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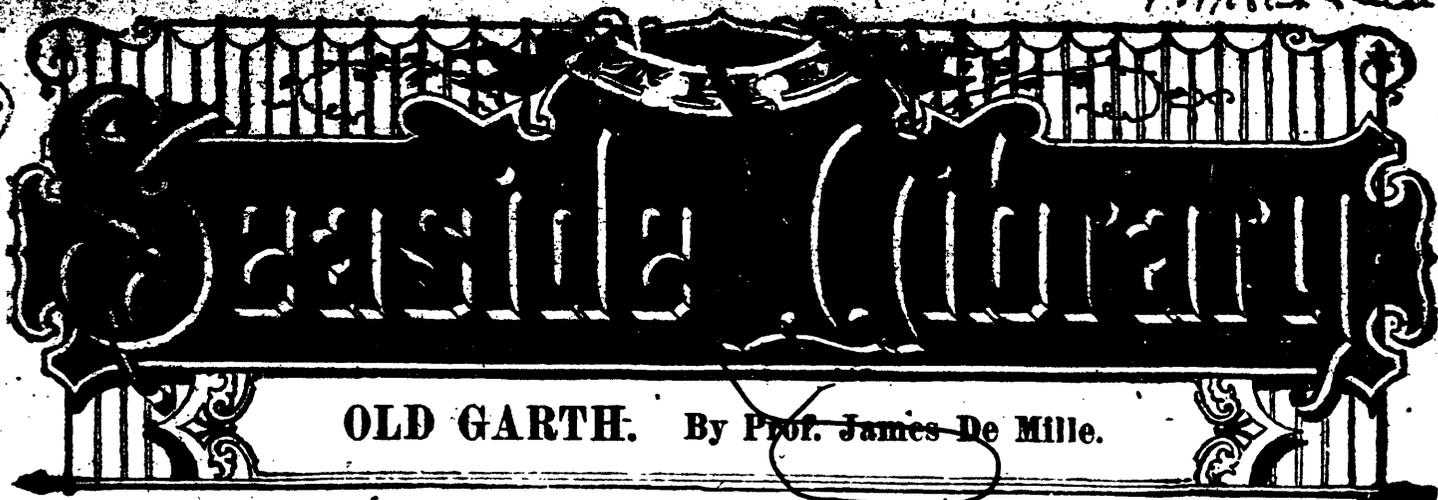
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OLD GARTH. By Prof. James De Mille.

This Number contains a Complete Story, Unchanged and Unabridged.

Vol. LXXV

{ DOUBLE NUMBER }

GEORGE MUNRO, PUBLISHER.
Nos. 17 to 27 VANDEWATER STREET, NEW YORK.

{ PRICE 20 CENTS }

No. 1512

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A STORY OF SICILY.

By Professor JAMES DE MILLE,

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Vol. LXXV.

{ DOUBLE
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OLD GARTH:

A STORY OF SICILY.

By Professor JAMES DE MILLE,

Author of "The Dodge Club," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE STRANGE MANUSCRIPT.

OLD GARTH sat in his room in Liverpool, smoking his pipe and reading a letter. It was a large, low apartment in the topmost story of a building that looked like a warehouse. From this a window opened out upon a narrow lane, on the other side of which and about six feet away rose the blank wall of another warehouse. There was but little furniture in the room: a narrow iron cot with mattress, two stout chairs, a small deal table, and finally a seaman's chest, which had been transformed into a couch by the simple means of a few gunny-bags.

The occupant of this room had not been in Liverpool more than six months, and yet had made himself known during that time throughout a pretty extensive circle of acquaintances, both by the eccentricity of his character, and the singularity of his business. These had impressed the public mind very strongly, and had produced that peculiar sentiment of good-natured toleration which is often felt toward any one who may be regarded as an "oddy."

Old Garth, as he stood in his humble apartment with the letter in his hand, presented rather a singular appearance. He was so tall that his bushy hair almost touched the low ceiling; his frame was gaunt, raw-boned, and sinewy, and his dress, though not exactly shabby, was yet coarse and ill fitting, giving a general air of slouchiness to his whole exterior. His face was bronzed, as though by long exposure to a tropical sun; he had his beard and mustache short cropped and of that length which is most popular with practical men, since it enables one to discard razors and yet gives no inconvenience; his nose was thin and long, his eyebrows shaggy, and over the whole face there was a certain grimness, arising from the grizzled hair which overspread it. There was, however, something in the face which attracted rather than repelled; the gray eyes were sad rather than stern; beneath the roughness of the features there were the signs of gentleness and kindly human feeling; while in the whole man there was the suggestion of a character in which the most pro-

found earnestness was blended with the most touching simplicity.

As Old Garth studied the letter which he held in his hands, the sound of footsteps, apparently ascending the stairs, came from below without attracting his attention. At length there came a rap at the door, after which the visitor, without waiting for any invitation, opened the door and entered the room.

The new-comer was one of those good-looking young fellows, who are so plentiful everywhere in this nineteenth century, both in fiction and in real life. He had a round, almost boyish face, clustering dark curls, open, frank expression, while his eyes were of that kind which look one full in the face, and compel a certain sort of interest if not regard. His first remark was the usual and natural one:

"Hallo, old boy, how are you?"
"Well, Henslowe, my son," said Old Garth, "I'm delighted to see you. Make yourself at home. Don't be bashful, and don't mind me. For my part, I'm in a confounded fix and about used up."

"Why, what's the matter?" said Henslowe, dropping into a seat upon the seaman's chest.

"Oh, everything's turned up," said the other, "that ought not to."

"Do you mean here in Liverpool, or in Sicily?" asked Henslowe. "Any news from the seat of war?"

"Well," said Garth, "that's about it. It is news from Sicily. It's that beggar Berengar. He's thrown up the cards. The game's up."

"Thrown up the cards? Why, what's that for?"

"Well, perhaps it couldn't be helped; but, you see, the fact is, he was expecting something from me, and that something wasn't forthcoming, and so—the game's up. It's hard, too. You see, it was this way with me: I'd been ten years or so in Sicily. They're a bad lot, but they've got some good points after all, and ought to have their rights. It's too infernally bad for those beggarly Bourbons to hold a magnificent country like a vegetable garden, and treat the population like a lot of slaves. Well, you know we've been working away for ten years or so

against the rascally Bourbons for the Sicilian Republic, and didn't make much progress, so I offered to come home and see if I couldn't do something; and that, as you know, is the reason why I came here."

"The very last place in the world to come to on such a business," said Henslowe; "that's what I've always told you. Now, if you'd tried France, you might have done something; but in England, there's no chance. We're the most matter-of-fact people in the world. We sympathize with revolutions everywhere, but we never dream of helping them; and in all England there's no such matter-of-fact place as Liverpool. I know that. Look at me. I'm an artist. An artist! and in Liverpool! Think of that! Now, an artist in Liverpool knows exactly the position of a patriot in Liverpool." But what does your friend Berengar say? Is that from him?"

"Yes. He don't say anything in particular, except that he's given up, and is going to make his peace with the Government. That means that the infernal scoundrel is going to be what we call Queen's evidence. He's going to play the Judas, betray his friends, tell all he knows about the revolution; hand in the names of the leaders, and all that. He means to save his own skin, and make enough by his treachery to get a start in life."

"How did this happen?"

"Oh, well—every traitor has an excuse, and Berengar has as good an excuse as any one. You see, the game had become desperate. When I left, I promised to seek for help here, and return in three months. But six months have passed, and I've done nothing. This is what Berengar tells me, and he adds that he must either do as he is doing, or hang. There's no doubt that the poor devil is in a fix. Here's his letter. You can see it for yourself."

"Thanks—but I don't know Italian."

"Well, it isn't hardly Italian, it's the Sicilian patois. Berengar boasts, or used to boast, about being a man of the people. After this he will probably be a man of the Government, for they will, no doubt, reward him for his treachery;—and in return for enabling them to hang a score or two of his most intimate friends, they will

give him a situation in some *déjána*, perhaps, with a salary of about four pounds a year. Rather small, isn't it? But that's often the case with the price of blood. Didn't Judas bargain for thirty pieces of silver?"

"Well," said Henslowe, after a brief pause, "perhaps, after all, it's just as well."

"Just as well!" cried Garth. "What! just as well! That's cool, too; and what's going to become of me, I should like to know, when the great business of my life's broken up?"

"Oh, as for that, a Sicilian revolution is hardly a business, and a man like you can easily find something else."

Garth shook his head.

"It's not so easy, I can tell you," said he, "for a man like me to find a congenial occupation that suits his nature, and doesn't offend his conscience. You see, I've lived a roving life. I've tried different countries—Greece, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Corsica—all, and I wasn't exactly satisfied with any of them. At length I settled down in Sicily. I found the people enterprising; ingenious, warm-hearted, and oppressed by a miserable government. I got mixed up with the Republicans there more and more until at length the establishment of the Sicilian Republic became the chief end of my life. And all the time I always had an idea that the eye of England was upon us. That's what I used to tell them. That's what I firmly believed. That's what brought me here! And this is the end? I never was so infernally humbugged in all my life. Englishmen care for nothing except business and money-making."

"Well, and why should they?" asked Henslowe. "There, don't fire up; I know exactly all that you're going to say; but the fact is the average Briton has only a very misty notion about other countries, and though he may feel a vague sort of sympathy with the cause of revolution in the abstract, yet he don't feel enough to assist with his purse. But never mind this just now. I've come to you about a little matter of my own. It isn't of much consequence, and yet, perhaps, after all, it may turn out to be of much greater consequence than it seems."

"A matter of your own," said Garth. "Out with it, my son; I should like to hear something that would drive Sicily out of my thoughts for a few minutes."

"Well," said Henslowe, "it's a curious sort of thing, and perhaps there isn't anything in it after all, but it's taken hold of me in such a manner that I swear I haven't been able to think of anything else ever since I first came across it."

"But what is it all anyway," asked Garth.

"Well, it's a manuscript," said Henslowe. "I found it in my father's desk. It consists of several sheets—quite old—and seems to me to be very important. I don't know how it may strike you, but for my part, I can't help feeling as though I'm on the verge of some great discovery. If so, my fortune's made, and if you like, you can help me, and go halves."

"But, stop: wait a bit," said Garth; "don't go on too fast. All this is beyond me, and I can't make head or tail of it. In the first place, what is this manuscript? is it in English, or some foreign language? and what is it about?"

"Oh, I'll show you it; of course," said Henslowe. "That's what I came here for. And I've brought it with me. Wait a moment. Here it is."

With these words, Henslowe drew from his pocket a parcel which was folded up in brown paper. This he opened, and brought forth another parcel also done up in brown paper. This wrapper he proceeded to remove. He did this with a tender care and deliberation which showed the high value he attached to its contents. At length the manuscript was disclosed, and this Henslowe unfolded and laid open before Garth, upon the small deal table; and then, having smoothed away the wrinkles, stepped back to watch the effect which might be produced.

Garth drew his chair up closer and proceeded to examine the manuscript.

The manuscript consisted of a sheet and a half of foolscap paper, covered with writing in a crabbed yet quite distinct hand. The paper was yellow and the ink was faded from age. The edges were worn away, and the corners also. The paper, in three half sheets, or separate leaves, having evidently fallen apart, for the lines of the folds were also deeply worn, and in some places here the paper could no longer hold together. There were also marks all over the manuscript which showed unmis-

takably that it had been much fingered, examined, and pondered over. From certain marks it also was evident that facsimile impressions had been taken from it, by tracing or some such mode. Here and there certain words were underlined, while down the margin of all the sheets were figures intended to number the lines, which figures had been made by some later hand than that which had written the manuscript. The first page contained thirty-seven of these lines; the second, thirty-six; the third, thirty-eight; the fourth, thirty-four; the fifth, thirty-six, and the sixth, thirty-five, making in all two hundred and sixteen lines.

All this was visible to Garth at the first survey which he made. The survey was made in silence; and turning over the pages he took one rapid glance over all.

"You see," said Henslowe, who stood watching him, "I want you to read it and give me your calm, unbiased opinion. There's a chance to make a fortune out of it, I think, or at any rate a stroke for a fortune. For my part, my position is such that I'm anxious to try anything. You know how it is with me, what I am—only a poor artist, poor in pocket, and poor too, I fear, in ability. I've no friends,—no prospects,—no future, and therefore, as is natural, I feel a good bit excited about this. Still I don't feel inclined to trust my own judgment altogether. Now, you've got a cool head on your shoulders, at least, for other people's affairs, and you're just the man that's able to give an impartial opinion, so I should like to know what you honestly think about it."

Henslowe spoke this in a rapid, feverish way, and with an anxious look; but Garth did not see him, nor did he appear to have heard one word of what had been said. His mind was completely engrossed by the manuscript. The first survey which he had taken of it had at once attracted his whole attention, and more. There was on his face something that looked like nothing less than amazement. Bending his head low he narrowly scrutinized the paper itself, and then turned it over till he reached the end, as though he were looking to see whether the handwriting was uniform or not. After this he looked back to the beginning. Then he frowned heavily, and once more looked at the end. Then he looked away with an absorbed and abstracted gaze, with his eyes on vacancy, and a heavy frown on his brow.

"In—fernally queer!" he murmured—"Landsdowne! Landsdowne Hall!—and Brother Claudian!—most infernally queer."

These words were not addressed to any one, for Garth was evidently lost in his own thoughts. Upon Henslowe the effect of them was extreme surprise. He had expected from Garth a cool, calm perusal of the manuscript, and a judicial summing up of its contents. Instead of this, he saw, even before Garth had read it—at the very first sight of it—a great and unusual excitement. This excitement also had been caused apparently by the mere sight of some names—Landsdowne, and Brother Claudian—which names he had seen at the beginning and end of the paper. Yet what could Garth possibly know about names like these belonging to a period far anterior?

To Henslowe all this was unaccountable, yet at the same time the evident emotion of Garth served to give the manuscript additional value in his eyes, since it formed an unintentional testimony to its mysterious importance. So he now watched Garth more narrowly and earnestly than ever, not saying a single word, feeling as though his friend might be the actual master of the secret which had been baffling him, and might be able to clear up the whole mystery.

After a brief period of reflection, Garth once more turned his eyes toward the paper. Leaning his elbows on the table he held his head in his hands, so that his face was not visible to Henslowe, but the profound absorption of the reader in his task showed how deep was its interest in his eyes. Now, whether that interest arose from the contents of the paper itself, or from some other additional knowledge of Garth, was out of Henslowe's power to answer.

CHAPTER II.

CONTENTS OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF BROTHER CLAUDIAN.

"To my beloved Friends & Preserver Ruperte Baron Landsdowne of Landsdowne Hall."

"BELOVED FRIEND,—It dothe not neede wordes to make knowne to you y^r stronge affec-

tion & gratitudo wth mye hart feeleth for y^r wth to xprese as is seemlye emptye words wth bee verilye weake & in mye case y^r is a dette beyonde wordes since it involveth Life itselfe. For it was by your heroick daringe intrepdedde courage & calm fortitudo y^r mye Life hath been safed & though y^r be manye in whose eyen y^r life of Brother Claudian, unworthy member of the Holy Societas of Jesus is lesse y^r nothing yet y^r be others who value him more pretioslye—but most of all in safing him y^r bath been done an act of pious love to y^r dear mother of us all y^r Holy Mater Ecclesia. Thus in y^r extreme of peril you risked all to safe me though in so doing you risked rank, possessions yea & Life itselfe.

"Beloved Frende y^r sandes of y^r life y^r you safed are nearly run out, it hath onlye gained a short yeare more & in these laste houres mye minde hath turned much toward you. For I think of you as one of y^r faithfulle among y^r faithlesse & as a valyant son of ye Holy Ecclesia among her bitter eneymes. Y^r time may come beloved Frende when your eneymes may triumph over you, and punish you sore for your faith and servitium to your King and your God. Theyre are traytours in every campe & you may have your Judas, & beloved frende it is out of my deep affectio & gratitudo y^r mye minde hath recalled a certayne thyng y^r wth occurred in mye earlye dayes & y^r wth may be important for you, & sholde y^r day of exilium ever come to you or youres, & sholde you be banished, your property confiscate & poverye oppress you, this may afford you y^r means of a reinstauratio of your fortunes & of giving back to you all wth you may have lost.

"Reade yfore these wordes well & marke y^r well & preserve y^r documentum, & if y^r time ever comyth (y^r wth may y^r Holy Santes prohibe it) y^r your servitium for God & King sholde be punish by y^r usurper & you sholde become an exul & a pauper & in sore need, y^r perhaps y^r testamentum may redeem your life from desperatio. Heare yfore wth I have to telle.

"It is 36 yeares y^r I was in Cadiz when y^r arrived a flete with prisoners captos at sea. These were all pyrates of y^r wth some had been hanged & y^r survivors were brought ashore & some were hanged ashore & others were spared for a time, not y^r they were less guilty but because they were diseased & some even on y^r point of death. Among whom was an Englishman of whom I heard tell, & being a countryman I deemed it my officium to visit him & see if I might not reclaim y^r wandering sheepe before it was too late. I therefore visited him & felt a true gaudium, that though in extremes almost, he yet was not a heretic, but desired to confess, & receive absolutio. His faithe was verily but weake & had well-nigh been destroyed by a life of mortal sin, but in these last houres y^r was a manifestatio of true penitentia & my ministratio was grateful. He listened eagerly to my wordes & made his confessio & showed true penitentia for the transgressions of his life. He also told me all y^r historia of his life, wth had been a long cursus of sin & iniquitas; what I am about to tell is no violatio of the arcaana of the confessional, but is y^r voluntoria made in many colloquia, when it was as I may say not so much Priest & Penitens y^r talked as homo & homo.

"His name was John Clark. About 30 yeares before this he left England (circa A. D. MDCL.) & went in a shippe to America, & y^r shippe was wracked & he with some mates in a boat was picked up by a shippe of y^r Buccanneers who took them all to their settlement in y^r insula Hispaniola, & there Clarke & his companions all joined y^r Buccanneers, & took y^r sacramentum or oath of fidelitas & made abjuratio of all other ties & bonds, & then after y^r followed a cursus of bloodshed & rapine & crimes unspeakable. At last on one occasio y^r shippe in y^r wth he sailed gave chase to a Spanish gallone y^r wth they knew to be a treasure shippe from y^r Havanas, y^r wth they chased for many days & approached y^r coast of Spain. But y^r Buccanneers kept her off from a port & in a storm pursued her through the straits & into y^r Mediterranean, where after two days they made an attack in a calm & captured her. The spolia were incalculabilia for y^r gallone had y^r whole of one yeare's revenue of Mexico.

"Now y^r sacramentum of y^r Buccanneers bound every one to y^r strictest fidelitas toward his comrades & y^r was always an aequale divisio of spolia. But on y^r occasio y^r spolia were of so great a magnitudo y^r nothing like it had been known ever before, & y^r Capitano was a man of very great ambitio & avaritia—who the day

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after the capture of y^e gallone, calling y^e Buccannere together made an oratio in y^e w^{ch} he said y^e spolia were greater than was ever known before, y^e it was y^e revenue of Mexico for one year & colde not bee less y^e 5 millione guineas & y^e they had won it themselves by their owen daring & valour, & y^e it w^{ch} be unfaire & unequal for to take it to Hispaniola & there divide it among y^e comradis who had been stayen at home in indolentia, & y^e those who had won y^e spolia sholde owen them. Saying y^e, moreover, it was impossible to convey y^e spolia through y^e Straits back to y^e ocean & on to Hispaniola: when so many Spanish shippes of war might encounter them. Nevertheless as he was afeared to perpetrate a violatio of y^e sacramentum of y^e Buccannere, he made a propositio y^e they sholde take y^e spolia to some hiding-place & there hide it until some time when they might make a final divisio among themselves with greater safety. W^{ch} thing y^e Capitano did propose, as was shlowen afterwards by y^e eventum y^e he might secure y^e larger portio for himself & defraud his comrades. But y^e thing was not suspect at y^e time & therefore it was y^e when y^e Capitano made y^e propositio y^e they sholde bury y^e spolia on a certayne insula w^{ch} he named to them, they were on & all persuade & consented to do as he asked, & thus it came to pass y^e Capitano was able to carry into executio y^e schema y^e he had w^{ch} was nothing else than to secure y^e possessio of y^e spolia for himself, & it was a vast summa—five millions of guineas, like y^e wealth of Crassus or of Cressus or of King Solomon: Such was y^e value of y^e spolia w^{ch} y^e Buccannere proceeded to take to y^e insula in order y^e they might bury it.

"Now y^e Buccannere were of every nation, & y^e Capitano was an Italiano & knew all about these shores & waters, of whom it was said y^e he once had been captus by y^e Corsairs of Barbary & had become a renegado & had sailed against y^e Christianos & had slain many until at last he had come back to the Christianos & joined y^e Buccannere. And he knew all the shores & islands of Europe & of Africa, & it was an island on the Italian coast y^e he made his electos for a place in y^e w^{ch} he sholde bury y^e spolia, w^{ch} insula being conveniens for seamen, & being unfrequentata & incognita, was a place in y^e w^{ch} y^e spolia might be safely concealed, & thus in obedientia to y^e Capitano they sette sail for y^e place where y^e Capitano did propose to —"

Here the sixth page ended at the 216th line. "There is a break here," said Henslowe. "Several leaves are lost, and these seem to contain the very cream and essence of the whole. Without these it seems impossible to find out anything. I've hunted everywhere for them but can't find them. Meanwhile you can have the conclusion."

With these words Henslowe drew from his pocket a parcel which he opened. In this was a half sheet of foolscap written on one side only, the counterpart in every respect of the other sheets. This he laid on the table before Garth.

"Here," said he, "is the last sheet. All the intervening leaves are gone. I haven't any idea how many there were, whether one or ten."

Garth looked up for a moment with the same abstracted air which he had shown before. Then he looked down again at the papers.

"Gone," said he, "Hm—and just here, too—well, that's a pity. Well, let's see what there is here"—and, saying this, he went on to read the last page.

"the spolia. For the place is not remote nor inaccessible since it is in y^e centre of y^e habitabile world & nigh to countries which carry on a great traffick, so y^e insula can easily be reached, & y^e spolia can be exhumed by a few men, & moreover y^e solitudo of y^e insula will enable you to perform y^e work in secreto, & if y^e necessitas sholde ever arise y^e will be your guide."
"W^{ch} necessitas I pray all ye saints to avert & rather to pour upon y^e heads of yourselve & familia all y^e blessings & benedictiones of Heaven & Earth, such being y^e daily prayer of your lovinge & gratefulle
"Amicus & Frater.
"CLAUDIEN.
"LANDSDOWNE HALL, October, MDCCXVI."

This was the end of the manuscript. How much of it was missing it was impossible to tell, as the pages were not numbered by the original writer, nor did the number of the lines indicate anything, since they had only reference to the

lines on each page, and seemed also to have been made, as has been said, by a different hand from the writer. It was evident, also, that the missing part was the most important, since it contained all the information relative to the burial of the treasure, and the place where it had been buried.

Garth sat for some moments looking at the manuscript, in silence. He was not reading, but was lost in thought. At length he raised his eyes to Henslowe, and regarded him for a few moments with the same silent thoughtfulness.

"How did you get these?" he asked at length, laying one of his big hands on the papers.

"I came across them by mere accident," said Henslowe, "in a bundle of papers belonging to my father. The papers were of little importance, but had been laid away by my mother after my father's death."

"Hm," said Garth; and then after another pause he once more asked, "And how did your father happen to get them?"

"I don't know that," said Henslowe. "Do you know whether he ever had any connection or any acquaintance with any of the family of the Landsdownes?"

"No. I really can't say. I'm sure. I dare say he had. In fact, he must have had. I should think, for I can't account for his getting the papers in any other way."

Once more Garth subsided into silence. Henslowe regarded him watchfully. It still seemed to him that Garth must know something about this affair, though how he should, was quite unaccountable. He knew, however, that Garth had lived a singular and most eventful life, and it was certainly probable, that in the course of his wanderings he had come across some circumstances which might possibly be connected with the secret of the manuscript. Perhaps he had heard the story of the buried treasure elsewhere; or, perhaps he might have heard of Brother Claudian. All Garth's emotions were easy to be read in his broad, honest face. He was not a man who could conceal what he felt, or wear a mask over his soul; and so Henslowe thought it best at once to come to close quarters, and question him about it. Without any circumlocution, therefore, he asked him directly:

"Do you know anything about this?"
It was a sufficiently direct question, and Garth gave one keen, penetrating glance at his questioner. Then, without giving any answer, he once more looked at the papers.

"No one," said he, at length, "can really know anything about this until these missing leaves are found. This manuscript is the play of 'Hamlet' with Hamlet left out. The key to the whole is gone—the pages that contain the real information. You have here only the introduction and the conclusion. Where are the missing sheets? That's the question. How could your father have come by these fragments? Have you looked for the rest? It must be among his papers, too."

Henslowe shook his head.
"No," said he, "it is not. I've looked over every paper that he left, and there is nothing of the kind. Then, again, I am convinced that he did not have the missing leaves himself, from certain papers which were bound up with these and which consisted wholly of annotations of his upon this very manuscript. These showed that he must have spent an immense amount of time and study upon the manuscript, and that his whole endeavor was to find out the meaning of this fragmentary part. The endless conjectures which he made about the place where the treasure was buried shows that he could not have seen the missing leaves. All that he found out from his study of the manuscript was no more than you and I may find out by similar study, much, in fact, that may be interesting, but nothing that can throw any real light on the subject."

"You are right," said Garth. "If that is the case, then he could not have known about the missing sheets. But it's a deuced queer thing too—odd and queer from beginning to end. I don't suppose there can be any doubt about the authenticity of this, as the old paper and faded ink tell their own story. But the style! Why, what sort of a fellow could this Brother Claudian have been? It isn't old English. It isn't the English of 1716, the date, when it purports to have been written. I don't mind the spelling, for in 1716 every one spelled as it seemed right in his own eyes. It's the style that I look at. What a curious dog this Claudian must have

been with his Latin words stuck in here and there and everywhere, like plums in a pudding."

"Well," said Henslowe, "that is easily accounted for. I suppose that he was English by birth, but had lived most of his life in foreign parts. Probably he had gone on missions to all parts of the world. His English must have grown rather rusty; and so whenever he came to one of those Latin words that our language is so full of, instead of giving it the English form, he wrote it out in Latin. English is a mixed up-kind of language, and there is where he broke down. My father observed this and made notes upon it. He called it the English of a foreigner or half foreigner—of one who was unaccustomed to speak it or write it. The English prose of that date was first rate and very much like what it is now, but Brother Claudian knew only the English of his youth, which was quite different, and had no doubt forgotten very much of that."

"As far as I can make out," said Garth, "the sailor's confession was made about 1680—that is thirty-six years before Brother Claudian wrote—and, in that case, as the treasure was buried about thirty years previously, it would carry the thing back to about the year 1650."

"Of course," said Henslowe; "that's all plain enough."

"The statements about the buccannere seem to be credible enough," said Garth.

"Yes," said Henslowe; "I've looked up the subject a little, and all that I have read agrees with the general statements here. They began their operations about 1610, and Hispaniola was one of their haunts. They frequented the Spanish main, and nothing was more likely than the pursuit of a treasure-ship, even all the way to Europe. The time of the occurrence mentioned here was the time when they were flourishing most—that is, about the middle of the seventeenth century. They had an oath by which they were bound to one another, and any violation of this oath was most severely punished—banishment to an uninhabited island seems to have been the usual punishment."

"Well," said Garth, "I don't see what earthly good this is, as long as the leaves are gone. We can't form the remotest idea about the place."

"That's the trouble," said Henslowe, "of course. We can form, however, some idea. He mentions the Italian coast. The islands lay off it."

"That's rather general," said Garth.
"Well, it's something to get that much information, even."

"You say," said Garth, thoughtfully, "that you have hunted after the missing leaves. Have you ever made any guess as to the cause of their being gone?"

"Oh, yes. I've tried to account for it in no end of ways. I've thought that, perhaps, some one has been trying to make out the place, and has removed them for the sake of studying them by themselves; and then, again, I've imagined that Brother Claudian himself never wrote any more; but, being old and probably forgetful, left this fragment just as it is; but, on the whole, it seems to me now, that it was all written in full, and that the loss of the intermediate part has been occasioned by carelessness or accident."

"Well, now," said Garth, "I'll tell you what I've been thinking of. In the first place, it seems absurd to suppose that Brother Claudian didn't write it all out; in the second place, there has been no carelessness in connection with this manuscript. It's been studied most carefully, and pondered over; and every word has been read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested. And so, finally, it seems to me to be highly probable that some Landsdowne, of several generations back, has investigated this, and has gone after the treasure. Now, this Landsdowne—whoever he may have been—in going after the treasure, has not thought it necessary to take the whole manuscript, but has simply taken that part of it which referred to the situation and appearance of the place of burial. This accounts, at once, for the fact that the manuscript has been carefully studied, and that its most important part is gone."

"By heavens!" cried Henslowe, with a startled look. "There's something in that. It never occurred to me before."

"It's very likely, at any rate," said Garth. "Now, do you happen to know anything about the Landsdowne family?"

"No," said Henslowe.
"If you did, it might be of some assistance. For instance, if you were to examine into their

past history and discover that some member of the family had suddenly disappeared, you might conclude that he had taken the missing papers and gone after the treasure. If you were to hear that some Landsdowne had suddenly made a large fortune, you might conclude that he had found the treasure. It seems to me that, before you pay any further attention to this, you had better try to find out these simple facts."

"I wonder how I can find out," said Henslowe.

"Easy enough," said Garth. "Landsdowne Hall is well enough known, and the Landsdownes yet live and flourish there."

"Landsdowne Hall? where is it?"

"In Cumberland."

"Why you know the place?" said Henslowe in surprise.

"Well," said Garth, slowly, looking at the floor—"I do—remember—some—thing—about—it. In fact—I happened—to be there—once—long ago."

There was something in Garth's tone as he said this which reminded Henslowe of the emotion which he had exhibited when he first looked at the manuscript. It was an emotion which had been quite unaccountable. That there could be any connection between Garth and Landsdowne Hall Henslowe had never suspected. It seemed indeed a very curious coincidence that the place in which this mysterious manuscript came into being should be also a place which exercised such unusual influence over his friend.

Henslowe, however, was not of a suspicious nature, nor was he at all inquisitive. It never entered into his head to push his inquiries further just then. Since Old Garth volunteered no information, Henslowe would not make any effort to win his confidence. On the whole he was satisfied with the impression that had been made. For Old Garth, who had always seemed to him a man with one idea, who rode his own hobby, and could think of nothing else, was now fairly caught by the powerful spell of this puzzling manuscript.

"Landsdowne Hall!" continued Garth, musingly—"I've lost sight of it for many years. It was in the old Earl's time. Lord George and Lord Paul used to be about. Queer dogs both. I don't know that I should object to take a run up there again—and have a look at the old place—only I don't see how I can leave this."

"Well," said Tancred "there's something in this manuscript. It's worth following up. I'm going to keep at it till I find out something, and of course I shall want your help—"

"You shall have it," said Garth.

CHAPTER III.

AN ARTIST'S HOME.

It was the attic-chamber of a house in the business portion of the city. The room was scantily furnished, the door was open and looked into a large apartment, with a skylight, in which there were various articles indicating that it was the studio of an artist. An easel stood in the middle, and near it a lay figure, while all around were articles of costume and artists' materials.

An old lady was seated in the little attic-room sewing. She was small and slight, with thin, sharp features, small, bright eyes, and delicately shaped hands. Her hair was very white, and the expression of her face indicated great refinement and gentleness. Something very winning and fascinating was visible in that face: it bore the traces of sadness mingled with resignation, and seemed to indicate one who had known great sorrows, yet, at the same time, had known great consolations. Her work engaged all her attention for some time, but at length it was interrupted by the sudden entrance of a young girl.

"Mamma, dearest," said the new-comer, advancing rapidly toward her and kissing her fondly.

"Why, my darling Pauline," said the old lady, dropping her work and standing up to embrace her daughter. "How nice this is! How were you able to get away to-day?"

"Oh, well," said Pauline, "they were all going off to the country, and so I was free to come to you. I suppose Tancred is not at home?"

"No," said the other. "He has been out all the morning."

Pauline, now took off her things, and sat down by her mother, with whom she entered into a long conversation.

An uncommonly pretty and attractive little thing was this Pauline. She had a round, dimpled face, with arch, laughing eyes, and an expression of happy self-content and childish innocence which was very charming. The mother and daughter had much to talk about. They did not see one another very often, and when they did meet they enjoyed one another to the full.

Mrs. Henslowe, whom we have thus seen living in an attic, had known better days than these; but her husband had fallen into poverty, and had finally died, leaving her without any visible means of support. Her children, however, had exerted themselves, and with some success. Tancred Henslowe was able to make a living as an artist, and has already been introduced to the reader, while Pauline gained her own living as nursery governess.

"Has Tancred heard anything more from Mr. Frink?" asked Pauline at length, after a long conversation about her own affairs.

"Not yet," said Mrs. Henslowe, "but he is expecting to hear every day."

"Is he doing anything more with his pictures?"

"Well, you know he has had an order from Mr. Merton for his Flower Girl."

"Oh, yes, I know, and has he finished it yet?"

"No, not yet. He hasn't done much this last week," said Mrs. Henslowe, in a tone of hesitation.

Pauline rose and went into the studio. Advancing to the easel she withdrew the curtain that hung over the picture, and looked at it.

It was a picture of great beauty and attractiveness. It was an Italian scene. The sun was setting. In the distance was a chain of dark purple hills, nearer a shepherd was watching his flock by a ruined temple. The chief attraction, however, was a figure in the foreground. It was a girl in the Italian peasant costume. She was sorting some flowers and looking at the spectator with an air of innocent triumph,—the figure, the face, and the expression were all those of the sweet little girl who now stood looking at the picture. It was quite evident that Pauline had served as her brother's model.

The expression in Pauline's face was precisely like that of the figure in the picture. There was the same beautiful innocence and childish glee. Mrs. Henslowe had come up and looked from the picture to her daughter and back again with fond appreciation, both of her daughter's beauty and her son's cleverness.

"It's certainly wonderfully like you," said she.

"Like me! Nonsense, mamma, dear," said Pauline. "Tancred has idealized me; but what do you mean by saying that it isn't finished? It looks so to me."

"Oh, well, Tancred says that it needs a few more touches."

"Has Mr. Merton seen it?"

"Yes, and was delighted with it."

"I should think he ought to be," said Pauline. "How glad I am! How clever dear Tancred is! He'll feel encouraged now, poor dear boy. I'm sure he deserves it. And now he'll feel like working."

Mrs. Henslowe shook her head with a sigh.

"I wish it may be so," said she.

"Why, mamma, dear, what makes you look and speak that way? What's the matter? Has anything happened to Tancred? You really make me feel quite uneasy."

"Well, I don't know," said Mrs. Henslowe.

"Perhaps I'm unreasonable, but I cannot help feeling worried."

"Worried?"

"Yes. I can't help it—your poor papa went off in the same way."

"The same way! What way, mamma, dear?"

"You don't know anything about it, Pauline, dear, but it was the beginning of all your poor papa's troubles, and now I'm afraid Tancred is going upon the same course."

"But what is it?" said Pauline. "I don't understand—what is it all about?"

"Well, it's some wretched papers—family papers—something about a treasure—papers containing some secret about its place of burial. Your father fretted his life out over the manuscript trying to find out the secret, and now Tancred has got hold of the same papers and is going on in the same way."

"Family papers!" said Pauline. "Why, what had our family to do with any treasure?"

"Well, I cannot say in particular. Your father found it among the family papers, however. It belonged to your grandfather. This grandfather had some quarrel with his wife's family. I needn't go into particulars. At any rate, he attached much importance to this paper, and used to pass very much time in studying it. After his death, your father seemed to grow fascinated with it, and became more and more absorbed in the study of it, until at length he began to neglect his own profession. He lost all taste for everything else. Sometimes he would give up the manuscript for a few months, but would invariably return to the study of it again. It was his ruin. If it had not been for that your father would have died a wealthy man, and left us in comfort, instead of dying a poor man, and leaving us to be paupers. This wretched manuscript was the ruin of his life, and made him always a dreamer. It is a curse to the family: After your father's death, I was on the point of destroying it, but I didn't dare to,—it was a sort of heirloom, and seemed to belong to the family. Besides, I did not think that there would be any further danger. So I left it among your poor papa's papers, and now, unfortunately, Tancred has found it. What makes me most uneasy is the fact that the manuscript seems to exert the same influence over him that it did over his father. He has already given up his painting, and has not touched the 'Flower Girl' since he found the manuscript. So, you see, Pauline, dear, it seems like your papa's old disease, and I feel a deep anxiety for fear Tancred's life may be ruined too."

The anxiety which Mrs. Henslowe felt was fully visible in her tone and look, and was also shared by Pauline, whom this unexpected intelligence had greatly astonished. But Pauline was more sanguine, and not so readily carried away by anxiety.

"Oh, well, mamma, dear," said she, "Tancred has his profession, and he is really very much devoted to it, you know,—and then he's beginning to get orders, too,—so we'll hope for the best; and perhaps this mysterious manuscript won't do so much mischief as you fear. Only I do wish that I could see it for myself."

The conversation went on for some time longer, and was at length interrupted by the entrance of Tancred Henslowe himself. He came bursting in impetuously, with his face aglow, his eyes full of eager delight, and waving a letter in his hand.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "My fortune's made! Hallo, Pauline, you're just in the nick of time!"

"Why, what's the matter, Tankie?" said Pauline, as she kissed her brother.

"What good news have you heard? Is that a manuscript in your hand?"

As she said this, Mrs. Henslowe looked anxiously at her son. His excitement touched her. She was afraid it might arise from some visionary discovery in connection with the manuscript. Of many and many such ebullitions of joy she had been the hopeless witness, and had learned to regard them all with suspicion, if not with fear and trembling.

"Manuscript!" exclaimed Tancred, in tone which at once set Mrs. Henslowe's mind at ease.

"No, indeed. What rot! No: this is a letter. And who do you think it's from, now?"

"Don't know," said Pauline.

"Guess."

"Well, Mr. Merton."

"Oh, no; you'll never guess. I'll tell you. It's from Frink."

"Frink!" exclaimed Pauline, in evident surprise.

"Yes," said Tancred, triumphantly. "We've been doing a little writing; but as I knew how you hated him and suspected him, I thought I wouldn't say anything about it. Now, I always rather liked the fellow. I saved him from hammerings at Eton. He attached himself to me, and has been a good friend ever since."

"But what does he say?" asked Pauline.

"Say? Why, he has given me the offer of a splendid situation; but you can read the letter for yourself."

And saying this, he handed the letter to Pauline, who opened it and read the following:

LANDSDOWNE HALL, April 10, 1836.

"DEAR OLD BOY,—I've done it at last, and gained what I've been trying after for many months. When I wrote you last I didn't feel altogether certain; but now it's decided, and I am instructed to ask you if you will accept

the position of private secretary to Mr. Drury. The situation is first rate. Salary five hundred pounds—duties very little—lots of time to yourself; lodgings and board free at Landsdowne Hall—position first rate—received as a gentleman—in fact, as one of the family.

"Drury is the brother of Lady Landsdowne, and in some way the chief manager and controller of the Landsdowne estates. An amiable, easy-going, indolent sort of man, very easy to please—merely wants a secretary to do his writing, which he could easily do himself, and is too lazy. The situation is in every respect such a capital one, that I would be glad to have it for myself, only I expect something very much better, which something is nothing else than the office of solicitor to the family.

"Among other advantages there is a daughter—the daughter of Lady Landsdowne, and heiress of the estates. You may have full swing—I don't object. I should like an heiress too, but this one is not quite my style, though I should think she must be altogether your style. So, you see, there is another attraction for you; and if all these various inducements don't bring you here on the wings of the wind, then you must be hard to please. At any rate, I shall hope for the best, and shall expect to have you here before long near me, and in a position where you can have plenty of honorable leisure for carrying on your painting, and for chatting with a friend. I expect to be with you in a day or two, when I can explain everything more fully, till when believe me,

"Yours expectantly,
"OTTO FRINK."

Pauline read this letter aloud with glowing cheeks, and eyes that flashed with joyous excitement.

"How splendid!" she exclaimed, as she concluded. "How perfectly magnificent! Oh, Tankie, how glad I am your fortune's made—and as for Mr. Frink, I hereby take back all I ever said against him."

"Isn't he a regular trump, though?" cried Tancred. "Oh, I knew it—I told you so."

"Five hundred; why, that's a perfect fortune to us!" cried Pauline.

"Yes, it'll be all clear gain," said Tancred, "since I'll have nothing to pay for board, and next to nothing to pay for clothes. You and mother can have it all; but you'll have to get out of this as soon as you can, and come and live near me, you know."

"Oh, there's plenty of time to make arrangements," said Pauline. "But as for this new situation, why, it seems to me that there is really no end to the advantages and benefits of it. Why, only think of the leisure you'll have—nothing in particular to do, Mr. Frink says—lots of time to yourself—and, of course, you can go on painting as much as you like—that is, if you want to paint."

"Paint! Why, of course. Won't I want to get up ever so many more Flower Girls and things?"

"But Mr. Merton won't want any more."

"Oh, other people will."

"Well, for that matter," said Pauline, "I think you'll soon have something better than pictures to devote yourself to, and some one far more attractive than your Flower Girl."

"Such as who?" asked Tancred.

"Why, who but the heiress, Mr. Frink understands—he's already allotted her to you, and I must say I call it generous in him. He says, too, that she is your style. That means well born, well bred, beautiful, clever, and all the rest. Why, Tankie, what a lucky dog you are!"

"Oh, as to that," said Tancred—I don't think much of that. Frink himself would not have let such a chance pass—no, no. The young lady, I imagine, is but so-so; but the place is enough for me, and I swear I think it's the greatest coincidence I ever heard of."

"Coincidence! What do you mean by that?" asked Pauline.

"That? Why, the very name of the place."

"I don't understand."

"Well, I suppose not—you haven't seen that manuscript of father's. Hasn't mother told you about it?"

"No, nothing beyond the mention of it. What is it? Will you let me see it?"

"Of course I will. I want every one to look it over, in the hope that some light may be thrown on it. I've just been showing it to a friend. Here it is. Just look over it, will you?"

And, with these words, Tancred handed the manuscript to Pauline, unfolding it very carefully, and charging her over and over not to

tear the paper. Pauline promised to be careful, and in a few minutes she was deep in the priest's manuscript.

"Didn't it strike you as very queer, mother," said Tancred, turning to Mrs. Henslowe, "that my situation should be in this very place—this Landsdowne Hall? Didn't you notice the name in the letter?"

Mrs. Henslowe murmured something scarcely audible. The fact is, she had noticed it at once, and had been very forcibly affected by it. The moment that Pauline had begun to read the letter, and had mentioned the name of Landsdowne Hall, the old lady started, and involuntarily her hands clasped one another. It was only by a strong effort, and by slow degrees, that she gained anything like composure.

"And, now that I think of it," said Tancred, "I should like to know how it is that father had these papers, and how they happened to be among his things, stowed away as belonging to the family. What connection is there between us, the Henslowes, and these Landsdownes? Do you know, mother?"

Mrs. Henslowe looked at him sadly, and with wistful eyes.

"Oh, yes," said she; "I know."

"What is the connection, then?" said Tancred.

"The connection," said Mrs. Henslowe, "is on the maternal side. Your grandmother, who married Leonard Henslowe, was a Landsdowne."

"A Landsdowne? You don't say so!" exclaimed Tancred, in surprise.

"I've never thought it worth while to mention it," continued Mrs. Henslowe. "Your grandfather, Leonard Henslowe, quarreled with the Landsdownes. But the connection is not of any value; still, if it were not for one or two others standing in the way, you might now be Lord Landsdowne instead of a poor artist."

"Lord Landsdowne!" exclaimed Tancred; "w-h-e-e-w!"

CHAPTER IV.

DELIBERATIONS.

"WELL, by Jove!" cried Tancred, "this is one of the oddest things I ever heard of! Such a lot of coincidences! It certainly is queer,—and what's going to be the end of it?"

"This is a very pretty story," said Pauline, who had now completed the manuscript. "And very mysterious and romantic. But, unfortunately, there is no conclusion to it; and I hate to read a story and find at the end of the book that it is only the first volume, and that the second one is not to be had."

"It can never be had," said Mrs. Henslowe. "Don't try to find it, Tancred, dear. Forget all about it. It was the ruin of your poor father, don't let it beguile you."

Tancred laughed.

"Oh, well, I'm a different sort of person from father. Don't you fret. You won't catch me letting myself be humbugged by this sort of thing. But did father ever go to Landsdowne Hall?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Oh, well, there were family difficulties in the way. His father had married a Landsdowne, and both incurred the enmity of the family. Their son could not go there,—but now there are new people, and your very name will be unknown."

"Who are they?"

"Well, there are no Landsdownes at all now—no men—at least not at the Hall. Lady Landsdowne lives there, with her brother, this Drury of whom Mr. Frink speaks, and Lucy Landsdowne is there, the daughter and heiress. That is all."

"Well, but how do you happen to know so much about them, mother?" asked Tancred, who felt great surprise at such knowledge on her part.

"Oh," said Mrs. Henslowe, placidly, "I have had cause to know very much about them, though since Lady Landsdowne has succeeded I have not known anything of them, and I am confident that they don't know anything of me."

"But, mamma, dear," said Pauline, "don't you suppose they may know all about us—and perhaps they have given this appointment to Tancred for the sake of making friendly advances toward a reunion of the family?"

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Henslowe, "that is quite impossible. What motive would they have? We are utterly obscure and insignificant. It is

barely possible that Mr. Frink may have told them."

"But how could he have told them," said Tancred, "when he don't know himself? Why, I myself didn't know anything about it till you told me; and I'm sure he doesn't know anything,—or suspect anything. And for my part he never shall know. I certainly won't tell him."

"You don't intend, then, to claim relationship?" said Pauline.

"Of course not," said Tancred. "In fact, if they knew the relationship, I would refuse to go."

"Oh, never mind about the relationship!" said Pauline. "Don't you see, Tankie, what a chance there is for you to form a new relationship? Go and follow in the footsteps of your illustrious ancestor and win one of the Landsdowne ladies—Lucy Landsdowne—I'm quite in love with the name, and I'm sure she must be all that's charming—now, isn't she, mamma, dear?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Henslowe, as Pauline appealed to her. "I've never seen her, nor have I heard what she looks like."

"Oh, never mind—depend upon it," continued Pauline, "she is to be your fate. Go, by all means, Tankie, dear; devote yourself to Lucy Landsdowne; win the heiress, and then, when they want to know who you are, tell them that you are their cousin by only a few removes. Win her, Tankie, marry her, and makes yourself Lord Landsdowne, and I'm sure you'll do credit to the name and the title."

"Have you ever seen the present Lady Landsdowne?" inquired Tancred of his mother, taking no notice of Pauline's somewhat flippant remarks.

"No," said Mrs. Henslowe, "I have not seen her; but I remember hearing a good deal about her when she first came there. It was after the death of Paul, the last earl. She came with her daughter, who was the next heiress. This Lady Landsdowne had lived a roving life with her husband, and he had died in France but a little while before. If he had lived, he would have leaped into one of the greatest fortunes in England. I've heard that she is a very clever woman, though not at all well bred. Some have said that she is of rather obscure parentage, and not lady-like. I've heard that her manner is stogy, and that she really was once on the stage. And I dare say it's very likely. Her husband had been dissipated, I have heard, and had picked her up somewhere without ever imagining that so great a destiny lay before him; for you know there had been two or three lives between him, and the inheritance, and the death of those Landsdownes was most unexpected."

"Stogy—ah!" said Tancred—"hm—and of low origin—well, I don't like that, to begin with; and I'm afraid, Pauline, that this Lucy will hardly come up to the mark. I rather think that Frink meant to hint at something of this sort. He couldn't stand her, that's evident, but thought I might,—a likely story. What! I—put up with a melo-dramatic, ill-bred giraffe! Confound his impudence!"

"Oh, really, now," said Pauline, "that is going a little too far. You had much better wait till you see her before you swear at her. Come now, Tankie, reserve your opinion till you've seen the lady. For my part, I've quite made up my mind that you are to marry her and be Lord Landsdowne."

"Well, at any rate," said Tancred, "it's a first-rate berth—almost too good to be true, I'm afraid—and I feel as though there must be some serious drawback which Frink has been afraid to mention,—such as a tendency to madness in this Drury, or in one of the ladies, or something perfectly intolerable about the establishment. However, I'll see Frink soon, and I'll pump him dry. In any case, I'll go,—I don't mind a mad landlord, or a lunatic lady or two,—and I'll put through three months, at any rate; and besides, there's one thing that I ought to succeed in if everything else fails—"

"What is that?" asked Pauline, as Tancred hesitated.

"Why," said Tancred, with an emphatic movement of his head, "the manuscript."

"The manuscript?"

"Yes—the missing leaves, you know. I have an idea that they may be lying somewhere at Landsdowne Hall. It's not at all unlikely. This manuscript must once have been there, since it was originally written there. These leaves—this incomplete portion—some one removed from that place, and most probably left the missing leaves behind him. What is

more likely than that they still are there, and at the same time what is more likely than that I may, by some happy chance, be able to find them?"

Tancred spoke with much warmth and animation.

"Well," said his mother, mildly, "if I were you I would give up all thought of this manuscript. I believe that a curse attends it. It ruined your poor father, and if you give yourself up to it it will prove to be your ruin, too."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said Tancred. "Why, my poor dear mother, I haven't the faintest idea of giving myself up to it, as you say; I'll merely try to find out what it means,—and, first of all, to find the missing leaves."

"Ah, now, Tankie, dear," said Pauline, "don't you do anything of the kind. Leave the manuscript with me. Forget all about it. Devote yourself to Lucy—she's the real Landsdowne treasure. Get her and make her your own, and then you will be able to smile at all the revelations of Brother Claudian."

"Oh, never mind; you'd better wait till I have seen your friend, Lucy; she may be a bearded vampire or a red-eyed virago."

"No, she's not; she's perfectly lovely."

"How do you know?"

"Oh—why, I feel it in my bones."

"Well, all I can say is that I only hope you may be right. I don't care about becoming a fortune-hunter; but at the same time if I should fall in love with a pretty girl, her fortune should not frighten me away; and so, if Lucy Landsdowne should be all your fancy painteth her, why, I'll only be too glad, and I'll do all I can to get her. But, as I believe that she is a scarecrow, I don't think much about her, but put my chief hopes in the missing leaves of the manuscript."

"Do you think," said Mrs. Henslowe, thoughtfully, "that this appointment, after all, is Frink's doing?"

"Frink's doing? Why, of course. Who else could have thought of such a thing?"

"Oh, I don't know; it just struck me that perhaps Lady Landsdowne or her brother might have put it in your way."

"I don't see how that could be. What can they know about me? You say yourself that they can't know anything about the relationship."

"So I thought; but, after all, on further consideration, it seems to me to be not impossible that they may know about you somehow. Perhaps they have heard of you from Frink,—perhaps they have been struck by the name, Henslowe, and have found out that you are the descendant of the one that intermarried with the Landsdownes,—perhaps they wish to make your acquaintance, and have taken this way."

"Well, I can't see exactly how they could find it out," said Tancred; "and for my part, I don't believe they would put themselves to the trouble."

"It's such a strange coincidence," said Mrs. Henslowe, "that one feels inclined to regard it as the work of design, rather than of accident. But I suppose there is no use in speculating. The event will show how it really is, and so I think, on the whole, that there is every reason why you should go."

This conversation with his mother and Pauline only served to intensify the desire which he already had to go to Landsdowne Hall. Each one placed before him some leading motive to influence him. His mother showed him the relationship which existed between himself and the Landsdowne family, and seemed to believe that this whole business arose from a desire on their part to form his acquaintance without committing themselves directly. Pauline again held forth before him the heiress, Lucy Landsdowne, whom she persisted in believing to be everything that was beautiful, and amiable, and attractive. Pauline, in fact, took it for granted that he would at once fall in love with Lucy Landsdowne, and would win her, upon which, with a comical perversion of the natural order of things, which was characteristic of her, she persisted in asserting that he would become Lord Landsdowne. In consequence of which she began to call him my lord, and kept it up during the remainder of her visit. As for Tancred himself, there were various reasons which made him eager to go to Landsdowne Hall:—first, the easy duties and good pay; second, the leisure which he would have to pursue the study of his art; and finally, the opportunity which would be given him to make a full and satisfactory investigation of everything connected with the manuscript of Brother Claudian.

In this last view he was confirmed by Old Garth, to whom he lost no time in making known his altered prospects.

He said nothing to Garth about the relationship between himself and the Landsdowne family, and nothing about Lucy Landsdowne, the heiress; and as Garth was utterly devoid of curiosity on those matters, it was not difficult to be reticent. He merely mentioned the nature of the appointment, and alluded to the singular coincidence which led to his being invited to live in such a capacity at Landsdowne Hall at the very time when he was so excited about the manuscript.

Garth was very much astonished, and very greatly moved.

"If I was a bit superstitious," said he, "I'll be hanged if I wouldn't look upon this as the work of Brother Claudian's ghost, who, having become your guardian angel, is bound to do the correct thing by you. At any rate, the thing is of the utmost importance, and is one of those critical events in a man's life on which everything depends. Why, man, the opportunity is immense—the advantage given you is incalculable. You have now in your own hands the power of investigating this manuscript to the very bottom. Your position at Landsdowne Hall will be the very one that will enable you to carry out a course of elaborate and minute investigation about the missing sheets; that ought to result in their discovery if they are in existence."

"Now, see here," continued Garth, "you will be private secretary, with nothing to do. That means that you will have a position which will give you the control of every book, manuscript, and paper in the place; and with nothing to interfere with a very leisurely and very full examination of everything. Now, there are several things that you ought to have in your mind."

"First, it is evident that this manuscript has been very carefully studied by some one who has taken possession of some sheets—now missing. This person was not your father, for he himself, as you say, was not able to make out anything."

"Some one, then, has taken up this matter before your father, and this one was, perhaps, a member of the Landsdowne family. At any rate, whoever he was, he removed the most important part—and it is now missing."

"Now, my young friend, it seems to me that there are several things for you to do. In the first place, as a matter of course, you ought to search everywhere to try if you can find the missing leaves, or any trace of them. It is possible that they may be stowed away somewhere among the Landsdowne papers, and if they are found, why, of course, that is all you want. We can then find out where the treasure was buried, and act accordingly."

"But if you can find the missing leaves themselves, why, then, the next thing to do is to see if there is any notice of this manuscript or of its contents, or of Brother Claudian among the Landsdowne papers. It is just possible that some information may be found among them, and that this information may be the very thing that we require."

"In the event of this not being found there, you'll have to change your mode of investigation, and find out whether any Landsdowne has ever suddenly got rich, or has suddenly disappeared without having been heard of. If you find out that either one of these cases has happened, why, then, you may feel sure that the search for the treasure has been made, and has either succeeded or failed; but whether it has succeeded or failed, you may make up your mind that the necessary portion of the manuscript of Brother Claudian is lost to you."

"Well," said Tancred, "I shall know something decisive about it before very long."

"And be sure to let me know."

"Oh, of course; but how long shall you be here?"

"I? Oh, I dare say I shall be here a couple of months yet."

"Then you'll do. But, I say, can't you come up to the Hall and see me?"

Garth hesitated and thought. Then a cloud came over his face.

"Well, no," said he. "On the whole, I think I'd better not. It must be George that's there now. I never liked him, and don't care to see him. It would only excite unpleasant feelings. So I'll stay here and hope to hear from you."

CHAPTER V.

LANDSDOWNE HALL.

LANDSDOWNE HALL was one of the finest houses in Cumberland. Its foundation was generally attributed to the fourteenth century, but the original building was almost altogether lost in the additions that had been made during successive centuries. As it met the eyes of Tancred it proved to be an edifice wherein the stately architecture of a varied past was combined with modern luxury and comfort. All around was an extensive park, filled with lordly trees and verdurous turf; a noble portico opened into the hall, from which a magnificent stairway led to the upper galleries. Within, everything was found which could contribute to elegant luxury and refined comfort. The picture-gallery was filled with the portraits of the Landsdownes, back to a period which was scarcely authentic. The great hall was adorned with antique armor and relics of the chase; the library was a magnificent apartment, wainscoted with oak at the ends, and on the other two sides filled with oakened shelves. Here were long rows of volumes, none of which seemed to be later than the preceding century, together with boxes and cases containing vast collections of manuscripts, most of which were letters belonging to the general correspondence of the family.

Frink had received notice of Tancred's setting out, and had met him on the road. On their arrival that same evening at the Hall, Frink had thought it too late to present Tancred to the family, and had taken him at once to the apartment which had already been designated for him, where the two friends passed the evening together.

Frink was a man of about the same age as Tancred, yet with the look of a much older man. He was a young man with an old face. His form was spare, his face thin, his eyes small and keen, and already, even at this early age, marked with crow's feet at the corners. His hair was thin and light. His expression was one of keenness and shrewdness, yet at the same time his face bore the unmistakable marks of refinement. They had been to school together, and still maintained that familiar friendship which is born of school life.

Tancred's first inquiries turned, naturally enough, to his employers, and to the causes which had led to his coming here. As to the employers, Frink said nothing, merely informing Tancred that he would see them and know them soon enough. But little more was said with reference to Tancred's appointment. Frink spoke as though Tancred and his antecedents were utterly unknown to the Landsdownes, that it was simply through his own suggestion and recommendation, and that to the Landsdownes it was a matter of indifference who came so long as he was a gentleman, and competent to perform the duties devolving upon him. At this, all the ideas which Tancred might have gathered from his mother as to the Landsdownes being aware of his relationship were at once dispelled.

On the following day, Frink presented him to the brother of Lady Landsdowne. This was Wadham Drury, who lived at the Hall, and was generally regarded as its head and ruler. Wadham Drury was a man of between fifty and sixty, with smooth, well-shaven face, and with a brown, well-kept wig, which served to conceal his baldness. His figure showed a tendency to corpulency. His manners were evidently considered and intended by himself to be those of a gentleman of the old school, but to Tancred they seemed to be altogether too florid and demonstrative. Drury met the new-comer with oppressive cordiality. He was exuberant in his welcome. He was loquacious and gushing, and used ten times as many words as were necessary. He evidently delighted in the sound of his own voice, and it was a trick of his to reiterate the last emphatic word in every sentence. He occupied more than an hour in delating on the beauties of Landsdowne Hall, after which he proceeded to show Tancred his duties. These referred principally to the correspondence of himself—Wadham Drury, Esquire, and also some of the business of the estate. Secondly, they had reference to certain instructions in art, which Lady Landsdowne would explain.

After this followed his presentation to Lady Landsdowne. This lady was in many respects like her brother, and particularly in his loquacity. Her powers in this respect were endless. She was also given to long and tedious circumlocutions, repetitions, and reiterations. Like her brother, she seemed rather to be playing a

part than acting from nature, and as Tancred's cool, critical eye detected in Drury the mere pretender to the part of a gentleman of the old school, so in Lady Landsdowne he saw one who lacked the tone, the air, the accent, and the breeding, which he had been always familiar with in true ladies, and which he had expected to find, as a matter of course, in Lady Landsdowne. But he remembered that her husband, according to his mother's story, had come unexpectedly into the inheritance, and had been a species of black sheep; that he had married in the days of his humiliation, and had picked up a wife who was probably his inferior. Lady Landsdowne was merely a Drury, and of other blood than his. One more remained for him to see, and that was the heiress, Lucy. Whether she would be a Landsdowne or a Drury, now became with him a question of very great importance.

CHAPTER VI.

LUCY LANDSDOWNE.

LUCY LANDSDOWNE proved to be neither a Landsdowne nor a Drury, at least, so far as Tancred's experience had reached. Of slender frame and medium stature, she did not exhibit the tallness of the one, nor the portliness of the other. Elegant in form, with shapely neck and shoulders, and delicate limbs, she seemed as light and as graceful as a fawn, and her movements were characterized by the unstudied elegance which is shown by nature, rather than the conventionalisms of artificial training. There was a dash of shyness about her which made her seem different to Tancred from other ladies whom he had known, but did not at all lessen her charms in his eyes. She was a blonde, and her light complexion and rounded dimpled cheeks seemed exquisitely beautiful to him; while her blue eyes had in their expression both the innocence, and, at the same time, the touching earnestness and sincerity of childhood.

Upon introducing him to Lucy Landsdowne, Lady Landsdowne said:

"I hope, Mr. Henslowe, that you will not find any inconvenience in allowing some time to my daughter. You will find, I fear, that her education has been sadly neglected, and especially in drawing and painting; and I'm sure I hope you may be able to do something with her. She's a sad, sad, naughty girl, and I'm sure I don't know exactly what to do with her."

As she said this, Lady Landsdowne stroked Lucy's hair with fond familiarity, and Tancred noticed something which surprised him not a little. This was, first, that Lucy's sweet face assumed an expression of repugnance and dislike the moment she felt Lady Landsdowne's touch; and secondly, that after Lady Landsdowne began to stroke her, Lucy seemed to shrink away from her as though that touch was displeasing; at which, Tancred felt not a little surprise. Yet, whatever was the cause of this singular conduct, he felt that all his sympathies were enlisted on behalf of this beautiful young girl, who had thus come upon his life path,—a girl who was quite unlike any one whom he had ever known,—whose perfect naturalness might make her distasteful to the conventional Frink, but only served to commend her to his own mind. The sight of her had quite overpowered him. The thought that he was to have her, as his pupil, in close and frequent companionship, was most delightful; and it seemed to him that this alone would be reward enough for coming to Landsdowne Hall.

Before the close of the day Tancred had the opportunity of seeing that although Lucy was very cold toward her mother, she had no lack of affection toward a certain old woman whom she addressed as nurse, and whom she fondled and caressed with unusual warmth of affection. It was a very grateful scene to Tancred, for it showed that Lucy was not so cold as he had feared, and it seemed to him as though her own-mother, by her indifference, had checked the natural feelings of her daughter's heart, which, left to themselves, had turned toward the nurse.

The first day at Landsdowne Hall showed various things.

First, he saw that his duties with Drury would be very light. Drury's business, whatever its importance might be, was not extensive, and all that was required of him could be done in less than an hour per day.

Secondly, Lady Landsdowne had thrown him

entirely and unreservedly upon her daughter; and by appointing him her teacher in drawing and painting, had opened the way to constant companionship of the most intimate character.

Thirdly, he had discovered that the mother and daughter were on bad terms, while the daughter and nurse were very fond of one another.

These discoveries were of a highly important character.

In the first place, the lightness of his duties and the easy unexact nature of Drury would leave him plenty of time to himself, and at his own disposal. This he might either devote to the private prosecution of his beloved art; or, as he was more inclined, he might apply toward the search after that mysterious manuscript which he had not at all forgotten, and the spell of which was as strong as ever. Here were all the conditions necessary to a thorough search—free access to the library and to the family papers, together with plenty of time and opportunity.

The association allowed with Lady Lucy was one which promised great enjoyment. Her sweet face had already inspired him with admiration, the chance of her society was a subject upon which he could not think without delight and excitement; to be with her would of itself be sufficient to make life at Landsdowne Hall superior to every other kind of existence.

Finally, the coldness existing between mother and daughter would be rather in his own favor than otherwise. It was clear that since Lucy had not the affection of her own mother, she must be badly off for friends, in which case, Tancred stood ready to give her all the affection which her desolate heart might crave.

CHAPTER VII.

AN ACCIDENT.

IN the course of a few days, Tancred had become fairly engaged in the duties of his new office. His occupations with Drury never required more than half an hour, but that gentleman usually held him engaged during the whole morning, in discoursing to him in sonorous sentences on every conceivable subject. In the afternoons he was at leisure to give drawing lessons to Lucy. Here, too, a half hour or an hour would have sufficed, but Tancred appropriated Lucy as long as he possibly could.

Lucy's nature was frank and confiding; she was quite free from anything like hauteur or reserve. After the first day or so their intercourse grew more familiar, and their conversation gradually extended itself to things that lay outside of the drawing lesson. It was impossible for two such natures as these to associate together without feeling at least a strong regard. Both were frank, and generous, and amiable, and had both been men, or both women, a strong friendship would have arisen. But when one was a handsome and chivalrous youth, and the other a beautiful and tender-hearted girl, it is not difficult to see what the result would inevitably be.

Accordingly, the more they saw of one another, the more they appreciated one another. It became the habit of Tancred to take her off, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, for the purpose of "sketching from nature," and it will readily be believed that this sort of association could not be otherwise than close and familiar. Every day they grew more acquainted with one another's character and surroundings. Soon Tancred told her all about his own past career, without, however, touching upon his relationship to her; while Lucy told him all about her own rather uneventful life. Her story coincided with his own observations and conclusions. For her mother she felt little else than awe and respect. She had never received from her a mother's love or tenderness, and she had nothing to give her in return but cold duty; but for her nurse she expressed the warmest affection, and declared that to her she owed everything.

It certainly did occur to Tancred, and very frequently too, that he was allowed very unusual liberty of associating with one who was the daughter of the house, and so very great an heiress. He could not altogether account for it. At one time he was half inclined to think that it was done on purpose; that, aware of his relationship to the Landsdownes, they chose this way of bringing him into intimate association with Lucy, in the hope that it might lead to their

union. On the other hand, it occurred to him, that it was much more likely to be due to the perfect indifference of Lady Landsdowne and the self-absorption of Drury.

Tancred soon found that his affections were being engrossed to a very dangerous extent by his sweet associate, and that his peace of mind might be very seriously injured if he did not guard against the passion that was rising within him. But what young man ever yet has succeeded in guarding against the first assault of such a passion, especially while enjoying constant association with the object of that passion? So Tancred every evening said to himself that he must watch and be careful, but on every succeeding day he found himself involved more heavily than ever. And so things went on until at last it only needed something a little out of the ordinary course of events to reveal everything.

As far as resolutions could go Tancred was prudent and honorable. He said to himself that it would never do for him, a penniless adventurer, to seek to win the affections of a great heiress. He felt that a marriage between them would never be permitted; and even if it would, his pride revolted at the idea of a wife with vast wealth and pre-eminent dignity. He wished to be not too greatly the inferior of his wife in rank and fortune; but here the disparity was so great that all the world would surely brand him as a mere fortune-hunter. So he resolved to keep a strict watch over himself. He could not bring himself to anything like flight from his beautiful associate, nor even to anything like a diminution in their hours of association, but contented himself with this vague resolve of self-watchfulness.

At length, one day an event did occur sufficiently out of the common run to destroy in one instant all Tancred's magnanimous resolutions. They had been out riding on their usual errand of "sketching from nature," and had gone a longer distance than usual. Lucy's horse showed some signs of weariness, of which, however, but little notice was taken. At length they began to descend a long hill, and as they went on, Tancred, in his usual enthusiastic style, dilated on the chief-points in the very magnificent scene before them. Suddenly in the midst of this Lucy's horse stumbled and went down. In an instant, before Tancred could make the slightest movement to prevent it, before he could even think, Lucy fell downward very heavily, striking on her head, and then rolling down the declivity for a few paces, lay senseless.

For a moment Tancred's heart stopped beating, and his whole frame seemed to be paralyzed in utter horror, and then flinging himself from his horse he flew to her assistance. He raised her senseless form in his arms, and supporting her thus, began wildly chafing her hands. As he did this a small stream of blood trickled through her golden hair and over her forehead. This completed the despair of Tancred, who now looked wildly around in all directions hoping to see some relief; but the spot was a lonely one, and nothing like relief was near. At length, the murmur of a brook caught his ear, and with a vague idea of the beneficial effects of water, he raised her in his arms and carried her in that direction.

Reaching the brook he laid her down gently, and then proceeded to bathe her face in the cold water. The flow of blood from her head was not much, yet it was quite sufficient to terrify Tancred, who tried to stanch it. For some time there was no response whatever on the part of Lucy, and the time seemed endless to her despairing attendant. In his anxiety he called upon her, and called her by every endearing name that he knew. At last, to his infinite relief, she drew a long breath, and half opened her eyes. At this, overcome with delight, Tancred caught her in his arms, kissed her a hundred times, and called her over and over again his darling and his love.

In the midst of this Lucy opened her eyes again and looked around in a bewildered way. It was evident to Tancred that she was not yet herself. He therefore held her supported in his arms, holding her pressed close to him, and keeping her hand in his, while her head rested on his shoulder, her face sufficiently upturned for him to see its expression. He saw the color slowly returning to the cheeks and lips, and felt her cold hands grow warm with returning life.

Lucy looked dreamily out upon the wide-spread scene before her, and the bewildered look did not leave her. Then she looked up at

Tancred and fixed her eyes earnestly upon his. She was in his arms; his face was close to hers. It seemed as though she did not know how this could be. She looked timidly at him, yet trustfully and tenderly, and a gentle blush suffused her face. Her eyelids fell, and she looked away.

"I—don't—remember—anything," said she, at last. "I know who you are, but I've lost all my memory of everything else."

She spoke this in a low voice, and gave him another look full of the same timidity and trustfulness.

"Oh, my darling! my darling!" cried Tancred, straining her close in his embrace. "You have had a terrible accident. You have not yet come to your senses. Rest. Wait awhile," he added, fearful lest she might move away. "You'll get better presently."

Lucy did not move.

"Didn't we live at Landsdowne Hall last?" she asked, in a strange voice.

"Yes, darling," said Tancred, wondering at her question.

"Is not this—the—the year 1836?" she asked again.

"Yes, my own sweet little pet," said Tancred, holding her closer to his heart, as though dreading a return of her senselessness.

"I think I'll get my memory back by and by," said she, "if you help me. So won't you please tell me a few things?"

"Oh, yes, darling," said Tancred, tenderly. "We left the Hall at one o'clock, you know," and then he went on to mention the route which they had taken. He mentioned also the sketches. The moment that he alluded to anything Lucy remembered it at once. In this way her memory came back more and more, yet still there was some perplexity.

"What were we doing before we left?" she asked.

Tancred told her.

"And have we lived any length of time at the Hall, or are we only visiting there?"

At this singular question Tancred looked in deep anxiety and perplexity at her. As he did not answer she raised her eyes once more to his. If he had thought by her question that her mind was wandering, the glance of her eyes and the expression of her face were enough to dispel such an idea, she looked at him with such gentle and tender affection, and with such soft and sweet modesty.

"We are living there?" replied Tancred, at length, not knowing what else to say.

"But—where is mamma?" asked Lucy, still further in the same tone.

"Lady Landsdowne? Oh, she's there too."

Lucy heaved a sigh. Once more she looked at Tancred in the same way, and then said slowly:

"I—I am afraid—I've not yet quite regained my memory. I cannot recall my own name quite distinctly. What is it?"

"Its Lucy, darling," said Tancred, glad to get on dry ground once more, after floundering in the depths of puzzlement.

"Lucy—yes—and what else?" she asked.

At this a light began to dawn on Tancred. It seemed to him as though in this partial obscuration of her faculties, Lucy had supposed herself to be something different to him; something nearer—bearing, perhaps, his name—in short, she had supposed herself his wife. Yes; this must have been her fancy, and this would also explain the look that she gave him. The thought was sweet beyond expression. He held her still close in his arms. It seemed easy now to say what he longed to say.

"Oh Lucy, my darling," he said, as he held her in his arms. "You are mine, are you not? and you will be mine, for I am yours. We are not yet married, darling, for you are Lucy Landsdowne; but I love you with all my soul, and as you've been my own for five or ten minutes past, will you not always be so to me?"

A crimson flush shot over the face and neck of Lucy. She struggled to get away, and in her shame averted her face; but Tancred's words were not spoken to an obdurate heart, and Lucy was soon drawn back to that heart against which she had leaned so confidently.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOVERS.

A new bond was now formed, by means of their declared love, which united these two more closely than ever, and threw a new pleasure

around their association. Tancred, however, on thinking it over, did not feel at all in a position to mention it to the elders. The next step to popping the question is, usually, to "ask papa," or whoever may be in papa's place. But this was the very thing which Tancred was not inclined to do. He anticipated the violent and insulting rejection with which his suit would be met. He felt sure of immediate dismissal from the place, and did not just yet feel willing to give up Lucy forever. He concluded, therefore, and very naturally, to enjoy as long as he could the society of his dear one, hoping that in the course of time something might occur to make the elders more favorable to him, or to lessen the disparity at present existing between himself and Lucy.

In the course of the conversations which took place between the lovers there arose, of course, a deeper intimacy, and things were revealed which had been hitherto concealed. Among these was Tancred's relationship to the Landsdowne family. This intelligence startled Lucy very greatly, and Tancred was surprised to find that the effect upon her was rather distressing than pleasing.

"Oh!" she cried, after a long and painful silence, "it must be you—it must be you!"

"Me! me! What do you mean?"

"Oh," she said, after another silence, "it all agrees together, and cannot possibly refer to any one else."

"Why, what? I don't understand," said Tancred, in new perplexity.

Lucy heaved a sigh.

"Well," said she, "you know I used often to overhear them talking about some one,—Lady Landsdowne and Mr. Drury, I mean, you know,—and I couldn't help overhearing, as they talked quite regardless of me. Well, this person was some one related to the family, and he was young, and it must be you."

"Oh, nonsense," said Tancred; "that by no means follows. There must be many connections of an old family like this, and among them are lots of young men."

"Oh, yes; but then," persisted Lucy, "this was some one in particular, about whom they were making some plan, and, from the way they spoke, the plan intended no good—it must have been to injure you; and, you see, in the midst of all this they send for you and bring you here, with no very important employment—more as though they wished to keep you in their power—in a state of unconscious imprisonment—so that they might have you whenever they want you."

"But what could they possibly mean by it, or what reason could they have?" asked Tancred.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Lucy; "I only know the words that I've overheard, and I judge from them that they are anything but friends. I believe that both Lady Landsdowne and Mr. Drury are your enemies."

"Why, how can that be?" cried Tancred, in astonishment, "when they are both so particularly kind and attentive, and especially when they allow me to have such constant freedom of access to you and association with you?"

Lucy sighed.

"I'm afraid," said she, "that it was part of their plan. First of all, they wished to get you here, and then to keep you here. To get you here, they made use of Mr. Frink; to keep you here, they made use of me."

At this, Tancred burst into a long and merry laugh.

"Well," said he, "by Jove! All I can say is that I only hope they'll keep it up. They have here my intimate friend Frink, and you, my own Lucy. If they choose to bring forward such agencies, all I can say is, I knock under; I've got nothing to say."

Lucy sighed and was silent.

During these weeks in which Tancred had thus been yielding himself up to the happiness of this new life, nothing had been seen by him of Frink. His friend, after having introduced him to Landsdowne Hall, had taken his departure to London, where his professional duties occupied his attention.

As to Old Garth, he was still in Liverpool. Tancred had written to him once, giving him a general idea of the situation in which he found himself, and Garth had written back, congratulating him, and urging him not to forget, in the charms of the heiress, the greater and more solid charms of the priest's legacy. "Don't give up the Landsdowne treasure, and don't imagine that the Landsdowne treasure may be Lady Lucy."

It must here be explained that Garth and

Tancred had not been acquainted until this visit of Garth's to England. They had drifted into connection with one another, and had formed a strong attachment. Garth, however, knew nothing of Tancred's family. He never saw Tancred's mother or sister, nor had they ever seen him.

CHAPTER IX.

A WONDERFUL DISCOVERY.

From the very beginning of his life at Landsdowne Hall Tancred had not been unmindful of that which had constituted no small part of his purpose in coming here, and that was the search after the missing leaves of the manuscript. The time which he had devoted to Lucy had always been the afternoon. The morning had been invariably passed in the library, where Drury was always to be found at that time. Here he had attended to the very trifling duties of his position. These duties were first of all to attend to the correspondence of Drury; which correspondence never amounted to more than one letter per diem on an average, and therefore did not occupy very much time. But in addition to this, Drury had so much to say about himself and about his tastes and opinions on politics, religion, morals, and every subject conceivable, that much time was taken up. Correspondence then was the first duty of Tancred, and the second duty was conversation.

But all this time Tancred kept the search after the missing leaves constantly in view. That search could never be carried out, however, until he should enter upon a thorough and comprehensive search of all the accumulated manuscripts of the Landsdowne family. Most, if not all of these, lay deposited in boxes and cases in the library, where they had lain unseen by any human eye for years and generations, and in some instances for centuries.

A short time after his first arrival at Landsdowne Hall, Tancred had introduced the subject of these manuscripts, and had requested permission to examine them, arrange them, and take notes of their contents in a general book of reference. To this proposal Drury had at once acceded without any objection whatever, and evidently without any other feeling than one of surprise that anybody should take such trouble voluntarily.

Having thus gained permission, Tancred went to work, and continued at his task during all his leisure hours. The mornings were generally wasted with the twaddle of Drury; the afternoons were taken up with Lucy. There remained the evenings, and as Frink was absent, Tancred pursued his investigations without any one whatever to interrupt him or interfere with him in the slightest degree.

Having thus plenty of time for leisurely examination, Tancred made great progress. But so great was the number of these letters and manuscripts, that at the end of a month there was but little to show for all his labor, in comparison with what yet remained. These letters were laid away, sheet by sheet, and tied up in parcels which contained several hundred. These were then deposited in boxes containing about twenty-four parcels. Each box would, therefore, hold about seven or eight thousand letters or manuscripts on an average; all of which had to be looked over. It was necessary to do this minutely, too, in order to effect the objects of this search, for he wished to find not only the missing leaves, but also some information as to whether any one of the Landsdownes had ever obtained the treasure.

One evening, as he was searching far into the night, he came upon some papers which bore the unmistakable appearance of age. There was also in the papers something which looked like the memorable manuscript. He opened the sheets. The handwriting was the same. He turned to the first words at the top of the first page. They were as follows: "go for to bury y' spolia."

These words startled him. He remembered well the concluding words of the last page in the MS. which he had seen. They were: "They sette saile for y' place wher y' Capitan did propose to—" and here came at the beginning of a new page the conclusion of the sentence: "go for to bury y' spolia."

Yes, there was no doubt about it. He had found the missing leaves of the manuscript.

His excitement was so great that he could scarcely read on; and then there came over him a feeling of suspicion, as though some one had placed this purposely in his way. It might

be Drury, with his solemn twaddle; or, it might be Frink. Such suspicions, however, were speedily dispelled by the thought that neither Frink nor Drury had any knowledge, whatever, of the Landsdowne manuscript, and, therefore, that no such trick was possible.

A careful examination of these leaves confirmed him in the opinion that they belonged to the original document. They were in a bundle of letters. These letters bore the date of the year MDCCXVII. This was about a year after the date of the manuscript. All the letters in this package bore the date of this year and the preceding one. All were old and written in faded ink. There could, therefore, be no reasonable doubt that the leaves were authentic. It seemed to Tancred that they had been separated by accident from the others, and folded up carefully and put away in this place, where they had lain unnoticed ever since.

CHAPTER X.

THE MISSING LEAVES.

HAVING thus convinced himself that there could be no trick, but that these leaves were original and authentic, Tancred then proceeded to read their contents, as follows:—

Concluding words on the 6th page of the manuscript owned by Tancred Henslowe:—

"They sette saile for y^r place where y^r Capitano did propose to—

Opening words on pages found at Landsdowne Hall:—

"go for to bury y^r spolia."

The manuscript then continued:

"Now there are off y^r coastes of Italia & on y^r Northe of y^r coastes of Sicilia certayne insulas w^h are called y^r Lipari, among y^r w^h there is a certayne islet without inhabitantes. This insula lieth nigh to y^r insula called Vulcano, distant about 3 leagues, and y^r name by w^h it is known to y^r marineres in these seas is Leonforte. Y^r w^h lieth to y^r west of y^r insula Vulcano. And y^r insula is in length not more y^r one half mile, & in height above y^r sea thirty fete, & much covered with woode and thicketes, & in the midste thereof there ariseth a rocke which lyeth on y^r superficies of y^r grounde, being circular in shape, though irregulare like a large bowlder from y^r sea, w^h rocke is circa 12 feet in heighte & depthe, & nigh to y^r rounde bowldere ariseth a palma tree circa forty feet in height. But all the remainder of y^r insula is covered with a growthe of beechen trees. Now this was y^r place where y^r Capitano made preparations to bury y^r spolia.

"More y^r one hundred & fifty men were engaged in y^r worke & much timber was needed & machinae. Y^r Capitano did first cause a pit to be digged at a point on y^r insula, on the west of the bowldere above mentioned, & y^r dimensions of y^r s^t pit were 6 feet length, four-fete width. Three men did engage conjointly in y^r digging, & as the pit grew deeper y^r sides thereof were stayed up with staying of stout timberes w^h was continued all y^r way, & as y^r work increased and y^r depth increased, y^r water did percolate & penetrate through y^r earth, whereupon y^r Capitano did place a coepa of men with pumps to pump out y^r water & keep y^r pit dry for y^r workmen, & so y^r pit was digged to a depth of one hundred fete.

"Now in addition to y^r pit y^r Capitano caused to be made another pit of greater length. Y^r w^h pit did start from y^r shore of y^r sea & go down to y^r bottom of y^r pit aforesayde in a slante, & y^r second slantynge pit was small & not more y^r 2 fete in syze, & it was stayed up with stone of w^h y^r was a greate stone on y^r shore of y^r insula—square in shape & easiye worked, & y^r last pit from y^r seashore to y^r bottom of y^r firste pit was a sluice or draine by w^h y^r Capitano did intend to secretly conveye y^r sea waters into y^r money hole, to y^r intente y^r no one sholde penetrate to it unlesse he knewe y^r secret of y^r draine. But y^r waters of y^r sea were not let to penetrate into y^r money holes until y^r last, & a gateway of stone & wood was constructed under y^r sea at a distance from y^r shore in depth of six fete of water, by w^h y^r sea water could enter. So y^r depth of y^r money hole was one hundred fete, & it was at the west side of y^r bowlder & y^r palma tree, one hundred fete from y^r west end of y^r insula, & y^r draine did starte from y^r sea shore at a pointe du weste and run down circa one hundred fete to y^r bottom of y^r money

hole, & thus y^r preparations for y^r spolia were made by y^r Capitano.

"Now y^r spolia itself was all contained in oaken boxes with hoopes of iron, w^h oaken boxes were smalle so y^r they might be lyfted without too much effort by one or two men, & these were ready to be placed in y^r receptaculum & these were all brought in safely to y^r shore from y^r shippe, & the palma tree did overhange y^r pit with its branches & folia, & it was so there upon one of these overhanging branches y^r Capitano did cause a wheel to be fixed over y^r w^h a line was slung & so y^r oaken-boxes of y^r spolia were lowered down in safetye to y^r bottom of y^r pit, & when y^r men did labor at y^r taske of lowering y^r boxes, y^r Capitano fearing lest passinge shippes should observe y^r work did cause his shippe to cruise about y^r insula, w^h shippe did capture & burn one vessel y^r came too nigh, besides chasinge awaye diverse others in terrore, & thus y^r worke proceeded.

"The oaken boxes containinge y^r spolia were then all lowered into y^r pit, at y^r bottom of w^h a chamber had been made, y^r area of w^h was twelve feet square, & y^r height thereof six feet, which chamber was well nigh filled with y^r spolia. Y^r Capitano did then open y^r sluice upon w^h y^r waters of y^r sea poured into y^r pit & rose within y^r pit to circa thirty fete from y^r mouth thereof, for y^r pit was digged one hundred fete from y^r top of y^r insula & penetrated circa seventy fete below y^r sea water. So when y^r sluice was opened y^r sea water did thus pour in. After w^h y^r Capitano did give word to throw in y^r earth into y^r pit w^h y^r workmen proceeded to perform, & as they threw in y^r earth y^r water rose higher till y^r water was all driven out & y^r pit was filled altogether with y^r earth in a solid massa. Now of y^r men y^r labored at y^r pit all were prisoneres captiv in y^r gallone w^h prisoneres y^r Capitano did give orders to slay at y^r mouth of y^r pit, whereof there were nineteen, all of whom were trucidate & butchered at y^r conclusion of y^r task of filling in y^r pit up to four feet from y^r top, & here in y^r mouth of y^r pit were their bodies thrown, & over y^r bodies there was thrown earth, & over y^r earth a platform of stout timbers, side by side, & over these was y^r earth laid smooth & even with y^r surrounding earth, & y^r Capitano did cause moss to be brought & stones & trunks of small trees & brush y^r w^h he caused to be placed on y^r surface of y^r earth over y^r mouth of y^r pit to y^r intente y^r it might have y^r appearance of natura, w^h it did in very deed have so much y^r no stranger could imagin to himself the work y^r had been done beneath.

"Y^r intention of y^r Capitano in thus letting in y^r sea water was to make it impossible for any one to be able to exhume y^r spolia, for no one would know about y^r sluice & y^r attempt to dig down to y^r spolia would be vain so long as y^r sea water should pour in, & y^r intention was to go away with y^r crew whom he did bring, & afterward return with another & smaller number, among whom such a divisio of y^r spolia might be made so as to leave a larger proportio for each man.

"Thus y^r spolia was deposited in y^r receptaculum at y^r bottom of y^r pit & was guarded by y^r sea water w^h y^r Capitano had let in & y^r marks of y^r work had been obliterated according as has been sayde, & y^r prisoneres to y^r numere of nineteen had been slaughtered at y^r mouth of y^r pit, & now after these things were ended y^r Capitano prepared to depart & y^r last actio w^h he did perform was y^r confagratio of y^r gallone w^h was burned & destroyed, & then they took up their departura from y^r insula & sailed for y^r Atlantic but y^r indignatio & vengfulle furia of Heaven did pursue & y^r a series of storms & horribiles tempestates w^h drave y^r shippe on y^r coast of Morocco. Here y^r Capitano & one half of y^r crew did perish & y^r other half were arrestate & made captivi & slaves to y^r Moors, & as slaves all did live till death, with y^r exceptio of one man, to wit, y^r seaman Clarke. Which seaman Clarke being once taken by his master to a seaport town did succedde wonderfullie in makinge good his escapado & reached y^r open sea in a boat where he was pycked up by an English shippe of war. After this he served among y^r English for some years & afterwards he became a buccanneero, & while thus serving his shippe was capta by a Spanyshe frigate, & as a prisoner he came into my way.

"And this storia I have thought good thus to set down & I hope y^r you will marke well these wordes & servare y^r documentum to y^r end y^r if adversitus should assail you y^r may be a resource. For in y^r event of exilium or confis-

calates of your estate you may redeem yourself from poverty by searching for—"

Here the manuscript ended, and just at this point the unfinished sentence was completed in the last leaf of the original manuscript, which Henslowe had first seen, in the words "the spolia."

This newly found portion consisted of six pages on three leaves, and amounted to about as much as the last, the writing being about an average of thirty-seven lines to a page. And thus the whole manuscript when now put together amounted to thirteen pages.

CHAPTER XI.

RESULTS.

It is impossible to describe the intense excitement that filled the breast of Tancred, as he looked over the pages of the manuscript which he had found so unexpectedly, and which accorded so wonderfully with the other pages which he had brought with him. They were parts of one manuscript, and all had been written by the same hand at the same time. They also contained the full revelation of all that he had so longed to know, descending into a most minute enumeration of particulars, and describing with almost painful elaboration all the characteristic features of the hiding-place of the treasure. The first night after this discovery, the treasure drove out every other thought. He did not close his eyes that night, nor did he think of anything else in the world than that manuscript, which he now continued to study with a devouring eagerness and self-absorption that he had never felt before.

The next thing to do, however, was to communicate with Garth. To do so by letter would be tedious; and then again he wished to show him the precious leaves, but was unwilling to trust them to the mail. He could not go in person to see his friend, for a variety of reasons. Under these circumstances the arrival of Frink took place, and Tancred at once resolved at the earliest opportunity to tell him the whole story, show him the manuscript, and get his opinion.

On the evening after this the opportunity occurred. Frink had finished some business with Lady Landsdowne and Drury which had brought him to the estate, and sought out Tancred for the purpose of spending the evening with him, and learning from him how he was getting along in his new life at Landsdowne. During this conversation Tancred communicated to Frink the whole story of the manuscript, together with the recent discovery which he had made. It was quite evident that Frink felt astonishment of no ordinary kind upon hearing this singular disclosure, and that his interest in the story was as great as his astonishment. He asked Tancred a series of most minute questions referring to the mode in which he had first gained possession of the manuscript, and how it had happened to come into his father's hands. This last question Tancred did not choose to answer, for although he had no secrets from Frink, whom he regarded as his most intimate friend; yet he did not think it worth while to allude to the relationship which the Henslowes had with the Landsdownes.

"Frink, however, did not push this question far. He seemed rather to feel curious about the way in which Tancred could account for the possession of it, than the possession itself. He found many other things to ask about, referring chiefly to the subject matter of the manuscript, and the things spoken of there.

"Well, Henslowe," said he at length, "I'll be hanged if I don't think that there may be something in this, only I'm not the sort of fellow to make up my mind at once. I should like to study this over more carefully, and give it all a thorough overhauling. You see it's such an unusual sort of a thing that a fellow don't feel exactly like believing it all at once. The treasure spoken of here is something so enormous that it reads like the record of some dream, and not like actual fact. What are you doing with these? Can you spare them for a day or so, and let me overhaul them?"

"Just what I should like you to do of all things," said Tancred. "I want to get the result of another person's examination. You see I've been working at it so long that I've got into a sort of groove, and can't get out of it, but you will be fresh at the work, and may see something new in it."

Frink, thereupon, took away the papers, and, as he had said, gave them a most careful examination, while Tancred awaited the result with considerable impatience and eagerness. Frink's disposition was slow and cautious; he was not a man to be drawn out of his usual deliberate mode of action by any sudden enterprize, and so several days passed before he again alluded to the manuscript. At the end of that time he once more appeared at Tancred's room, bringing the papers with him.

"Well," said Tancred, "you've looked them over, have you?"

"I have," said Frink.

"And what's your opinion?"

Frink placed the manuscript carefully on the table, and looked earnestly at Tancred.

"You, yourself," said he, "of course believe in this."

"Most certainly."

"And if I didn't believe in it, my unbelief wouldn't affect you at all."

"Certainly not; my mind's altogether made up. I believe in that most implicitly."

"Well," said Frink, "so do I."

"Oh, you do, do you? Why, I didn't know but that you had formed some suspicion as to its authenticity."

"Oh no; the fact is, it needs but a very slight examination to show that it must be a *bona fide* document, and exactly what it professes to be. I should like to find out something more though. Can you tell me whether your Henslowe portion of the manuscript ever fell into any other hands outside of your own family, or whether any one else knows about it? This is a matter of some importance."

"Oh, I'm certain," said Tancred, "that no one outside of our family knows anything about it."

"Well, that is an important thing," said Frink, "for, although, there is no mention of the place of burial in the Henslowe portion, still it's just as well that no one should know that there is such a manuscript in existence at all. Now as to the last half, this Landsdowne portion, we may be sure that this is absolutely unknown. It must have been lying here, packed away for very many years. Its existence cannot even have been suspected. It was only by the merest accident that you made this discovery; consequently we are safe in considering ourselves to be the only living persons who know anything about the secret revealed here."

"That must be so," said Tancred.

"Well," said Frink, "there is still another thing to be considered, and that is, whether this treasure has ever been discovered."

"The very thing that I have often thought of," said Tancred.

"It is possible," said Frink, "that this treasure has been found by some of the family. You see how the papers have been studied over?"

"Yes."

"Well, some one has been studying this up before you, and may have got the money."

"Well," said Tancred, "it certainly is possible, but there would be a sure way of finding out whether a Landsdowne ever got it or not."

"How?"

"Why, by finding out whether any Landsdowne has ever got rich suddenly. Now that question I am in a position to answer. I have looked over all the papers in the place nearly, and have found that no Landsdowne has ever discovered any treasure, nor has any connection of the family. There is no record of any one getting rich. So I think we may take it for granted that whoever examined this manuscript never got beyond the bare examination."

"If that is really so," said Frink, "then of course we have the whole field open before us. And so the next question that arises is whether we can find the place or not."

"Why, that's easy enough, isn't it?" said Tancred. "It's all put down there plainly in black and white."

"Yes," said Frink, "it certainly is very clear, very explicit, and very minute," and as he spoke he drew a slip of paper from his pocket. "I've got it jotted down here," he continued as he unfolded it, "the chief points mentioned in the manuscript. Now here they are!"

"First, the place is one of the Lepari Islands. Secondly, it is near the island called Vulcanano."

"Thirdly, it is three leagues to the west of it."

"Fourthly, this islet is called Leonforte."

"Fifthly, it is half a mile long, and thirty feet above the water."

"Sixthly, it is covered with woods and underbrush."

"Seventhly, it is marked by a palm-tree forty feet high, and by a granite boulder twelve feet in diameter."

"Eighthly, the trees are generally beech."

"Ninthly, the money hole must be found; and—"

"Tenthly, the drain to let in the sea water."

"And now, my dear boy, the question is how to begin to go about it."

"Well," said Tancred, who had listened to the above "points," as Frink called them, most attentively, "that's what I call at once neat and logical and methodical. You are evidently intended by nature for a solicitor, or something of that sort. All those points of yours are clear enough in my own mind, but I should never take the trouble to sum them up in that fashion, and certainly not to write them all out."

"Well, that's my way," said Frink. "They say it's a sign that a fellow's going to be an old bachelor. But never mind. Have you thought about what you're going to do?"

"Do? Why, seek after it."

"But how? You can't go alone."

"Oh, no; there's a friend of mine."

"Who?"

"Garth."

"Garth. H'm. Oh, yes; I've heard you speak about him. But will two be enough?"

"No, I should hardly think so; but I haven't arranged those minor details yet."

"Well, you'll have to have three at least, and so, since it must be, why, I might as well be number three as any one else; and so—"

"What!" cried Tancred. "You?"

"Of course."

"How can you leave your business?"

"Business? Why, man, this will be a business that may yield more in one month than my practice would give me in a lifetime."

"True," said Tancred; "but I didn't think you were the sort of man to go off, on an affair of this kind."

It seemed, however, that Tancred had been mistaken, and that Frink was resolved upon being one of the party.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WARNING.

TANCRED was not able to keep his secret long concealed from Lucy. She herself marked some unusual elation in his manner, combined with mystery, and gave him no peace till she had made him tell her all. Nor was Tancred unwilling to reveal. The only objection which he had to tell her lay in the fear that she might regard it all as visionary, and think him wanting in devotion to her if he went on so wild an errand. He found his fear just and well founded. Lucy did, indeed, regard it as visionary, and could not bring herself to consent to listen to any of Tancred's arguments about the authenticity of the manuscript, or the actual existence of the treasure. In fact, her reception of his intelligence was at once most embarrassing, while at the same time, in one way most charming.

For, as she listened, her face evinced many varying emotions of surprise, alarm, apprehension, dismay, and displeasure, until at length, even in the midst of his eloquent descriptions of the treasure, she burst into a flood of tears.

Tancred stopped short.

"What's the matter?" he asked, in consternation.

"You're going to leave me!" she sighed.

"Why, my darling Lucy! Is that it?"

Lucy said nothing. Her tears flowed faster. Tancred took her in his arms, and tried to soothe her, but she moved away.

"You're going to leave me," said she, "on a wild and foolish errand, and I shall never see you again. And now, when everything here is so nice, and everybody likes you so, and we see so much of one another, and you pretend to be fond of me, and I don't believe you care for me one bit."

At this incoherent speech, which yet showed clearly to Tancred how completely her heart was in his keeping, he did not know what to say. He, therefore, said nothing in particular, but contented himself in doing what most young fellows would have done in his place—that is, he took her in his arms caressingly, and murmured in her ear all sorts of endearing words. These at length reduced Lucy to a state of comparative calm, so that she was able to overcome her excitement, and express herself more clearly.

"Now promise," said she.

"What?"

"Promise that you'll not think any more about this miserable manuscript."

"But, my dearest Lucy, only let me speak."

"I positively refuse to hear anything about this, you naughty boy."

"But I must explain; you'll listen, won't you, now—just a little? and then I promise to do anything you wish."

"Well, then, on those conditions I'll listen," said Lucy, in a mollified tone and gracious manner.

Upon this, Tancred proceeded to explain to her his own particular private circumstances, reminding her of her own great wealth, and showing her how his poverty made their respective positions too unequal.

"I'm sure," said she, "I don't see the use of thinking so much about money."

"Well, you know, darling, I don't; it's your friends—it's the world at large."

"But I'm sure I don't care for the world at large."

"Ah, yes you do! you wouldn't like me to be called a fortune-hunter."

"But you wouldn't be; and why should we care for what ill-natured people might say?"

"Well, but in any case, I never could get you."

"I'm sure I don't see why not," said Lucy, softly.

"Your mamma and uncle would never consent."

"How do you know that, sir?"

"Oh, I'm sure of it! They don't suspect me even now. They would accuse me of a breach of faith, if they knew how things were."

"Well, but if they didn't like it, why did they bring you here? and why do they allow you to see so much of me?"

"I'm sure I don't know; but I believe they never suspect that I would dare to raise my eyes to you. They think I am a man of honor, and would not violate the confidence they put in me by seeking your love, my own darling. And so, you see, my sweet little pet, I'm in an awfully false position; and I feel, in some sort, as though I'm violating some agreement, only it's nothing of the sort. But, at any rate, I shouldn't dare to let them know how it is, for fear of being driven out of this. So, you see, there it is. This can't go on forever. I'm afraid to ask them for you; and the only thing that seems open for me to do is to try and do something that may lessen the distance between us. Now, if there is nothing in this, as you say, why, I'll soon find out, and there'll be no harm done; while, on the other hand, if there is a treasure, and I can get it, why, then, my darling, I can hope to win you—with their consent, if I can, but if not, why, then, without it."

Tancred went on in this strain at some length, explaining to Lucy all his motives, until, at length, her objections to the scheme grew gradually weaker and she began to acquiesce in it, and, at length, to concede, that, under present circumstances, it was one of the best things that could be done. She now began to take some interest in the plan itself, and question him about the way in which he intended to carry it out.

"Well, then," said he, "my intention is to have as few with me as possible. In fact, three, I think, will be the number. It won't do to have any servants or employes. We must be all equal partners—all going equal shares. Now, with me I intend to associate two intimate friends, men whom I know and trust, and whom I have already communicated with."

"Who are they?"

"One is in Liverpool. His name is Garth."

"Garth? I never heard of the name."

"Of course not. He is a stranger to you. But he is one of the finest fellows living, and as true as steel."

"And who is the other?"

"The other? Well, the other is Frink."

"Frink!" exclaimed Lucy, in a peculiar voice.

"Yes."

"I'm sorry for that."

"I know you don't altogether like him," said Tancred, "but he's an old friend of mine."

"I not only don't like him," said Lucy, "but I particularly dislike him, and I have reason to."

"Oh, I hope not. Why, what can poor Frink have done?"

"Well, in the first place, you must see," said Lucy, "that his position here is one of influence."

"Of course."

"Your coming here was through him."

"Of course."

"Your coming here was through him."

"I'm sure I'm obliged to him, no end."
 "Well, that shows his influence."
 "Oh, I dare say. He's such a clever fellow, that he has influence wherever he goes."
 "Yes, but it is different here. Mamma and Mr. Drury are under his influence, not because they believe him to be so clever, but because they are afraid of him."
 "Afraid of him?"
 "Yes."
 "About what? Why, what can they possibly be afraid of?"
 "Well, that's just what I don't know," said Lucy; "but it looks exactly as though he knew some secret about them, which puts them in his power."
 "Oh, come now," said Tancred, "you must be dreaming. That sounds like mere fancy."
 "It's no fancy," said Lucy, firmly, "it's the truth."

"How do you know?"
 "Well, he came here first a year ago. He had an interview with mamma; after which she was terribly upset and nervous for a long time."
 "Oh, but that may have been accidental."
 "Yes, but he had an interview with Mr. Drury which made him upset and nervous too. And mamma and Mr. Drury have been very different ever since, very uneasy and troubled. And Mr. Frink has ever since done exactly as he pleased, and made them do the same. And your coming here was all arranged among them for some purpose which I don't know."

Tancred laughed.
 "Oh, well," said he, "as to that, I rather think Frink showed himself my friend, and I'm sure you ought to forgive him, Lucy, for my sake. As to his influence over your mother and Mr. Drury, I think, darling, that you are just a little bit fanciful."

"Oh, you may laugh, but I cannot help it."
 "You've always disliked him, you know."
 "And, with reason."
 "With reason?"
 "Yes, you yourself would allow it if I were to tell you all."

"Why, Lucy, you speak as though you had something awful against him."
 "Well, I have this," said Lucy—"I overheard him once stipulating with mamma, something about me."

"About you!" exclaimed Tancred, with a flushed face. "What?"
 "I can't say, exactly, it was something unpleasant, though. He tried to do the agreeable to me, too, but I always disliked him, and so—but never mind, only remember this, don't trust him; for, mark my words, he will betray you yet."

This revelation was most unpleasant to Tancred, who pressed Lucy to tell him more. This, however, she was unwilling to do. Frink was his friend, she said, and was to be his chosen companion, and she felt unwilling to inspire him with feelings of hostility against that friend. All that she wished was that he should be on his guard against Frink, and not trust him too implicitly.

The words of Lucy produced a strong effect at first. For about two days Tancred felt hostile toward him, and suspicious. He, also, felt a jealous resentment of Frink's earlier attentions to Lucy. But Frink took no notice of Tancred's coolness. After the second or third day the hostile feelings began to pass away, and at last, Tancred, who was incapable of bearing malice, not only resumed his old friendliness, but forgot all about Lucy's warning.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VOYAGE OF THE ADVENTURERS.

It remained now to make the needful preparations for the expedition. Everything had been already communicated to Old Garth who expressed the utmost delight at the intelligence, and at once proceeded to think over the best plan of action. The advent of Frink upon the scene led to some question on Garth's part which Tancred responded to in the fullest manner. The feelings which Tancred had for Frink were however, by no means shared by Garth, and he did not appear to regard this new addition with any particular enthusiasm.

"Well," said he, "I suppose I'll have to take your word for it, Henslowe. Appearances are certainly against him, and I don't trust him, but since you guarantee his good faith, why, it's all right, I suppose."

This warning of Garth's was given in a care-

less, off-handed manner, and was received with a laugh by Tancred.

And now came the preparations. These were of no common kind, and Old Garth bore the chief part in them. A multiplicity of little details had to be attended to, and a large number of minute articles prepared, which were suggested through the large experience of Garth. First of all they had to procure a vessel for themselves, and a vessel of the right sort. They found some difficulty in procuring one which was suitable. At length, however, they found a schooner-yacht which had belonged to a nobleman who had now no more occasion to use her, and had offered her for sale. She was in first-rate condition, and had everything complete, and they bought her at once. Upon testing her sailing powers, they found her to be everything that was desirable. She had a roomy and luxurious cabin aft, while forward there were the seamen's quarters in which they hoped to be able to deposit their treasure, if they succeeded in getting it. For the present, however, they used it as a place of deposit for their cargo.

This cargo consisted of a miscellaneous assortment of everything likely to be useful in such an expedition as theirs. First of all they took care to store up plenty of provisions. For it was their intention to take up their abode on the island, and not move from it until they had gained or lost the prize. Accordingly, they bought barrels of ship bread, together with cheeses, and hams, and potatoes, and all other ship stores in common use. About the luxuries or superfluities of life they gave themselves but little trouble, since they were all prepared to rough it to any extent. In addition to provisions and the ordinary ship stores, they had to make extraordinary preparations for the necessities which were peculiar to their present errand. Such as:

Rope in abundance, and of many sizes, so as to hoist and lower up and down from the hole which they might dig.

Pulleys and blocks of various sizes, which were to be made use of in the same way.

Pickaxes of various sizes.

Shovels of various kinds.

Axes with which to cut down the trees, so as to obtain timber for staying the sides of the pit.

A blacksmith's complete apparatus, consisting of anvil, hammers, and bellows, together with slack coal, with which to do any iron work that might be needed.

A supply of boards and planks of different sizes.

A set of carpenter's tools.

A medicine-chest.

A large supply of clothing of all sorts, to serve them in case of the wear and tear of their own while laboring in the pit.

Together with many more, too numerous to mention.

But the thing to which Garth attached the most importance was a small steam-engine, which, though at the present day it would seem clumsy and ill contrived, was, nevertheless, at this time a marvel of neatness and ingenuity. It could be taken to pieces and put up again without any very great trouble, and could be used either to haul up weights, such as vessels of earth and mud, or else for the purpose of pumping. Now, Garth himself happened to understand the steam-engine very thoroughly, and was also possessed by nature of sufficient mechanical ingenuity and skill to be able to take this machine to pieces and reconstruct it without any trouble whatever. Tancred did not believe in the steam-engine very much, and as for Frink, he made a few appreciative remarks, which, however, were merely commonplace civilities, and only served to conceal an utter skepticism. About this, however, Garth troubled himself not in the slightest degree, but continued to sound the praises of his wonderful engine with an enthusiasm which never slackened.

About a fortnight was taken up in making these preparations, and at the end of that time the "Dart," for such was the name of the yacht, spread her white wings and sailed far away to the Southern Sea.

All these preparations had cost much money, which, however, had been raised without very much difficulty. Tancred had saved some hundreds of pounds. Garth was the owner of as much more, while Frink possessed still more. The schooner had been purchased for a very low sum, and two thousand pounds sterling more than covered the entire expenditure of the three associates.

These three, Garth, Tancred, and Frink, considered themselves quite sufficient for all the purposes that lay before them, whether of navigation on the sea, or labor on the shore. Garth, by virtue of his age and experience, assumed, with the consent of the others, the position of captain or leader. The schooner required no larger number, her rig being adapted to very easy sailing. Had they been more luxurious in their tastes or habits they might indeed have felt the need of a cook, but being inclined to rough it, the absence of that functionary gave none of them any concern. They had enough biscuit and cold meats on board to serve them without any further preparation, and as for drink, they had laid in stores of liquors which enabled them to dispense very well with tea and coffee.

It was glorious weather. The "Dart" ran down the channel and out across the Bay of Biscay, and along the coast of Spain and Portugal, and into the Straits of Gibraltar. A fair wind bore them swiftly along under blue skies and over sparkling seas. The air and the surrounding scenes served to inspire them all and fill them with hope. Day after day passed on that bright voyage, and still the "Dart" sped over the waters.

All were full of hope and confidence, though each one avowed his feelings in a way which was characteristic, and in accordance with his own private character and purposes in life. Garth was full of his projects about a Sicilian Republic. His present adventure was only a means to an end. It was an undertaking, which, if successful, would enable him to fling himself into the heart of Sicily, and rally round him among the Sicilian Mountains a band of brave desperadoes to the war-cry of Liberty and the Republic. Then should Garth feel that he had not lived in vain, and might hope to accomplish something before he died. On the other hand, if he failed, he had made up his mind to buy out from Tancred and Frink their shares in the "Dart," and use her for the benefit of the Sicilian Republic in some way or other to be afterward decided upon.

Tancred, on the other hand, was as full of hope as Garth, but his hopes all pointed to a very different object. His hopes all turned toward Lucy. For her he was risking everything. If successful, he was certain of winning her, but if he failed, he was in danger of losing her. Of failure, however, he did not choose to think, but persisted in hoping for the best, and in allowing his imagination to dwell fondly upon that bright day in the future, when, coming back crowned with success, he might once more meet his love and claim her for his own.

As for Frink, he was different from either. He talked incessantly, but not so much as the others about the treasure. Either his mind was not so much occupied with it, or else he concealed his thoughts more.

The relationship of Frink to the others was peculiar. Tancred treated him with unfeeling friendliness and cordiality, seeming always to feel that Frink was his old friend and school-mate, and to have utterly forgotten the warning of Lucy. With Garth, however, it was different. There was a reserve in his manner toward Frink that nothing could lessen. The recommendation of Tancred had brought Frink on board, but nothing could lessen Garth's utter distrust in the man and dislike of him.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CRUSHING DISAPPOINTMENT.

GARTH had brought with him the latest charts of the Sicilian and Italian coast, and Tancred had brought one of an earlier edition. These charts they studied most carefully on the voyage, but yet to their great perplexity they could not find either in the latest edition or in the earlier one any trace of the little island of Leonporte. Now, according to the manuscript, this island of Leonporte was one of the cluster, known as the Lepari, on the north of Sicily. Its position and size were both very minutely described. It lay near the island of Vulcano, three leagues west, and was about half a mile long. The description was certainly as plain, and as intelligible as any description could be, and the writer evidently had a perfectly clear idea of the position of the island, but this very singular circumstance made it all the stranger, that no mention of it should be in the Admiralty chart.

"It's queer," said Garth. "It isn't often that

the Admiralty make any mistakes in their charts, either of omission or commission, yet here is a clear omission."

"Perhaps the island has omitted itself," said Frink, with a smile.

"And what may you mean by that, pray?" said Garth, who never was cordial with Frink.

"Well, merely this," said Frink, "that the island has taken itself off."

At this Garth frowned and looked abstractedly out upon the sea.

"I don't understand you," said Tancred.

"Well," said Frink, "I'll explain. You know that in these seas volcanoes are very active. It's the midst of a volcanic region. There's Etna and Vesuvius. There's also Stromboli. Now all these Lepari islands are of volcanic origin—that is, they've been thrown up by volcanic action. Sometimes an island is thrown up in a single night. This would be all very well if it stood there, but unfortunately the islands sometimes go away as quickly as they came, and it has happened that just as you began to get fond of an island it has vanished out of your sight."

"And you think that this may have happened to Leonforte," said Tancred, in a tone of vexation.

"Oh, I merely made the suggestion. It's one way of accounting for the absence of any mention of it in the chart. You see it's among the volcanic Lepari Islands, and it happens to stand next to an island which has the very ill-omened name of Vulcano."

"True," said Tancred, "but then wouldn't there be some mention of it here on the chart? Wouldn't it be said that an island once stood here?"

"Well, yes. I suppose so, if the island had been there within fifty years, and this leads me to think that it may have disappeared more than a century ago, or perhaps a short time after the treasure was buried, and that would also account for another thing. I mean, for the fact that although several people have evidently studied up this manuscript, no one has ever found the treasure. Perhaps they have gone to seek the island, and have never been able to find it."

"Well, that certainly is an encouraging suggestion too," said Tancred. "It would be rather too bad to find that out. At any rate I'll hope for the best."

"Oh, so will I for that matter," said Frink. "I merely threw this out as an idea that might have something in it; but of course we must hunt up the island all the same."

"Well," said Garth, "at any rate this disposes of one difficulty that caused me some trouble."

"What was that?"

"Well, I didn't know but that the island might have become inhabited since the burial of the treasure."

"Inhabited? Oh, there's no fear of that. It's too small."

"Small? not a bit of it. I've seen smaller islands than Leonforte is said to be, crammed with people. But if it had been inhabited it would certainly have been down on the chart."

"Well, for my part, I confess, I'd rather find it inhabited than not find it at all."

"Oh, I rather think it's there somewhere."

"But how do you account for its not being on the chart?"

"Well, in various ways. One is that it is an actual mistake. You can't expect infallibility, even in an Admiralty chart, nor omniscience, and so as they have not known about Leonforte, they have not set it down. Another way of accounting for it is on the ground of a confusion of names. The island here called Vulcano may be not the one now called Vulcano. Perhaps the sailor Clarke meant Stromboli, where the volcano is. Now here on this chart, just about three leagues from Stromboli there is a small island which may be the one."

"So it may."

"So you see we needn't give up just yet."

"But this one may be inhabited."

"So it may. That's the fear I've always had."

"What can we do?"

"Well; that depends upon the number of inhabitants on the island. If there are only two or three poor fishermen or peasants, we can buy them up at once, and pack them off; but if there are many people on it, I hardly know what we can do. It will certainly be hard to work, so as to avoid suspicion. It's the only real difficulty before us."

"At any rate we ought to know soon, for we must go there first of all, and find out—"

"Yes, we ought to do that, for the sake of our own peace of mind."

This discovery served to disquiet them somewhat, but their very disquietude and suspense only made them the more eager to find out as soon as possible. On entering the Straits of Gibraltar, they sailed away due east, and kept on this course for some days. Here, however, their course was checked; for the wind, at first, hauled round and blew stiffly from the east, and they had to beat up against it. After this had lasted for a day or two, the wind died out altogether, and then came a calm. With such interruptions and delays as these, the "Dart" continued on her way, making, however, but little progress, until at length the wind came up from a favorable quarter, and the "Dart" once more dashed through the seas.

At length, they saw on the horizon, the lofty form of an island rising up peak-shaped. According to the observation of Garth, this island should be that one of the Lepari group, known as Vulcano, and therefore the one mentioned in the manuscript. But here, at the very place where the "Dart" sailed, they were about three leagues off from Vulcano, and to the deep and bitter disappointment of all, there was no sign whatever of Leonforte, or of any island, islet, sand-bank, or anything else whatever.

The disappointment was a most bitter one; and although they had been in some degree prepared for it by the absence of Leonforte on the Admiralty chart, yet when it came to the actual fact, the blow was unexpected and quite overwhelming. As the "Dart" sailed on, their eyes wandered around, as though they half expected to find something somewhere on the sea, which might afford a trace of Leonforte. In this way they sailed on until they reached Vulcano. Here Garth went ashore. He found the island inhabited, and questioned some fishermen and some priests, but found that no one had ever known anything of any island lying west, nor had there ever been any mention made of any. So Garth came back to the schooner.

"Well," said he, "there's one thing more for us to do now."

"What is that?" asked Tancred, gloomily.

"Well, you know the idea I had that the sailor, Clarke, meant by Vulcano not this island, but the volcano—that is, Stromboli. So the only thing now to do is to sail there and see if it is so. If we can find Leonforte anywhere it will be three leagues west of the volcano."

"Well, that's our only chance now," said Tancred, "as far as I can see."

"For my part," said Frink, "I think it's far more likely to be Stromboli. Of course it is—the seaman Clarke meant all the time the volcano."

"Well," said Garth, "we must make up our minds for a disappointment. It's just as well to be prepared for the worst."

The "Dart" now came about, and headed northeast. The wind was fresh, and she made the run of forty miles in a few hours. Long before sundown they came in sight of Stromboli. The towering peak rose up, with its pennon of smoke floating from its summit. With anxious eyes the three adventurers sought all over the surface of the sea for some signs of Leonforte. South of Stromboli they saw islands of various sizes, but west they saw nothing but a wide waste of water.

CHAPTER XV.

SEARCHING AFTER THE MISSING ISLAND.

AFTER this second disappointment, the party fell into a profound silence, which was unbroken for a long time. At length, as the "Dart" continuing on her course began to leave Stromboli behind her on her lee, Garth brought her about, and headed her toward the island.

"I don't know what to do next," said he, "but there's no need cruising about forever, so I think we'd best drop anchor, fill we come to some decision."

To this neither Tancred nor Frink made any reply, but moved about in silence—doing their respective tasks, as the vessel came about, and then seating themselves once more and looking out to sea in an abstracted way—which silence lasted until, at length, about sunset, when Garth called to them to drop sail and let go the anchor.

"We've got to decide to-night," said Garth, "all about our future movements."

This he said as they seated themselves astern, while the "Dart" swung at anchor.

"Now I intend to go below, and give a thorough overhauling, first to the manuscript, and then to the chart."

"I don't see the use of that," said Tancred, "we've overhauled them both hundreds of times, and I, for my part, am beginning to feel a little tired of it all."

"Well, what else can we do?" asked Garth. "Are you willing to give up now on the spot, turn away here from this place, and go back to England?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I should hardly like to do all that—so soon."

"What else do you want to do then?"

"I don't know."

"Oh let's overhaul the manuscript again by all means," said Frink; "who knows but what we may notice something new, or find out some mistake that we've been making."

With these words they all went down below, where Garth lighted the lamp, and spread out the chart on the cabin table. He then drew forth the well-worn manuscript, and turning to the place where the island was described, read, in a loud voice and with slowness and distinctness, the following:

"Now there are off y' coastes of Italia & on y' Northe of y' coastes of Sicilia certayne insulas w^h are called y' Lepari, among y^h there is a certayne islet without inhabitantes. This insula lieth nigh to y' insula called Vulcano, distant about 3 leagues, & y' name by w^h it is known to y' mariners in these seas is Leonforte, y^h lieth to y' west of y' insula Vulcano. And y' insula is in length not more y^h one half mile & in height above y' sea thirty feete, & much covered with woode & thickettes, & in y' midst thereof there ariseth a rocke w^h lyeth on y' superficies of y' grounde, being circular in shape though irregular like a large bowldere from y' sea, w^h rocke is circa 12 feete in heighte & depthe, & nigh to y' rounde bowldere ariseth a palma tree circa forty feete in height. But all y' remainder of y' insula is covered with a growthe of beechen trees. Now y' was y' place where y' Capitano made preparations to bury y' spolia."

"It's evident," said Garth, as he finished it, "that we have not been making any mistake in the manuscript thus far, for here we find it again—three leagues to the west of the Island of Vulcano, one of the Lipari Islands. It's evident also that there is now no such island here, whether we take the Island Vulcano itself, or suppose that Stromboli was meant. And now there remains for us only two courses open. One is to give up the whole thing as a fiction, made up by the man Clarke as a sailor's yarn, to humbug the priest, or to give it up and go about our business; and the other is to take it as materially true, but that some mistake has been made in stating the position of the Island Leonforte, a mistake which may have been made by Brother Claudian, especially as he wrote from memory many years afterward."

"But suppose there has been such a mistake," said Tancred, "what can be done in that case?"

"Simply this," said Garth, "we can make inquiries to find out if there's any island called Leonforte among the Liparis. It don't make any difference to us where it is, so long as it is here somewhere, and accessible to us. Now, my plan is to go to Palermo, and make inquiries there."

"A good idea," said Frink.

"Capital," said Tancred. "It gives us a little hope yet, and that is something."

"I know lots of seamen in Palermo," said Garth, "and in other Sicilian towns. The most of the fishermen in Sicily are good republicans, and belong to us. They all know the Lipari Islands. There's old Paolo Bembo, that can tell me exactly what I want. He's grown gray in prowling about these waters, and, if he's still in the flesh, I can learn from him the whole thing. Now, my idea is that it will be better for us to go to Palermo without delay."

"Yes," said Tancred; "that seems the best thing for us in our present situation. If you know these sea-faring men you ought to be able to find out everything you want."

"Why, there can be no question at all about it," said Frink. "You speak their language, and have advantages such as few possess for learning all that you want to know."

Some further conversation followed, but the result was that the unanimous resolve was to go, as Garth suggested, to Palermo. That night, however, they remained where they were, and as they were all pretty well fatigued with watch-

ing and overwork, they slept soundly, and did not set sail for Palermo until the following morning.

On reaching Palermo, Garth went forth in search of Paolo Bembo. This personage had once been a fisherman by name, but in his eventful life had dipped a little into privateering, and, as was whispered, into piracy also. Rheumatism, however, and old age had induced him to retire to the quiet of a shore life, and he gained a living by selling miscellaneous articles to the fishermen and sailors of the port. Garth found him without any very great trouble, and was received by old Bembo, with a mixture of profound respect and hearty cordiality.

Garth was not much at diplomacy, and came directly to the point, pretending, however, that he was only going to the island for sport. Now, old Bembo knew perfectly well that sport was only a pretense, but he thought that Garth's true motive was a political one, and had some connection with the "Republic."

"Do you know the Lipari Islands?"

"Perfectly; every one of them."

"Is there one called Leonforte?"

"Leonforte! Yes."

"Where is it?"

"Well, it is nearer to Vulcano than to any other island."

"Vulcano!" exclaimed Garth, excited by this confirmation of his hopes. "In which direction?"

"Well, some three or four leagues away."

"In which direction, though—north, south, east, or west?"

"East."

"East!" exclaimed Garth. "East? Are you sure? Isn't it west?"

"Oh, I'm sure it's east. In fact, there is no island west, though some lie northwest; but this is due east, in a straight line."

"What size is it?"

"Well, it is small—about half a mile. It is only twenty or thirty feet high. Some sailors call it Palma Island, on account of a tall palm-tree on it."

"A tall palm-tree? Oh, yes; and this island—are there inhabitants on it?"

"Inhabitants? Oh, no; not a soul."

"You're sure, are you?"

"Oh, yes; at least there were none when I was last on it, and that was quite lately—let me see—about fifteen years ago."

Some further conversation followed, but this was quite enough for Garth. It showed him that the island was there, and that it coincided fully with the description in the manuscript.

On acquainting the others, they at once felt the highest exultation. It was evident now that the whole difficulty had arisen from the faulty memory of the priest, who had written the word "west," when he ought to have written "east," a mistake which could easily be accounted for from the lapse of time.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ISLAND.

ONCE more, then, the hope that had almost died out began to revive, and the bright vision of wealth and prosperity begun to return. The information of old Bembo served to show that the islet of Leonforte was, after all, no fiction, but a reality. Others knew it besides Clarke or Brother Claudian, and here was a man in Palermo who had stood upon its shores, and whose description corresponded in every respect with the well-known words of the manuscript. The manuscript was therefore perfectly reliable, and the only trouble had arisen from a mistake in one word. Brother Claudian had written west when he ought to have written east. Such a mistake was most natural. He had taken down the narrative of the sailor, Clarke, but in writing it out after the lapse of years, he had naturally forgotten the particular situation of Leonforte toward Vulcano, and had written the wrong word.

Full of hope, they now set sail from Palermo toward the Island of Vulcano. This time they were sure, at least, of Leonforte. Disappointed they might be, yet at least they would have the satisfaction of a trial. They would be able to see for themselves, and judge accordingly. Even if they should eventually fail, it would be less hard to bear than a failure at the very threshold. These new hopes animated them all, though each manifested his feelings in a different sort of way, according to his own disposition. Garth was eager, impatient, yet strong and self-contained. Tancred was nervously ex-

cited, and full of feverish restlessness, while Frink, more cool and collected, showed his animation chiefly by being more generally talkative and lively.

The first day the wind was light, and the "Dart" did not make very considerable progress. As the sun set they could see, far away to the northeast, the dark mass of Vulcano lying low on the horizon. Then, after the manner of this southern clime, day vanished, and night instantly succeeded. The night was calm, with a moderate breeze from the southeast, at the impulse of which the "Dart" slipped along through the water, holding fairly on her course.

At length morning came. It was early dawn. The three treasure-seekers were on deck. They had taken turns at the watch through the night, and were now all sufficiently refreshed to enter with vigor upon the duties of a new day. They stood looking over the water. Toward the northwest, and somewhat behind them, lay the Island of Vulcano. Eastward, and a little distance before them, the waters were all reddening and glowing in the reflected rays from the flaming sky. There the sun was casting up his rays, the heralds of his approach, and there on the horizon, immediately in front, lay a low dark mass, in the very midst of the glowing sea and flaming sky.

No one spoke a word. Each one knew that this was the islet which they sought; but seemed afraid to mention its name, for fear lest it might suddenly vanish from the scene. But the islet was all too real and too firm on its deep-set base to be subject to any such enchantments; and every moment revealed more and more of its outline. The wind came up more freshly, and the "Dart" drove onward faster through the sea, and the sun climbed higher, until at last he rose above the horizon. Nearer and nearer they came; higher and higher rose the sun; until at last the islet stood clearly revealed, full before them, not more than a mile or two away. There it lay, about half a mile long, covered with trees, in the midst of which rose up a solitary palm.

None of them uttered a word. The sight of the island seemed to be enough. The sight itself seemed to fill all their souls. Each one knew the words of the manuscript, in which the island was described, by heart; and was now exulting in the exactness with which this island before them corresponded with the words of that description. Under these circumstances the "Dart" moved onward, while Garth steered her straight toward the island.

At length they came close up, and Tancred heaved the lead, sounding as they approached the shore, and thus they reached a spot as near as a hundred yards. Before them they saw a little cove, which seemed to promise moorings for the schooner, but they resolved first to go ashore and inspect. Accordingly the schooner came to anchor, and, lowering a boat, the three went ashore.

The island rose about thirty feet above the sea. It was covered with trees which rose about thirty feet higher. At the west end of the island, nearest the place where the schooner anchored, there was the cove spoken of. It was peculiarly situated, and opened from the southern side. Toward this they rowed and soon reached the place. The cove was not more than sixty feet in width, and ran in for about a hundred yards in a winding course, being deep, and sheltered by the island and the trees. It was adapted to afford a secure harbor for the schooner, and a place where no passing sailor could descry her.

No sooner had they made this discovery than they at once returned to the schooner. They determined while the wind was fair to bring her without delay to this haven, and then after having secured her they could proceed more leisurely to the work of surveying the island. Accordingly, they hoisted anchor, up sail, and before long the schooner "Dart" was lying in the snug little harbor secure from every sudden storm and hidden from every curious eye.

The trees on the island were of moderate size, and beech prevailed, though there were some of other kinds. There was but little underbrush, and they could walk about without any difficulty, and survey the surface of the island. In the cove they saw what they supposed might have been the mooring-place of the pirate vessel and her prize; and judged that the pit where the treasure had been conveyed could not be very far away. Now there was but little difficulty in finding the place. For there were two landmarks, either of which would have sufficed, but which, when taken together, served to indi-

cate the place with unerring accuracy; these two landmarks being—first, the palm-tree, and secondly, the boulder. The palm-tree had already excited their attention from a distance, and it rose close by the cove on the north, a few hundred feet away. Toward this they first bent their steps, and soon reached it.

On reaching the palm-tree they saw a huge round granite boulder covered with moss, and about twelve or fifteen feet in diameter. This they had expected to find, and the discovery excited no surprise, but merely gratification or satisfaction. So fully had the description of the manuscript been carried out that they expected now to find everything verified, down even to the smallest detail. But one thing they found here which did create a sensation, and a very strong one too. As they stood there under the palm tree, looking all around, up and down, and in every direction, the keen eyes of Garth caught sight of something suspended from the palm-tree. There it hung, high in the air, suspended by chains from the palm tree, as it had been hanging for centuries—an iron wheel which had undoubtedly been used for the purpose of lowering the treasure into the money pit. Beneath that wheel the pit itself must lie, but the ground bore no mark externally. It seemed like any other part of the surface of the island, being smooth and even with the rest, showing no indentation, nor any elevation, but being in all respects like the ground about it.

But before making any attempt here, Garth was anxious to find the sluice, since in his opinion nothing could be done until this was found and stopped.

This is what the manuscript said about the sluice:

"Now in addition to y^e pit y^e Capitano caused to be made another pit of greater length y^e w^h pit did starte from y^e shore of y^e sea & go down to y^e bottom of y^e pit aforesayde in a slante, & y^e second slantynge pit was smalle & not more y^e 2 feete in syze, & it was stayed up with stone of w^h y^e was a greate stone on y^e shore of y^e insula, square in shape & easily worked, & y^e last pit from y^e seashore to y^e bottom of y^e firste pit was a sluice or draine, by w^h y^e Capitano did intend to secretlye convey y^e sea waters into y^e money hole to y^e intente y^e no one sholde penetrate to it unlesse he knewe y^e secret of y^e draine. But y^e waters of y^e sea were not let to penetrate into y^e money hole until y^e last, & a gateway of stone & wood was constructed under y^e sea at a distance from y^e shore in depth of six feete of water by w^h y^e sea water colde enter. So y^e depth of y^e money hole was one hundred feete & it was at y^e west end of y^e bowldere & y^e palma tree one hundred feete from y^e west end of y^e insula, & ye draine did starte from y^e sea shore at a pointe due weste & run down circa one hundred foote to y^e bottom of y^e money hole & thus y^e preparatiounes were made for y^e spolia by y^e Capitano."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DIGGERS FOR THE TREASURE.

THE first day's survey showed them plainly that there were no inhabitants on the island, and also that there never had been any. The beach-trees covered nearly the whole surface. The island might have attracted settlers had the soil been fit for cultivation, but it was very poor, being interspersed with bowlders of various sizes, and consisting as a general thing of gravel or clay.

The manuscript had already given them warning that there was something very peculiar on the construction of the pit, since it was supplied by a drain, with sea-water, which constantly flowed into it; and informed them also that they would have to stop the drain before they could get to the bottom of the pit. The position of the drain was also clearly mentioned, and its starting point laid down. Guided by the directions in the manuscript, they made an effort to find the mouth of this drain, but could find nothing which, in any way came up to their idea of such a work. The search after this concluded the day, and they then retired to the schooner, where they deliberated as to the best plan of action for the following day. After talking it over from every point of view, they decided that it would be the best plan under the circumstances to begin at once upon the money hole.

Accordingly, on the following morning, they all went to work. Two, Garth and Frink,

worked with pickaxes, while Tancred used the shovel. The earth was firm and hard packed, and it was evening before they had come down to the timbers spoken of in the manuscript. Three feet below the surface they came to these timbers, or rather what was left of them, for some of them were altogether gone, and others half decayed, so that they were thrown out without much difficulty.

On the following day they resumed their work, and the first thing that was thrown out was a human bone. Others followed, and, indeed, the whole of the second day was taken up in exhuming human bones, until at length all were taken out. They amounted to nineteen skeletons. The third day was taken up in burying these again in another place.

They had now dug down for about six feet, and they saw that it would not be possible to go any further without making a timber-work to stay up the sides of the pit, without which the earth would be certain to cave in upon them. The remains of an original timber-staying were plainly visible, but in this, decay had made such ravages that it was almost completely useless. In fact, its only utility lay in this, that it served as a species of border to indicate where a new staying should be put, and to lessen their labors in this direction. It was now necessary for them to add to their labors by felling trees, and trimming them and cutting them into the requisite shape. But the beech-trees all around stood ready at their hands, all of a very convenient size and being easy to work. Still, the hewing and chopping and fitting of wood was tedious, and very much retarded their work. It was not possible with their utmost efforts to accomplish more than three feet a day on a downward descent. The hole which they made was the same size as the original one, and in this they were guided by the remains of the original staying. By working in this way they at length after ten days' incessant labor, attained to a depth of thirty feet.

But at this point they were confronted with a difficulty which had thus far been avoided. Hitherto, the progress of three feet a day had been kept up, without any other obstacles than the earth. One digged, the other shoveled, and a third raised up the earth by means of a pulley and a basket. In the work of staying all were engaged. But at the depth of thirty feet they encountered water, which water threatened to interfere seriously with their work. At first they tried to bale it out, by filling pails and hoisting them; but this was found to be so utterly inadequate that they were compelled to desist and betake themselves to some other mode of action. It was at this point that Garth resolved to have recourse to his steam-engine. He had already thought of it several times, but there seemed no occasion for it, since one man was able to hoist up all the earth that they were able to dig. Now, however, the flow of the water had proved too fast for the power of one man to check, and the steam-engine was needed. Besides, he thought of the sluice connecting with the sea, and he saw that if this drain were still open and in working order, it would need all the power of their steam-engine to keep the pit free from the rush of the flowing waters.

Garth now proceeded to set up the engine in a convenient place. This proved to be the most difficult job which they had hitherto encountered, yet by means of ingenious contrivances they succeeded at last in getting the engine into position, and in applying its power to a pump. It was with some anxiety that they watched the result. The engine certainly did its work well, and pumped up and flung forth an enormous quantity of water. Unfortunately, however, enormous though the quantity was, it made no appreciable difference with the contents of the pit. The level remained almost unchanged. It was as though they had tried to pump out the sea itself. The steam-engine proved ridiculously inadequate. In vain Tancred and Frink, who remained below, plied pickax and spade. They found it impossible to work in the pudding-like mass. In vain Garth, who tended the engine, piled on the steam. The engine worked bravely, but its strength was matched against overwhelming odds.

It now became evident that the flow of water from the sea was constant, and in large volume, and that until this should be checked, it would be quite useless to do anything with the money hole. Below this thirty feet no progress could be made. Thirty feet down marked the sea-

level, and on reaching that they encountered the sea-water. They comprehended the full nature of their position. They understood it from the description in the manuscript. The design of the pirate captain, as there unfolded, had been this very thing—namely, to baffle all those who might dig for the treasure, and in that manuscript it was plainly stated that it would be necessary, in order to get at the treasure, first to close off the sea-water from the sluice.

First of all, they took a fresh examination of the manuscript so as to avoid all mistake. They saw there that the drain had been made to let the sea-water into the money hole. It ran from the shore of the sea in a slant to the bottom of the money hole. It was two feet square, formed of stone. It started from the sea-shore, "at a pointe du Weste" and "a gateway of stone and wood was constructed under y^e sea at a distance from y^e shore in depth of six fete of water."

It was evident by this that the drain started from the west end of the island. Here, then, they turned to carry out the search.

First of all, they sought to find whether there were any remains whatever of this work, which was called in the manuscript "a gateway of wood and stone." This must have been some solid work of timber and masonry under the water, and containing a sluice, or doorway, with a flood-gate by which the sea-water might enter. Originally such a work must have been large enough to be easily detected. But now no search availed to discover any such work—no timber could be seen and no stone—nothing was visible but the sea-shore.

Then they investigated under the water going out in a boat, and peering cautiously downward. The wonderful transparency of the Mediterranean waters allowed them to see far down, even to the depth of thirty or forty feet, with perfect ease, so that the depth of six feet was as nothing. Nevertheless, they saw no sign of any work whatever. If any gateway to the drain had ever been constructed, it must long ago have been dashed away by the surges of the storm-tossed sea as they thundered upon this western shore, in many a tempest and hurricane. To those who sought for it now, nothing appeared save the smooth floor of the sea bottom, with myriad pebbles, and cobble-stones, and coral and shell-fish, and seaweed.

At length they saw that any search like this was useless, and that if they wished to find the drain they must go to work in another way altogether. Garth decided that it would be best to take the bearings of the drain according to the description in the manuscript, and then dig downward for it. Taking the central point of the palm-tree and the middle point of the money hole, and drawing a straight line through these two points, due west toward the shore, he reached a place on the beach, and here he resolved to dig as near the sea as possible. In order to prevent the sea water from coming in upon this new excavation, he took one of the largest casks from the schooner out of which he knocked the bottom, and then used it as a species of coffer-dam. Work in this was somewhat slow on account of the contracted space; yet it was the only thing left, and they managed to make some progress.

At length, after several days of most tedious work, they reached the depth of four and a half feet. Here they struck some solid work. Upon examination it was found to be a structure of squared stone, sloping down in a direction which led to the money hole.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT THE BOTTOM!

THIS sloping stone-work was the very drain which they had been seeking after. Upon its discovery some time was taken up in debating about the best course to be taken. At first they had no other idea than to stop it up by forming a new floodgate. But Garth soon reminded them that it would be quite enough if they were able to stop up the sluice in any way, so as to keep out the flow of the sea water, and that a gateway would not be needed at all. To stop this up was more easily performed, although this required some hard labor. It was necessary to dig down on each side of the sluice as far as the bottom. The oozing of the water through the sand made this troublesome, but it was successfully accomplished. Stones cemented with clay were then laid in the place, until a wall had been made on either side of the drain,

and above it. After this the drain was broken into and a mass of clay was thrust down there, by which the passage-way of the drain was completely stopped up, and all further flow of the sea water rendered impossible. All this was very tedious, and nearly a fortnight elapsed from the first discovery of the drain until it was broken into and stopped up. The work of stopping up was made as thorough as possible, and then once more they resumed their work at the money hole, and had the opportunity of testing their work so as to see whether it was complete or not.

Once more, then, Garth took up his station at the steam-engine, while Tancred and Frink, with pickax and spade, went to work below. It was with a feeling of intense impatience that they waited for the first stroke of the pump, and one of infinite relief and immense exultation that they saw the actual result. For now the engine had it all its own way, and a few minutes sufficed to suck the money hole dry and leave it free from water. The sea had been effectually shut out, and the steam power, having now no longer such a mighty enemy with which to contend, had it all its own way. Cheers arose from the toilers in the money pit, in which the grimy Garth at his steam-engine hoarsely joined.

Once more, then, having triumphed over the water, they were able to carry on their work as before, and having now only the earth to contend against, their progress went on. But as they descended it became, naturally enough, rather slower, for every increase of depth made the work down below more difficult, and made it harder both to hoist the earth or to lower down the timber for the staying. The water, also, had to be pumped out at regular intervals, for, though the sea had been shut out, yet still the water which had already been in remained, and this had to be got rid of as fast as it was encountered. The steam-engine, also, was made use of to hoist out the earth which was excavated, and this materially lightened the labors of the excavators. But the hole was close and contracted, and the necessity of staying up as they proceeded constantly retarded the work. In this way their progress decreased from the rate of three feet a day to that of two feet.

While working in the money hole, they did not forget the drain from the sea. From this quarter they knew that there was an ever-present menace. Their work there had been, after all, rather superficial, and the sea was constantly assailing it. It might at any moment dissolve the clay and pour forward down the drain to flood the money hole once more and endanger their own lives. These considerations made them constantly watchful over the drain. Every day they examined their work, and enlarged it, and tightened it, and added more to it, tearing away the drain itself and filling it up solid with stone and clay. Thus they sought to secure themselves and work against the menace from the sea.

The work went on. Thirty feet slowly progressed until they became forty; forty went on to fifty, and they had the triumphant consciousness that they had gone half way. As they went on they encountered the same difficulties. First the oozy bottom, from which the water had to be pumped; then the slimy mud, which had to be hoisted out; then the harder earth, which had to be loosened with the pick before it could be removed and hoisted out of the hole. Then, after excavating a few inches in depth, a new staying would have to be placed all around, in addition to the older timbers. The labor became too severe for Garth. Frink and Tancred had to take his place. One had to learn to manage the steam-engine, and Frink offered to do so. Tancred declined on the plea that he never could understand machinery. So Frink became engineer, and soon was able to manage the machine as well as any one, while Garth worked with Tancred at the bottom of the money hole.

Now, then, work went steadily on. The depth slowly, yet surely, increased. The steam-engine worked constantly, and the drain was effectually barred against the sea water. The depth increased from fifty to sixty feet, and from sixty to seventy. Then from seventy to eighty, and from eighty to ninety.

At this depth their work grew so much more laborious that they could not accomplish more than a foot a day; and now their suspense also increased, as was natural, at their close approach to the object of their search. The foot a day went on deepening steadily. At the end of every day

CHAPTER XIX.

A STARTLING CONFESSION.

the prospects were discussed, each time with more excitement.

So the depth went on.
Ninety-one feet!
Ninety-two!
Ninety-three!
Ninety-four!
Ninety-five!
Only five feet more. Five feet between them and the great treasure—the countless, the long sought, the long hoped-for.
Only five feet.
Then they went on:
Ninety-six feet!
Ninety-seven!
Ninety-eight!
Ninety-nine!

On reaching that depth it was too dark to work any further. They had done their day's work of one foot's excavation, and had put in the timbers as usual to stay the work, and had sent up the last bucketful of earth. After this they had prepared to go up. Before starting Garth took his pickax and drove it down deep into the earth. It penetrated till it struck against something hard. Again and again Garth struck his pickax, and each time it met with the hard substance. It was evident to him that there was something different there from anything they had hitherto found. He thought it felt like wood. It seemed to him that it was the timber covering over the boxes of treasure, or perhaps one of the boxes themselves.

But it was too late that night to do any more, and Garth turned away, curbing his impatience. Both he and Tancred concluded that it would be better to go up now, and leave any further examination till the morrow. For now an examination would only be partial and incomplete; but on the morrow it would be a part of their day's labor, and they could make this labor as exhaustive as possible. And so with this resolution Garth and Tancred ascended.

They announced to Frink this latest news. He said nothing for some time, and at length he spoke in a slow and peculiar voice:

"Hm," he said, "then, if that is so, to-morrow ought to—to end it."

The next day came. Garth and Tancred prepared to descend while Frink, as usual, was to attend the engine. It was their custom to go down one at a time, and in making this descent they were lowered down by the steam-engine.

On this morning, as may be supposed, they were earlier than usual. Garth went down first; then Tancred.

They worked, as usual, for about a quarter of an hour. Several bucketfuls of earth had been hoisted out, and Garth was intent on his work to try to find out whether it was timber or a plain board, that lay beneath the stroke of his pickax, when all of a sudden a rattling sound was heard, and he was struck several times on his back and head.

He started up and Tancred did the same. An exclamation burst from both. The circumstance, however, was easily explained. The hoisting bucket had fallen, and had dragged all its chain down to the bottom of the hole. Bucket and chain now lay there at their feet.

"Hallo!" cried Garth, looking at it with a startled face. "I should like to know how that happened."

Then he looked up and Tancred saw that his face was very pale. As for Tancred he thought nothing of it. It was a mere accident. He called out to Frink.

No reply came.
He called again and again.
No answer!

"I wonder what's become of the fellow," said he, looking at Garth. He met Garth's eyes fixed upon his, and there was that in them that made him shudder.

Suddenly there was a dull sound that seemed to come from the bowels of the earth, and all the island seemed to move.

"What's that?" cried Tancred. "Is it an earthquake?"

Garth looked all around him with an awful face.

"It's an explosion!" said he.

"An explosion?"

"Yes; and look here."

He pointed down: water was at his feet, oozing in around them fast.

"An explosion!" cried Garth, "we are betrayed!"

MORE than three months had passed away at Landsdowne Hall, since Tancred had gone, and during all that time Lucy had never heard one word from him, good or bad, directly or indirectly; still, as she knew that his enterprise was to be made in a remote place, and that it was one which would occupy much time, this silence did not occasion the slightest uneasiness. He himself on taking leave had assigned six months as the shortest possible time of absence or silence, and had warned her that he might be away without being able to communicate with her for as much as a year. Lucy, therefore, had no expectation of hearing from him under six months' time, and was prepared to wait very much longer. She thought about him incessantly. Her faith in the success of his enterprise was decidedly weak; but whether successful or unsuccessful, she felt confident that he would come back as soon as possible, and then when they were once more together, they would be able to take measures with reference to their future.

In the meantime Lucy's thoughts were very largely occupied by the illness of her nurse. It will be remembered that her affection for this nurse had been strong enough to surprise Tancred. Lucy herself had confessed to him that she loved her nurse far better than her mother. With this nurse, Mrs. Wells, her earliest thoughts had been associated. Her mother had always been indifferent. Mrs. Wells had always been true and loving. Still, though Lucy had for some time felt no need of her services, Mrs. Wells persisted in devoting herself to her young mistress, and so devoted was Lucy to the old nurse, that she would not listen to the proposal to take to herself a younger and more modish lady's maid.

Such was the person whose illness now alarmed Lucy. She had been taken ill suddenly, and she had sunk rapidly. What made it worse, was the discovery that Lucy had made that her illness was largely owing to mental trouble. Something was evidently preying on her mind; and although her bodily illness was certainly real, yet it was her mental disquietude which made her bodily illness worse.

Lucy noticed this, and at first made no allusion to it. She felt profoundly disturbed and perplexed; disturbed at thus finding that Mrs. Wells could have any secret from her, and perplexed because she did not know what to do to enable her to gain relief. Delicacy prevented her from even alluding to it, and thus she was compelled to watch the distress of one she loved without making any effort to help her. But Mrs. Wells herself, at length, found her troubles intolerable and spoke of them first.

"There's something on my mind," she said, after long preliminaries—"something on my mind—and it's killing me, darling—it's killing me."

At this startling address Lucy did not know what to say. She said, however, what came uppermost.

"You want to see a clergyman, dearest nurse?"

The nurse shook her head.
"No, no, no," she said, "at least not now. A clergyman can do no good as yet."

"Shall I get a lawyer, then?"

Mrs. Wells sighed.
"You may; but not yet. It is you—you—"

"Me!" exclaimed Lucy in amazement.

"Yes, you!" repeated Mrs. Wells; "you. The secret has been gnawing at my heart all my life. It is your secret. What if I should die—and you not know. And they do not want you to know. But you must—you must. I must tell. I am hungering and thirsting to tell you all."

The nurse's vehemence now began to alarm Lucy. She thought that this unusual excitement, as well as this strange and unintelligible language, was due to delirium. She therefore strove to soothe and quiet the nurse; but her efforts were of no avail.

"Lucy, child," said she, "you think that I am excited. You think I do not mean what I say. Dear child, this is nothing new, it is not my illness that has made me think of my secret, but it is my guilty secret that has made me ill and reduced me to this. For years it has been in my mind. For years I have had to keep up a struggle within my soul till my heart has become diseased, and my frame has broken down. It is this secret, dear child, this guilty secret."

The nurse here began to tremble violently, and Lucy, in great terror and consternation, ran to her relief. These dark hints as to her secret showed her that there was no delirium. Mrs. Wells had for years been subject to fits of nervous prostration and other disorders which the family physician had called disease of the heart. Lucy now heard her attribute this heart disease to the possession of a secret. More, she called this a "guilty" secret. What it could possibly be she was not able to guess, and awaited a further revelation with awful expectancy.

"Lucy, darling child," said Mrs. Wells at last, as soon as she had recovered herself somewhat.

"Well, nurse, dear," said Lucy, with an effort at cheerfulness.

"You have always loved me, haven't you?"

"Always, always!" said Lucy; "and most dearly."

"As well as—as any one?"

"Yes, more, far more; you have always been my dearest one, my dearest nurse—and more like a mother than a nurse. I've always said so."

"So you have," murmured the old lady, "and I love to hear it—more like a mother than a nurse—that's what you've always said."

"Yes, darling," said Lucy, folding her arms around the nurse. "You have always loved me just like a mother, and I have always loved you just like a daughter. Lady Landsdowne is too cold and austere. She has no affection for me at all. She chills me. I'm afraid of her. But you, my own dearest, you are like a true mother."

Mrs. Wells looked up at Lucy with a strange, eager, wistful gaze, and over her face there was a yearning look of unutterable affection.

"Lucy, darling," said she, in a low voice.

"Well, nurse?"

"Can I tell you it?"

"What?"

"What is in my heart?"

"Tell it?—certainly. Do, nurse, if you think I'm fit to be trusted—if it will give you any relief; do tell me."

"But you will hate me!"

"Hate you?" cried Lucy, in tender reproach.

"Hate you, my dearest, sweetest nurse?"

"Are you sure you wouldn't?" asked the nurse, eagerly.

"Sure? Why, it's impossible? How could I ever feel anything for you but love?"

"Oh, but you don't know what this is. You cannot bear it. You could never forgive me. You would always look upon me with horror. And oh! my darling, that would be worse than death!"

"Oh, my own dearest, what a strange opinion you must have of me. Don't you know me, your own Lucy, whom you have called your child a thousand times over. Haven't I had you all my life always near me? Haven't you always loved me dearly, and haven't I always loved you? You break my heart, nurse, when you doubt my love. Don't you remember once a few years ago when we used to play that we were mother and daughter, and I would call you mamma for weeks together. Come, now, pretend that you are my mamma now, and tell me all. Your daughter Lucy can never turn away—"

At these words, uttered with many caresses and in tender accents of affection, there came a change over the pale, wan face of the nurse, a flush spread over the white features, the eyes glistened with joy. She wound her hands round the young girl's neck, and strained her tremulously to her painfully throbbing heart.

"Oh, darling! Oh, my child!" she said, in a low voice. "Yes, be my daughter again; call me mamma."

"Mamma, darling mamma," said Lucy, kissing the old nurse again and again.

"And you love me!" she sighed.

"Dearer than all the world," said Lucy.

"And you are my own darling daughter."

"Yes, mamma dearest," said Lucy.

"Oh, my child! Oh, Lucy! Oh, my own, my darling daughter! It is not pretense—it is real. You are my daughter, and I—I—I am your—your own mother! No, no; don't move; don't leave me, daughter, don't leave me, or you'll kill me. Wind your arms around me; hold me tight in your embrace, my own dearest darling. You said you loved me."

Overwhelmed, confounded, and bewildered at these strange words, Lucy only knew enough to check the first wild start of surprise and hold in her arms this strange old nurse who thus claimed her as her daughter. With an idea that

It was all delirium, but with a deep under conviction that it was all true, Lucy listened as the nurse went on.

"It was years ago—you were an unconscious infant when I began it. It was Lady Landsdowne's bargain. I thought it would be best for you. I have lived all these years with you, hiding myself a stranger to your heart. I bargained that I should always be with you, and consented that I should be unknown. Oh, what a struggle I have kept up! Oh, how hard it has been to remain unknown to my own child! I have tried to feel proud of your education, your beauty, your accomplishments, your prospects—but all in vain. Oh, I did wrong!—very, very wrong. I see it. Oh, I sinned, I sinned, I sinned! Oh, I had no right to bind myself to such an agreement! Now you see why Lady Landsdowne never cared for you. You are nothing to her. You have none of the blood of her or of hers. You have no right here. You are mine—my daughter. And oh, how I have paid the penalty of my sins—yes, with my heart's blood! It is remorse that has killed me; it is the long effort that I have made to stifle the yearnings of a mother's love. And oh, tell me, tell me that you don't hate me for this. Tell me that you forgive your wretch of a mother. Tell me that you love me still, in spite of all.

All these words were poured forth wildly and incoherently. The heart of the old nurse beat more and more furiously, until at last its palpitations seemed to suffocate her. She could speak no more. She gasped for breath, and finally became senseless. Lucy, half frenzied with excitement and anxiety, could scarcely control herself so as to administer the necessary restoratives, but at last succeeded in affording relief. The affection of a lifetime, which she had cherished for the nurse, an affection quite as strong as she could have felt had she always known herself to be her daughter, now arose within her, and caused her to hang over the senseless form with anxious care and tender assiduity. This loving and anxious affection engrossed all her heart, nor did it allow her to dwell upon the consequences that might follow from the discovery of her mother. Those consequences she pushed forward into the future, leaving them to the developments of that future. At length the nurse began to revive once more, and gradually regained her consciousness and her recollection. Her first thought was for Lucy, and finding that there was no alienation in the daughter's heart, that the tenderness and affection were if possible, even greater than ever, she gave a sigh of thankfulness, and tears of joy flowed forth unrestrained.

But Lucy saw with deep concern that the intense emotion of this last scene had been too much for her newly discovered mother, and had left her much weaker than she had ever been before. Her limbs were almost powerless, her voice faint and almost gone, while in her attenuated frame, her heart throbbed with a speed and a force which seemed frightful to Lucy. Still, Mrs. Wells was eager to complete the revelation of her secret, and although Lucy earnestly entreated her to postpone it until another time, and try to get rest for herself just then, she would not be persuaded, and went on to tell her the whole story.

The substance of that story was as follows: That Mrs. Wells was the widow of a small tradesman in Liverpool, who had failed in business and in health, under which circumstances he had gone to the South of France with the wreck of his property, in the hope of regaining his strength. Here he had died, leaving his widow and an infant daughter almost penniless. They were in deep distress, and in the extreme of poverty, when the opportunity offered of improving their circumstances. A lady came once to Mrs. Wells offering to adopt her child. This was Lady Landsdowne. Mrs. Wells did not know her motives at the time, but afterward discovered all. Lady Landsdowne at that time made what seemed a very handsome offer. She offered to adopt the child formally as her own, and make her the heiress to her own fortune. She offered to let Mrs. Wells always remain with her daughter, on the simple condition of her taking the name and station of nurse, and keeping the secret. All this seemed so easy, that Mrs. Wells accepted the terms with joy, and regarded it as a special interposition of Providence.

Years passed, however, and Mrs. Wells found that there was another side to the story. First of all she found her position as nurse intolerable, and never ceased to long to reveal herself to her

daughter as her mother. The older Lucy grew the stronger did this longing become, and Lucy's deep affection for her instead of comforting her maternal yearning only made her position more tantalizing.

There was another thing, however, of a more serious character still. She discovered that Lady Landsdowne occupied Landsdowne Hall by virtue of this child. The child had been passed off as her own. Upon the death of the last Lord Landsdowne this woman had been living in France and claimed the estate in the name of her daughter, who was next in descent. Her own daughter, however, had died, and she had obtained Lucy, whom she had made use of in this way for her own purposes. This discovery gave fresh trouble to Mrs. Wells, for she now saw that she had placed her daughter in a very false position, that she had been aiding and abetting a very grave crime, and had been cheating some other Landsdownes out of a great inheritance.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FLOWERS.

SUCH a discovery as this, with all its accompaniments, was certainly enough for one night, yet Lucy was called upon to undergo a worse shock than this. Mrs. Wells, who for years had maintained so severe a struggle within herself, had come out of that struggle wounded to the death. Out of so much self-reproach, remorse, and penitence, mingled with insatiate longings which had to be repressed, she had carried a broken-down constitution, and a bodily frame afflicted with an incurable heart disease which for years had been growing worse. The excitement of this last scene, with its anguish and its intense emotion, had been too much for her. She never rallied. On the following day she sunk into senselessness, out of which she never again emerged in this life, but died without ever again hearing the loving words of her daughter.

This one thing only was needed to complete the utter desolation of Lucy. It would have been bad enough had she never known her relationship to the departed, for then she would have lost her best friend; but now she had lost the only relative she had on earth; and worse than this, she was well aware that she had no more right to live here at Landsdowne Hall than any beggar from off the highway. Worse still. From her mother's revelation it became clearly evident to her that she had been chosen in her infancy by Lady Landsdowne, and had been made use of all her life for the sole purpose of enabling them to come into an unlawful possession of the Landsdowne estate—that she had been the unconscious partner thus far in a gross crime, which, if known, would be severely punished, so that she was not only an interloper here,—but she was actually committing a crime every day she remained.

She was not Lucy Landsdowne, not the great heiress, not the noble lady; she was Lucy Wells, the daughter of a poor bankrupt tradesman.

And yet, what could she do? Could she go away? Where? And how could she live? Besides, what would Lady Landsdowne think if she were to go? Would she allow it? Never. She was as necessary to Lady Landsdowne as ever. Lady Landsdowne would keep her here at all hazards, not out of affection but from necessity. If she were to fly, Lady Landsdowne would send pursuers after her. She would claim her as her daughter. She would laugh at the story of Mrs. Wells. Such a story could not be proved.

Lucy's nature was a gentle and timid one. She had no boldness nor enterprise whatever. She shrunk back from danger, from publicity, and from independent action. Her timid nature thus of itself prevented her from following out the dictates of conscience. Conscience told her that she had no right here, that she was aiding the commission of a crime, that she should fly, but her natural timidity made her remain. Here was her home. Here she had always lived. To go away was madness. To get a living anywhere was impossible.

And thus it happened that though a prey to the deepest anxiety, yet, Lucy did nothing whatever, but lapsed back into the old life, and into that old life she would have gone back for good, had it not been for an accident which changed the whole current of her thoughts and of her life.

She was one day seated in the library, in a recess of the window, reading. Heavy curtains fell down completely concealing her. Lucy

was not addicted to reading in the library, and at this time she had picked up a book which was lying on a chair, and turned over its leaves without much interest, when footsteps arose and voices accompanying. The voices were those of Lady Landsdowne and Drury, and they were both talking in a low, earnest tone. At first she could make out nothing, but they soon came close by and stood so near that she heard every word that they said. Now, Lucy's first thought was that they would go on; afterward, as they stood talking so near her, she had a vague impulse to retreat; and this she would have done had not something which they said so roused her curiosity that she stood rooted to the spot, listening most intently, without any thought that she was performing the disgraceful part of eavesdropper.

"So there's no more news than that?" were Lady Landsdowne's first words that Lucy heard.

"Well," was the reply of Drury, "at any rate you see we're certain to get rid of Henslowe."

It was this that arrested Lucy's attention, roused her curiosity, and made her stand rooted to the spot, listening with all her ears.

"Yes," said Lady Landsdowne, softly, "that follows, of course. We'll get rid of Henslowe."

"Well," said Drury, "I'm not sure, but that it's better to have Henslowe to deal with than such a devil as Frink."

"Oh, no," said Lady Landsdowne; "you forget. The cases are widely different. Henslowe is the next heir. The Landsdownes are all dead, and Tancred Henslowe represents the children of Mary Landsdowne. He will be Lord Landsdowne, when he finds out, as a matter of course, but he must never get the estates. To have him here as Earl of Landsdowne, and heir to all the property, owner and master, would be a very different thing from having Frink here as partner. The Earl would be our master, but Frink, at the very worst, would be no more than our equal."

"Of course, of course. Oh, yes," said Drury, "I know all that; we understand it all perfectly well. At the same time I cannot help wishing that we had let things go on as they were. The young people were evidently attached to one another, and if Henslowe had married Lucy, it would have settled the whole thing."

"Well, I dare say that might have been best," said Lady Landsdowne; "but what is the use of lamenting? You know how Frink interfered. First, he brought him here to use him as a whip over us, and afterward, when he saw that we were content to let things take their course, he changed his mind. He now wants Lucy himself. Why didn't he say so at the outset, and avoid all this? You and I must arrange a new plan."

"Well, I'm afraid we must be subordinate in any way. Frink will get Lucy and be master here. I haven't the nerve I once had. He'll send us to the right-about. I'd rather have Henslowe for a master. If it weren't too late I'd interfere to save Henslowe yet. But it's too late."

"Of course it is," said Lady Landsdowne, calmly. "We mustn't hope to save Henslowe now. He's doomed. He's lost already. We must now try to fight off Frink the best way we can."

"Well, if it comes to open war," said Drury, "and it may come to that, I suppose we've got as much against him as he has against us."

"Oh! no, no; don't think that. He's got everything against us, in black and white—proved beyond the hope of denial—and what have we against him?"

"What! Why the murder of Tancred Henslowe?"

"Ah, and how can we prove it? Who will find the body of Tancred Henslowe? Who can prove that Frink was ever anything else than his best friend? No, no; we must work in other ways. Above all, we are not in a position to defy him. We must wait till he comes back, find out as much of his intentions as possible, and fight him with his own weapons. Come, rouse yourself, Wadham. This life of ease has almost destroyed you. Think of what you once were—how bold, how audacious to contrive, with what iron nerve and invincible will you carried out your plans, with what subtlety you could undermine and circumvent another. Come, your whole future is at stake—your very life. Will you allow yourself to be beaten at your own game by such a tyro as Frink?"

Drury drew a long breath. "Well—that's like a breath of fresh air. By jove! You touch the right spot. Yes, that's it. Let me shake off this infernal laziness, and I'll circumvent Frink yet. I'll see whether he's going to have it all his own way."

Here the conversation ended, and the two moved off, leaving Lucy a prey to emotions such as she had never known before. Even the startling revelation of Mrs. Wells, though it was something that was connected with all her past and affected all her future, was less exciting than this—even the death of that mother discovered so suddenly, and lost so soon, seemed less overwhelming. For here was the revelation of a secret as wonderful and as important, and the disclosure of a crime worse than that of Mrs. Wells, while at the same time there was the awful intelligence touching the doom of her lover.

As soon as she could withdraw unobserved from her hiding-place where she had been an unintentional hearer of so much, she did so, and sought the privacy of her own chamber, when she turned her thoughts toward all that she had heard, endeavoring to recall every word in that conversation. Out of all that conversation a number of things were very plainly manifest to her.

First, Tancred Henslowe she already knew from his own lips was related to the Landsdowne family; she now learned that he was next of kin and the true heir, although he himself did not know it. His ignorance must have arisen from the secluded life which his mother had led, and possibly her lack of interest in the family affairs of Tancred's father.

Secondly, Tancred was at this moment the real and the only Earl of Landsdowne.

Thirdly, Tancred was the real heir and owner and master of all these estates. She was here as interloper. She was Lucy Wells. The Hall belonged to the Earl. Tancred the real heir. What a wonderful turning of the tables was here. A short time since she was the great heiress, and he the humble suitor; now he was the great heir, and she the humble and insignificant and low-born girl.

Fourthly, she now understood very well that policy of Lady Landsdowne which once had seemed so strange to her and to Tancred—the policy by which they had been allowed to see so much of one another. It was allowed out of a deliberate purpose to bring about a marriage between them. Tancred had been brought here for that purpose and for no other. From their conversation it seemed as if Frink had at first brought him here as a menace against Lady Landsdowne and Drury, and that they had accepted the situation.

Fifthly, whatever may have been Frink's policy in the first place, he afterward changed it. He was, as Lucy had always feared, a traitor. He had gone off with his trusting friend for the purpose of effecting his destruction. That was evident. He had taken advantage of the manuscript business to get Tancred into a position in which he might be secretly destroyed.

Sixthly, his motive for this was not hard to find. The conversation showed that Frink was aiming after a share of the Landsdowne property, and as large a share as possible. His intention was first of all to destroy the next of kin, Tancred, so as to get rid of any danger from his side, then to marry Lucy, the nominal heiress, and gain control of everything.

Here, then, there was a motive strong enough to lead such a man to the commission of almost any crime.

Finally, Tancred was now in a position of deadly peril. A plot had been made aiming at nothing less than his utter destruction. In the conversation it had been said that he was already lost and that it was "too late" to save him. "Too late!" The thought was anguish. But Lucy would not yet believe it. They themselves could not know for certain. There was yet time for hope and he might yet be saved.

The question now came to her more imperatively than ever. What should she do?

To this question she could now give an answer. The circumstances were very different from what they had been before. On the former occasion it had been only herself that was concerned. Now, however, it was not only herself, but another one dearer than herself. What she would not do for herself she would do for Tancred.

She resolved then upon instant and immediate flight, and for the following reasons:

First, to save herself from a false position, to

escape from Lady Landsdowne, and also from the designs of Frink.

Secondly, for the sake of finding out where Tancred was, so as to warn him of his danger or save him from it. This second was her chief motive. In addition to this if he should be saved she wished to make known to him the truth of his position with reference to the Landsdowne estates.

But how could she fly to find him or save him?

This was easy enough. In the first place she had money enough to go anywhere. She had always been liberally supplied, and had never spent much. She did not scruple to use all that she had in such a purpose as this, which was to restore to Landsdowne its true lord and heir.

Again, she had the address of Tancred's mother, at Liverpool, which he had given her. In case any letters should fail to reach her from him, he had directed her to write or send to his mother, who would be able to keep her informed as to his movements.

Thus, Lucy, knew exactly where to go, and had money to get there.

So that the only thing remaining was for her to get off. Her wish was, of course, to go without being observed, so that she might not be followed. There was some difficulty about this. Had she been a bold and enterprising young lady, she might have gone off by night; threading her way through the park, and scaling the walls. For such an exploit as that, however, she would never have had the requisite nerve. Indeed, had her escape depended upon this, she never could have effected it. Fortunately, for her, accident suggested to her a mode of departure which was simpler and more feasible.

It was the fashion for a number of beggars, half-gypsy folk, and such like, to come to Landsdowne Hall to receive certain alms by virtue of an old custom which had originated in past ages. It happened that one of their visiting days occurred about this time. It seemed to Lucy that she might easily slip out among them without any one suspecting.

Accordingly she collected what things she wished to take, wrapped them in a bundle, threw an old mantle over her, put on an old bonnet, and in this guise waited till dusk. By that time the gypsies were beginning to start. Lucy did not wish to be among them, nor behind them, but went out before them. No notice whatever was taken of her, and thus she escaped unobserved.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SEARCH AND ITS RESULTS.

So infrequent was the association of Lady Landsdowne with Lucy, and so little was the thought given to her, that several days elapsed before her absence was discovered. Since the death of Mrs. Wells there had been no one to fill her place, nor had any one been engaged to take the post of lady's-maid to Lucy. Consequently, there was no one in particular to be interested in her movements. The first one who noticed that she was not at the Hall was a stable-boy, who used to hold her horse when she went out riding; which boy, observing that, for several days, she did not make her appearance, began to make inquiries under the impression that she was ill, and these inquiries led to the discovery that she was gone.

The startling intelligence was received by Lady Landsdowne, at first, with incredulity, and afterward by an agitation fully warranted by such a circumstance.

Drury was roused, and felt as much agitation as she did. A search was made in all directions. They would have kept it secret, if possible, but that could not be done, since the whole house had learned the fact of her disappearance before they themselves had heard of it. But the search which they made was unavailing.

First of all, they questioned every one of the servants most closely and strictly. In vain—not one of them knew anything about her. Not one of them had seen her for three days; nor could they learn anything from any of them which might throw a light upon the cause of her departure. No letter had come from Henslowe, so that it could not arise from any secret love-affair; and they knew very well that there was no other one who could possibly have inspired her with any tender sentiments. Since the death of Mrs. Wells she had been very greatly depressed, but such a state of mind would hardly

have been a likely cause for driving her away from her home. Then, again, their suspicions turned toward Frink. They wondered whether it was possible that he could have enticed her away under any pretext whatever. It was possible, yet they could not imagine how he could contrive it. As far as they could see, there was absolutely no motive whatever for Lucy's flight, and it was also quite impossible for them to conjecture the way in which that flight had been carried out.

Three days had elapsed before they found out. The fourth day was taken up with inquiries and searchings about the Hall and estate. Every place was examined most carefully and not a nook or corner of house or estate was left unvisited. But nowhere did they find any trace of her. A few things, however, they learned. One was, that she had taken away a small amount of clothing, although not a particle of her jewelry had been removed. Another thing was that she had left early in the morning, or some time during the night. In addition to this search in the Hall and grounds, further inquiries and searches were made throughout the surrounding district. Little or nothing was found out here. A vague report came in that a young lady was seen walking along the road early in the morning, a few days previously. From the keeper of the nearest railway station they learned that a young lady had been there four days before, but she had kept her veil down so that he could not see what she was like. She went off by one of the trains, but whether north toward Carlisle, or south toward Liverpool, was more than he could say. But even if the station-master had known the direction which she took, it would have availed but little, for they still would have been in ignorance of her purpose and of her ultimate destination. Such were the circumstances attendant upon Lucy's flight.

Drury, however, was confident that he would find her. He had connections in different cities of the kingdom. To these he wrote at once. In Edinburgh, in Glasgow, in Carlisle, in Preston, in Liverpool, in Manchester, and in London, agents were put in motion as soon as possible, and exerting themselves in connection with the police. The circumstance of Lucy's flight, together with other things, had caused Drury to undergo a complete transformation. From the easy, twaddling, voluble, plausible, indolent old man, he had suddenly changed to an eager, vigilant, active, scheming, crafty plotter, with every energy of his body, and every faculty of his mind roused to action. The resources of a subtle nature, and adroit manner, and cool nerve, were all called forth, and Drury became again the daring adventurer who, years before had, by a bold exploit, seized upon the vast inheritance of the Landsdownes. Drury threw himself now with his whole soul into this search after Lucy, and not a day passed in which he did not suggest some new plan, or put some new machinery in motion. Fortunate was it that he possessed no clew whatever to her movements; for had he possessed the slightest he would infallibly have fallen upon her trail, and brought her back.

Beside the active energies of Drury, Lady Landsdowne was but an inferior genius. She relied altogether upon him, and only sought to assist him by the offer of an occasional suggestion.

At length, one day, a new incident occurred, which served to divert the thoughts of both of them to a new subject, and rouse up Drury to a fresh degree of vigilance, so as to guard against a new danger. It was a letter from Frink.

The letter was dated London, and consisted of but a few lines. It informed them briefly that he had accomplished the purpose for which he had set out, and that, after attending to some business in London, he would go to Landsdowne Hall. A significant postscript contained the following:

"P.S.—I should like very much to have Lucy prepared to receive me in a more cordial manner than the last time."

On reading this letter, Drury handed it in silence to Lady Landsdowne. She read it carefully, and then neither of them said anything for some time.

"He's done it," said Drury, at last. Lady Landsdowne nodded.

"I'd rather have Henslowe back, if it could be done," continued Drury.

Lady Landsdowne said nothing. "However, regrets are useless, and we've got

to act. I see something very peculiar in that postscript, don't you?"

"What?"

"Don't you see that hint about Lucy?"

"Yes."

"Well, what is the meaning of that, do you suppose?"

"Why, simply this, that he wishes us to make Lucy more cordial to him, as if that were possible, even if she were here."

"Oh, no, there's more than that."

"What?"

"Why, he's going to fight on that base."

"Fight on that base?"

"Yes, he's going to fire the first gun in the name of Lucy."

"I don't understand."

"Well, this is it: I believe he is at the bottom of Lucy's disappearance. He's got her off somehow. Perhaps he's told her *the truth*! Perhaps he's trumped up some story about Henslowe. Perhaps he's frightened her."

"But that's impossible; he hasn't written."

"No; but he may have come here himself in some underhanded manner. He could easily do that. Whoever of the servants he has bribed, he has done it well, for I can't discover anything, and I can't find out that any one of his style or figure has ever been here. Well, he's got her away; he's probably told her *the truth*. And now, his next step will be to come to an open rupture with us. He'll come here—demand Lucy—we can't produce her. He'll then accuse us of breaking faith with him, quarrel with us, and begin open war, unless, indeed, we both go down on our knees before him, and accept the terms which he may be graciously pleased to grant. Oh, the fact is, Henslowe would have been by far the better master."

"But are you sure that he is going to be the master?"

"Well, that's just the question."

"Are you going to give up all at the first blow?"

"By no means."

"What do you intend to do?"

"Well, that's the very thing that I do not know just yet. I shall have to be guided by circumstances altogether, and meet Frink as may seem best."

"But you will have to come to an open rupture."

"That don't follow."

"Why, if he comes here for Lucy, and finds that she is gone, he will at once declare that we have sent her away on purpose to keep her from him."

"Oh, of course. That's his plan. He gets Lucy away first himself, and then charges us with carrying or sending her off. - He'll be bitterly abusive and insulting, no doubt, and do all he can to force on a quarrel; and for that very reason I won't fight—at any rate, not openly. He's determined to quarrel, and I'm equally determined not to. I'll explain, I'll apologize, I'll flatter, I'll do anything but quarrel. I'm resolved to keep on good terms with him, so as to be in a position to watch his little game and circumvent him at the right time."

CHAPTER XXII.

A LETTER FROM THE LOST.

Lucy succeeded in finding Mrs. Henslowe without any difficulty. She soon explained all about herself, and made them acquainted with as much of her story as she deemed proper to reveal. She did not think it necessary to trust them with the secret of her parentage. She merely gave them to understand that her friends were opposed to her engagement with Tancred, and that his life was in danger from their plots. This was, of course, sufficient to rouse the fullest sympathy of Pauline and her mother. They were well aware of Tancred's feelings toward Lucy, and on seeing her now, coming as she did under such circumstances, they received her with open arms.

Neither Mrs. Henslowe nor Pauline had felt the slightest anxiety about Tancred. He had told them the same as he had told Lucy, namely, that he would be for a long time on a lonely island; and that six months at least must elapse before they could expect to hear from him. The only chance of hearing from him sooner would be in the event of a total failure, and relinquishment of the purposes of the expedition. And so, as the six months were little more than half over, they looked forward to a still further period of waiting.

But the information which Lucy brought filled them all with terror. That Tancred was related to the Landsdownes they knew, but that he was the next of kin Mrs. Henslowe had never suspected. Again the intelligence that Frink was false roused them to a still greater degree of terror. In fact, the intelligence was so terrible that they could scarcely bring themselves to believe it, and rejected it utterly. They sought to find arguments to oppose all the circumstantial evidence which she brought, and appealed most of all to Tancred's long and familiar intercourse with Frink. They had been friends from boyhood. They had exchanged many and many an act of kindly friendship. Frink was bound by every principle of duty, and every tie of friendship, and every motive of honor, to stand by his friend. Even if Frink sought after his own selfish interest, he could gain far more by serving Tancred than by betraying him into the hands of strangers. If Frink knew that Tancred was next of kin he could do better for himself by working as the ally of his friend than his enemy and betrayer. By such arguments as these they sought to overthrow the suspicions of Lucy; and so strong were these arguments, and so implicit was the faith which they both had in Frink, that Lucy began to imagine that she must have done him an injustice, or that Frink himself had deceived Lady Landsdowne and Drury most thoroughly. In the very midst of this, a letter came one day directed to Mrs. Henslowe which gave a new turn to affairs.

Pauline went to the door at the postman's knock and took a letter from him with a cry of joy. With this letter she came rushing back and thrust it, with a flushed face and beaming eyes, into her mother's hand. Lucy started up, sharing the excitement of Pauline, and Mrs. Henslowe, on looking at the address, exclaimed: "Why, it's from Tancred!"

It was even so. The address was in Tancred's handwriting. The letter was covered with foreign postal marks. On opening they found it written in Tancred's handwriting, and read the following:

"Leighorn, September 20, 1836.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER.—You will be surprised to get a letter dated from this place, but I may account for it from the fact that my expedition is exploded, and I am here on a new plan. But I'll explain all about it in a few words. Well, we found the island of Leonforte after some trouble; and went to work there digging like beavers. The manuscript was all right and valuable as far as it went, and we worked on full of hope for week after week, till at last we got to the bottom. On reaching that important point, however, we found unfortunately that there was nothing in it. I shouldn't wonder if some one had been there before us: perhaps the pirate 'Capitano' himself, or perhaps, even, one of the Landsdownes. However, there's the melancholy fact, and I leave you to imagine the faces of Garth, Frink, and your humble servant on the day when we came up from our last discovery.

"Well, we all cleared out and sold the schooner and traps in Palermo. I'm happy to say that we sold the stuff at a sufficient advance to pay us for our trouble, so that none of us are much out of pocket. Garth cleared out to join his Republican friends, and Frink remained awhile with me. I've just got an offer from a wealthy American. He has engaged me to go to Florence to copy pictures for him. The offer is a very handsome one, indeed, and makes me quite flush. I owe this to Frink. Poor old Frink seems awfully cut up because I've been so disappointed.

"I won't go home till next spring, for my engagement is too important to leave, and the only thing that can draw me home is Lucy; but I've written to her, and explained all about it. And now, dear mother, as for you, I want very much for you and Pauline to come out at once, and I will meet you at Leighorn. I inclose a draft for thirty pounds, which will pay all your expenses out here. Write me 'Poste Restante, Leighorn,' and let me know when you leave, so that I may know about when to expect you. Be as quick as you can, for I am anxious to get off to Florence.

"Frink is off for England soon, and perhaps he may see you before you leave Liverpool. He can tell you all about our adventure. I wish I could go, too, and bring you on, but I can't manage it. And now, dear mother, do not suppose that the failure of this expedition is anything so very bad. Of course we were disappointed, but we have come to laugh over it now.

For my part my circumstances are very good, and my prospects quite brilliant. I find that Frink has been blowing my trumpet everywhere, so that my future is quite secure. I'm almost afraid to say how much I expect to make this year. Enough to say that I'm as good as independent; so you see you must not condole with my failure, but congratulate me on my success. Give my best love to dear Pauline, and believe me, dearest mother,

"Your affectionate son,

"TANCRED."

Pauline read this letter out loud, and great was the joy in the little household. The letter passed from hand to hand, and each one read it privately. All fear and suspense was now over, and nothing of doubt as to the truth and authenticity of the letter was entertained by any. Mrs. Henslowe merely made a passing remark that the writing was neater than usual, and that the conclusion was a trifle more formal than Tancred's usual style; but these comments excited no attention whatever.

All were delighted, and each one had private and special reasons. All were overjoyed at the safety of Tancred, and equally overjoyed at getting rid of the horrible suspicion that had been lurking in their minds. It was now perfectly evident to all of them that Frink was no traitor; indeed, so far was he from being a traitor that he was still proving himself the faithful and steadfast friend of Tancred. To him Tancred was even now attributing his latest piece of good fortune. Frink was the one who was blowing his trumpet, and who had obtained for him his present brilliant engagement.

Mrs. Henslowe and Pauline were also inexpressibly delighted at the invitation for them to go to Italy. It was like a summons to come to heaven. Liverpool was a place which they particularly detested, and the gloomy lodgings in which they had been living made it still worse. And now they were invited to leave this gloomy town, and these gloomy lodgings, to go to the delicious climate, the genial sunshine, the beauty, the joyousness, and the glory of classic Italy.

Lucy again was touched more particularly by the allusion to herself, and the letter written to her. Much would she have given, and she would have done much to be able to get possession of that letter, but it was directed to Landsdowne Hall, and of course that was out of her reach. She did not dare to go there, or to send there. Once out of the power of Lady Landsdowne, nothing would induce her to go back. Mrs. Henslowe and Pauline did not know her secret as yet, but they knew that she would not go back to Landsdowne Hall, and so they now united their entreaties in the endeavor to induce her to go with them to Italy. There was every reason why she should—as their friend, as the betrothed of Tancred—for she would be under the protection of Mrs. Henslowe, and secure from discovery by her friends. To such a journey no great persuasion was needed. Anything was better than going back. The poor girl was no longer the great heiress, but merely the friendless orphan, Lucy Wells, and so she was glad to accept the kindly invitation.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FRINK.

On the following day a gentleman was announced who sent in his card. To the surprise of all it was Frink. Mrs. Henslowe and Pauline were delighted at the arrival of Tancred's friend, and hastened to see him; while Lucy, partly from an invincible dislike to him, and partly also from a dread that he might betray her to Lady Landsdowne, refused to see him, and made them promise to say nothing about her.

The letter which they had just received had inspired Mrs. Henslowe and Pauline both with the warmest feelings of gratitude and esteem for one who had proved himself such a faithful friend, and for whom Tancred professed such a strong regard. There was also a little touch of compunction in the mind of each at the thought of the injustice which they had done him in listening to Lucy's suggestion, and in imagining that he could ever have been a traitor.

Frink was, therefore, received with a warmth which must have been most satisfactory to himself, and was made to feel that the mother and sister of Tancred regarded him with no ordinary favor. He had, of course, much to tell about their expedition, and entered into very full de-

tails about it. The first part was a simple narrative of facts, and he did not have to draw in the slightest degree upon his imagination. He related their dismay on reaching the point west of Vulcano, and finding no island there, their voyage to Stromboli, their return to Palermo, and their final discovery of Leonforte. Then he described with great accuracy their labor on the island, their work at the money pit, and the water-drain.

The conclusion of his story was, however, made up more from imagination.

At the bottom of the hole, he said, they had discovered a mass of timbers and boards half decayed, broken stones, rusted tools, and arms of antique fashion, all of which went to show either that no money had ever been deposited there, or else that it had been removed by the astute Capitano, who himself had planned the ingenious hiding-place. He said that their own opinions differed. That he held to the belief that the money had been removed, while Garth and Tancred thought that it had never been put there, but that the hole had been contrived to deceive the pirates, and its only contents had been the timber and boards now found there, while the men had been put to death, not to conceal the treasure, but to prevent them telling the other pirates about the trick that had been played.

The narration of their expedition and the discussion of these various theories gave Frink much to talk about, and enabled him to occupy much time in deepening the good impression which he had made upon the minds of Mrs. Henslowe and Pauline. After this he proceeded to give an account of their return to civilized life. They had left the island, he said, and gone to Palermo. There they had sold the vessel and its outfit for a very good sum, and the profits thus made had more than repaid them all for the outlay which they had put forth. Upon getting his money back, Garth had at once left them and returned to his former vocation among the Sicilian Republicans, while Tancred had turned his thoughts homeward. At this juncture a wealthy American had turned up, who wished to obtain copies of certain works of art in Florence. Tancred had been recommended, and had been accepted on a liberal salary.

And now arose the question of their departure. In two or three days Mrs. Henslowe would have her few preparations made, and would then depart. Frink questioned her as to the route which she intended to take, and found that she was going to London and through France.

Upon this, Frink recommended a plan of his own, which was to go by sea. A ship, he said, would sail in less than a week direct for Leghorn. They could all go by her, not only more cheaply than the other way, but far more conveniently. He also informed them that he himself might possibly go with them, if he could finish some business which he had to do.

This suggestion was received by Mrs. Henslowe with the utmost delight. So long a journey had been very dreadful to her. She was an inexperienced traveler, and to go through France was to her a most formidable undertaking. To go direct to Leghorn in a ship was undoubtedly the very best procedure, and no other plan could be compared with it, while the possibility of having the company of Mr. Frink made it more delightful than ever. And Mr. Frink informed them that he would let them know in another day all about it.

The effect of this letter upon Lucy has already been mentioned; and followed as it was by the appearance of Frink, and his reception by Pauline and Mrs. Henslowe, it will not be surprising if her mind underwent a very remarkable change. She had left Landsdowne Hall with the firm conviction that Frink was a scoundrel in himself and a traitor to his friend, in league with Lady Landsdowne and Drury to destroy Tancred, with subsidiary designs, also, upon herself, which had been made manifest on former occasions. But now she had him presented to her by Tancred himself, as it seemed, as his loyal friend, his chosen associate, his generous benefactor, his warm-hearted advocate. In addition to this here were Mrs. Henslowe and Pauline sounding his praises, and growing eloquent over his delicacy, his kindness, and his unselfish generosity. Was it wonderful, therefore, if Lucy's evil opinion of Frink should grow weak, or that she should begin to doubt the correctness of that opinion. It was morally impossible for her to maintain that opinion in the face of all this. She began to think that in

the first place she had been, as Tancred himself said, prejudiced against Frink. It seemed now as though Lady Landsdowne and Drury thought him working against Tancred, when he was working in reality for him, as though he had completely deceived them with reference to his own plans and purposes. If this were so, it was not impossible that Frink should be all that Tancred believed him.

Under these circumstances Lucy withdrew her objections to see Frink. The only difficulty was to find a sufficient excuse for her being here, or to give some plausible ground for accompanying Mrs. Henslowe to Italy, as she proposed doing. Had it not been for the chance of Frink's accompanying them she would have kept in the background, and allowed them to say nothing; but as it was probable that he would go with them she saw the necessity of preparing Frink for that circumstance. It was, however, a very delicate matter. Frink was the solicitor of the Landsdowne estate. Could it be expected that he would be silent while seeing the daughter and heiress flying away from his employers. Would he not insist on her return, or, perhaps, cause her arrest? All these difficulties occurred to Lucy, and she mentioned them to her friends.

The moment she did so these friends blew them all to the winds. Their implicit confidence in Frink, and their high regard, made them feel sure that he would be their friend and hers. He was the loyal friend of Tancred, he would be true to Tancred's *fiancée*. To trust him fully would be the wisest course, and accordingly Mrs. Henslowe took upon herself the task of explaining the whole story, so as to secure the friendly co-operation of Frink.

Upon Frink the information given by Mrs. Henslowe came with the utmost suddenness. Up to this moment he had never doubted that Lucy had been sent away by Lady Landsdowne, to be kept out of his way. He now learned that Drury had spoken the truth. He learned also that Lucy was more completely in his power than he had ever expected to have her, until he had won the whole game.

The surprise which he felt was evident; but Frink was so completely master of himself, that Mrs. Henslowe could not see anything more than a very natural feeling. He listened to her story about Lucy's unwillingness to go back, and after hearing all, he addressed himself to her with a candor and generosity that charmed the old lady, and made him, if possible, more her friend, than ever.

He stated frankly that Lucy was in a false position; that she had done very foolishly; that she ought to go back; that it was his duty as solicitor to the estate and friend of her mother to send her back; but, as she was betrothed to his friend, and would soon be his friend's wife, that this made a difference. He would therefore act for Tancred, and keep Lucy's secret at all hazards. Moreover, he would even go so far as to aid and abet her escape.

Frink had already had a stormy scene with Drury, at Landsdowne Hall. Drury had come up to Liverpool, watching proceedings as well as he could, by means of his agents. He saw Frink at Liverpool, and to his amazement, found him very friendly. Frink, in fact, even went so far as to apologize for his own harshness, and assured Drury that he now believed him to be a man of honor.

All of which made Drury open his eyes, and believe more strongly than ever that Frink had managed in some way to get Lucy under his control.

This is what he mentioned to Lady Landsdowne.

"What is he doing now?" she asked.

"He seems to be planning a general emigration scheme."

"Such as what?"

"Don't know—to take the mother and sister to Tancred."

"Lady Landsdowne regarded Drury with a solemn face.

"So—they'll—all—go!" she said.

Drury shrugged his shoulders.

"And Lucy," said she.

"Well, I can't make out his plan about Lucy at all, and I've heard nothing more about her. As for Frink, however, I've got a plan at last, that will effectually—settle—him,—and—forever!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE VOYAGE OUT.

THE ship "Delta," Captain Thain, was engaged in the Italian trade, and this was the vessel which had been engaged by Frink for the purpose of taking the ladies to Leghorn. Frink had accomplished his business to his own satisfaction, and announced to Mrs. Henslowe that he would be able to go with her to Italy, a piece of intelligence which excited the liveliest emotions of joy in the mind of the old lady. She had an unconquerable nervousness about every form of travel, and though going by sea was much less perplexing than going by land, it was, at the same time, more dangerous, and this she dreaded to encounter. Now, the prospect of Frink's society made the sea voyage lose all its terrors, and if Lucy had felt any lingering objection to Frink, the delight of Mrs. Henslowe would have prevented her from expressing it.

The "Delta" was a vessel of very good class, and with comfortable accommodations for passengers. She was of about six hundred tons burden, copper-fastened, and of very fair rate of speed. Her cabin was roomy for the size of the vessel, and there were three spare state-rooms which were engaged for the party. Captain Thain was an Englishman, who, however, spoke Italian like a native, and had much to do with the purchase or disposition of the cargo. He was a thin, wiry man, with a cunning smile, and bright shrewd eye. Not the sort of man one would like to rely on for any kind of favor, nor yet one in whose power a man would like to be; yet in ordinary life, and in general, a good-natured sort of man, and willing to oblige when it did not cost anything. With this Thain Frink had many consultations, deep and prolonged, involving things far beyond the scope of an ordinary sea voyage. With this Thain Frink, after such prolonged consultations, came to a full understanding, and the whole train was laid, and all the circumstances arranged, by which the intentions and plans should be carried out which Frink had formed with reference to Mrs. Henslowe, Pauline, and Lucy. Until these should all be satisfactorily disposed of, it would be impossible for him to make the move which he intended with reference to the Landsdowne estates, and therefore his arrangements with Captain Thain were of a highly important character.

But while Frink was holding interviews with Thain there were others who had access to the same person. Thain had been induced to call on Drury, and these two had succeeded in making "arrangements." It will be seen by this that Drury was busily engaged in doing as he had said, which was "fighting Frink with his own weapons." Now Thain was not by any means a comfortable man to deal with, and in this case where these two carried on a war with one another by means of Thain, the victory would incline to the one who knew Thain best, or could use him best.

Now there was one disadvantage under which Drury labored, and that was his utter ignorance of Lucy's whereabouts. He suspected that Frink had beguiled her away and kept her secluded in some safe hiding now, but where, he could not imagine. It never occurred to him that Lucy could by any possibility be here in Liverpool with the Henslowes, and was to form one of the party. He knew that Mrs. Henslowe and Pauline were going, and he knew Frink's designs with regard to them, and acquiesced in them, but he did not know who the other lady was. In fact, he did not much care. He supposed it was some friend of theirs, and as he was indifferent to the fate of Pauline, so he was equally indifferent to the fate of Pauline's friend. And this was the reason why Drury missed this chance of finding the fugitive.

At length the day of departure came, and the party took their places on board. Everything had been made ready for them, and every moment the ladies had reason to admire the careful forethought of their invaluable companion. That forethought had extended itself to the minutest details, and of all that could minister to their comfort on board nothing seemed to have been omitted. The wind was fair; and although the ladies felt the usual ills that afflict those who are not accustomed to the sea, yet before a couple of days they became accustomed to the new life, and had overcome the first inconveniences. Time passed pleasantly. The "Delta" crossed the Bay of Biscay without encountering more than one hard blow, coasted along the shore of Portugal, and at length en-

tered the Straits. Once in the Mediterranean, the voyage became very much pleasanter, the air was milder, the sea calmer, and the nearness of their destination gave a new pleasure. Frink now became more agreeable than ever. He had exerted himself since leaving to make things pleasant, but now he became the life of the party, and even Lucy was obliged to confess to herself that Frink had an endless fund of good nature to draw upon. Frink also was a very intelligent man, and was well educated. The approach to the storied scenes of the past stimulated his mind and quickened his imagination, and he poured forth all his knowledge for the entertainment of his friends. This knowledge was not, however, the hackneyed facts such as may be acquired from school-books or retailed by pedants, but the fresh, romantic legends that live along the shores of Spain, of Barbary, and of Sicily.

At length they came within sight of Sicily. Here the captain, with many apologies, informed the passengers that the ship would have to touch at a port on the south, to land some goods which were consigned there.

"It won't make much difference," Frink explained to the ladies—"a day or two at the most; and the captain will put us ashore. It's one of the most romantic places in the world, and full of magnificent scenery."

"What is the place?" asked Pauline, curiously.

"Sciaccia," said Frink.

"Sciaccia!" said Pauline. "I never heard of it before."

"I dare say not," said Frink. "It's on the south side of Sicily, and was founded, I believe, by the Saracens. I've heard that the name was 'Sheikh,' and the Italian 'Sciaccia' is a corruption of it. It was a famous stronghold of the Saracens in its day."

"Are there many people there now?"

"Well, no, not very many; fifteen or twenty thousand, I suppose. There's a little trade going on, but not of any great consequence. Still, it's a curious old town, and the scenery in the neighborhood is most magnificent. If we go ashore I should like to show you around."

"Oh, I'm sure I should like, above all things, to see it."

"You certainly shall, if we go ashore," said Frink.

"Oh, we really must go ashore; why, how could we exist aboard the ship, with the land in sight all the time? It would be too tantalizing!"

"Yes; and above all, the land in sight being Sicily."

"Is Sicily as beautiful as Italy, Mr. Frink?"

"Yes; and even more so. In my opinion Sicily has all the characteristic features of Italy, but in excess; the same glorious blue sky; the same deep verdure to the foliage; the same purple hills; the same transparent air, and the same exquisite grace about all objects. Added to this there are ruins everywhere, and in greater variety than Italy can boast; for here, side by side with Greek temples and Roman aqueducts, you may see a Saracenic mosque and a Gothic cathedral."

"How utterly charming!" cried Pauline.

"Oh, how awfully delightful it must be!"

"Of course it is," said Frink. "I love Sicily more than all countries. You ought to hear Old Garth."

"Old Garth! Isn't he very, very eccentric, Mr. Frink?" asked Pauline. "I've heard Tankie talk so drolly about him."

"Oh, yes; he's what they call an 'original' in every respect; but though we differ in most things, there was always one subject that we used to agree on, and, more than that, a subject over which we used always to go off into raptures that would drive Tancred wild."

"Oh, how nice; what fun," said Pauline. "And how I should like to see Old Garth. Do you think it possible that he could be in Sciaccia?"

Frink laughed.

"Well, it's certainly possible," said he, "but by no means probable. But what a joke it would be, just as our boat touched the beach at Sciaccia, to find ourselves face to face with that tall broad-shouldered figure, with his grizzled beard and lordly face; but then we're just as likely to see Tancred standing there as him."

Frink spoke this in a careless, indifferent tone, and turned his head lightly away.

The prospect of landing on the shores of Sicily, far from being unpleasant, was in the highest degree attractive to the ladies. Even Mrs. Henslowe felt the charm of the Sicilian land and longed to turn her eyes upon its glow-

ing landscape. Besides, it would form a most agreeable change from the monotony of a sea voyage.

First of all Sicily lay like a blue line upon the horizon, then it grew up into shape and distinctness, towering gradually aloft in grander outline. Nearer they drew, and nearer, and there opened up before them the green slopes with the distant background of purple hills—a fair, a glorious land, the storied land of Sicily.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CASI DI SCIACCIA.

BEFORE the close of the day the "Delta" was at anchor in front of Sciaccia. There was no harbor, and the ship had to anchor about a mile from the shore and land its merchandise in boats. The party landed that same evening, and put up for the night in the Hôtel dell'Aquila, which was the best of the three miserable inns which are supposed to accommodate travelers to the town.

Like many other Sicilian towns, Sciaccia stands upon the edge of a cliff at some distance above the sea, and its situation is thus at once both curious and imposing. It has a circuit of walls, with towers at regular intervals, and these walls and towers throw an additional attraction around the place. The mass of houses rising beyond the line of walls, the domes of churches, the massive outlines of convents and palaces, all conspire to give the town an air of solidity, and even grandeur, which is sadly dispelled on a closer inspection.

The chief attractions to the traveler here are outside of the town, in the country beyond. Yet within the walls there are a dozen or so of objects worthy of notice, and among these are the two castles in ruins at the east end. They are called Perollo and Luna. These are memorials of the bloody feuds which raged between these families for generations, and caused to Sciaccia a series of calamities, from the effect of which it has never recovered. The troubles and disturbances consequent upon these quarrels are called the "Casi di Sciaccia." These may be briefly explained here, in the words of Mr. George Dennis:

"In the reign of Martin and Mary, the heiress of the house of Peralta, a lady of rare beauty and vast possessions, was wooed both by Count Artale de Luna and by Giovanni Perollo, a descendant of that Gilbert who had wedded Juliette de Hauteville on the death of her first husband, Lamparron. The King, being partial to Luna, as a Spaniard, prevailed on the lady to give her hand to him in preference to the Sicilian, which excited such rage in Perollo's heart that nothing less than the destruction of his fortunate rival could satisfy him. He made several attempts to cut him off by open violence, but, failing in these, he had recourse to secret revenge, and in 1472 destroyed the Count by poison. The infamous deed entailed discord and ruin upon both families, but a kind of sullen quiet reigned till Artale's son Antonio arrived at an age to take up the feud, when a civil war arose in Sciaccia that involved the whole city in horror and desolation. Pietro Perollo, the inheritor of his father's quarrel, was the feudal lord of the fortress of Sciaccia, which he kept full of his armed retainers. The Count of Luna possessed the strong castle of Calta Velotta, twelve miles distant. Each was ever seeking to compass the destruction of his foe. In April, 1455, Luna and his followers were taking part in the solemn procession of one of the holy thorns of Christ's crown through the streets of the city, when, on passing Perollo's castle, Pietro, at the head of his bravoes rushed out, assailed and slew many of the Count's suite, and put the rest to flight. Pietro, singling out his hereditary foe, attacked him with great fury, stabbed him repeatedly in the face and body, and left him for dead. Then, rushing to the castle of Luna, he sacked it, drove out the family of his victim, and took refuge himself in the castle of Geraci. The Count's body was found by his attendants, who, perceiving that he was still breathing, tended him with such care that he was ultimately restored to health, when he retaliated fiercely on the lives and property of his adversaries, sacking and burning Perollo's castle, and putting more than one hundred of his partisans to the sword. Pietro was fain to save himself by flight. The citizens, weary of this party strife, appealed to the Government to maintain order. King Alfonso the Magnanimous sentenced the two barons to perpetual banishment, and confiscated

their possessions; but, three years later, on his death-bed he revoked this sentence, which ill-judged lenity was productive of further evils. Thus ended the first 'Casi di Sciaccia.'

The feud, thus suppressed, broke out afresh seventy-four years later. Giacomo Perollo, proud of his own wealth and power, and confiding in his popularity with the lower orders, and in his friendship with the Viceroy, the Duke of Monteleone, assumed almost despotic power over the lives and liberties of the citizens of Sciaccia, and bore himself with such haughtiness that he roused the spirit of Sigismundo di Luna, who could not brook the insults of his hereditary foe.

"In 1529 he flew to arms, and collected a force of four hundred foot and three hundred horse, and threatened the Castle of Perollo; but though the Baron Giacomo obtained assistance from the Viceroy, Luna contrived to obtain possession of Sciaccia. After vain attempts to take the castle by assault, he turned against it the cannon on the city ramparts, effected a breach, stormed it, and put all within the walls to the sword. Perollo managed for awhile to elude pursuit; but the Baroness and the wives of his followers fell into the power of the Count. At the sight of these ladies, Luna controlled his wrath and treated them with all knightly courtesy. Laying aside his arms he approached the Baroness with respect, kissed her hands, lamented with her over her misfortunes, and offering her his arm, conducted her and her attendant ladies to a neighboring convent. Then resuming his ferocity, he returned to his search for the Baron, who, being betrayed into the hands of his retainers, was butchered by them before he could reach his rival's presence. The Count, with savage delight at his death, had his corpse tied to a horse's tail and dragged through the streets in barbarous triumph. He then took vengeance on all the partisans of his deceased foe; and desisted only at the approach of the adherents of Perollo, who, rallying, returned to Sciaccia in great force, when he thought prudent to retire to the Castle of Bivona; his opponents retaliating on his faction, and repeating the tragedy of fire, sword, and rapine which he had enacted.

"The Emperor, Charles the Fifth, who then ruled Sicily, was not of a disposition to allow such outrages to pass unpunished. His Viceroy deputed two Judges of the Supreme Court to bring the Count and his partisans to punishment. Luna saw the storm approaching, fled from Sicily, and took refuge at Rome, confiding in the protection of Pope Clement VII., his uncle. Then the past illegal outrages were succeeded by judicial slaughters and persecution. The judges condemned many of the citizens of Sciaccia to the gallows, others to perpetual imprisonment or banishment, and imposed on the city a heavy fine for having endured so long the outrages of the hostile factions. All the followers of Luna that fell into their hands were hanged and quartered, their heads and limbs being set up in the cities and villages of the island as a lesson to evil-doers. The Count of Luna having in vain attempted to mitigate the wrath of his sovereign, and finding himself without hope of pardon, was overwhelmed with despair, and threw himself into the Tiber: This was the second 'Casi di Sciaccia.'

A wall of steep cliffs overhangs the sea, upon which is Sciaccia, and behind the town rises a gray mountain with a hermitage on the summit. This is the mountain of San Calogero, which is always the first object for the traveler to visit, and this was the first place to which our party turned their attention.

"It's one of the most magnificent views in the world," said Frink. "We must go there first, and afterward we can ramble off further away into the country."

"Who is San Calogero?"

"A hermit."

"I never heard the name before."

"Well, he was some Greek monk or other, and they say that he was commissioned by Saint Peter to come here and drive out the devils who were supposed to inhabit the interior of the mountain. It's full of caverns and hot springs. San Calogero appears to have gone about discovering hot springs and vapor baths, and some say he rebuilt some ancient baths which had fallen to ruins. All the cures performed here now are attributed to him by the people about here."

"And how high is that hill?"

"Oh, not more than a thousand feet high."

"A thousand feet! Why, mamma can never go up it."

"Oh, no; she need not try it; she may remain behind until we come back again."

Mrs. Henslowe agreed to this arrangement most readily. In fact, she had no idea whatever of undertaking to climb an almost precipitous hill of such a height as that, but preferred to look out upon the blue Mediterranean with the white sails that dotted its expanse, and the dark hulls of the ships that were lying in the anchorage below.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BRIGANDS.

It was arranged that Mrs. Henslowe should remain behind while the younger members of the party made the ascent of San Calogero, and after their return she would go with them on an excursion for a few miles into the country. This excursion they would have to make on horseback, for there was no carriage road, and Captain Thain promised to exert himself to procure the necessary animals, among which he offered to procure an easy going mule for the use of Mrs. Henslowe. This arrangement was gladly acceded to by the old lady, and Captain Thain went off to perform his part of the agreement, while the others set off for San Calogero on donkeys. Frink, with Pauline and Lucy, formed this party, and a cicerone accompanied them, who spoke sufficient broken English to make himself understood.

They first came to some baths which were situated at the foot of the mountain, over which the cicerone went into raptures, and which he declared to have the power of healing all manner of diseases. Leaving these, they began the ascent of Calogero. They found the pathway very steep and rugged. At first the ground was cultivated, and the pathway passed onward between vineyards, but at length they left these behind and came to where it was all bare and rocky, with scarce a trace of vegetation, except some coarse herbage, and here and there some clusters of dwarf palm. After leaving the vineyards, and entering upon this barren district, they came to a large cavern, called the Grotto di Diana. Here the cicerone shouted, and the echo was wonderful. Further on was a deep pit or well, going down obliquely, where they heard a roaring noise, which sounded like the distant thunder of rolling waters, as though from the bowels of the earth. In fact, the whole mountain is full of holes, and chambers, and subterranean passages, where springs arise, and water pours along incessantly. Even on the summit of the mountain these springs are found, and form a chief resort to those making the ascent. They are very celebrated, even beyond the bounds of Sicily, and form one of the chief attractions of Sciaccia.

These vapor baths are very ancient, and have become surrounded with a mass of legends, according to which they were made in the mythical ages thousands of years ago by Daedalus himself. Moreover, legend says that Minos, King of Crete, was suffocated here. The baths consist of a number of grottoes hollowed out from the rock, with seats hewn also from the same, upon which patients take their station, and are thrown into a perspiration by the hot vapor which steams forth upon them. Upon the rocky walls may be seen inscriptions which have been made here for some thirty centuries by more than a hundred generations of visitors. Our party entered this cavern but found the atmosphere so close and suffocating, and so laden with heavy vapor, that they were compelled to retreat at once. Adjoining this is another cave which the cicerone pointed out to them as having once been the abode of the famous San Calogero himself, who is now the tutelary Saint of Sciaccia. In this cave they saw a well of immense depth which went down to the innermost recesses of the mountains. People have tried in vain to descend into this by means of ropes, but the immense volumes of steam which always roll upward have rendered futile all efforts of this description.

But, though the visitors on this occasion did not gain any very great satisfaction in their inspection of the cavern, they found themselves more than rewarded for their toilsome ascent in the magnificent prospect which awaited them. There a vast panorama lay outstretched on all sides before their eyes. On the land side the fertile country surrounding Sciaccia lay near at hand, while further away it arose into the distant highlands of the interior. On the north-east towered the picturesque form of the isolated mountain of Luna d'Orni; in another direction they could see the whole line of coast

from the promontory of Granitola on the west all the way to Girgenti on the southeast, while in the distance toward the southwest the island of Pantellaria might be seen rising in a purple mass above the horizon more than fifty miles away.

After enjoying the view to the utmost they returned once more to Sciaccia. They made the descent without any mishap, and found Mrs. Henslowe patiently awaiting them. Captain Thain meanwhile had succeeded in getting some ponies, and a mule, with which animals the party prepared to set out on a ramble into the country. Their destination was Caltabellotta, a very picturesque town, about twelve miles away. The road was a pretty one, though not passable to carriages, and the country had very many beautiful landscapes. This was the only direction in which a party could take a journey, for the road up and down the coast was unpleasantly rough and monotonous.

Caltabellotta itself was not without attractions. It originated in Roman days, but owes its present name to the Saracens who captured it and called it Kalat-al-Bellut, or Castle of Oaks, corrupted by the natives into Caltabellotta. A rocky steep arises above the surrounding country crowned with an ancient castle, and around this, and at its base, clusters the town. A river winds at the foot of this rock, which, however, like most Sicilian streams, is almost dry in summer; while from the castle on the summit of the rock there is a most magnificent prospect. The population of the town is a little over five thousand, and one of the churches here was originally a Saracenic mosque, and its style still indicates its origin.

Upon leaving Sciaccia the party rode along at an easy pace. The road, or rather path, went around the base of Mount San Calogero, and was in places two narrow for two to ride side by side. Captain Thain rode ahead. Then Mrs. Henslowe, next to her was Lucy, then Pauline, while Frink brought up the rear. In this way they went along until they came to within about a mile of Caltabellotta. Here the road wound around the spur of a hill, and on one side the rocks arose steep, while in the other there was a dense growth of cactus and dwarf palm. The road also was narrow and rougher than it had hitherto been, and wound in a crooked manner in and out among projecting rocks, prickly cactus, or scattered stones. The path wound in this way, and steadily descended a hill until at last it came down to a valley, or rather ravine, in which was one of those dried-up river beds which are so common in Sicily. Here there was a space some thirty or forty feet in width running up into a narrow gorge among the rocks, toward the hills. The bottom was all strewn with sharp rocks like the channel of a mountain torrent.

This path they descended slowly, and one after another entered the ravine. Scarcely had they all entered, scarcely had Frink, who was last, emerged from the pathway into the open, than a loud shrill whistle burst upon their ears. Involuntarily they all started and stared around them. They did not have to wait long. In an instant, from behind a number of rocks in all directions around them, there sprang forward as many as twenty ruffianly looking men, all armed to the teeth, which men at the moment of their appearance all raised their rifles, and held the party in a deadly aim. At the same time two men came forward who advanced to Captain Thain. One of these men talked with him for some time. The others all stood in consternation looking upon the scene.

"What does this mean Mr. Frink?" asked Pauline, in a tremulous voice.

Frink said nothing, but sighed and shook his head.

"Are they brigands?"

"I'm afraid so."

"Can we do nothing?"

"We have no arms," said Frink, "and besides, see how many of them there are."

At this Pauline burst into tears, and hurried over to where her mother sat looking upon the scene, with a frightened face. Her mother folded her in her arms, without a word.

Lucy now hurried up to Captain Thain.

"Oh, captain!" she said. "Can't you tell us what this means? What do these men want?"

The captain turned and shrugged his shoulders.

"Well," said he, "these miserable devils have got us, and I've been trying to get them to let us off, and I'm afraid they won't listen to reason."

"What do they want?" asked Lucy, calmly. "Want—oh, everything! They think you are noble ladies, English millionaires and all that, and they ask a hundred thousand guineas for the ransom of the party."

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN THE PIT.

FOR some time neither Garth nor Tancred said one word further, but stood in silence at the bottom of their pit, staring at one another in stupefaction and in horror. There lay the chain which had fallen at the bottom of the pit, and there too they saw the ooze of water as it came slowly trickling through. Terrible was their position, terrible beyond expression was their prospect, but more terrible yet was the suspicion that flashed through each one as to the way in which this had been done. This suspicion had already been put forth in words—the words "We are betrayed!"

The explosion had sounded from the bowels of the earth, and seemed to rise simultaneously all around them, as though the very island itself had moved. The horror of that explosion had been like that of death itself, and their nerves had not yet recovered from the vibration that had thrilled through them.

But it was not a time to stand in stupid wonderment, and Garth was the first to rouse himself.

"Come," said he, "we must look about us, and see what can be done."

"But what has happened?" said Tancred.

"What?—why an explosion."

"Couldn't it have been an earthquake?"

"No; it's been an explosion, and has been done by human hands."

"Who?"

"Only one—Frink."

"Impossible!" cried Tancred, endeavoring to fight off the suspicion.

"No; it's true. That's the reason he took charge of the engine. He threw down the chain to prevent our escape, then he blew up the dam by the sea, to let in the water through the drain, and here it is. But come, let's make a dash for it."

Seizing his pickax, Garth drove it two feet above his head into the interstice of the timber staying, and then drew himself up and tried to maintain himself by thrusting his feet into the lower interstices. But the timbers had been laid too close together, and there was no foothold. A few desperate efforts of this kind showed Garth only too plainly that it was impossible, so he was compelled to relinquish his design. Had it not been so wide they might have managed to struggle up by stretching their legs across, and working up in that way; but the width was too great to allow of this, and Garth, who tried this, gave it up also.

After this, they stood in silence looking upon the walls that rose up around them. The efforts of Garth had not taken up many moments, but already the water in the bottom of the pit was up to their ankles, and the prospect of perishing without an effort was intolerable. Suddenly Garth seized his pickax and tore away at the last timber that had been inserted. With a few vigorous efforts he forced it from its place and stood it upright against the wall of the pit.

"What's that for?" said Tancred.

"Our only hope," said Garth, tearing away at another.

"How can we get out with these?"

"Arranging the beams zigzag, and then climbing," said Garth, as he tore out another.

"But, man, you'll loosen the whole staying, and it'll fall in upon us."

"We'll have to run some risk, of course," said Garth, who was now tearing at a third beam.

"But we'll be buried alive," remonstrated Tancred.

"As well be buried alive as drowned like a rat in a pit," cried Garth.

Tancred said not a word more. He had nothing to say. Remonstrance was useless, unless he himself had something better to offer. Garth, also, had put the matter in its right shape, and the choice was between drowning and being buried alive. But in the last case there was merely a risk, and there was a chance, at least, in favor of the adventure.

Garth worked away thus, tearing away beam after beam, and pulling them out from the place where they had been deposited, while

Tancred assisted him and stood each one up on end.

"How many do you want?" he asked.

"Oh, well, about a couple of dozen ought to do."

"Why, man alive, the whole concern'll tumble in upon us."

"Well; I can't help it."

"Won't it be enough if we're able to climb up out of reach of the water?"

"No; we must get out of the hole. Otherwise I'd rather die here and be done with it."

Meanwhile, as Garth worked, the water continued to ooze through the soil. Already it was above their knees, and rising more rapidly. At length Garth stopped.

"There!" said he, flinging down his pickax, "we ought to have enough. Let us begin now."

Taking one of the beams he put one end of it at the bottom on one side, and leaned the beam against the opposite side of the pit, so that the upper end was about five feet from the bottom. Another was placed alongside of it. By the help of this slanting beam Garth was able to climb up a little distance. He then reached down and, raising up another beam, rested the lower end against the upper end of the first beam, and passed it across the pit slanting across to the opposite side like the first. His intention now became evident, which was to construct a series of beams, running zigzag fashion from the bottom of the pit to the top. Thus a ladder would be formed, up which they might be able to climb. The only difficulty would be about carrying up the beams as they climbed higher. Still, that was not an impossible task, though certainly difficult in the extreme.

At this moment, just as Garth had secured the second beam, there came something like a shudder in the walls around, and then suddenly it seemed as though all the pit had fallen down. A deep, dull sound arose, accompanied with the gurgle and hiss of foaming waters. The two men stood awe-struck, bracing themselves involuntarily to receive some terrible shock. The moment was one of awful expectation,—but it passed and they found themselves still alive. Tancred up to his armpits in mud and water, and Garth wildly clutching the sides of the pit.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "Hurry up. We can climb a little way now. The timbers are all loosened. Can you get up from where you are?"

"Oh, yes; don't mind me, old fellow," said Tancred, in his usual voice. "Take care of yourself. Go ahead, and I'll follow."

As he said these words, he seized the beams and lifted himself up out of the water, while Garth began to climb higher. It was indeed as Garth had said. Either the tearing away of the staving, or the action of the water, or both together, had loosened all the soil at the lower part of the pit, so that it had fallen down in one mass; but in that loosening of the soil and in that fall, the timber staving had not come down in a coherent way, but in its descent had been dislocated and torn asunder. The consequence was that each beam of the staving was separated from the other and stood apart, so that there was both a grasp for the hands, and a hold for the feet. It became, in fact, a sort of ladder, far more easy to climb than the zigzag arrangement which Garth had begun.

Up this Garth now climbed for some distance until, at length, he was compelled to stop. Here there was a break in the staving. Below this it was fallen and dislocated; above this it had continued firm. This arose from the fact that the lower soil was loose sand and gravel, while the soil above had been composed to a large extent of clay, and was consequently far firmer. At this place, where the break occurred, there was an interval of about two feet between the fallen staving and the upper portion; and the upper timbers of this fallen staving projected or bulged out about a foot, while the sand and gravel had fallen down behind the staving, leaving here a kind of shelf, where Garth was able to sit quite securely and rest. From this point he looked down and saw Tancred just beneath him, to whom he reached out a hand, and thus assisted his friend to a place at his side.

"Well," said Garth, drawing a long breath, "we shall be able to rest here for a time."

"The trouble is about getting out," said Tancred.

"That's a fact, and the worst of it is, I've left the pickax down at the bottom."

"I wonder if I couldn't get it?"

"Oh, no, it's buried under the earth and logs;

and then the water, I dare say it's ten feet deep by this time. It seemed to come in fast enough; I wonder if that water is from the sea, or from some subterranean spring?"

"It's from the sea," said Tancred. "I got a mouthful, and it was as salt as brine."

"H'm—then that decides it," said Garth. "It's bound to come up higher."

"Well, if that's the case, it seems to me we had better make the most of our time here. Are we half way up, do you think?"

"Oh, yes, more; I don't believe it's over forty feet to the top from here."

"Forty feet! well that's enough to drown us, for the water can come up to the sea level, and that's thirty feet from the top."

Garth said nothing for some time.

"I suppose we couldn't burrow up behind the staving?" said Tancred.

"Well, by Jove, that wouldn't be a bad idea," said Garth; "if we only had something to burrow with."

"There's my knife."

"It wouldn't last."

"Well, I'll tell you what; suppose I cut some sharp pointed sticks, and both of us work our way up, or one at a time; one might stay below to thrust the earth out."

"The earth's too hard. It's stiff clay."

"Oh, that's only in places. At any rate, it's better to be doing something than to sit here doing nothing."

With these words Tancred seized one of the beams of the staving that was nearest and drew it out of its place. After this, he split off from one end some pieces; these he sharpened and then began to scoop away the earth behind the upper staving. The soil was, as Garth had hinted, rather hard and stubborn, but Tancred worked away, and gradually began to loosen it so that it fell in considerable quantities. Garth sat for some time in thought, not taking the slightest interest in Tancred's work, but evidently absorbed in some plan of his own, and making calculations as to the probable distance to the top of the pit, by counting the logs as they rose one above another.

Then, while Tancred was still working away, Garth loosened the lowest beam of the upper staving and placed it across the pit slantwise, with the lowest end resting on the ledge where he was. Beside this he placed another which he tore from the opposite side. But here his work had to stop, for he could not reach the opposite side, nor could he venture to take any of the staving from the side on which he sat, for fear that it might all come down on their heads.

Suddenly a noise from below arrested him. The noise was caused by some lumps of earth from Tancred's work which had fallen down.

The noise was made by its fall into the water, and sounded so close by that Garth started in astonishment and looked down. The next instant he called Tancred:

"Quick! quick!"

Tancred stooped over and looked down.

"It's rising fast!" said he.

"Yes."

"Why, it's within a dozen feet of where we are."

"Yes, and it'll soon be half a dozen."

"Well—then my work's dished," said Tancred. "I ought to have twenty-four hours—but at this rate I won't have ten minutes."

"There's a direct connection with the sea," said Garth. "The drain was choked at first, but the sea water has been pouring in so fast that it has cleared the sluice. It's pouring in now faster than ever. You see how high it has risen since we came here."

With these words Garth relapsed into silence, and sat looking down at the black waters beneath, while Tancred, desisting from his now useless work, sat by his side looking down in the same way.

Slowly and surely the waters rose, creeping up inch by inch; drawing nearer and nearer. Whether those waters could rise higher than their present position they did not know for certain, yet they had very good reason to fear that they would. It was therefore with a feeling of dark and gloomy apprehension that they sat there on the ledge and looked down, as the waters came up and drew nearer and still nearer.

One effort more was still possible.

"It's our only chance," said Garth.

"What's that?"

"The staving on this side. We must run the risk of the earth falling on us."

Saying this, Garth rose and tried to loosen the lower beam of the staving on the side where

they were resting. After a series of laborious exertions, in which Tancred assisted him, he succeeded in loosening the beam, and in removing it from its place. After this he raised it up, and placing the end against the upper end of the transverse beam on the opposite side, he raised it up and placed its upper end on the nearer side of the pit.

But scarcely was this done than a loud call from Tancred started him:

"Climb—climb—for Heaven's sake—up with you as high as you can go. The water is here!"

"You go first," said Garth, unwilling to leave his friend in a position of greater danger than himself.

"No; nonsense," cried Tancred. "Up with you. I'll take care of myself."

Garth said no more. He clambered up till he stood upon the upper beam. Tancred then clambered after him, and attained to the same foothold. Both stood there, thus steadying themselves as best they could against the side of the pit.

The waters rose, and seemed to rise faster now than ever, covering up the ledge where they had recently rested, swallowing up the lower beam and advancing higher and still higher.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OUT.

THUS, while Tancred and Garth sustained themselves as well as they could on the beams, the waters arose higher and still higher, advancing upon them. Further up they knew they could not climb, for the beams of the staving here lay close adjoining one another, so that there was no chance to grasp them. The only hope now was that they might not be altogether covered by the water, but that where they stood they might keep their heads above it. But now there was a circumstance which Tancred was the first to notice; so perfectly natural, and to be expected, that Tancred, on seeing it, only wondered that he had not thought of it before. He saw it now, however, when it was plain before his eyes, and with a loud cry of joy communicated the pleasing intelligence to Garth.

"Hurrah," he cried. "Why, Garth, what do you think! The beams are all floating up here!"

"By Jove!" cried Garth. "Only think what donkeys we have been all along. The beams—somehow I had an idea that they all got wedged in at the bottom."

"No, here they all are, every one of them. We might almost be able to float upon them."

"Oh, no, we'll have a better use for them than that. As a raft they couldn't lift us up much further, for I rather think the water has found its level at last."

"Well, what can you do with them?"

"Do with them? why, go on and construct a climbing way, zigzag as I began. I'll finish it, after all, and with the very beams that I began on. And so, young feller, as you're down there, just try if you can reach them. Can you do it?"

At this, Tancred stooped down, steadying himself with one hand, and grasping one of the beams with the other. The water had risen to the level of his feet, and the beam was floating along with all the others, end upward as they had been piled up at the bottom of the pit. This beam he succeeded in raising.

"Wait a moment, my boy," said Garth. "Just stretch that beam across so as to afford a better foothold, and then reach up another to me."

Tancred did so, laying it across parallel with the one he stood on. This afforded as convenient a standing place as he could wish, and here he could take his station with both hands free to lift up any more of the beams that Garth might want.

The waters now did not rise any higher. It seemed indeed to be quite evident, that they had reached their highest point, which was at the level of the sea. Above them the pit arose for not more than thirty feet, and over its mouth they saw the hoisting tackle. This was their goal, and it was almost within reach.

"Now, my son," said Garth, "just pass along another of those beams."

Tancred did so.

Garth took it from him, and laid it across transversely, reaching upward from the upper end of the beam he was standing on.

"Now pass along another," said Garth. Tancred did so.

Garth laid this parallel with the other, and then climbing up, he stood here. This gave him two beams upon which to take his stand, and left his hands free for action. Tancred was standing close by the water. Garth was standing about ten feet above him, while above Garth the distance to the top of the pit was now not over twenty feet or so.

"Now, my son—the game is in our own hands," said Garth. "Pass up another beam."

Tancred did so—and still another. Both of these were fixed by Garth above him, in the same way in which those had been fixed below him, that is to say, transversely, and lying side by side. These beams rose to within fifteen feet of the top.

Tancred now passed several beams up to Garth, which he laid beside these last ones, after which he climbed up and adjusted them one above another. Two came up to within ten feet of the top. Then two more. These came to within five feet. As Garth laid these last in their place, he bounded up with a shout to Tancred to follow, and Tancred came up swiftly after him.

The next instant Garth had sprung up out of the mouth of the pit into the world above, and then kneeling down, waited for Tancred. Tancred was not one minute behind him. He clambered up, and Garth seized his shoulders as they emerged above the opening, and assisted him out. Not a word was said by either. Garth turned away and stood looking at the ground. Tancred, overwhelmed by the tide of feeling that surged through him, staggered off a few paces, and sunk down upon his knees. It was no wonder, for never in the history of the world, had there been a more narrow escape from a tremendous death.

At length they roused themselves to action, and began to look around. First of all they turned their eyes to the cove, and there, if any additional proof had been needed of the guilt of Frink, they found that proof.

The schooner was gone!

Yes, gone—and the waters of the cove lay there smooth and deserted. Far away, out upon the sea, they could descry a white sail, but whether it was that of the "Dart" or of some other vessel, they could not tell.

"Well," said Garth, "I shouldn't have believed it."

"Believed what? his treachery? no," said Tancred. "Nor could I."

"Treachery! Oh, no, dear boy. I'm not surprised at that. I never trusted him. I made up my mind to go it blind for your sake. He was a bad bill, but you endorsed him. I used to see treachery in his face again and again. No, what I'm surprised at is, how he got the 'Dart' off alone—that's all."

"Well, he's done it, at any rate."

"Yes, that's a fact, and without help, too. He couldn't have had friends hidden about."

"Oh, no, he must have done it all alone. But after all, it's not such a very hard job, I could have done it myself."

"Yes; but then, Frink never pretended to know much about navigation. He was not much on the sea, that's evident. Well, necessity is the mother of invention, and he's managed to get the schooner off."

"He's done it up pretty quickly."

"Oh, I don't know about that," said Garth.

"Why, it's all taken place in half an hour or so."

"Half an hour!" cried Garth. "Heavens, man! is that the way it all seems to you. Half an hour! Why, to me it seems half a year. At any rate look there—"

Tancred looked up to the sky to where Garth pointed. It was the sun, now shining high in the meridian. With a stare of amazement he looked at his watch. It had stopped at nine o'clock.

"Nine o'clock!"

"Nine," said Garth. "Oh, you got a ducking; your watch stopped. That shows the time when the water came in, and the staying fell. My watch shows ten minutes of twelve. Frink must have thrown down the chain at about eight o'clock, and the explosion was not more than a quarter of an hour after that."

"I don't know about that explosion," said Tancred, "Mayn't it have been an earthquake after all?"

"There's one answer," said Garth, pointing to the empty cove, "and if you want another and more conclusive one, come with me."

Saying this, he led the way across toward the

end of the island, to the well-known place where they had closed up the sluice. Tancred followed, and they soon reached the place.

On reaching it, they found themselves in the presence of a scene of devastation which was to them simply terrible, since it showed them the power and the malignity which had been put forth for their destruction. For the space of a hundred square yards the surface of the ground was all blackened, as though a fire had passed over it. The greater portion of this area was also upturn, and now lay before them broken into scattered and irregular clods. In the midst of this there was a heap of stones, intermingled with gravel and clay and mud, while all around lay stakes and boards and fragments of ropes and oakum.

"There!" said Garth, grimly. "How hard we worked at this, and how long a time! But it took only about a quarter of a second to blow it all up this way."

"It must have taken more than a second," said Tancred. "You don't count the time it took to make the blast."

"If'm, well, that probably took about half an hour."

"Do you suppose he did it last night?"

"Not he. He was too cunning. No; he must have done it all this morning. He's snatched up the powder, rushed here, dug a hole, pitched it in, lighted a match, and run—and see! By Jove!" continued Garth, picking up a small cylindrical bit of tin. "I'll be hanged if this isn't the nozzle of our powder-can! The fellow's just grabbed the can, stuck it in here, and fired away! That's it."

He held forth the tin to Tancred. It was evidently, as Garth said, the nozzle of the powder-can. That can contained their stock of blasting-powder, which had been taken on board through the provident foresight of Garth, who thought it best to prepare for all manner of excavation, and did not know but that he would have to blast his way down to the treasure. As Tancred took the tin he regarded it in silence, with a melancholy look in which there was something of bewilderment. Hitherto, in spite of the terrible conviction of the treachery of his friend, there had been other feelings within him,—the dread of instant death, the desire for life, the motive for energetic action—all these combined to drive Frink out of his mind,—but now there was nothing intervening, and before him there arose, in all its blackness, the full revelation of the treachery of Frink. What had prompted so base an act? With what possible design had he perpetrated it? Had it been from some sudden impulse, or had it been the result of long, deliberate preparation beforehand? To these questions he could give no answer.

It seemed as though Garth was acquainted with Tancred's thoughts, for he made a remark which chimed in with them completely, just as though he was answering some question.

"Yes," said he; "the infernal villain meant it from the first, and has been planning it all along."

"But why? What motive could he have had?"

"Oh, well, I don't know what deeper motives the fellow may have had, but there's a very superficial motive—namely, the possession of the treasure."

"But he hasn't got the treasure."

"But he'll return and get it."

"Not he. Hasn't he blown up the drain?"

"Pooh! that's nothing; he'll come back and stop it again."

"He can't do it alone," said Tancred.

"Well, he'll bring some companion."

"Well, in that case he will lose all the advantages of his crime. For what good would it be to destroy us if he has to have other partners in our place. That would be utterly unmeaning. It would have been better for him to retain us as partners and avoid a crime."

"By Jove!" said Garth, "you're right. To tell the truth, I haven't had time to think very particularly about it. I knew that he was the traitor, and didn't think of any motive but a desire to have all the treasure to himself. But he couldn't have it all as things stand. He'll have to have partners, and it would be better for him to have us than any others; so, it isn't for the treasure. No; it's something else. Now, what is there that is stronger than the love of money? What is there in your circumstances, my son, that could tempt him to such a crime? We must put money out of the question. There are two other passions which are stronger than avarice. One is ambition, the

other is love. Now, the question is, which of these can he have served by destroying you. For the blow was aimed at you. I was merely your partner. Now, think. Can he have served his ambition?"

"Nonsense!" said Tancred. "Ambition! How can he have served his ambition?"

"Very well. Can he have served his love?"

"I can't for the life of me see how," said Tancred. "You know my engagement, and all that, to Lucy Landsdowne; you know all about my position; you know that this Frink first brought me there. How, then, can he be a rival? He can't be in love with Lucy. She hates him, too, and she distrusted him as much as you. She warned me against him."

"Oh, she warned you against him, did she?" asked Garth. "And on what grounds?"

"Oh, nothing. She had overheard stray remarks, which made her think they all wanted to injure me or destroy me."

"They all did. Ah! the Landsdownes and Frink. And now, I should like to know why they wanted to injure you?"

Tancred shook his head.

"Frink has served this desire, not as agent, however, mind you, not from avarice, but in his own person, for himself, and from some higher motive. Now, if that motive was not love, it must have been ambition."

"But that's nonsense."

"No, it isn't. Who are you? Is there anything in your past history that would make you liable to such a plot as this? Are you in any way connected with these Landsdownes, directly or indirectly? Remember, you were invited to Landsdowne Hall under very peculiar circumstances. Why did they send for you? Why was Frink in alliance with them? You must find out all this."

But here their conversation was interrupted. Garth saw something, and suddenly stopped and hurried toward it. Tancred followed. They soon reached it. It was the small boat which they had used while making the dam to the sluice, and which had been moored here ever since. Frink had gone away, and in his hurry had left it behind.

CHAPTER XXIX.
ONE MORE TRIAL.

THIS discovery of the small boat at once put a new face on affairs. It showed them that they had an alternative, and were not left as they had supposed, helpless on a desert island. They now had a means of escape, and could leave whenever they chose. This was the thought that was uppermost in the mind of each.

"Now," said Garth, "we're all right—we needn't die here—we can get off whenever we choose."

"Yes, and land isn't so far away but that we can get to it even in this boat."

"This boat! Oh, this isn't a bad boat. We can get to Sicily if we want to."

"Still, we had better try Vulcano first."

Out there on the west lay Vulcano only three leagues away, to which they could go in the little boat without difficulty whenever they might feel inclined. Meanwhile, the consciousness of this made them feel quite content and took away all immediate desire to leave.

"Well," said Garth, "this puts a different face on affairs, and the question now is what we had better do. Shall we leave the island at once, or shall we leave the island at all?"

"It would be a pity to give up the results of our work when we have toiled here so hard and for so long a time."

"Yes, and when, as I may say, we have actually touched the treasure—for you know my pickax did strike what seemed to be an oaken box, and that, too, at the very depth mentioned in the manuscript."

"But what can we do just now?"

"Well, we have some tools, you know, and we have the steam-engine."

"Yes; we are in a position to work. You and I can do well enough."

"Certainly we can."

"Do you suppose we can stop up this sluice again?"

"We might try. For my part I have no doubt about it. The thing can be done easier than before because we know how to go to work. My idea would be to drive a row of piles along there as far down as the bottom of the drain; then put boards against them on the inside, and then dig down and tighten it. It

will take some time, but I know it can be done. The first thing though for us to decide is whether we will go on or not. Now, I say go on. I feel convinced that the treasure is there—that it is within reach. We have escaped with our lives, but then we have got rid of a traitor. We can afterward hunt him down and punish him. But, as for me, I want the money for the Sicilian Republic."

"Well, I say, go on," said Tancred. "I feel just as you do. I want to finish this business at any rate. We've almost got to the end of it, and I don't feel inclined to give up now. I want the money as much as ever, if not more than ever. I want to circumvent Frink, in whatever plan of his he may be trying to carry out?"

"That's the right sort of temper, my boy; so now, as we're decided to go on, let's arrange about what we had better do next. The schooner's gone, but most of our tools are ashore here and can be used as before. We are short of provisions, however, and we must have another schooner."

"Yes."

"We must go off and buy one at the nearest port."

"Messina or Palermo. Yes, I suppose so."

"Oh, no; nearer than that, I hope. It seems to me that we may find something to suit us over there in Vulcano."

"Then you can't expect to get anything like the Dart."

"Of course not. In fact, I'd rather not, I should prefer one of the ordinary Sicilian craft. It would be much less liable to attract notice, and would, of course, be far more likely to keep up our concealment. What we want is something that can carry in safety anything that we may get out of the pit yonder."

"Well, we ought to get a native vessel in Vulcano."

"Of course; the natives there own lots of them—every householder has one. We must go over and select for ourselves."

"We shall want provisions."

"Yes. We can cross over to the nearest port, and lay in a stock of the necessaries of life. Some small town, where they have half a dozen shops would be the best adapted for our purposes. We can get all we want, and be back here in two or three days."

It was decided, therefore, that they should set forth at once to procure the schooner and other requisites, after which, if successful, they might return and resume their work at the money pit. They had no preparations to make. The boat was lying ready for them, and they had only to jump aboard and row away. Fortunately for them it had been the fashion of each one to keep his money about his person, and all the money which Garth and Tancred had left was in their wallets in the shape of circular letters, or else around their waists in a belt. In their belts they had gold enough for any immediate emergency, and if they wanted more they could easily obtain it at Messina, which was not more than forty miles away.

A pull of four hours brought them to Vulcano. Here they found a scattered population, with no appearance of any boats adapted to their wants. It was therefore necessary for them to search elsewhere. Garth, who spoke the language perfectly, learned from the people that the best and nearest place for their purposes was the town of Milazzo, which was in Sicily, and not more than twelve miles away. They hired a sail-boat to take them over, towing their small boat behind, and reached Milazzo before sundown.

They would not have decided so readily in favor of this had they not seen the course of the "Dart" as they left the Island of Leonforte. They had watched till it was out of sight, and noticed that her course was almost due west. This would take her out of their way, and enable them to carry on their own work unknown to Frink, who would of course believe them both to be dead. So now, on reaching Milazzo, they found themselves in a position to work without fear of discovery.

Milazzo is a flourishing town of about twelve thousand inhabitants. In our own day it is known as having been for years the residence of Louis Philippe while that wandering Prince was in exile, and, still better, as having been the scene of Garibaldi's fiercest fight. But it is a place that is very seldom visited by strangers—it lies out of the common track. Tancred had never even heard of it, and Garth, though he had heard of it often enough, knew very little about it. They were therefore delighted to find

in it a place of considerable commerce, where vessels of every size might be seen, and stores and provisions of all sorts might be obtained. Here, after some search, they found a vessel for sale which seemed to be the very one for which they were on the lookout. It was a Sicilian craft, with one mast and large latteen sail. It was broad in the beam, shallow in the hold, decked, and very easily navigable by two hands. The terms at which it was offered were reasonable, and they at once concluded the bargain. Tancred and Garth rode over to Messina, where they got their circular letter cashed, and with the proceeds had ample means for all their purchases.

Having bought the vessel they next made purchases of everything which they would be likely to need, and then having completed all these preparations they once more set sail for Leonforte. They left in the evening, cruised about all night, so as to avoid observation, and on the next morning ran into the little cove where the "Dart" had lain. Here the vessel was moored and the two stepped ashore.

Their first efforts were now directed to the water-drain. A careful inspection of the scene of explosion showed them that every trace of a drain at this place had been effaced, and that there was no vestige of the drain which they had made. The only thing for them to do was to go to work and find out by actual experiment what could be done. Their work here was, of course, laborious, yet, to their great delight, they found it less so than on a former occasion. Then the sea-water came in a mass through the drain immediately upon them. Now, however, the drain had been destroyed; they were digging in a soil composed of gravel and clay—a soil which was certainly porous enough—yet the water which came here had to come by oozing through. The flow, therefore, was slow, and could easily be kept under. Thus they were able to dig down to a depth below the level of the drain, and from here a stout dam, which was quite impervious to any sea-water. By this means they felt convinced that they had closed off the sea for good.

Having thus once more accomplished this necessary preliminary, they again turned their attention to the money hole. First of all it would be necessary to pump out the water. Now it was that Garth's steam-engine amply recompensed them for all the trouble that they had had with it. The water in the pit was at the same level where they had left it, but the action of the steam-engine upon the pump soon reduced it until at length the deep pit was dry. They found now to their great delight that the new dam by the sea-shore was quite efficient, and that no more water came through the sluice.

But the inside of the pit was as yet unsafe for labor, and before anything could be done toward completing the search for the treasure, it would be necessary to repair the staving. This then was their next task. They examined it all and tested it most carefully from top to bottom. In many places the staving was perfectly good, and had only been dislodged, while in one or two places it had to be removed and replaced. This was all at length completed, and then they had to excavate afresh all the earth that had caved in at the bottom. About ten feet had thus fallen in, and this had to be dug out and hoisted. But it was easily worked, and they were able to excavate it all, and put in a new timber staving in about ten days.

"And now they had at length reached the spot at which they were when Frink had dealt his blow at them. Now came the hour of their last supreme trial, upon which all would depend. On this day Tancred at first wished that both should go down, but Garth persuaded him to remain above, so as to guard against the possibility of any new danger.

"Who can tell," said Garth, "what may happen. We may have been watched and tracked. There may be some spies even now lurking in the woods around, waiting to deal upon us a more certain death, or Frink himself may have come sneaking back, and may have been prowling about all the time, waiting for a new chance."

"Well," said Tancred, "it will be a great piece of self-denial, but there's certainly something in what you say, and so I agree to stay up and watch."

"Now, let us go to work cautiously," said Garth, "and first of all let us take a tour around the island, so as to make sure that no one is about here."

Tancred agreed, and the two friends then set

forth and made the complete circuit of the island. In that circuit they saw every portion of the shore, and scanned every foot of the surface of the island. No trace of man appeared. The island was desolate; and out at sea nothing appeared except here and there a distant sail. These distant sails, however, excited no attention as they had become accustomed long ago to this sight. There were always sails visible, and always the sails passed by and none came near. In fact, the people of Vulcano told them that no one ever went on Leonforte.

Having thus made the circuit of the island, and secured themselves from the possibility of surprise or discovery, the two returned to the money hole.

"And now, my boy, I'll go down," said Garth. "You stay here for precaution's sake, and watch and wait. Let's have no excitement about it, any way. If we succeed, or if we fail, let's act like men. Let's make up our minds to be neither depressed nor elated. Keep cool now. For my part, I'm going to be as cool as a clock."

"Well, I promise you not to show any signs of excitement. As to my feelings, that's another question."

"Oh, bother your feelings. Light your pipe and fire away. There's nothing like smoking to keep a fellow cool."

"Well, as I always smoke at all times, whether I'm excited or not, I may as well smoke now," and with these words, Tancred lighted his pipe. Garth did the same.

Garth now prepared to descend. Before doing so he turned to Tancred with a solemn face.

"When we meet again," said he, "we shall either be beggars or millionaires. In either case we shall be different men from what we have been. So here I bid you good-by, old Tancred; for when I see you again, you'll be another man."

He held out his hand. Tancred grasped it.

"Good-by, Old Garth," said he.

In a few minutes more Old Garth was far down at the bottom of the money pit, and Tancred heard the dull thud of his pickax as he worked away. Every little while Garth would give a signal, and Tancred would hoist up the bucketful of earth.

At length there was a period of delay somewhat longer than usual. Tancred found himself growing excited, and recalled the advice of Garth about keeping cool. He therefore filled his trusty pipe once more, lighted it, and waited patiently.

At length the signal was given and he began to hoist up. The bucket came up. It seemed heavier than usual. It came near the top. Tancred looked down as it rose up.

"Great Heavens! What was that—that square mass, with flakes of damp earth clinging to it, with a rusty band of iron discernible—with the wood all molded and soggy with the damp of years! His hands seemed to lose their strength. He could scarcely hoist any longer. But he had to hoist. He gave a few frantic efforts. He dragged it toward him, he pulled the bucket in upon the platform. He tore the box out, and, seizing one of the pickaxes near, he burst it open with one blow.

And then and there he stood, dumb with astonishment; for as the box burst open there lay revealed a dull, yellow gleam, and he knew that his wildest hopes were more than realized.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE RAISING OF THE TREASURE.

TANCRED was roused out of his stupor by a new signal, and at the same time a voice came from the bottom of the pit—a low voice, with a far-off sound, which cried to him "keep cool!" The signal was an imperative one. He had to attend to it. He therefore seized the rope and once more began hoisting. This time there was another box, which was followed by yet another. Tancred soon found himself growing calmer at the labor which was required of him. He found that he had no time to stand there indulging in great raptures. He had to work, and work hard. The labor was the same as it had been all along, except that instead of hoisting buckets of dirt he was raising boxes of treasure. And so the work continued until Garth came up in the evening, and found him with piles of boxes heaped up around him.

There remained now before them a very serious question, and that was the disposal of the treasure.

"How are we to get it away from the island?" asked Tancred, as they rested on that first day from their labors.

"Why, in the vessel."

"But it won't hold all."

"Why, we won't take all in one load. We must take a little at a time."

"And suppose some one should come here in our absence?"

"Well, I've thought of that, and the more I've thought, the more convinced I am that we must make use of the drain again."

"The drain?"

"Yes; to flood the money hole."

"How?"

"Well, by laying a small pipe through the dam. I've got a plan, and I mean to carry it out before we take off the first load."

After this they raised as many boxes as they deemed advisable to trust to the schooner, and then Garth proceeded to carry out his plan. He had thought of this beforehand, and had brought with him on board the schooner a piece of leaden pipe which he had picked up at Milazzo. They then dug down till they came to the uninjured drain, and from this they dug a narrow channel toward the sea, in which they laid the leaden tube. The end was open to receive the sea water, but was so skillfully concealed that no visitor could notice it. Then the water of the sea was allowed to flow into the money pit, and it did so, filling it up to the sea level in about six hours.

"When we come back," said Garth, "we can empty it out, and if anybody comes here they won't be able to do anything."

Before going away they carefully blackened all the surface of the ground by exploding powder and burning dried leaves.

"If Frink comes back," said Tancred, "he'll see nothing but his own work."

"It isn't Frink that I think of. He'll be busy elsewhere."

The vessel sailed to Marseilles. Here Tancred gave himself out as a merchant, and hired a warehouse. In the vault of this he put all the boxes of treasure. Garth obtained a number of pieces of matting, and bound up each box, so that it looked like some species of merchandise—like dates—such as is exported from Africa or the East; and, by taking the treasure-boxes to their warehouse in this way, they were able to elude observation. So successful was the plan that they loaded the vessel with matting to take back to Leonforte.

On his first arrival at Marseilles, Tancred had written to his mother at Liverpool, and also to Lucy, at Landsdowne Hall, telling them briefly about his success, without, however, going into particulars. He himself could not think of going to see them till all the treasure was recovered; but he told them to write to him at Marseilles. He also made a hurried journey to Paris, to Brussels, and to Frankfort, at which cities he opened an account with certain leading bankers—given himself out as the agent of an Anglo-Mexican Gold Mining Company. In this way he disposed of several boxes of treasure to each, and left with the promise to bring more. He also hired warehouses in each of these cities, so as to have plenty of places of deposit. The odd form and singular marks on his ingots were noticed, and led to remarks; but he satisfied the questioners with the reply that the Mexicans still used the old Spanish system of marking their gold.

After making these necessary arrangements, the two adventurers returned to Leonforte. The appearance of the island was unchanged. No human foot had trodden those shores since their departure from it. The tube was found without difficulty, and its mouth was closed, after which they proceeded to pump the water out of the pit. This was successfully accomplished, and the work of recovering the treasure went on as before, Garth laboring below and Tancred up above. In the course of time they raised enough for a second load. This time, they wrapped each box in matting, so as to make it look like African merchandise, and in that way they stowed it aboard the vessel. After this they let in the water as before, and then set sail for Marseilles.

On arriving at Marseilles, Tancred was disappointed at not finding any letters. He took it for granted that his first ones had miscarried, and wrote fresh ones. After this he went to work with the disposal of the treasure as before. First, the boxes were all brought to their warehouse. Then a number of stout trunks were bought, into each of which two boxes were placed. Then Tancred and Garth each made

journeys to Paris, or to Frankfort, or to Brussels, taking these trunks with them.

Thus far they had experienced no trouble with the custom-house officials. At Marseilles, they announced their vessel to be a yacht, and themselves English yachtsmen. Although the vessel did not look much like a yacht, still the officials were aware of the eccentricities of Englishmen, and a handsome fee induced them to allow this craft to pass. On the Belgian border, the boxes passed for what they were, namely, gold; and with the further statement that it was the gold of the Anglo-Mexican Gold Mining Company. The same thing was done on the German frontier. In this way the gold was safely diffused to many different places of deposit—some being retained in their own warehouses, some being sold, and some being left with bankers for safe keeping. Meanwhile, time passed, and no answers came to Tancred's letters. He had inclosed drafts in both his former letters to his mother, and on inquiry at Marseilles, he found that these drafts had not yet been paid.

This seemed strange; but Tancred was not of a fretful or worrying disposition; and thought that he would hear soon; so he kept at his business.

On their return to Leonforte, they stopped at Genoa, at Leghorn, and at Naples. At each of these places they hired a warehouse, and also made arrangements with bankers in the name of the Anglo-Mexican Gold Mining Company. Thus their connections were increasing. This was Garth's own suggestion, who preferred having his funds here, as they would be more within reach. Three more voyages were now made, which resulted in the disposal of a large amount in each of these places last mentioned. On each of these voyages, they took all the precautions which they had taken before, and always flooded the pit before quitting the island.

Meanwhile Tancred began to be somewhat astonished at not hearing from his mother or Lucy. The silence of all of them was strange, and could only be accounted for on the ground that they had not received his letters. Had one answered and another not, then he might have felt uneasy as to the silence of that one who had not answered. But, as it was, they were all so differently situated that it was impossible for him to think that they were all subjects of anxiety. And so he hoped for the best, feeling vexed and annoyed at what he conceived to be the miscarriage of his letters, but not having any worse feelings.

And now they at length reached the last of the treasure. Seven trips had been made, and vast deposits made in various ways in the cities of Marseilles, Paris, Brussels, Frankfort, Genoa, Leghorn, and Naples. This eighth voyage was to be the last, and the gold was to be taken to Paris, or Marseilles. Their vessel had an average load, and there was nothing more to detain them. Garth's only desire now was to efface all traces of their work, so that if any one should ever come there, were it Frink himself or some other person, they should learn absolutely nothing. He determined therefore to blow up the money pit.

The steam-engine was thrown down to the bottom and broken to atoms. All the tools were hurled down after it, together with everything, large and small, that they did not intend to take away.

A dozen kegs of blasting powder were then deposited on a shelf about half way down the hole. These kegs had been brought from Marseilles for this purpose. A fuse was attached, and this was lighted by Garth's own hand.

They then hurried to the vessel and put out to sea, sailing away southward for about a couple of miles. As they sailed they watched the island all the time. Meanwhile the sun set, and the darkness of night came on with that rapidity which is usual in southern climes.

Suddenly, as they looked, there burst forth a flash of lurid light in the midst of the darkness, which seemed to lighten up the whole sky; then there was a rush upward of an eruption of flame bearing with it vast masses of earth and rocks and trees; then a dull, far-off roar, and then the thunder of the explosion came full upon their ears, prolonging itself in long reverberations all over the surface of the sea, and then all died out in universal stillness and darkness.

The two did not venture to return, but kept off and on all night long, and in the morning paid a farewell visit to the place where they had labored so hard, and known such extremes of despair and exultation.

The ruin was complete. Of the work of human hands there was not a vestige. All around the place where the money hole had been, the earth was upturned and loosened. The leaden pipe was gone, the water-drain was once more blown up, and the money hole itself was utterly effaced. Frink, if he should come back, could scarcely know where to look for the place where he had left his friends, for the palm-tree had been flung away into the cave and the boulder had been rolled after it.

"Well," said Garth, grimly, "we've done our work so well that there doesn't seem anything more for us to do, and so I think we may as well bid good-by to Leonforte."

With these words he led the way to the vessel. Tancred followed, and soon the two were sailing away for the last time. As they went on they met some boats from Vulcano, who hailed them, and asked them if they had seen the new volcano on Leonforte.

"Yes," said Garth.

"Is it burning yet?"

"No."

"Is it large?"

"No; a trifling volcano, not worth a visit."

Upon this the boats went back to the shore. To these men it was not a very strange circumstance, after all, that an island should suddenly belch forth fires at night. Such things had been known before in these waters, and such things will be known again especially among the Lepari Islands.

The two adventurers now kept on their way to Marseilles, and arrived there in due time. There the treasure was transferred to their vaults, and afterward to Paris. Here, in Paris, in the course of a week, their whole remaining stock of gold was disposed of to various bankers.

Garth now became restive. He was anxious to return to Sicily and wished to have an equal division of the money. This was done without any difficulty, and the share of each was sufficient to content the most avaricious.

"Well, my son," said Garth, "you've got your work in life and I've got mine. I don't know how we'll manage it, but I don't think either of us will ever again carry out a job so neatly as this one of Leonforte. I should dearly like to have you with me in Sicily. If you were by my side, my boy, I believe the Republic would be a fixed fact in less than a year. But if you won't you won't, and so there's an end of it. There's one thing you've got to do, though, and that is; look out for Frink! Mark my words. If that fellow finds that you've escaped him, and finds you out, he'll not miss you a second time. I'll tell you what I think you ought to do. You ought to fight him with his own weapons. Take another name. Go about secretly and watch for him."

"No," said Tancred; "that's all nonsense. I'll be hanged if I'm going to make my life miserable for a scoundrel like him. Besides, what could I do in disguise? What a miserable fist I should make of it fighting in the dark!"

"Well, perhaps so. I couldn't do it myself."

"Nor could I."

"So you'll run the risk?"

"Oh, yes. What else can I do?"

"Well, I dare say you're in the right of it. If you began a secret war against Frink, you'd only fret your life out."

"That's it. If ever I meet him face to face I'll have it out with him; but, if not, why, he may run for it, for all I care."

Not long after this conversation, the two friends separated, Garth to go to his old associates in Sicily, to bring his newly gained wealth, and his old experience, and his personal character to the aid of the vague Sicilian Republic, and Tancred to go to his home, and find his relatives and friends.

He reached Liverpool without any event of importance, and at once hurried to the lodgings where he had left his mother and sister.

They were gone!

He was thunderstruck. To his inquiry, "How long ago?" the answer was given:

"Oh, more than a month ago."

A month! That, then, accounted for not getting any answer to his letters. They couldn't have received them. The people, however, could give him no information about this. All they knew was that Mrs. Henslowe and her daughter had gone away together with another lady. Who the other lady was they did not know. Where they had all gone to they did not know.

And this was Tancred's welcome home!

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN THE DARK.

THE departure of his mother and sister in this utterly unexpected and mysterious manner flked Tancred with something like consternation, and he felt bewildered at his utter incapability to find out anything about them. Mrs. Henslowe was, by nature, reticent, and was certainly not the sort of woman to take into her confidence the landlady of her boarding-house; Pauline was in this respect similar to her mother; and the consequence was that no one at the boarding-house had the slightest idea where they were going. Tancred asked every question that ingenuity could suggest. He asked whether they had gone away with any others. The people did not know. There had been a strange gentleman who called twice or three times.

A strange gentleman! About this man Tancred made minute inquiries, and the replies, though couched in vague terms, still served to indicate, with some degree of clearness, some one who must have been very much such a man as Frink himself.

Further inquiries elicited the information that the time when this stranger made his calls could not have been more than a fortnight later than the time of Frink's treachery at Leonforte. This showed Tancred that Frink must have lost no time, but returned as soon as possible to England. It also served to show that Frink, having accomplished his deadly purposes against himself, had gone on some similar errand against the other members of his family. As to Frink's motive, Tancred remained quite in the dark. It had become a hopeless mystery. He had talked it over with Garth, who, however, had suggested nothing which Tancred could accept as at all natural or reasonable. Sometimes he felt inclined to think that Frink had gone mad, and indeed at one time he had dwelt much on this idea, accounting for his madness on the ground of sudden excitement, while reaching the end of their search; but Garth had growled out too many indications of deliberate treachery for this idea to be long entertained. And now, in addition to this mystery in connection with the crime against himself, he found another mystery greater still in connection with a plot against his mother and sister. Why should they be involved in this fate? What good could harm to them do Frink? What evil had they ever done to him?

In addition to this strange gentleman, there was the story of a strange lady, who had gone with them. She had come to the place some weeks before, and had been living there. They did not know her name. She was on terms of great intimacy with Mrs. Henslowe and her daughter, as far as they could see. Inquiries about the personal appearance of this stranger threw new light upon the subject. The truth never for an instant suggested itself to him; so far, indeed, was he from suspecting it that he inclined to the very opposite. This stranger seemed to him now, in his suspicious questionings, to be some emissary of Frink's, whom Frink had sent to carry out some sinister purpose of his own. How this woman had gone about it he could not imagine, but he believed that she must have insinuated herself into the confidence of his mother and sister. If Frink had indeed conveyed them away, it must, as Tancred thought, have been through the preparations and contrivances of this woman. What little the landlady was able to tell him all served to convince him that his suspicion was correct, and that Frink's plan had been carried out by his agent all the time that they were on Leonforte.

In his eager desire to gain some clew as to the place where they had gone, he questioned the people of the house very closely about the addresses upon the trunks and luggage. But here, as in other things, his search failed to yield any satisfactory result. One of the servants thought she saw the name Lisbon written on the trunk, while another was sure that it was India. This may be accounted for on the ground that the real address was, perhaps, Leghorn, Italy, and that while one servant had mistaken one of these names, the other servant had equally mistaken the other. One thing occurred which made Tancred for awhile indulge the hope that he had got upon the track of something, and this was the mention by the landlady of the very cabman who had taken the ladies away. He happened to be a man whose face was familiar to her, and thus she was able to recall him. Tancred at once found the man, and asked him about what he remembered concerning his drive on the occasion referred to. The cabman, who was an honest, straightforward

soul, did his very best, and sought by every means in his power, such as scratching his head, staring at vacancy, etc., to remember something, so as to satisfy his questioner, but in vain. He could remember nothing beyond the bare fact that he had driven some ladies somewhere. He had driven so many other fares since that time, that they had all become hopelessly confused together.

After this he sought at the post-office to see if any of the letters which he had sent had been delivered. He found them all there yet; none had been taken. This showed him plainly that they must have gone away before the time of sending his first letter to them. These letters, also, had all been advertised, and if his mother and sister had been in Liverpool they would certainly have seen the advertisement; consequently, there was no escape from the conclusion that they had left Liverpool. But for what place? Where? Why? These were questions that he was not able to answer, and upon which little or no light had as yet been thrown, after all his efforts.

Nothing now remained which Tancred could do by means of his own unassisted efforts. He had preferred doing all that he could by himself; but now, having exhausted every possibility of private and personal action, he had to look beyond himself for help. That help he could best find by means of detectives or in the hands of the police. He therefore lost no time, after coming to this decision, in putting his case into their hands. He had a faint hope that they could give him some information at the outset which might be of advantage. In this hope, however, he was disappointed, and the police could only promise to do all in their power.

After a few days he received the first reports from them. They could give him no information about the destination of Mrs. Henslowe and her daughter. No such name appeared anywhere in any list of passengers by sea to which they had access; so they concluded that she must have gone somewhere by land. One piece of information, however, they had gained, and that was of some importance. The yacht "Dart" had been brought back to Liverpool, and was now lying in one of the docks, under the charge of a broker, whose business it was to sell her. This broker knew nothing about her owner. She had been put in his hands for sale by a man who had sailed with her late owner, and had been directed by him to do this. This man had left the city. The date of this transaction agreed with the date which Tancred had already fixed upon as being the time of Frink's arrival at Liverpool.

Tancred was in the dark still about the chief object of his search, yet a few things had been discovered, and a few more things were suspected.

First, the "Dart" must have come on to Liverpool almost immediately, delaying only long enough to pick up a crew somewhere.

Secondly, the "Dart" had undoubtedly brought Frink to Liverpool in her.

Thirdly, Frink at once had waited upon Mrs. Henslowe.

Fourthly, he had prepared the way for his own appearance, as Tancred suspected, by means of this mysterious female, who had won his mother's confidence, and had gone away with her as her companion.

More than this he could not discover, nor could he even suspect. It would be necessary for him to wait until his agents and the police had made a fuller and further examination.

In the meantime, while thus waiting for the police, he resolved to gratify the desires of his heart, and also to quell his own anxiety, by paying a visit to Landsdowne Hall.

For already he had begun to feel anxious in another way. He had written to Lucy as well as to his mother, and had received no answer from her. He began to fear that there might be a cause for her silence, as well as for that of his mother. As one had been beguiled away he knew not where, and hidden from him, so, also, might the other have been spirited away out of his reach. Frink had been doubly treacherous; it was quite likely that he would also be triply treacherous. If his innocent mother and sister were victims of his machinations, why might not Lucy also be the same?

Besides, if Lucy should have suffered no harm from Frink, she would be more likely than any one else to give him information about him, for Frink's connections were closer with Landsdowne Hall than with any other place, and that was the one spot in all England where

he would have been most likely to put in an appearance after his return from the Island of Leonforte.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FENCING.

THESE were the motives that induced Tancred to go to Landsdowne Hall. On arriving at the place he asked at once for Lucy. The servant stared, and as he was an old acquaintance of Tancred, and moreover an admirer of his, he proceeded to tell him all that was known about her disappearance, and the search of Drury after her. In addition to this he told him much about the gossip of the servants' hall, which gossip had generally favored the theory that young Henslowe had run away with her to Gretna.

If anything could have added to the bewilderment of Tancred, it would have been this fresh mystery. Here was disappearance added to disappearance, and as far as the information of the servants went, this second one was quite as puzzling as the first, and the fate of Lucy was as dark as that of Mrs. Henslowe and Pauline. To Tancred it now seemed that there must be some common cause. It also seemed certain that Frink was the chief actor, but whether as agent or principal had yet to be found out.

If agent, then who was the principal?

Could it be this Drury? Of Lady Landsdowne he did not think. She was a woman, and therefore above suspicion. But Drury was different. He had been closely associated with Frink. Frink was solicitor of the estates, and as far as Tancred could learn, had been appointed to that post by Drury. To Drury, then, Frink, as Tancred thought, stood in the relation of employé. No doubt Frink would do whatever Drury wished him to do, and would certainly not do anything against his interests. Evidently these two were to all intents and purposes close allies, and were carrying out a common policy.

He could now see that this common policy had for some time past referred to himself. It was this that had led to his own appointment as Drury's private secretary. It was this that had led to his handsome pay for doing nothing; it was this that had led to the free-and-easy footing upon which he had been put; it was this that had led to the liberty with which he and Lucy had associated with one another, and which had so often excited his own surprise. Evidently the whole thing was part of a plan which aimed at his life.

He now saw that this plan aimed no less at the life of his mother and sister.

It also became evident from this latest discovery that Lucy herself was included in the same plan.

He had already failed utterly to fathom the motive of this design. So now he did not stop to ask himself why Drury should frame such a design against himself and his. He accepted it as a fact, and wished now simply to see whether it was possible to get upon the track of his friends. For this purpose he decided to have an interview with Drury.

Drury received him with manifest surprise, which was altogether too great to be checked. Tancred noticed it. As Drury entered he saw him stop, stare, start, and look at him with every expression of astonishment. Such, however, was his self-control that he quickly recovered himself and endeavored to be as unconcerned as possible. So he advanced with a smile, holding out his hand.

"My dear Henslowe. Why, it's really yourself! Positively, now? Well, well; this is indeed a delightful surprise. Why, some one said you had died of the plague at Alexandria. My dear fellow, it gives me infinite delight to see you *in propria persona* alive, well, robust, and better looking than ever."

Tancred took his hand, which was held out to him, and made a few remarks of a commonplace character, after which the two sat down. Each regarded the other curiously, and the conversation that followed was for some time of a non-committal character, as though the two, like skillful gladiators, were fencing for a time before coming to blows.

As the two regarded each other they each saw that a change had come over the other. Drury still affected indolence and good-natured garrulity, but Tancred saw that there was something beneath these things; that these qualities indeed served as a mask, and that he was a man who might have any purpose, however desperate, and carry it out unflinchingly.

Drury, on the other hand, saw in Tancred some one who was totally different from the man who a few months before had come here to be his private secretary. There was something in him now that looked strong, masterful, and commanding. In truth, a great change had indeed come over him, which was visible in his face, his mien, and even in the tone of his voice. It may have been the result of his recent tremendous experience where he had learned and suffered so much. It may also have been the magnitude of the present crisis, where the lives of all those who were most dear seemed at stake; or it may have been the consciousness of almost resistless power arising from the vast wealth which he possessed. This last of itself would have been sufficient to work a change in him. No longer was he the penniless youth struggling for a foothold in the world, and willing to humble himself. He was a man of vast wealth, and with the consciousness of corresponding power.

All this Drury saw in Tancred as he sat talking with him. And as he talked he turned over in his mind all the considerations that might affect his dealings with this man. Should he defy him, or should he conciliate? How much Tancred might know he could not tell as yet, but eventually he might find out. There was every chance for defiance, but there was also good cause for conciliation. The easiest as well as the wisest plan would be to remain on amicable terms with him. Frink he feared no more, and if it should come to a struggle with Tancred he thought he might be able to deal with him as he had dealt with Frink. Still this man would be a worse enemy than Frink. Against him Frink had already failed as was apparent by his presence here, and he was not one whose enmity was to be lightly incurred.

At length Tancred came to the point and asked him decidedly about Lucy. This led at once to a frank statement on Drury's part. The statement was made in a characteristic manner. He affirmed that he had known all along about Tancred's tender sentiments toward Lucy, and had had no objection, but that Frink had been exceedingly opposed. He then stated that shortly after Tancred's departure Lucy had mysteriously disappeared. He gave a detailed account of all his searches after her, by himself and with the help of the police, and concluded by the confession that at that moment he had not the remotest idea where she was.

All this Tancred had already learned from the servant, yet he went on to question Drury, not for the purpose of learning anything about Lucy's departure, but for the sake of finding out how far Drury himself might have been concerned in it. Drury answered all his questions with the utmost frankness, and Tancred found it impossible to detect him in a single instance of self-contradiction or inconsistency. According to his own statement he had quarreled with Frink and had sent him away. This quarrel, it seemed, had arisen out of the disappearance of Lucy. Drury believed that Frink had had something to do with it, and for this cause had quarreled.

This was precisely what Tancred himself felt inclined to believe. Frink had dealt a treacherous blow against himself; he had led away his mother and sister; that he should also have been the one who had led Lucy away was easy enough to believe; but this did not explain the actual connection of Drury with these acts. Drury's profession of hatred toward Frink could not go with Tancred for more than it was worth. It might be Drury's policy as principal to disclaim any act of his subordinate for the sake of diverting suspicion from himself. In this way Tancred did not lose one particle of his utter distrust of Drury, nor did he believe one word of what he said more than what seemed in itself to be probable.

At length Drury, in his confidences, reached the point where Frink went away. Here Tancred's impatience could no longer be restrained.

"Do you know where he started from?"
"Oh, yes!"
"Where?"
"Liverpool."
"Where did he go to?"
"Italy."
"How?"
"By a ship."
"A ship? Strange. Do you know her name?"

"Yes. Let me see. It was the 'Delta,' Captain Thain."

"The 'Delta,' Captain Thain," repeated Tan-

cred, and taking out his memorandum-book, he wrote down this name.

"Do you know whether there were any more passengers?"

"I believe there were. Let me see. Mention was made to me of some ladies."

"Ladies?"

"Yes."

"Do you know their names?"

Drury shook his head.

"Oh, no! I don't know anything about them. It was only from the interest I happened to take in Frink's movements that I knew about the ladies."

"Do you suppose that these ladies were friends of Frink, or going with him?"

"I don't know."

"Why may not Lucy herself have been one of them?" said Tancred, throwing out this question simply to see its effect, and without thinking that there was anything at all in what he said.

But at that question a sudden thought seemed to have flashed into the mind of Drury. He frowned, started, clinched his fist, and stared fixedly with stern face at Tancred.

"By Heaven!" he cried, "if I thought that were possible, I'd—but no—no—it's impossible—utterly impossible."

Nevertheless that thought took possession of Drury's mind, and the emotion which he evinced was not without effect on Tancred. For now he kept asking himself the very question which he had thrown out as a mere catch to Drury: "Why may not Lucy herself have been one of them?"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CAPTAIN THAIN.

FURTHER conversation with Drury elicited the information that the ship had been bound for Leghorn, though whether the passengers were going there or not was more than he could say. Still, this was something, and, in the eyes of Tancred, it was of the utmost importance. It gave him a starting-point. What had thus far troubled him most was the utter darkness which confounded him wherever he turned his eyes. His mother and sister, and finally Lucy, had all vanished without leaving a single trace behind. Now, at last, he would be able to take up the search with something definite to aim after. With his vast wealth he could make use of all the police machinery of Europe; and, when once on their track, it would indeed be strange if he could not ascertain their fate.

Whatever were his opinions about Drury, or whatever might be their ultimate relations, Tancred chose not to precipitate hostilities and parted with him, on this occasion, with the same outward appearance of amicability with which they had conversed together. Drury assured him that he would do all in his power to find Lucy; and if he could learn that Frink had led her off, he swore that he would do all in his power to punish Frink. Tancred made no remarks about either, and merely confined himself to a few statements as to his possible movements, which were too general to convey any information.

He now set forth upon his search without loss of time, and, first of all, went to Italy. Before going, he made inquiries at Liverpool about the "Delta," and learned that such a vessel had really left Liverpool for Italian ports at the date mentioned by Drury, and had not been back since. The passengers had been taken by the captain on his own private account, and no names had been given to the consignees. The "Delta" might go first to Leghorn, but was equally likely to go to any other port, as her destination was a general one; she certainly would stop at Leghorn, however, as she had consignments to merchants in that port.

All this information served to show Tancred that his search would be wide, extended, and by no means simple or easy; and it was with this for his guide that he arrived at Leghorn.

Here he at once secured the help of the police, and made inquiries. He learned that the ship "Delta" had been there, and had landed some English manufactures, but had only remained a week; after which she had sailed for Naples. She had brought no passengers. If she had, they would have been noted by the police, and their passports would have been viséed. Nothing of the kind, however, had occurred.

From Leghorn Tancred now went to Naples. Inquiries made here led to the discovery that the "Delta" was here also; that she had landed

goods and had gone to Venice. No passengers had come.

Upon this, Tancred went to Venice, with the same result precisely. He learned that the "Delta" had gone to Trieste.

Over to Trieste he went, but only to be once more baffled. The wanderings of the "Delta" were most tantalizing, and reminded him of the game played by little boys, who write in a book, referring to some particular page, which, on being found, bears a reference to some other page, and so on to the end of the book. At Trieste he found a reference to Ancona, and at Ancona a reference to Valetta. Finally, at Valetta, he found a reference to Marseilles, and at Marseilles he found the "Delta" herself.

The police at Marseilles aided him with characteristic promptness. Upon his information Captain Thain was at once arrested. This worthy did not appear to have bargained for anything of this sort; and when, in addition to the dreaded French police, he found himself also confronted with the stern face and penetrating eye of Tancred, who demanded of him an account of his mother and sister, he at once signified his willingness, nay, his eagerness, to tell all.

"Who engaged their passage?"

"Mr. Frink."

"What for?"

"I don't know."

"Where to?"

"To Leghorn."

"Who was the lady with them?"

"There was Mrs. Henslowe, and Miss Henslowe, named Pauline; and in addition there was their friend, Miss Landsdowne."

"Miss what?" cried Tancred, in horror and amazement.

"Miss Landsdowne—name, Lucy. That's what they called her."

The effect of this discovery on Tancred was overwhelming; nevertheless, he subdued his emotion and went on to question the captain.

"Do you know why they happened to go with Mr. Frink?"

"No. I never was in their confidence."

"Did they go willingly?"

"Oh, yes; most willingly."

"They were friendly, then?"

"Oh, yes; perfectly so."

"And Miss Landsdowne, was she friendly with Frink?"

"Oh, quite, so far as I could see."

"Well then, go on, tell us where they landed."

"Well, I'll tell all I know. You see the ship was loaded with stuff for different ports, and the first was Marsala. After that Girgenti, on the south of Sicily. Now on reaching Girgenti we had to anchor a couple of days to send the stuff ashore, and here Mr. Frink offered to take the ladies ashore to show them some magnificent ruins. He said they were the ruins of some great city of old times, inhabited by the Greeks. I dare say you know all about it."

"Oh, yes. Agrigentum. Well, go on."

"Well, they all went ashore and visited the ruins, and after this I had a little leisure myself, so I joined them, and then Mr. Frink proposed a little ride into the country. It was a pretty place, and the ladies quite liked the idea. So we all started off."

"You went with the party then?"

"Yes; they invited me and so I went. Well, we rode about a couple of miles and came to a narrow sort of ravine, when suddenly we found ourselves surrounded by brigands."

"Brigands!"

"Yes, nearly a hundred. They called themselves Republicans, but that means brigands, and you'll see that they were all of that. Well, in an instant we were every one of us arrested."

"All of you. Then how did you escape?"

"I'm coming to that. The ladies were frightened at first, but the captain of the band informed them that they wouldn't be harmed. He told them through me. I could speak Italian. So then they grew calm. He told them he would hold them for ransom, and that they would have to communicate with their friends as soon as possible."

"Ransom. Ah! and how much?"

"Well, he wouldn't tell that at first, but he made them all hand over their papers, and had them examined. He sent them away, I think, to some one who understood English, for when they came back the captain was very much elated. He called me to him and informed me that the ladies were miladis, English nobles, all of them, that one was Lady Landsdowne—that's the one that called herself Miss Landsdowne. I suppose—and the others were all lords and

ladies except me. So he had made up his mind to hold them all to ransom, and had fixed the ransom for the whole party at one hundred thousand pounds. As for me, I was too paltry to be considered, so they let me go for the purpose of informing their friends. I was not allowed to take any written message whatever from any one of them, but merely to state the facts to their friends. And that was the reason why I was freed."

"And Frink was left."

"Yes."

"Well, did you communicate with their friends?"

"I did all I could do. I wrote to a Liverpool merchant, telling him to let the relations of Lady Landsdowne and the Henslowes know. I also hunted up the British Ambassador at Naples as soon as I could, and made him acquainted with the facts. He said he would do all he could. So, as I could do no more, I left it in his hands, and have been on my business ever since."

"Did the British Ambassador do anything?"

"I don't know. I had his solemn promise; and you may go and ask him, and you'll see that this is all true. I've no motive for telling anything but the truth."

Captain Thain's story, as the reader may see, was a judicious mixture of truth and fable, and this Tancred judged it to be from the nature of the man. Such as it was, however, the captain stuck to it. Tancred saw him again and again in private, and tried to get him to confess the full truth, but in vain. He offered him enormous bribes, but to no purpose. The captain persisted in the assertion that he had told all. From which persistence Tancred gathered a belief, not in the captain's honesty or veracity, but that his dear ones had met with a fate so terrible that the captain dared not tell the truth about it.

Under these circumstances he decided to go to Naples and see the British Ambassador for himself.

He went there accordingly and saw that functionary. He learned that Captain Thain had actually been there and given the same statement that he had made to Tancred. His Excellency the British Ambassador had at once put himself into communication with the Neapolitan authorities, who had put themselves into communication with the Sicilian authorities, who had given directions for the pursuit and arrest of the brigands. Hitherto, his Excellency the British Ambassador regretted to inform Tancred, the efforts of the Sicilian authorities had not been crowned with success.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AMONG THE BRIGANDS.

PAULINE and Lucy stood clinging to Mrs. Henslowe, and the brigands stood all around them. As Captain Thain informed them who they were, who had stopped them, and what their intentions were, they felt all their worst fears confirmed, and all hope died within them. If these brigands had arrested them under the supposition that they were great personages, they did not know how to disabuse their minds. The enormous ransom mentioned by Thain was not to be thought of; but then there was no ransom whatever which could be obtained. Mrs. Henslowe and Pauline had only enough to pay their way to Leghorn, and were dependent upon Tancred. Lucy was a poor fugitive. No ransom could be hoped for. The very mention of the word ransom was enough to fill them with despair.

"Can't you tell them," said Mrs. Henslowe to Captain Thain, "that it is all a mistake?"

The captain shook his head.

"They've been looking out for some time for a party of English, and they are determined to keep us."

"But we are poor."

"You could never make them think so. These fellows think that every English traveler is a nobleman—a milord or miladi—without any limit to his wealth."

"The question of ransom," said Mrs. Henslowe, "is not to be thought of. I have nothing in the world but what is about me. Why should they put us to trouble when they cannot possibly get anything by it?"

"Ah, madam, there you are altogether right; but the mischief is you can't do anything with these fellows. They've got their minds made up, and all that you say won't move them

one single hair's breadth. They've determined to make us English lords and ladies."

"But what is to be the end of it?" cried Mrs. Henslowe.

Captain Thain shrugged his shoulders and said nothing. But this gesture and this silence were both eloquent in the highest degree, and served to express a world of meaning, while to those who were able to understand it this suggested meaning was frightful.

"But, Captain Thain," said Pauline, "what is the use of their keeping us prisoners? They can't get any ransom. We are poor."

"Oh, well," said the captain, "they will wait."

"But waiting won't do any good," continued Pauline; "we never can get any money."

The captain was silent.

"And so—why can't they be persuaded to let us go, now, and we will give them all that we have."

"Well, they already are sure of that, but they hope for more."

"But they can't get any more."

The captain shrugged his shoulders.

"So what's the use of keeping us?"

"No use, of course, miss," said the captain, "only you can't get them to think so. They are all sure that you are nobles."

"Nobles! What put that into their heads?"

"Their fancy, I suppose. They think they've got quite a windfall."

"Well, they will only have to find out that they have captured two or three poor ladies, and I should like to know what is to be done in that case, and, for that matter, I should like to know what they can do themselves."

"Well, miss, that is a matter that I should prefer not to speak about at all."

"In that case," said Pauline, "I shall have to ask you to act as interpreter, and allow me to speak through you with the captain of this gang."

"With pleasure, miss."

Saying this, Captain Thain called to one of the brigands with whom he had already been talking, and made him acquainted with Pauline's wish. The brigand chief was a stout, thick-set man, who looked like a retired grocer. The expression of his face was perfectly good-natured, without a particle of anything like ferocity visible in it. He certainly did not look like the ideal bandit which Pauline had in her mind.

Upon learning Pauline's wish, the brigand chief came forward and said, through the interpreter, that he would be very happy, indeed, to listen to miladi, and to do anything in the world which should contribute to the comfort of miladi, or the other miladis.

Upon this encouraging intelligence, Pauline began.

In the first place, she wished to assure the gentlemen before her that they had made a great mistake. They were not English nobles, but very plain English people, and also very poor. It was impossible for them to obtain any more money than what they had already on their own persons.

The captain, with a smile, assured her that such beauty and grace as miladi had would do honor to a throne, and that he would do all in his power to make them comfortable until the ransom should arrive.

At the second mention of their supposed wealth, Pauline felt annoyed, and reiterated her assertion that they were poor.

The brigand chief smiled, and nodded, and shrugged his shoulders.

"For whom do you take us?" asked Pauline.

"For English milords and miladis."

"Why?"

The brigand chief stated that he had obtained some papers in the pockets of the gentlemen, and had questioned them also. From which papers and questioning they had learned that their prisoners were Lord Frinks, and Miladi Enneslo, with her daughter, and Miladi la Contessa de Lansdauno.

This statement was not without effect upon Pauline. Until then she had forgotten the rank and title of Lucy. So accustomed had she grown to consider Lucy as her own equal that she could only think with an effort upon her real position in life. Besides, she was ignorant of Lucy's secret. That secret she had carefully guarded, since she did not deem it proper to tell the story of her birth except when it should be necessary.

Lucy herself heard all this conversation, and this last remark was not without its effect upon her. To her it seemed as if the brigands had

found out that there was a Lady Landsdowne in the party, and had consequently arrested all on her account. Although she herself did not know how she might be ransomed, still she was willing to bear her troubles by herself, and not draw others into them, particularly when those others were so dear to her.

So now Lucy interfered in the conversation.

"Tell him," said she to Captain Thain, "that he is mistaken. I am the only miladi. I am Lady Landsdowne, but these ladies are not noble. They are plain citizens of the middle class. They are also poor, and cannot find any ransom. It will be unjust as well as useless to hold them as prisoners. It will be sufficient to detain me."

At this generous proposal of Lucy's there was agitation on both sides: Pauline declaring that she must not try to sacrifice herself for them, while the brigand chief shrugged his shoulders very violently, and talked for a long time with Captain Thain. In this conversation the name of Lansdauno was mentioned very often, as well as that of Enneslo.

The end of it was that the captain assured Lucy that she was mistaken in her statement, and that her offer was not to be thought of.

"These ladies," said he, "are also English nobles—countesses both,—and they shall not allow you to offer yourself up for them. They, too, must join with you in bearing their share of the ransom. One of you—that is you alone—might experience a little delay if you had to raise the whole sum yourself, but if it is divided among all four—the Milor Frinko and the three miladis—it will amount to only one quarter of the whole sum for each person. This will make it very easy and agreeable. At the same time, we will do all in our power to make the time pass pleasantly until the ransom comes."

"But the ransom cannot come," said Pauline—"the ransom will never come."

The brigand chief shrugged his shoulders.

"What then?" asked Pauline.

Captain Thain interpreted this question.

The brigand chief answered:

"There is the usual course," said he—"the custom."

"The usual course—the custom—what may that be?" asked Pauline.

"Death!" said the brigand.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP.

AT that dread word there was silence for some time. Lucy shrunk back within herself, and looked around with awe-struck face. But Pauline was less timid, and still struggled against the harsh fate that had fallen upon them. There was no longer any hope of saving herself,—no longer any chance of softening or modifying the sentiments of the brigands,—but the thought of her mother came to her, and there arose within her the hope that her mother might be saved. Aged, weak, infirm, and poor, there was no reason why the brigands should care about taking her with them; and if she were set free she might yet reach Tancred, and let him know what had happened. Such were Pauline's thoughts.

"One word more," said she, speaking to Captain Thain, as interpreter, in the usual way. "My mamma is weak, and ill, and old. There is no reason why she should be detained as prisoner. Can you not let her go? Take me. It will be enough to hold one member of a family as ransom."

The brigand chief shook his head as this was translated to him.

"No, no," said he; "better have all we can—all the better security. Two in a family make it all the better, for if one dies, you see, we'll have the other left. No, no; the old Contessa must come along with us."

"But she is too infirm," said Pauline.

"Oh, we will altry to make it pleasant for her," said the brigand chief, cheerfully.

"It will be enough to have me."

"Two are safer than one," rejoined the brigand.

But at this moment the conversation was terminated by Mrs. Henslowe herself. She had been talking with Lucy, and had only caught the last few words.

"Pauline, child," she said, "what nonsense! Why, I shouldn't be willing to leave you even if they were willing to let me. Do you think I would go away and leave you alone with them? I'm astonished to find out what an opinion you have of me."

This of course put a stop to Pauline's entreaties, and she could only yield to fate.

Some further conversation now took place between Captain Thain and the brigand chief, after which the captain advanced to the ladies and addressed them as follows:

"Ladies," said he, "this chief of the brigands has just been explaining matters to me. He tells me that, in order to obtain the ransom, it will be necessary for one of this party to go away and get it. Moreover, he tells me that, as I am not a nobleman, he will let me off, to go away and communicate with your friends; and so if you have any friends I should like to have their names—and if you want to write a letter, why you might scribble a few lines, if it were only with a lead-pencil. I've got a pocket-book here and you could write in the leaves of it. So now, if you will only make haste, I'll be obliged. First of all, madam, I'll ask you."

At this he turned to Mrs. Henslowe.

"There's no one to whom I can write," said Mrs. Henslowe. "My son Tancred can never raise our ransom, so why should I write?"

"Well, mamma," said Pauline, "we may as well say something; so captain, if you will be kind enough—"

"With these words she took the captain's proffered pocket-book and pencil, and opening it, she wrote on a blank leaf:

"DEAREST TANCRED,—If you ever see this you will know that we are prisoners among the Sicilian brigands. If you can induce the British Government to do anything, let them know that we were captured a few miles out of Sciacca. God knows what may be the end of this. May He bless you and have you in His keeping. Good-by.
PAULINE."

To this Mrs. Henslowe added a few words:

"God bless you, my own darling boy.
Your own loving MOTHER."

Finally Lucy added something:

"DEAREST TANCRED,—Farewell forever.
Your own LUCY."

Captain Thain stood silently watching each lady as she wrote down her last words of farewell.

"What is the address?" he asked at last.

"Tancred Henslowe, Leghorn, Italy," said Pauline, writing out the address as she spoke.

"And you, miss—what is your address?" he asked, turning to Lucy.

"The same," said she.

"But your friends. Have you no friends in England?"

"No," said Lucy. "Not one."

She had thought it all over and had made up her mind to die rather than apply for help to Lady Landsdowne or Drury.

The captain raised his eyebrows and turned away. As he walked off Frink came up to him.

Thus far Frink had been a spectator and auditor, and had seen and heard things which created some surprise. He had heard the captain mention him particularly by name as one of the prisoners, and as an English milord. He had also heard the captain say that he himself was to be set free so as to go away to see about the ransom. Now, in itself, neither of these statements would have caused any particular uneasiness to be felt by Frink, for they were what he expected; but in addition to these there was the long conversation with the brigand chief, the fact that Captain Thain had this game altogether in his own hands, and the additional fact that he seemed fully bent on playing his own game quite irrespective of Frink. These things Frink had noticed, and these were the things that created anxiety in his mind. It was now plain that Thain was going away, and it seemed very evident that he expected to leave him behind as a prisoner. But Frink had not by any means bargained for this.

So he determined to know the worst as soon as possible. With this intent he came up to Captain Thain and drew him aside.

"A word with you, captain."

"Certainly, most certainly."

"What's the meaning of all this? What are you about? What am I to do?" said Frink, in a hurried, feverish voice, looking at Captain Thain with piercing scrutiny. Captain Thain returned his gaze with the utmost indifference, and said:

"Well, it's my opinion that you and I have both got to look out for ourselves the best we can. These gentlemen have suggested that I had better go and try and raise the ransom."

"Ransom! Ransom be hanged," said Frink. "They haven't any idea of ransom for me."

"Unfortunately for you," said Captain Thain, "that's the very idea they have got."

"What! for me?"

"For you."

"What!" cried Frink, "do you mean to say that I'm a prisoner here?"

"Well, really, it does look a little like it," said Thain, in a mocking voice.

The tone was not lost on Frink. He regarded the other scrutinizingly, and for some time was silent.

"Then you propose to go away and leave me here?" he said at length in a steady voice, with the same scrutinizing look.

Captain Thain nodded pleasantly.

"That's exactly it," he said, with a bright smile.

"And leave me here?" continued Frink.

Captain Thain nodded.

"A prisoner?"

"Yes."

"With these ladies?"

"Exactly."

"Well, in that case what becomes of our agreement?"

"Well, that's all carried out."

"Carried out! How?"

"Why, I agreed to bring these ladies here and deliver them over to the brigands. Haven't I done so? Aren't they all here now prisoners—in this lawless country—with no hope of escape, and no possibility of ransom? Don't you know that when the time has passed allotted by the bandits for the ransom to come, if that ransom does not come they will surely be killed? Don't you know that?"

"Yes, yes; but me—me—what do you mean by betraying me?"

"Monsieur," said Thain, in the same mocking voice. "Don't use such coarse language. I've simply allowed the bandits to take you too, and why not? You came out with the party. Why should I save you?"

Frink gave a ghastly smile.

"Well," said he, "I'll give you—"

"Monsieur," interrupted Thain, "you haven't got it to give. Besides, there's a prior engagement, by virtue of which you are here."

"A prior engagement!" cried Frink, starting back, as a fearful thought suggested itself.

"With whom?"

"With Drury!" said Captain Thain.

At this, Frink struck his forehead with his hand, and, with a deep curse, turned away.

Captain Thain also turned away, and walked off in another direction.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CAPTIVES.

It was, indeed, a bitter moment for Frink, as he learned that all his treachery had recoiled upon his own head, and that the pit he had dugged for others was the very one into which he had fallen himself. Bitter was it to see that this was the end of his far-reaching plans, and that the fate which he had so carefully elaborated for the heirs of Landsdowne had implicated himself in its folds. But bad as this was, there were two elements of bitterness in it which made it worse. One was, that Captain Thain, whom he had chosen to be the blind tool toward working out his own plans of treachery and baseness, should have turned against him in this way; and the other was, that in the struggle of cunning intellect he should have been so completely defeated by his rival, Drury.

The worst of it was that he could not understand how this had happened. For this he had not been prepared, nor had he ever anticipated anything of the kind. He had made his arrangements with Captain Thain without ever thinking that Drury was on his track. But now he saw plainly that he must have been watched by Drury all the time. He must have been dogged most pertinaciously, and all his plans must have been found out and guarded against. It was evident that Drury had outbribed him, and had learned from Captain Thain all his own plots. Drury had by high bidding and larger payment obtained possession of his own secret confidential agent, and had induced this confidential agent to further his views. Much Frink wondered whether Drury could have known about Lucy. If he had known it seemed strange that he should have permitted her to be taken away in this fashion. Nothing certainly could have been gained by Drury and

Lady Landsdowne from the loss of Lucy, while very much injury would be done to them. It seemed impossible that they could know about her, and yet it seemed strange that with all Drury's close espionage he had not found out that Lucy was with the Henslowes.

But Frink's speculations were at length cut short by a peremptory notice from the brigand chief to prepare to start. Each one then mounted the donkey which he or she had been riding previous to the capture, and with the brigands before, behind, and on either side of them, they all moved away from the ravine.

Their course as they first came had been across the ravine; but now, under the guidance of the brigand chief, it lay up the ravine. The track was much like the one which they had thus far been traversing, but somewhat narrower and rougher. Up this path they went, and after about half an hour they found themselves upon the slope of a hill. From this position the prospect was more extensive than it had been for some time past. Having emerged from the rocky bowlders the view was unobstructed. Behind them was the sea, before them arose a range of lofty mountains, while on either side were high lands which looked like spurs that projected from the mountains and descended toward the sea.

They traveled thus all the remainder of the day. The path was rough and the road hilly, and the donkeys went at a walk. The guard of brigands, which never left them, regulated this pace, and did not allow them to go out of reach. Escape was thus impossible, and indeed all thought of escape was prevented by the fact that this guard was armed, and the slightest attempt to fly would have been punished with the life-blood of the fugitive.

They rode along until sundown. They all felt that they had gone a long distance, though how long no one had any idea. At sundown they reached a ridge of rocks, with olive-trees all around, that grew out of the scant soil. In the distance towns and villages were visible, but the spot which they had reached seemed lonely enough. Here they rested for the night. Food was furnished for the party, and some straw was brought by the brigands for the ladies.

On the following morning they all started afresh, and during all the following day they traveled onward. Only one half of the brigands were visible. The remainder had withdrawn. No communication was possible between the captives and their captors, owing to the ignorance of Italian of the former. The scene this day was very beautiful. As a general thing they seemed to mount higher into more elevated land, advancing steadily along a track which led up the mountains. Here and there they could see villages and hamlets,—now nestling at the foot of hills,—again perched on the edge of cliffs. The hills also were largely cultivated. They passed vineyards, and olive-groves. They also met peasants in considerable numbers, with whom these brigands seemed to be on very friendly terms, but their ignorance of the language prevented the captives from gaining any benefit from this.

At length to their great joy they reached their destination. It was toward the close of the second day. They came to a place on the side of a hill which looked down into a valley. On the opposite side of this valley hills arose, and in the distance towns were visible. Still the place was quite secluded, sufficiently so, indeed, for the purposes of brigands, and more than was agreeable to the captives.

This stopping-place was a village of a dozen white houses. In the midst of this was an old church which was in a ruinous condition. The roof was all right, but the windows were gone. The altar was dismantled, and the church had not been used as such for some time. Into this they were all required to go, and by signs they were made to understand that this was to be their dwelling-place, or prison. A number of women were here whom Pauline supposed to be the wives of the brigands. Here the party entered and looked around, partly with a feeling of relief that their wanderings were over, and partly with a feeling of curiosity as to this dwelling-place of theirs. There was some conversation between the brigands and the women, after which the latter came forward and by signs led the ladies into a small chamber at one end. Here there were two straw beds; but though the furniture was scant and rude, still there was the privilege of privacy, and this was of itself a blessing too great to be undervalued.

Here the captives entered upon a new life of captivity—a life different from anything which

they had known before—a life also to which they all knew there could be but one end—the end which the brigand chief himself had announced—death! For how could they hope to obtain the ransom stipulated, or indeed any ransom whatever? The three months would pass, the ransom would not be ready, and so for all of them there would be death!

Mrs. Henslowe had felt much fatigue from the journey, and also needed better accommodations than anything which this village could furnish. Her condition gave Pauline much anxiety, but being of a sanguine temperament, she hoped for the best. Pauline indeed felt less anxiety than she might otherwise have known, for the reason that she had something to do. This something was the acquirement of the language of the people, the Italian, or rather that Italian *patois* which is spoken in Sicily. Being naturally clever, she made very great progress, and spent about twenty hours of the twenty-four in this pursuit. The consequence was that she made very rapid advances, and in a few weeks could understand almost everything that these people might have occasion to say, and this was the very thing she wished to do.

Pauline was a great favorite with these women, partly because she was so much with them, partly because she could understand them, and partly on account of her own genial ways. Her mother's health was a frequent cause of anxiety, but there came, at length, an event which brought with it fresh perplexity. This was the removal of Mrs. Henslowe to another place. The brigands, in fact, began to see that her health suffered in this place, on account of the lack of comforts incident upon her life here, and so they decided to send her away, retaining Pauline and Lucy. They intended to take her to the convent of Monte Citorio, which was not more than ten miles away, in which place she might receive every attention, and be in a position to obtain her liberty whenever she wished. Mrs. Henslowe objected to this, but Pauline saw that it was the only chance for her life, and urged her to go.

Pauline and Lucy were now left to themselves.

They saw Frink every day.

On the day after the departure of Mrs. Henslowe, he said:

"I am glad she is gone. It will be best for her and for us. We can now arrange a plan of escape. As long as she was with us, we were prisoners; but now that she is gone, we shall be able to fly."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PLANS OF ESCAPE.

Six or seven weeks had at length passed away in this captivity. Mrs. Henslowe's departure to Monte Citorio was attended with beneficial results, for Pauline heard that she was much better, and, being of a very sanguine temper, she persisted in hoping for the best. Pauline had become a universal favorite. By constant effort she had mastered the language sufficiently to carry on any sort of a conversation, and this was at once a recreation to her, and an advantage; it served to beguile many and many a tedious hour. It also showed her the character, habits, mode of thought, and general ways of the Sicilians. Moreover, it brought her into close association with them, and enabled her to secure their good will and confidence.

The Sicilian women were by no means a bad lot. They thought, as a matter of course, that brigandage was a perfectly respectable, honorable, and Christian mode of getting one's living; but, at the same time, they were full of sympathy for their prisoners. Not one of these women would have refused any kind of office for the prisoners, but, at the same time, they would never dream of assisting them to escape: their deliverance could only be obtained with the consent of their husbands, unless, indeed, they should succeed in flying off by themselves.

The women were thus naturally kind hearted; but Pauline's amiability and cleverness, together with her knowledge of the language, won from them a larger amount of affection, which also was extended to Lucy. Lucy also, upon seeing the good effects that attended Pauline's endeavor to learn the language, tried to do the same. Her success was by no means remarkable, yet still she learned enough to enable her to get along with the help of signs and gestures, and, though she lagged far behind Pauline, yet she learned enough to be very useful to her.

Of the robbers, they did not see very much. These gentry came and went without molesting the prisoners. They appeared to have unbounded confidence in their women, for they often left the place for days together with no other guards over the prisoners except these; but the confidence was justified as far as they were concerned. No doubt they relied upon the remoteness of the place, and did not suppose that any of the prisoners would dream of trying to escape.

All this time Frink had been allowed considerable liberty. He was confined in a cottage not far from the old church, and was permitted to see the ladies every day in the afternoon for two or three hours. The ladies both felt sorry for him, and tried to make it as pleasant for him as possible. Pauline had never felt any repugnance to him, and whatever Lucy had felt once, had become gradually effaced, first, by the association of the sea voyage, but latterly by the tie of a common misfortune. They could not look at this wretched, lonely, haggard man, without deep commiseration.

All the time that Frink had passed had been spent by him in deliberating over his position, and the best chance to escape. He had marked the course which they had taken when they had first been brought here, and had noticed that it tended steadily toward the north. Far away toward the south he could see a blue line along the horizon, which he knew to be the sea, and believed to be near Sciacca. It did not seem to be more than thirty miles away. The country between looked brown and burnt, but there were numerous villages visible, and there were also vineyards, and olive-groves. To be confined in a robber's hold while all around were villages and towns, was an intolerable thing, and therefore Frink watched, and waited, and planned, and hoped.

This constant watching at length revealed to him the important fact that the guard was but carelessly kept. First, there was the fact that the men went away leaving only the women; and secondly, there was also the fact that the women did not trouble themselves particularly about their prisoners. This might have arisen from the conviction that the prisoners had no idea of trying to escape, or it may have sprung from the belief that in such a country they never could find their way to any place of refuge. However this may have been, there was the fact.

The question then arose how to go about his escape. And first of all, should he fly alone, or should he take one or both of the ladies?

To fly alone seemed perfectly easy. As for the ladies, it was only Lucy that he thought of rescuing. She was the prize for which he had been playing so desperately yet so patiently. If he could rescue her he would earn her endless gratitude, and if he could win her for his wife the way to Landsdowne would be opened up. To leave Lucy behind was therefore not to be thought of; still he knew that Lucy would not be willing to go alone without Pauline, and consequently it would be necessary for him to devise some plan by which he could persuade her to fly. A little deliberation showed him this.

The next opportunity that he had he mentioned to them the plan that he had formed. Already he had made statements to them which were calculated to inspire alarm and stimulate the desire to escape. He now ventured to recommend flight at the earliest possible time.

"The weeks are passing," he said; "three months will soon go by. Our ransom will not be here. You know what the result will be. The brigand chief said it—death!"

"But do you think they will really be so cruel?" asked Lucy; "they seem so kind."

"There's no hope," said Frink; "it is their law, and they always stand by it."

"I don't see how they can have the heart to—"

"Don't trust them. When money is concerned, these men are as merciless as fiends."

"I'm sure I should think these women would persuade them to spare us."

Frink shook his head.

"These women," said he, "are the slaves of their lords, and have no thought separate from them. If their husbands ordered them, they themselves would calmly cut all our throats."

By such representations as these Lucy's scruples and timid hesitation were done away with. Pauline, being of a far more enterprising nature, needed no persuasion. She herself was only too eager to fly. There was but one objection.

"But, suppose we get away, what will become of poor mamma?"

"But what can you do for her if you are here?"

"Well, I can hear from her at least and learn how she is."

"But, if you are free, you will be able to do something. You can appeal to the British Ambassador."

"Oh! can I? can I, really? And do you think he would help me?"

"Of course. What do you suppose an ambassador is made for? That is his highest duty—to protect his fellow countrymen."

Now they talked over the details of their flight. Day after day was taken up in making arrangements. As Lucy was so timid, it was decided and agreed upon that Frink should take charge of her, while Pauline should go by herself. By dividing in this way the chances of capture would be diminished. A place of rendezvous was appointed on the other side of the valley, where a white tower arose from out a mass of foliage. For Frink, on his long observation of the whole country, had settled upon everything. It was also arranged that they should disguise themselves. Frink was to dress as an Italian peasant, Lucy like a peasant woman, while Pauline resolved to dress as a boy. She succeeded in getting these dresses without any difficulty, and also in obtaining some dark-colored liquid, with which they could stain their faces to the swarthy complexion of the children of Sicily. Such was Pauline's intimacy with the robber-women, and such was the freedom now allowed, that she was able to make these preparations without awakening the slightest suspicion.

Frink's design will now be manifest. His former plot had been to go up the country with Mrs. Henslowe, and Pauline, and Lucy, have the party arrested by brigands, save Lucy and fly, leaving the others with the brigands, by which way he would complete the destruction of the Henslowe family, and at the same time win Lucy's gratitude as the savior of her life. But the counter-plot of Drury with Thain had involved him in this very ruin that he had planned for others. His present purpose was to carry out his original plan. He would fly with Lucy, and save her if possible. Pauline would be left to wander by herself throughout the wilds of Sicily, to be recaptured, as he confidently believed, or to perish. As to Pauline and her mother, he desired and hoped never to hear of them again. The white tower which he had named as a rendezvous, he had indicated for the express purpose of leading Pauline astray, for he had observed numbers of men coming and going at that point, and had concluded that it was a haunt of brigands. For his own part, he intended to fly with Lucy in a totally different direction.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FLIGHT.

The night for the attempt at last came. It was clear, and the sky was bright with stars. There was no moon, but that was an advantage. The moonlight would have disclosed too much. What light there was served to show a pathway, while at the same time it rendered concealment easy. At about midnight Frink's low rap was heard, and Lucy got out of the window and joined him. The women were all asleep, and the men were all away. Her departure was effected without noise, and without difficulty. Frink had arranged this beforehand, and the understanding with Pauline was that she should set out a half an hour after they left, and make for the tower already mentioned. They would wait there for her.

Pauline now waited as patiently as possible until about a half an hour seemed to have passed. All was still. She then set forth.

She had already disguised herself. Her hair was cut short, her face and hands stained brown, and she wore the clothes of a peasant boy. She looked like a handsome Sicilian lad of about fifteen. Such were her preparations, and in such a guise did she set forth to fly from the brigands.

At first there was the excitement of the adventure, and there was also the thought that none but women were around her. Had it not been for this, Pauline's courage might have faltered, and she might have turned back from an attempt like this in which she was to cope with darkness, and solitude, and danger. But

the absence of the brigands reassured her, and with every step of the way she felt an increase of confidence. In this way she stole off from the old church, and out of the little cluster of houses. She then came to the brow of a long hill that ran down for several miles into a valley. On the opposite side was the tower whose white outline was now but barely discernible, but she had seen it often enough by day, and had marked the place too well to miss it. On the long slope there were clusters of olive-trees here and there, and she darted under the shadow of these as soon as she could. The ground was quite even, and the night was not so dark but that she could see her way so as to secure a fair footing.

Down this long slope she went, taking advantage of the shadow of trees and groves whenever she could, and at other times going over the open. She hoped to catch up with Frink and Lucy, and therefore went as fast as she could for a time, until at length she had gone far enough away to make her feel more secure, and then she slackened her pace, so as to save her strength. At last she reached the valley at the bottom of the long descent. Here there was a grove, through which she had to pass. All was still, and the only noise was the sound of her own footsteps. Under the trees it was quite dark; and more than once she stumbled and fell over projecting roots. She also became bewildered, and wandered for some distance. The grove seemed much larger than she had supposed, but there was a general slope of the ground, and this served her as a guide, for she kept onward in the direction where the ground declined.

At length she came to some rocks and round bowlders of various sizes. It looked exactly like the ravine where she and her friends had been captured; in fact, it was the very counterpart of that place. She saw the same surrounding wall of rocks and ledges, the same rough bowlders strewn promiscuously around. This resemblance was due to the fact that both places were of that sort very common in Sicily, namely: they were the beds of river torrents. During the wet season these places are full of roaring, impassable torrents, while at other-times they present a scene of barren desolation. This place Pauline crossed, and on reaching the opposite side she found herself once more in a grove like that which she had left behind. Here the ground began to ascend, and she now rightly concluded that she was on the opposite side of the valley.

Thus far she had seen nothing of Frink and Lucy, and had heard nothing. At first she had hoped to catch up with them, but after her wanderings in the grove she had given up this idea, and had deferred all hope of meeting them until they should all encounter one another at the rendezvous of the tower. In this hope she toiled along and ascended the slope. The ground here was steeper than it had been on the opposite side. Pauline had become completely bewildered in the grove; she had lost all idea of her true course, and was merely going on what seemed nearest to the true one. She was going up a rising ground, and as long as she did this it seemed to her as though she was crossing the valley, and ought to come out somewhere not very far away from the tower.

Several hours had now passed, and Pauline thought she must have gone the distance requisite to bring her to the tower, but as yet there were no signs of it. The trees surrounded her on all sides, shutting out all sight of anything. The ground still ascended, and was now steeper and rougher. Pauline was compelled to go more slowly—a thing she was by no means unwilling to do, for she was now afraid of moving too far away from the tower. Instead of walking, she seemed to be climbing, and the ascent at length grew so steep that she was compelled to sit down and rest several times.

It seemed useless now for her to keep on at this rate, so as she sat and rested she thought over her past course, and tried to discover where her mistake had been. It seemed now to her that she had passed beyond the tower either on one side or the other; which side she could not tell. To go back was not a pleasant idea. She preferred to take a new course, either to the right or to the left. Which of these to take she could not decide for some time, but at last by a mere instinct, she turned toward the right. She now walked in this new direction for a long time. The trees grew more and more scattered, and at length she came to a narrow pathway. This she crossed and kept on in her former course. The trees grew thinner and more scat-

tered, and it seemed to Pauline that she was approaching some open place.

Now, too, the darkness began to decline, and the flushed sky showed her where the east was. It was dawn of day. She had been wandering all the night. She was footsore and faint, and her trembling limbs could scarce support their weight. At last there was a burst of red light; the sun arose, and at the same time Pauline came out upon the brow of a high wide hill.

The hill was bare. She was on the edge of the grove. She could see for an immense distance. Her position was so elevated that all the surrounding country appeared to be spread beneath her feet. She could not recognize anything. She could not make out anything that looked like the place she had escaped from. At length as her eyes wandered all about they rested on an object far down the hill. It was a white tower, which seemed to be of the same shape and size as the one which had been appointed for the rendezvous. A longer survey convinced Pauline that it must be the one, and that she had walked past it while going through the woods. It was about two or three miles down, and she had gone that far beyond it, climbing all the way.

The sight of the tower filled her with joy. At once all her fatigue was forgotten. She started immediately to return. There she thought Frink and Lucy were awaiting her, perhaps already they were deploring her absence, perhaps they were going to do something rash to save her. She must hasten back and join them. Full of joy she hurried back, but her joy did not make her imprudent. She remembered the danger there was of discovery, and kept close under the trees. In this way more than half an hour passed, and she had now come close to the tower. Suddenly something attracted her attention. She crouched low and looked with fixed and eager gaze.

There were three men. They had just come out of the tower. They stood outside. After them came a fourth. All appeared to be engaged in earnest debate. They were all armed. They were also all dressed exactly like her late master's, the brigands. Pauline felt sure that these men were those very brigands, and that they were now in pursuit of her and Lucy. As this thought came to her a chill of horror passed over her, and for a moment all seemed lost. It was as though she had been already captured. The fact that she saw them made her feel as though they must also see her. As she looked, two others came out, and the band then broke up into knots and wandered apart. After a time some of them went into the tower again.

At this, Pauline's presence of mind returned. She felt that she was still free. This thought roused her. Once again her weariness was forgotten; stealthily but swiftly she withdrew from the place, and seeking the concealment of the trees, she ascended the long slope toward the top of the hill. She had no plan now. Her only immediate desire was to find some place of temporary safety or shelter where she might rest. In this way she went on for hours. At the end of that time she felt ready to drop. She was also starving with hunger. Her brain seemed to reel. Her knees tottered.

Suddenly she heard a loud voice. She looked up.

A tall man stood before her with a menacing gesture. He was armed. She had fallen upon this man unawares.

Pauline sunk upon the ground. "Signor!" she murmured. "Oh, signor, cibo! Pane! per l'amor di Dio!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

OLD GARTH.

As Pauline sunk upon the ground, the man came up to her, and, as she spoke those words, he stooped and gently raised her.

"Come, little one," said he, in the Sicilian dialect. "Cheer up. I'll find something for you."

His voice was a deep bass, but there was something in its intonations which sounded kindly to Pauline. She looked up hastily, and perceived that the man was regarding her with something like pity. She felt encouraged, and staggered to her feet.

"You seem tired," said the man. "I am starving," said Pauline. "Come, then. Can you walk, or shall I carry you? It's only a few steps." "I'll try."

"That's right. Come, little one, and follow me."

With these words the man led the way, while Pauline followed, to an open place beyond the wood. Here there was a boundless view, for the place seemed to be the summit of a lofty ridge, up whose declivity Pauline had advanced ever since she had turned away from the tower below. Beyond this open there arose a tower something like the one formerly mentioned. Towers like these are, however, frequent in Sicily, when in times past, the land for ages was given up to all manner of internal wars. As they advanced toward this tower, the man paused, and on coming up Pauline saw a yawning abyss of unknown depth, and of a width that varied from twenty to a hundred feet. She saw now that the place on which the tower stood was an isolated rock with precipitous sides, which, as far as appearances went, could only be approached from this direction. Here, she saw a ladder, by means of which the abyss could be crossed. This ladder was placed against the cliff opposite, which rose up some eight or ten feet higher than on the side where she was standing.

"Can you go across there?" asked the man. Pauline looked down at the abyss and shuddered.

"Very well, then," said the man. "I'll get you across."

Saying this, he took Pauline in his arms, and, without a word, strode across the abyss on the ladder. Pauline, in a paralysis of fear, clung to him as he made the terrible passage, but the man's words reassured her, and she was put down on the other side before she could give utterance to her terror.

"Now," said the man, "I'll get you your breakfast. You've just come in time, for I was going away."

With these words he entered the tower. Pauline followed, and the man began to produce various eatables.

The interior of the tower consisted of one chamber about twelve feet square. Above this was an upper one, to which the ascent was made by means of a ladder through a trap door. The walls of the tower were at least twelve feet thick all around. There was a massive gate, and a rusty iron grating. A niche in the wall was covered over with a board, and served as a closet, from which the man drew forth various articles of food. A cold quail, half of a roast duck, some rolls of brown bread, a flask of wine—such was the breakfast. These were spread upon a rough table. Pauline was invited to sit upon a beer keg and eat. She did so, and as she ate the man sat apart staring through the door at the outer world, and occasionally taking keen though furtive glances at his guest. He said nothing, however, except occasionally when he urged her to take more wine, or offered some cognac. He seemed to feel that his first and highest duty was to satisfy the wants of his guest, and then he would have plenty of opportunity to make any inquiries that he might wish.

At length Pauline finished, and began to thank the stranger.

"You seem to have lost your way," said he, by way of opening a conversation. "Do you live far from here?"

"Yes," said Pauline; "very far."

"Not a Sicilian, I suppose?"

"No."

"I thought not."

"I'm English," said Pauline.

"What!" cried the man. "The devil you are!" The man spoke in English himself, and spoke like an Englishman; he stared hard at Pauline, and his face assumed an expression of complete bewilderment. But if the stranger felt astonished at finding that this apparent peasant boy was English, so Pauline felt equal astonishment at finding that her host was also English. A transport of joy overwhelmed her. It seemed as though she had escaped from all her enemies.

"Oh," she cried, "how glad I am! I've been captured by brigands. I've been held by them for ransom, and I ran away last night. Oh, how glad I am!"

"What!—you!—captured!—an English boy! I'd like to know what brigands there are about here that could keep this so close, and from me. Were you alone, or were there more?"

"Three others."

"Three others! And all English?"

"Yes."

"Were they relatives?"

CHAPTER XL.

THE "BOY, PAUL."

"Yes; my mother, and a lady and gentleman—friends of mine."

"Four prisoners! Four! and so long a time! and held to ransom. By Heaven, what scoundrels they are! And where are the others?"

"My mother was removed some time ago to Monte Citorio, for her health. The others escaped last night, when I did."

"Monte Citorio? What was your mother's name?"

"Henslowe."

"Henslowe!" said the other, staring hard at Pauline, who blushed deeply. "That's it. You have a strong Henslowe look. You must be related to Tancred."

"Tancred!" exclaimed Pauline.

"Yes."

"We—we—belong—to the same family," said Pauline. She was in great trepidation now. She had come as a boy, and did not know how to explain that she was not. She had no clothes but what she wore. To let this man suppose that she was a girl would be intolerable. All her maidenly shame opposed this. She trusted him; she required his help, but she dared not tell him who she was. He had no doubt that she was a boy. As such, she could get along until she should reach a place where she could come out in her own proper person.

"The same family. I thought so. You look awfully like him. And who were the others?"

"Miss Landsdowne."

"Landsdowne! What name?"

"Lucy."

"Lucy! Not Lady Lucy, from the Hall?"

"Yes; she left the Hall."

"Why?"

"I don't know," said Pauline.

"But how did she get to Sicily?" asked the other, in utter bewilderment. "Who else was there? What was the name of the man?"

"Frink."

"Frink!" exclaimed the other, in an awful voice. "His Christian name—do you know it?"

"Oh, yes; it is Otto Frink."

"Otto Frink; it's the same man! By Heaven's! he's been too quick for us. What'll Tancred do?"

At this he rose with every mark of the strongest agitation, and went out of the tower into the open air, leaving Pauline full of wonder. Who could this be, who seemed so familiar with the names Henslowe and Landsdowne? Who could this be, who was acquainted with Tancred? Who could this be who was associated with these her friends? And why had he shown such emotion at the name of Otto Frink? Such questions as these came to her mind, but she was not able to furnish any answer whatever to them. But Pauline's interest in this man was too great to be quieted, and she wished to learn more from him. So she rose, and went outside. He was standing there looking at space. Before him was a boundless prospect—many a hill and vale, many a town and tower, the Mediterranean in the distance, and a suspicion of the coast of Africa, or a blue line on the far horizon. "But none of these things attracted his attention.

"Boy," said he, as Pauline came up and in front of him, "boy, you have been a witness of an infernal crime that I haven't got to the bottom of. For of all the villains that ever lived, this Otto Frink is the worst. Your namesake and relative, Tancred, Henslowe, can testify to this. He and I both can testify to this. Otto Frink tried to murder us. He is trying to exterminate all the Henslowes and Landsdownes, I believe."

At this a suspicion came to Pauline.

"Are you not Garth?" she asked.

"Yes," said the other, "my name is Garth Landsdowne, my lad—generally known as Old Garth. You may call me Garth, for I like you; do you hear? and what's your name? Christian name I mean?"

"Paul," said Pauline, with a blush, which glowed deathly under her swarthy skin.

"Paul. Well Paul, my boy; you and I'll have to get pretty well acquainted; and as you're a Henslowe, you have the right stuff in you. I'll tell you a story about this Frink that'll open your eyes. May be you can tell me something about him that'll open mine. Perhaps between us we shall be able to get some clew to this last performance of his. But I'd give something to understand how it is that Frink has formed a connection with my friends the brigands.

GARTH had evidently taken an uncommonly strong fancy to the boy, Paul. He patted his head, leaned his arm affectionately around his shoulder, and sat talking with him for hours together. Now, the boy, Paul, did not exactly know what to do under the circumstances. Had she been Miss Henslowe, Garth would never have dreamed of these little marks of esteem. But she was the boy, Paul, and how could she wound or offend him by shaking off his big hand as it rested gently on her head. She could not. For her own part she felt very strangely drawn toward this grim, gaunt man, for she saw under his rough exterior a noble and a gentle nature. Besides, he was Tancred's best friend—one of whom she had often heard, and whom she had learned from him to admire. Old Garth was a familiar name, and here was Old Garth himself before her. He seemed to her like a big brother, and she felt a sweet sense of protection and of peace.

Garth soon made her acquainted with his present position and past affairs. Among other things he gave a full and complete account of the search after the treasure, the betrayal of Frink, their escape, their persevering endeavors, and their final success. All this was news to Pauline. She now saw of course that Frink had spoken lies all along. She saw also that Frink had no doubt contrived the destruction of her mother and herself. This discovery awakened terror within her as to the present position of her mother. She now felt most painfully the necessity of keeping her secret. She would have given much to tell Garth all. But she could not tell him that she was a lady. She must continue to pass for a boy. Still she approached as near as possible to the point.

"Mr. Frink," said she, "often mentioned Tancred, knowing that we belonged to the same family. He told us also that he had gone on some sort of a speculation as you mention, but it had failed."

"Did he say what had become of Tancred?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"That he had gone to Florence, having made an engagement with a wealthy American."

"Oh! And did he mention me?"

"No."

"H'm. Well, Tancred'll get home all right before his mother and sister begin to feel anxious. He was a good son, and awfully fond of his mother and sister. He used to talk of them all the time."

"I believe his sister is a governess, or something," said Pauline, indifferently.

"Come, now, my fine fellow," said Garth, harshly, "none of that infernal aristocratic superciliousness. Let me tell you, Pauline Henslowe is an English lady and a noble hearted girl; the fact of her being poor is no discredit. I admire her for her pluck, her industry, her cheeriness—"

"Ah, well," interrupted Pauline. "I didn't mean anything. I dare say she's all very well."

"Well, you must know that the fact of a girl being a governess doesn't prevent her from being a lady."

"Certainly not," said Pauline, meekly.

"What puzzles me," said Garth, again, "is the peculiar relations between Frink and the brigands. I'll be hanged if I can understand it at all. He seems to have been dragged off in spite of himself. Its just possible; but then he may have arranged that in order to impose on the others. Perhaps in his escape last night he merely planned to go home again and let you slide. But its a queer business, and I'll have to go about and hunt him up to pay off old scores."

"You see," continued Garth, "my position here is a peculiar one. I'm working up the Sicilian Republic. I've got lots of followers all eager for liberty, fraternity, and equality. Some are my old friends, but others are a new lot. The most of my old friends have gone over to the Government and taken offices. Some of them have turned again and come over to me. The fact is, the whole thing with them is a mere money question. As long as they can get a living out of it they'll work for a republic or anything else. They find that I have money, and so they come to me. Of course they're not reliable. Not one of them but would betray me to-morrow for two and sixpence. That's why I live here on this rock. I haul up my ladder and can get them at defiance. Besides, I have an

other way of getting up and down that I invented myself. No one knows about it except me. Oh, these devils are treacherous devils, you may be sure of that. I don't know but what I'll have to give up before long. If I could only find the decent people taking up the cause—or if I could find the people that do take it up willing to make some sacrifice, I wouldn't mind; but you see how it is. I'm the only man in Sicily that's willing to do anything for the good cause, and I'm a foreigner. There's a situation for you. I'll tell you what it is. For the present, at least, I mean to let the good cause slide. I'll hunt up your mother and Miss Landsdowne, and get them out of the clutches of these infernal devils."

Pauline asked him whether the brigands that captured her could have had any connection with the Sicilian Republic.

"Why that's the very thing that makes me so savage," cried Garth. "I believe that every one of those infernal rascals are in my pay as soldiers of the Republic. And so, as they are gathered conveniently together in bands, and have nothing else to do, they take to capturing unfortunate travelers, and holding them to ransom. But I'll have something to say about this. Listen, now, boy. Are you a coward?"

Pauline was an awful coward, but, being the "boy, Paul," she dared not confess it.

"I don't know."

Garth smiled a paternal smile.

"Oh, well," said he; "you're small and young,—and too nervous altogether. When you knock about more you'll be all right. At any rate, I won't try you. I'll go alone."

"Go alone?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Why, to my friends, the brigands. I suppose you don't feel particularly anxious to go with me?"

Pauline was silent. She certainly did not feel anxious to go, and preferred very much never to see any one of the brigands again. Aside from ordinary fear there was also the unpleasant chance of having her disguise at once detected by her old friends. And the more she saw of Garth, the more she dreaded his finding out the truth about her.

"Well," said Garth. "it's no use going to-day."

"Why not?"

"Well, they'll all be off, in every direction. I'll start to-morrow morning at dawn, and get down to them when they are at their breakfast. I'll have it out with them then and there."

"But don't you think that they may do some harm before then?"

"Well, you see, the fact is, I won't be able to find them, wherever they are. They scatter everywhere. Besides, who are they whom they would harm. Your mother, I take it, is safe. You are safe. Well, there remain Frink and Lady Lucy. Frink, I suppose, has his own plans about her. For the life of me I cannot find out or even imagine how it would be for his interest to harm her in any way. I think his flight with her is a sham. He wants to get off with her, and make her think he has saved her from some awful fate. In which case he hopes to succeed to the unfortunate Tancred in her young affections."

"Never!" said Pauline.

"Oh, you don't know! Why not?"

"She is not so shallow as that," said Pauline.

"Oh, that's the way," laughed Garth. "That's always the way with you boys. You think all women are angels,—that is, all young women. Wait till you get as old as I am."

Pauline was silent. To such a remark she had nothing to say.

"Her best chance," continued Garth, "will be to get back to England. Tancred may turn up in time to save her from throwing herself away,—and may possibly," he added dryly, "give Frink a bad fright,—that is, if I don't see him before then and give him a worse one. My best chance will be to hunt him up among my Sicilian Republicans; and if I find him, I swear I'll form a court-martial, and have him tried for murder. The offense was committed within the limits of Sicily. I recognize, and we all recognize the Sicilian Republic as the only lawful government, and, consequently, if I find Frink, I'll have him tried for his life."

At another time in the day Garth took Pauline about to show her the place.

"Now, my son," said Garth, putting his arm in his usual affectionate "elder-brother" fashion about Pauline, so that his hand rested on her shoulder; "now, my son, to-morrow, you'll

be here all day alone, like Robinson Crusoe. You'll be perfectly safe. Haul up the ladder, and you may set the world at defiance. No one can get up here if you say no. I shall be back by sundown, or perhaps earlier; but if anything happens to detain me, you'll have lots to eat. I'm afraid you'll feel lonely, but I'll feel lonely too. I'd rather have you with me, but then I'd rather not. You don't know how infernally jolly it is to have you here. These Italians are a miserable lot. It reminds me of the time when Tancred and I were on the island."

So the two walked about, and Pauline saw that the place was as Garth said, almost perfectly inaccessible.

CHAPTER XLI.

ALONE.

"Now, I'm going off, little one," said Garth, "and I'm going to leave you here. I thought at first of taking you with me, but I find that it will embarrass my motions. I don't care about trusting you in danger. I shall feel anxious unless I know you're safe. You will be safe here. You've only got to haul up the ladder, and then you can set all Sicily at defiance. Don't let it down for any living being except me. You can see me when I come from that rock yonder, where you can see without being seen."

In these words Old Garth expressed the tender feeling of anxious regard which he already felt for the "boy, Paul," a feeling which he himself did not at all understand, but considered in some sort as an "elder-brotherly" sentiment.

"The fact is," continued Garth, "I don't like the looks of this, and I don't quite know how it's going to end. It's a very bad case indeed, and I don't mind explaining to you what I mean, though some might say I was violating secrets. Well, you must know, in the first place, I've lived in this country for a dozen years or so, and am very well known all over the western half of the island. I connected myself with the Sicilian Republicans, and worked for them for years. About a year ago the movement looked like dying a natural death for want of funds. I volunteered to go off to England to try and raise something. I did so. Well, I failed, and failed utterly. I fell in with your relative, Tancred Henslowe, and there, as luck would have it, we got up that scheme for digging money. I've told you all about that. Well, you know, after all was ended we separated, and I came back to my old ground with more money at my disposal than I ever dreamed of having. I found nearly all my old companions had ratted—they had gone over to the Government, and most of them had taken small offices. Some of these fellows came back to me, many others I picked up. As I had money I had no difficulty in gaining followers for the Sicilian Republic. Well, I have worked hard, and I have bands of men, all under the Republic, filling up the country from Palermo to Gergenti, and from Marsala to Castronuovo. I've got I don't know how many thousand Sicilian rascals, all under pay, all ready to rise when the word is given.

"But there's one difficulty now in the way, and it's become a little complicated from this brigand business. One of my oldest associates in Sicily is a Maltese. His name is Berengar. He was faithful to the Sicilian Republic till the last, and wrote to me at Liverpool, telling me he had given it up. When I came back I found him in a Government office at Caltanissetta. He left it at once and joined me. On finding that I had plenty of money his devotion knew no bounds. The fellow is just an average Italian, but money will take him anywhere. I don't trust him, and haven't trusted him for some time. That's the reason why I choose to take up my abode in a place like this.

"Indeed, I've suspected for some time that Berengar has his own views and plans. I've had to put a great deal of the work in his hands, and in the chief council of the Sicilian Republic he has more influence than I have. I have the money-bags, however, and that keeps me ahead. I know that he would cut my throat to-morrow if he could gain anything by it. I know also that he has a large number of scoundrels who are his own devoted followers. Moreover, he don't care a button for the Sicilian Republic, but is only on the lookout for his own fortune.

"Now, one of the first and foremost rules in our Republic is leveled against brigandage in any shape. That is the besetting sin of revolu-

tionists in Sicily and in Italy, and I have always fought against it. Now, more especially, I fight against it since this new movement is mine—and these men are all my servants, Berengar and all—bought, and hired, and armed, and kept in food, with my own money. But this piece of brigandage is a thing that violates all our most sacred laws. This brings the whole question between me and Berengar to an issue. Thus far I've felt his treachery without being able to prove it. I've felt anxious also to get rid of him, but had no good reason to. The fellow is a traitor and means mischief. This affair happened in his own province, for he has charge of all the men around Sciacca. He must have known it; and, indeed, the vastness of the ransom makes it seem like his own work. All of which makes it highly necessary that there should be a final settlement between me and my friend Berengar.

"From your description of the brigand chief, I should think it must be Berengar himself; if so, he must die. But I should like to know very much what Frink's share has been in this business, and how these two scoundrels ever happened to come across each other's path."

"Don't you think you may risk something in putting yourself in the way of so desperate a man?" asked Pauline, who felt much trepidation at the idea of any accident befalling her new friend.

"Risk! Why, of course, I risk something all the time. My only protection is that these fellows know that their pay comes through me. They know that I receive mysterious supplies from abroad. I dare say they'd like nothing better than to seize me and hold me to ransom; but then, if they did that, they'd fight among themselves. It's very hard to have to do with such a precious set of rascals. In fact, these last few weeks while I've been living here alone and in danger, I've often asked myself what sort of a Republic it would be with such cut-throat citizens to sustain it; and whether I can stand it much longer is a question that I can't answer. It wouldn't take much to induce me to give it all up."

"Oh, do!" cried Pauline, in a tremulous, eager, coaxing voice, laying her hand on his arm, and looking up with her deep dark eyes into his face—"Oh, do! Find my mother, and then come home with us."

Garth looked down, and a smile of strange sweetness passed over his rugged face. With his usual gesture, he laid his big hand on Pauline's shoulder, and said:

"Well, my son, wait till I get back, and then we'll talk over the whole subject."

After Garth's departure Pauline felt lonely enough. He had stood on the other side of the chasm, waiting until she had drawn back the ladder, and then had departed. In spite of his assurances that the rock was impregnable and inaccessible she felt incessant alarm, and spent the greater part of her time in stealthily wandering among the brush that lined the chasm, and peeping cautiously across to see if there were any signs of approaching enemies; but no enemies came, and no signs of alarm arose: all around there was silence, and peace, and beauty. Gradually the fears which she felt for her own safety grew faint; but in their place there arose fears of another kind—the fear lest Garth might meet with some mischance—lest, in his encounter with Berengar, he might come off defeated.

The short acquaintance which she had had with Garth had already resulted in very great and cordial intimacy between them. But as far as she was concerned the acquaintance with Garth did not seem a short one. She had heard all about him long ago from her brother. She had heard all about the Sicilian Republic and Garth's absurd attempt to raise money in Liverpool. She knew that he was one of her brother's companions in the search after treasure. She had never seen him before, but felt as though she had; for Tancred had described his form and features, his gestures and expression, his tone of voice and attitude, and peculiarities, until she had gained a very vivid and a very correct idea of him. At the present time she felt as though she had known him for years, and the things which he talked about, such as the Sicilian Republic and the treasure expedition, were all old, familiar themes to her.

Most painful was it now, and every hour more and more painful, that she had come upon him in such a guise, and in such a way. Had she only kept her own attire and found him, and made herself known as Pauline Henslowe, sister of Tancred. But now it was too late, and

how should she ever dare look at him in her own true person?

CHAPTER XLII.

BELEAGUERED AND BESIEGED.

THE hours of that day passed slowly. Evening came, the sun set, darkness spread over all the land. Still there were no signs of Garth. And now Pauline began to be seriously disturbed, and there arose within her thoughts of all the imaginable dangers that might be encountered by him. With his fate her own seemed now to be involved. Upon him depended, first of all, the discovery and the rescue of her mother; upon him depended now her own escape. Without him she would infallibly be lost. How could she ever escape? How could she ever find her way from this remote rock out into the regions of civilization—into the regions of law and order? It was not to be hoped for. The first effort would result in her capture by brigands.

That day was a tedious one for Pauline. Had she been in a different state of mind, she would have found leisure to admire the stupendous scenery that was visible from this elevated rock. The place itself had, no doubt, been one of those strongholds which in the past had defied the assaults of Carthaginian, of Grecian, or of Roman arms, or, at a later date, had witnessed the struggle of Saracen and Sicilian, of Guelf and Ghibelline, of Arragonese and Angevine, or of all the combatants, whether baron or bandit, royalist or rebel, who had struggled together down through the ages. This lonely, isolated rock, which had originally been severed from the adjoining mountain by some convulsion of nature, seemed now as though it bid defiance to any assailant, and as though even a defenseless fugitive like Pauline, who had come here for refuge, might remain in safety, secure from all harm.

All around the scenery was most magnificent. It has been said that there is no part of the globe, of similar extent, that is so uniformly rugged as Sicily. If any part of the island could bear out the truth of such a statement it was this part. Immediately below lay vast crags, into which the foot of the mountain was broken. Toward the west was a valley, with lofty heights beyond. Here, in different directions, were the white outlines of towns which Pauline afterward learned were Brizzi, Chinsa, Palazzo, Adriano, and Bivona. Eastward arose a lofty double peak, beyond which other masses arose, some rocky, others wooded, others white with snow. Toward the north there were vast masses, hills rising beyond hills, like the waves of the ocean in a storm, without the slightest apparent intervention of level ground. Toward the south and southwest there extended a long valley, or at least an apparent valley, though it needed but a short inspection to see that it was only relatively a valley, inasmuch as the hills here were lower, and from the lofty post where Pauline stood, appeared to melt gradually into the plain. At the end of this valley appeared the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and just where the sea touched the land arose a mountain, with the white walls of a city beyond and beside it. It seemed to Pauline that this might be Sciacca, and the mountain might be the height of San Calogero. In that supposition she was right, and whether she was right or not made no difference at that moment. The well-remembered town stood so invitingly near, and was associated so strongly with that last day of happiness, and the first of misery, that her emotions overcame her; she could not bear the sight, but turned away in deep dejection and with new anxiety in her heart.

The close of this long day was approaching, and Pauline began to fear the worst. Another night of suspense would be too much. For hour after hour she waited among the underbrush near the chasm, hoping to see some sign of Garth. Still all was silent. No sign appeared of the absent one. Now she began to think of the future that lay before her. What should she do if he never came back? Should she stay here, or venture forth? Venture forth! How could she dare? She could not tell where to go. How could she find her way in that wild country, almost trackless, rough and rocky, and swarming with brigands? What Garth himself had told her about his exertions in behalf of the Sicilian Republic appeared to her to be the worst thing she could do. Thousands of men had been

of a desperate enterprise. Their chief leader, Berengar, had already shown what this movement meant by arresting herself and her friends. Would not any one of all those thousands be equally ready to play the brigand at the first opportunity? To venture forth, then, amid such perils, was a thing that she could not think of without a shudder. But to stay would not be possible. She might, indeed, remain for a time; but at length the slender stock of provisions would be exhausted, and she would then be compelled to set forth in spite of the dangers that might menace her, and the perils that might environ.

Suddenly, in the midst of such meditations as these, she heard a low but very distinct whistle. She started and looked eagerly. Soon a figure was visible moving along among the leaves near the edge of the cliff. One look was enough. It was Garth. In another instant Pauline had sprung forth from her concealment and had hurried to where the ladder was. She reached it just as Garth reached the opposite side. The ladder was arranged so that it could be pushed across without much trouble, and this Pauline easily accomplished. A few strides brought Garth across. The moment that he had reached the opposite side he drew up the ladder with a jerk, and then grasping Pauline by the arm, drew her back to a place where some rocks arose.

"They're after me, my son," said he, solemnly. "A little more and you would never have seen Old Garth again. At one time I thought it was all up, but I hurried on for your sake."

He spoke in a low voice, and with much emotion. As for Pauline she was so overcome with joy at seeing him, and so excited at being freed from the dark fears that had been tormenting her, that she burst into tears, and stood clinging to his hand with both of hers.

"Well, you are a tender-hearted little fellow," said Garth, in his usual affectionate way, "and you're not the sort of boy to be left here alone among rude rocks and bloody brigands. But never mind, little one, I'll get you out of this yet in spite of all of them."

He spoke affectionately, and fondly, and caressingly, as one speaks to a child. There was something in the face of the "boy, Paul," which to Garth was extremely touching—something tender, something beautiful. He never thought of requiring valor or enterprise from his new guest; he felt rather as though he himself must protect that guest.

"What's the matter?" asked Pauline as soon as she could speak.

"They're after me."

"Who?"

"The brigands. All of them. That's what they are now. The Sicilian Republic, I fear, is a ghastly dream."

"What do you mean? What has happened?"

"Oh, it's all that devil Berengar. I found the fellow, and at once taxed him with brigandage. He at first denied it, but then finding I knew all, he confessed, and defied me. I then called upon him to deliver up the captives. He refused to give me any satisfaction whatever. I then denounced him as a violator of a sovereign principle in the Sicilian Republic, and threatened to have him deposed from his command. Upon this he grew insane with passion and drew a pistol. I at once fired, and wounded him. After this the whole band arose. I tried to reason with them, and informed them that Berengar was a traitor to the Republic, but my words were nothing. They all assailed me at once like wolves. Fortunately there were plenty of rocks about, so I dashed in among them, doubled, and ran for it, with the whole gang after me. Last night I managed to shake them off, but couldn't get back here. If it hadn't been for you," added Garth, pathetically, "I'd have stood and had it out with the whole lot of them—but then I knew you were waiting—and as it is it's bad enough, for the whole gang, with Berengar at their head, are after me. They've got on my track somehow, and may be here at any moment, though I don't much think they'll be here before to-morrow."

"Oh, what a narrow escape you've had," said Pauline, with a shudder.

"Yes; and it would have been pretty hard for you," said Garth, "if I hadn't got back; and you know, my son, that was the very thing I thought of. You see, besides, that it would never have done for me to take you with me."

That night Garth slept on the ground, near the place where the ladder was, while Pauline slept in the tower in the upper loft, at Garth's express command. Garth was a light sleeper,

and could wake at the slightest noise, but during the whole of the night he was not aroused.

The next morning came. Garth rose cautiously and peeped through the bushes. On the opposite side he saw a human face peering through the foliage, first at the chasm, and then at the rock. It was Berengar. He did not see Garth. But Garth saw him. In an instant his rifle was up; the next instant a report rang forth, and Berengar with a yell dashed back.

The next instant loud cries arose from all sides, and the woods seemed full of men, rushing to help Berengar. Roused by the noise, Pauline hurried out from the tower, and stealthily approached Garth.

"Go you back, little one," said he. "This is no place for you. We're besieged, and the garrison has just fired the first gun. The General of the investing army has just been wounded, and has hauled off his forces in disorder."

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE SIEGE.

THE besieging army, as Garth had named it, seemed to have been repulsed by that first shot, but it was only for a time. Whether Berengar was killed or wounded was not immediately apparent, as no one was visible. But noises and voices were heard among the forest.

"Berengar was hit hard," said Garth, "but I think he's alive yet, and as venomous as ever. He's evidently keeping his men well in hand. There's a head that governs them, and whoever he is he knows what he's about. I shouldn't wonder if they will make a regular siege of it."

"What can we do?" asked Pauline, anxiously.

"Oh, well. We can be governed by circumstances," said Garth. "We've got a good place, easily defended, and it may be that they'll give up. But if they persevere, and if it looks as though they understand business, why, then, we'll have to consider our ways."

For some time after this there was no sign of any human being. Garth and Pauline were concealed behind rocks which allowed them to see all the other edge of the chasm, while they themselves were completely hidden. Here they made their breakfast, and Garth dispatched Pauline for another rifle and some ammunition.

"Shall I take this?" said she, in as bold and confident a manner as possible, poising the rifle in her hand.

Garth looked at her with an amiable smile.

"Are you a first-rate shot?" he asked.

"Well—not exactly first-rate," said Pauline.

Garth shook his head.

"Then you won't do. No man must fire from this garrison unless he can hit every time. I haven't any ammunition to waste. I don't care about firing many shots, but I want every shot to tell. You can be of more use by waiting on me."

"But it seems too bad for me to be doing nothing while you are doing everything?"

"Oh, well, perhaps I've had more experience at this sort of thing than you. Besides, I've constituted myself your guardian and guide for the time being, and I've made up my mind to give up all and restore you to your home. So now, my son, you trust to Old Garth."

Garth's voice had unconsciously become a little louder. It was audible to concealed enemies, for the report of a rifle rang out, and the ping of a bullet interrupted him.

"Oh, there they are," he whispered; "and now, not another word. Republics are always ungrateful," he added, after awhile. "See how the Sicilian Republic is treating me."

But little was said. Hours passed away. Those in the woods opposite were silent. How many there were Garth could not tell. They certainly maintained a silence which was creditable to their skill and patience.

"Well," said Garth, "two can play at this game."

Suddenly he took aim at something.

Then—bang!

A loud yell followed. Garth saw a figure spring up. Another figure advanced. Hastily Garth seized another rifle and fired. Another yell followed. Then nothing more was seen. Low groans were heard, however, and muffled voices. Garth loaded and watched. Sounds arose, which seemed to indicate that the wounded were crawling away.

Silence now followed.

Garth changed his position, crawling along the edge of the chasm, behind rocks which had been placed there, and occasionally taking an

observation. At one point he fired, and again a cry of anguish followed his shot. Then there was silence again, and Garth did not have another shot for some time.

The silence lasted for a long time, and was at length broken by sounds at a distance. Nothing could be seen on account of the trees. There was the crackling and snapping of underbrush.

"I must go and try to find out what this is," he whispered to Pauline.

He stole away as stealthily as before, and was gone some time. Pauline did not see him. She herself was watching the opposite side, but could see nothing of the enemy. Suddenly half a dozen rifle shots sounded from the opposite side. An awful thought came to her. They have seen Garth! They have shot him. She dared not move from the place, though her first impulse was to fly to find him. Besides, Garth had told her not to move, and also to fire if they attempted to cross during his absence.

And now a noise aroused her. Two men appeared boldly on the opposite side of the chasm. They carried a rude ladder, which they had constructed from small trees, and this they proceeded to put across. Pauline understood the whole thing. They had shot Garth! They were now crossing boldly. The thought roused her to desperation. All terror fled. Could she sit tamely and allow that noble soul to perish beneath the vengeful blows of miscreants like these? She stopped not to consider. She seized the rifle, and taking as good an aim as she could, she fired. That same instant there was another shot. A yell escaped, and one of the ruffians staggered toward the precipice and fell headlong down the awful abyss. Whose was the shot that had sent this man to his ruin? Pauline did not stop to ask. She saw the man fall. She saw the ladder fall after him. She saw the other brigand fly back into the woods. But about this she did not think at all. All her thoughts were taken up by that other shot. Who fired that? It was Garth! He was alive then! He was safe! And now in that revulsion of feeling she fell forward and burst into tears.

In that position she felt a hand laid on her.

"Well done, my brave boy," said Garth's whispered voice. "That was a glorious shot. They will see that we have more over here than they think. They thought I was alone, and caught sight of me down there. Then they fired, and made a rush to cross before I should get back. Your shot showed them how we can muster strong over here. Hurrah for the boy, Paul!"

"I—I—didn't—hit him," stammered Pauline.

"Hit him—of course not. I hit one, and you frightened the other away." Don't you imagine that you hit a man, little one," he continued, drawing nearer, and putting his arm, comrade fashion, about her neck. "You couldn't hit a man if you tried. No, no; I mean to do all the hitting while we are together. You can postpone all that till you grow older!"

It was quite evident now that the day had been taken up by the brigands in constructing that ladder, that a portion of the band had been sent away for the very purpose of getting the wood and making it, while the others had remained behind to watch for the opportunity of firing. The noise which they had heard had no doubt signaled the return of the ladder party.

What would be the next move? That was a question which it was difficult to answer. The brigands had spent the whole day there, and the ladder upon which they had based such hopes was lost. Worse than all, they had been compelled to see a number of their party put *hors du combat*. Would they give up in dejection? Would they imagine that Garth had an unknown number of associates on the rock, and was prepared to give them a hot reception. Or would they rather feel the more infuriated at their losses and repulse, and persevere more desperately in their resolve to take vengeance upon Garth?

This was the question.

Garth decided it in his own fashion.

"They're going to fight it out, my little man," said he, in a whisper, "to the bitter end. They'll have all my own Republicans about my ears before another day. They'll send out signals and messengers in all directions, and turn all my own thunder against me. I'll be caught and crushed by my own machinery. Berengar is alive yet, I believe, and cursing his insides out. I believe they'll watch for this night and send for reinforcements, and then make a gen-

eral rush upon us, or try to starve us out. Now, I don't intend to let them do that."

"What will you do?"

"Do? Why retire?"

"Retire?"

"Yes."

"How?" asked Pauline, in wonder. "Can you go across the chasm?"

"Certainly not. I've another way, a secret way—known to no one but myself—in fact, I found out an old place, once used no doubt as a secret way, and made a few repairs. It's as good now as it was in the days of Hanno, or Hannibal, or Frederick Hohenstaufen. My mind's made up. We must leave this place this evening. I'll watch here for a few minutes, and do you go into the tower, and get my wallet in the upper room—also, a brace of pistols, and a knife. That's all. Be as quick as you can, for I wish now to leave as soon as possible. If we leave soon, we will be able to reach Felaga in safety. Go now, my little man—don't forget the pistols, the wallet, and the knife."

He sunk down low, as he said this. Pauline looked at him for a moment in anxious scrutiny, and then hurried away.

CHAPTER XLIV.

ESCAPE.

UPON Pauline's return Garth took the wallet and put it in his pocket, stuck the pistols in his belt, and, taking the two rifles with which he had thus far made his defense, whispered to her to carry the other. He then went along the edge of the chasm in a crouching position, keeping behind the stones that had been arranged there, so as not to be seen. Pauline followed as cautiously as possible. In this way they went on, until they had come to the side of the rock which was opposite to the chasm. Here Garth entered among some low brush. There was not the slightest sign of any path way here, and Pauline did not know how this could be the way down a steep precipice, but she followed on, trusting in Garth.

On emerging from the bushes, Garth let himself over the cliff upon a shelf of rock which was about four feet down. This shelf ran down for about thirty feet, in a steep incline, on which there was no difficulty in walking, and terminated at a rift in the rock. In this rift there were indentations cut on either side, and they afforded foothold like the steps of a ladder; the rift itself was not more than eighteen inches wide, and descent was quite easy. This descent was between thirty and forty feet, not enough to cause any particular dizziness; and Pauline was able to climb down without much trouble. At the foot of this they reached another shelf in the precipice. This ran down, and at the termination another shelf appeared below, not more than four or five feet, which ran on, almost horizontal, and afforded passage-way to another shelf. This shelf ran steeply down, and bore the marks of what had once been steps, showing that this passage-way must, so Garth said, have been used in former times. This ended in a narrow shelf, from which they passed to another. This one terminated in nothing but the smooth precipice. As yet they were only about one third of the way down, and beneath there lay a wild expanse of rugged rocks upon which the spectator could not gaze without a shudder. But Garth's ingenuity had devised a mode by which this could be crossed, and this was the work of which he had spoken to Pauline. About twenty feet above them overhead arose the sharp crest of a rock that ascended from the valley below, and was joined close to the precipice. By climbing up the face of the cliff for this distance, one could easily step upon this rocky crest; and in order to facilitate this, Garth had enlarged some old time-worn marks that had seemed to him like the traces of old stepping places. Up this he climbed, and so well was the work done, that Pauline followed with the greatest ease, though she was encumbered with the rifle, and soon stood by Garth's side. He looked at her with a face in which there was a smile that seemed struggling with pain. He spoke, but it was with an effort.

"Well done, my little man."

"What's the matter?" asked Pauline, anxiously.

Garth drew a long breath.

"Oh nothing," said he. "Come along. It's all plain sailing now."

The rest of the way was like the past, only much easier. It consisted of a series of shelves

in the rock, that led from one to another, in a gradual and practicable manner. To one looking down from above, or up from below, or at the face of the cliff from a little distance, it would have seemed impossible to scale that rocky height—it would have seemed like a sheer precipice, impossible to man—but those marks on the cliff which, at a distance, looked like faint lines formed by accident, were now proved to be easy pathways for those who had learned the secret; and so along this easy pathway from one shelf to another, from rock to rock, and from ledge, to ledge. Garth led Pauline, until at last they reached the bottom of the cliff at a distance of over five hundred feet from the top.

By this time it was sundown, and the darkness came on with that rapidity which is characteristic of this clime. Soon the darkness had overshadowed all. But the night was clear, and though there was no moon, still the sky overhead was dotted with innumerable stars. Garth hesitated for a time, or seemed to Pauline to hesitate, for he sat upon a stone and bowed his head upon his hands as if in thought.

"Do you know the way?" asked Pauline.

No answer came. She had to repeat the question.

"The way, little man, the way, did you say," said Garth, in a hesitating voice. "Oh, yes; know it by heart; could go it blindfold; and it's my opinion," he continued, drawing a long breath and rising to his feet, "that our progress now will be something very like blindfold. However, you follow close and it'll be all right."

With these words he started off at a pace which seemed to Pauline unnecessarily quick, while she followed as best she could. For some time the path ran down a steep declivity; the footing was insecure, for there was nothing but broken, slippery stones, which slid at every step. In addition to this, they were surrounded on all sides by a forest of chestnut-trees, whose dense foliage made the darkness most intense. Over and over again, Pauline had to call to Garth to find out where he was. At each call he stopped with a whisper of warning; but at last, finding that she was stumbling painfully and hopelessly in the dark, he took her hand in his and thus drew her along behind him.

All this time he said not a word. Pauline noticed whenever she came near him that his breathing was labored and distressed. After he took her hand he held it in a convulsive grip, and she could feel the throbbing of his pulse from that grasp of his hand, and the throbbing was exceedingly strong, and as quick as the pulse of one who is in a high fever. A thousand fears came to her at these alarming symptoms. What was the matter? What could Garth mean? Was he frightened? Impossible. What then could be the matter? She knew not.

After about an hour they emerged from the forest, and came to an open country. Here the path ran among rocky boulders and cliffs and ledges, while on either side arose mountains and precipices. In fact, it was one of those places which in the rainy season became river beds, and on the maps are marked as rivers. The path here was winding but good enough, and it was a relief after the one which they had just left. Garth, however, seemed to walk more painfully. He relinquished Pauline's hand and strode forward at a pace which was gradually slackening, and with steps that were gradually weakening.

At last Pauline saw before them the white houses of a town. It was as she afterward found Felaga. It was a small mean town, with one inn, which appeared to be well known to Garth, for he bent his steps straight toward it, and never paused till he reached it. But then and there Pauline had all her worst fears confirmed; for Garth, having reached the door, sunk down in a dead faint.

In an instant Pauline had roused the inn, and Garth was carried inside to a room, and put upon a bed; while Pauline, in great trepidation, knew not what to do, but implored the people to send for a doctor. The women of the inn tried too soothe this handsome and unhappy "boy," and devoted themselves to the work of resuscitating the unconscious man.

"Ah, poor man!" cried one. "He is wounded. See!"

And drawing down his shirt, she showed his left arm all bloody. At this sight all was revealed. Pauline at once recalled the shot, her terror, Garth's shot in return, his singular manner afterward. This must have been the reason why he had resolved to fly. He had felt his

wound, and his inability to keep up a defense. This was the cause of his deep breathings, his swiftly beating heart, his evident suffering. And as Pauline thought of all this she burst into tears. And all the women sympathized very deeply with this poor boy who was so faithful. And they all said—he must be his son.

Garth revived in time. More, he slept well that night. On the following day he waked much refreshed. On waking he saw Pauline.

"Well, little man," said he, with a smile. "You musn't look so at me. You're a bundle of nerves, I believe. You must keep cool. I'm all right."

Pauline said not a word. Her lips trembled. She could not speak. She bent down her head and wept.

Garth's eyes grew moist.

"I'd give something to know what the blazes is the matter with me," he thought. "Ever since this boy Paul has come I seem to have changed."

"Look here, my son," he said, abruptly. "Would you like to be of service?"

"Oh, what can I do!" said Pauline, eagerly.

"Well, the fact is I got hit yesterday. Don't send for a doctor. Don't let any of these Sicilian Sangrados get me into their clutches. If they do I'm a dead man. Can't you probe the wound?"

"Probe it? Oh, I don't know," said Pauline, in deep distress; "but I'll try."

Pauline made one trial, but proved miserably inadequate. Garth gently reproached her for being "a bundle of nerves," and got her to send in the landlord's wife. This woman did admirably. Perhaps she had not been without practice in that sort of thing, for she had lived in a part of the world where bullets are thrown about rather freely.

The result was that Garth felt immediately better, and began to talk cheerily to Pauline about a speedy return to civilization and a reunion with friends.

CHAPTER XLV.

A MISUNDERSTANDING.

ONE thing greatly disturbed Garth at Felaga. As he grew better he was able to notice what seemed like altogether too close an intimacy between the boy Paul and the landlord's pretty daughter. They were always together, that is to say, when Pauline was not nursing him. Garth missed her, felt aggrieved at her absence, thought himself injured, and noticed with something like indignation that Pauline was always with the landlord's daughter whenever she was not with him. It seemed to honest Old Garth to be a piece of gross carelessness in the boy Paul and he determined to give him a talking to about it.

On the other hand, Pauline thought that Garth seemed to be unduly fond of the care and the attentions of this same pretty daughter. Her name was Teresa, and she was a lovely brunette, full of life and merriment. Pauline had confided to Teresa and the landlady her secret, and these good people put no bounds to their kindness to the beautiful young miladi Inglese; but all this did not prevent Pauline from looking with jealous eyes upon Teresa as she stood by the bedside of Garth. Then it was that Pauline lamented her false position and longed to make known the truth, but dared not even to hint at it.

One day, Garth ventured upon his long meditated remonstrance.

"My little man," said he, "you are young and thoughtless, and I'm old enough to be your father. Now, as I'm your elder, and fond of you, I'll take the trouble to give you a piece of advice. Don't you think you're allowing yourself to be just a little bit too intimate with pretty Teresa? She's a nice little girl, and it would be an awful pity if you should get her fond of you. Come, now, don't flush up, take what I say in good part and think it over. You don't mean any harm, of course—all fun—pour passer le temps—and all that, but still, my son, this sort of thing don't always do—and I'll say no more about it."

Pauline said not a word at this; but these words sunk deep into her heart. She put an utterly false interpretation on them. She thought that Garth had grown fond of Teresa, and it was this jealous fondness which had made him so quick to notice the intimacy between them. This discovery produced upon Pauline a very

great effect, and led to a marked change in her whole demeanor. She began to think that she was *de trop*; she began to keep out of the way; she grew more reserved, and lost that sweet geniality and confiding reliance which had thus far distinguished her.

Garth noticed this soon enough, and wondered. He said nothing, but tried to discover the cause. At first he thought that "the boy Paul" had resented his words, and was trying to have secret interviews with Teresa; but a conversation with Teresa enlightened him on this point, for he found that "the boy Paul" had grown strangely changed to every one. The question, then, was what had caused the change?

The change was a most painful one to Garth. He wondered at his own feelings. He missed "the boy Paul," and longed to have him as he used to be. At length he could endure it no longer, but taxed him with it.

"You seem to care no more for Old Garth, my son," said he, one day. "It seems to me that I don't see as much of you as I ought, or as I want to."

Pauline turned her head away. "Why should I force myself where I am not wanted?" said she, in a low voice.

"Hallo," said Garth, "what's that? Force yourself?"

"Others are more welcome now," she continued. "I merely make way for them."

"The boy's mad!" said Garth. "Look here, my little man, look at me."

Pauline gave one glance at Garth. A strange thrill passed through him as he encountered her burning gaze. Her eyes instantly fell to the floor. Garth regarded her intently. He saw her bosom heave and fall and her whole frame quiver with agitation.

"There's some mistake," said he, in a low voice. "What do you mean?"

"Teresa!" said Pauline, bitterly.

Garth looked at her attentively, as before.

"H'm," said he at last; "so that's it. Well, boy, see here."

Pauline looked up.

"Give me your hand."

Pauline laid her little hand in his.

"Now, understand me. There's not a woman in all the world that I care a straw for. As for you, I want you to know that you are always welcome; I want to have you always with me; I want you, and no one else. Do you hear?—no one else. I can't have too much of you. I can't have enough of you. Boy, I love you better than I ever loved any human being. When you are away I hunger and thirst after you. So, now—now—will you desert Old Garth again?"

Garth's voice was hoarse and tremulous with emotion. His hand clutched that of Pauline convulsively. She, on her part, trembled from head to foot. Her hand lay cold and damp in his. She could not speak; she dared not look at him. One thought only was present in her mind: if he were to find out who she was he would despise her.

But after that there was a better understanding between them, and there was certainly no further jealousy on the part of Pauline.

Garth now recovered rapidly, and soon regained his former strength. No sooner did he feel in a position to travel than he prepared for the journey which was to restore Pauline to her friends. He hired two stout mules, and in this way they set forth. In order to avoid any of the band of Berengar, he went in the direction of Lercara, while several others, to whom he attached himself, were journeying in the same direction.

Lercara is a small town of not more than ten thousand inhabitants. It is situated on the top of an immense mass of mountains in the very middle of the island. It is a dirty and squalid place, and is chiefly supported by the sulphur trade, which is carried on between this place and Palermo. Here Garth delayed a few days, stopping at the Locanda dell'Italia, hesitating whether to go to Palermo, or toward the south. At length, for various reasons, he decided to take the southern route toward Girgenti, thinking that in this direction there would be the greater probability of hearing of the lost captives. With this intention he directed his course toward Castonuovo, the next town on that road.

The way now led through some of the most magnificent scenery in the world, and commanded a view of much of the interior of Sicily. The scenery was of the same rugged and mountainous description as that which they

had thus far encountered, except that it was grander, and more extensive, and more diversified. A vast sea of mountains spread around on every side—lofty, abrupt, and majestic. On the south towered on high the vast mass of Monte Commarata, with its double peaks, and toward the east, a range of hills, with a rugged ridge, from which arose cone-shaped masses known as Mussomeli and Satera. In the north San Calogero arises, a sharp peak, and further on is a long range of mountains, the Madoni, their dark sides dotted with white villages, and their peaked summits white with snow. Looking eastward there was described a long, deep valley, extending for many a mile in one unbroken sheet of green; beyond which, on the furthest horizon, there appeared, towering far above all other heights, alone in unapproachable majesty, now clad in ice and snow, the sublime form of Mount Etna. From its cone a small wreath of smoke ascended, and floated in the wind like a pennon in the air.

The road descended a bare declivity, winding in and out in all directions. After a few miles they came to a richly wooded plain at the foot of the hills, while above this, upon a hillside, and at the base of lofty cliffs, was the town of Castonuovo. Olive groves surrounded it, while on the crest of the cliff were the ruins of an ancient castle. Here Garth and Pauline stopped to rest for the noon.

"Look here, my son," said Garth. "Every new place I came to I hate worse; every new town is a step on the road which takes you from me. How shall I get along without you? Do you ever think of that? Come now, you won't forget Old Garth, will you?"

Pauline looked at him solemnly with her dark eyes, and murmured something commonplace.

"This is the land of Damon and Pythias," said Garth, after a pause; "there must be something in the air of the place, or why should I have grown so fond of you? It reminds me of stories that I've heard of father and son meeting incognito and feeling strangely drawn to one another by the ties of nature. Only I haven't any son."

CHAPTER XLVI.

GIRGENTI.

TANCRED meanwhile had been devoting all his energies in searching after the lost. Having convinced himself that nothing was to be expected from the dilatory Sicilian officials, he resolved to take the matter into his own hands and search for himself with his own emissaries. He was compelled to act altogether upon the information which Captain Thain had given. This information he deemed substantially true, since it had what looked like the endorsement of the British Ambassador. Unfortunately, there was one error in that statement, and in a matter of vital importance. This was the place from which the party had started. Sciacca was the actual point of departure from which they had passed away. Captain Thain, however, had said that it was Girgenti, and to Girgenti Tancred accordingly went.

Girgenti is the modern apology for the mighty and splendid Agrigentum, a city whose name is associated with some of the most thrilling events of classic history, and with the most majestic strains of classic poetry. Girgenti is divided into two parts, the first being the city proper, situated upon the summit of lofty cliffs, and the second being the port which lies at the base. The upper city, as seen from the cliffs above the port, has a most imposing appearance, the houses extend in long white lines, rising one above the other in terraces, while the whole is dominated by the massive forms of the cathedral and castle. It is this grandeur of appearance that has gained for Girgenti the title of "la magnifica."

But upon entering the city this illusion is at once dispelled. The town is most confusedly arranged, and there is but one street worthy of the name, all the other so-called streets are nothing better than lanes and alleys, abominably paved, full of all manner of filth, impassable to carriages, and almost equally so to horses. The houses are not only ugly, but shabby, and a general air of squalor pervades the whole place.

Filth reigns everywhere; beggars and dirty children fill the streets. "The town is as foul and fetid as the face of nature around it is fair and smiling. Never, perhaps, was there a contrast more striking than between the luxury of ancient Agrigentum and the nastiness of modern Girgenti."

Contrast with this the description given of the ancient city by Polybius:

"Situated at the distance of only eighteen stadia from the sea, it possesses all the conveniences which the sea procures. The whole circuit of the city is rendered uncommonly strong both by nature and art; for the walls are built upon a rock, which, partly by nature, and partly by the labor of art, is very steep and broken. It is surrounded also by rivers on different sides: on the side toward the south by a river of the same name as the city, and on the west and southwest by the Hypsas. The citadel, which stands upon a hill on the northeast side, is secured all around the outside by a deep and inaccessible valley, and has one way only by which it may be entered from the city. On the summit of the hill is a temple dedicated to Minerva, and another to Jupiter, as at Rhodes. For, as the Agrigentines were a colony from Rhodes, they gave this deity, not improperly, the same appellation by which he was distinguished in the island from which they came. Agrigentum excels almost all other cities in strength, and especially in ornament and beauty. It is in all respects magnificent, and is adorned with porticoes and temples, among which the temple of Jupiter Olympius, though not finished, indeed, with great splendor, is equal in size and in design to any of the temples of Greece."

Agrigentum, says a modern writer, in its site possessed something of the magnificent peculiar to itself. Nature traced out its plan in a vast platform of rock. Art had but to perfect the design of that great architect. This magnificent area, which is nearly square, is elevated to a very considerable height above the surrounding territory; its perpendicular precipices formed the bases for walls; ravines, penetrating into the interior, offered most commodious situations for gates; while numerous little eminences, scattered about within, seemed as if designed for the advantageous display of noble edifices. Imagination can scarcely conceive a more glorious prospect than that which the southern cliff of this great city once displayed, surmounted by a long unbroken line of the finest monuments of Grecian art, among which stood six majestic temples of that severe Doric order which so happily combines elegance and simplicity with solidity and grandeur. The ruins of these stately edifices still command the admiration of posterity where they stand, the images of calm repose, the memorials of a mighty state, and the vindicators of its ancient grandeur. Time has spread over them its somber tints, which blend harmoniously with the surrounding landscape, and throw, as it were, a sacred charm around its rocks and mountains. The interior of the ancient city is now divided into farms and vineyards, though the direction of its principal streets may still be traced by the deep, worn furrows of the chariot-wheels; but solitude has succeeded to the tumultuous throng which once circulated there. Corn waves over the regal mansion of Phalaris, and the reign of silence is disturbed only by the shepherd's pipe or the reaper's song.

Agrigentum was founded by a colony of Greeks, and grew with great rapidity, until finally it had a population of over half a million. Here it was that the tyrant Phalaris set up his bull, and inclosed the artist inside as its first victim. The city flourished most under Theron. All this prosperity came to an end in 406 B.C., when a great Carthaginian army laid siege to the place, and after a resistance of seven or eight months the people resolved to leave the place, and seek refuge in a neighboring city. "The road," says Grote, "was beset by a distracted crowd, of both sexes and of every age and condition, confounded in one indiscriminate lot of suffering. Not a few, through personal weakness or the immobility of despair, were left behind. The old, the sick, and the impotent were of necessity abandoned. Some remained and slew themselves, refusing to survive the loss of their homes and the destruction of their city. Others consigned themselves to the protection of the temples, but with little hope that it would procure them safety. The morning's dawn exhibited to Imilcon unguarded walls, a deserted city, and a miserable population of exiles huddled together in disorderly flight. The Carthaginians rushed upon the town with the fury of men, who had been struggling and suffering before it for eight months. They ransacked the houses, slew every living person that was left, and found plunder enough to satiate even a ravenous appetite. Temples, as well as private dwellings were alike stripped, and those

who had taken sanctuary in them became victims like the rest. The great public ornaments and trophies of the city, the bull of Phalaris, together with the most precious statues and pictures, were preserved by Imilcon, and sent as decorations to Carthage.

From this blow Agrigentum never recovered, for though people came back and the city rose once more, still it was far different from its olden self. Romans and Carthaginians captured and recaptured it, until it sunk at last into an unimportant possession. Different indeed is it now from the days when Pindar sung:

“Hymns that rule the living lyre.
What god, what hero shall we sing?
What mortal's praise the strain inspire?
Jove is Pisa's guardian king,
Hercules the Olympiad planned,
Trophy of his conquering hand;
But Theron, whose bright axle won
With four swift steeds the chariot crown,
Noblest of hosts, our song shall grace
The prop of Agrigentum's fame,
Flower of an old illustrious race,
Whose upright rule his prospering states proclaim.”

CHAPTER XLVII.

TANCRED'S PREPARATIONS.

The task before Tancred was a difficult one, and he realized to the fullest extent all this difficulty. Before setting out for Sicily he secured the services of a half dozen active young fellows, whom he intended to make use of in prosecuting his researches. One of these was an Italian who had figured as a Carbonaro in a rising in Naples. The rising had been suppressed, and the Italian had fled to England, where Tancred had met him. His name was Michel Angelo. The second was a Frenchman, who had been in the service of Ali, the Pasha of Jamna, and was a bold and desperate man. The third was a Spaniard, who had been a Carlist, and had left his country in disgust. The other three were Englishmen, one a retired Indian officer; the second, a navy lieutenant; and the third, an adventurer who had fought in South America. All these had been old friends and associates of Tancred's. They had also been acquainted with Garth when he was at Liverpool. If he had come to England for recruits they would all have promptly joined his standard, but as he had come for money they declined. Upon Tancred's resolve to prosecute this search he at once sent for these friends, and they all joined him at Naples.

Only the Italian, Michel Angelo, knew Sicily, but all the rest knew Italy, and could speak Italian with greater or less fluency. Michel Angelo's knowledge of Sicily was of the very greatest importance, since it enabled Tancred without loss of time to decide upon a definite course of action. After long consideration Tancred decided to engage a large number of men about Girgenti and other places, and divide them into six bands under the leadership of his friends, while he himself should exercise the supreme control. Michel Angelo and the Frenchman, Jean Darcot, did most of the enlisting, though the others worked at it. But Girgenti was soon found inadequate to give the supplies they needed, so that a new plan of action was resolved upon, which, though more roundabout, was in the end more expeditious.

The arrangement was as follows: Each of Tancred's friends should establish himself at one of the larger towns of Sicily, raise what men he could, arm them, and then march his force through the interior toward Girgenti. They were to make most careful inquiries as they went along, and if they came upon any track of the lost ones, however slight, they were at once to communicate with Tancred, and follow up the search till some result was reached.

First, Michel Angelo went to Palermo. From this point he was to march through the center of the island to Girgenti.

The Frenchman was sent to Marsala. Here and at Trapani he was to raise his gang, and then march through the interior to Girgenti. This route would be a very circuitous one, but it was hoped that his searches might lead to something.

The Spaniard, Gutierrez, was sent to Catania, where he was to raise men, with arms and supplies, and march through the country back to Girgenti.

The Indian officer, Berton, was sent to Syracuse, with instructions to proceed in a similar manner in that direction.

The lieutenant, McIntosh, was sent to Messina. From this point he was to march with

his men along the coast as far as Cefalu, from which point he was to turn southward in the direction of Girgenti.

Finally, Tancred kept the South American, Smith, at Girgenti, while he himself worked in conjunction with him to raise men here and keep up a search in various quarters.

The march of Michel Angelo amounted to over one hundred miles.

The march of Jean Darcot would amount to over one hundred and twenty miles.

The march of Gutierrez would amount to more than one hundred and fifty miles.

The march of Berton would be about as long as that of Gutierrez.

The march of McIntosh would be the longest of all, and would be more than two hundred miles; but two thirds of the way would be very easy, and it was not supposed that the search would be so close in that direction, or that so much time would be occupied by him as by the others.

As to the authorities, Tancred's plan was a simple one, and was adopted at the instigation of Michel Angelo. If any unpleasant inquiries were made, each commander was instructed to inform the authorities whatever might be most plausible, and stop their mouths from further questionings by a bribe.

For although the Sicilian magistrates could not rescue prisoners from the bandits yet they would have resented any attempts of the friends of the prisoners to do so by force of arms, considering such attempts as a reflection upon the weakness of the Government.

As to the brigands, the mode of action determined upon was to be largely governed by circumstances. If the prisoners could be found and captured, they were at once to be seized by force; but if they were in places not easily accessible, or if their lives would be endangered by any open attack, then it would be necessary to come to terms with the brigands, and even pay any ransom. For Tancred's plan was to stick at nothing so long as he could save his friends. If ransom had to be given he would give it, and when his friends were once safe out of the hands of the bandits he could punish them afterward in any way that might seem most satisfactory.

Thus the plans of Tancred were far-reaching and comprehensive, involving an actual search of the whole island—a search so thorough that it was scarcely possible that the prisoners should not be heard of. But from the fatal defect in the information which Thain had given much of this labor would be lost. Had he only known that Sciacca was the place of departure, instead of Gergenti, the task would have been easier.

In fact, there was from the first this difficulty about Gergenti, that he never could find the slightest trace of any of his missing friends. None of the hotels showed any trace of them. Their names did not appear in any register. None of the guides had any particular recollection of any such party. Tancred, therefore, could only conclude, either that they had gone into the country direct from the ship without taking any guides, or stopping at any hotel; or else that the landlords and guides had forgotten about them.

Tancred now waited patiently, while all his forces were being set in motion. At length he heard from all of them. One by one they had started from all the points assigned them, and along all the routes indicated above. Tancred himself went out in a northwesterly direction, inasmuch as this route lay outside of the track of the others. He hit upon this by the merest accident. And yet this was the very route which lay directly through the region where his friends had been conveyed. In this place there were no roads whatever. There were only paths, rough, winding, scarcely passable for horses, fit only for foot-passengers, or perhaps mules.

Time passed, and one by one the various bands converged on their march toward one common center.

First came the Spaniard, Gutierrez, who left his men at Caltanissetta, and hurried on in person to report. He had found out nothing whatever.

Next came Berton, who had started from Syracuse, and brought his men all the way to Girgenti. He also had found nothing.

Next came Michel Angelo. He had marched in two bands, one going by the way of Lercara and the other through Corleone. After searching about the country they had halted at each of these places. Nothing had been learned.

Next came McIntosh, who, coming from Messina, had turned southward from Cefalu.

His men halted at Castronuovo. He brought no information.

Next came Darcot. He had come in two bands, one by the sea and one through the interior. He had left one part of his forces at Caltabellotta, and another part at Chiusa.

Smith had brought up his men from Girgenti as far as Castel Termini.

Tancred himself had pushed on to Bivona, at which place he began to hear perplexing rumors.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE SICILIAN REPUBLIC.

AT Bivona there came to Tancred many perplexing rumors from all the region round about. From Castel Termini, from Castronuovo, from Lercara, from Felaga, from Brizzi, from Palazzo Adriano. At one place a lady had been seen, at another a lady and a gentleman. In each case these were said to have been Inglesi. The rumors were of a distressingly vague description, and on being followed up ended in nothing. Yet, there was something in them which led Tancred on, and made him feel as though he was on the track. This was especially the case when, in one place near Brizzi, they heard of three ladies and a gentleman, Inglesi, who had been in a place not far away.

In no other part of Sicily had even this much been found out, so that Tancred pushed his researches throughout this district most diligently. The district was a difficult one, being fuller than usual of ravines and rocky plains and precipitous hills, but there was another difficulty which was more troublesome still.

It was one for which Tancred had not been prepared, and which gradually unfolded itself to the great perplexity of himself and his friends.

In the course of their searches, they had gradually become aware of a great organization opposed to them, which baffled their efforts and dissipated their plans. It was wide-spread, covering all this part of Sicily and filling all the center and west with its far reaching and minute ramifications. Large as Tancred's forces were, the opposing forces of this mysterious power were larger still, but what the object of it was he could not tell. Michel Angelo had not suspected the existence of anything of the kind and was slow to believe it; but he was the one who first came in contact with it, and had been most bewildered. Jean Darcot, also, had come into collision at an early period with the same power, and these two had sought to unravel the mystery.

The approach of all Tancred's forces to this common central ground seemed to bring them more closely into collision with the mysterious power. This power was made manifest in many ways, in encountering warlike preparations, in being conscious of incessant espionage, and in seeing distant figures, who regarded them with stern attention as if preparing for a struggle. They had the air of brigands, but their arms and organization were of a higher order.

If they were indeed a vast band of brigands, then the task of Tancred became a much more serious one than he had supposed. For this was the region where they most abounded, and which they had evidently chosen as their headquarters, but in this very place he had come upon what seemed like the faint traces of his friends. What, then, was to be done. Should he try mild measures, or move forward all his forces and try violence. The latter course he saw would be a desperate one. In such a country as this a small band might defy an armed empire, and his force could do but little. He determined, therefore, to try to get into the secret of this mysterious power and make friendly overtures.

These overtures were made incessantly, persistently, and patiently, and being accompanied with gold, were not unsuccessful. Gradually a communication was made with individuals, who, though evidently with much terror, were induced by heavy bribes to tell all they knew.

Great was the amazement of Tancred, as also of his friends, as it all came out. These were the forces of the Sicilian Republic, and in this region were their headquarters. Their organization was comprehensive and systematic. They were under the control of one supreme intelligence, who, though merely possessing the modest title of chief, had yet almost absolute authority, since he supplied all the funds. The fact of the chief holding the money-bags gave

him boundless authority. Still there was much murmuring. The chief was very strict. He would not allow a little harmless brigandage. What was done had to be kept concealed. Besides, the chief was a foreigner, an Inglese. Already there were murmurs. One of the generals of the Republic had a large following. He was the chosen friend and right hand man of the chief, yet he resented his chief's domineering manner and strict discipline. A movement was going on at that time under this general to throw off the control of the chief. They hoped to make him prisoner and get his money, or make him furnish them with all they wanted. But this was a very difficult matter, as the chief was watchful and lived alone, armed to the teeth, in an impregnable and almost inaccessible stronghold.

This was all the information that the man could give. Tancred understood it all. With a feeling of immense exultation he recognized the work of Garth. Garth had been laboring there at his beloved Republic. Garth had organized this far-reaching conspiracy. Garth it was who, from his lonely and inaccessible retreat, was the controlling power whose arms he had felt all around him. These disaffected, mean-spirited Sicilians chafed under his control, as was natural. But Tancred felt convinced that Garth could hold them all in check.

His highest desire now was to find Garth. Brigandage had no doubt been carried on in spite of Garth's law. Perhaps his friends had been seized by some of these disaffected followers; perhaps they were moving against Garth on account of this very thing. Perhaps Garth had set them free, and had punished the evildoers. All this was possible. One thing was certain. Garth was the very man of all men who could now give him the information that he wished.

As for the man, he swore he knew nothing about any English captives. Tancred did not believe him, and offered him heavy bribes if he would tell. But in vain. Either the man could not tell, or was afraid to. He then tried to induce the man to take him to Garth's stronghold. The man refused, but offered to speak to some others about it.

On the following day this man returned, bringing with him a man who desired to have a private interview with Tancred. This man had his arm in a sling, and showed signs of suffering. He told a strange story.

First, he had heard, he said, that Tancred was searching after some English travelers, and wished to see the chief. In both of these enterprises he could assist him, but only on one condition, and that was that Tancred should bring forward all his forces, capture the chief alive, and hand him over to the Sicilian Republicans for trial.

This Tancred refused to do.

In the conversation thus far, Michel Angelo had acted as interpreter, and he now began to question the stranger more closely.

"What is your name?"

"Berengar."

"Is your wound a recent one?"

"Yes. The chief shot me yesterday."

"Why?"

"A quarrel."

"For what cause?"

Berengar refused to answer.

"These English travelers," said Michel Angelo. "The chief wished to stop brigandage. He tried a little sharp discipline."

"It is not your business," growled Berengar, turning to go.

"Wait," said Michel Angelo, and he gave a whistle.

In an instant Berengar was in the hands of two stout fellows, who held him fast, while Michel Angelo searched his pockets.

"What's this for?" cried Tancred, in amazement.

"Why, this must be the actual brigand himself who captured your friends," cried Michel Angelo. "See, look over these things. Do you recognize anything?" and as he said this he handed to Tancred a gold chain and locket which he had taken out of the breast pocket of Berengar. Tancred snatched it from him, and held it with trembling hands. It was his mother's locket, and contained the likeness of his father.

"Hell bound!" he cried. "Where is she? Take me to her? Tie the villain's hands behind him, and don't let him out of your sight."

Berengar turned pale.

"Confess all," said Michel Angelo.

"They've escaped," said Berengar.

"When?"

"Three days ago."

"You lie!"

"It's true. We were away, and they fled."

"Where did they go?"

"No one knows except the chief. That's why he shot me. I chased him, and tried to capture his rock. We are besieging it now. I got shot for my pains. We have him there now. We're going to starve him out. You can find him there if you want to. Only let me go, for I am wounded and in pain."

"No; you can't go. You must guide us to where the chief's rock is."

About six hundred men were at Bevona, and these were at once assembled for the march. They took Berengar with them, and after about three hours came to the place. The brigands had been guarding the chasm ever since the last shot had been fired, but had not attempted to cross.

Tancred called in a loud voice.

"There was no answer."

He then had a rude frame-work made, and crossed over.

The rock was empty.

CHAPTER XLIX.

FRINK AND LUCY.

LET us now return to Frink and Lucy, who had fled, leaving Pauline to suppose that she would be able to join them. But, as has already been shown, Frink's intention was widely different. His aim was to fly in another direction and throw Pauline off altogether. He hoped that Pauline would be lost on the road, and therefore be first to be captured. He also counted on Pauline, in the event of capture, giving information about him, which information would of course utterly mislead his pursuers.

Thus, if all his plans turned out well, he would accomplish every one of his dearest desires, for he would carry out his cherished plan for getting rid of Pauline and her mother, while as the apparent savior of Lucy he would earn a title to her favor, which no other human being could hope to rival.

They had disguised themselves in the way already mentioned. Lucy was dressed like an Italian peasant-girl, while Frink looked like an intelligent bandit. Of course, such a disguise could not deceive any close inspection, but they hoped that it would pass muster to the ordinary observer.

On leaving the old church Lucy had joined Frink, who led her in silence to the rear of the village, and then in a southerly direction. The way ran down a long slope, under olive-trees which served as an excellent place of concealment. This course was almost opposite to that which Pauline was told to take, and which she did take. Lucy would have noticed this, but she was too full of excitement and trepidation to notice anything, and the idea of treachery had never entered her head.

Frink had spent much time in settling upon his present course, and had as clear an idea of what he wished to do as any one could have. He had seen that the country to the south was open, and that in the distance was the sea. He thought that by making one vigorous push he might get there. One mistake, however, he had made, and it was a very serious one. To him, looking down from the height, the country had appeared smooth and easy to be traversed, whereas it was one of the roughest countries in the world; arid, bare of verdure, strewn with vast rocks, and intersected with gullies and ravines. All this made it a place through which progress could only be made by the most toilsome exertion.

They went on for some time through the olive grove, and at length reached the foot of the declivity. Here the ground at once became rough and broken. Large rocks appeared on every hand, and there was no sign of any pathway. Frink searched for some time, walking along the outskirts of this rocky region until, at length, he was fortunate enough to find something like a track which led into it. Here he led the way while Lucy followed. They could not go fast on account of the roughness of the ground. The pathway also wound in an exceedingly circuitous manner so as to avoid the larger rocks and cliffs that interfered with it.

At length Lucy surmounted her terror and excitement sufficiently to have some thought of Pauline.

"Hadn't we better wait about here somewhere?" she asked, anxiously.

"What for?"

"For Pauline."

"Oh, we have not got to the tower yet."

"But more than an hour has passed."

"I know it, but it's no use waiting anywhere except at the tower. She isn't likely to come this path. She may take another path. If we stay here we may lose her, for she may go on in another direction."

To this Lucy had nothing to say, so she followed Frink in silence for some time longer.

The pathway continued as before, rough and difficult to traverse. It also continued to keep its circuitous and roundabout character. At length it led into a wood, and here they went on for some time. But the path grew fainter, and the wood grew darker, until, at last, they had utterly lost their way. Until now Frink had managed to retain some idea of the course in which he was going. But now, in the darkness of the wood, he found this impossible, and soon began to become utterly confused. His chief object now was to regain the path, but the darkness was such that even if he did get upon it he was not able to recognize it.

It became a question now whether to keep on or to remain where he was. He finally concluded to keep on. He did so. Lucy, who had seen his confusion, and conjectured the cause, once more suggested that they had better wait. She still hoped that Pauline might be somewhere near, and felt as though they might have a better chance of seeing her if they remained. But Frink assured her that the only hope of seeing her was by getting to the tower.

After about a quarter of an hour, to his immense surprise, Frink found himself coming out of the wood into a rough-looking place much like the open ground through which the pathway had at first led. There was no path here, but it was better than the wood, and so they walked on here for some time. But so rough was the ground that their progress was extremely slow, and Lucy soon grew so weary that she could scarcely move. In vain Frink tried to assist her. He himself began to feel the effect of such severe exertion, and could do but little toward helping his companion. He decided, therefore, to rest for the remainder of the night at least, and sought now to find some suitable hiding-place. There was a rising ground a little distance ahead, and toward this they went. On one side of this was an overhanging rock, in front of which was another rock, which looked like a place adapted to concealment. Frink gathered some dry moss from the neighboring wood, and thus made a couch for Lucy, who at once flung herself down and went to sleep. Frink sat outside and tried to watch, but, in spite of his anxiety, his fatigue overwhelmed him, and before long he was fast asleep—in a sleep indeed which was so sound that he did not wake till the sun was high in the sky.

On waking he started and stared around with horror. But, in point of fact, what he had considered as a most dangerous thing, was one cause why he had not been already captured; for the brigands were already out over the country in search of the fugitives, and some of them had passed on through this place not far away from where these two were. They were now far away, and were still in pursuit, thus giving Frink and Lucy a short respite.

He roused Lucy as soon as possible, and communicated to her his fears.

"I only intended to stay here for an hour or so, but we've been here too long, and our pursuers will be after us. Can you start?"

"Oh, yes," said Lucy; "but how can we go?"

"But we must go."

"You forget Pauline."

"No," said Frink; "but we have waited for hours, and she has not come. I don't forget Pauline, but I must take care of you. Our only hope now is in flight. We can only hope that Pauline may have reached some town."

Lucy sighed.

"We have done all that we could," said Frink. "Let us not waste time in weeping. We ourselves are in danger. We may be seized at any moment. You may have to bewail your own capture before half an hour."

These words roused Lucy, and she prepared for further flight. Frink had had sufficient forethought to make some provision for this journey, and now produced some chestnut-cake, such as is the common diet of the Sicilians, a black, coarse substance, yet quite nutritious and not unpalatable to those who have acquired a taste for it. Of this he and Lucy ate enough to

serve for a breakfast, and then started off once more. They now entered the forest, and kept along the edge of it in the same direction as the ravine, but under the shadow of the trees.

The ground here ascended steadily and soon grew smoother and more free from large masses. The ravine itself diminished in size till it looked like a dried up river bed, with no stones more formidable than the ordinary round cobble-stones none of which were much larger than a man's head.

At length after an ascent of two or three hours they reached the summit. Here they found a slight hollow, where there were olive groves, vineyards, and a chestnut plantation. Beyond this the ground rose slightly, and here there was a small village. The sight of this filled both of them with joy. It seemed to them as though all their troubles were at last over.

But remembering that there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, they did not lose their caution even at that moment. Frink surveyed the scene closely and with much circumspection to see that there were no suspicious characters about. His inspection satisfied him that the way was clear of enemies, and he advanced toward the village.

It was small and dirty. One street ran through it, on either side of which were small lanes. A handsome church in the Sicilian Gothic style stood in the main street, and opposite to this a large building with a sign which bore the name, "Locanda Grande."

CHAPTER L.
AN ALTERNATIVE.

THE inn was by no means inviting, yet, to these fugitives, it seemed like a palace. They learned that the village was Brizzi; that Sciacca was about thirty miles distant across the country, but that the road there was about fifty miles, and very rough; that it was not much further to Palermo, over a much better road. They found, thus, that they were not so near the sea as they had supposed, and now, for the first time, learned that the brigands had held them captive in this neighborhood. Of brigands, however, the landlord knew nothing at all. He had never heard the word. He swore that there were no such beings at all—at least, not in Sicily, and certainly not near Brizzi. The Brizzi people were pious sulphur-diggers, who did not know what a brigand was. At this innocence of the landlord they felt much reassured.

Feeling, now, perfectly safe, Frink resolved to think over his position, and decide upon his future. Before leaving Brizzi, he resolved to have a full and complete understanding with Lucy. As yet, she was in his power and under his control, whereas, if he postponed it another day, she might set him at defiance; for Brizzi was, so to speak, in the very midst of the brigand district. To Frink it seemed as safe as Palermo; but to Lucy it would seem as dangerous, almost, as the place that they had last fled from. This sense of danger would necessarily make her feel quite dependent upon Frink, and subservient to his wishes. He could work upon her timidity, her love for Pauline, her fear of the robbers, her longing for liberty, and thus persuade her or coerce her to fall in with his views.

Lucy had rested for several hours, after which they dined. The table of the Locanda Grande was of a Sicilian character, with dishes containing plenty of onions, plenty of grease, and plenty of dust—in fact, grease and dirt preponderated throughout the Locanda—but the guests were too happy and too tired to complain. It was after his soul had been fortified by this repast, that Frink began to speak.

"Lady Lucy," said he, "I wish to speak to you now upon a matter that is of much importance to me, and the present moment is the most fitting to introduce it."

"What is it?" said Lucy, who supposed that it had reference to their journey, and was a mere question of routes.

"I will be abrupt," said Frink; "I must be. I wish to speak about myself—about my position toward you—about my hopes—about the dearest wishes of my heart."

He paused. Lucy looked astonished and troubled. She had not expected this; she had forgotten Frink's old fondness for her. It was a terrible time for him to remind her of it.

"While we were together on shipboard," he continued, "I was silent; while we were cap-

tives I was silent. I would not allow you even to suspect the truth. But now I am myself again; now I have succeeded in snatching you from destruction,—from the grasp of those miscreants, from the sentence of death under which they held you,—and I can speak. Lady Lucy, I love you; I have always loved you. Will you listen to me? Will you give me hope?"

"Oh, Mr. Frink! oh, Mr. Frink!" cried Lucy. "Do not go on! Oh, do not! It is too hard! Not now—oh, not now!"

"Yes; but now is the very time," persisted Frink. "I have saved you; it is fresh in your memory; you owe your life to me—and what is better than life?"

"That is not generous, to remind me of the heavy obligations under which I am to you."

"No, it is not generous; of course not; but what, then? Love is unscrupulous. I cannot stop to consider what my words are; I cannot afford to be generous or delicate; I love you too well; I have risked too much to win you. If I let this opportunity slip, you will forget all that you owe to me."

"Forget? Oh, I assure you I never shall forget—never, Mr. Frink, never!"

"Let me remind you now—and oh, forgive me if I seem indelicate. Let me tell you what I have done. But for me you would be a prisoner still, without hope. The time fixed for the ransom would expire. What then? Why, only one thing—death; or, if not death, something worse. You would be the fifth wife of some Sicilian cut-throat—an exile for life. But now you are safe. I have brought you here. You have before you the chance of returning to your native country. And now, is it much to ask you to think of me with favor, to return, if you can, my love?"

"Oh, no, no!" said Lucy. "Forgive me, Mr. Frink; I am sorry to pain you; but that can never be!"

"And why not?" asked Frink.

"My heart is already given to another."

"You cannot mean Tancred Henslowe? Oh, I forgot—I have never told you. He is dead."

"What!" cried Lucy, in horror.

"He is dead," said Frink. "He has been dead for months."

Lucy smiled.

"You forget how short a time it is since I saw his letter."

"No I don't. But he is dead."

Lucy again started.

"What do you mean?"

"Why this. I knew it all along. He died in Sicily. He never went to Florence. More, he died before I went to Liverpool. He died. I saw him die. I did not tell the truth, however. How could I. I found his mother and sister so happy. They were preparing for the voyage. What could I do. Why, I went with them. I did this chiefly to be able to break the news to them. But I never had the chance. I kept putting it off. Besides, I went with them because you were going, and I hoped that I might lessen your prejudice against me."

"Oh, heavens! is this so? Can it be possible?" cried Lucy.

"As sure as I live, it is true. He has been dead for months. I swear it by all that is most holy."

Lucy buried her head in her hands.

"Do not pine after what is lost forever," said Frink. "Do not give yourself up to an imaginary affliction. Be just, be merciful. Think of all that I have done. Think of the dangers that I have saved you from, the dangers that yet lie before you from which I must yet save you."

"Alas!" cried Lucy, "I was never so miserable as at this moment. I wish I could be what I was yesterday."

"You can easily go back," said Frink, "but remember, when the time for the ransom comes your lot will be very different. Then you must accept your doom."

Lucy shuddered.

"Oh, what can I do!" she moaned. "Oh, it is too hard! He is not dead. He cannot be."

"It is true," said Frink; "but do not dwell upon this. I come to you now with the offer of my love. I have risked all for you, and have much to do yet before I put you in a place of safety. Do not let me bear all these toils for nothing. Do not leave me unrequited. It is a low ground to take, but I have no other way of moving you. You have no other tie now. All I want is the promise from you that you will accept my love. I do not wish to take his place in your heart. That I can never do.

But let me have some place—the second—anywhere. Promise at least some place, and say that you will be mine."

Lucy was silent. She was overwhelmed with grief at the death of Tancred, and such a proposal at such a time was abhorrent. Besides, there was her old dislike to Frink which had never been altogether surmounted. This now she found reviving at the pressure of his persistency. She found her grief for Tancred giving way to keen resentment against Frink. At the same time she was keenly sensible of the terrible position in which she would be if Frink should leave her in anger. What could become of her? How awful to fall once more into the hands of the brigands!

"Spare me!" said she, in her distress. "Give me time, if only to mourn over the lost."

"Time, certainly," said Frink. "You have all your life to mourn. I only ask the place after him. I only ask your promise now."

"I cannot."

"Oh, do not say so—do not," cried Frink. "This cannot be. You drive me away. For I cannot live any longer in such close proximity to you unless I have some hope. Give me that hope."

"I cannot—I cannot," said Lucy.

"This is a mere whim," said Frink, with some impatience. "Come, Lady Lucy. I have tried prayers. It is no use. I ask you now, calmly, and with dignity, and with all respect—will you come with me or will you stay?"

At this Lucy stared at him in amazement.

"Come with me. Let me save you from a terrible fate, and give me hope, or else, we must part here."

Lucy stood looking at him. Gradually his meaning came to her.

"This is a threat," said she, slowly.

"No," said Frink, mournfully. "It is an alternative."

"Your wife, or death," that is the alternative, said Lucy, slowly. "Well, since Tancred is dead, I don't see any good in life, and so I choose—well, I choose not to be your wife. I will run the risk."

Lucy stood quite calm, with the calmness of cold, dull despair. She spoke in a meditative way, looking at the floor.

"You're mad!" cried Frink. "You're mad. Think of the brigands. Think of their cruel sentence."

Lucy shook her head.

"Oh, I know—I know. But what can I do? If they kill me, let them kill me. For, sir, as I look at you," and here she regarded him with a look that sent a thrill through him. "I find that I prefer death to a life with you. I had no idea that I had such a dislike to any human being."

"H'm," said Frink, frowning darkly, and turning away. "In that case any further conversation is useless, and, of course, the only thing left for me to do is to retire. If I had retired earlier, and alone, it would have been better for both of us, but now, the brigands will be sure to capture you, and you will be punished for going with me."

He turned away. No word of farewell was on his lips. He had been stung to the soul by Lucy's words. He walked to the door. Lucy sat down, and sent after him not a word or even a thought.

CHAPTER LI.
RECAPTURE.

As Frink reached the door of the inn, he found there a number of men with whose appearance he was not at all pleased. They all carried rifles, and had an independent swagger, and a free and easy stare, which reminded him in a most unpleasant way of his late friends, the brigands. In spite of the landlord's ignorance about these gentry, Frink felt a thrilling horror at the sight of them. His first impulse was to run for it and escape from the back windows; but another instant showed him the folly of this, so suppressing his emotion, he assumed an indifferent air as possible, and sought to pass out. But at this, one of the fellows, with a grin, interposed his rifle. With a muttered curse, Frink stepped back. He gave a hasty look all round, and once more the thoughts of flight occurred. But in that hasty look he saw a face at the back window nearest, and the face was regarding him with a benevolent smile—much the same smile as that with which an angler regards some particularly fine salmon that he has just landed.

Upon this, Frink went back to the room where he had left Lucy. His disappointed love was now forgotten. He had but one desire—life—liberty. He wished to know the worst.

"Lady Lucy," said he, "I'm sorry to say that we are again caught. The brigands are here. You can speak the language well enough to talk with them. Will you be kind enough to ask them what they want? You'd better keep as cool as you can, and not show any uneasiness. I've come back here to make them think I suspected nothing."

At this, Lucy rose. She had been prepared by Frink's recent words for falling again into the hands of the brigands. This happened sooner than she had suspected, but she was prepared for it, and so she went out coolly enough. As she approached the door, the fellows interposed their rifles to keep her back.

"Who are you, and what do you want, gentlemen?" she asked, calmly.

"Pardon, miladi, but we are your guardians until the ransom comes. You must remain under our care until then. We have had much trouble in finding you, and are glad to see you again."

"But is there not a government—a magistrate in this village?"

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"There must be a magistrate."

"Ah, miladi, what would you have? men must live."

This proposition was undeniable. Still Lucy could not altogether understand it all. To be captured by brigands in the wild country was intelligible at least, but to be captured by brigands in the Locanda Grande, on the principal street, and opposite the cathedral, was rather puzzling.

"By what right do you talk to me about ransom?"

"Ah, miladi, have you so soon forgotten?"

"I know I was a prisoner, but I escaped and came here."

"Ah, but miladi did not know that Brizzi is our own territory."

"Your own territory!"

"Yes. All the inhabitants belong to us. We are Brizzi people. The landlord is one of our captains. Besides, we are all citizens of the Sicilian Republic."

At this astounding information Lucy had no heart to pursue the investigation any further. She saw that in their flight they had run from one trap into another, and that escape was now utterly impossible.

"Pardon, miladi," continued the brigand; "but it is painful to me to have to say that it will be impossible for you to remain at the Locanda Grande."

"Where do you intend to take me to?"

"Away from Brizzi, Eccellenza."

"Where?"

"To a tower."

"A tower?"

"And, miladi, it also pains me to have to say that it will be necessary to separate you from your friend the Milord Frinco. You must now all be kept in separate places. The Miladi Enneslo, the old lady, the young Miladi Enneslo, your ladyship, and the Milord Frinco—all."

This information was received by Lucy with equanimity. It certainly caused her no grief to learn that she was to be separated from Frink.

"When will you take me from this place?" she asked.

"To-day."

"Soon?"

"Oh, yes; soon; in one half hour!"

"Well, I will inform my friend," said Lucy, and with these words she went back into the room and reported to Frink the whole conversation which she had had with the brigand.

The recent scene with Frink had left no apparent effects. The facts had been brought to light, which facts were that she disliked Frink intensely, and had let him know it plainly. Still she was ready to treat with him or talk with him on the old terms of intercourse, that is, with ordinary civility on both sides: intimacy, cordiality, or friendship was not to be thought of.

The new turn to affairs had driven away Frink's mortification. He had something to think of far different from a sentimental affection for Lucy. His life was once more at stake. All his thoughts were needed now to save himself. Bitterly he regretted that he had over-loaded himself with the weight of Lucy. Had it not been for her he might have been safe. He had saved her and endangered himself only to be insulted and rejected. He could now only

hope for a fresh opportunity of escape, and he felt that his sweetest vengeance would be to escape and leave Lucy behind. If they could only be together in some place so that she might know of his escape it would be better, but the report which she gave showed him that henceforth they must be separated, and that even if he did escape she might never know anything at all about it. Even if she were to repent in dust and ashes, and be willing to become his bond slave he would never know it.

No more words were exchanged between them. Each knew the mind of the other. Each had made up his and her mind. There was no need for any further remarks. They would henceforth be separated. Frink might escape, but Lucy could not be benefited by it; and if Lucy should be freed, Frink could not be benefited.

After about an hour word came to them that they were to leave. About a dozen men were drawn up outside. A mule was there for Lucy. All the rest would have to walk. Thus they were to be conveyed to their various places of imprisonment. They made no remarks either to one another or to the brigands. Words were useless. Both were silent. Each one thought rather of the future and of its possibilities. Lucy mounted the mule. Frink marched behind. In this way they left the town of Brizzi.

Leaving the town they turned away to the right. There was open ground here, and it was the side of a hill. They followed a path which led down into a valley, beyond which arose mountains far higher than the elevation upon which Brizzi stood. Down this path they went, into the valley, Lucy on the mule, Frink following, six brigands armed to the teeth going before, and six more also armed following behind. In this way they reached the foot of the hill.

Suddenly there was a movement among the brigands.

"I Forestieri!" cried one, which means, "The Strangers!"

The word excited universal alarm. All stood still and watched and listened. There came a distant sound—the sound of tramping feet, of rattling arms, of human voices. The brigands listened for about the space of one minute, and then, as if by one common impulse, turned and fled back as fast as they could.

Frink and Lucy were left alone.

Both looked at each other in wonder.

Frink looked all around. He heard the sounds. A band of men were evidently descending the mountain on the opposite side, and advancing toward them. Soon they would be here. The brigands had fled.

"More brigands!" he murmured. "Lady Lucy, dismount; fly for your life!"

Lucy looked at him, but did not move. Her mind was made up. Better the brigands than Frink. Better death than Frink.

A sudden thought seized Frink. He looked all around. Then he seized the bridle of the mule and led it away.

Lucy screamed.

"Stop that," cried Frink, fiercely, "or I'll stab you to the heart!"

Lucy was silent.

Frink led the mule after him and plunged deep into the woods.

CHAPTER LII.

* THE STRANGE LADY AT CASTRONOVO.

It was felt both by Garth and Pauline on reaching Castronuovo, that some change was imminent. The town was situated on a road which was more traveled than any other in this part of the island, and it was not impossible that in this place news might be heard from some of the other members of the party. Garth therefore waited with some feelings of apprehension to see what would become of the "boy Paul" and Pauline felt herself excited to an unusual degree from various causes. Her chief excitement, however, arose from the equivocal position in which she was. She longed to lay aside her present disguise and appear in her own person, and yet she had come to dread the effect that this might have on Garth. She wished Garth to think no ill of her. She prized his affection. She dreaded the possibility of an estrangement on his part. And yet she feared that when her secret was known she would lose him forever.

There was the chief street and a number of narrow dirty side streets. In the middle of the town

was the Piazza, and on one side of this the Locanda dell Europa. Here the travelers put up.

"I think," said Pauline, "I will make some inquiries among the people of the hotel. Perhaps I may learn something."

"Well, my son, be careful. Remember your besetting sin. Don't go to philandering about among the women."

Pauline went off with a laugh, and Garth strolled out into the stables to see what they were doing with the mules. Then he lighted his pipe and strolled up and down the Piazza. Here he met with several old acquaintances, with whom he entered into an animated conversation. These were men in the lower walks of life, some looking like muleteers, others like vine-dressers, others like shepherds, others like peasants. All, however, had something in common with Garth, and with one or two the conversation seemed to assume very great earnestness. There was only one thing that could cause such community of feeling between men representing such differences in race and in rank, and that thing could not be anything else than *la buona causa*, namely the Sicilian Republic. Garth's manner with these men was not, however, particularly cordial. He seemed merely to talk with them for the sake of killing time, and there was a certain air of preoccupation about him as though his thoughts were elsewhere. He had already confessed in his conversations with the "boy Paul" to a feeling of disgust for the associates with whom he was united. His earlier enthusiasm for *la buona causa* seemed to have died out, and the bullets which the Sicilian Republicans under Berengar had aimed at him, had probably destroyed any lingering feeling of regard.

But in the course of his conversation with these men Garth learned of the arrival of various forces in this district. Some had come to Lercara, and others to this town. Both of these bodies of men had left, going over the mountains westward. The questionings which the leaders of these bodies had made through all the region round about had made people pretty well acquainted with their wishes. Garth now learned that these bands of men were sent into the interior for the purpose of finding out about certain travelers who some time back had been arrested by brigands. The information was startling. It showed that these travelers had not been neglected by their friends. It showed that there must be at the bottom of this search one who was animated by love, and who possessed great wealth. He had watched the progress of some of the first detachments of this force, wondering what its purpose might be, and wondering also what the numbers might be. He now understood all. But one thing was plain to his mind, and that was that they were coming to take away the "boy Paul." He saw also that the "boy Paul" would infallibly learn of this search this day from the people of the Locanda, and perhaps would be eager to leave. And there came at this thought a dark sense of desolation over the soul of Garth.

He learned much in the course of his inquiries. He learned that these bands of men had come from many different directions into this one district; that they were all armed; that more were quartered in the neighboring towns; that they were led by lieutenants of different nations—English, French, Spanish, and Italian—but that behind these there was one leader—a young man, who was the soul of the movement—who was present everywhere, and urging everything forward, all of which Garth listened to; but it did not occur to him who this leader was. His mind was occupied with one thought, which was that the boy Paul would soon be taken from him, and would be lost to him forever.

Meanwhile Pauline had been in the house. Her first business had been to see the landlady, with whom she soon came to an understanding. The good woman sympathized fully with her, and showed her the utmost kindness and attention. In the course of conversation the landlady mentioned, in a casual way, that there was a strange lady in the house, who had come there the day before. She was a foreigner who could not speak a word of Italian, and had recently made a most fatiguing journey, from the effects of which she had not yet recovered. At the mention of this Pauline felt her heart stop beating, and in an instant the most excited thoughts and the wildest hopes arose within her mind.

A strange lady! A foreigner! Fatigued after a journey. She hardly dared to ask for fear lest the hopes might be dashed to the ground.

"Where has she come from?"
 "Oh! over the mountains. She has been among the—people," said the landlady, who by this meant the brigands.

Pauline's voice almost left her.
 "Take me to her," she whispered. "Let me see her."

The landlady noticed her agitation, and looked at her in surprise.

"You seem ill," said she. "You had better take some rest. You had better go to bed."

"No, no, take me to her," repeated Pauline: "to the strange lady."

The landlady said no more but led the way, and Pauline followed. The strange lady had evidently been treated with hospitality and consideration. She had been allotted the best room in the house. In such an inn as this the very best room was not much to speak of; but such as it was they had given it to the guest, and here it was that Pauline found her.

She saw reclining upon a bed a well-known form. The face was pale, indeed, and wan, but still not so much changed as she had feared. There was in the face the marks of sadness rather than of sickness, and Pauline's first thought was that she brought with herself all that was needed for her mother's recovery. For it was indeed Mrs. Henslowe—her own dear mother—who had thus been so strangely and unexpectedly restored. She was lying on the outside of the bed, with her face turned away from them, so that she did not see them. The landlady had opened the door softly, and they had entered noiselessly, so as not to disturb her, and the consequence was that she had heard nothing. She seemed to be absorbed in her own thoughts. She lay motionless, and at length gave a gentle sigh.

One look was enough to show Pauline that it was indeed her own mother, and one instant was sufficient to suggest caution against the shock of too sudden a discovery; so she touched the landlady's arm and retreated. The landlady followed, and closed the door.

"I'm afraid," said Pauline, "of surprising her too much."

"Do you know her, then?" asked the landlady.

"Know her? She is my own mother!"

"Your mother? O *gran Dio!*" cried the landlady, in amazement. "What a miracle!"

"We have been separated. I want you to prepare her. Go in, dear woman, and tell her that you have news about her friends."

"Ah, dearest, trust me. I will prepare her. I will take care that she has no shock. Don't be alarmed."

"But do not be too long."
 "Oh, no."

"The suspense is frightful," said Pauline.
 "Feel."

She took the landlady's hand and placed it over her heart.

"O *gran Dio!* how your poor dear heart throbs!" said the landlady. "But have patience, and I will soon be back."

With these words she entered the room again, and closed the door.

CHAPTER LIII.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

Now, the landlady did not know one word of English, and Mrs. Henslowe did not know one word of Italian. This was perfectly well known to the landlady, who, however, did not hesitate for one moment, but proceeded to the delicate task of preparing the mind of Mrs. Henslowe for a meeting with her daughter. Such a task could, of course, not be carried out by words, and the only way remaining was to do it by means of signs. But in the language of signs all Italians are well versed, and of all Italians the Neapolitans and Sicilians are the most proficient. The landlady, therefore, entered upon her task with the utmost confidence in her success.

To explain how it was that the landlady entered upon her task would be quite impossible, at least without the aid of a set of diagrams, and that would be of no use to the reader. Suffice it to say, that it was not by means of signs and gestures only that she was able to communicate her ideas. The chief way was by means of the expressions of her face. It is by such things as these that we judge of one another's feelings, and often of one another's thoughts. The language of signs is largely supplemented by the language of expression.

The landlady, therefore, by many varied signs and expressions succeeded in conveying to Mrs. Henslowe's mind that there was something very pleasant going on, which she wished to communicate to her; next, that some one wanted to see her; next, that it was some one from over the mountains; next, that this one's appearance would give her great joy, and dry all her tears.

Upon gathering all this from the landlady, Mrs. Henslowe became greatly excited. From this she could draw but one conclusion, which was that some good news had come to the landlady from some of her friends—from Lucy, or, perhaps, from her daughter Pauline. The joy of the landlady showed her that the news must be good.

Pauline was now introduced as soon as possible. Her hair had been cut short since her mother last saw her, and she had dyed her skin dark brown, and she still wore the clothes of a peasant boy. This Sicilian peasant, who thus came to her with his curling hair and his olive skin, for a few moments completely deceived Mrs. Henslowe, who regarded him with an amiable smile, in which there was no recognition whatever. But it was only for a moment. As Pauline stepped nearer—the familiar face, the sweet, loved face became revealed in spite of all the changes of color and of disguise. A low cry of joy burst forth from Mrs. Henslowe, and rising from her reclining posture she and Pauline both fell weeping in one another's arms.

The landlady left the room, wiping her eyes, crying and laughing hysterically. The mother and the daughter were left together. For a long time they could not speak; then, for a still longer time, even after they could speak, they could utter nothing but words of love, or ejaculations of joy, or wonder, or pity, or admiration. Their love for one another seemed like a sort of hunger which was insatiable. And Pauline's supposition was right. Her mother's illness was of the mind rather than the body, and this restoration to her daughter seemed to give her life and strength.

Mrs. Henslowe at length was able to tell her story to Pauline, and listen to Pauline's in return. Mrs. Henslowe's adventures may here be briefly set forth.

She had been taken away on account of her health to a less elevated position, a place down in a romantic glen where the change proved speedily beneficial. Still there was the misery of her lonely position, her despondency about the future, her anxiety about her daughter, all of which affected her mind, and counteracted the good effects of the change of air. She then wished to go back and join her daughter, but could not do so. Her ignorance of the language prevented her from making herself understood, and though she tried to ask them to take her back or bring her daughter to her, she could not communicate the idea to them. She was able to send messages and receive others in return, and this was her chief solace. She began to think that the brigands did not care about bringing them together again, but had decided to keep them apart, perhaps for the sake of greater security. At length, two or three days previously, there was a great commotion. A band of brigands headed by Berengar went by in great haste, and a woman came to her offering to assist her to escape. She did not clearly understand what had happened or even what the woman proposed. She did not know whether the woman proposed to take her to Pauline or to set her at liberty. She accordingly allowed the woman to do as she pleased, acting on the principle that she could not be worse off than she was, and might be a great deal better off.

On hearing Pauline's story, Mrs. Henslowe noticed particularly two things in it.

The first was the fact that Frink had left her behind, and that she had not seen him since.

"I have come to the conclusion," said she, "that this man Frink is a traitor of the blackest dye, and is at the bottom of all our troubles."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Pauline, who was unwilling that her mother should know the whole truth just yet, and tried in a mild way to check her.

"Do you know the letter which came to us, and purported to be written by Tancred?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, it was a forgery."

"A forgery! What makes you think that?"

"Why, I had that letter with me, and used to solace myself with it, as with your letters. At length I noticed a certain strangeness in the expressions that had never struck me before. Then I noticed that the handwriting was not quite the same. The expressions were stiffer

than Tancred's, and the writing was too neat. It was a good imitation, but it was too evidently an imitation. It was only by a critical examination by one in my position that these things could be found out. And now it seems he has marched away with Lucy, and left you among the brigands."

Pauline was silent. It was not the time for her to tell the whole truth about Frink, especially as she saw that her mother was very anxious about Tancred. The story of his narrow escape would be too much for her, she merely put an end to her mother's suspense on that score by informing her that Garth had been with Tancred after the date of that letter.

The next thing which Mrs. Henslowe noticed was Garth.

About him she questioned her daughter most closely.

"And he said his name was Landsdowne?"

"Yes."
 "Garth Landsdowne?"

"Yes."
 "Tell me, all over again, how he looked."

Pauline described him most minutely.

Mrs. Henslowe listened very attentively and was silent for some time.

"H'm," said she. "He has changed certainly from what he once was. I saw him when he was a young man. He was an officer in the Guards, one of the handsomest men in England. But he has changed. Still it must be the same man. And so you called yourself Paul."

"Why, what else could I do, mamma, dear?" said poor little Pauline, who felt the difficulty of her position once more coming back upon her.

"And you told him that Tancred belonged to the same family as you. Well, that was the perfect truth."

"Oh, yes."
 "I should like to see him. I suppose he will remain here a little while."

"I should think so."

"Strange, too! I never imagined that 'Old Garth,' as they called him—my son's friend—was Garth Landsdowne. I could tell a good deal about Garth Landsdowne, for I used to hear about him. The Henslowes, you know, are connected with the Landsdownes, and you and Garth should be about third cousins. I dare say, with a little effort, I could recall the whole family connection back to your common ancestor, Rupert—the one who saved the Jesuit who wrote that foolish and unhappy manuscript about the treasure, that wretched paper that ruined my husband, and has done such mischief to my poor boy."

CHAPTER LIV.

LAST WORDS OF THE "BOY, PAUL."

SINCE Pauline had met with her mother, hours had flown by unnoticed, and so swift was the flight of time that it was almost evening before she was aware. At the discovery of this she at once thought of Garth, and wondered where he was and what he was doing.

She thought of this with anxiety. Had he missed her? Was he wondering what had become of her? Had he not warned her on her leaving him against leaving him too long. And yet she had left him all day. She knew well how he would take it. He would feel hurt and offended. He would wonder at her indifference to his wishes.

She must now go forth and find him. For this one evening she would postpone any explanation, and be the "boy, Paul," for the last time. Perhaps before the morrow some way might present itself by which she could explain without the result that she feared. For, as has been said, she prized Garth's affection too much to risk it, and she wished that he should remain as fond of the girl, Pauline, as he had been of the "boy, Paul."

But she feared very much about the result of the explanation. Garth would lose the "boy, Paul," but she feared that he would feel no interest in the girl, Pauline. He did not seem to be the sort of man who could feel an interest in any woman whatever, and in his bitter disappointment and vexation he might hate and despise her as a species of spy and deceiver.

In a trouble of this sort she would not go to her mother for advice. There was a species of delicacy in her sentiments with regard to this matter; her position seemed to her to be so peculiar, and her relation to Garth so unex-

ampled, that she shrunk from mentioning the subject to any one. So far, indeed, was her mother from understanding the truth of the case, that she did not know anything about Garth's utter ignorance of Pauline's secret, and took it for granted that he was aware of the disguise, and had acquiesced in it as the best one possible under the circumstances.

"Well, Pauline, dearest," she said, "it's very fortunate that you speak the language. You must see the landlady, and try to get some respectable dress. It's high time you took off that disguise."

Meanwhile, how had Garth passed the day? Wearily and drearily enough. At first he had tried to kill time by talking with his Republican friends; but after awhile he grew weary of this, or perhaps, had quite exhausted this subject. He then became aware that the boy, Paul, was remaining indoors an unreasonable length of time, and began to wonder what was keeping him. He then tried once more to get up a conversation with his Republican friends, but found that occupation no longer of any interest.

He now took to strolling up and down the streets alone. He began to think that he was an injured man. He never did like this fashion of the boy Paul's, of going among the women of the inns, and making a baby of himself, and on this occasion he liked it less than ever. What made it worse was the fact that he had warned him against this very thing this very day. And this was the end of it. The boy, Paul, had no sooner lost sight of him, than he had forgotten all about his words and his wishes. He felt slighted, neglected and hurt.

"What in the world has come over me," thought Garth to himself, "or what is the matter with me? My brain must be giving way. I'm getting into my dotage. What is the reason that this boy Paul has taken such a hold of me? He's a poor, forlorn little fellow, with a very delicate frame, a very helpless way, and a wonderfully touching and pleading expression. But what's that? Why am I thinking of him all the time? Why am I not contented if he is out of my sight? There was my child—when a little baby, I hung over her with delight, and loved to look at her, but—this feeling seems to be a different sort of thing, too. It is partly paternal, no doubt, and partly elder-brotherly, no doubt, and partly friendship, of a very unusual character. It must be friendship, but I'll be hanged if I know why I should feel so toward this friend in particular, especially when he is not half so fond of me as I am of him—clearly not. But this sort of thing can't last. The boy must go back to his friends, and then what'll become of me? Pooh, nonsense; I must get rid of this silly weakness of mine. I must do as some fathers do—pack the boy off, so as to save myself from the evils of dotting fondness."

Such were Garth's thoughts. But they did not give him any relief nor lessen his loneliness. He sat in front of the Locanda, on a bench, and buried his head in his hands. In this position he was found by Pauline. She came out to see him, for the last time, as the "boy, Paul."

She touched him gently on the shoulder. He looked up. Pauline saw his face flush all over, and his eyes light up with a flash of joy. But Garth restrained himself from any demonstration.

"Well, my little man," said he, in his usual affectionate way, "so you've turned up at last, have you?"

Pauline felt inexpressibly touched at this,—there was something in him that looked forlorn and lonely,—yet he had no word of reproach.

"I've found my mother," she said, in a low, tremulous voice.

"What!" cried Garth. He started to his feet, put both hands on her shoulders, and looked at her earnestly.

"I've found my mother," repeated Pauline. "She has escaped from the brigands. She got here yesterday. I should not have stayed so long, if it had not been for that. I thought, perhaps, some of them might tell you the news—but I suppose they thought you had heard." Garth drew a long breath.

"Come, my son," said he at last. "Sit down here." And sitting on the seat, he motioned Pauline to a place beside him.

"Well, little boy," said he, "it's sudden. I didn't think you would meet with any of them for some little time yet. It certainly was a very lucky accident that your mother escaped."

"You must come in and see her," said Pauline. "She is very anxious to see you."

"Yes—thank you. Of course I shall call on her—but not this evening. I'll wait till to-morrow. Well, I'm very glad, my son—very glad, indeed. I was puzzled to know what had become of you."

"Ah!" said Pauline, with a smile, "and of course you imagined that I had forgotten all your words of warning."

"Well, I don't deny that I did—and naturally, too,—for you are a wonderful philanderer, for a small boy. And so your mother has turned up! Well, I'm sincerely glad—for your sake—though sorry for my own sake."

"Sorry!" said Pauline, in a low voice.

"Why?"

"Oh, well, a lonely old fellow like me, when he makes a friend, don't like to lose him."

"Lose him?"

"Oh, well,—of course you'll have your mother to take care of now, you know,—and our old life, that we've been living the past few days, must end."

"I hope you won't give me up," said Pauline, in a low voice, "because I have found my friends."

"Give you up! Never!" said Garth. "My boy, you never will know what you are to me." Pauline's heart beat fast.

"It's not in the nature of things," said she, "that a man like you, with your great purposes and undertakings, should feel any interest in one like me; but you've been very kind, and I shall never, never forget you and your affection as long as I live."

"Well, that's a queer way of talking," said Garth, "after what I've told you. Me not to take an interest! Why, what do I feel an interest in, but you?"

"Oh, you'll forget all about me," said Pauline, "when you go back to your Sicilians."

"Never!" said Garth. "Boy, you're like a lad with a dotting father, and you don't begin to comprehend it. You are the one to forget. I am the one that will remember. If you could look into my heart, you would say of me, as David said of Jonathan, 'Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.'"

"Will you always say that?" asked Pauline, with feverish agitation.

"Always."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes."

"And after?"

"Till the end of life," cried Garth.

Pauline started to her feet. She bent over Garth.

"Then, so say I," she whispered, with a trembling voice, "and look you that you stand by your word, as I will by mine!"

She hurried off, leaving Garth utterly mystified.

CHAPTER LV.

THE "BOY, PAUL," VERSUS THE GIRL, PAULINE.

PAULINE looked forward to the morrow with great trepidation. She had already spoken to the landlady about a proper dress, and that personage exerted herself to the best of her ability. The dresses at her disposal were not, however, of the kind which Pauline had been accustomed to wear. The finer dresses in the French fashion were about ten years out of date, and the other dresses were the costumes of the Sicilian peasantry. These were remarkably neat and picturesque, and Pauline decided in favor of one of these.

The choice was a very happy one. To have leaped from a boy's dress back into the dress of an English lady would have been a very violent transition; but by dressing as a Sicilian peasant girl, Pauline seemed to herself to adopt a compromise, and she tried to hope that the shock would not be so great to Garth. But much of the peculiarity of this dress was toned down; the cumbersome petticoats were razed; and the result was that Pauline looked like a young English lady dressed for a fancy ball. Her olive tint was washed off; her slender and elegant figure appeared to the best advantage; and her short hair gave piquancy to her lovely and animated face.

The landlady performed her part *con amore*. It was her delight to show the Signorina Inglese how becoming to her the Sicilian costume could be. All that evening Pauline passed in adjusting the dress to her taste. All that night she lay awake wondering what would be the result of it. When the morning came she had to

array herself for the coming interview. This occupied a long time, for she could not feel satisfied. At one time she thought her dress too prim, at another too careless, while, as the hour for Garth's coming drew nearer, she became more nervous and agitated.

Garth had expected to see the "boy, Paul," in the morning, but that was a pleasure which he was never again to have. Henceforth the "boy, Paul," should appear to him no more. But Garth thought that he would find him with his mother. The invitation was brought to him as he ate his breakfast, and Garth sent word that he would call in half an hour.

On his entering the room Mrs. Henslowe arose to greet Garth. One look at the gentle and noble features of this lady was enough to win Garth's most respectful admiration. He shook hands with her, and bowed low with a grace that seemed strangely out of keeping with his rough attire and rugged face. Garth also made a neat little speech of welcome, which was altogether in the style of a polished man of the world, being, however, far superior in so far as it was perfectly sincere. On seating himself he questioned her about her adventures and her escape, and Mrs. Henslowe proceeded to tell her story.

Now Mrs. Henslowe had not been impressed by the fact that Pauline's secret had been unknown. She had not thought much about that, but had quietly assumed as a fact that Garth knew all about it. Accordingly, as she went on speaking, Garth was soon struck by what seemed to him rather an unaccountable thing.

This was Mrs. Henslowe's allusions to a daughter. From this daughter she had been separated. About this daughter she had been incessantly anxious. With this daughter she occasionally communicated by letter. But there was no mention of a son. On the other hand, the "boy, Paul," had never made any mention whatever of a daughter. There was thus a singular discrepancy which puzzled Garth not a little.

All this time Pauline was there. On entering the room Garth had seen that another female was present. Of that female, however, he took but slight notice. A careless glance had shown him that she was dressed in the Sicilian costume, and he thought it was one of the women of the hotel. He did not notice this person's face at all. But this, instead of offending Pauline, gave her a little relief, and she hoped that thus Garth would gradually find out what she felt so afraid to let him know. As the conversation went on Garth paid but little attention to Pauline, and Mrs. Henslowe made no movement to bring her to his notice. She knew they were well enough acquainted, and did not notice that they had not spoken.

Such then was the situation, when Garth became aware of the fact that Mrs. Henslowe had a daughter. Pauline's eyes were never removed from his face. She watched every expression. It seemed after awhile as though Garth felt her gaze, for he turned his eyes toward her, and for the first time noticed her face. In her carefully ordered hair, and in her fair and beautiful features, however, he saw no trace of the "boy, Paul;" his only thought was, "What a lovely girl! It's an English face!" And then his gaze fell away.

Pauline still watched him. She was profoundly agitated. Her suspense also was painful, and she longed for it to end either in one way or another.

At length, taking advantage of a pause in Mrs. Henslowe's story, Garth said:

"Excuse me, but there's one thing that I don't quite understand. You mention a daughter. I was not aware that you had a daughter, too."

"Sir," said Mrs. Henslowe. "I say I was not aware that you had a daughter. Your son never mentioned it."

"My son!" cried the old lady, forgetting everything now but her son. "Oh, you have seen Tancred. Tell me where—where?"

"Oh, yes," said Garth; "but I didn't know Tancred was your son."

He began to get out of his depth: "Tancred? why of course he is. Who else do you mean by my son?"

"Your son; why little Paul, of course."

"Little Paul!" said Mrs. Henslowe, in bewilderment, and turned toward her daughter. Pauline was already on her feet. She was looking at Garth with eyes that flamed with irrepressible eagerness and excitement. Her frame trembled from head to foot. She tried to keep cool, but the thought that Garth might now turn from her forever was crushing her

down. And yet she had to speak. She had to learn the worst.

"He means me, mamma," said Pauline, in a trembling voice. "He has only known me in my boy's disguise."

"Oh, I see. How very funny," said Mrs. Henslowe.

Garth rose to his feet. The voice was the voice of the "boy, Paul," a voice dear to him, but now all broken by emotion; a voice that flew to his heart and echoed in his soul. But the face—the form—ah, who was this! Lovely she was, as lovely as an angel, and her eyes were fixed upon him with a glance that thrilled through him, a wistful, longing, piteous entreaty; the glance of one who was looking to receive her doom. They were moist with rising tears; in their soul-lit depths there was the revelation of something that he had not seen before. And as for Garth, he looked at her, but his mouth was dumb.

Who was she? Tancred's sister. His sister! Great Heaven! a girl! not Paul, but Pauline! The disordered hair was smoothed down, the brown, olive complexion had given way to marble whiteness. He had come here yearning to find his "boy, Paul," and he was presented with this.

"Why, you two seem to have forgotten all about one another," said Mrs. Henslowe, who had not the faintest ghost of a conception of the tremendous conflict of passion that was going on within the hearts of these two.

"It seems strange," said Garth confusedly; "I thought I'd find—a my boy, Paul—but—"

He looked around with a weary sigh,—and then looked back at Pauline.

She stood pale and trembling. She looked at him no longer. Her head bowed down, and her eyes were fixed on the ground.

Garth was now as pale as death.

"How white she is!"—he thought—"this one; how neat—how beautiful—as lovely as an angel! There are tears in her eyes. She's crying. Does she feel cut up, as I do. I hope not. Oh my boy! my boy, Paul! Where are you with your rough clustered hair, your olive face, your dreamy eyes, your loose ragged peasant dress."

Garth sunk back into his chair without another word. Pauline seated herself with a shudder in her former position, and sat there dumb. For her, all was over. He had lost his "boy, Paul," and she had read in his face that he rejected her.

Mrs. Henslowe now resumed her story, as though nothing had interrupted it, and went on with a minute account of everything. To all this Garth apparently listened, but only apparently. He did not really hear one word. His eyes were fixed on Pauline. He saw in her face, in her attitude, and in her expression, nothing but utter despair.

CHAPTER LXI.

A MEETING OF OLD FRIENDS.

WHEN Garth left he bade them each good-by, shaking hands with each. He had no fixed ideas of what he was to do.

"We shall see you again, of course," said Mrs. Henslowe.

"Oh, yes," said Garth, "I hope so. I intend to arrange matters, however, so that you can go to Palermo, and my agents there will do anything for you. You had better wait there till you hear from Tancred; but I will make inquiries first, and let you know."

By all this Pauline understood that Garth would not come back again. She rose now as he came toward her. She stood no longer trembling, but calm. Suspense was over. She knew the worst. She had to bear it, and she bore it. One final look she gave him, as he held out his hand.

"Good-by," said he, in a husky voice, taking her hand.

Pauline looked at him. Her glance went through him. She spoke, and in a low voice:

"It's not in the nature of things," said she, "that a man like you should feel any interest in one like me; but you've been very kind to me, and I shall never, never forget you and your affection as long as I live."

She withdrew her hand and retreated rapidly from the room. Garth stood looking after her, with the tones of her voice ringing in his ears. The voice was Paul's voice. The words were those which Paul had said on the previous even-

ing. They were repeated word for word. He had easily answered them then. He had nothing to say now.

A short time after this he was mounted upon his mule and riding out of Castronuovo back to Lercara. Desolation was in his heart, and he sought to obtain relief by action. He had made up his mind what to do. His first care was to see about Mrs. Henslowe and Pauline. He had left word at the inn that he had gone forward, and would be responsible for the guests. He had written a few lines to Mrs. Henslowe, informing her that he would engage lodgings at Palermo and write to her; and now he was on his way there with this purpose. He would engage lodgings, send off letters in various directions in search of Tancred, and place sufficient funds at the disposal of the ladies until Tancred should make his appearance.

But as he went on his way, there was a dark desolation in his heart. He had lost his young companion—the boy, Paul. For that loss nothing could compensate. His life seemed suddenly to have lost all its sweetness and flavor. There was nothing left for which to live. He had never felt before how strongly the boy, Paul, had wound himself around his heart. Once before he had fretted over the absence of the boy, Paul, prolonged a little over the time that seemed necessary. Now, he had to bear an eternal loss.

And with the image of the boy, Paul, came the image of Pauline; Paul transformed—the boy's rags to the white robes of a slender girl, the disheveled locks to the neat hair, the brown skin to marble whiteness; but in both there was the same voice, and the same eyes. The expression of the face, also, could not be changed; nor could the heart—that heart of love. She loved him. She had loved him, not as a boy, but as a girl—and the thought sent a strange thrill through him.

She had repeated to him words which she had uttered on the evening before, as the "boy, Paul." She might also have repeated those last words of hers, spoken on that evening. Those last words were still ringing in his ears; "Look that you stand by your word as I will by mine!"

That last look haunted him; her marble face, her deep, dark eyes, whose glance had penetrated to his soul, and the expression of her face, which seemed to speak for a broken heart. This parting was evidently a blow to Pauline, and Garth thought of this with a pang.

Now, as he rode along, there came to him again the memory of the whole time which he had passed with the "boy, Paul." He recalled that form under a new light—the form of Pauline in disguise. Now, he thought of her beauty and her grace; again, of her tenderness and affection. How she had relied upon him! How she had turned to him for aid! How she had brightened his life! How she had mourned over his wound! How tenderly she had nursed him at Felaga! And what anguish had this last parting caused her! Garth thought of his own words to her, and now repeated, with a new meaning, the words—"Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

So Garth rode along the way on his mule, and old memories mingled with new ones. The boy, Paul, became confused with the girl, Pauline, until at length he found himself thinking rather of the latter than of the former.

"I'll be hanged if I know what's the matter with me," he thought. "I don't know but what I'm likely to be a greater fool now with the girl than I was about the boy. In any case, I'm an infernal idiot, and I don't know what's going to be the end of it. This sort of infernal nonsense I'll never do. Never!"

Suddenly, as Garth made a turn in the road, he saw a number of men coming toward him. They were all armed and on foot. His first thought was that they were some of his own Republicans; his next, that they were some of Berengar's mutineers. Flight was not to be thought of, for he was within shot, and if they were enemies they could easily shoot him down, while, if they were not enemies, there would be no reason to fly; so he rode boldly forward.

The leader of the band was ahead—a tall, well-built man, who walked with long strides. Soon he came near enough to be recognized. His features seemed familiar. To Garth's immense surprise, this man waved his hat in the air with a shout of joy, flung down his gun, and came running toward him.

"Garth! Old Garth!"

"Tancred, by all that's wonderful! How did you get here?"

"I've been hunting after you for a fortnight

over all the country. But, tell me, old fellow—my mother—my sister—"

"Safe, thank Heaven, safe!"

"Where?"

"Close by—at Castronuovo."

"What! just behind you?"

"Yes."

"And Lucy?"

"Ah, my boy, I can't say anything about her! Frink took her off, and left Pauline to escape by herself."

"Frink!"

"Yes."

Tancred gave a groan.

"By heavens!" he cried: "how is it that we miss him? Our men are all over the country."

"Well," said Garth, "as long as my rascals held them prisoners they could easily baffle yours, but, since my mutiny, I can't tell what's become of them; but—Hallo! What—Who's this? By Heaven, it's Berengar himself! Cursed rascal," he added, in Italian, "you are the one to give this Englishman information. Where did you pick up this devil?"

"We hold him as hostage," said Tancred.

Berengar, for it was he, stood cowering and looking at the ground. Before him he saw the man whom he had so greatly injured, and whom he feared more than any other on earth. This man, he now found, was the intimate friend of his captor.

Tancred went on to tell the whole story of his capture of Berengar, and his search at the rock.

"Ha! ha!" said Garth. "Well, the next time they undertake to keep watch there, let them keep a sharper lookout."

"I wonder if Frink can have got them."

"Impossible. No one knows the way except myself and my dear friend, Berengar, there."

"Look here, old fellow," said Tancred, "don't you want to try this fellow by court-martial, and have him hanged as a rebel?"

"I! Oh, no. You may have him. I paid him off with a couple of bullets. He's in my debt no longer. He's in yours. He's the original vagabond that seized your friends."

"So I supposed all along," said Tancred, "but your assertion puts it in a different shape."

"Ask him."

"I have asked him."

"Perhaps you don't understand the way. I'll ask him now."

With these words Garth dismounted and taking a pistol from his pocket, seized Berengar by the hair of his head and held the muzzle of his pistol to his temple. The wretch trembled from head to foot.

"Answer every question without hesitation," said Garth in the Sicilian patois. "Who gave you information that led to the seizure of these English prisoners?"

"An Englishman."

"Who? The prisoner Frink?"

"No, the captain of the ship."

"Did Frink betray the ladies?"

"Not to me."

"Was he a prisoner, or only pretended?"

"A real prisoner, held to ransom."

"Did you consider him as important as the others?"

"Quite."

"You say that the captain of the ship betrayed them all."

"Yes, all; Frink and all."

"Did you pay him?"

"No."

"Who did?"

"He told me it was for his interest. I supposed it was a speculation. Perhaps he was paid by English nobles."

Many other questions followed; but these were the most important ones.

CHAPTER LVII.

AN UNDERSTANDING.

GARTH'S vigorous style of questioning was entirely successful. It admitted of no evasion, or refusal, or even hesitation. The answers of Berengar were translated to Tancred, and the information conveyed certainly afforded some surprise. Most of all was he perplexed at learning that Frink had not been the one who had betrayed them into the hands of the brigands. Had he learned that Frink was a *bona fide* prisoner he would not have been surprised at all, for he would then have concluded that Captain Thain's story was correct, and that the party were accidentally captured by brigands. But now he learned that Captain Thain's account

was false in some respects, and that the captain himself, by Berengar's own statement, had been the one who had betrayed them.

Much still remained to be explained; but the mystery still remained, why Captain Thain should have betrayed the ladies, and why, having done so, he should have betrayed Frink also. To seek out Captain Thain would hardly be satisfactory. He would wish to come to a conclusion at an earlier date. He now saw, however, that behind Frink there arose the dim forms of some secret actors clouded in darkness. These, he now thought, must have been the chief actors all along, of whom Frink and Thain were both alike the agents. Frink had been sent to destroy certain ones, and Thain had been sent to destroy Frink.

But who were these actors?

It was impossible for him to conjecture. He knew of no human beings who could be benefited by his death. He had no enemies. He knew of none who regarded him with hatred. But this question had often arisen before. It had grown out of the attempt on the lives of Garth and himself on the island, and had formed the subject-matter of many an earnest discussion. In the course of these discussions many things had turned up, but nothing seemed to afford a solution. Garth had once or twice touched upon Drury, but neither could find anything in him to fasten any suspicion upon.

All these thoughts passed through his mind while Garth was carrying on his inquisition, and telling him the result. Then followed a discussion between the two friends.

"I wonder my friend, Michel Angelo, didn't get all this out of him," said Tancred. "He questioned him with the pistol."

"H'm, perhaps so; but perhaps he didn't really mean to blow Berengar's brains out, while I did mean it, and Berengar knew it perfectly well. And now, my boy, what are you going to do with this fellow. Shoot him? It seems to me that the best thing will be to make use of him. Set a thief to catch a thief, and send him after Frink. Send your own men with him, with orders to keep a sharp lookout, and tell Berengar if he comes back with Frink he will be freed, but if he comes back without him he will be shot."

"All right."

"Well, then, I'll finish with him," and with these words Garth turned once more to Berengar.

"Listen," said he, fixing his eyes upon Berengar. "A chance will be given you for your life. You will go with these men and try to catch Frink. You have got off the Republicans from my control, but can use them in this matter. Now, if you can get hold of Frink and bring him back alive, you will be set free on the spot; but, mark this: if you come back without him then you will instantly be tried before a tribunal consisting of the gentlemen gathered around you. Your trial will occupy about half a minute, and you will be, not shot, but hanged like a dog, and your body pitched into the nearest ravine. Do you accept the offer, or will you be hanged now?"

"I accept," said Berengar.

This was all mentioned to Tancred, and Garth explained to the followers. These were faithful men, though none of the lieutenants were among them.

"I must see my mother and sister first," said Tancred.

"I should think so," said Garth.

"You must come with me. Where were you going?"

"Well, the fact is, I was going to Palermo to see about getting quarters for your mother and sister, and to write over Europe after you."

"All right. Well, now come back with me and try to prepare my mother for the news. I'm afraid to go too abruptly. Will you come?"

A great light suddenly shone in Garth's eyes, and spread over his face, and there arose before him the vision of the "boy, Paul," arrayed in white, beckoning him and looking him through and through with her sad and beautiful eyes.

"Oh, yes," said Garth. "I'll go back with you."

"As soon as I've seen them I'll set off with this party, and see if I can't get upon their trail. Perhaps you can come too."

"Perhaps so."

Tancred and Garth now hurried on as fast as they could, leaving the others with Berengar, to follow at their leisure. Garth gave up his mule to Tancred, and walked along with great strides. In about two hours they reached Castronuovo.

"I'll go ahead," said Garth, "and you can come along more slowly."

"Yes, yes. That's a capital idea; and I'll wait below till you tell me."

"Yes."

"With this understanding, Garth went back to the inn. As he came near, he saw a pale face at the window. His heart smote him. A great longing arose within him to comfort that stricken soul within.

He hurried up the stairs.

"Come in," said a voice, in answer to his knock.

He entered.

Pauline was there at the same place where he had left her, as though she had not left it. Mrs. Henslowe was also there.

But Garth saw only Pauline. Her face was flushed crimson. Her eyes were fixed on him with devouring intensity, as though to read his soul. Why had he come back? What was this? Was he making a martyr of himself? He pitied her; he felt sorry for her; he was coming to try and soothe her. Away! That was not what she wanted. Better had he kept on his journey than seek to give her so cold a thing as mere pity. All this was in her eloquent face. Yet there was something more, and that was the light of joy and hope.

"I've come back," said Garth, "with glorious news. I met some one on the road. I've come to prepare you for—"

"Tancred!" cried Mrs. Henslowe, starting to her feet.

Garth bowed.

"Oh, my son! Oh, where is he?"

"Down below. I will call him."

"No, no! Let me go! Oh, my son!" cried the old lady. She started and hurriedly left the room.

Pauline made a movement to follow, but Garth came up in front of her.

"A moment," said he, as he looked at her. "Will you say again, little one, all that you said last night?"

He spoke with his old caressing fondness, though his voice was all tremulous and stammering. Pauline saw it all now. It was not pity that was in his face; it was something sweeter. Her heart beat with wild throbs. She hardly dared to believe what she saw.

"Remember, little one," said Garth, "I was in the dark, and you were not. Was I to be blamed if I felt shocked at so suddenly losing my darling boy—my boy, Paul? But come, little one, will you say it all again?"

"Will you?" said Pauline, in a thrilling whisper, looking Garth through and through.

Garth pressed her to his heart.

"Very precious is thy love to me," said Old Garth, solemnly, and with infinite tenderness. "Thy love to me is wonderful, passing the love of women."

"Ah, but you broke your word," said Pauline.

"I know it," murmured Garth; "and I've come back to mend it."

"But I shall never again be to you your 'boy, Paul,'" she said, timidly.

"But you'll be something sweeter, my darling little girl, Pauline," said Garth, pressing her closer to his heart, and kissing her again and again.

She looked up at him, as though to assure herself that it was all true; that he really meant what he said. Tears trembled in her eyes, but they were tears of joy.

"You've bereaved me of 'my son,'" said he. "You must make good the loss."

"Ah, but can I really ever be as dear to you as you said he was? Put your hand on my head as you used to, and call me your little man."

"Catch me at it!" said Garth, with a happy laugh. "I'd rather have my arms around you, and I'd much rather have you for my little girl."

"Ah, you dear one! you do mean it all!" cried Pauline. "And will not regret the loss of the 'boy, Paul?'"

"If you had been really a boy I should never have loved you at all. It was the tender grace of the sweet girl that stole my heart, and I never suspected it."

"Then you'll have to take me as I am."

CHAPTER LVIII.

AN UNPLEASANT DISCOVERY.

THE joy of Tancred at meeting with his mother and sister, and thus obtaining the reward for

his toil, was counterbalanced by the absence of Lucy, and by the utter darkness in which she was lost. Worse, he now knew, by Pauline's story, that Lucy was in the power of Frink, a villain who had already shown himself capable of any crime in order to carry out his own desires, and who would be as cruel and as unscrupulous with her as he had been with others. The thought of Lucy's danger filled Tancred with alarm, and the peril of her position, while thus in the power of Frink, seemed worse than ever. It did not allow him to rest one moment longer than was absolutely necessary, and almost immediately after having embraced his mother and sister, he was off with the prisoner Berengar as his guide at the head of his men.

Garth also accompanied his friend; for even the endearments of Pauline could not make him indifferent to the claims of friendship. The presence of Garth and Berengar at once put an end to the division that was dissolving the ranks of the Sicilian Republicans, and they began to throng in from every quarter. The six bands of Tancred's men, under their leaders, stood waiting in various places, all around, for the command to be given. Tancred and Garth, with the prisoner, went ahead, so as to be on the spot, and act most promptly in case of need.

To the followers of Berengar all the country was well known, and also all the people. In many villages, and even towns, they were regarded as the actual masters, which accounts for the careless security with which they had treated their prisoners. Escape would have been impossible for any of them had it not been for the confusion consequent upon the rebellion of Berengar.

Now, as they advanced, they made inquiries in all directions in vain. To their surprise and bewilderment, no one knew anything about the fugitives. No one had seen any fugitives whatever, or even any foreigners, except those of Tancred's band. This utter darkness into which they had vanished, caused not a little perplexity to all of them, and even to Berengar, who now appeared at his wits' end. Tancred, suspecting foul play, had already informed him that he would allow him but two days more, when suddenly a happy thought occurred to Garth.

"There's only one place," said he to Tancred, "in all Sicily, where one could hide so completely as Frink is now hiding, and yet live."

"What place is that?"

"My own hiding-place. The rock!"

"True," said Tancred. "But how can he have got there?"

"By mere accident, I suppose. It does not seem impossible, in fact, it's quite likely; for Pauline herself almost reached it. A native, or a well-guarded traveler, would never go near it; but a fugitive, keeping as far as possible from human dwellings and human haunts, might very easily get there. Did you leave the ladder or staying that you crossed on—or did you take it up?"

"Why, I left it there."

"Then it's not at all unlikely that Frink has found the place, and is hiding and biding his time."

"Then let us hurry on, in Heaven's name, and put an end to this horrible suspense."

The word was now given, and it was also sent to all the outlying companies of men, until at length the scattered detachments closed in on all sides, along a circle of one hundred miles.

Pauline, now left to herself, fed her memory with the secret of the last interview with Garth, and looked forward eagerly, yet patiently, to the time when she would see him again.

Before two days, Mrs. Henslowe had become acquainted with the state of the case, to her infinite amazement. She had not suspected anything of the kind—first, because Garth seemed to her not at all a "lady's man;" and secondly, because she had always been in the habit of regarding Pauline as a mere child.

However, there it was; and as it was an inevitable fact, the old lady accepted it, and prepared to make the best of it. And, by way of a beginning, she began to turn over in her mind all that she knew about the Landsdownes in general, and about Garth Landsdowne in particular, so as to see what would be her daughter's particular station in life.

Now, the old lady had a good many things stored away in her memory, and she had once taken a great interest in the affairs of the Landsdowne family, since they were her husband's relatives. Of late years she had thought but little on such matters, yet a little effort might easily recall most of what she had once known. She herself had said as much to Pauline. She

had heard much of Garth Landsdowne, in particular, in her younger days; and now that this very Garth Landsdowne had appeared so prominently upon the scene as the dear friend of her son and the dearer friend of her daughter, with the prospect of becoming a son-in-law to herself, it was no more than natural that the old lady should begin to rake up the past, so as to gather together all that she could.

At first the old lady was much elated, and boasted to Pauline about the excellence of her memory. She jotted down many circumstances as they suggested themselves, so that they might not be forgotten, and talked with much pleasure about the discoveries that she was making. Suddenly, however, all this came to an end. She stopped talking about the subject altogether. It was evident, however, that she continued to think about it, and, indeed, that she thought of nothing else, but what she did think of she was reluctant to communicate. In vain Pauline questioned her mother. At first her mother refused to say anything, and then expressed herself in a series of ominous sentences which excited the darkest fears in Pauline's heart. This, of course, only made her the more eager to know all. At length she gathered from her mother's hints that this new trouble had reference to Garth. Upon this Pauline could be refused no longer.

"I must know, mamma," said she, "whatever it is."

"But, my child, you shall know, only I'm afraid to tell you."

"Nonsense. I have confidence in Garth. I know there can be nothing which cannot be explained most satisfactorily."

"I hope so, I'm sure; but at the same time there are certain facts which have to be met with, and of which no explanation can be possible."

"I can't imagine what you can mean."

"Facts with reference to Garth Landsdowne."

"Mamma, dearest, I trust him too utterly to feel alarm. I am confident that you are mistaken. At the same time I want to know it. So say on."

"I did, hope, indeed, Pauline, child, that I might be, but the more I think of it the worse it seems to grow."

"But you won't tell me what. Why, will you keep me on the rack, mamma, dear?"

In this way Pauline teased, and grew more and more urgent, until at length Mrs. Henslowe, worn out with her persistency, and unable to frame any excuse for further refusal, proceeded to tell her the dreadful secret:

"In the first place, then, Pauline, dearest, I have discovered that your brother Tancred stands so near to the earldom of Landsdowne, that there is only one life between him and the title, although there are two between him and the estate."

"Tancred? What! my brother?" exclaimed Pauline, in amazement.

"Yes, and that one life is Garth Landsdowne."

"Garth?"

"Who is the Earl of Landsdowne?"

"Nonsense, mamma. How perfectly ridiculous," said Pauline. "I'm sure he isn't aware of it."

"Perhaps not; I don't know, I'm sure. I can imagine, however, why he does not care much about his dignity."

"Not care! Why, mamma? Is there any man who would be so indifferent?"

"Oh! he may have his reasons."

"Such as what?"

"Ah, dear child, this is what I dread to tell you, but I must do it. You must know."

"Now, mamma, I positively forbid this. You must tell. You said you would."

"But how can you bear it?"

"Nonsense, I can bear it very well. What is this terrible thing?"

Mrs. Henslowe looked fixedly at Pauline.

"Can't you imagine?"

"Not I."

"Then I must tell. Garth Landsdowne is married."

Pauline started back as if struck by a sudden blow. Her face grew white as ashes; her lips trembled; she stared at her mother in horror. Mrs. Henslowe started to her feet and ran to her daughter.

"Oh, my darling! Oh, my child!" she moaned. "Bear it, oh, bear it!"

"I don't—believe it," gasped Pauline.

"It's true."

"It's false."

"Oh, my child!"

"He ne—never—would—do—so. He couldn't. He's too noble. "It is not—it cannot be."

Mrs. Henslowe said nothing for some time, but tried to soothe her miserable child. At length Pauline urged her to tell all.

"Tell all. Let me hear what it is. Let me know why you think this—why you say it so positively."

"Ah, dearest child, how I shrink from it. But you must know, and now is a better time than further on, when your heart may be too far gone, and your affections too deeply implicated."

"Never mind my heart—never mind my affections," cried Pauline. "Tell me all. Let me take it into my own mind and turn it all over mere by myself."

The agitation of Pauline gave her mother exquisite distress, but she could not go back. Having made a beginning she had to go on.

"I'll tell you. There were three different branches to the Landsdowne family. First, the descendants of Rupert's eldest son; second, the descendants of Rupert's second son; and third, the descendants of Rupert's daughter. The descendants of the first son have died out. Garth Landsdowne descends from the second son, and is now the Earl of Landsdowne, while your brother Tancred is descended from Mary, daughter of Rupert, and if Garth were not living, would himself be the Earl."

"Well," said Pauline, to whom all this seemed unimportant, beside the other statement of Garth's marriage.

"Well, about twenty years ago, Earl George died and was succeeded by his brother Paul. Earl Paul died the year after. Neither of these left heirs. Garth then came in. Now, Garth had been married and was living in Paris, or somewhere else in France."

"How do you know?"

"I know it perfectly well. The marriage was a runaway affair. I don't know why. It made a great noise at the time. Strange to say, though Garth never came to England, I remember hearing that he had sent his wife and daughter to live there. Then your father's troubles came on, ending in his death, and I never heard even the name of Garth Landsdowne, nor did I ever think of him. When Tancred came home talking about 'Old Garth,' I thought Garth was the surname, and never dreamed that they were the same."

"Perhaps it is a different person," said Pauline.

"No," said Mrs. Henslowe. "Unfortunately, though, he is so greatly changed I can still see the likeness."

"But why should he live this way? For many years he was in poverty. It can't be possible that he would live in poverty while his wife was in splendor."

Mrs. Henslowe shook her head.

"I remember hearing your father say once in the old days that poor Garth had met with trouble of a domestic character—something about his wife. Well, you know, if it were so the domestic trouble may have separated them, and Garth may have chosen to live as he has lived."

"I'll never believe it till I hear it from his own lips."

"Certainly not; and I'll write him—I will—at once."

"No, mamma, dearest, I'll write him."

"You; nonsense. It would be excessively indelicate. Why, how could you allude to such a thing?"

"I don't believe it; and I wish merely to write to tell him how perfectly I trust in him."

"You shall not do anything of the sort. You will only make mischief."

"Mischief! How?"

"He will only grow more infatuated about you."

"Infatuated? How can he if he is married?"

"Why, if he hates his wife so bitterly as not to live with her, he will love you the more passionately."

"You don't leave the slightest chance of escape from your horrible accusation. You are too cruel, mamma, dearest."

"It is kindness to you, my darling child, for do you not see how important it will be for you to shake off this fondness before it grows too strong."

"It is too strong for me now," said Pauline, with a sigh.

"Oh, my child: you don't mean it," said Mrs. Henslowe.

"I'm sure I can't help it," said Pauline.

"Oh, it will pass away."

"And don't you think that there is the slightest chance for poor, dear old Garth?"

Mrs. Henslowe shook her head sadly.

"Then if this is so I shall never get over it—never. If this is so I shall die."

And with these words Pauline buried her face in her hands and wept.

CHAPTER LIX.

MRS. HENSLOWE'S LETTER.

THE intensity of Pauline's grief amazed Mrs. Henslowe. She had not imagined that her love for Garth had been so far developed. She had thought of it only as a girlish passion, which might easily be checked or suppressed if taken in time. Her own alarm at the discovery of Garth's rank, station, and marriage, had been great, and her only desire was to save her beloved daughter from impending trouble. To her surprise and immense anxiety she perceived how profound was the affection which Pauline felt for Garth. Still there was only one thing now to be done, and that was for her to strive against it. It would be necessary to write to Garth and make inquiries of him, and ask him for explanations, and at the same time it would be necessary to have some change of scene. To leave Castronovo at once would be a matter of the greatest importance, and Palermo seemed the most appropriate place to go to under the circumstances.

"We can do that," said Miss Henslowe, "without giving him any reason to think that we are condemning him unheard, as you say. We go there for comfort and change of air. If he is innocent, he can find you there as easily as here."

"You are so harsh, mamma, dear."

"My dear child, it is for your own good. I'm not harsh. You were thrown together in a most extraordinary manner, and in such a way that it was impossible for the poor fellow to be on his guard. Had you come to him as a young lady, he would probably not have thought of you. He would have treated you with manly courtesy, but would never have dreamed of going beyond that. As it was, however, you see he thought you were a boy; he grew passionately fond of you without knowing why—it was the girlish face and girlish grace that he loved."

Pauline said nothing. This seemed too true.

"Let me look at that paper. What is it?"

"It is the genealogy," said Mrs. Henslowe. Pauline looked and saw the following:

1780. Rupert Landsdowne.	1770. Mary mar'd Leonard Henslowe.
1770. Philip.	1760. Henry mar'd 1821
1760. George dies 1821.	1750. Garth mar'd 1821
1750. Paul dies 1822.	1740. Edgar Henslowe.
	1730. Tancred Henslowe.
	1720. Tancred Henslowe.
	1710. Date of Mrs. of Chaulian.
	1700. Date of Sallor's Confession.
	1690. Date of burial of treasure.
	1680. Date of burial of treasure.

(To the above dates Mrs. Henslowe had added the following:)

Pauline studied this for a long time.

"I dare say you feel certain, mamma, dear."

est," said she; "but, somehow I feel that my Garth is another one altogether."

Mrs. Henslowe said nothing.

"And so you think that his wife is the present Lady Landsdowne?"

"Yes."

"Why can't she be the widow of Paul or George?"

"Simply because neither of them ever married. They left neither wives nor children."

"Then why can't she be the widow of some other Garth?"

"Because there is no other Garth."

Pauline sighed.

"And do you mean to say," she continued, after a pause, "that Lucy is the daughter of Garth Landsdowne?"

"Of course."

At this, Pauline flung the paper on the floor. "You might as well make out that Tancred is her father, too," said she, with some asperity in her tone; and then the next instance she flung herself, sobbing, into her mother's arms, accusing herself of cruelty to her, and begging her to forgive her. And Mrs. Henslowe folded her daughter in her arms and sought every means in her power to soothe her agitated feelings.

Mrs. Henslowe that very day wrote two letters.

The first one was written to Garth. It was as follows:

"DEAR SIR, — After your departure my daughter, Pauline, disclosed to me the fact that she had engaged herself to you. At first the news, though unexpected, was not unpleasant; I certainly had no objection to make, except possibly on the score of disparity of age; but afterward there came to my remembrance certain facts that filled me with alarm and horror. I felt bound at once to communicate them to my daughter; and I hereby communicate them to you, since, though they are well known to you, I deem it best for you to be aware of the grounds I have for my own action.

"In spite of the lapse of nearly twenty years, I recognized you as the young guardsman whose sudden marriage made such excitement among your whole family connections. After that marriage you went to France. Then you had a child. Then, on the death of your cousin Paul, in 1822, you became Lord Landsdowne, and sent Lady Landsdowne and your child back to the Hall. Lady Landsdowne has lived there ever since, and is there now. Lady Lucy, her daughter and yours, has also lived there ever since, until the hour when she left it of her own accord.

"Now, sir, you have the facts as they are known to me, and in view of all this I cannot find words to express my surprise at the course of conduct which you have allowed yourself to take with my daughter Pauline. Surely, if she deserved no consideration in her own person, she certainly deserved some for the sake of your friend Tancred. But, sir, I thank Heaven that this has been discovered already, so that the mischief may be prevented before it is too late. Of course, under the circumstances, you will see the propriety of making no further attempts to communicate with my daughter Pauline. I will try to believe that you have yet a moral sense, that you have erred without sufficient consideration, and that now, when your offense is placed before you, the desire will arise to make amends. If I might be allowed to make a suggestion, I would recommend you to return to your wife, Lady Landsdowne, and take with you your daughter, between whom and her mother you may be the means of making a reconciliation.

"I remain, sir,

"Your humble servant,
"MARY HENSLOWE."

After this was written the following, in a different hand:

"Mamma will not let me read the above. My darling, I trust in you implicitly, and love you with my whole heart.

"Forever, your own,
"PAULINE."

Mrs. Henslowe allowed Pauline the consolation of adding these lines. She then sought for a means of conveying the letter to Garth. A man was found who offered to do this. She also wrote a letter to Tancred.

After this she prepared to leave for Palermo. This she could do without any difficulty, as

Tancred had left her money enough for every purpose. The road, however, was not very good, so that she and Pauline had to set out on mules and travel in that manner as far as Vicari, when they came into the high road that runs from Catania to Palermo. Here they obtained a post-chaise without any difficulty, and in that way made the rest of the journey. At Palermo they put up at the Hôtel Trinacria, and there awaited Tancred.

CHAPTER LX.

THE PLACE OF REFUGE.

FRINK led the mule after him into the woods, hurrying onward as fast as he could. Behind him arose the sound of footsteps hurrying onward, and the shouts of men, but these passed by and did not come their way. They had not been seen by the one party, and by the other they had been forgotten. At last the noises had all subsided, the immediate danger of pursuit had passed away; and Frink began to breathe freely and to slacken his pace.

Thus far he had been hurrying along a rough track that led among the forest-trees and scattered rocks. It was one that was not very much used, and for that very reason was the more agreeable to Frink, since it seemed to show that pursuit in this direction was not very probable. To slacken his pace was now very desirable: first, in order to prevent fatigue; and, secondly, in order to give him more leisure to think.

Of course, the country was altogether unknown to him, and even if it had been known he could have recognized nothing here on account of the trees. Once before, in his first flight, he had formed a rough idea of the country through which he wished to go, and of the course which he intended taking. But now he had no idea of the country, and no plan of any course. He had made a sudden rush for liberty, and had been lucky enough to lead off Lucy along with him. The consequence was, that now, as he sought to make some plan, he found himself utterly unable, and he could only determine to go onward and see where the present pathway might lead.

The woods continued. The trees were chestnut. Now and then they came to open spaces where the soil was sandy, with bowlders intermixed, and here gigantic cactuses rose on high. Beyond these they encountered an ever-varying growth of all the trees native to Sicily—the oleander and tamarisk growing in the neighborhood of the water-courses, while on the hill-slopes were the myrtle, laurel, cistus, and arbutus; here on the level ground arose the fau-palm and lentiscus, while in various directions, intermingled with other trees, were the bamboo, the carob, the stone-pine, and the cypress.

Through such scenes the track led, until, at last, it began a steady ascent of a long hill. Here the trees were thicker, yet not so thick as to prevent a ready passage, and up here, accordingly, Frink went, determining to go on wherever the path led, thinking that its loneliness would be his best protection.

Meanwhile Lucy's mind had been filled with her own thoughts. Until now she had disliked and suspected Frink but had never actually feared him. But his brutal threat uttered so fiercely when she refused to fly opened her eyes to his character. She saw that he was a violent, remorseless man, against whom her resistance was useless. As long as they were together she would be utterly at his mercy. It would be impossible for her to resist him. Her only hope would therefore be in the possibility of meeting with any other human beings. For such as these she incessantly longed, and kept up a most earnest outlook. Who they might be made not the slightest difference to her. It would be enough if they were human beings. Brigands would be welcome—in fact, any one would be welcome so long as she might be delivered from Frink. She had made up her mind to fling herself upon the protection of the first person she met. She was full of hope. Thus far the brigands had seemed omnipresent and all powerful, and she expected before long to come upon some of them again. To Frink she said not a word, good or bad. To remonstrate was useless, to beg, equally so, to protest against his conduct a silly waste of words.

It may be a matter of wonder that Frink should thus burden himself with a helpless girl who could only retard his progress and lessen his own chances of escape. But the fact was, Lucy was so necessary to the accomplishment of his schemes that he was willing to run almost any risk to gain her. Besides, he

loved her as far as he was capable of loving anybody, and for her sake had already risked so much that he felt unwilling to lose her after all. Rather than do so he was prepared to carry on a most arduous struggle and run the most serious risk. To escape and carry Lucy with him would be to him the certainty of success. He felt confident of winning her consent to marriage with him. Then, as the husband of Lady Lucy, he could return to Landsdowne Hall and dictate his own terms to Drury and Lady Landsdowne. But without Lucy his position would be widely different. He might, indeed, make some arrangement with Drury, but nothing that would be adequate to his desires. The great prize itself would be swept away into the hands of others, and all his devices and crimes would prove to have been useless. So great, therefore, was the importance he now attached to winning Lucy and saving her that he felt almost willing to die rather than escape without her.

The ascent of the long hill occupied many hours, and though it was not steep, still it ran on for a great distance. It then terminated abruptly at a chasm. At this Frink halted with something like consternation, when suddenly he noticed a tower on the rock opposite the chasm. For thus, as the reader will perceive, Frink had happened to turn into the very path that was used by Garth to go and come from the top of the rock.

Seeing this tower, Frink supposed that there must be some way of getting to it, and accordingly walked along the edge of the chasm. After about a hundred paces he came to the narrowest part of the chasm, and here he saw a rough ladder thrown across. It was the one upon which Tancred had crossed while on his search after Garth. On his departure, no one had thought it worth while to take it away, and, consequently, it had remained here ever since. This was the only crossing place, and Frink wondered now how he should get Lucy across.

He himself went across first, leaving Lucy where she was. He was not afraid that she would fly, nor did she attempt to. She knew not where to go, and felt too helpless to move. Besides, she was utterly worn out with fatigue. Frink, therefore, crossed and looked about. He saw Garth's ladder, and placed that across beside the other. He then returned and caught sight of some small trees. These had been cut down and stripped of their branches, and had lain there ever since. It was done by Berengar's first party when they came to attack Garth. Frink took a half dozen of these and laid them over the ladder. Thus a flooring was formed, and a passage-way wide enough to allow of Lucy being led across without the horrors of giddiness. Across this Frink assisted her, and she went over without difficulty. So firm was the way, that Frink succeeded in getting even the mule across, a task impossible to any less sure-footed animal. Then Frink drew up the poles and the ladders, and proceeded to examine his place of refuge.

He found the rock as has already been described, as also the tower. But Garth, in his hasty flight from his stronghold, had not been able to remove anything, nor had Tancred cared about making any change. All therefore remained as it had been during Garth's occupation. To Frink's intense delight, he found an ample supply of arms, ammunition, and provisions. In the upper loft there were several bags of ship-bread, upon which Garth had evidently relied as the backbone of his supplies, a bundle of dried fish, a ham, and a keg of common Sicilian wine. There were two rifles, several cases of powder, some bullets, together with some clothing. In the lower floor a trap-door appeared, which Frink opened. It disclosed a deep well underneath, or rather cistern, in which there was still some water.

The survey which Frink thus made showed him that he had a stronghold which was remote, inaccessible, and virtually impregnable. He had provisions which would last a long time. He had arms to beat back an attack. He therefore decided to remain in this place at least for the present. He hoped by so doing that the brigands would utterly give him up, and conclude that he had escaped. In this impression they would no longer be on the lookout, but would turn their attention to other matters. After four or five weeks, or when his provisions might be exhausted, he could once more set forth. The mule would be a great assistance, for Lucy could then fly without fatigue. And since his last attempt had resulted in failure, he determined to direct his steps on the next occasion to the north.

This, therefore, was the reason, as Tancred conjectured, why the search after him and Lucy had been so completely baffled. The pursuers had turned their attention to the country all around, but none of them had as yet penetrated to this place. While the search was going on, Frink was waiting patiently day after day until what seemed sufficient time should pass away, while Lucy, full of terror and apprehension, waited with greater patience for the approach of those who might save her.

CHAPTER LXI.

FRINK'S DESPAIR.

WHILE thus trusting himself to this natural fortification, Frink was not unmindful of another advantage which he would have. He would be alone with Lucy. She would be completely dependent upon him. He determined to do his utmost to win her confidence and elicit her affection. Every day he ventured forth to seek for game, and also to explore the country. Lucy drew back the ladder after he had gone. Lucy was there to meet him on his return. Lucy had to give him an account of what she had been doing during the day, while he in return would always entertain her with an account of his own proceedings. Frink thus had a great advantage. Lucy was also absolutely dependent upon him, and, if anything, had been able to gain for him a place in her affections, it would have been this.

But unfortunately there had arisen a deep-seated repugnance against him in Lucy's mind. This had been the result of many things. Originally it had been almost instinctive, but had been heightened by his attentions to her. After that, during the voyage, this repugnance died out to a great extent, and during their captivity it began to change to a friendly feeling. But the occasion of their flight from the brigands had roused all that old repugnance to more than its former strength. It was not so much the force which Frink had used, or his ferocious language. It was rather the act itself. Their captors, the brigands, were in full flight. Deliverers were approaching; and yet at that moment Frink had drawn her away from the chance of liberty into a fresh captivity worse than the previous one. There, at least, she had enjoyed the society of Pauline. But he had torn her from this friend and carried her off to this lonely rock. No efforts of Frink, therefore, could efface the bitter memory of his past acts. Lucy refrained from reproach, and never failed to answer with courtesy; but in her manner toward him there was always an involuntary constraint, a chill, a coldness, an icy barrier, and this Frink felt. Vain were his efforts to remove it. No cordiality was possible. Nothing beyond mere conventionalisms were ever exhibited by Lucy. Such were the relations between these two as they dwelt on the rock.

Meanwhile, the grand advance was taking place upon this common center, from a circuit of one hundred miles, by all the bands in the employ of Garth and Tancred—these last being in the midst, and heading a body of special explorers. Before coming to close quarters, however, some scouts were sent out, who inspected the ground carefully, and brought back word that Frink was there.

It may seem like cowardice that such precautions were taken. Neither Garth, nor Tancred, however, was a coward. There were two reasons why they had to act with great circumspection.

The first reason, consisted in the desperate character of Frink and his situation. The ease with which Garth had repelled the attack upon him was remembered by all concerned, and all felt that to avoid useless bloodshed the most careful measures would have to be taken.

The second reason, lay in the fact that Lucy was a prisoner there, and in Frink's power. If driven to extremities, he could take instant and speedy vengeance on his pursuers by destroying Lucy. For this cause Garth and Tancred determined not to let Frink see them, if possible, or even to suspect their existence, until Lucy should be safe. For it will be remembered that, as yet, Frink had no reason to suppose that they had escaped, but was living in the full belief that both of them lay dead at the bottom of the pit in Leonforte.

Having learned from the scouts that Frink was actually on the rock, the next step was to prepare for an attack upon him. It was decided that a band of men should go up to the

chasm, headed by Berengar, and make an attempt in that direction. If Frink showed signs of trepidation, and gave up, all would be well, but if he showed fight, and held his ground, then they need not make any useless sacrifice of life. While Berengar and his men were thus to go up to the chasm, Garth and Tancred would scale the rock at that particular place down which Garth had once led Pauline. This was a secret known only to himself, and which he did not care to reveal to any one except Tancred.

The task allotted to Berengar was accepted by that worthy with the greatest alacrity. His life was to be the reward. If Frink was captured, and Lucy saved, then Berengar should be set free. On the present occasion his bonds were removed, and he was allowed full liberty of action. Anything like an attempt at flight was, however, prevented by the fact that one of his late wounds was still painful, and prevented him from walking with much rapidity, and also by the information conveyed to him that he was watched by his followers, who were all Tancred's men, and who would shoot him down at once, if he made the slightest motion to escape.

Frink was on his rock, all unconscious of these formidable preparations. He had, in fact, been anticipating some enjoyment on this day. He had intended staying upon the rock, and not going out, as usual, to hunt or reconnoiter. He was desirous of drawing Lucy into a conversation, which might be more or less confidential, and might lead them both into more intimate terms. He had already ventured upon such confidences, and now wished her to reciprocate.

He was standing near the edge of the chasm, a favorite place of his when he was alone, partly because it afforded concealment from all sides; and partly because he could watch the opposite side. This was a place which he invariably occupied when he was not in the tower or away hunting, and here, on this morning, he had taken up his station.

Suddenly Frink thought he saw some object moving in the woods opposite. He started, and sought to penetrate with his keen, watchful glance, into the recesses of the forest. But nothing more was visible, and he began to think that his senses had deceived him, or else that some animal might have been moving along—perhaps a hare—perhaps a stray cow—or, perhaps, even a wild boar. He, therefore, tried to dismiss his fears, and finally, for a distraction to his thoughts, he went back to the tower to request the company of Lucy.

She came forth at his request, and as he still felt uneasy at the suspicion of people in the woods, he brought forth two rifles, with the requisite ammunition, and took up his station with these near the chasm.

"You mustn't be alarmed," said he to Lucy, with a smile. "I merely bring these by way of precaution."

"Oh, I'm not at all alarmed."

"And I should feel obliged if you would remain with me. I may wish some help, or may wish something from the tower, and may not be able to leave the place."

"Do you think that any one is coming here?" asked Lucy, with an eagerness which she tried in vain to repress.

Frink looked at her with a gloomy face.

"It seems to me," said he, "that you would not feel so very sorry if such were to be the case. For my part, however, I will not allow myself to be taken again, and am here to resist till the last."

"I'm sure I don't see why," said Lucy, "the brigands were kind enough."

"Kind!" exclaimed Frink, "that's because they were waiting for the ransom. When the time would be up, they would have killed us all."

"But these may not be brigands."

"Who else can they be?"

"Why, people—soldiers—hunters. You surely will not fire until you find out who they are?"

"Of course not," said Frink, "but I know too well who they will be."

"And even if they are brigands," said Lucy, "I don't see what you alone can do against so many. You will be taken at last."

Frink looked at her solemnly.

"Never," said he. "Never alive. I have made up my mind to die rather than fall into their hands again. As for you," he added, bitterly, "you talk like a child. You will not look things in the face. Understand, then, that the fate to which the brigands will devote you is too

terrible for words or even for thought. Never shall I allow you to be recaptured. In spite of yourself I will save you from it."

"What do you mean?" asked Lucy, shrinking away in terror from the gloomy meaning that suggested itself to her in Frink's look.

"I mean this," said he. "If the brigands come they shall never capture me, and they shall never capture you. I have made up my mind to go where they cannot follow. I will go to death, and I will save you also from the horror of their hands."

"How?" faltered Lucy, with a shuddering fear.

"I will send you on before," cried Frink.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE LAST OF FRINK.

FOR some time there was silence. Frink turned away and stood peering into the woods. Lucy stood rigid, looking with fixed gaze at space. Between these two and the chasm rocks arose which prevented them from being seen by any who might be approaching from the other side. Any one thus approaching would thus be observed before he, himself, could see anything, and where desperate men were on guard, the attack was necessarily dangerous in the extreme. This was well known to Berengar, who had himself experienced it. So severe had been the lesson which he had then learned, that he would not have tried this again had Garth been defending the rock; but Frink seemed a far less formidable enemy, and Berengar was willing to try it against him. Still he used all the caution of which he was capable. He and all his band moved cautiously through the forest, watching every step, and hoping to catch the solitary garrison unawares. Their stealthy advance, their noiseless tread, and their dexterous way of taking advantage of the cover of the trees would have done honor to a band of Cooper's Indians. Berengar was at the head some distance in advance. The others followed at irregular intervals. All were vigilant and on the alert. In this way they advanced.

At length they came close enough to the chasm to see the crest of the rock. Here Berengar made a halt and commanded his men to keep cautiously in hiding, while he reconnoitered. He then advanced nearer in the most stealthy manner possible, moving from tree to tree. It was this which had attracted Frink's notice and excited his alarm; for Berengar had found it necessary to cross a more open space. This he had tried to do by crawling low to the ground, but had not been sufficiently skillful to avoid observation. Frink, however, had been invisible, and Berengar hoped that thus far he had been unobserved, a hope which was vain, inasmuch as Frink had seen the movement and had been put on his guard.

Berengar's object in thus stealing so cautiously ahead was a very natural one. He hoped that Frink would observe less vigilance than his predecessor; that the ladder would be allowed to remain, and might even be enlarged by the addition of other things. The chances, of course, were against this; for one who took the trouble to fly here would not be likely to leave any approaches open behind him. Still, there was a chance, and it was this chance that Berengar hoped to find. Now, it was not possible to see the ladder without coming up pretty close to the chasm, a thing which could not be done without exposing one's self. Berengar's whole hope now was that he was not watched. If the ladder were there, it was his intention to steal across, and, taking up his station on the opposite side, shout for his followers. If the ladder were not there, he would have to find some other means of crossing. Now, Berengar had not yet approached quite near enough, and he found it necessary to get still nearer, if he would see the ladder. This, however, he hesitated about doing, from the memory of his past sufferings in the place. Such was the position of both parties, as Frink talked with Lucy in his hiding-place.

And now a slight rustle in the bushes opposite roused him. He looked up. He saw a human face. This face was turned toward him. For a moment it seemed to Frink that those eyes had seen him. The next moment, however, they wandered past. This man was scanning eagerly the edge of the rock.

At length the man ventured forth, and looked cautiously about. His whole face and form

were clearly visible. Frink recognized him at once. He recognized him as one of his worst enemies—the very brigand Berengar, by whom he had been first seized, and from whom he had but recently escaped. This was the man to whom he had been betrayed by Thain and Drury. This was the man who no doubt had been paid to keep him, and who never would let him go.

He now saw the last hope of escape die away utterly. If Berengar were here, his whole band must be near. Berengar had been following him and searching for him ever since. He had found him at last. He was here. There he stood, face to face.

Hope died out in Frink's heart; but in its place there arose the hottest fury and the fiercest desire for vengeance. His rifle went up in an instant, and Berengar was covered by it. The noise, which Frink made in cocking it, alarmed the brigand. He looked up. He caught sight of Frink's face, as his eyes glared upon him from a crevice in the rocks. He saw also the muzzle of the rifle which was leveled against him. He saw the whole thing.

By an involuntary start he sprang backward, as though to escape.

Too late!

As he did so, the report of the rifle rung through the air; a wild yell sounded out, and Berengar gave a leap upward, and fell down dead!

The next instant all was confusion. Figures flitted to and fro in the woods. Two men rushed forward to Berengar's help. Frink raised his other rifle and took aim, but did not fire; he thought it best to reserve it until a time of actual attack. The two men seized the body of Berengar, and drew it back into the woods.

Frink proceeded to load his rifle.

All this had been the work of a few moments. Lucy had been a horror-stricken spectator. So awful was the sight of death, that she sat almost senseless. It seemed to her as though Berengar was one of her deliverers, and Frink was her captor and jailer; and as though her deliverer had been shot down while coming to save her. This fierce, furious, gloomy Frink had her a hopeless captive on this lonely rock, to do as he might choose. The thought was anguish.

In a sudden panic she started to her feet. She had a wild idea of flight.

Frink started up also, and, seizing her by the arm, drew her closer in under the shelter of the rocks, regarding her with a face of appalling meaning.

"Do you remember what I told you?" he cried.

Lucy said not a word. Terror had deprived her of utterance. Frink had now no more pity for her than a madman.

"Do you remember?" he repeated.

Lucy gasped out some incoherent words.

"The brigands are there, but they shall never capture me. I cannot escape, but I can die! Do you hear?"

"Yes; oh, yes!"

"And if I die, you shall not escape. You shall not go to triumph over me. I have lost my soul for your sake. For you I have become a traitor and a murderer. If I die, I will not die alone. You must die, too, and go with me into the other world!"

"Oh, spare me! Oh, have mercy—have mercy!" moaned Lucy, shrinking back in an anguish of terror.

"Mercy! There's no question about mercy!" said Frink. "I love you; and, since you haven't been mine in life, you shall be mine in death."

"Oh, have mercy!"

"No; we must die. Soon they will be upon us. I must kill you now, and then I will kill myself. The death of the chief will only make them more merciless. Come, prepare!"

"Oh, give me time. Oh, don't be too hasty," cried Lucy. "Perhaps they will go away. We may yet escape."

Frink shook his head.

"There's no hope," said he. "They know we're here. They'll watch till we are starved out, or else they'll make an attack to-night—come over in the dark and get us alive."

At this, Lucy fell on her knees and buried her face in her hands. There was no hope. Despair was in her heart.

"Rise!" cried Frink.

She did not move.

"Very well," he murmured. "Better so. Say your prayers."

With these words, he raised his rifle and pointed it at her. Suddenly the sharp report of

a rifle sounded behind him, with loud shouts and the rush of footsteps. He started involuntarily and turned.

For a minute he stood as if turned to stone.

Two men were bounding toward him with loud cries and menacing shouts. Two men! Who were these two men?

The forms of those whom he knew to be lying dead far away, lying drowned at the bottom of that deep pit in Leonforte, done to death by his own hands; men who had been his friends, whom he had betrayed, whose memory was anguish, the thought of whom was torment. What, then, must the sight of them have been, coming thus suddenly, coming without warning, coming thus with loud shouts and menacing gestures? It was as though they had risen out of the ground, or darted into visible form out of space.

Horror indescribable came upon him and overwhelmed him. For a moment he stood as if turned to stone. Then, with a yell of mortal fear, he darted back and bounded wildly away. His rifle fell from his hands. He leaped from rock to rock, not looking where he went, urged by a maddening impulse to fly. On he went, and on, in a straight course, for some twenty or thirty paces.

Then he sprang forward. A wild cry rose in the air, and the next instant Frink disappeared down into the awful chasm.

CHAPTER LXIII.

A GENERAL BREAK-UP.

As the report of the rifle rang through the air, followed by the shriek from Frink, the woods on the opposite side of the cabin seemed suddenly to become alive with human beings. They poured forth, all armed, looking eagerly about, and peering down into the abyss into which Frink had fallen. The defender of the rock had been taken in the rear, so that now there was no longer any need for caution or silence. Until now none of them had known, though some had suspected, that there was any secret path to the top of the rock, but the presence of Garth and Tancred now made known most plainly the fact of its existence. Garth now flung a ladder across, and soon the whole band had crossed over.

Meanwhile Tancred had busied himself with Lucy. On seeing the flight of Frink he had flung his arms around the prostrate girl, with a thousand exclamations of endearment, but found that she was deaf for the present to all words of love. She was senseless. Much alarmed, and full of dire apprehensions, Tancred tried to rouse her. Rubbing and chafing her hands at length were efficacious toward restoring her, and she began to come back to herself. At length she drew a long breath, and looked up. The first human face that she saw was that of Tancred. The last human face had been that of Frink. She had closed her eyes on Hate, and now opened them on Love. Horror had withdrawn and given way to happiness. But so utterly unexpected was this appearance of Tancred that for some time Lucy was unable to understand it. She thought it was a portion of the senselessness into which she had fallen. She fancied that she had not yet altogether emerged from it, but would yet have a rude awakening to actual fact. She lay, therefore, gazing up into Tancred's face, with a faint smile on her lips, not daring, however, to utter a word, for fear of breaking the spell.

It was Tancred who first spoke.

"Lucy, darling!"

"Tancred!" she murmured.

"Have you recovered, dearest?"

"I don't know," said Lucy, who hardly felt certain that she was quite awake.

"Do you know me, dearest?"

"Tancred," was the reply in a tender voice.

"Do you feel stronger?"

Lucy drew a long breath and sat up.

"Am I really alive and awake, or is it all a dream?" she murmured.

She looked all around, trying to recollect what had happened. She saw the breastwork of rocks under which Frink had pulled her but a short time before. She saw the area on the top of the rocks. She saw the distant horizon with its border of rugged hills. She saw the overhanging sky. She saw the old tower. All these things had their own suggestions to make, and one by one Lucy's recollections came back again to her mind. She thought of Frink's last threat. Again, she saw him seize his gun and take aim. She heard his awful

words. She felt the gun pointing at her head. Then the report rang out.

In fact, when that report had sounded, she thought it was Frink's rifle fired at her. She had instantly become senseless. This result was partly due to her fatigue and weakness, consequent upon such intense excitement and emotion, and partly also to the power of imagination. She believed that the rifle was fired at her and she fell.

There is a well-authenticated story of a student in a German university upon whom a trick was played by his fellow students. This trick involved a trial for some offense for which the accused was condemned to death. His head was placed on the block, the judge gave the word, the executioner raised his ax, and a cold wet cloth was dropped on his neck. Nevertheless, the student fell dead just as if the ax had fallen.

So here Lucy had fallen senseless, and the only wonder was that she had not fallen dead.

For a long time she could not understand her position or believe in her good fortune; but Tancred found means to convince her that she was not dreaming, but was really and truly awake, and to explain how it was that she had come here.

Meanwhile, Garth had pushed the ladder across, and the men had come over. Now, among those who thus came over was a man who wished particularly to see him. This man had been sent by Mrs. Henslowe with the letter to Garth, which has already been mentioned, and also a letter for Tancred. This man had come up with some of the followers of Berengar, who informed him that Garth and Tancred would both be here in this place, and here he had accordingly come. Garth took the letter and read it through.

The perusal produced upon him the most extraordinary effect. He read, frowned, stared, read again, and finally sat thinking for a long time, with his eyes fixed on vacancy. At last he arose, and walked toward Tancred. By this time Lucy had come to the full use of her senses, and she and Tancred were sitting gazing into each other's eyes with a rapturous expression. Garth bowed low to the lady, and congratulated her on her safety, but made no pretense to receive her in any other way; although, if Mrs. Henslowe's charge had been true, he was bound then and there to receive her as nothing else than his own daughter. Garth, however, did not dream for one moment of receiving her in any such capacity.

"By the way," said he to Tancred, "a man has just brought this for you."

He handed the letter over to Tancred.

"I've just received a letter myself," continued Garth, "by the same hand. It's very important; I must go at once to England."

"England!"

"Yes; and at once."

"Pooh, man! Wait, and come along with us."

"I can't. There's nothing to keep me here. I mean to give up the Sicilian Republic for good. Berengar's fate has settled that question in my mind. But my business is so important that I must be gone without a moment's delay."

"Oh, well, then, my dear fellow, if you take that line, I've got nothing to say."

"Will you have the kindness to make my adieux to your mother, and will you also say to your sister that I had to depart very hurriedly without saying good-by, but hope to see her as soon as she arrives in England?"

"Certainly, my dear fellow; but why not stop in and see them on your way?"

"Can't do it, man," said Garth; "must go like a shot; not a moment to spare; and now good-by."

He shook hands with Tancred and was off.

The letter which Tancred received was written by his mother, and informed him that she and Pauline had decided to go to Palermo, and that they would put up at the Hôtel Trinacria. She urged him if he found Lucy to bring her there as soon as possible.

This news was, on the whole, rather agreeable to Tancred than otherwise. To go to Palermo was just what he wanted; whereas, if his mother and sister had remained at Castronovo, he would have had to make a long detour. There was, not far from here, however, a path which led from Filaga to Vicari, at which latter place they would find a carriage-road and obtain a post-chaise to carry them the remainder of the way.

Fortunately, the mule had been taken care of and now proved to be in excellent condition.

Lucy felt strong enough for the journey. Tancred left some directions for the disposal of the remains of Frink. Berengar's friends saw to the disposal of his remains. Tancred now set forth with Lucy—a far different companion from the one with whom she had been of late, and on her last eventful journey. It was not more than ten miles to Vicari, and they reached the place before evening. Here they put up at the hotel. The next day they reached Palermo.

Here Tancred gave to Mrs. Henslowe and to Pauline Garth's message. Pauline heard it with feelings of joy and intense relief. This message from his lips was a declaration of his perfect innocence of the charges laid against him by her mother. She would see him in England. That was enough.

Mrs. Henslowe had now to explain to Tancred the true cause of Garth's departure. At first Tancred tried to pooh pooh her charges, but after further discussion with her he began to feel very serious about them. He could not deny that Garth must be Earl of Landsdowne. The recollections of his mother, together with other incidents within his own knowledge, all combined to make him feel convinced that this must be so. But as to the other statement it was different. He was acquainted with Lady Landsdowne, and could not bring himself to believe that she could be the wife of Garth. His conviction about this arose from his knowledge of her character and also partly from the questions which Garth several times asked about her. These questions were put very innocently and with all the appearance of interest and curiosity. In an ordinary man such questions would have meant nothing, but in Garth they meant that he knew nothing about her nor wanted to know. For Garth was utterly guileless and sincere, and was incapable of any kind of deceit or dissimulation, even if it amounted to nothing more than feigned ignorance about something well known to him.

But in the midst of all this Lucy made a revelation of another secret, which was more astonishing to them than anything else. She had kept silent for some time, and had made up her mind to say nothing about it until she should see Tancred. Now, therefore, the time had come, and she told all about the death-bed declaration of her old nurse. The discovery that Lucy was no longer Lady Lucy Landsdowne, heiress of the vast Landsdowne estates, produced a wonderful effect on all of them. Upon Tancred the effect was one of unmixed pleasure. Although the disparity between them had been removed by his own wealth, still he could not help being swayed by his old feelings; and to make her his wife now, when she was only the humble, penniless girl, seemed sweeter to him than wedding a great heiress.

Pauline, also, was delighted. Part of her mother's charge was that Garth was the husband of Lady Landsdowne, and also the father of Lucy. To her the first had been horrible, and the second preposterous. But now this revelation of Lucy showed that she was no relation whatever to Garth, and Pauline could not help believing that, as the latter had been so easily disproved, so would the former be.

Lucy's information produced upon Mrs. Henslowe's mind a different effect, and led to an expression of opinion which was characteristic.

"Well," said she to Tancred, "that'll be all the better for you, you-know."

"Oh, yes," said Tancred, "I think it's better—don't care about having such a swell for a wife."

"Oh, but I don't mean that."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I mean that you'll be the next heir of Landsdowne. Garth has no heirs."

"Oh, bother that," said Tancred. "I don't care; I've got as much as I want."

"But there isn't any reason why you shouldn't get the earldom. Then Garth has a wife, but won't live with her. It's a pity about Pauline; but I hope she'll get over it in time. Garth can't marry her; and since she can't become Lady Landsdowne, why, I should like to see you Lord Landsdowne. And Lord Landsdowne you must be, sooner or later, for Garth of course will never have any heirs."

"Oh, you don't know about that," said Tancred.

There was now no reason why they should stay any longer in Sicily, and they began their preparations for going back to England. They merely waited long enough to give to the ladies that rest which they needed, in order to recover from the fatigues consequent upon their recent life. One week was sufficient for this. All

that time they were making preparations for the return. At first Pauline indulged in a feeble hope that Garth might be on board the same vessel, but on embarking she was disappointed, for she saw no signs of him whatever; for in fact Garth had hurried off at once to Palermo, and had arrived just in time to catch the steamer. He had thus left Palermo more than a week before the ladies.

Tancred took his party by water in the P. and O. Company's steamer. The voyage was a pleasant one, and all looked forward with eager hope to a return to their native land, which now was doubly dear to them on account of their bitter experience of foreign lands. But of all, none looked forward to a return with such bright hopes as Pauline.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE EARL OF LANDSDOWNE.

GARTH arrived in England without any delay, and at once set out for Landsdowne Hall. His purpose in making this visit was one which he had communicated to no one. Mrs. Henslowe thought that this was a sure proof of his guilt, and asserted that if he was innocent he would certainly have said as much to Tancred, and that he would have confided to him the facts of the case. Tancred scouted his mother's insinuations, and asserted that she knew nothing about Garth.

Garth, meanwhile, kept his own counsel and followed out his own plans. The first of these plans was to reach Landsdowne Hall as soon as possible and bring matters to a crisis. Accordingly, he hurried there without delay, and on reaching the Hall he at once sent in a request to see Lady Landsdowne.

This request was answered by the appearance of Drury. Drury did not recognize Garth, but seemed struck by his appearance and impressed by a sense of his importance. Unable to conjecture anything as to the reason of this visit, he could only think that it might refer to Lucy, or perhaps to Tancred. He pleaded Lady Landsdowne's ill health as an excuse for her not appearing in person, and tried to induce Garth to confide his business to him.

All these statements, however, were abruptly pushed aside by Garth, who reiterated his request to see Lady Landsdowne.

"Tell her," said he, "that I have come on important business referring to events connected with her first advent to this place. She will understand that."

Upon this Drury shrunk back into his boots. He now felt sure that this man was Frink's confederate, who had come to finish his game, and perhaps to avenge him. There was therefore nothing more for him to do but to prepare Lady Landsdowne for this interview. He told Garth that he would acquaint her ladyship with his wishes, and went away full of the darkest apprehensions. In such a state of mind he went to acquaint Lady Landsdowne with this new portent. Lady Landsdowne was unable to make any preparation. She knew not for what she was to prepare, and therefore could only come down to see this new-comer for herself.

In this state of mind she entered the room, full of curiosity and apprehension. Garth had not seated himself, but remained standing in the center of the room, from which position he had amused himself in looking around. Here he stood, a tall, rough figure, but with an air of authority in his face, and dignity in his mien. Lady Landsdowne entered and regarded him fixedly with the same feeling of apprehension. Garth greeted her with a cold inclination of his head, and then regarded her in silence for some time.

Lady Landsdowne looked at him in the same silence. Drury, who came in after her, looked with dismay at her, turning his gaze first upon her, and then upon her visitor. He saw her face grow pale, and still paler, and a look of deadly terror come over it. She had recognized this man, and the discovery had thus overcome her. What was this? Who was he? What was he to her? Drury could not answer.

"Do you know me?" asked Garth, in a harsh voice.

Lady Landsdowne gasped, and said nothing. "Do you know me, I say," repeated Garth. "Answer me, Ann Holder!"

At the mention of this name Drury turned ghastly white, and staggered back with a start of terror and a look of despair.

"Yes," said the woman, whom he called by

the name "Ann Holder." She spoke in a scarce audible whisper.

"Who am I?"

At this the wretched woman looked wildly around, and then sunk upon her knees.

"Mercy!" she gasped. "Mercy, my lord, mercy!"

"Pooh! nonsense!" said Garth; "first do what I say. Answer what I ask, and speak the truth."

"Oh, my lord!"

"Who am I?"

"Lord—Lord Garth, my lord; Lord Landsdowne—Earl of Landsdowne, my lord," stammered the woman.

"And what do you mean by calling yourself Lady Landsdowne?"

The wretched woman groaned.

"You are Ann Holder. You were lady's-maid to my poor wife, that died nearly twenty years ago in France. My wife died, and my child died, and I, a broken-hearted man, became a wanderer over the earth. I forgot my country, and I forgot my family, and now I come back at last to find that some one has been living here all these years as my widow—personating my lost wife, with a false child used to personate my poor infant; and you—you are the woman. You, a common creature—Ann Holder—my wife's maid. Great canopy of Heaven!"

At this grand climax the woman, who had been crouching in the dust all along, now collapsed utterly, and fairly writhed at his feet in an agony of terror and remorse. Incoherent words escaped her, prayers for mercy, attempted excuses, confessions of guilt, deprecations of anger.

Garth turned away in contempt.

"Pooh! Get up," he cried. "Your offense is so abominable, so utterly infernal, that no punishment is adequate. Burning alive might do, but the law don't allow it. Your case is utterly beyond me. If it had been a smaller offense I might have had you hanged or transported for life; but as it is, I give up. Stand up and answer my questions, and then if you speak the truth you may go and take this blathering humbug with you. Only be careful to speak the truth."

At this the woman got upon her feet, and stood trembling. Garth now asked her a number of questions which need not be repeated here. The substance, however, may be given, which will also explain the whole plot.

The marriage of Garth Landsdowne has already been spoken of. It was as Mrs. Henslowe said, nor had her memories been incorrect. He had been a dashing young guardsman of London. During a visit in the country he had fallen in love with the daughter of a poor half-pay officer and married her. They had gone off to France and there lived for some time. In order to obtain the means of subsistence, Garth sold out of the army. His future was somewhat cloudy, for there was no prospect whatever of his inheriting the Landsdowne estates; but he was young and hopeful, and took no thought for the morrow.

At length his wife gave birth to a daughter. Not long afterward she died, leaving Garth utterly overwhelmed. For his daughter's sake, however, he still bore up. But the child was not long spared to him, for in a few months she followed her mother to the grave. This final blow fell with tremendous force upon Garth. He lost all pleasure in life. By one of those impulses common to men of strong passions, he went forth into the world at large to seek that distraction of soul, which may be more easily found in lawless communities than in the well-ordered centers of civilization. He cut himself off altogether from his old haunts and vanished completely out of the memory of man. Africa, Asia, and America became by turns the scene of his restless wanderings, and at last returning to Europe, he had found in Sicily a congenial sphere of action for his restless spirit. During all these years he heard nothing about the affairs of the Landsdownes, and even on his visit to Liverpool he did not take sufficient interest in them to make any inquiries about them. Circumstances had occurred, however, which, if known to him, would have excited his deepest interest, especially at the time when he was in such need of money.

At the very time when Garth was meeting with his deep afflictions, events of immense importance were transpiring at Landsdowne Hall. The Earl had died. This was George, Garth's cousin. Garth never heard of his death. The next heir was George's brother, Paul. He died in the following year. After this, the next heir

was Garth. But Garth knew nothing about the death of his cousins.

About this time, Drury fell in with Ann Holder. This woman had been maid to Garth's wife. The affairs of the Landsdowne family excited the deepest interest in both. They knew that Garth was the next heir; but that he had gone into far distant lands, and would never be heard of again. It was Drury who first thought of the plan which they afterward carried out.

No one knew Garth's wife. No one knew about her death. Garth had not thought fit to send any notice of it. He was too much broken down by it to think of such a thing. Nor had any notice been given of the death of his child. A series of careful inquiries made by Drury assured him of this. Having ascertained this, Drury then began to carry his plans into execution.

Ann Holder was to personate Garth's wife, and call herself Lady Landsdowne. The father of the real wife was dead. She had a certain general resemblance, which was sufficient to make her pass muster except with some old friend. Drury obtained all the necessary documents, and as Garth had gone away in a hurry, leaving all his own papers, he had been able to secure these also.

But the most important thing was to get a child, and pass her off as the daughter of Garth, and his heiress. This was done in the way already mentioned to Lucy by her dying mother. Lucy was thus brought up as the daughter of this Ann Holder, and the heiress of Landsdowne.

The plan had been carried out with perfect success. The skill of Drury enabled him to obtain every document that was necessary, and establish every proof. For years they had enjoyed their high station, and had begun to believe themselves the rightful possessors of Landsdowne, when Frink turned up.

They never knew how it was that Frink found out. From hints which he dropped to Drury, however, it was supposed that it all grew out of his discovery of Tancred's relationship to the Landsdowne's. This he had found out from his mother, who had been familiar with the affairs of the Landsdowne family. His aim had first been to marry Lucy, and win the inheritance for himself. Afterward, he had persuaded Drury to invite Tancred to Landsdowne Hall, so that they might take measures in concert against him. Drury, however, played Frink false, and Lucy's love for Tancred ruined his plans. He had to appear upon the scene himself, and then fortune appeared to favor him in the matter of the manuscript. In that manuscript he never believed at all. He mesely accompanied Tancred so as to insure his ruin. Garth's name became known to him in the midst of this business, and only increased his determination to carry out his deadly purpose. This purpose was his own. He made some hints to Drury about his designs against Tancred, but said nothing definite. Of Garth and his true character he made no mention. The consequence was that when Garth did come Drury was utterly unprepared. He came, too, at the very time all danger appeared to have passed, when those who had alarmed his conscience or troubled his peace had been quietly disposed of; when they seemed to have taken themselves forever out of the way. At such a time suddenly appeared a new enemy, and that one the worst of all.

Before that enemy neither Drury nor Ann Holder could stand for a moment. At the first blow they both sunk down, forever crushed and annihilated. Another man might have handed them over to the law for punishment. But Garth did nothing. He simply sent them away, and they passed into obscurity. His own words explain this. Their offense was too great. No punishment would be adequate; consequently, he did not seek to inflict any.

Tancred had told Garth before their last separation what his plans were in case he should find Lucy, and mentioned where he intended to go. It was in Liverpool. Garth went there and waited. About a week passed and his patience was rewarded.

For the party arrived, and Pauline saw Garth ready to receive her. To Mrs. Henslowe's unbounded astonishment and slight displeasure, Garth took Pauline in his arms as though he meant then and there to appropriate her for his own. And Pauline, who, after all, had never really doubted him, and had never felt a worse feeling than one of bewilderment, now saw that

her loving confidence had been fully justified, and that Garth would be all her own.

Explanations followed all around. The end of it was that Tancred's party did not remain in Liverpool more than one night, but departed as Garth's guests to Landsdowne Hall. Here Lucy and Tancred revisited the scenes which were so sweet to both by the associations of the past. Here Mrs. Henslowe found her memory of family affairs constantly stimulated. Here Garth found himself surrounded by the images of his ancestors, and found in the duties of his lofty position something which afforded quite as good an occupation for his mind as the management of the Sicilian Republic.

Shortly after their return, there was a double marriage. Tancred led Lucy to the altar, who, though she had lost her great inheritance, had gained what to her was of more value. Garth also led Pauline to the same altar, and she became the Countess of Landsdowne, but never lost in after life that sweet charm which had once made Garth feel all his nature go forth in unextinguishable love for "the boy, Paul."

THE END.



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