**Unsustainable**

**Part 2**

**Genesis**

Noah & Lorette had arrived at Ellesmere Island 3 years before. This territory had been claimed by Greenland – which had become an international power as its underground was rich in every kind of unexploited mineral resources. Canada had asserted its rights to the possession of this island as it was its legal territory. But such wasn’t Russia’s opinion. This country had always been ruled by tyrants - from *Ivan the Terrible* in the 16th century & even before to *Leonid Brejnev* in the 20th – 5 centuries of despotism are enough to forge a country & its conquered neighbours’ mentality.

But Noah & Lorette were still on Canadian soil & could profit from national funds for their researches about “endangered” species. And they were fast disappearing because of the nuclear radiations let out in the atmosphere by all the nuclear plants that had been damaged by the “*Big One*” in California. Moreover, this pollution had extended to the Pacific Ocean waters. Noah & Lorette were extremely pleased to have been the first to preserve the DNA of unpolluted animal species just after *the Big* *One.*

Raving news came over every day from “down under”. Life was becoming extinct in America & lots of species were inexorably disappearing. Noah & Lorette had only had time to preserve the marine species & a few terrestrial mammals’ DNA. But, of course, not every species’. That was what disturbed them. They thought they were more or less endowed with the preservation of all the animal species on earth!

 

**Aftermaths**

Denis Papin, a Frenchman, invented the steam engine at the end of the 17th century & Joseph Cugnot, another Frenchman created the 1st automobile prototype – the “*fardier*” to transport heavy loads – before the Revolution in 1789. Then came the *Industrial Revolution,* in Great Britain first & Robert Stephenson created the first locomotive & railway lines at the beginning of the 19th century. In those times, Man had started polluting the Earth’s atmosphere. Then, coaches & six were gradually replaced by the first automobiles. At the beginning of the 20th century, each car was unique & motorists had to forge a new part if they had a breakdown.

At that time, a genius had the great idea of inventing the *assembly line* on which specialized workers would assemble all the parts of a car model. Henry Ford had been inspired by his readings of F.W.Taylor, an American engineer & economist who had invented fast-cutting steels & - mainly - the organization of work. The first automobile assembly-line appeared at the beginning of the 20th century at the *Ford factories* in Detroit (Michigan). This city – which witnessed the birth of automation - had never recovered from the 2011 economic slump & had become deserted.

Henry Ford’s example gave birth to lots of disciples all over Europe. The gas to fuel all these new engines was first found in Texas where J.D. Rockefeller made a fortune. That was the beginning of exhaust gases & fumes.

Coal has always been a means of heating. Layers of coal appear at the surface on Norhtumberland beaches & the people there have always been accustomed to collecting coal to heat their homes ever since prehistoric times. England’s *Black Country’s* systematic exploitation began with the *Industrial* *Revolution*, at the end of the 18th century. Lots of workers were sweated to death – in Northern France & Lorraine as well – lots of them died of silicose. Coal burning is 5 times more devastatingthan oil burning. The USA - & especially China - is the biggest coal-burners on earth. Coal is often used to fuel nuclear plants.

Anyway, the atmosphere was polluted at Ellesmere by all the past mistakes of Noah & Lorette’s ancestors. But it wasn’t the worst.

 

The Americans, in their quest for happiness which – inspired in that by such French philosophers as Jean-Jacques Rousseau or Voltaire (“*every individual is endowed with* *a right to the pursuit of happiness*”) had developed well-being at its utmost as early as the 20th century, using air-conditioning in their homes as well as in their automobiles. CFCs (carbon fluor combustibles) proved, after 50 years, to be the worst cause of the hole in the ozone layer over the North Pole. Along with the development of consumption, lots of fridges started to appear (“*Frigidair*” is another French invention). Unfortunately, those devices are CFC-gas-overproducing for it’s the essence of their use: preserving food by refrigerating it. The people at the end of the 19th century started living in apartments & the need of such devices started to soar up in the mid-1950s for it was part of *the* American Dream*: “A big house, a pink Cadillac & a fridge”* as ElvisPresley used to say (lol!)

So, the CO2 (carbon dioxide), CFCs & nuclear energy cocktail had destroyed the north-western civilization based on capitalism & ever-growing exhaustion of our planet. Animals had become mere consumption products on legs. Children were educated apart from the reality of this world & had become mean – they didn’t even know that the meat they ate in great profusion came from animals which were grown on pastures which had been cleared off of their soil-protecting primal forest. They had no notion of how to respect Nature – though they were taught in class - & they polluted without being conscious of their mischiefs.

The Northern hemisphere world had come to an end.

 

Noah & Lorette listened to the news on board every day. People were dying in the USA because of the atomic radiations emanating from havocked nuclear plants. Same thing in Europe where terrorists had blown up a nuclear plant near Paris. Unfortunately, there had been floods upstream the river Seine & its tributaries, caused by the greenhouse effect & the hole in the ozone layer. The reservoirs on the Aube, Marne & Seine – which flows through Paris – had been filled up to their utmost of their capacities & dams had yielded under the water pressure in the “*Orient Forest Lake”*: the oldest reservoir on the river Seine, dug in the mid-1950s to regulate the flow of this river & prevent the floods in Paris. Troyes, the former capital of Champagne Province & residence of lots of Templar Knights during the middle-ages, had been badly damaged: the aftermath of the melting of the ice-cap as Champagne is located just under the North Pole. Farewell! the Champagne vineyards that are France’s commercial shopwindow & whose wine is tasted all over the world! (“*the king of wines & wine of* *kings*”) Noah & Lorette had kept a few bottles of that celebration wine in their “*Ark”* & reserved it for a special event.

Noah & Lorette had enough animal DNA to reconstitute a small part of the animal population now. But what was the use of refueling the world with animal species while it was overpolluted from exhaust gases, CFCs & nuclear emanations? They liked *Ellesmere* but it was doomed to extinction because of the past mistakes of the former leaders & politicians of the Northern hemisphere (Great Britain, France, the USA, Canada, China…) The best for them would be to sail down to the South Pole where pollution had not been so devastating as there were no major political powers in that hemisphere.

“*The Ark’s* “”nuclear battery had been reloaded & could have crossed the universe! That made Noah & Lorette think that they had been endowed with the mission of preserving the “*life from before*” & transmit it down to the South Pole.

 

**Odyssey**

After the winter season, the ice had molten at Ellesmere & they weighed off anchor on spring day 2031. Lorette was pregnant & they decided to leave the Arctic & its boreales. That season marked the end of the polar night & life was resuming its rights. Flocks of penguins were nesting their chicks, herds of debonaire-looking walruses with their fangs out ready to defend their calves, looked like caring, loving parents. They sailed along the coast of Greenland, often on the deck of their “*Ark*”, admiring the last glaciers, whole parts of which fell into the waters of the Arctic Ocean with the noise of a crumbling mountain collapsing under the effect of the greenhouse effect. They sometimes had to dive below the surface because there could be some kinds of mini tsunamis. All along the Greenland coast, big icebergs fell down from the inlandsis & started drifting southward, carrying with them whole colonies of seals, albatros, even some polar bears. These species – whose DNA had been preserved by Noah & Lorette – were condemned to death.

They sailed –or rather let themselves drift south by the Labrador stream - past *Baffin Island*, almost the size of Scandinavia. They soon reached the coast of Labrador, famous for its dogs – a crossbreed between *Newfoundland & St Hubert*. This part of eastern Canada strangely bore a Spanish name because some Spanish cod-fishers had settled there during the 19th century. They trained their dogs to bring back the fishing nets.

Carried along by the *Labrador Stream*, they enjoyed the early spring sun, sometimes having short excursions on the coast to take some DNA of inland species such as cariboos, mooses, elks, arctic foxes, fishing eagles, arctic geese, cranes & many others which they hadn’t yet repertoried. They were perhaps the last human beings on earth to be able to observe the northern hemisphere’s wildlife & they took lots of clichés. These incursions on the mainland were also, for them, the opportunity to gather a few plants & berries as they were a little fed up with the course of diet pills they consumed every day. This way, they recovered a little humanity; the taste of past things that would never be recovered. There were lots of cranberries in this region & they could film the last cranes eating to their stomachs’ content, a reminiscence of their past *Thanksgivings*. They sometimes cried at the view of the cranes which ate their favourite food & needed to rest a little on their way from the Arctic regions to Mexico to restore their strength. These birds were incredible, flying like an Armada for miles & miles without losing their goal. There must be something in Nature to orient them! They shed tears at the view of those big birds - the size of an ostrich - which would not survive (along with lots of other terrestrial species)

After sailing past the coast of Labrador, they arrived at the Saint-Lawrence estuary, discovered by French explorator *Jacques Cartier* in 1535, under the reign of French King *Francis I.* The French had got “*some acres of snow*” in Canada as Louis XV used to say, but they were ousted from North America by the British during the C*olonial Wars* at the beginning of the 18th century. Actually, France never saw the advantage of possessing a colonial empire as there are lots of resources in France while there are little in Great Britain. That’s why the British had always wanted to conquer the world & impose their conception of order (*British imperialism*) for they felt economically inferior to France & Spain. Who knows if a French or Spanish-dominated world at the end of the 19th century, at the time of Queen Victoria, had not been different from what it was in 2031?

They filmed the sperm whales’ love parade in the *Saint-Lawrence estuary* as it was the mating season. There, the Saint-Lawrence continental lukewarm waters blend into the icy-cold waters from the Arctic. They were moved to tears when listening (& probably recording for the last time) the famous sperm whales’ love cries. They stayed for about 2 weeks in the Saint-Lawrence estuary, filming, observing & crying. Lorette’s pregnancy had started at Xmas the previous year & they were even more sensitive to the spectacle…

 

After weighing anchor for 2 weeks at *Anticosti Island* in the middle of St Lawrence Estuary – a part of French-speaking Quebec Province whose capital city is Montreal, founded by Marguerite Bourgeois & De Chomedey, missionaries from Champagne – Noah & Lorette sailed off with great reluctance. They considered that this part of North America was a great sanctuary of animal species. But they thought they were endowed with a mission!

They sailed along *Nova Scotia’s* coastline, then reached US waters. They sailed past the coast of Massachussetts where, more than 400 years before, *the Pilgrim Fathers* had first met the Wampanoag Indian tribe on 21st November 1620 & asked them for help as they were completely destitute & it was the beginning of winter. The Canadians also celebrated that communion with the Amerindians whose territory they had stolen, moved ahead by the” *whites’ manifest destiny”.*

They sailed past Boston, one the first cities to be founded by *the Pilgrim Fathers* & soonreached *Cape Cod Bay & Nantucket Island*, from where whaling ships used to weigh off anchoras told byHerman Melville *in “Moby Dick”.* The coastal sideline you can observe from a bird’s eye view just after you leave *JFK airport* had totally disappeared & there were no longer inland waters; they had been swallowed by the Ocean. It was a miracle for *Nantucke*t *Island* not to have been eradicated protected by *Cape Cod*.

They soon reached *Long Island* – famous to all air passengers from Europe for it warns them that the aircraft is going to start her landing on *JFK airport*. It had considerably reduced in size (more than one half according to Lorette) but she had only flown once to NYC with her godmother for her 10th birthday.

They sailed – getting tanned in the nude under the early spring sun (but it’s mainly the spray which turned them as tawny as old buccaneers. Noah had nothing on him (nor Lorette). They only wore head scarves (maybe like their biblical ancestors). There was no one on the Ocean & they were surprised at the sight of “*The Statue of Liberty”* hip-deep in the water. Her gold-torch was hanging low. Her gold flame had been re-covered in gold by French artisans in 1984, a well-deserved lift-up after 100 years in the middle of NYC’s bay where *Miss Liberty’s* copper ironsheet covering GustaveEiffel’s infrastructure, erected in *1884* had become green. It was a present from Napoleon III French Second Empire’s regime which intervened in Mexico during the revolution. Napoleon I’s nephew seemed to have taken the scope of the American continent’s importance. But it was too late to restore French imperialism in America. The French were ousted from Mexico as they had been from Canada & India.

They drifted past the New Jersey shores. *Atlantic City’*s casinos had almost completely disappeared because of the irretrievable rising of the ocean level due to the melting of the Arctic Cap (ever since the “*Kyoto Treatise”* in 1981, neither the USA nor China had wanted to limit their race to power & the conquest of our planet).

They sailed past the *Delaware Peninsula* – whose southern part had disappeared under the waters.

After getting dressed, they paid a visit to President Abraham Lincoln’s colossal statue & walked down *Constitution Avenue* down to the *Capitol (or White House).* But how long would that symbol of American Liberty stay intact?

After getting back on their “*Ark*”, they were somewhat optimistic as the symbol of freedom in America had not disappeared. Actually, that man- born on a boat on the *Mississippi River*- had graduated to becoming a lawyer & had the audacity to proclaim the end of slavery for Black people. He was assassinated 2 years later because of his progressive ideas.

 

They sailed down the *Chesepeake Bay* down to Maryland – the first region to be conquered by the British under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I - & noticed that the southernmost tip of the peninsula had been overwhelmed by the waters of the Atlantic. They were beginning to think that they had been inspired by an immanent force (a sort of divinity like in ancient Greek tragedies). The difference was that they didn’t want to end up in death or suicide like those ancient heroes. They were themselves: modern day heroes who were trying to save up the planet by preserving animal identities. Vegetal species could still grow anywhere & thrive thanks to the almost unlimited pollen reproductive power (some 10 000 year-old still-genetically unchanged barley grains were found back in some Egyptian sarcophagi).

They were southbound to *Cape Hatteras* from where whaling ships used to start from. But the *Pimlico Sound* coastline (that beachy head between sea & land had forever disappeared).

They were no longer accustomed to the sun after 2 years spent at the North Pole. After sailing along the Carolinas Coasts (southern American states settled by big estate owners at the time of *the Rump* *Parliament* & after the British Puritan Revolution in 1651), they soon reached the Florida Peninsula.

No more bathers on those once so-crowded paradisiac beaches – a dream for Noah & Lorette who could get integrally-tanned on the deck of “*the Ark”*. Miami beaches – where most stars pictures were taken a few years before – were completely submerged.

They sailed along the Florida coast. “*Cape Canaveral’s JFK’s Space Center”* had been flooded by the unsustainable progress of the Atlantic Ocean, causing lots of populations – among which the *Seminole* Amerindian tribe– to reach highlands to survive. *The* *Seminoles* had always survived to the Whites’ invasion & never concluded any treatise with their invaders, surviving on their marshy lands first, then selling artisanal clothes & lots of other items to the tourists & other retired people who came there to enjoy the sun & end up their lives peacefully. They had made such a fortune in 2006 that they were able to purchase NYC’s *Time Square* “*Hard Rock Café*”. Their spokesman had even declared that his kin would purchase back all Manhattan’s *Hard Rock Cafés* “plant after plant”. They had eventually been vanquished… not by the white men but by the havoc the latter had caused. Their swampy lands at the southern tip of Florida, an alligators’ & other species’ paradise had been irremediably conquered by the Mexico Gulf salty waters - forever…

After crossing the *Straits of Florida (*they crossed the wake of a few illegal emigrants from Haiti or Cuba drifting on their nutshells. They hadn’t yet understood that *the American Dream* was done & over. But Noah & Lorette were sailing in the opposite direction & couldn’t tell them what they had seen. They soon reached Cuba. Havana’s northernmost districts were flooded (which caused even more emigration to the USA: a sort of tradition in this country which used to be under US influence at the beginning of the 20th century & almost triggered out a 3rd world war when USSR’s communist regime invaded *Hogs Bay* in 1961. Fidel Castro had got hold of the leadership & reigned almost 50 years after a military putsch. His brother Raul was still at the command of this biggest island of the Caribbeans. But what could he do against the inexorable rise of the Atlantic Ocean? Icebergs were floating off the Cuban shores & caused lots of shipwrecks.

 

There were 3 month left before Lorette’s baby’s birth. After sailing off the western head of Cuba Island, past *Cape San Antonio*, they debouched into the *Yucatan Channel*. In the distance, they could make out Mexican *Cancun* *City* where a G9 had taken place 20 years before (they were very young). The parleys between the 9 great leaders had been disturbed by angry protesters & there had been riots. They had watched TV dox about the failure of the discussions between the states who were members of the top 9 at the time & couldn’t prevent themselves from thinking that a great part of what was happening had its origins in that Mexican city.

 They sailed in the same stripped way, enjoying the summer tropical sun. Their route led them off *La Isla de la Juventud (Island of youth)* along the southern shore which had been protected from the melting of the ice cap. They could see people working on the plantations (an ancestral job on this island) waving at them & they waved back from their vessel. The women were bearing their newborns on their backs & working at cane-cutting for the rum production. Nothing could seem to alter the good mood of these slaves’ descendants. There was still life on this planet & it moved them to laughters as they saw how these people – under a dictatorship that caused an embargo from the USA as early as 1961 – coud still enjoy the mere fact of being alive despite all their difficulties.

They were now in the *Caribbean Sea* – also called *Sargasso Sea* - limited north westernly by the *Greater* *Antilles* (Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola & Puerto Rico) & the *Lesser Antilles* (Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Saint-Kitts & Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, Barbados, Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago). Some of them were composed of tiny islands inhabited by billionaires who had purchased properties from offshore paradises where they could deposit their money in all safety.

In colonial times, this region had been coveted by lots of imperialist powers (GB, France, The United Provinces, Spain).Sea wars had been declared for the possession of these corsair paradises where black slaves were shipped after the colons had killed all the Amerindian original dwellers whom they often didn’t consider as human beings. These tiny islands had become, some 250 years later the refuge of another sort of adventurers. No more seafarers such as Morgan (*Blackbeard) -* of accursed memory - inthese parts. They had led the way open to another kind of adventurers: the finance sharks.

As they came closer to the *Cayman Islands* – a former *Blackbeard* hiding place - they could see lots of sandy beaches & yachts. They didn’t feel like waving at those rich holidaymakers & headed to Jamaica, the *“reggae & rastaquere’s island*” from where Jimmy Cliff - & Bob Marley a little later on - had imported their traditional music to the UK. It was estimated that more Jamaicans lived in London than on their island. They had started emigrating ever since the end of the 1950s as they didn’t need a passport as they were considered as Commonwealth British subjects.

They sailed along the coast of *Hispaniola Island,* first discovered *by Christopher Columbus* in 1492. This island was divided in two: a French-speaking part at the west & a Spanish-speaking part at the east. This island had been monickered “*the Island of Slaves*” before the French Revolution in 1789 because the French slave traders imported slaves from the western African coasts to work on the cane sugar plantations & the French possessed the whole island after conquering it from the Spaniards during the 30 years war in the 17th century. An African slave had a maximum life expectancy of 10 years if he was in good health & could work all day like an animal.

Perchance, some land-owners seemed to be endowed with a touch of humanity (probably due to Voltaire & Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s works such as “*Candide*”, “*Zadig*” or “*La Nouvelle Héloïse*”) which they had read. That’s how *Toussaint l’Ouverture,* a Black slave of Haiti, got affranchised by his master who had taught him how to read & write & he endowed Toussaint (*Whitsun* in English probably because he had been born on a 1st of November) with a small property.

After the French Revolution – at a time when France’s *Directoire & Triumvirat* were busy defending the borders of the fatherland in danger of being invaded by all its neighbours – The Spaniards tried to reconquer Hispaniola as they considered – justly – that it was their right. That’s when *Toussaint l’Ouverture* started to push back the Spaniards to the East. In 2031, the isle was divided into 2 parts: a western French-speaking part & an eastern Spanish-speaking part.

After his victory over the Spaniards, *Toussaint* had sailedto France *&* got the independenceof all theslaves of Haiti at the *Directoire Assembly* in Paris. He became the Governor of Haiti. There were even French opera singers who sang In Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital. Unluckily, Napoleon I re-established the aristocratic French regime (creating counts & dukes & marquesses to thank his war heroes) & suppressed the abolition of slavery in Haiti. In the name of “*Liberty, equality, fraternity*” - which is the French Republic’s motto - & the same banner (from which he had the white colour ripped off as it was the colour of aristocracy), he decided to fight against the Napoleonic troops which had been sent from France to re-establish the former regime, now called *“Premier Empire*”.

Eventually, *Toussaint l’Ouverture* was betrayed & sold to the imperialist army Napoleon had sent over by his own headquarters. He had to face a fake trial (which was customary at the time of the French Revolution after the “*Terror*” period at the beginning of the 1790s). He was found guilty of conspiration against Napoleon (he was not the only one) & sent to a jail in Jura (not the Scottish island but the French mountains) where he died because he had probably contracted consumption (a very common disease at that time).

A book about “*Toussaint l’Ouverture*” had been purchased on the island by Lorette who had French-speaking ancestors from Quebec. She had heard of it & translated it to Noah who loved hearing her beloved translating that story. Noah had never heard about that French-speaking hero & thought that he was equal to MLK, Rosa Parks & Nelson Mandela concerning the fight for the equality of rights.

 

They spent 2 weeks coasting from a tiny inlet to another. There were no serpents endemic to that region. They mainly analysed birds from their eggs & giant sea turtles, all sorts of fishes like barracuda & eels (but they could walk on earth). All the eels in the world seemed to have a mating appointment in the *Sargasso Sea*. It was their migration place. They also caught some - for they were in profusion - to fry them (especially the small ones) to compensate for some nutrients which their diet pills couldn’t. They sailed past *Puerto Rico*, an American territory conquered from Spain in 1898, under Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency. Then, they had a 2 day on-shore excursion to visit *Saint Kitts & Montserrat* English speaking islands – former members of the Commonwealth. It was so fun to see all those welcoming people. In addition, their accent was so loveable as was the accent of all the other people living in the West Indies (English-speaking Caribbean people).

Then they sailed past Guadeloupe, a French *départment* (the equivalent of a British county). This island had seen the rebellion of the black slaves under the reign of French King Louis XIV which had been repressed with an utmost cruelty around 1685. France then enacted “*The Black Code*” to prevent any further revolt in its “*Antilles*” colonies. Martinique (*the island of rum*) had suffered the same course of rebellions & was also a French “*department*”. They disembarked at Fort-de-France to buy fruits & vegetables as they had heard of the incredible ambiance of Martinican markets & were positively enraptured by the good mood of the *Créoles*. The mulattos there spoke a bizarre sort of French lingo & lorette – who spoke French with a Canadian accent from Quebec – couldn’t help bursting out in laughter at the intonations, accompanied by gestures & mimics from the natives. They left the island in high spirits, Lorette trying to imitate the lingo of the people on the market & the pittoresque women she had seen in their motley attire! If there was a paradise on Earth, it was certainly there, in Martinique!

They coasted all along the way to *Trinidad & Tobago,* getting DNA from birds, sea reptiles, fishes, seals, walruses, sea lions, otters. That region was especially rich in animal species & they were beginning to think that they looked like their biblical ancestors.

They landed at Port of Spain (capital city of *Trinidad & Tobago*) on summer day 2031, after a 3-month odyssey. This island was a melting pot of all the races in itself: it was first peopled by Caribbean Indians (almost all exterminated by white settlers), then came the blacks to work on the plantation. In 1838, slavery was abolished &, from that time on, Indians settled in these islands to somewhat replace the black workforce, made illegal by the British Parliament’s decree. Noah & Lorette were great fans of Nicki Minaj who had been born on this beautiful island & had made her début in the USA some 20 years before.

They left *Trinidad* regretfully. They had so much loved the Calypso music originally played with stick on old oil barrels recovered from the ocean that had landed on the beaches & the dancers on stilts celebrating the coming of the summer season that they promised one another to come back one day (provided these island were not flooded by the Atlantic).

Noah & Lorette had collected lots of animal species by now but no serpents as they had coasted in regions that were devoid of them. It was their dearest wish to get DNA from snakes. It was fulfilled as they sailed past Guyana, Suriname & French Guyana (one of the 3 French departments along with Martinique, Guadeloupe & Ile de la Réunion & Mayotte in the Pacific Ocean). There, the rainforest & rare essences had not so much suffered from uncontrolled deforestation as in Amazonia. It was a little dangerous to get DNA from hatched Anaconda eggs from which the little animal was ready to come out. More than once, they had to retreat & hurry back for safety to “*the Ark”.* Those reptileswere really dangerous & could have easily choked one of them in their coils. But they were part of the Creation & deserved to be saved as well as the other animals

The weather was changing as they were getting closer to the equator. It was stifling as they were in the summer season. They often got drenched to the bones by heavy tropical rains. They sometimes couldn’t make out the sea from the sky & they seemed to be in a sort of liquid element. They dived more & more underneath the surface to observe the tropical fish, sea-shell & crustacean species. They put on their scuba-diving suits & explored the bottom of the ocean to get DNA from all those species. They had doubts about corals & sponges as to their true nature: were they animals or plants. A proof that nothing is really delimited in Nature & that Man has to be tolerant as Nature itself is a continuum & hasn’t created barriers (apart from North-East Australia’s *Great Coral Reef) (lol).*

They were so busy prospecting the Atlantic Ocean’s depths that they didn’t even realize that they had crossed the equator. They were so surprised to see the water spinning the other way round when they took a shower - a rewind of Alfred Hitchcock’s *shower scene -* that they stayed at least one hour observingthe phenomenon(scientists will always be scientists).

By that time, they rarely came to the surface for 2 reasons:

1. The weather was awful
2. They could have been spotted by the Brazilian coast guards & taken into custody

The Brazilian police forces were reputed for their ruthlessness & shootings of homeless children trying to survive on garbage dumps.

They had better avoid that country which offered possibilities to people who had made it but none to the destitute. The whole world had witnessed the way all those oppressed people had demonstrated in front of the whole world’s reporters to attract the planet’s attention about their living conditions & the barbaric way used to tame those unprecedented riots. Football (or soccer in the US) had then taken another dimension opposite to its fans’ concern about which star would join which club & how much he would earn per year. Big money wasn’t so much a concern right now. It would rather have been invested in the salvation of the planet!

 

They landed at Belem, the former capital of Amazonia at the beginning of the 20th century, when the booming automobile industry needed rubber - which was found in the rainforest: the sap of hevea trees. Belem was a sort of ephemereal capital of the world for 50 years at that time & attracted lots of adventurers. The polymerization of rubber enabling to fabricate synthetic rubber brought the booming growth of Belem to a dead end. Noah & Lorette visited the opera-house.Like Port-au-Prince’s opera house, that one had known glorious times when opera-singers came to sing there. Now it looked decrepit & run down. They had the impression that operas were a token of past glamour.

I n Belem, they were revolted by the illegal trade run by poachers of some rainforest animals. Swallowing their anger, they humbled themselves to ask permission to take a sample of some blood from jaguars, toucans, alligators… which they got providing a few dollar bills. There have aiways been people profiting from human & animal distress. They were convinced that Man is the most ruthless animal of the Creation & that they had to redeem this image for the future generations, provided they could live in accordance with Nature as the latter was on the verge of disappearance.

Disgusted by this experiment, they let themselves drift past the *Cape of Sao Roque* (the Horn of south America), promising to one another to sail up the *Amazon River* & explore it one day. Who knew if the Indian tribes living along its banks wouldn’t be preserved as they had never or very scarcely been into contact with civilization? It was a solace for them to dream of a return to the origins of human kind. They were depressed by the state of the north-eastern Brazilian coast –one of the poorest regions of this huge & diverse country. The yearly hurricanes & tidal waves had devastated Natal & its surroundings. Who knew where the survivors had found a refuge from the outburst of sea & wind? maybe in the primeval jungle. Noah & Lorette might be the witnesses of the final scene…it seemed like the end of a theatre play.

 Southbound to the *Tropic of Capricorn*, they were now as tawny as the natives whom they waved at. At night, they slept on the deck *of the Ark.* For a few days*,* they had had the strange impression of being followed by something in the wake of their submersible but couldn’t find any explanation to that strange feeling. One night, as they were drifting off *Recife*, Noah lit up the signal light. They were first scared to see heads emerging from the water, as if they were followed by scuba divers from the CIA. Noah stopped the engines of the bathyscaph to make sure, while Lorette was ready to start the engines in case of emergency. They were both very anxious & thought they had been discovered at last by the coast guards. Eventually, the leader of the pack came close to the deck & Noah could discover the head of a manatee, so much alike a human head. They had probably made the same error as Ulysses in “*The Odyssey*” who tied his seafaring companions to the mast of the ship for he thought mermaids were attracting them. He called Lorette who came up from the engines quarters. They spent the night stroking these amicable & pacific sea mammals also called *sea cows* for they browse the sea-weeds along the sandy coasts.

 

They arrived at *Rio de Janeiro* on august 1st 2031, after a more-than-4-month honeymoon sea voyage. They saw the “*sugar loaf”* from afar with its statue at the top. It’s always an epiphany for air or sea travelers to make out this huge statue of a conquistador, a symbol of the New world such as The Statue of Liberty in NYC. Contrary to the latter, the Conquistador with his cross in hand stood firmly over the huge city of the *Cariocas,* like a symbol of the exploitation of this part of South Americaby the Portuguese as early as the beginning of the 16th century. Noah & Lorette were not surprised not to notice anyone on the *Copacabana beach.* Indeed, the lastsoccer World Cup in 2016 had been branded by so many riots from “*los olvidados”,* the people who lived in *“the favellas”,* those shanty towns in the upper part of the city, that the jet set didn’t dare any longer to get sun-tanned & be photographed in bikini on these miles of sand. Noah & Lorette could enjoy a whole *farniente* afternoon on one of the most famous – but now deserted - beaches in the world

The temperature reached 120° F (50°C) as they crossed the *Tropic of Capricorn.* Noah decided to pursue the course of their odyssey under water to cull the DNA of sea anemones & multicolored exotic fishes (Lorette’s scuba diving suit didn’t fit her any longer as her delivery was less than 2 months ahead) . It took them about one week to reach the *Parana* estuary, separating 2 challenging countries (Uruguay & Argentina). They had been so busy diving & hunting under the ocean that they had the impression of living in an aquarium. They needed to resurfaced to reload their own & *the* *Ark’s* solar batteries. They surfaced in the *Rio de la Plata* & started to sail upstream, enjoying the sun, which was very pleasant after a one-week- complete immersion underwater. They had been sailing up the estuary for about 30 mn when they heard a voice on a loudspeaker telling them to stop their engines. Through the binocular lenses, Noah could see a coast guard vessel sailing towards them at full speed. He had hardly noticed the Uruguayan flag at the prow of the ship (a yellow sun in the top left corner on a striped blue & white background alost the Argentinian one which is a yellow sun in the middle of a white & paler blue striped background ) that Lorette, who was observing the Argentinian shore & admiring the *Buenos Aires* skyline saw a coastguard vessel dashing at the fullest speed of its motors to *the Ark.* It took them about 30 seconds to take a decision. They ignored the intimations to stop their engines from both sides of the Rio de la Plata & dived into its depths to avoid contact with those fierce defenders of the their territories. Maybe they could come to terms together. Unless they fired at each other. Lorette & Noah were laughing at the idea but they knew what had taken place in Argentina under the dictatorship of Juan Peron during the 1970s & didn’t feel like spending a few years in the jails of this country in the hope of being judged one day.

After switching on to the spare battery, they dived to a 1-mile depth & sailed at full speed under the waters. They wanted to leave this part of the Argentinian waters where there is a lot of sea-traffic for Argentina’s economy rests on the exportation of beef meat all over the world. They said to themselves that they would refuel the battery along the coast of Patagonia, when they had sailed south of *Mar del Plata* & reached the Patagonian waters (the wild part of Argentina).

When they resurfaced, the temperature had considerably changed. They were in the middle of austral winter & it was a mere 50°F (10°C). What a contrast from a fortnight before! They were roasting on the *Copacabana Beach.* Anyway, the spectacle was incredible along that Patagonian coastline. It was a refuge for swarms of albatross, seagulls, puffins, penguin, awks, sealions, walrus… living peacefully there since Creation. The ice had molten because of the greenhouse effect but the conditions were far less dramatic than at Ellesmere. Those coasts were still a paradise for animals. They were beginning to think they had taken a good decision to emigrate to the South Pole.

The more they went south, the more the sea was cold. Those were not in the best conditions to land in Antarctica for it was the end of August in the Northern hemisphere. The long austral winter was not yet at an end as it was comparatively the end of February. They decided to land at the Falkland Islands (*Las Malvinas*). These islands were the British Empire’s southernmost possession & had caused a war because Argentina revendicated these bleak islands. In 1984, Margaret Thatcher’s British government waged a war against Argentina. It is estimated that “the iron lady” was reelected for a 3rd term as Prime Minister. This war for a forlorn, uninhabited island had been branded by the sinking of a British war ship by an “*Exocet*” French-fabricated Argentinian torpedo which caused around 300 casualties.

Ever since that time, the British had become to get interested in their antipodes colony where used to live a few penguins & cormorants + the lighthouse keeper. They had developed a small 30,000 town with schools & a hospital. There was even a sea marine life laboratory. As it was the end of august & the austral weather would last another some 2 or 3 months, they decided to weigh anchor in this unhospitable part of the world. They were surprised to find themselves in an British town. Everyone spoke English & lived like in GB. Breakfast in the morning. Lunch at one o’clock composed of imported tea (with or without milk) & jam or marmalade on toasts. There were tea-rooms & pubs like over there. There were even immigrants from India & Jamaica (a solution to the overwhelming problem of the absorption of climactic refugees). As they already knew the mayor of *Port Stanley*, the capital of this British dominion, Lorette & Noah decided to stay there until the birth of their child. Boris Morgan, the Welsh origin mayor, needed scientists like them to develop research on the islands he was in charge with. In addition, the climate was changing – not so fast as in the Arctic Ocean - & new breeds &wind-resisting flora could be experimented. They were not far from the Sea of Weddell which was under British dominion. They felt at home like in Canada & were used to rough weather. But the climate was changing so rapidly…

Contrary to the Arctic Regions*, Antarctica* was a continent which some scientists supposed to have drifted from the PacificOcean to the South Pole. Until then, it had been covered with several miles of ice in its center. The greenhouse effect had thinned the icecap & it was then possible to live on the coasts of this continent which could mean the salvation of Mankind. That’s the reason why Noah & Lorette had dared to start their odyssey. They were about to succeed in their enterprise.

 

To be continued

P.REMY