

a coincidence too natural to be worth attention. It might seem undignified on the part of a mounted brigand to lift a lady's purse ; but I doubt if, outside romance, the freebooter has much sense of professional dignity. As to the outcome, of course, the usual course is to hold the captive to ransom ; and that was an unpleasant reflection. For I had no friends whose whereabouts I knew nearer than Frankfort-on-the-Main ; it might take months before negotiations could be even opened ; and, though I was well enough off for ordinary needs, I was by no means prepared to diminish my capital in order to satisfy the rapacity of Transylvanian brigands. It seemed a black look out, any way. And the worst reflection of all was that perhaps my delay might prove fatal to András Mári, supposing her to be in some extremity—that, at the best, I should seem to her false to my word, and guilty of the blackest and most cowardly ingratitude.

" Phil—are you there ? " I asked at a venture. But no answer came. I could not reach out my hand to help me find out in what sort of prison I might be ; for my arms were fastened to my sides, and so tightly that my flesh was almost cut by the rough rope that pinioned them. Only a cold dampness seemed to tell me that I was not in the open air.

At last—after an hour, perhaps, since it seemed like three or four—I heard a sound of scrambling and of falling pebbles, and a hand rather rougher than the rope tore the bandage from my eyes. Then I found, thanks to the dim light, that I was in a small cavern, apparently in the face of a cliff,