

THE CRAFTSMAN, HAMILTON, 15th SEPTEMBER, 1869.

SAVED FROM DEATH.

WRITTEN FOR THE CRAFTSMAN BY D. R.

Concluded.

"When next I opened my eyes, I found myself in a small hut, very poorly furnished, and apparently unguarded. It was a long while before I could see this much, for my head seemed so confused, that I could not fix my thoughts on anything for more than a moment, when I felt my senses leaving me. At length, I remembered all—the attack, and its result, but had they left me here alone? I tried to rise, but found I was too weak. The noise I made, brought a man to the door, who looked in, and seeing me recovered, called some one else, who proved to be an old woman. She came up to me with a grave air, and with a not unkind touch, placed a pillow so as to make me more comfortable. My head was paining me very much, and I pointed to it, being too weak to speak.

"She understood me, and said in broken English, that she would try to ease it. She left the room, and returned in a short time, with a bandage, and some lotion, with which she bathed my head. She said my head had been cut, but she had bound it up, and now it was getting better. The dressing gave it great relief, and I tried to thank her, but with the saddest smile I ever saw, she left the room. However, she soon came back with some eatables, and a bottle of wine. After I had refreshed myself, I felt much better, and asked her where I was. The woman shook her head sadly, as she replied, 'You will know too soon.' Then I was still in the hands of the miscreants who had robbed me. I tried to find out from her other particulars, but she would not give me any information. All the answer I got was, that I would soon find out. Just then, my old friend the innkeeper, entered the room, and I noticed that his shoulder was bound up. He looked at me with a most diabolical expression, as if to slay me where I lay, but something evidently restrained him. He called the old woman aside, and I heard the words 'chief,' 'to-morrow,' and as he spoke, I saw her cheek blanch, and I felt worse was in store for me. Remarking her agitation, the ruffian laughed brutally, and said, 'What! are you not used to it yet, mother, its time you were.' 'I should be a fiend then, she said quietly, 'now I am but the mother of one,' and as she spoke, she looked at him with such a calm disdain, that he really seemed abashed, and slunk out of the room. Poor mother of such a son.

"No one appeared gain that day, and I had plenty of time for reflection. My mind was in such a tumult, and I still suffered so much from my head, that I found it impossible to concentrate my attention upon a single point. I knew they intended I should die, and I tried to think how you would feel, Nellie, and if you would give me more than a passing thought, and whether you, and my dear old guardian here, would ever know what came of me. I imagined the dismay of Mr. Wareham, when I failed to return, and thought of a thousand things, but always the one thought that was uppermost was—will Nellie grieve for me.

"Thus the day rolled on, and at night I was glad to sleep, exhaustion and suffering had completely

worn me out. So soundly did I sleep, that it was broad daylight before I opened my eyes. Just as I awakened, I heard the innkeeper say to some companion, 'He sleeps soundly now, but will sleep sounder to-morrow.' These words recalled me from a pleasant dream of home and Nellie, to a realising sense of my horrible position. Was there no way of escape? I suggested this to the old woman, when she brought me my breakfast of bread and goat's milk, but the sad earnestness of her reply, convinced me of its hopelessness. What could I do, weak and unarmed, against so many strong and well armed men. No, I saw there was no help for it, but to wait till the chief (whom they appeared to expect soon,) arrived, and see if a heavy ransom would tempt him to release me."

CHAPTER III.—THE DENOUEMENT.

"Towards noon, a commotion outside the hut, proclaimed something unusual, and a surmise, that the chief had arrived, proved correct, for, immediately afterwards, a tall, dark, fierce looking man entered, before whom all made way.

"He marched up to my couch, and fixing his ferocious eyes on me, said—'So another of your cursed countrymen has come to die in Italy!' His wild manner confirmed a suspicion I had previously entertained, that I was the captive of the celebrated bandit chief, Carvati. As this conviction forced itself upon me, my heart grew cold, and my hopes of succour sank—I had heard his story. He had once been a generous, confiding youth, who had been most foully wronged, by—I blush to say—an Englishman. His wrong seemed to have changed his whole nature; from being one of the kindest of men, he became hardened to a demon. Eventually, he associated himself with a horde of banditti, of whom he became the chief, so as to enable him the more easily to carry out his vow of vengeance against every member of the nation which owned his wronger, on whom he could lay his hands.

"The people had told me that an Englishman had never been known to escape from him alive, and the authorities had been foiled in every attempt to capture him. This was the being who now stood over me, and I was an Englishman, and in his power. No wonder my heart sank like lead, and my brain reeled under the terrible situation. Controlling myself by a powerful effort, I raised myself and confronted him. I told him that I had never harmed him or his, and would be willing to pay a ransom for liberty. But this offer seemed but to exasperate him the more. 'I want not your gold!' he shouted, 'but to exterminate your false race! Away with him to instant death!'

"Two stout fellows, beside whom I looked a mere infant, seized me, and, despite my struggles, dragged me out of the hut. I begged and prayed for mercy, and was jeered at in reply. I shouted for help in my despair, but no help came. I saw the poor old woman, wringing her hands, with a countenance pale with terror and affright. One of the murderous crew, with a brutal laugh, said—'I knew we would have some sport when the chief came.' My tears and supplications had no effect on the hardened wretches, and I felt that indeed my last hour had come. Despair took possession of my heart, and I passively awaited my fate. I offered a silent prayer to Heaven, and commended you, Nellie, to the care of our Heavenly Father. A ruf-