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AND

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MASONS AND MASONS.

FOR THE CRAFTSMAN, BY G. S.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHAT MEN CALL CHANCE—THE GODS A HIGHER NAME."

Why should I linger over the evil days? The year that had already spread such ruin among our wealthier neighbours, was not to close before it had left its track of devastation among ourselves, their humble imitators. And, among all the hopeful adventures which, ere the 27th December had come round in all its glad pride of Anniversary commemoration, were destined to a record in the ever-lengthening schedule of disappointed enterprise, none had gone so completely and irretrievably to the wall as that to which were pinned poor Nelly's fortunes and my own under the Deed of Settlement of No. 609. The daintily engraved certificates of its promise and our hope, have been long since released from the safe custody of any banker. Faded and half tattered, they still sometimes stare us in the face as we overhaul the archives of our golden youth, and are set solemnly aside to preserve their lesson of human vanity, or, perhaps, for mere sake of their reminder of the long-ago, before Ambition had yielded place to Memory. Commercially, they are as absolutely valueless as though hand and seal had never certified the price of their acquisition. There are in the Peninsula, a certain deep shaft and some half-dozen long drives, ruined smelting works and a dislocated tangle of once costly steam machinery; and beneath the whole ignoble wreck lies buried some £80,000, together with the splendid dreams of wealth and its attendant glories that transfigured, for the enthusiasts of its subscription, each stray delusive fragment of oxide or of carbonate into the veritable reality of the Philoso-