

faint ; but she brought herself to with a visible effort, and proceeded, in a cold and passionless monotone, in which, however, it was just possible to trace a faint vibration. "When—he—was taken, I swore upon the Cross, and the Koran, upon Fire and Water, that I would exact life for life ; that whoever took the life of Sándor should give me his life, and that in whatever manner Sándor died, so should his murderer also die—and by my own hand. Had you been a soldier, I would have fought you hand to hand. Being what you are—you will seat yourself in the hollow of that great stone and I shall take your head with my sword, even as his head was taken by yours."

"But what have I"—I was beginning—

"No. It is useless for you to speak of mercy or ransom. Ah, it was terrible when I thought that death was going to save you from vengeance. But fortune was not so cruel. I wrestled with death for you, and I prevailed——"

"You mean," I could only ask, as calmly as bewilderment allowed me, "that you saved my life only in order that you might take it in your own way ? But even so, what have I to do with Erdélyi Sándor ? With one who is no more than a name to me ?"

"You look me in the face, and deny that his head did not fall by your sword ?"

"And do you take me for an executioner—me ?"

"You deny it ? Very well ; you shall have a fair trial. Here are your judges," she said, in a stronger voice, pointing out her subjects by a