant duties of an old man's day are done, and I have supped alone in silence, I feel the pleasant anticipation of a visitor to Town, who on his first evening spends an agreeable half-hour in deciding which theatre he will attend. Shall I fight the old battles over again? Camperdown, Copenhagen, Trafalgar—these names thunder in memory like the booming of great guns. Yet more and more frequently I turn the pages of my journal still further back, to the frayed and blotted log of a midshipman—to an episode I have spent a good part of my life in attempting to forget. Insignificant in the annals of the Navy, and even more so from an historian's point of view, this incident was nevertheless the strangest, the most picturesque, and the most tragic of my career.

It has long been my purpose to follow the example of other retired officers and employ the too abundant leisure of an old man in setting down, with the aid of my journal and in the fullest possible detail, a narrative of some one of the episodes of my life at sea. The decision was made last night; I shall write of my first ship, the *Bounty*, of the mutiny on board, of my long residence on the island of Tahiti in the South Sea, and of how I was conveyed home in irons, to be tried by court-martial and condemned to death. Two natures clashed on the stage of that drama of long ago, two men as

strong and enigmatical as any I have known—Fletcher Christian and William Bligh.

When my father died of a pleurisy, early in the spring of 1787, my mother gave few outward signs of grief, though their life together, in an age when the domestic virtues were unfashionable, had been a singularly happy one. Sharing the interest in the natural sciences which had brought my father the honour of a Fellowship in the Royal Society, my mother was a countrywoman at heart, caring more for life at Withycombe than for the artificial distractions of town.

I was to have gone up to Oxford that fall, to Magdalen, my father's college, and during that first summer of my mother's widowhood I began to know her, not as a parent, but as a most charming companion, of whose company I never wearied. The women of her generation were schooled to reserve their tears for the sufferings of others, and to meet adversity with a smile. A warm heart and an inquiring mind made her conversation entertaining or philosophical as the occasion required; and, unlike the young ladies of the present time, she had been taught that silence can be agreeable when one has nothing to say.

On the morning when Sir Joseph Banks's letter arrived, we were strolling about the garden, scarcely exchanging a word. It was late in July, the sky was blue, and the warm air bore the scent of roses; such a morning as enables us to tolerate our English climate, which foreigners declare, perhaps with some justice, the worst in the world. I was thinking how uncommonly handsome my mother looked in black, with her thick fair hair, fresh colour, and dark blue eyes. Thacker, her new maid,—a black-eyed Devon girl,—

came tripping down the path. She dropped my mother a curtsey and held out a letter on a silver tray. My mother took the letter, gave me a glance of apology, and began to read, seating herself on a rustic bench.

“From Sir Joseph,” she said, when she had perused the letter at length and laid it down. “You have heard of Lieutenant Bligh, who was with Captain Cook on his last voyage? Sir Joseph writes that he is on leave, stopping with friends near Taunton, and would enjoy an evening with us. Your father thought very highly of him.”

I was a rawboned lad of seventeen, lazy in body and mind, with overfast growth, but the words were like a galvanic shock to me. “With Captain Cook!” I exclaimed. “Ask him by all means!”

My mother smiled. “I thought you would be pleased,” she said.

The carriage was dispatched in good time with a note for Mr. Bligh, bidding him to dine with us that evening if he could. I remember how I set out, with the son of one of our tenants, to sail my boat at high tide on Bridgwater Bay, and how little I enjoyed the sail. My thoughts were all of our visitor, and the hours till dinner-time seemed to stretch ahead interminably.

I was fonder, perhaps, of reading than most lads of my age, and the book I loved best of all was one given me by my father on my tenth birthday—Dr. Hawkesworth’s account of the voyages to the South Sea. I knew the three, heavy, leather-bound volumes almost by heart, and I had read with equal interest the French narrative of Monsieur de Bougainville’s voyage. These early accounts of discoveries



in the South Sea, and of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of Otaheite and Owhyhee (as those islands were then called), excited an interest almost inconceivable to-day. The writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau, which were to have such lamentable and far-reaching results, preached a doctrine which had made converts even among people of consequence. It became fashionable to believe that only among men in a state of nature, freed from all restraints, could true virtue and happiness be found. And when Wallis, Byron, Bougainville, and Cook returned from their voyage of discovery with alluring accounts of the New Cytheræa, whose happy inhabitants, relieved from the curse of Adam, spent their days in song and dance, the doctrines of Rousseau received new impetus. Even my father, so engrossed in his astronomical studies that he had lost touch with the world, listened eagerly to the tales of his friend Sir Joseph Banks, and often discussed with my mother, whose interest was equal to his, the virtues of what he termed “a natural life.”

My own interest was less philosophical than adventurous; like other youngsters, I longed to sail unknown seas, to raise uncharted islands, and to trade with gentle Indians who regarded white men as gods. The thought that I was soon to converse with an officer who had accompanied Captain Cook on his last voyage—a mariner, and not a man of science like Sir Joseph—kept me woolgathering all afternoon, and I was not disappointed when the carriage drew up at last and Mr. Bligh stepped out.

Bligh was at that time in the prime of life. He was of middle stature, strongly made and inclining to stoutness,

though he carried himself well. His weather-beaten face was broad, with a firm mouth and very fine dark eyes, and his thick powdered hair grew high on his head, above a noble brow. He wore his three-cornered black hat athwartships; his coat was of bright blue broadcloth, trimmed with white, with gold anchor buttons and the long tails of the day. His waistcoat, breeches, and stockings were white. The old-fashioned uniform was one to set off a well-made man. Bligh's voice, strong, vibrant, and a little harsh, gave an impression of uncommon vitality; his bearing showed resolution and courage, and the glance of his eye gave evidence of an assurance such as few men possess. These symptoms of a strong and aggressive nature were tempered by the lofty brow of a man of intellect, and the agreeable and unpretentious manner he assumed ashore.

The carriage, as I said, drew up before our door, the footman sprang down from the box, and Mr. Bligh stepped out. I had been waiting to welcome him; as I made myself known, he gave me a handclasp and a smile.

"Your father's son," he said. "A great loss—he was known, by name at least, to all who practise navigation."

Presently my mother came down and we went in to dinner. Bligh spoke very handsomely of my father's work on the determination of longitude, and after a time the conversation turned to the islands of the South Sea.

"Is it true," my mother asked, "that the Indians of Tahiti are as happy as Captain Cook believed?"

"Ah, ma'am," said our guest, "happiness is a vast word! It is true that they live without great labour, and that nearly all of the light tasks they perform are self-imposed; released

from the fear of want and from all salutary discipline, they regard nothing seriously.”

“Roger and I,” observed my mother, “have been studying the ideas of J. J. Rousseau. As you know, he believes that true happiness can only be enjoyed by man in a state of nature.”

Bligh nodded. “I have been told of his ideas,” he said, “though unfortunately I left school too young to learn French. But if a rough seaman may express an opinion on a subject more suited to a philosopher, I believe that true happiness can only be enjoyed by a disciplined and enlightened people. As for the Indians of Tahiti, though they are freed from the fear of want, their conduct is regulated by a thousand absurd restrictions, which no civilized man would put up with. These restrictions constitute a kind of unwritten law, called *taboo*, and instead of making for a wholesome discipline they lay down fanciful and unjust rules to control every action of a man’s life. A few days among men in a state of nature might have changed Monsieur Rousseau’s ideas.” He paused and turned to me. “You know French, then?” he asked, as if to include me in the talk.

“Yes, sir,” I replied.

“I do him justice, Mr. Bligh,” my mother put in; “he has a gift for languages. My son might pass for a native of France or Italy, and is making progress in German now. His Latin won him a prize last year.”

“I wish I had his gift! Lord!” Bligh laughed. “I’d rather face a hurricane than translate a page of Cæsar nowadays! And the task Sir Joseph has set me is worse still! There is no

harm in telling you that I shall soon set sail for the South Sea." Perceiving our interest, he went on:—

"I have been in the merchant service since I was paid off four years ago, when peace was signed. Mr. Campbell, the West India merchant, gave me command of his ship, *Britannia*, and during my voyages, when I frequently had planters of consequence as passengers on board, I was many times asked to tell what I knew of the breadfruit, which flourishes in Tahiti and Owhyhee. Considering that the breadfruit might provide a cheap and wholesome food for their negro slaves, several of the West India merchants and planters petitioned the Crown, asking that a vessel be fitted out suitably to convey the breadfruit from Tahiti to the West Indian islands. Sir Joseph Banks thought well of the idea and gave it his support. It is due largely to his interest that the Admiralty is now fitting-out a small vessel for the voyage, and at Sir Joseph's suggestion I was recalled to the Service and am to be given command. We should sail before the end of the year."

"Were I a man," said my mother, whose eyes were bright with interest, "I should beg you to take me along; you will need gardeners, no doubt, and I could care for the young plants."

Bligh smiled. "I would ask no better, ma'am," he said gallantly, "though I have been supplied with a botanist—David Nelson, who served in a similar capacity on Captain Cook's last voyage. My ship, the *Bounty*, will be a floating garden fitted with every convenience for the care of the plants, and I have no fear but that we shall be able to carry out the purpose of the voyage. It is the task our good friend

Sir Joseph has enjoined on me that presents the greatest difficulty. He has solicited me most earnestly to employ my time in Tahiti in acquiring a greater knowledge of the Indians and their customs, and a more complete vocabulary and grammar of their language, than it has hitherto been possible to gather. He believes that a dictionary of the language, in particular, might prove of the greatest service to mariners in the South Sea. But I know as little of dictionaries as of Greek, and shall have no one on board qualified for such a task."

"How shall you lay your course, sir?" I asked. "About Cape Horn?"

"I shall make the attempt, though the season will be advanced beyond the time of easterly winds. We shall return from Tahiti by way of the East Indies and the Cape of Good Hope."

My mother gave me a glance and we rose as she took leave of us. While he cracked walnuts and sipped my father's Madeira, Bligh questioned me, in the agreeable manner he knew so well how to assume, as to my knowledge of languages. At last he seemed satisfied, finished the wine in his glass, and shook his head at the man who would have filled it. He was moderate in the use of wine, in an age when nearly all the officers of His Majesty's Navy drank to excess. Finally he spoke.

"Young man," he said seriously, "how would you like to sail with me?"

I had been thinking, ever since his first mention of the voyage, that I should like nothing better, but his words took me aback.

“Do you mean it, sir?” I stammered. “Would it be possible?”

“It rests with you and Mrs. Byam to decide. It would be a pleasure to make a place for you among my young gentlemen.”

The warm summer evening was as beautiful as the day that had preceded it, and when we had joined my mother in the garden, she and Bligh spoke of the projected voyage. I knew that he was waiting for me to mention his proposal, and presently, during a pause in the talk, I summoned up my courage.

“Mother,” I said, “Lieutenant Bligh has been good enough to suggest that I accompany him.”

If she felt surprise, she gave no sign of it, but turned calmly to our guest. “You have paid Roger a compliment,” she remarked. “Could an inexperienced lad be of use to you on board?”

“He’ll make a seaman, ma’am, never fear! I’ve taken a fancy to the cut of his jib, as the old tars say. And I could put his gift for languages to good use.”

“How long shall you be gone?”

“Two years, perhaps.”

“He was to have gone up to Oxford, but I suppose that could wait.” She turned to me half banteringly. “Well, sir, what do you say?”

“With your permission, there is nothing I would rather do.”

She smiled at me in the twilight and gave my hand a little pat. “Then you have it,” she said. “I would be the last to stand in the way. A voyage to the South Sea! If I were a

lad and Mr. Bligh would have me, I'd run away from home to join his ship!"

Bligh gave one of his short, harsh laughs and looked at my mother admiringly. "You'd have made a rare sailor, ma'am," he remarked—"afraid of nothing, I'll wager."

It was arranged that I should join the *Bounty* at Spithead, but the storing, and victualing, and fitting-out took so long that the autumn was far advanced before she was ready to sail. In October I took leave of my mother and went up to London to order my uniforms, to call on old Mr. Erskine, our solicitor, and to pay my respects to Sir Joseph Banks.

My clearest memory of those days is of an evening at Sir Joseph's house. He was a figure of romance to my eyes—a handsome, florid man of forty-five, President of the Royal Society, companion of the immortal Captain Cook, friend of Indian princesses, and explorer of Labrador, Iceland, and the great South Sea. When we had dined, he led me to his study, hung with strange weapons and ornaments from distant lands. He took up from among the papers on his table a sheaf of manuscript.

"My vocabulary of the Tahitian language," he said. "I have had this copy made. It is short and imperfect, as you will discover, but may prove of some service to you. Please observe that the system of spelling Captain Cook and I adopted should be changed. I have given the matter some thought, and Bligh agrees with me that it will be better and simpler to set down the words as an Italian would spell them—particularly in the case of the vowels. You know Italian, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

“Good!” he went on. “You will be some months in Tahiti, while they are gathering the young breadfruit plants. Bligh will see to it that you are given leisure to devote yourself to the dictionary I hope to publish on your return. Dialects of the Tahitian language are spoken over an immense space of the South Sea, and a dictionary of the commoner words, with some little information as to the grammar, will be in demand among mariners before many years have passed. At present we think of the South Sea as little less remote than the moon, but depend on it, the rich whale fisheries and new lands for planting and settlement will soon attract notice, now that we have lost the American Colonies.

“There are many distractions in Tahiti,” he went on after a pause; “take care that you are not misled into wasting your time. And, above all, take care in the selection of your Indian friends. When a ship drops anchor in Matavai Bay the Indians come out in throngs, each eager to choose a friend, or *taio*, from amongst her company. Bide your time, learn something of politics on shore, and choose as your *taio* a man of consideration and authority. Such a man can be of infinite use to you; in return for a few axes, knives, fishhooks, and trinkets for his women, he will keep you supplied with fresh provisions, entertain you at his residence when you step ashore, and do everything in his power to make himself useful. Should you make the mistake of choosing as your *taio* a man of the lower orders, you may find him dull, incurious, and with an imperfect knowledge of the Indian tongue. In my opinion they are not only a different class, but a different race, conquered long ago by those who now rule the land. Persons of consequence in



Tahiti are taller, fairer, and vastly more intelligent than the *manahune*, or serfs.”

“Then there is no more equality in Tahiti than amongst ourselves?”

Sir Joseph smiled. “Less, I should say. The Indians have a false appearance of equality from the simplicity of their manners and the fact that the employments of all classes are the same. The king may be seen heading a fishing party, or the queen paddling her own canoe, or beating out bark cloth with her women. But of real equality there is none; no action, however meritorious, can raise a man above the position to which he was born. The chiefs alone, believed to be descended from the gods, are thought to have souls.” He paused, fingers drumming on the arm of his chair. “You’ve everything you will need?” he asked. “Clothing, writing materials, money? Midshipmen’s fare is not the best in the world, but when you go on board, one of the master’s mates will ask each of you for three or four pounds to lay in a few small luxuries for the berth. Have you a sextant?”

“Yes, sir—one of my father’s; I showed it to Mr. Bligh.”

“I’m glad Bligh’s in command; there’s not a better seaman afloat. I am told that he is a bit of a tartar at sea, but better a taut hand than a slack one, any day! He will instruct you in your duties; perform them smartly, and remember—discipline’s the thing!”

I took my leave of Sir Joseph with his last words still ringing in my ears—“Discipline’s the thing!” I was destined to ponder over them deeply, and sometimes bitterly, before we met again.

## II. SEA LAW

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*Toward* the end of November I joined the *Bounty* at Spithead. It makes me smile to-day to think of the box I brought down on the coach from London, packed with clothing and uniforms on which I had laid out more than a hundred pounds: blue tail-coats lined with white silk, with the white patch on the collar known in those days as a “weekly account”; breeches and waistcoats of white nankeen, and a brace of “scrapers”—smart three-cornered reefer’s hats, with gold loops and cockades. For a few days I made a brave show in my finery, but when the *Bounty* sailed it was stowed away for good, and worn no more.

Our ship looked no bigger than a longboat among the tall first-rates and seventy-fours at anchor near by. She had been built for the merchant service, at Hull, three years before, and purchased for two thousand pounds; ninety feet long on deck and with a beam of twenty-four feet, her burthen was little more than two hundred tons. Her name—*Bethia*—had been painted out, and at the suggestion of Sir Joseph Banks she was rechristened *Bounty*. The ship had been many months at Deptford, where the Admiralty had spent more than four thousand pounds in altering and refitting her. The great cabin aft was now rigged as a garden, with innumerable pots standing in racks, and gutters running below to allow the water to be used over and over again. The result was that Lieutenant Bligh and the master, Mr. Fryer, were squeezed into two small cabins on

either side of the ladderway, and forced to mess with the surgeon, in a screened-off space of the lower deck, aft of the main hatch. The ship was small to begin with; she carried a heavy cargo of stores and articles for barter with the Indians, and all hands on board were so cramped that I heard mutterings even before we set sail. I believe, in fact, that the discomfort of our life, and the bad humour it brought about, played no small part in the unhappy ending of a voyage which seemed ill-fated from the start.

The *Bounty* was copper-sheathed, a new thing in those days, and with her bluff, heavy hull, short masts, and stout rigging, she looked more like a whaling vessel than an armed transport of His Majesty's Navy. She carried a pair of swivel guns mounted on stocks forward, and six swivels and four four-pounders aft, on the upper deck.

All was new and strange to me on the morning when I presented myself to Lieutenant Bligh, the ship was crowded with women,—the sailors' "wives,"—rum seemed to flow like water everywhere, and sharp-faced Jews, in their wherries, hovered alongside, eager to lend money at interest against pay day, or to sell on credit the worthless trinkets on their trays. The cries of the bumboat men, the shrill scolding of the women, and the shouts and curses of the sailors made a pandemonium stunning to a landsman's ears.

Making my way aft, I found Mr. Bligh on the quarter-deck. A tall, swarthy man was just ahead of me.

"I have been to the Portsmouth observatory, sir," he said to the captain; "the timekeeper is one minute fifty-two seconds too fast for mean time, and losing at the rate of one

second a day. Mr. Bailey made a note of it in this letter to you.”

“Thank you, Mr. Christian,” said Bligh shortly, and at that moment, turning his head, he caught sight of me. I uncovered, stepping forward to present myself. “Ah, Mr. Byam,” he went on, “this is Mr. Christian, the master’s mate; he will show you your berth and instruct you in some of your duties. ... And, by the way, you will dine with me on board the *Tigress*; Captain Courtney knew your father and asked me to bring you when he heard that you would be on board.” He glanced at his large silver watch. “Be ready in an hour’s time.”

I bowed in reply to his nod of dismissal and followed Christian to the ladderway. The berth was a screened-off space of the lower deck, on the larboard side, abreast of the main hatch. Its dimensions were scarcely more than eight feet by ten, yet four of us were to make this kennel our home. Three or four boxes stood around the sides, and a scuttle of heavy discoloured glass admitted a dim light. A quadrant hung on a nail driven into the ship’s side, and, though she was not long from Deptford, a reek of bilge water hung in the air. A handsome, sulky-looking boy of sixteen, in a uniform like my own, was arranging the gear in his box, and straightened up to give me a contemptuous stare. His name was Hayward, as I learned when Christian introduced us briefly, and he scarcely deigned to take my outstretched hand.

When we regained the upper deck, Christian lost his air of preoccupation, and smiled. “Mr. Hayward has been two years at sea,” he remarked; “he knows you for a Johnny

Newcomer. But the *Bounty* is a little ship; such airs would be more fitting aboard a first-rate."

He spoke in a cultivated voice, with a trace of the Manx accent, and I could barely hear the words above the racket from the forward part of the ship. It was a calm, bright winter morning, and I studied my companion in the clear sunlight. He was a man to glance at more than once.

Fletcher Christian was at that time in his twenty-fourth year,—a fine figure of a seaman in his plain blue, gold-buttoned frock,—handsomely and strongly built, with thick dark brown hair and a complexion naturally dark, and burned by the sun to a shade rarely seen among the white race. His mouth and chin expressed great resolution of character, and his eyes, black, deep-set, and brilliant, had something of hypnotic power in their far-away gaze. He looked more like a Spaniard than an Englishman, though his family had been settled since the fifteenth century on the Isle of Man. Christian was what women call a romantic-looking man; his moods of gaiety alternated with fits of black depression, and he possessed a fiery temper which he controlled by efforts that brought the sweat to his brow. Though only a master's mate, a step above a midshipman, he was of gentle birth—better born than Bligh and a gentleman in manner and speech.

"Lieutenant Bligh," he said, in his musing, abstracted way, "desires me to instruct you in some of your duties. Navigation, nautical astronomy, and trigonometry he will teach you himself, since we have no schoolmaster on board, as on a man-of-war. And I can assure you that you will not sup till you have worked out the ship's position each day.

You will be assigned to one of the watches, to keep order when the men are at the braces or aloft. You will see that the hammocks are stowed in the morning, and report the men whose hammocks are badly lashed. Never lounge against the guns or the ship's side, and never walk the deck with your hands in your pockets. You will be expected to go aloft with the men to learn how to bend canvas and how to reef and furl a sail, and when the ship is at anchor you may be placed in charge of one of the boats. And, last of all, you are the slave of those tyrants, the master and master's mates."

He gave me a whimsical glance and a smile. We were standing by the gratings abaft the mainmast, and at that moment a stout elderly man, in a uniform much like Bligh's, came puffing up the ladderway. His bronzed face was at once kindly and resolute, and I should have known him for a seaman anywhere.

"Ah, Mr. Christian, there you are!" he exclaimed as he heaved himself on deck. "What a madhouse! I'd like to sink the lot of those Jews, and heave the wenches overboard! Who's this? The new reefer, Mr. Byam, I'll be bound! Welcome on board, Mr. Byam; your father's name stands high in our science, eh, Mr. Christian?"

"Mr. Fryer, the master," said Christian in my ear.

"A madhouse," Fryer went on. "Thank God we shall pay off to-morrow night! Wenches everywhere, above decks and below." He turned to Christian. "Go forward and gather a boat's crew for Lieutenant Bligh—there are a few men still sober."