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MAMMOTH DRAWING Ormiston laaghing : "it they clear irive away the stifling atmosphere."

"Then you mean to give the up pursuit?" "Not exactly. I love this mysterious beauty too well to do that; and when next I find her, be it where it may, I shall take care she does not alip so, easily through my fingers."

LADY LEOLINE.

By May Agnes Fleming.

CHAPTER III.-Continued,

Sir Norman. "Surely you do not mean to say she is there?"

night, and lose no time-that is, supposing you

can procure a licenze." "I have one already. I have a pass from the

Lord Mayor to come and go from the city when

" I don't particularly desire to see the illumin

ation, as I know of ; but I will ride. neverthe-less. What am I to do when I get there ?"

less. What am I to do when I get there ?" "You will enter the ruins, and go on till you discover a spiral staircase leading to what was

herd stay away." "And if I am discovered peeping like a ras-

not be discovered if you take care. Ah ! Look

She pointed to the river and both her com-

"Do you know those two gentlemen ?" she

"And that page, to which of them does he

"The page !" said Sir Norman, with a stare,

as he leaned forward to look; "pray, madam, what has the page to do with it ?"

The two peers had ascended the stairs, and

Very unpleasant ones to you ! but you need

cally valet, what will be the consequences ?

"Go there and you will see. Go there to-

ately broke in :

or heard of it ?"

[рюже.

there !"

asked.

belong?"

the others.

"Look and see !"

witness the illumination."

"I cannot forget that page," said Ormiston, musingly. "It is singular, since he weers the Earl of Rochester's livery, that we have never "She will." "Where is she now ?" La Marque hesitated and seemed uncertain whether or not to reply. Sir Norman passion seen him before among his followers. Are you quite sure, Sir Norman, that you have not?" "See him? Don't be absurd, Ormiston 1 Do you think I could ever forget such a face as

"Tell me, madam, for I must know !" "Tell me, madam, for I must know !" "Then you shall; but, remember, if you gev into danger, you must not blame me." "Blame you ! No, I think I would hardly do that. Where am I to seek for her !" """" hhet? "It would not be easy, I confess. One does not ace such every day. And yet—and yet—it s most extraordinary !"

"Two miles from London beyond Newgate," said the mask. "There stand the ruins of what "I shall ask Rochester about him the first thing to morrow; and unless he is an optical illusion-which I vow I half believe is the case was long ago a hunting lodge, now a crumbling ikaleton, rocfless and windowless, and said, by -I will come at the truth in spite of your demoniac friend, La Masque !" rumor, to be haunted. Perhaps you have seen

"Then you do not mean to look for him to-"I have seen it a hundred times," broke in

night ?" "Look for him? I might as well look for a Not I! I have promised needle in a haystack. Not I ! I have promised La Masque to visit the old rains, and then I shall go forthwith. Will you accompany me?" "I think not. I have a word to say to La Masque; and you and she kept talking so busi-

ly, I had no chance to put it in." Sir Norman laughed.

I ploase." "Good 1 Then you'll go to night." "I will go. I might as well do that as any-thing else, I suppose; but it is quite impossi-ble," said Sir Norman, firmly, not to say obsti-rately, "that she can be there." "Very well—you'll see. You had better go on horseback, it you desire to be back in time to witness the illumination." "Besides. I have no doubt it is a word you would not like to utter in the presence of a third party, even though that third party be your friend and Pythias, Kingsley. Do you mean to stay here like a plague-sentinel until she re-

turns ?" "Possibly; or if I get tired I may set out in search of her. When do you return?" "The Fates, that seem to make a football of

my best affections, and kick them as they please, only know. If nothing happens-which, of the living-I shall surely be back by daybreak." "And I shall be anxious about that time to

hear the result of your night's adventuce ; so where shall we meet ?"

"Why not here? it is as good a place as

any." "With all my heart. Where do you propose

discover a spiral staircase leading to what was once the vaults. The flags of these vaults are loose from age, and it you should desire to re-move any of them, you will probably not find it a impossibility." "Why should I desire to remove them?" asked Sir Norman, who felt dubious, and dis-appointed, and inclined to be dogmatical. "Why, you may see a glimmering of light— hear strange noises: and if you remove the getting a horse ?" "At the King's Arms-but a stone's throw hear strange noises; and if you remove the atones, may possibly see strange sights. As I told you before, it is rumored to be haunted, "Good night, and God speed you !" said which is true enough, though not in the way they suspect ; and so the fools and the common

Ormiston. And wrapping his cloak close about him, he leaned against the doorway, and, watching the dancing lights on the river, pre pared to await the return of La Masque.

With his head full of the adventures and mis-adventures of the night. Sir Norman walked thoughtfully on until he reached the King's Arms-a low inn on the bank of the river. To his dismay he found the house shut up, and bearing the dismal mark and inscription of the pestilence. While he stood coupanions looked. A barge gaily painted and gilded, with a light in prow and sters, came templating it in perplexity, a vatchman, on guard before another plague-stricken house, adgliding up among less pretentious craft, and stopped at the foot of a flight of stairs leading to vanced and informed him that the whole family the bridge. It contained four persons-the oarsman, two cavaliers sitting in the stern, and had perished of the disease, and that the landlord himself, the last survivor, had hern carried off not twenty minutes before to the plague-pit. a lad in the rich livery of a court page in the act of springing out. Nothing very wonderful in all this; and Sir Norman and Ormiston looked at her for an explanation.

look of annoyance, and being informed what he wanted, "there are two or three horses around there in the stable, and you may as well help "Certainly," replied Sir Norman promptly; "one is the Duke of York, the other the Earl of Rochester." yourself, for if you don't take them, somebody elee will.'

This philosophic logic struck Sir man as being so extremely reasonable, that without more ado he stepped that without more ado he atopped round to the stables and selected the best it contained. Before proceeding on his journey, it occurred to him that, having been hand-ling a plague patient, it would be a good thing to get his clothes fumigated ; so he stepped into an apothecary's store for that purpose, and proan apothecary's store for that purpose, and pro-vided himself also with a botble of aromatic vinegar. Thus prepared for the worst, Sir Norman sprang on his horse like a second Don Quixote striding his good steed Rozinante, and collicit for the most of advantures and sallied forth in quest of adventures, These, for a short time, were of rather a dismal character, for, hearing the noise of a horse's hoofs in the silent streets at that hour of the night, the people opened their dours as he passed by, thinking it the pest-cart, and brought forth many a miserable victim of the pestlence. Avertup his head from the revolt ing spectacles, Sir Norman held the bottle of Sir Norman started vinegar to his nostrils, and rode rapidly till he reached Newgate. There he was stopped until his bill of health was examined, and that small manuscript being found all right, he was per-mitted to pass on in peace. Everywhere he

quickened a trifle, as be thought that be might be speaking to the husband of the lady for whom he had so suddenly conceived such a rash and inordinate attachment. That personage meantime having reloaded his pistol, with a self-possession refreshing to witness, replaced it in his doublet, gathered up the reins, and, glancing slightly at his companion, spoke again : "I should thank you for saving my life, I sup-thank thank ing neonle is so little in my line.

pose, but thanking people is so little in my line, that I scarcely know how to set about it. Perhaps, my dear sir, you will take the will for the

deed. An original this," thought Sir Norman, "whoever he is." Then, aloud : "Pray don t trouble yourself about thanks, air, I should have done precisely the same with the highwayman,

had you been three to one over them," "I don't doubt it in the least ; nevertheless, I feel grateful, for you have saved my life all the same, and you have never seen me before.'

"There you are mistaken," said Sir Norman, quietly. "I had the pleasure of seeing you scarce an hour sgo." "Ah !" said the stranger, in altered tone,

"and where?" "On London Bridge?"

"I did not see you." "Very likely, but I was there none the less." "Do you know me?" said the stranger; and

Sir Norman could see he was gazing at him sharply from under the shadow of his slouched hat. "I have not that honor, but I hope to do so

"It was quite dark when you saw me on the bridge—how comes it, then, that you recollect me so well?" I have always been blessed with an excel-

lent memory," said Sir Norman carelessly, and I knew your dress, face, and voice instantly." "My voice ! Then you heard me speak probably to the watchman guarding a plague-

stricken house?

"Exactly ! and the subject being a very inter-esting one, I listened to all you said." "Indeed ! and what possible interest could the subject have for you, may I ask?"

"A deeper one than you think !" said Sir Normau, with a slight tremor in his voice as he thought of the lady, "the watchman told you the lady you sought for had been carried away dead, and thrown into the plague-pit !"

"Well," cried the stranger, starting violently, "and was it not true?" "Only partly. She was carried away in the

past cart sure enough, but she was not thrown into the plague pit !" "Aud why?

"Because, when on reaching that herrible spot, she was found to be alive !" "Good Heavens! And what then ?"

"Then," exclaimed Sir Norman, in a ton

almost as excited as his own, "she was brought to the house of a friend, and left alone for a few minutes, while the friend went in search of a doctor. On returning they found her-where do

"Where?" "Gone !" said Sir Norman emphatically, "Gone !" said Sir Norman emphasically, "spirited away by some mysterious spency; for she was dying of the plague, and could not pos-sibly stir hand or foot herself." "Dying of the plague, O Leoline !" said tho stranger, in a voice full of pity and harror, while for a moment he covered his face with his hards."

hands."

"So her name is Leoline?" said Sir Norman to himself. "I have found that out, and also that this gentleman, whatever he may be to her, is as ignorant of her whereabouts as I am myself. He seems in trouble, too. I wonder if he really happens to be her husband ?"

The stranger suddenly lifted his head, and fa ored Sir Norman with a long and searching look. "How come you to know all this, Sir Norman

Kingsley ?" he asked abraptly. "And how come you to know my name ?" demanded Sir Norman, very much amazed, not-

withstanding his assertion that nothing would "That is of no consequence! Tell me how

you've learned all this?" repeated the ttranger,

in a tone of almost stern authority. Sir Norman started and started. That voice ! he had heard it a thousand times ! It had evidently been disguised before; but now, in the excitement of the mament, the stranger was thrown off his guard, and it became perfectly mitted to pass on in peace. Everywhere he familiar. But where had he heard it? For the went, the trail of the serpent was visible over all. Death and Desolation went hand in as well known to him as his own. It had the heard in the series well as well known to him as his own. It had the all. Destin and posterious inside the gates tone, too, of one far more used to command great piles of wood and cool were arranged, than cutreat; and Sir Norman, instead of

of fatality in their meeting ; and his pulses | flecting whether she was or not, and then said, meditatively : "No-I don't know as she was. On the whole,

AND PROVIDENT OF A CONTRACT AND DESCRIPTION OF A CONTRACT OF

I am pretty sure she was not " Sir Norman felt as if a ton weight had been suddenly hoisted from the region of his heart,

"Was she aug body else's wife ?" "I think not. I'm inclined to think that except myself, she did not know another man in

"Then why was she dressed as a bride ?" in

"Then why was she dressed as a bride ?" in-quired Sir Norman, rather mysbified. "Was she? My poor Leoline !" said the stranger, sadiy. "Because-" he heaitated, "because-in shorts, Sir Norman," said the stranger decidediy, "I decline answering any more questions !" " I thall find outs, for all that," said Sir Nor-ran " and have I shell bid sor and white for

"I than bdd out, for an enso, said our two-man, " and here I shall bid you good-night, for this by pabh leads to my destination." "Good uight," said the stranger, "and be careful, Sir Norman-remember, the plague is

abroad i" "And so are highwaymen !" called Sir Nor

man, a little maliciously ; but a careless laugh from the stranger was the only reply as he galloped away.

CHAPTER V.

THE DWARF AND THE BUIN.

The by-path down which Sir Norman rode led to an inn, "The Golden Crown," about a quarter of a mile from the ruin. Not wishing to take his horse, lest it should lead to dis covery, he proposed leaving is here till his return; and, with this intention, and the strong desire for a glass of wine -for the heat and his ride made him extremely thristy-he dismounted at the door, and consigning the snimal to the care of a hostier, he entered the bar-room. It was not the most inviting place in the world, this same bar room—being illy-lighted, dim with tobacco-smoke, and pervaded by a strong spiritnous essence of stronger drinks than ms t and cold water. A number of men were loibering about, emoking, drinking and discussing the all-absorbing topic of the plague, and the fires that might be kindled. There was a moment's pause, as Sir Norman entered, took a seat and called for a glass of sack, and then the conversation went on as before. The landlord hastened to supply his wants by placing a glass and a bottle of wine before him and Sir Norman fell to helping himself, and to ruminating deeply on the events of the night. Rather melancholy these ruminations were, though to do the young gentleman justice, senti-mental melancholy was not at all in his line : but then you will please to recollect he was in love, and when people come to that state, they are no longer to be held responsible either for their thoughts or actions. It is true his attack had been a rapid one, but it was no less severe for that ; and if any evil minded critic is disposed to speer at the suddenness of his disorder, posed to speer at the succession has district, I have only to say, that I know from observa-tion, not to speak of experience, that love at first with the lowentable fact, and no myth.

Love is not a plant that requires time to flourish, but is quite capable of springing up, like the gourd of Jonah, full grown in a moment. Our young friend, Sir Norman, had not been aware of the existence of the object of his afand a hulf, yet he had already got to such a pitch, that if he did not speedily find her, he felt he would do something so desperate as to shake society to its utmost foundations. The very mystery of the affair spurred him on, and the romantic way in which she had been found, saved, and disappeared, threw such a halo of interest round her, that he was inclined to think sometimes sho was nothing but a shining vision from another world. Those dark, splendid eyes; that lovely marble like face; those wavy ebon tresses; that exquisitely exquisite figure; yes, be felt they were all a great deal too perfect for be fold they were all a great deal too perfect for this imperfect and wicked world. Sir Norman was in a very bid way, beyond doubt, hus no worse than millions of young men before and after him; and he heaved a great many profound sighs, and drank a great many glasses of sack, and came to the sorrowful conclusion that Dame Fortune was a malicions jade, inclined to poke fun at his kest affections, and make a thuttlecock of his heart for the rest of his life, Hutticecock of his heart for one read of his file, He thought, too, of Count L'Estrange; and the longer he thought, the more he be-came convinced that he knew him well, and had met him often. But where? He racked his brain until, between love, Leoline, and the count, he got that delicate organ into such a maze of bowilderment and distraction that he felt he would be a case of congestion shortly, if he did not give it up. ut the count's ice was not the only

and then at Sir Norman, in evident tropidation of the question,

The second se

"That ruin, sir ? You must be a stranger in this place, surely, or you would not need to ask that question." "Well, suppose I am a stranger? What

"Nothing, sir; only I thought everybody knew everything about that ruin."

"But I do not, you see? So fill your glass again, and while you are drinking it, just tell me what that everything comprises." Again the landlord glanced feartully, ut the

Again the multion glanced fearfully at the fiery eyes in the corner, and again hesitated. "Well I" exclaimed Sir Norman, at once sur-prised and impatient at his taciturnity. "Can you speak, man? I want you to tell me al. about it."

about it." "There is nothing to t:ll, sir," replied the host, goaded to desperation. "It is an old, de-serted ruin that's been have ever since I remem-ber; and that's all I know about it."

While he speke the crouching shape in the While he speke the crouching shape in the corner reared itself upright, and keeping his fiery eyes atill glaring upon Sir Norman, ad-vanced into the light. Our young knight was in the act of raising his glass to his lips; but as the apparition approached he laid it down again, untasted, and shared at it in the wildest surprise and in-tenseet curiosity. Truly it was a singular looking creature, not to say a rather startling one. A dwarf of some four feet high, and at least five feet broad across the shoulders, with least five feet broad across the shoulders, with least five feet broad across the shoulders, with immence arms and head—a giant in everything but height. His immence skull was set on such a trifie of a neck as to be scarcely worth men-tiving, and was garmshed by a violent mat of coarse black hair, which also overrun the terri-tory of his checks and chir, leaving no neutral ground but his two fiery eyes and a broken nose all twisted awry. On a pair of short, stout legs he wore increase jack-boots, his Herculean shoulders and chest were adorned with a leathern doublet, and in the belt round his waist were shoulders and chest were adorned with a leathern doublet, and in the belt round his waist were conspicuously stuck a pair of pistols and a dag-ger. Altegether, a more ugly or sinister gentle-man of his inches it would have been hard to find in all broad England. Storping deliberate-by hore Sir Nurman, he placed a hard on and ly before Sir Norman, he placed a hand on each lip, and in a deep, guttural voice, addressed him :

"So, sir knight-for such I perceive you are -you are anxious to know something of that old ruin youder ?" "Well," said Sir Norman, so far recovering

from his surprise as to be able to speak, "sup-pose I am ? Have you anything to say against it, my little friend ?

"'Oh, not in the least !" said the dwarf, with a hoarse chuckle. "Only, instead of wasting your breath asking this good man who professes such utter ignorance, you had better apply to me for in formation."

Again Sir Norman surveyed the little Hercules from head to foot for a moment in silence,

you happen to know about it, my pratty little friend ?" "O Lord !" excla med the laudlord to himself,

with a frightened face, while the dwarf "grinned horribly a ghastly emile" from ear to ear. "So much, my good air, that I would strong-

by advise you not to go near it, unless you wish to catch something worse than the plague. There have been others -our worthy host, there, whose treth, you may perceive are chattering in bis head, can tell you about those who have tried the trick, and—" "Well !" said Str Norman, curiously.

"And have never returned to tell what they found !" concluded the little monster, with a diabolical leer. And as the landlord fell, gray

and pasping, back in his seat, he broke out into a loud and hyens-like laugh. "My dear little friend," said Sir Norman, staring at him in displeased wonder, "don's laugh, if you can help it. You are unprepossessing enough at best, but when you laugh, you look like the very (a downward gesture) him-

self. Unbeeding this advice, the dwarf broke again the landlord nearly into fits, and seriously discomposed the nervous system even of Sir Norman himself. Then graning like a baboon, and still transfixing our puissant young which with the arms fixing fill baboon, and still transfixing our puissant young knight with the same tiger-like and un-pleasant glare, he nodded a farewell; and in this fashion, grinning, and nodding, and back-ing, he got to the door, and concluding the in-beresting parformance with a third hoarse and hideous laugh, disappeared in the darkness. For fully ten minutes after he was gone, the wonne may knyth his over blankly fixed on the

young man kept his eyes blankly fixed on the door, with a vague in pression that be was suf-fering from au attack of nightmare; for it scemed impossible that anything so preposterously ugly as that dwarf could exist out of one. A deep groan from the landlord, however, convinced him that it was to disagreeable midnight vision, but a brawny reality; and turning to that individual, be found him gasping, in the last degree of terr r, behind the counter. "Now, who in the name of all the demons out of Hades may that ugly abortion he ?" inquired Sir Norman. "O Lord ! be merciful ! sir, its Callban ; and the only wonder is, he did not leave you a bleeding corpse *b bis feet !" "I should like to see him try it. Perhaps he would have found that is a game two can play at! Where dues he come from and who he ?"

ros think ?" "But," added the man, seeing Sir Norman's

The two peers had accended the stairs, and were already on the bridge. The page loitered behind, talking, as it seemed, to the waterman. "He wears the livery of the Earl of Roches-ter," said Ormiston, speaking for the first time, "but I cannot see his face." "He will follow presently, and be sure you ase it then I Possibly yon may not find it en-tirely new to you." tirely new to you." She drew back into the shadow as she spoke ; and the two nobles, as they advanced, talking earnestly, beheld Sir Norman and Ormiston. Both raised their hats with a look of recogni-tion, and the salute was courteously returned by "Good-night, gentlemen," said Lord Roches-

ter; "a hot evening, is it not? Have you come here to witness the illumination?" "Hardly," said Sir Norman; "we have come "The first will have one good effect," and Ormiston lauphing; "if they clear the air and

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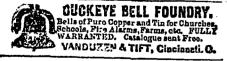
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Pray God they drive away the plague." said the Duke of York, as he and his companion passed from view.

The page sprang up the stairs after them, humming as he came, one of his master's love ditties-songs, saith tradition, savoring any-thing but the odor of sanctity. With the warn-ing of La Masque fresh in their minds, both ing of La Masque fresh in their minds, both looked at him earnestly. His gay livery was that of Lord Rochester, and be-came his graceful figure very well, as he marched along with a jaunty swagger, one as be marched along with a jaunty swagger, one bade werywhere wrought. And he remembered band on his side, and the other toying with a bad everywhere wrought. And he remembered be bouse of a friend—now, who may this be built of the bouse of a friend—now, who may this astrologer, that the paved streets of London ing all dogs, great and small, to be put to death would be like green fields, and the living be no first and small, to be put to death would be to bury the dead. Long "So I judged," said Sir Norman, rather bitas propagators of the pestilence. In passing, the lad turned his face toward them for a moment--a bright, saucy, handsome face it was--and the next instant he went round an angle and disappeared. Ormiston suppressed an oath. Sir Norman stifled a cry of amazement—for both recognized that beautiful colorless face, those perfect features, and great, black, lustrous eyes. It was the tace of the lady they had saved from

the plague off ! "Am I same or mad ?" inquired Sir Norman, looking helplessly about him for information. "Surely that is she we are in search of." "It certainly is !" said Ormiston. "Where "Where

are the wonders of this night to end ?"

"Satan and La Masque only know ; for they both seem to have united to drive me mad. Where is she ?" "Where, indeed ?" said Ormiston ; "where

is last year's snow ?" And Sir Norman, looking round at the spot where she had stood a moment before, found that she, too, had disappeared.

CHAPTER IV. THE STRANGER.

The two friends looked at each other in impressive silence for a moment, and spake never a word. Not that they were astonished they were long passed the power of that emotion; and if a cloud had dropped from the sky at their feet, they would probab'y have looked at their teet, they would probaby have locked at it passively, and vaguely woulder if the rest would follow. Sir Norman, especially, had sunk into a state of mind that words are faint and feeble to describe. Ormiston, not being quite so far gone, was the first to open his lips. "Upon my honor, Sir Norman, this is the most astonishing thing I ever heard of. That certainly was the face of our half dead bride ! What, in the name of all the gods, can it mean, I wonder?"

Wonder ?'

1 wonder " "I have given up wondering," said Sir Nor-man, in the same helpless tone. "And if the earth were to open and swallow London up, I abould not be the least surprised. One thing is certain ; the lady we are seeking and that page are one and the same."

"And yet La Masque told you she was two miles from the city, in the haunted ruin ; and La Masque most assuredly knows."

"I have no doubn she is there. I shall not be the least patoniabed if I find her in every street botwien this and Newgate." "Really, it is a most singular affair ! First.

you see her in the magic caldron; then we find her dead; then, when within an ace of being buried, she comes to life; then we le ve her lifelera as a merble statue, shut up in your room, and fifteen minutes after, she vanishes as my-steriously so a fairy in a nursary legend. And, issely, she turns up in the shape of a court page, and swagers slong London Bridge at this hour of the night, chanting a love song. Faith 1 it would puzzle the splinx herself to read this rid-

dia, I've a notion "" "I, for one, shall never try to read it," said Sir Norman. "I am about tired of this laby-rinth of mystories, and shall leave time and La Masque to unravel them at their leisure,"

waiting only the midnight hour to be fired. Here, however, no one reented to be stirring; and no sound broke the silonce but the distant rumble of the deathcart, and the rugies of the

driver's bell. There were lights in some of the houses, but many of them were dark and deserted, and nearly every one bors the red cross of the plague.

It was a gloomy scene and hour, and Sir Norman's heart turned sick within him as he noticed the rain and devastation the pestilence longer able to bury the dead. Long before this, he had grown bardened and accustomed to death from its very frequence; but now, as he looked sound him, he almost ro solved to ride on and return no more to London till the plaque should have left it. But then came the thought of his unknown lady-love, and with it the reflection that he was on his way to find her; and, rousing himself from his melan-choly reverie, he rode on at a brisker pace, beroically resolved to brave the plaque or any obber emergency, for her sake. Full of this laudable and lover-like resolution, he had got on about half a mile further, when he was sud-

denly checked in his rapid career by an exciting, but in no way surprising, little incident. During the last few yards, Sir Norman had come within sight of another horseman, riding on at rather a leisurely psee, considering the place and the hour. Sudd nly three other horsemen came galloping down upon him, and the leader, presenting a pistol at his head, re-quested him in a stentorian tone for his money or his life. By way of reply, the stranger in stantly produced a pistol of his own, and before nished highwayman could comprehend the ast

the astonished highwayman could comprehend the possibility of such an act, discharged it full in his face. Wibh a loud yell the robber reeled and fell from his saddle, and in a twinkling both his companions fired their pistols at the traveller, and hore with a simultaneous cry of rage, down upon him. Neither of the shots had taken effect, but the two enraged highwaymen would have made short work of their victim had not Sir Norman, like a true knight, ridden to the rescue. Draw-ing his sword, with one vigorous blow he placed another of the assassing hors de combat ; and, delighted with the idea of a fight to stir his stignant blood, was turning (like a second St. George at the Draggon) upon the other, when that individual, thinking discre-tion the better part of valor, instantus neously turned tail and fied. The whole brisk lithle

apisods had not occupied five minutes, and Sir Norman was scarcely aware the fight had begun before it had triumphantly ended.

"Short, sharp and decisive!" was the stranger's cool criticism, av he deliberately wipad his blood-stained sword and placed it in a velvet scabbard. "Our friends, there, got a velves scappard. "Our triends, there, got more than they bargained for, I fancy. Though, but for you. sir," he said, politely raising his bat and bowing, "I should probably bave been ere this in heaven, or-the other place.

Sir Norman, deeply edified by the easy same froid of the speaker, turned to take a second look as him. There was very little light; for the night had grown darker as it wore on, and bhe few store that had glummered faintly had hid sheir diminished heads behind the piles of hid sheir diminished heads behind the piles of rinky clouds. Still, there was a faint phosphor-beccut lights whitening the gloom, and by it Sir . Norman's keen brisht eyes discovered that he wore a long dark cloak and slouched hat. He discovered something also, too-that he had . seen that hat and cloak, and the man inside of them on London Bridge, not an hour before. It struck Sir Norman there was a sort

get ing angry, as he felt he ought to have done, mechanically answered : "The watchman told you of the two young

men who brought her out and laid her in the dead-cart-I was one of the two." "And who was the other ?"

"A friend of mine-one Malcolm Ormiston."

"A h! I kow him ! Pardon my abruptness, "A h! I kow him ! Pardon my abruptness, Sir Normau," said the stranger, once more speaking in his assumed suave tone, "but I feel daeply on this subject, and was excited at the moment. You spoke of her being brought friend be, for I was not aware that she had

terly, "or she would not have been left to die aloue of the plague. She was brought to my house, sir, and I am the friend who would have stood by her to the last."

Sir Norman sat up very straight and haughty on his horse; and had it been daylight he would have seen a slight derisive smile pass over the hps of his companion. "I have always heard that Sir Norman Kinge-"I have always heard that Sir Norman Kinge-

ley was a cnivalrous kurgh ," he said ; "but I scarcely dreamed his gallantry would have car-ried him so far as to brave death by the pestilence for the sake of an unknown lady-however beautiful. I wonder you did not carry her to

"No doubt ! Those who could desert her at such a time would probably be capable of that

or any other baseness !" "My good friend," said the stranger, calmly, "your insunustion is not over-courteous, but I can forgive it, more for the sake of what you've done for her to-night than for myself."

Sir Norman's lip curled. "I'm obliged to you! And now, sir, as you have seen fit to question me in this free and easy manuer, will you pardon me if I take the liberty of returning the compliment, and ask you a few in return?"

"Certainly; pray proceed, Sir Norman," said the stranger blandly; "you are at liberty to ask as many questions as you please—so am I to

As many questions as you please—so am I to answer them" "I answered all yours unhesitatingly, and you owe it to me to do the same," said Sir Nor-man somewhat haughtily. "In the first place, you have an advantage of me which I neither understand, nor relish; so, to place us on equal terms, will you have the goodness to tell me your name?"

"Most assuredly! My name," said the stranger, with glib airiness, "is Count L'Estraoge.

"A name unknown to me," said Sir Norman, with a pieroing look, "and equally unknown, I believe, at Whitehall. There is a Lord L'Estrange in London; but you and he are certainly not one and the same." "My friend does not believe me," said the

"My mend does not believe me," said the count, almost gayly—"a circumstance I regret, but cannot help. Is there anything else Sir Normau wishes to know?" "If you do not answer my questions truth-fully, there is little use in my asking them," asid Sir Norman, bluntly. "Do you mean to say you are a foreigner?" "Sir Norman Kingsley is at perfect liberty

Sir Norman Kingeley is at perfect liberty to answer that question as he pleases," replied the stranger with most provoking indifference. Sir Norman's eye flashed, and his hand on his sword ; but, reflecting that the count might find it inconvenient to answer ony more questions if he ran him through, he restrained him-

self and went on. "Sir, you are impertment, but that is of no consequence, just now. Who was that lady-what was her name?"

"Leoline." "Was she your wife ?"

about him assumed, he was positive; and he montally called over the muster-roll of his past friends, who spent half their time at Whitehall, and the other half going through the streets, making love to the honest citizats' pretty wives and caugh ers ; but none of them answered to Count L'Estrange. He could second the spoke English with too perfect an a cent to be that; and then be knew turn, Sir Norman, as if he had been his brother. In short, there was no use driving bimself asane trying to read so unreadable a riddle; and inwardly consigning the mysterious count to Old Nick, he swallowed another glass of sack, and quit thinking about him.

So absorbed had Sir Norman been in his own nouruful musings, that he paid no attention whatever to those around him, and had nearly whatever to those around him, and had nearly forgothen their very presence, when one of them, with a loud cry, sprang to his feet, and then fell writhing to the floor. The others, in dismay, gathered about him, but the next instant fell back with a cry of, "He has the plague !" At that dreaded announcement, half of them scamp-ered off incontinently; and the other half, with the landlord at their their different former. the landlord at their head, lifted the sufferer, whose groans and cries were heart-rending. and carried him out of the house. Sir Norman, rather dismayed himself, had risen to his feet, fully aroused from his re-verie, and found himself and another should particularly like to know." verie, and found himself and another individual sole possessors of the premises. His companion he could not very well make out; for he was sitting, or rather crouching, in a remote and shadowy corner, where nothing was clearly visible but the glare of a pair of fiery eyes. There was a redundancy of hair, too, about his bead and face; indeed, considerable more atout the latter than there seemed any real necessity for, and even with the imperfect glimpse he caught of him the young man set him down in his own mind about as hard looking a customer as he had ever seen. The firry eyes were glar-ing upon him like those of a tiger, through a jubgle of bushy hair, but their owner spoke never a word, though the other stared back

with compound interest. There they ast, bram-ing upon each other-one fiercely, the other juriously, until the re-appearance of the landlord with a very lugubrious and woebegone countenance. It struck Sir Norman that it was about time to start for the ruin; and, with an eye to business, he turned to cross-examine mine host a trifle.

"What have they done with that man ?" he

asked by way of preface. "Sent him to the pest-house," replied the landlord, resting his elbows on the counter and his chin in his hands, and staring diamally at the opposite wall. "At 1 L ord 'a' mercy on us 1 these be dreadful times !" "Dreadful enough !" said Sir Norman, sigh-

ing deeply, as he thought of his beautiful Leoline, a victim of the merciless pestilence. "Have there been many deaths here of the distemper ?"

Twenty-five to-day !" groaned the man. "O Lord 1 what will become of us ?" "You seem rather disheartened," said Sir

Norman, pouring out a glass of wine and hand-ing it to hun. "Just drink this, and don't boring it to him. "Just drink this, and don't bor-row trouble. They say sack is a sure specific against the plague."

Mine dost drained the bumper, and wiped his

Mine dost drained une bumper, and wiped his month, with another hollow groan. "If I thought that, sir, I'd not be soher from one week's end to t'other; but I know well enough I will be in a plaque-pit in less than a week. O Lord! have mercy on us !"

"Was she your wife ?". The stranger paused for a moment, as if re-and glanged, first at the fiery eyes in the corner, through the chinks in the broken flags,

The landlord leaned over the counter, and placed a very pale and startled face close to Sir Norman's.

"Thay's just what I wanted to tell you, sir, but I was afraid to speak before him. I think he lives up in that same old ruin you were inquiring about-at least, he is often seen hangafraid of him to sak him any questions. Ab, sir, it's a strange place, that ruin, and there be

"What are they?" inquired Sir Norman. "I should particularly like to know."

"Well, sir, for one thing, some folks say it is haunted, ou account of the queer lights and noises about it, sometimes ; but, again, there be other folks, sir, that say the ghosts are alive, and that he"-nodding toward the door-"is a sort of ringleader among them."

" And who are they that cut up such cantrips in the cld place, pray ?" "Lord only knows sir. I'm sure I don't. I

never go near it myself ; but there are others who have, and some of them tell of the most beauti-ful lady, all in white, with lorg, tlack hair, who walks on the battlements monlight nights."

"A beautiful lady, all in white, with long black hair ! Why, that description applies to Leoline exactly." And Sir Norman gave a violent start, and

arose to proceed to the place directly. "Don't you go near it, sir !" said the host, warningly. "Others have gone, as he told you, and never come back; for these by ireadful times, and men do as they please. Between the plague and their wickedness, the Lord only knows what will become of us !"

" If I should return here for my horse in an hour or two, I suppose I can get him !" said Sir Norman, as he turned toward the door.

"It's likely you can, sir, if I'm not dead by that time," said the landlord, as he sank down again, groaning dismally, with his chin between his hands.

The night was now profoundly dark ; but Sir Norman knew the road and ruin well, and, drawing his sword, walked revolutely on. distance between it and the roin was briffing, before him, a mass of deepse black in the blackness. No white vision floated on the broken bathlement this night, as Sir Norman looked wistfully up at them ; bus neither was booked whathing op at them; but nonner was there any ungainly dwarf, with two edged sword, guarding the ruined entrance; and Sir Norman rassed unnelested in. He sought the spiral staircise which he Masque had spoken of, and, passing carefully from one ancient chamber to mobher, stumbling over piles of rubbish and stones as he went, he reached is at last. Descending gingerly its tortuous steep ness, he found binged in the mould reine yents week. O Lord 1 have mercy on us 1 "Amen !" said Sir Norman, impatiently. "If fast has not taken away your wits, my good sir, will you tell me what old ruin that is I saw a little above here as I rode up ?"