

Book Six:

Continuation and Conclusion

O motion wondrous strange, O most inconstant rest!
A man who thinks he stands is straightway onward
pressed.
O most elusive rest, so restless in repose.
Our downfall rushes in, descent we never chose,
Even as death itself. Inconstancy that took
Great toll of me is found described here in this book
Inconstancy doth lurk within each moment's gladness;
Inconstancy alone outlives our very sadness.

CHAPTER 1: *A little preface and a brief report on how the new hermit's life agreed with him*

If anybody imagines I am relating my life story merely to while away the time or to make people laugh (as jesters and mountebanks do), he is greatly mistaken. Too much laughter is disgusting to me, and whoever kills that noble, irreplaceable asset, time, badly wastes the divine gift which is granted us that we may work out the salvation of our souls. Why should I help anybody to such vain foolishness and, without being asked, become other folks' Secretary of Entertainment? As if I didn't know that by doing so I would participate in other people's sins? Dear reader, I consider myself above such business; and whoever wants a fool, let him buy two and he'll have one to spare. The reason I am presenting my story with a dash of humor is that some delicate

tenderlings can't swallow pills that are good for them unless they have been coated with sugar and gilt, not to mention the fact that even the most sober-sided of men will put down a serious book, whereas they keep reading one that makes them smile ever so little every once in a while.

If I am charged with making satirical attacks, I plead "Not guilty." Many folks would rather see general vices berated and scored in a general way than have their own deficiency of virtue corrected in a friendly way. Unfortunately, Mr. Everybody (to whom I am addressing my story) does not enjoy the theological style either. One can see how mountebanks and medicine men nowadays draw more of an audience when their clown begins to shout and caper than can the most enthusiastic minister of the gospel who is calling his flock together, by having all the church bells rung three times in a row, so that he may deliver a wholesome sermon.

Be that as it may. Let me protest to the world that I am innocent if someone takes offense at my having dressed my *Simplicissimus* in the fashion demanded by the people themselves, when they want to be taught something useful. If here and there a reader is satisfied with the husks and disregards the kernel which is hidden underneath, he will have a jolly story to content him, but he will miss by far that which I had really wanted him to get. So I'll start where I left off at the end of the fifth book.

There the gentle reader learned that I became a hermit once more, and why. Now I must tell how I behaved in this state. The first few months, while my ardor was still strong, everything went well. From the start I easily put a damper on my carnal desires (better called "lust"), to which I had been dedicated, for since I no longer worshiped Bacchus and Ceres, neither did Venus care to visit me anymore. I still was not perfect; I had my temptations, a thousand every hour. For instance, when, in order to make myself remorseful, I thought of the practical jokes and tricks I had played on people, the lust of the flesh which I had enjoyed came back at the same time. That wasn't always good for me, nor did it

help my spiritual progress. I have since concluded that idleness was my greatest enemy, and freedom (for I was not subject to a clergyman who would minister to me and watch me) was the chief cause of my failure to persist in the life I had determined to lead.

I lived on a high mountain range called the Moss, a part of the Black Forest that is covered by a somber stand of firs. I had a beautiful view east into the Oppenau valley and its branches, and south into the valley of the Kinzig and Gerolts-eck County, where the lofty castle rises among the neighboring heights like a kingpin in a game of ninepins. To the west I could see upper and lower Alsace, and to the north in the direction of lower Baden, down the Rhine, where the city of Strasbourg, with its high cathedral tower, stands out like the heart enclosed by its body. I spent more time looking at the beauty of the view than praying: my telescope, which I had not resigned myself to putting away, was a powerful encouragement in this. After dark, when I could no longer use the glass, I picked up the instrument I had invented for the reinforcement of hearing and listened through it, for instance, to dogs barking several hours away or some game stirring closer by. This is the kind of foolishness in which I engaged, and in time I neglected work and prayer, two activities by which the old Egyptian hermits had maintained themselves physically and spiritually.

In the beginning, while I was still new, I went about the neighboring valleys, from house to house, looking for alms in order to keep alive. I took no more than what I barely needed, and I especially shunned money, an attitude that my near neighbors viewed as a great miracle, even as a kind of apostolic holiness. But as soon as my abode became known, everybody who came into the woods brought me something to eat. These people bragged about my holy and unusual life, so that folks from farther away, driven by curiosity or veneration, also came to see me. Thus I suffered no scarcity of bread, butter, salt, cheese, bacon, eggs, and other vittles; I even had too much! But that did not make me any more

blessed. Rather, the longer I lived, the worse I became, growing lazier and less charitable. I could well have been called a hypocrite or a holy faker. For all that, I did not give up thinking about virtues and vices and considering what I would have to do if I wanted to go to heaven. But I did this thinking without system, without good counsel, and without the firm resolve to be as serious as my condition and the amount of desirable improvement would have required of me.

CHAPTERS 2-18: *Summary*

[Simplicius, asleep, reports a vision or dream: The Prince of Darkness receives word that the Thirty Years' War is ended and that peace on earth is greeted with the joyous singing of "Gloria in excelsis" and "Te deum laudamus." This news drives Lucifer almost insane with rage. He lashes out at various devils for having wasted their chances through laziness. But Belial points out that peace also produces a respectable crop of vices and that all is not lost. Lucifer's fury has attracted many other spirits of hell, who are now lectured by their prince and promised rewards if they redouble their efforts.

[The pep talk over, a dispute arises between Extravagance, a gorgeous female, and Avarice, a ragged old man, concerning who can serve hell better. Instead of receiving a verdict, they are sent out into the world to substantiate their respective claims. Extravagance is assigned to a rich, young English lord; Avarice, to his steward. The lord wastes a fortune, while the steward fraudulently amasses one. In the end they join the army of Charles II and after his defeat become robbers. After their capture, the master is beheaded, the servant hanged. Thus the quarrel remains undecided. Simplicius wakes up from his sleep.

[On a walk through the woods Simplicius finds a life-sized statue. It looks like an old German hero; and when he tries to turn it over, it begins to speak, saying its name is "Soon-

different," who has always been with him and who will not leave him until he dies. It gives Simplicius a recipe for conversing with lifeless objects and, as if for fun, changes into about a dozen different shapes, but always remains its own true Soondifferent self. Having changed into a bird, it flies away.

[Simplicius feels that he is not really serving God or man; and after reading some saints' lives he decides to make another pilgrimage. His dress and hairy appearance get him an easy living, but he is hardly better than a hobo: in Schaffhausen a rich burgher gives him a night's lodging, and in turn he tells fanciful tales about his travels and gives the burgher a foolproof coded recipe against being hit by bullets: "Stand where no one is shooting and you will be safe." His conscience bothers him, however, and in order to keep the man from a false sense of security, he informs him by letter that he has played a hoax on him.

[Along his way, Simplicius tells the most egregious and fantastic lies. He has culled them mostly from ancient writers like Pliny, but he leads his listeners to believe that he has personally seen and experienced everything.

[In a castle owned by a former acquaintance, Simplicius exorcises a ghost. For this service he is offered valuable gifts, which he refuses. He only accepts a lining for his threadbare old cloak. However, the owner secretly sews pieces of gold into it.

[In another burst of humility and devotion Simplicius visits the holy places of Loreto and Rome, and when he discovers the gold coins in his cloak, he decides to journey to Jerusalem. In Genoa he takes a boat for Alexandria, where war prevents further progress. While sight-seeing in Egypt—in Cairo he sees pyramids, and mummies, and machines that raise chickens without hens—he is captured by Arabian robbers and taken to the Red Sea. But whereas the other Christians are sold as slaves, Simplicius is exhibited as a wild and woolly cave man from Arabia Deserta. Under threat of death

he is to keep silent while on exhibit. Simplicius doesn't mind his life too much, but in a large commercial city, before an audience consisting partly of Europeans, he blurts out in Latin that he is being held against his will and would appreciate being rescued. A riot ensues, and the local ruler decides Simplicius must be freed; his former masters are sentenced to become galley slaves, and part of their confiscated money is to go to Simplicius in payment for damages. Simplicius renders thanks to his European rescuers and wonders what to do next.]

CHAPTER 19: *Simplicius and the carpenter come away with their lives and, having suffered shipwreck, are provided with a land of their own*

My fellow countrymen advised me to buy a new set of clothes, and because I had nothing else to do I sought the acquaintance of all the Europeans; they liked to have me about, both for reasons of Christian charity and because of my unusual experiences. Since there was little hope that the Damascene war in Syria and Judea would soon end, enabling me to resume and complete my journey to Jerusalem, I changed my mind and decided to go home via Portugal in a large Portuguese galleon that was ready to leave. Instead of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, I would make one to St. James at Compostela, and then I would retire somewhere and use up what God had granted me.

In order to sail without special expense (for as soon as I had plenty of money I started pinching pennies), I made an agreement with the head merchant on the galleon: he was to take over all my money and use it to his advantage; he was to return it to me in Portugal, but instead of interest I was to receive free passage and food; furthermore, I was to do all sorts of jobs aboard ship and ashore, as occasion and necessity required. But I reckoned without my host, for little did I

know what the good Lord had in mind for me. I undertook this long and dangerous journey all the more eagerly because the previous trip across the Mediterranean had gone so well.

When we had boarded the ship and moved with a favorable wind out of the Gulf of Arabia (or the Red Sea) into the ocean, we set our course for the Cape of Good Hope and sailed for several weeks, enjoying weather that could not have been any better. When we thought we were roughly opposite the island of Madagascar, there suddenly arose a storm so violent that we hardly had time to take in sail. The storm grew worse, and as time passed it got so bad that we had to chop off the mast and abandon our ship to the capricious force of the waves. They took us up almost to the clouds and in the next moment dropped us down into an abyss, where we stayed for as long as half an hour. This very effectively taught us how to pray. Finally the waves threw us on a hidden rock with such violence that the ship broke to pieces with a horrible crash, and a pitiful cry arose all around. The rocks were instantly strewn with boxes, bales, and parts of the ship. On the crests and in the depths of the waves woeful human beings were clinging to objects which they had happened to grasp in their predicament. With ghastly screams they deplored their end or commended their souls to God.

A carpenter and I were lying on a large piece of the ship, a sort of raft held together by beams. We clung to them and encouraged each other. Gradually the cruel storm subsided, and little by little the raging waves grew calm and smooth. But pitch-dark night came, bringing with it a sudden shower. It now appeared that in the middle of the ocean we were to be drowned from above. The rain lasted till midnight, and we suffered greatly. Then the sky became clear again, so that we could see the stars; and by them we could tell that the wind, coming from Africa, was drifting us out to sea in the direction of unexplored Australia; and that gave us quite a shock.

Toward daybreak it got dark again so that we couldn't see each other, though we were not far apart. We continued drifting in this dark and miserable state until we suddenly noticed

that we had run aground and stopped. The carpenter, who had a hatchet in his belt, probed the depth of the water and when he found it was less than a foot deep on one side we were greatly relieved; we had hopes that God had helped us to reach land. When we recovered, we noticed a fragrance of flowers, indicating the same thing. But because it was so dark and the two of us were so tired, we did not have the heart to look for shore, though we thought we could hear birds singing (as, in fact, we could). As soon as day broke in the east we saw close by in the dim light some land and bushes. So we dropped off into the water, which became shallower as we waded, until, overjoyed, we finally stepped onto dry land. There we fell on our knees, kissed the earth, and thanked God in heaven for preserving us like a father and guiding us to this shore. And that's how I came to this island.

At first we did not know whether we were in an inhabited or an uninhabited country, or only on an island. But we noticed right away that the soil must be very fertile, for every square foot of it was so covered with bushes and trees that we could hardly get through. When it was completely light and we had made our way through the undergrowth for about a quarter of an hour without seeing even the slightest trace of human habitation, we concluded that we must be on an unknown but very rich island. Many strange birds approached us without fear; we could even catch them in our hands. We found lemons, oranges, and coconuts—fruits we enjoyed very much. When the sun rose we came to a plateau that was full of palm trees (from which palm wine can be made). This delighted my comrade no end, for he loved to drink. There we rested in the sun and dried our clothes, which we had taken off and draped over some bushes; meanwhile, we walked around in our underwear. My carpenter struck his hatchet in a palm tree and found that it was full of cider. Unfortunately we had no vessel in which to catch it, for we had lost even our hats in the shipwreck.

When the sunshine had dried our clothes, we put them back on and climbed to a high, rocky peak, located on the right

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side, toward the north, between the plains and the sea. Looking around, we found that we were not on a large mass of land but on an island no bigger around than an hour and a half's walk. And when we could see no other land far or near, but only water and sky, we both became sad and lost all hope of ever seeing human beings again. On the other hand, we were consoled that God's kindness had sent us to this safe and fertile place, and not to a barren spot inhabited by cannibals. Then we started to consider what we would have to do in order to survive. And since we had to live together on this island almost like prisoners, we swore each other eternal loyalty.

On the mountain we had climbed were many and various birds, and their nests were so full of eggs that we could hardly stop marveling. We ate some raw and took a supply with us to a spring of sweet water, which flowed toward the sea with enough volume to drive a small mill wheel. Again we felt joyful and decided to build our house near this spring. For our new household the two of us had no other equipment than one hatchet, one spoon, three knives, one fork, and a pair of scissors. There was nothing else. To be sure, my comrade had some thirty ducats that we would gladly have spent for a lighter if we had only known where to buy one. But the money was of absolutely no use to us; in fact, it was worth less than my powder horn, which was filled with tinder that had become soft and gooey. I dried this tinder in the sun and put part of it on a flat stone; over it I spread some easily combustible material, of which there was plenty—moss and fibers from the coconut trees. Then I ran my knife through the powder and struck a fire. This made us as happy as our rescue from the sea. If we had only had salt, bread, and a drinking cup, we would have considered ourselves the luckiest fellows in the world, though twenty-four hours before we could have been counted among the most unfortunate. Such is God's faithfulness and mercy toward men. His be the honor in all eternity. Amen.

We caught some of the birds that were all around us, killed,

plucked, and washed them, and stuck them on a wooden spit. I turned the roast while my comrade brought in timber and started building a hut to protect us from rain (which is rather bad for health in this part of the world). To make up for the lack of salt, we seasoned our food with lemon juice.

CHAPTER 20: *They hire a pretty cook, and with God's help they get rid of her*

This was our first meal on the island; having finished it, we collected dry wood to keep up our fire. We would have liked to explore the whole island; but because of exhaustion, sleep pressed in upon us and we slept without interruption until early next morning. Then we followed the brook to the place where it pours into the sea, and we saw with great amazement that a vast number of fish, all the size of medium salmon or large carp, was moving up the sweet water of the little river. It looked like a large herd of hogs crowding ahead. When we also found some bananas and sweet potatoes—both good eating—we thought we had struck it lucky, though we missed four-legged animals and wished we had company to help us enjoy the fruits, fish, and fowl of this island. But we could not find a single sign that men had ever been there.

We were walking along the shore, wondering how to arrange our household and especially how to get pots and pans for cooking, and for fermenting and keeping palm wine so that we could really enjoy it, when out at sea we saw drifting something that we could not make out at that distance, though it looked bigger than it turned out to be. When it came closer and drifted ashore, it turned out to be a half-dead woman. She lay on a box and her hands were stuck through its handles. Christian compassion caused us to pull her ashore; and when we figured out from her clothing and other indications that she must be an Abyssinian Christian, we were all the more anxious to bring her around. Observing the proprieties, as is becoming with honest women, we held her, head

down, until a considerable quantity of water had run out of her. And though we had nothing save lemons with which to revive her, we squirted under her nose the oil contained in the peel, and shook her until finally she began to move and speak in Portuguese. As soon as my comrade heard this, and after a little color had returned to the woman's face, he said to me, "This Abyssinian woman sailed in our ship as the maid of a great Portuguese lady. I knew both of them well. They embarked at Anacao and were headed for Annabon."¹ When the woman heard this, she showed great joy, addressed the carpenter by name, and not only told about her trip but also spoke with amazement at their both being still alive and meeting here, ashore and out of danger. The carpenter asked what might be in the box. She answered that it contained some Chinese cloth, some weapons, and several pieces of china (which had been bought from her mistress' husband as a gift for a great prince in Portugal). We were very glad, because we needed all of these things badly.

After that she asked us to be kind enough to keep her with us: she would cook for us, do the laundry, and generally act as our maid—even be like a slave to us—if only we would protect her and provide her with the necessities of life, as much as good fortune and the nature of this country permitted. With much difficulty the two of us carried the chest to the place we had chosen for our house. There we opened the chest, finding in it goods so practical that, in our present shape and condition, we could not have wished for anything better. We unpacked and dried them in the sun, and our new cook proved very helpful and diligent. After that we butchered poultry, which we boiled and fried. Meanwhile, the carpenter went to get palm cider, while I walked to the nearby mountain to gather eggs, which we used hard-boiled in place of our daily bread. On the way I thankfully contemplated God's gifts and benefices, which his providence had lovingly furnished us and would continue to provide. I prostrated myself and thanked the good Lord with outstretched arms and a

¹ Opposite Cape Lopez on the coast of Guinea.

heart gratefully uplifted. Then I gathered as many eggs as we needed and returned to our hut, where the evening meal was already set out on the very chest that we had fished out of the sea and were now using as a table.

While I had been away getting eggs my comrade (who was twenty-odd years old, while I was over forty) had made an agreement with the cook which was to turn out badly for both him and me. Being alone together, they had talked of old times and the fertility and abundance of this island, which could be called truly blessed; and they had become so close that they were considering marriage. But the Abyssinian girl would not hear of it unless my comrade, the carpenter, got me out of the way and made himself the sole ruler of the island. She said it was impossible to have a happy, peaceful marriage if a single man were around; and she made him consider how suspicion and jealousy would plague him if an old fellow were talking with her every day, though he might never even intend to deceive him. "But I have a better plan," she said. "If I should ever marry and increase the human race on this island, which can easily support a thousand or more people, let the old fellow marry me. Then it's only a matter of some twelve or fourteen years until we'll have a daughter whom you can marry." He would still not be as old as I, and the firm expectation that one would become the other's father-in-law (or son-in-law) would prevent any ill feeling or danger, into which he might otherwise enter. Of course, she would rather have a young man than an old one, but under the circumstances they would have to act as necessity required and play it safe for the sake of herself and the children to be borne by her. This conversation was far longer than I write it here. But it and the quick movements and apparent beauty of the Abyssinian (who looked much more impressive by firelight) so captivated and deluded my good carpenter that he did not mind promising to throw the old fellow—meaning me—into the ocean, for he would sooner ruin the island than give up such a lady as she. That's when they made the agreement I mentioned before. But he was to kill me with his ax while I was unaware or sleeping, for he was afraid of my strength and

my cane, which he himself had made for me, in the shape of a Bohemian earpick.

After such conniving the woman showed my comrade a good bed of clay not far from our hut, and promised to make beautiful pottery from it—just like that of the Indian women who live on the shores of Guinea. She also made all sorts of suggestions as to how she would advance both them and their children, feed them on this island, and provide a peaceful, enjoyable life for a hundred generations to come. She could hardly stop enumerating all the good she would get from the coconut trees; for example, from their fibers she wanted to make clothing for them and her children and grandchildren, and so on.

And now I, poor man, returned, being completely in the dark about their evil agreement and foul business. I sat down to enjoy what had been prepared, and according to Christian custom and praiseworthy tradition I said grace. But as soon as I made the sign of the cross over the food and my table companions and asked for divine blessing, box and cook disappeared with all that had been in the chest. Left behind was a stench so strong that my comrade almost fainted.

CHAPTER 21: *How they dwelt on the island, and how they became accustomed to such a life*

As soon as he had recovered a little and come to his seven senses, he knelt down in front of me, folded his hands, and for perhaps ten minutes repeated nothing but the words, "Ah, father! Ah, brother! Ah, father! Ah, brother!" And while he repeated these, he cried and sobbed and could not utter a single sensible word. I was beginning to think that fright and stench had deprived him of reason. When he did not stop but kept on asking my forgiveness, I demanded, "Dearest friend, what shall I forgive you? You never hurt me. Tell me how I can help you." "I ask your forgiveness," he replied, "for I have sinned against God, against you, and against myself." And then he repeated again and again his previous lament,

until I told him that I knew of nothing sinful in him, but if he had indeed done something that weighed on his conscience, not only would I forgive and forget from the bottom of my heart (as far as it concerned me), but I would also join him in calling on God's mercy and forgiveness. At these words he embraced my legs, kissed my knees, and looked at me so sorrowfully that I fell silent, for I neither knew nor could guess what was the matter. But when I had cheerfully taken him into my arms, embracing him and begging him to tell me what was on his mind and how I might help, he reported in great detail his conversation with the pseudowoman from Abyssinia and the resolve he had made against me, in defiance of God and nature, of Christian love and the oath of true friendship solemnly sworn. And he uttered this with words and gestures that definitely indicated true repentance and a contrite heart.

I consoled him as best I could by saying that God had probably sent us this as a warning so that in the future we might better resist the devil's snares and temptations, and live in constant fear of God. After I had talked with him in this way, he was consoled a little, but he was not satisfied and begged me most humbly to impose a penance for his crime. In order to restore his downcast soul as much as possible, and because he was a carpenter and his ax was still good, I asked him to erect a cross near the place on the shore where we—and the diabolical cook—had landed. This deed would not only be a penance pleasing to God, but in future would also prevent the fiend (who shuns the sign of the holy cross) from invading our island so easily. "Alas!" he answered, "I shall build and erect not only one cross on the plain but also two on the heights, if only I may regain your grace and favor, O father, and may hope for God's forgiveness." He went to work eagerly and did not stop until he had finished the three crosses. We erected one on the seashore, the other two separately on the highest peak of the mountain. The inscription read: *To honor God and in defiance of the enemy of mankind, Simon Meron from Lisbon in Portugal, with the advice and aid of his faithful friend Simplicius Simplicissimus, a Ger-*

man, has made and here in Christian intent erected this token of the passion of our Saviour.

From then on we lived a little more religiously than we had before, and for a calendar I carved a notch in a stick for each day and a cross for Sunday. To keep the Sabbath and celebrate it, we sat together talking of holy and divine matters. I had to use this method of keeping track of time because I had not yet thought of how to record anything verbal without the use of paper and ink.

In concluding this chapter I want to reminisce about something that happened on the evening after our good cook's departure. The first night we had not noticed it, for because of exhaustion and fatigue we had fallen asleep at once. The new event that frightened and distressed us was this: We still had vividly in mind how the accursed fiend, in the guise of the Abyssinian, wanted to destroy us by a thousand sly tricks, and we could not sleep. We lay awake a long time; mostly, we prayed. As it grew dark we saw innumerable lights hovering about us in the air. They shone so brightly that we could tell the difference between leaves and fruit in the trees. Thinking that this might well be another temptation of the devil, we fell silent and kept very quiet. But in time we found that it was a kind of firefly or lightning bug (as we called them back home), which comes from a special sort of rotting wood that is found on the island. These bugs are so bright that they can be used in place of candles. Later I wrote long passages of this book by their light. If they were as common in Europe, Asia, and Africa as they are here, the candlemakers would lose a lot of business.

CHAPTER 22: *Further consequences of such events; how Simon Meron quit life and the island, and how Simplicissimus remained its only master*

Since we saw that we had to stay where we were, we also arranged our housekeeping differently. My companion made

hoes and shovels out of a black wood that becomes almost as hard as iron when it dries out. We used them, first of all, to dig holes for the crosses. Then we made ponds for sea water, in which salt could form (as I had seen in Alexandria, Egypt). Third, we started a pleasant garden, for we considered idleness the beginning of the end. Fourth, we channeled the brook, so that we could direct it as we liked, enabling us to dry up the old bed and thus pick out, with dry hands and feet, so to speak, as many fish and crayfish as we wanted. Fifth, we found extremely good potter's clay next to the brook, and though we had no potter's wheel, or a drill and other tools with which to build one, and though we had never learned this skill, we figured out a way of making what we needed. After we had kneaded and prepared the clay we made it into sausages about as long and thick as British tobacco pipes. We stuck these coils on top of each other like snails and so made pottery vessels—large and small crocks and dishes for cooking and drinking. After the first firing turned out well, we had no more cause to complain about any lack of supplies. And though we had no bread, we had plenty of dried fish, which we now used in its place. In time the scheme of producing salt also succeeded, and then we really had nothing to complain of—we lived like people of the golden age.

Little by little we learned how to make a delicious cake from eggs, dried fish, and lemon peel, by grinding the last two ingredients between two stones to make a tender meal and baking it with grease from the so-called dodo. My partner learned how to make palm wine by gathering the juice in large jars and letting it stand for a few days until it had fermented. Then he drank so much of the stuff that he staggered, and toward the end he did this almost every day, regardless of what I said about it. He argued that the cider turned to vinegar when you let it stand too long; and there's truth in that. When I asked him not to make so much at once, only a sufficient quantity, he answered that to despise God's gifts was sinful; the palm trees had to be tapped, or they would choke on their own juice. I had to let him run the gamut of his de-

sire, or he would have reproached me for grudging him what we had in abundance.

And thus, as I said above, we lived like the first men in earth's golden age, when without the least labor a bountiful heaven produced everything that is good for man. However, as no life in this world is so sweet and happy that at times it is not made bitter by the gall of suffering, so it happened to us, too. Insofar as our household improved daily, to that extent our clothing deteriorated from day to day until it rotted on our bodies. Fortunately, until now we had never noticed any winter, not even the least cold, though at the time at which we began to go naked, we had been on the island more than a year and a half, according to my tally. At all times the weather was like that of Europe during May and June, except that about August or a little earlier we had hard rains and thunderstorms. From one solstice to the other the length of days never varied more than an hour and a quarter. Although we were by ourselves on the island, still we did not want to go naked like brute animals but wished to be clothed like European Christians. If we had had quadrupeds, we could have used their skins for covering; lacking them, we skinned large birds, like penguins and dodoes, and made ourselves trousers. But because we had neither the tools nor the necessary chemicals to prepare the skins, they turned hard, became uncomfortable, and deteriorated before we knew it. The coconut palms furnished us with enough fibers, but we could not spin or weave them. My pal, who had been in India for several years, showed me a spine like a sharp thorn on the tips of leaves. If it is broken off and pulled along the stalk of the leaf (more or less as is done with string beans), then there remains connected to the thorn a thread as long as the leaf which can be used in place of a needle and thread. This gave me an opportunity to make trousers from leaves, which I sewed together with thread from their own growth.

While we were living together in this manner and had progressed to the point where we had no reason to complain

about overwork, waste, want, or trouble, my comrade daily drank his palm toddy, as he had become used to it, until finally his liver and lights became inflamed; and before I knew it he quit me, the island, and the palm wine by reason of an early death. I buried him as best I could, and while contemplating the inconstancy of human beings and similar topics, I made him the following epitaph:

The reason I am here and not at sea,
Nor yet in hell, is that there fought for me
Three things: the first was raging ocean;
The second, mankind's fiend, hell's cruel Satan.
These two I did escape with help of God;
But palm wine put me underneath the sod.

Thus I became the sole master of the island, and once more I began the life of a hermit. For this I had not only ample opportunity but also a stubborn will and determination. To be sure, I made use of the gifts and goods of the place (for I was grateful for God's mercy and omnipotence that had granted me such abundance); but I also tried my best not to misuse these riches. I often wished that some of those honest Christians who had to suffer want elsewhere might be present to enjoy the bountiful gifts of God; but since I knew well that it would be easily possible for God (if that were his will) to transport any number of human beings to this place, by means more miraculous than the one by which I had come here, I humbly thanked him and his divine providence for caring for me like a father and placing me in this serene situation ahead of thousands of others.

CHAPTER 23: *The hermit concludes his story and makes an end of these six books*

My comrade had not been dead a week when I noticed a spook near my abode. All right, Simplicius, I thought, you are alone. Why shouldn't the Evil One dare to trouble you?

Don't you imagine this malicious mischief-maker enjoys making life hard for you? Why do you let him disturb you, when God is your friend?

For a few days I walked around with such thoughts; they helped me considerably and made me more pious. I was expecting an encounter with the evil spirit, but this time I was mistaken; for one evening when I heard something suspicious I stepped out of my hut, and there by a rock wall, near the largest spring of the brook that runs from the mountain into the sea, I saw my comrade standing and scrabbling with his fingernails in the cracks of the cliff. I was considerably frightened, but I took courage, made the sign of the cross, commended myself to God's protection, and went to the ghost. I thought that since I would have to do it eventually, today was as good a time as any. I used words that are customary on such occasions, and I soon found out that while still alive my late companion had hidden his ducats there, thinking he'd get them out and take them with him when, sooner or later, a ship came to the island. He also gave me to understand that he had relied on this amount of money more than on God for getting home. This was why he had been punished with restlessness after death and been forced to cause me trouble, for which he was sorry. At his request I took out the money, which I valued at less than nothing. (Since I could use it for nothing, one may easily believe me.)

This was my first fright while alone. Later, ghosts other than this one troubled me, but I want to say nothing of that. With God's help and mercy I got to the point where I no longer noticed any enemy except my own thoughts, which were most variable, for thoughts are hard to control, being scot-free; yet in time a reckoning even of these will have to be made.

In order to have my account less heavily charged with sin, I tried to avoid what did not improve me, but I also assigned myself a daily physical task, which I had to do along with my usual prayers. For just as man is born for work (as a bird for flight), so idleness causes illness of body and soul and, in the

end, when one least expects it, death. Therefore, I made a garden, though I needed it less than a wagon needs a fifth wheel, since the whole island could justly have been called a lovely pleasure-garden. Nor was my work good for anything but introducing a more complete order here and there, though many a person would have considered the natural disorder of the plants far more charming. But as I said, it did away with idleness.

Oh, how often I wished for books of spiritual instruction; after I had tired my body and needed rest, I wished to console, edify, and delight myself. But books were not to be had. Now, since I had read in some holy author that the whole wide world is a great book, in which he recognized the wondrous works of God and through which he was encouraged to praise him, I remembered the crown of Christ when I saw a thorny bush; when I saw an apple or a pomegranate, I thought of the fall of our first parents and mourned it; when I drew palm cider from a tree, I imagined how my Saviour had mercifully spilled his blood for me; when I saw a mountain or the sea, I recalled the miracles our Lord had worked in these places, or his experiences there; when I picked up a rock to throw, I visualized how the Jews wanted to stone him; when I was in my garden, I thought of the anxious prayer on the Mount of Olives or of Christ's grave and how he had appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden, after the Resurrection, and so on. Such thoughts were my daily occupation: I never ate without thinking of the Last Supper, and I never cooked my food without reminding myself of the eternal pains of hell.

At last I found that I could write very well on large palm fronds with the juice of lemons mixed with that of Brazil wood (of which tree there are several kinds on this island). This greatly delighted me, for now I could take notes and write down prayers. While regretfully considering my entire life, all the nasty tricks I had played since the days of my childhood, and how a merciful God, disregarding all my coarse sins, had until now not only preserved me from eternal

damnation but even granted me the time and the chance to better myself, to convert, to ask his forgiveness, and to thank him for his kindness, I wrote down everything that came to my mind in the book that I made from palm fronds. This, together with my comrade's ducats, I put in a place where people who might sometime come here would find it and be able to tell who had previously inhabited this island. If someone should find the book and read it (sooner or later, before or after my death), I beg him not to take offense if he should find words in it unbecoming to the mouth, not to mention the pen, of a person bent on improvement. Let him remember that the telling of easygoing stories requires easygoing words. An honest Christian reader will marvel all the more, and praise God's mercy, when he finds out that, for all this, such a rogue as I received enough of God's grace to withdraw from the world and live in such condition that he may hope to find eternal glory and by the sufferings of our Redeemer to attain everlasting bliss and a blessed

End.

CHAPTERS 24-27: *Summary*

[The last four chapters constitute a report written by John Cornelissen, a Dutch sea captain from Haarlem for a friend in Germany:

[On the way from the Moluccas to the Cape of Good Hope, bad weather separates Cornelissen's ship from the others in the fleet. While looking for St. Helena, Cornelissen sights an island marked by two crosses on its highest point, though the maps show no land at all in that part of the ocean. A boat, sent to investigate, returns with water, fresh poultry, and quantities of fresh fruit. The only inhabitant of the island has retreated into an inaccessible cave. He is thought to be an outcast and probably insane. Further exploration reveals that pious messages, mottos in various languages, and crosses are attached to trees or carved into their bark. When a grave and a third cross are found, the sailors call the place the Island of the Crosses.

[A number of sailors now start behaving like madmen, and the captain determines to speak with the hermit in the cave. The second attempt to penetrate into the cavern is no more successful than the first: flares and torches go out, and only when the men are at the point of complete frustration does the hermit shout at them. The invaders, he tells them, are welcome to everything the island offers, but after what happened yesterday he is afraid for his safety. It turns out that the first group of sailors had looted and destroyed Simplicius' hut and threatened his life. The ship's chaplain apologizes and asks advice on curing the madness of the sailors. The hermit assures the captain and his men that he is ready to repay evil with good, and after he has been promised that he will not be taken off to Europe and that the location of the island will not be revealed, he appears, shakes hands all around, and guides them out of the cave. The light he uses comes from

dried specimens of big lightning bugs, which he has fastened all over himself.

[The madness among the sailors has increased so much that now hardly a sane man is left. They are given the kernels of the plumlike fruit that induced the madness in the first place, and within the hour all are normal again. The chaplain calls the men together and gives them a stern lecture on looting. Thereupon the sailor who has stolen Simplicius' most precious possession, the palm-leaf book, returns it together with the thirty ducats in cash which he had also taken. Simplicius gives the book to Captain Cornelissen as a personal gift and asks him to distribute the money among the poor of Haarlem.

[Simplicius is very skillful in treating and nursing the ship's sick. His help is as much appreciated as he enjoys giving it, but to show their gratitude, the officers invite him to a sumptuous meal. Unlike any German Cornelissen had known, Simplicius eats only the plainest food and drinks water instead of wine. He states his reasons for refusing to return: When he left Europe the place was filled with war, arson, murder, pillage, rape, and fornication. But when God took away these evils, removed plagues and famine, and once more sent noble peace to profit the poor people, there arose all sorts of vices such as voluptuousness, gluttony, drinking, gambling, whoring, sodomy, and adultery which drew the whole swarm of the other vices after them. The worst of it is that there is no hope of improvement because every one thinks he is a good Christian when he goes to church once a week at best and to communion once a year. Simplicius is afraid that God who had shown him the grace of putting him on the island would treat him like Jonah if he tried to leave it after dwelling there for fifteen years. On the island he has freedom from want and vain desires. When the captain asks him whether he is not afraid to die there alone, he answers that the absence of men does not disturb him so long as God is with him.

[After all the sick have recovered and supplies have been taken aboard the merchantman, Cornelissen sets sail on the sixth day and rejoins his fleet at St. Helena. Before leaving, the

ship's carpenters rebuild Simplicius' hut and the captain gives him a burning glass which he has requested for making fire from the rays of the sun. They also leave behind an ax, a shovel and a hoe, two bolts of cotton cloth, a dozen knives, a pair of scissors, two copper pots, and a pair of rabbits, to see if they will multiply on the island.]

The End