

more than thirty-six, for there was a great difference between the sons of the two marriages of the old earl of all."

"But there was another and younger uncle of my grandfather," and Lord Stanmore. "You do not mention him. What became of him?"

The two villagers looked at each other; at last Turner said, with some hesitation,—

"The younger brother died."

"Well, I conclude he died," observed Lord Stanmore, "or he must now be past eighty, even allowing for the great difference of age between my great grandfather and his younger brothers. Tell me something of Uncle Tristram?"

"He did not go to America, as was generally supposed," said Jenkins; but Turner gave him a nudge, and added,—"Mr. Grainger says that you have orders, sir, for great doings here to welcome back the earl. I humbly beg to say we shall be proud to help in any way that lies in our power."

"The best way, the only way in which you can possibly assist, at your time of life," said Lord Stanmore, "is by recalling to mind and informing me of the precise way in which the corridors and rooms lay at the time of my grandfather's departure. He has himself described to me much of the interior disposition of the house. I have recognized his own suite of rooms. I have slept in his bed room; but I am stopped at the entrance of a narrow corridor in that suite by a closet, an artificial, or rather a modern closet. The entrance to the chapel below is also closed, but only closed; it will be easily opened by proper workmen, and that will be our first care. I wish the chapel to be opened to-morrow."

Lord Stanmore watched the countenance of the two old men as he addressed them, and perceived they were startled by the mention of the little blocked-up passage; while they recovered themselves at the order given to open the chapel, and eagerly proposed to investigate it at the moment. To this Lord Stanmore agreed, being convinced that the time had not yet arrived for obtaining their confidence, and inwardly resolved to open the corridor by other means than theirs.

On the following morning, while Lord Stanmore was at breakfast, the village veterans arrived with younger workmen, and awaited his good pleasure in the hall. Before giving orders to open the great entrance to the chapel, he sent for the butler, and inquired whether it was there Mr. Sanderson had left his own furniture, to be removed at a future period.

"Oh, no, my lord," replied the butler; "the inventory was verified by Mr. Sanderson's agent, and all that furniture removed while you are stopping at the Marquis of Seaham's."

"Then let the workmen open the chapel directly, but carefully," said Lord Stanmore, silently recalling to mind the fact of the chapel having been so completely closed by the late owners of the place. The slender wall of masonry was soon demolished that had filled up the depth of the ancient wall beyond the thick oaken doors. The men had worked carefully; the doors would require no more than cleaning and polishing; they were locked, but that difficulty had been provided against, and in a few instants Lord Stanmore was within, and, at his request, alone within the sacred spot. All was in good repair, though faded, and he looked around with the deepest interest. He heard the retreating footsteps of the workpeople, and closing the door, knelt at the foot of the long-deserted altar.

"The remains of my forefathers lie in the vaults beneath," thought he, "and the hidden Lord of glory has, in the old days, blest this shrine. Here must be the culminating point of welcome to the long-exiled lord of Woolton Court!"

The daylight was employed in viewing the various parts of the premises, and giving orders for the approaching fête. But these preparations for the joyful return of the Earl of Charlton, did not prevent Lord Stanmore from writing to Miss Sanderson an account, not only of the progress made towards a discovery of the nocturnal sounds, but also of the motives of honor that bound him to unravel a plot of too exaggerated a devotion for the ancient possessors of Woolton Court. In the evening, a letter was written to the Marquis of Seaham, giving the whole confidence, and intreating it in return, on the subject of the mysterious music, or plaint, in the southwest angle of Woolton Court; mentioning also the blocked-up corridor, and the two old villagers with their traditions. In a few days the answer arrived, and was as follows:

"My dear lord, the mysteries of Udolpho are revived in those of Woolton Court. I have listened to their legends from my boyhood. Of course, I have never heard nor seen anything myself, having visited the mansion by daylight only, in gay company, talking and laughing enough to scare away any ghost, even that of Tristram Woolton, your collateral ancestor, who is said to haunt the house. To be serious I uphold your resolve to probe the matter to the bottom, with the prudence, firmness, and sagacity, so truly your own. Should you wish for a confidential companion at midnight, that flesh and blood may sympathize in your encounters with restless spirits, or desiring mortals, ride over here and I will return with you on the following day. I am at liberty this week, but cannot promise beyond. Yours faithfully, SEAHAM."

Our hero accepted this proposal most gladly, and the two friends found themselves on the last day of October comfortably seated by a blazing fire in the library at Woolton Court, discussing every possible topic of interest, except the projected onslaught at midnight on the secrets of the south-west corner of the mansion.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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