

panion. "My dear young fellow," he said, in a wheedling tone, "you need not be so unaccommodating; when you hear what I have to say you will be perfectly satisfied, and, in the meantime, I ask you to forbear and come with me."

"On one condition," said Oliver. "I last saw you on your back with a dirk in your ribs; now you are clothed as I saw you then; throw back your coat—over the heart—there."

They were standing face to face. The old man shrank back, but Oliver, with a dart of his arm, threw the coat back upon his shoulder, and, before he could clap his hand over his heart, he saw the fissure which the dirk had made, its edges ridged with the ooze of blood from the heart stricken below.

Before Oliver had time to move, the old man had whipped a dog-whistle from his pocket and had blown it sharply. In a moment Eric and Hugh rushed from their concealment in the woods, and, after a short, violent scuffle, overpowered him. They bound his hands behind his back, tied a handkerchief across his mouth, and, while Eric guarded him, Hugh went into the forest and soon reappeared leading a horse which Oliver at once recognized as the one ridden by Miquelon. They lifted him into the saddle and formed a procession; Eric leading the horse, Hugh walking by his side, and the old man bringing up the rear.

When they reached the Manor, Oliver was thrust into a room which opened from the large hall. It was built like a cell, the only aperture, besides a hole for a stove-pipe in the ceiling, being a small window high in the wall, heavily crossed with iron; there was no furniture except a small oak table, ornamented with some rude scroll work at the ends, and a bench against the wall. Here Oliver sat down. His feet were not pinioned, but the handkerchief was still bound upon his mouth, and his hands were fastened firmly behind his back.

There could be no doubt in his mind for what fate he was reserved; it was only, he thought, a question of the time and the manner of his taking off. In this extremity he did not think further of the mysteries by which he was sur-

rounded, or endeavor to find a clue to them; his one thought was how he could make some show of fight for his life. He carefully examined his cell. The light from the window fell upward upon the stove-pipe hole, and downward toward the door, but he could expect succor from neither of these quarters. At a first survey, he thought the walls were perfectly smooth, but after a more careful scrutiny he discovered a nail or spike about six feet from the floor. Standing upon the bench he found that this spike was just even with his face, and slipping its head under the upper edge of the handkerchief which covered his mouth, he gradually worked the bandage downward until it passed his chin and left his mouth free.

This was an incalculable relief, and it seemed to him that he could actually think to more purpose when he could expand his lungs to their fullest capacity. But after this first glow had passed he could take no comfort from his cogitations. A prolonged straining at his wrists proved that the knots would hold against any effort of his own. He passed the greater part of an hour chafing the cords against the iron bound corner of the bench. If he had been a Bastile prisoner, with a lifetime to spend in such an occupation, he might have continued with the hope of success after a decade, but he saw that in his present need the task was hopeless. Suddenly he felt faint and sank upon the bench so completely exhausted that a sort of stupor crept upon him. He was aroused from this by a slight tap upon the shoulder. Starting up he looked around.

There swinging to and fro like a pendulum was a good brave dirk. It was suspended by a string through the hole in the ceiling. He could distinguish no one there, but the action was friendly, for when he turned so that the dagger struck his back, it was lowered to a level with his hands. With some difficulty he grasped it, and after a moment's consideration, he worked it carefully into one of the holes in the scroll work of the table. This allowed sufficient resistance, and after several wounds to his wrists and hands, he succeeded in