

row passage, Malcolm, who was before his friend, fell forward, and was plunged into a stream of water. Fortunately, it was but a few feet in depth, and he soon regained his feet and assisted Francis to follow. It was a stream flowing beneath the earth, and they felt assured that they might trace it to its termination. With renewed ardor they began to descend the stream, by walking in the water, which was so cold that their limbs were soon so benumbed that it was with the utmost difficulty they could proceed. The passage was low and they were obliged to stoop considerably to follow it, which much increased their difficulty; but still they struggled onward for life and liberty were at stake.

"I can go no further," at length exclaimed Francis, in a feeble voice, as he sank against the rocky side of the gloomy place. Malcolm threw his arm around him to aid his progress, but Francis refused to accept the offered aid. "Nay, nay!" he cried, "save thyself, and leave me to my fate! better that one were saved to bear the tale of our sufferings to our homes, than that both should perish."

"We live or die together!" was the firm reply, and Francis, supported by the arm of his friend, again moved onward. Soon the way became so contracted, that they could move forward only with the greatest difficulty, but through the opening they thought they could perceive a gleam of light. Was their purpose almost accomplished? At last the passage became so narrow that one only could move at once, and that, by crawling on their hands and feet with their bodies immersed in the chilling water of the mountain stream, but soon their toil was repaid, for the subterranean rill burst forth, and, descending many feet down the side of the mountain, mingled its waters with a small river, which went rushing onward with impetuous haste amid the rocks which bounded its channel.

With the greatest difficulty they at length succeeded in leaving their watery passage without being precipitated into the stream below; but this was at last effected, and, drenched with wet, benumbed with cold, and almost overcome with fatigue, they seated themselves on the trunk of a fallen tree, that the warm rays of the summer sun might dry their dripping garments, and infuse new life into their exhausted frames, ere they commenced the long and toilsome journey which lay before them, ere they could reach the noble home of Francis of Avignon, and take measures for the rescue of the Lady Isabella.

WHEN the Lady Isabella was torn from the humble residence in the mountain cottage, she doubted not that she had again fallen into the hands of the followers of the heartless wretch who tore her from her home, and deep and dreadful was the anguish of her heart when she thought that again must she be in that monster's power. Her cries, her tears, and her struggles, were all in vain, and she was borne onward by her fierce captors, over rugged mountain eminences, through dark and gloomy vales, through tangled brushwood, and mountain streams, until they reached the limits of the mountains, and the fine open country between the mountains and the Rhine was spread out before them. Carefully concealing themselves in an almost impenetrable thicket, they announced their resolve to remain until joined by other members of the band, who had dispersed in different directions, and who had named this as the place of rendezvous. Their treatment of Isabella had been as kind as their circumstances would admit; far different from what she had experienced when in the power of the ruffian Otho; and now, a rude arbor was formed from the boughs of trees for her alone, and although she was strictly guarded, not one of the band ever intruded upon her, except to bring her food or offer her their services, if she had any wish it was in their power to gratify. Isabella could not but feel their kindness, but yet she was truly wretched. No hope of ever seeing her home again, now remained, unless Gustavus de Lindendorf might by some chance learn her fate, and generously rescue her once more. But this was in truth but a slender hope; nor did she wish to owe still further obligation to one whom she felt she could never reward. As she sat revolving in her mind her hapless destiny, regardless of the conversation of her captors, which was carried on outside her tent, a word caught her ear that in a moment riveted her attention.

"Now if we could command fifty of our brave fellows!" exclaimed one of the men, "would it not be a glorious enterprise to make a descent on the stronghold of the old baron of Lindendorf! in truth 'twould be a deed of mercy to break up that refuge of barbarism and cruelty, for fearful are the tales that are told of the bloody deeds of the Lords of Lindendorf! Why we, the terrible banditti of southeastern France, are truly merciful compared with them, for gain, and not the love of cruelty, inspires our actions! And although the present lord is of milder mood, his son is said to be a true branch of the family tree,