



TO NORA MAVOURNEEN

Mary Celestia Bell

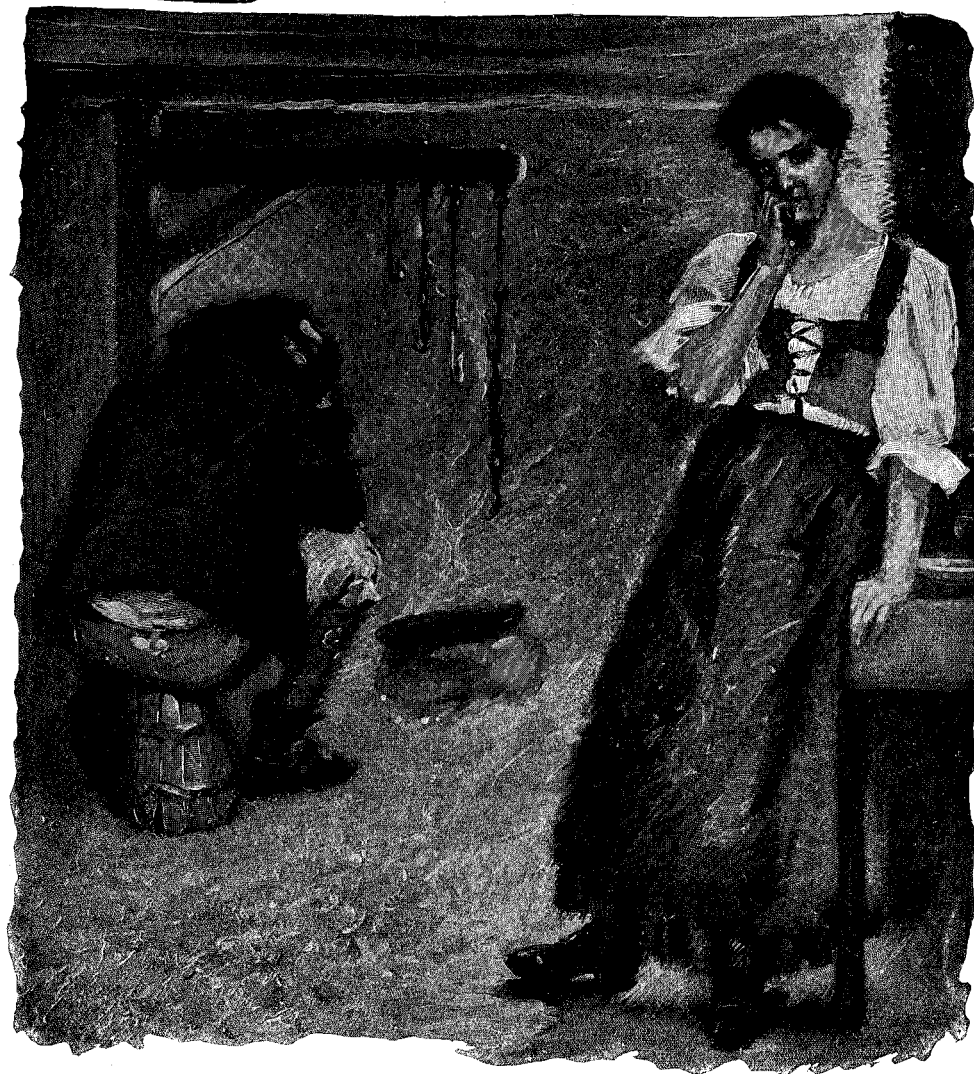
O BLESSIN's on the old days
 ☞ When joy was to the fore,
 With praties sweetly blossomin'
 ☞ Ferninst the cabin door ;
 An' we to foot it on the green
 ☞ With neither scrip nor shoon,—
 For you was just a sweet colleen,
 ☞ An' I a gay gossoon.

An' sure a merrier ne'er grew up
 ☞ Beneath old Erin's sky ;
 'Twas just to get the bite an' sup,
 ☞ An' let the world go by.
 'Twas just with you to dance an' sing
 ☞ To some glad Irish tune,—
 For you was but a sweet colleen,
 ☞ An' I a gay gossoon.





An' blessin's on the black days
 ☞A-streelin' o'er the sky ;
 No praties in the ash-bed,
 ☞No creature in the sty.
 The hunger kep' us broad awake
 ☞To dance beneath the moon,—
 For you was just a sweet colleen,
 ☞An' I a gay gossoon.



The ROMANCE of CHRISTMAS ISLAND

By Sturgis B. Rand.



TRUE STORY OF A RECENTLY-DISCOVERED "TREASURE ISLAND."

NOTHING so enthralls the imagination, especially the fresh imagination of a boy, as the thought of an island set far out in the lonely waste of a southern sea. Palms rise first from over the horizon's edge; then the long, low beaches of sand appear, with the surf thundering upon them; the sea-birds clatter at the strange sight of a sail; perhaps the black, sprawling ribs of some ancient wreck rise above the smothering sand, and beyond that, leading down from the tufted palms, are the footprints of a savage. Who knows what pirates have careened their ships in that half-hidden harbor, or what rough men, bearded, heads bound with red kerchiefs, pistols in sash, have there been marooned, and have stood gazing out to sea for a sail. A far-sea island is the open door to all romance. How well Robert Louis Stevenson, who was always a boy in imagination and all too briefly a man in years, knew that door. How he loved a sea island! And where is the boy who would not give his birthright to have been on the "Hispaniola" when she first sighted "Treasure Island"! And what is the charm of

"Robinson Crusoe" and "Swiss Family Robinson" and "Sindbad the Sailor," of Poe at his best, and Marryat and Cooper, and all those other robust story-tellers who have made life worth living—what but a sea island!

And yet not one of these giants among writers has ever, in all the ocean of imagination, sighted an island more strangely wonderful than that the true story of which I shall set down in this place. For Christmas Island is remarkable in ways that the story-teller never dreamed of. It is an island of modern romance—the kind of romance which will absorb the interest of the boy of half a century hence. No pirates ever landed on the shore of Christmas Island, for its shores are too rough and forbidding to tempt even a hardy sailor; no barefooted savage ever left a footprint on its beaches, for until a few years ago no human voice was ever heard among its higher hills; no sailors were ever there marooned, nor gold buried.

Vessels bound down through the Straits of Sunda, making for the Cocos or Keeling Islands, the pearl fisheries of West Australia, or some other far place, sometimes, on the