

## CHLORIS OF THE ISLAND

The officer looked at him. "I dare not," he said, earnestly.

"Bah! I meant no appeal to you," said Warburton. "I know, my dear sir, that you must do your duty. What I meant was that it was best for all that he should escape rather than be brought to justice and discredit an ancient family."

"True, sir—very true," agreed the soldier. "But I must catch him."

They quickened their pace to a run, and emerged then into the wilderness of grass-grown sand. No one was visible anywhere upon the rolling expanse, and no sound reached them; it was as if they had been launched unexpectedly into a desert of still waters.

"He will get away," said Warburton presently. "He has every chance in his favor, among these wastes."

"'Tis likely," assented his companion, "but he will be caught some day. I shall be glad if it be not I who has the privilege. I have dined with his father."

"Sir Stephen is dead," said Warburton.

The officer opened his eyes. "Then is this Sir Nicholas that we are hunting?" he said, and laughed shortly. "The family has fallen on rough times."

"'Tis doomed," said Warburton, laconically.

"Doomed!" echoed the other, examining him with wonder.

"Sir, you saw that lady yonder?" said Warburton, grimly. "You have dined with Sir Stephen, you say. May I ask if the family was present?"

"There was a very handsome girl," said the captain, displaying some uneasiness; and then he added, awkwardly, "I know what you would ask me. You're right, but, gad! I do not wag my tongue; I can bridle my gossip."