

CHLORIS OF THE ISLAND

"What does this mean?" he asked, vacantly.

"It means, sir, that this is no proper time to be drinking," said Warburton, roughly, and knocked over the bottle, spilling the red wine on the floor.

"Damme! sir, what is this piece of insolence?" stut-tered Philip, struggling to his feet. "And what does Sis here?"

"Go outside and you will learn what it means," said Warburton, contemptuously. "Have they not brought the news of your father's death?"

"'Tis true, he is dead, rest him," said Philip, surlily. "But you have broken my bottle," and he rapped loudly for the innkeeper.

Warburton stood regarding him with a glance of disgust, and was conscious that Chloris's hand was stolen gently into his. He turned and found a pitiful face directed on her brother, in which a great horror mingled with tears. He held tight the hand.

"Know you this also," he said, sternly—"that your brother Nicholas is dead?"

The fingers closed convulsively on his, and Philip started.

"What! Nick dead?" he exclaimed, in bewilderment. "How comes he dead? You are lying." Warburton did not answer to this, and he let his eyes drop. "The devil!" he exclaimed, in a lower voice, in which was a thrill. "Then I am Sir Philip."

"My God! you are welcome to it!" cried Warburton, in disgust.

"Sir Philip!" said he, not heeding. "Poor Nick! 'Tis worth another bottle. Poor Nick!"

Warburton turned away abruptly and got out of the room with Chloris, white and failing.

"Cheer up, sweetheart," he whispered. He had