

agreeable to her. At the ball—the opera and route—he paid her, those attentions, so pleasing to one in her peculiar position; and with such tact, did he veil his real intentions, that she soon learned to regard him with anything but indifference, and to look up to him for council and advice. And as they were to sail for India in the same vessel he persuaded her to allow him to make all the arrangements for her passage out.

A short time prior to her departure from England, they were engaged in some private theatricals, in which she played the part of Mrs. Percival Clifford, and he that of her former lover. This was the forerunner of her ruin—for it was owing to this circumstance that Sandhurst had conceived the idea of engaging her passage under the name of Clifford—trusting to his powers of persuasion, and the general influence he had over her, to gain her consent to assume it. He did not overrate his powers; but it was not until she was on board, that she became acquainted with this circumstance. Being thrown constantly together, during the passage, he had an opportunity in their long conversations, and during their visit to Gibraltar, Malta and other places of interest on the route, to undermine or destroy the better principles of her nature, and prepare her for the part he intended her to play on their arrival at Bombay. In this he succeeded only too well; one by one, her scruples vanished before his passionate appeal, and she finally consented to take that downward step which resulted so fatally for the happiness of those most concerned. On my return home I wrote to Oscar, telling him what had transpired in my unsuccessful attempts to induce Clara to rejoin him, and request him to take no rash step in consequence thereof, which would lead to a public exposure of his domestic affairs, and no real good, could be effected by such a proceeding.

"What is it Acbar Ali?" I enquired, as I observed that energetic officer coming rapidly towards me, as I was in the act of mounting my horse to attend a ball at Government House at Carrell.

"The gentleman who gave the information concerning the lady at Chittagong Lodge is here, and is going to visit her at nine this evening."

"Are you sure? I did not know he was in Bombay," I replied.

"I saw him enter the Byculla Club House, and heard him tell the Hamalls, that he should require them to carry him to Chingleparra, at nine o'clock, and to be sure not to be behind time," said Acbar Ali.

I looked at my watch, it was half-past seven. Rash impetuous Oscar, should he and Sandhurst meet there would be blood spilt between them, this, I determined, if possible, to prevent; and made arrangements to meet such an emergency should it arise.

"Request Dr. DeCosta to meet me, quar-

ter before nine, near the bungalow on the Parrell road. Tell him to bring his case of instruments with him, and have a Dooly in attendance, and let the bearers go by the back way across the Byculla flats, and enter the date grove at the side of the house, and remain there until called for. Be sharp Acbar, and let no mistake or delay occur." I then re-entered my office (for I had an hour to spare) to arrange my plans.

Dr. DeCosta was surgeon to the force, a gentleman of Portuguese descent, very skillful, quiet and good natured; in fact, the very man to send, should any contingency, such as I anticipated, arise. At half-past eight, I mounted my horse, and rode towards Chingleparra.

"Is that you Dr.?" I called out in a quiet tone, as the figure of a man moved beneath the shadow of a date tree.

"It is!" was the subdued reply.

I dismounted and explained to him the business on hand. I gave him a brief sketch of the whole story, and he promised hearty co-operation in my plans. I suggested that he should not enter the bungalow until he heard my signal, or the clash of weapons as I left him. He bowed approvingly, and I quietly made my way through the shrubbery, and posted myself in the verandah; close to one of the drawing room windows. The night was dark, but the room was brilliantly illuminated, revealing everything distinctly in the apartment. There were six French windows to it, all of which I could command a full view of, with the exception of one near the door which was partially concealed by a silk screen. Clara had been playing, for I heard the sound of music as I approached, but it ceased as I stepped on to the verandah, and I saw Sandhurst lead her from the piano, and seated her beside himself on a superb conversation couch in the further end of the room with one hand round her waist in a most loving manner, while with the other he played with the luxuriant tresses of her beautiful black hair that fell on her magnificent shoulders, her face was partly turned from him, as if in thought he was evidently urging her to accede to some request, but I could not ascertain the purport of his words. A slight noise at one of the front windows caused me to glance in that direction. I saw over the top of the screen that it was being quietly opened, and in a moment after a figure entered the room in rear of the screen. This I was certain must be Oscar. I passed rapidly round the angle of the verandah in the hope of being in time to prevent a collision, but I was too late; for as I entered, I heard Oscar thunder out,

"Scoundrel, take the reward of your villainy," and in another instant the report of a pistol was heard through the bungalow.

At the first sound of Oscar's voice, Sandhurst sprang up, and turned in the direction from which I came, and received the bullet in his shoulder. With a cry of pain and

rage he fell back on the couch. Clara terrified beyond measure at the sight of the bleeding and prostrate form of her protector, started up and recognized the pale and livid features of her husband, as she stood beneath the glare of the chandelier, vengeance gleaming from his flashing eyes, which were bent upon the fallen man, uttering a wild piercing shriek, she turned and fled through the folding screen to her own apartment. The door closing behind her, Oscar stood for a moment as if paralyzed. He allowed me to take the pistol from his hand. I had scarcely done so, when a dull heavy sound, as if something had fallen in the adjoining apartment, smote the rear. With one bound, he cleared the intervening couch, and dashed into his wife's room. I followed him, but we were too late, for there extended at full length on the Persian carpet in front of her toilet table, lay the lifeless form of his wife; her face was turned upwards, and in one hand was firmly clutched in the grasp of death a small vial tabled Prussic Acid: the contents of which she had swallowed, and the effect must have been instantaneous. The report of the pistol had been heard by the surgeon, who now entered. Who, on examination, pronounced life extinct. He assisted to place the body on the bed, and at my request he went to attend to the wounded man, who had fainted from loss of blood. I succeeded in drawing Oscar from the room, before any of the servants entered. I led him through an anteroom, to the back verandah, where by entreaty and persuasion, I prevailed upon him to quit the place. I pointed out to him the event that must necessarily follow, if he insisted on remaining. A Coroner's inquest would elicit the whole fact of the case and supply a theme for gossip to thousands; if he would trust the matter entirely to me I would manage that his name or hers should not be made public, and the real nature of the occurrence should never be brought to light. Then in a voice hoarse with emotion, answered,

"Fortescue, I will trust to you to see that my poor lost Clara be properly attended too, and no expense spared in the arrangement for her interment." He then sprang from the verandah, and disappeared among the rose bushes, and before sunrise the next morning he had left the Island of Bombay far behind him. The surgeon having dressed the wound which Sandhurst had received, he then had him placed in the Dooly that had been brought to the bungalow by a signal from me, and was quietly conveyed to his own bungalow; having given the necessary instructions to the servants and prevailed upon the good natured surgeon to give me the required certificate, and promised his assistance in carrying out the arrangement for the funeral, leaving two of my men on duty at the bungalow to prevent any intrusion, I proceeded to the hall or parrell, and then returned to my office. On