

where I was, or what had befallen me. But when I did—oh, how stiff I was, and how I ached; I was all one huge ache, where I was not numbed.

“Drink this!” said a half-naked fellow, whom I had not yet seen—there seemed no end to the band. And he emphasized his command by presenting a pistol at my head with one hand while he held out to me a silver cup with the other.

“Certainly,” I said, thinking of Fair Rosamond. I drank, and—strange!—with a well-remembered aromatic flavour there came back to me the luxurious glow, through limbs and veins and brain, which seemed to have brought me back from the grave once before. Aching and numbness left me as if by magic; and, when my cords were still further loosened, and I rose upright, I was more refreshed than if I had passed the night on down.

I was conducted, unblinded, by three armed brigands, round a corner of the cave, by a ledge so narrow and slippery that it seemed scarce possible to avoid falling into the torrent far below, and then through a thick copse, by various rough paths, until we emerged into a good-sized hollow among the grey rocks which arose on all sides—some sheer, some broken. It was a strange scene, indeed, into the midst of which I thus entered. The hollow was half-filled with men of all shades of colour, in all attitudes, in all grades of costume, from that of fully clad hunter or herdsman to that of the nearly naked savage, and all more or less fully armed. And, standing nearly in the midst, beside a long, low fragment of rock, I saw—not as a captive, but as a Queen—András Mări.