

which was to convey him to his long-forsaken home, with his arm around the Venus-like figure of his wife, and his eyes upon the swiftly vanishing roof of the isle, St. Udo Brand, who had spoken but little since repeating the vows which had made his darling by his side his own, now found speech, and half playfully apostrophized the dream-like scene before him thus:

"Farewell ye coral isles, wherein I found my Pearl and happiness. Blessed be your coraline foundations, your lazy inhabitants, and your fever-breeding climate. You have been to me a world of passion, of hope, of purity. Oh, my Lost Good, who has been sent to me in mercy"—his playful accents changed to the gravity of deep emotion, as he drew yet closer to him his "Perdita"—"I turn to you henceforth to be what you would wish me, and to study your secret of how to live. I have been wandering on the burning sands, and pressing forever onward to reach a glittering lake of the desert, which, ever rippling and vanishing, beckoned me farther from the cool, calm shades of rest. Now I come, a wearied pilgrim to your pure heart, my wife, for you have opened it to let a weary, dusty wanderer in. Your purity, my simple Margaret, reminds me of the immaculate heights of snow-capped Gaurisankar—serene, majestic, while I, a lava-crusted, thunderous, calcined volcano, lashed by the fires of many passions, come to cool my fevered blood by your chill radiance."

"Hush, St. Udo! If you knew how intensely happy I am with my destiny——"

She paused, for her glad eyes were filling fast, her fond tones faltering.

"Oh, my soft-souled Perdita! my simple darling!"

And then sweetly swooped the rush of joy to them, and they were dumb, for some one who has read the human heart says, "The most exquisite of all emotions is utter silence, with a being in whom we feel entire sympathy."

"Ah, *par ma foi!* but I am the good fairy, after all!" muttered the chevalier, hugging his fancy little self, and pacing about near them, with a protecting air, as if they were his especial *protégés*. "I feel like Guardian Angel of their fortunes. Saint Ludovic—*par la messe*, it sounds well!"

"Thank Heaven! Ethel Brand's incomprehensible will has explained itself at last!" mused Davenport, laying down his crumpled *Times*, "and it has proved itself to be the wisest will ever the Brands made. Married in spite of themselves, and as happy as love can make them in spite of a plain face, on the one side, and a reputation that the dogs wouldn't pick up once, on the other. He's

a saved man, and she's a happy woman—dear, faithful Margaret. What glorious news for old Gay."

When Mrs. St. Udo Brand came home to Seven-Oak Waaste, she found a letter awaiting her, and in its many pages she found at last the true history of the man who had been the Sleuth-Hound of Castle Brand:

CONVICT SHIP FEARLESS, March —, '63-

"MISS WALSHINGHAM:—As you are a remarkably clever woman, and I have always been an admirer of fair play, I will give you your dues, and own that in our little game you had the best of it, and deserved to have.

"I don't bear you malice for this cursed mess which you've pushed me into, although I have you only to blame for it, for perhaps I didn't go the right way to work with you, and I was a confounded fool for my pains.

"Yes I've been a lover of fair play all through my dodging life, ever since I was big enough to run at my father with a knife for making my mother cry; and since in our desperate little game together you won, I think it but fair play to own it, and to show you the few trumps with which I fought against your full hand.

"I'm sent back to banishment for life, and you are, I hear, a happy bride, coming home with St. Udo Brand; but if I know the practical good sense you possess, you won't toss this into the fire till you've read it all, and wasted a few good-hearted regrets on the wretch whose luck was so infernally poor.

"Forty years ago, Colonel Cathcart Brand, only son of Ethel Brand, Dowager of Seven-Oak Waaste, went* to Cuba, which was a military station then as now, and fell in with a splendid-looking Cuban girl called Zerfina Barelli.

"Of course, the man took her in, and ruined all her worldly prospects through her love of him. In five years he was ordered back to England again, and coolly proceeded to take leave of the girl who had been more to him than many a wife is to her husband, and had nursed him through more than one, almost fatal attack, of fever. In vain she pleaded that he would take her with him, and own her boy as his legal heir. The colonel swore he couldn't, and offered her any money if she would not follow him.

"She agreed to this, and when I was four years old, they parted, never to meet again.

"I inherited all my mother's deep, patient ferocity, added to my father's outward appearance, and was called Brand Barelli, at St. Kitts, where I was sent to school, I not having the remotest idea of my parentage.

"When I was ten years of age I was sent