

8 THE CASTLE OF THE SHADOWS

would be under the castle; but almost instantly Loria, obliged to follow, had caught up with her again.

"One of the greatest sorrows of my life is connected with this valley," he answered desperately. "Now will you take pity upon me and turn round?"

Virginia hesitated. The man's voice shook. She did not know whether to yield or to feel contempt because he showed emotion so much more readily than her English and American friends. But while she hesitated they were joined by her cousin, Sir Roger Broom, who had been riding behind with her half-brother, George Trent, and Lady Gardiner.

"Look here, Loria," he exclaimed, with a certain excitement underlying his tone, "it has just occurred to me that this is—er—the place that's been nicknamed for the last few years the 'Valley of the Shadow.'"

"You are right," answered Loria. "That is why I didn't wish to come in."

Sir Roger nodded towards the château, which now loomed over them, grey, desolate, one half in ruins, yet picturesquely beautiful both in