

Oh that I had died under the hand of the pirates! Oh that the ocean had swept me down to death with all its waves! Then I should not have lived to see this day!"

Roused by her vehemence Despard started from his abstraction and looked around.

"It seems to me," said he, "as if you were blaming some one for inflicting suffering on a man for whom no suffering can be too great. What! can you think of your friend as he lies there in the next room in his agony, dying, torn to pieces by this man's agency, and have pity for him?"

"Oh!" cried Beatrice, "is he not my father?"

Mrs. Compton looked around with staring eyes, and trembled from head to foot. Her lips moved—she began to speak, but the words died away on her lips.

"Your father!" said Despard; "his acts have cut him off from a daughter's sympathy."

"Yet he has a father's feelings, at least for his dead son. Never shall I forget his look of anguish as he stood on the balcony. His face was turned this way. He seemed to reproach me."

"Let me tell you," cried Despard, harshly. "He has not yet made atonement for his crimes. This is but the beginning. I have a debt of vengeance to extort from him. One scoundrel has been handed over to the law, another lies dead, another is in London in the hands of Langhetti's friends, the Carbonari. The worst one yet remains, and my father's voice cries to me day and night from that dreadful ship."

"Your father's voice!" cried Beatrice. She looked at Despard. Their eyes met. Something passed between them in that glance which brought back the old, mysterious feeling which she had known before. Despard rose hastily and left the room.

"In God's name," cried Brandon, "I say that this man's life was not sought by me, nor the life of any of his. I will tell you all. When he compassed the death of Uracao, of whom you know, he obtained possession of his son, then a mere boy, and carried him away. He kept this lad with him and brought him up with the idea that he was his best friend, and that he would one day show him his father's murderer. After I made myself known to him, he told Vijal that I was this murderer. Vijal tried to assassinate me. I foiled him, and could have killed him. But I spared his life. I then told him the truth. That is all that I have done. Of course, I knew that Vijal would seek for vengeance. That was not my concern. Since Potts had sent him to seek my life under a lie, I sent him away with a knowledge of the truth. I do not repent that I told him; nor is there any guilt chargeable to me. The man that lies dead there is not my victim. Yet if he were—oh, Beatrice! if he were—what then? Could that atone for what I have suffered? My father ruined and broken-hearted and dying in a poor-house calls to me always for vengeance. My mother suffering in the emigrant ship, and dying of the plague amidst horrors without a name calls to me. Above all, my sweet sister, my pure Edith—"

"Edith!" interrupted Beatrice—"Edith!"

"Yes; do you not know that? She was buried alive."

"What!" cried Beatrice; "is it possible that you do not know—that she is alive?"

"Alive!"

"Yes, alive; for when I was at Holby I saw her."

Brandon stood speechless with surprise.

"Langhetti saved her," said Beatrice. "His sister has charge of her now."

"Where, where is she?" asked Brandon, wildly.

"In a convent at London."

At this moment Despard entered.

"Is this true?" asked Brandon, with a deeper agitation than had ever yet been seen in him—

"my sister, is it true that she is not dead?"

"It is true. I should have told you," said Despard, "but other thoughts drove it from my mind, and I forgot that you might be ignorant."

"How is it possible? I was at Quebec myself. I have sought over the world after my relatives—"

"I will tell you," said Despard.

He sat down and began to tell the story of Edith's voyage and all that Langhetti had done, down to the time of his rescue of her from death. The recital filled Brandon with such deep amazement that he had not a word to say. He listened like one stupefied.

"Thank God!" he cried at last when it was ended; "thank God, I am spared this last anguish; I am freed from the thought which for years has been most intolerable. The memories that remain are bitter enough, but they are not so terrible as this. But I must see her. I must find her. Where is she?"

"Make yourself easy on that score," said Despard, calmly. "She will be here to-morrow or the day after. I have written to Langhetti's sister; she will come, and will bring your sister with her."

"I should have told you so before," said Beatrice, "but my own troubles drove every thing else from my mind."

"Forgive me," said Brandon, "for intruding now. I came in to learn about Langhetti. You look upon me with horror. I will withdraw."

Beatrice bowed her head, and tears streamed from her eyes. Brandon took her hand.

"Farewell," he murmured; "farewell, Beatrice. You will not condemn me when I say that I am innocent?"

"I am accursed," she murmured.

Despard looked at these two with deep anxiety.

"Stay," said he to Brandon. "There is something which must be explained. There is a secret which Langhetti has had for years, and which he has several times been on the point of telling. I have just spoken to him and told him that you are here. He says he will tell his secret now, whatever it is. He wishes us all to come in—and you too, especially," said Despard, looking at Mrs. Compton.

The poor old creature began to tremble.

"Don't be afraid, old woman," said Philipe.

"Take my arm and I'll protect you."

She rose, and, leaning on his arm, followed the others into Langhetti's room. He was fearfully emaciated. His material frame, worn down by pain and confinement, seemed about to dissolve and let free that soaring soul of his, whose fiery impulses had for years chafed against the prison bars of its mortal inclosure. His eyes shone darkly and luminously from their deep,