

"She will marry again," said Hannington quietly. "Rutherford perhaps. I hope she will. You can tell her so, if ever the occasion comes, Val. And if she has—other children, and this little one should be neglected, or if the child was left motherless, then you—Val——"

"She should be my child, then," said Valencia softly.

"Yes that is what I wanted to hear you say. God bless you, Valencia. God forgive me!"

The light was fading from his eyes: his voice was growing very weak. She could barely hear his words when he murmured at last.——

"Kiss me, Val."

She bent to kiss him, and received his last breath upon her lips.

## CHAPTER XL.

### THE LUCK RETURNS.

THE way in which John Hannington came by his death remained for some time a mystery. Ralph Kingscott's flight was not at first connected with it, except by Alan Moncrieff in his own mind; and the questions that he put to Hannington, and that others also put, had not been answered by the dying man with sufficient clearness to ensure certainty.

Moncrieff became sure in his own mind that Kingscott was responsible for Hannington's death, but he sincerely hoped that it was by accident and that his brother-in-law had harbored no murderous design. The suspicions of other people were very easily allayed. It was not known that Ralph had met Hannington; no one had seen him leave Torresmuir, and he went away from home so often that his absence did not excite remark.

When Alan Moncrieff looked into his own affairs, much that had been puzzling to him was explained. The fraud and trickery of which he had been the dupe for years made him stand aghast. Ralph had gone on until discovery was imminent, and had then disappeared; he had taken with him large sums of money—enough indeed, to constitute a nice little fortune on which he could subsist very comfortably in a foreign land. Moncrieff, in the first shock of