

THE EARL'S WARD:

—OR,—

THE OLD CHAPEL AND ITS MYSTERIES.

A Romance of the Land and Ocean.

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BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.  
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## THE EARL'S WARD.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE YOUNG FISHERMAN AND THE SMUGGLER.

AT a point about half way between the borders of Scotland and Dunstanborough, on the coast of Northumberland, there is a cove of considerable extent which, in years long past, bore the name of Lollards' Bay, from the circumstance that a small party of those people fled from Germany on account of persecution from the mendicant friars, and made a temporary settlement near that spot. It deserves, however, hardly the name of a "bay," for it is but a deep, ragged basin, forming an extended mouth to a small river that runs up a short distance into the country to the northward and westward. Near its entrance are numerous quicksands, islands, and towering and sunken rocks, so that one not perfectly familiar with the narrow, dubious channel could not run even a pleasure yacht within its shelter. Neither would any one not knowing of the existence or locality of this inlet have ever mistrusted the fact by sailing down the coast, for the obstructions to

its view from the sea were so numerous and seemingly interwoven, that the coast seemed hardly broken by its indentation.

The sun must have been at least an hour high, though most of the bay was shaded by the tall forest trees that just caught the rays of the bright orb upon their waving tops. It was a June sun, and its beams danced upon verdant foliage and towering rocks, stopped a moment to play with the ripples at the mouth of the inlet, and then went darting away over the broad bosom of the German ocean.

Half way up the bay was a small skiff-built boat, which was being propelled by a single individual towards the river. The boat glided swiftly through the water, though ever and anon its inmate would raise his oars for a moment to gaze about him, and once or twice his movements seemed to indicate that he was not quite determined where to land, and, if one might judge from the anxiety betrayed in his

quick, nervous glances, he wished to escape detection from some quarter. At length, however, when he had nearly reached the mouth of the stream, he seemed to give up his watching, for, setting himself more firmly to his task, he pulled directly for the stream, and after he had passed some ten or a dozen rods up between its banks, he turned to the left and shot into a little artificial inlet, where he landed and hauled his boat ashore after him. Having accomplished this, he cut from a willow that grew near him a small twig, then reaching over into the cuddy of his skiff he took therefrom four good-sized fish and strung them upon it, after which, he started off up a narrow path that led through the thick wood.

Now we have a chance to study somewhat of our acquaintance's appearance. He was a young man, who could not have been over one-and-twenty years, tall, and stoutly built, though by no means clumsy, for his wrists, hands, ankles, and feet, were small, almost to delicateness, while his head was carried with that erectness and graceful ease that betray the perfect freedom of all the muscles in the system. His face was handsome—not with any delicate or very classical turning of the features—but with the beaming of an independent good nature, accompanied by a proud look of conscious right—though it must be confessed that at the present time that pride which could by nature but have belonged there, was clouded and ruffled by a shade of some nervous fear. His hair was long, and hung down over his shoulders in jet black ringlets, and where its wavy curls were allowed to grow shorter about the temples, they gave to his dark eyes a piercing lustre. Though his calling was but that of an humble fisherman, yet his garb was hardly in keeping with such a vocation. He wore a blue, pointed jacket, lined with tinsel, from beneath which hung a buff skirt with purple edging. His legs were clothed in blue woollen tights, and his feet in dressed deerskin boots which fitted tightly about the ankles, but were rather large and slouchy about the tops. On his head he wore a kind of plaid bonnet, somewhat after the fashion of the High-

landers, and, take him all in all, he was such an one as an observer would be likely to watch and study with interest.

[SEE ENGRAVING.]

As the young man entered the path he resumed his watchful manner, gazing carefully about him, and starting as some linnet or sparrow would hop from bough to bough, or some rabbit start up near him. At length he reached a point where the path took an abrupt turn around a high rock, and instead of following it he struck into the woods on the right, preferring to take a more circuitous route, rather than run the risk of coming suddenly upon any travelling point in his way, seeming still bent upon not allowing himself to be caught unawares. But the very precaution he took thwarted his own design, for he had hardly entered a rod and a half into the shrubbery that ran wild among the trees, when the heavy crackling of bushes struck upon his ear, and ere he could escape detection a hand was laid upon his shoulder.

"Ah, Cecil, I've been hunting for you," said the new comer, who still kept his hand upon the young man's shoulder.

Said individual was more stoutly built than him whom he called Cecil, and his face, half covered by a dense mass of black beard, looked stern and repulsive. His hair was black and shaggy, and he was dressed in the garb of a smuggler, with a brace of pistols and a long knife stuck within the belt that confined his dark frock, while in his slouched hat he wore a small blue and white feather, the insignia of command.

"Garl Tamell," returned the young man, "what would you with me? Why do you thus intercept me?"

"I have business with you, Cecil—business of importance. You must pilot the Ranger into the safe to-morrow."

"I had thought as much, Garl, and hence I have been trying to avoid you," returned the youth, while a look composed both of pain and determination rested upon his features.

"Been trying to avoid me?"



Cecil Leland, the Young Fisherman. See Chapter I, page 8.

"Yes—I even took this route through the wood so that I might not meet you."

"And why should you do this?" asked the smuggler captain—for such he was—as he took his hand from the other's shoulder, and gazed sternly into his face.

"Because," returned Cecil, without hesitation, "I know that you would have to be away for some time, and that you would have to go to-night."

"Well—what of that?"

"I knew that the brig would have to be piloted into the safe to-morrow."

"Well."

"And that you would not trust any of those you have left on board to do it."

"Of course I would not, Cecil, so long as you were to be found, for there are none so well acquainted with the thousand rocks that guard the bay as you and myself. Now explain to me this strange affair—this skulking away from me."

"It is simply this, Earl; that I wish to have nothing further to do with your business."

"Our business, you mean, Cecil," said Earl Tamell, while his eyes betrayed considerable sarcastic anger.

"No," returned Cecil, not appearing to notice his companion's manner, "not *our* business, for you know that since the death of my father I have not accompanied you on any of your excursions. At times I have helped stow away your contraband goods, and I have often brought the brig safely into the bay, but even that I will do no—"

"Ha!"

"I *wish* to do no more."

"I thought you would correct yourself," said the smuggler, while a bitter smile passed over his features. "And now," he continued, "perhaps you will tell me why you have this objection? Are you afraid?"

"*Afraid!* Not of *man!* No—here lies my reason," and as he spoke, he laid his hand upon his heart. "Earl Tamell, I would be able to walk unblushingly, unshrinkingly through the world. When I go among my fellow-men, I would be able to own *myself*, to

show myself for what I am. I would not skulk amid the rocks of the coast, and the trees of the forest when I am upon the shore. No—I would be something more noble than he who is afraid of man."

"What mean you by that, Cecil?"

"I mean that *you* are afraid of man."

"Ha!"

"Ay, Earl Tamell, do not start. You are afraid of your fellow-men, for you dare not, except in disguise, go among them. You know that I speak the truth. Now *I* would not be such a man."

The smuggler laid his hand upon the butt of a pistol and drew it half-way from his belt, but as he met the keen glance of Cecil, he pushed it back, remarking, as he did so:

"You talk like a man who has been sickened by love, Cecil."

The young man's face crimsoned, and a slight tremor ran through his frame, but it soon passed off, and his companion continued:

"Come, no more of this, or I shall think you mean to betray us. That you would not *dare* to do."

"Not dare."

"No—you would not dare to break the solemn oath you made to your father, upon his death-bed."

"No, I should not, Earl," replied the young man, with a shudder.

"And does not the same oath bind you to render us such assistance as we may demand in getting our goods on shore? When your father released you from the brig's crew, did you not take the most solemn oath that you would be a pilot to us, if we needed you, anywhere within fifteen miles of the coast?"

"Yes, yes—I did. But you will relieve me from it. You can do it, Earl."

"But I *will not do it!* Now, to-morrow afternoon, at three o'clock, you must take your skiff and go out to the brig. She will heave-to off Wing Cove, and wait for you, if you do not get there before she does, and if you do, you must wait for her. Remember that fearful oath!"

Six years before, when old Murtell Leland, a notorious smuggler chieftain, lay upon his death-bed, he bound his son, by the most fearful oath that tongue could frame, that he should perform such duties as the reader has already heard, and in consideration thereof, he gave to that son the privilege of leaving the crew. Cecil well remembered that oath, and he dared not violate it; so, after pondering for some moments, he said, in a sad tone:

"Garl Tamell, I will not break my oath. I will do as you wish me."

"'Tis well. I know you will not break your word," returned the smuggler, as he cast a gratified look upon his young companion, and then casting his eyes off to the westward, as if instinctively looking for the sun, though had it been half-way up the heavens the woods would have shut it out, he added:

"'Tis late now, and I must go. You will not forget—at three o'clock, to-morrow afternoon. Hark!"

"What is it?" asked Cecil, starting at his companion's sudden exclamation.

"Did you not hear footsteps, as of some one moving away?"

"No."

"I did, surely."

"'Twas but a rabbit or a fox."

"'Twas too heavy a step for that. I certainly heard footsteps, and they sounded as if stealing away."

"Well, let it go. It must have been your own imagination. Your *profession*, Garl, makes you suspicious of even a footfall."

The smuggler captain winced at this remark, but in a moment more, he received the young man's promise to be punctual, and then he turned back through the thick wood, while Cecil once more entered the path and kept on his way. There was a shade of painful thought upon his face, but the sun had already set, and he hurried quickly on.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE EARL'S WARD, CECIL'S STRANGE SUSPICION.

WHEN Cecil entered the path again, he struck a point beyond the high rock to which allusion was made in the last chapter, and here the path struck off to the southward, and though the shades of twilight had fallen over the scene, yet we may venture to describe the peculiarities of the way.

For some ten or fifteen minutes the young man kept on through the wood-bound path, but then the narrow forest walls opened to a more extended scene, and gradually a beautiful country view became visible to the eye. The left was still bounded by towering rocks and craggy precipices; but away to the right lay spread out beautiful fields and meadows, with here and there a murmuring brook, or a clump of neatly cultured shrubbery, the whole divided into variously figured checkers by carefully trimmed buckthorn hedges.

Still following to the left, Cecil at length arrived at a high wall, through which he passed by means of a small wicket. This brought him within the extensive inner park of an old castle, built after the fashion of the feudal times—with

its walls and battlements, moats and bastions—towering far above him, upon an eminence which overlooked the whole surrounding country. The path, though now somewhat steep, was by no means difficult, and steadily the young man pursued his way. At the castle gate he readily gained admittance, and he at once passed directly on to the left wing, where were the apartments of the domestics.

"Well, Cecil," said the old butler, as the youth entered that functionary's apartment, "so you've got along with the fish."

"Yes, Malcolm, and if I'm a little late, the quality of my load must make up for it. There—aint those beauties?"

"I' faith, they are, good Cecil," returned Malcolm, while his eyes sparkled as he took the fish in his hands. "They'll make a glorious dish for my lord to-morrow. Now wait a moment, and I'll get thee thy money."

When we are requested to "wait a moment," we may always know that "a moment" means any time less than an hour, and as Cecil knew the old butler's propensity to tardiness, he set

himself down, determined to wait patiently for the man's return. It might have been three minutes—perhaps five—after the youth took his seat, that the door was opened and a young girl entered the butler's room. She was a beautiful creature, with a countenance all made up of hope and joyousness—hope for all things good, and joyousness that she herself was good. She had lived eighteen years, and though joy was a part of her nature, yet she had seen sorrow, for she was an orphan. At an early age she had lost both father and mother, the former of whom was a noble knight of Scotland, but when he died, civil feuds had stripped him of all his property, and his only child, his lovely Ida, was given in care to his brother-in-arms, Sir William O'cleveland, Earl of Belford.

Sir William had passed the best part of his days in the service of three kings, and now he had settled down in his own castle to spend the remainder of his life in quietude. His household consisted of himself and son, who was an only child, and Ida Stanley, together with a large number of servants and retainers.

This, then, is the old earl's castle, and the girl who has just been introduced, is Ida Stanley, his ward.

"Ah, Cecil," exclaimed the happy girl, as she came tripping forward, "you are late, to-night. You know you promised me that you would go with me this evening, and show me where those beautiful blue-bells and mountain-pinks were that you found the other day."

"Really, Ida, you must forgive me," returned Cecil, as he cast an admiring glance, not unmixed with a slight shade of pain, up into the face of the fair girl, at the same time arising from his seat and extending his hand—"I had to catch the fish I promised the earl, and I had not so good fortune as usual, but at some other time I will accompany you."

"Then let it be to-morrow afternoon, Cecil."

"Well. Ah, no—I forget. I cannot go then. Say next day after to-morrow."

"But why not to-morrow?"

"Why, you know, Ida, that one in my position must not be idle. I have a mother to sup-

port, and to-morrow I have an opportunity to earn something."

The rich blood of an avenging conscience arose to the cheeks and temples of the youth as he made this answer, for though he had told no lie, and though he would not have told one to Ida Stanley, yet he knew that the hope was in his bosom that she would think his to-morrow's opportunity was to be in his usual avocation. Ida, however, took no notice of his emotion, or if she did, she thought it was but a momentary feeling of inferiority at the humbleness of his calling, and with another happy smile, she said:

"Then be it the day after to-morrow—any time in the afternoon—that is, before three o'clock. Now you will not disappoint me."

"No, I will not, if my life and health be spared," returned Cecil, now relieved from his embarrassment.

"I knew you will not fail me, Cecil, for you are the only one to whom I can look for such favors."

As Ida spoke, the butler returned and placed in Cecil's hand the pay for the fish, remarking that the very next lot he caught he must bring up to the castle, and having so spoken, he turned about his business, while the youth, after once more assuring the fair girl that he would be true to his promise, turned from the lodge and passed out of the court.

It was fairly night when the young man gained the bridge outside the gate, though the myriad stars that twinkled in the azure vault lent a visible lustre to the earth. He passed out of the inner park by the same wicket at which he had entered, but here he struck off to the left instead of keeping the same way as that by which he had ascended the eminence, and passed over nearly half a mile of meadow-land, where he crossed a small brook, and entered a forest path. He had been some minutes in the wood when he suddenly stopped, crossed his arms upon his breast, and bent his head in thought.

"No, no," he murmured, as he started slowly on, "this should be so no longer. I have no right thus to crush my own heart. Ida cares

not for me other than as a companion. She loves me as I would love those who do me favors, and she thinks not that she harms me when she thus seeks my companionship. She is grateful to me because when she was a child, I saved her from a watery grave, at the risk of my own life, and she would now show her gratitude by treating me in some respects as an equal; but it must not be—my heart knows her rank—it knows not its own parentage, but under the influence of love it has bowed to her in silent adoration. I will go with her as I have promised, and then I must see her no more. But what excuse can I offer? what plea can I make for the necessity of such a course? O, Ida, Ida! you can never know how fondly, how devotedly, I have loved you. You will never know the sweet influence that love has exerted upon me. It found me a wild, a reckless boy, caring for no laws, owning no restraint—and it has made me better, and it has made me proud, for it has shown me that there must be nobler aims in life than that to which my father and mother would have bent my mind. Like the gentle dews of heaven upon the parched and crackling foliage of earth, it has given life and vigor to the better impulses of my nature. O, and can I give thee up? Can I—O, fool! where is thy hope? There is none! Once more, as I have promised, I will be thy companion, and then it must pass from me."

Again Cecil Leland quickened his pace, nor lagged he again till he reached a cross road that led out to the great mail road between London and Edinburgh, and within a few rods of where he emerged from the wood he came to a small thatched cottage, which he entered.

The interior of the cot was not only comfortable, but there was a certain degree of refinement, and, one might almost say, luxury, about it, that would hardly be expected from its locality and general outward appearance. There was but one occupant before the youth entered, and that was a female, Margaret Leland, the mother of Cecil. She was not old—not over forty-five—and there were traces of beauty yet visible in her marked features, though, in truth,

they belonged more to the masculine than to the feminine order. There was nothing harsh, nothing repulsive in her features, but they were marked by an iron will, and their various tracings gave evidence of a strange and wayward disposition.

Cecil again had to be told that he was late, but this time he gave his true reason, and told of his interview with the smuggler captain.

"Then the Ranger is again outside?" said Mrs. Leland.

"Yes," returned her son, in a sort of intuitive manner.

"And you are going to pilot her in?"

"Yes."

"Then I hope she has a valuable cargo, for this is the fourth, and you know in every fourth cargo, I receive an equal share."

"Yes," again returned Cecil, in the same distant manner.

"Have you made anything, to-day?"

"Yes, two shillings. So I think I have earned my supper, at all events."

"So you have, my son, and you shall have it," and as the widow thus spoke, she arose to prepare his evening meal.

The meal was soon prepared, and it took the youth but a short time to satisfy his hunger, after which he turned his chair from the table, and regarded his mother a few moments in thoughtful silence. She, in the meantime, removed the dishes to the cupboard and placed the table back to its place, after which she resumed her seat.

"Mother," said Cecil, in an earnest tone; "who is this Carl Tamell?"

"He is the commander of the Northumberland smugglers."

"I know that; but who, and what is he? When my father died, old Buntnell was made captain, but now this man has superseded him, and I ask you who he is?"

"I have told you all I know, Cecil."

"No you have not," returned the young man, in a decided tone. "You know more about him, than that he is merely the captain of the Ranger."

"Pray, my son, what has given you such an idea as that?" asked the smuggler's widow, while a degree of perturbation was manifest upon her countenance.

"I ask the question for information."

"And I have answered it."

"Not to the extent of your knowledge."

"But why should you think that?"

"Because, I know that I have seen Garl Tamell under other circumstances."

"Ha!" uttered Margaret Leland, with a sudden start; but in a moment she recovered herself, and assuming a careless manner, she said:

"You may have seen him a thousand times, for aught I know, and so may thousands of others have seen him, ere he took command of the brig, but yet for all that he may be nothing but plain Garl Tamell."

Cecil gazed for a moment upon the floor, and then raising his eyes again to his mother's face, he said, while a peculiar shade of meaning passed over his handsome countenance:

"Look me in the eye, mother, and tell me if you know no more of this man than what you have told me. Do you not know the exact position he held before he joined the smugglers?"

There may have been a slight tremor about the corners of the woman's mouth, and her eyes

may have shrunk from the keen glance of her son, but the emotion would hardly have been noticed, for she instantly replied:

"I trust you know enough of my character to be aware that no secret which I wished to keep would be divulged; therefore, it can matter not to you whether I have known him or not. That is enough."

"It may be enough for you, but not for me," replied Cecil, in a decisive tone. "I know that I have seen him under other circumstances, and I know, too, that those circumstances were so peculiar, so strange, that there must be much hidden beneath them. If you were to reveal all to me, I would not betray your secret, but if you do not, I will myself solve the mystery."

"You had better beware, Cecil, for Garl would not long let you live with his secret."

"Ha! now you have confessed yourself," uttered the young man, as he started from his chair, and began to pace the room. "But you need tell me no more. I will trust to circumstances for the rest."

Margaret Leland regarded her son with a strange look as he paced the room, and though in that look there was much of admiration, yet there was a shade of fear blended with it; but she made no further remark, and ere long both mother and son sought their rest.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE BEAK REEFS.

ON the next afternoon, according to agreement, Cecil wended his way down to the bay where he had left his boat, and having shoved it off, he entered it, and pulled out to sea, and took his course along the coast to the southward. The wind was moderate, setting up from the southward and eastward, and though considerable surf was breaking in upon the rocks, yet the youth made good headway, and in little over an hour and a half he reached Wing Cove, where he had been directed to wait for the brig. Having hauled his boat up on to a little sandy beach, he stationed himself upon a rocky eminence where he could command a good view seaward.

Not over fifteen minutes had passed after Cecil had taken his station upon the lookout, before he made out the brig just rounding a point to the northward of Dunstanborough. She had all sail set—studding-sails below and aloft—and though the circumstance appeared somewhat strange that the brig should thus crowd on canvass directly on the coast, yet the youth supposed she might be anxious to make

her time, and without further thought he came down from the rock, and once more shoved his boat into the water.

Hardly had young Leland got into his skiff before he felt a sudden whirl of wind strike upon his cheek, and the dry sand began to leap from the beach and dance about in the air. Instinctively he shot his boat out further into the cove and cast his eyes off to the southward and eastward, where he saw a long line of white-capped waves shaded by a strange darkness of the atmosphere. The scene was nothing new to the young fisherman, and he knew that the sooner he got on board the brig the better, for the storm that had thus been heralded was sure to be a severe one; so bending himself with a sudden energy to the oars, he urged his light bark swiftly out of the cove towards the brig.

As Cecil rounded the southern point of the cove, he cast his eyes towards the smuggler and saw that she had already lowered her studding-sails, and taken in her royals, but that she made no disposition to shorten sail further. He was surprised at this, for the gale was even now al

most upon her, and an exclamation of something like professional anger was upon his lips, when his eye caught a scene that made him start. Directly in the smuggler's wake, and not more than a mile distant from her, was a man-of-war brig, also standing on under a heavy press of canvass. In a moment, all Cecil's sympathies were awakened for those who had been his companions, and who had petted and loved him in his childhood, and forgetting all his new-born prejudices and resolves, he determined to stand by them against their government enemies, and straining his power to the utmost, he sent his light boat flying over the waves like a sea-bird. In fifteen minutes he took his oars inboard, and waited for a line from the brig. In a moment more one was thrown to him, which he easily caught, and ere long his skiff thumped against the vessel's side, and seizing upon the chains of the main rigging, he easily made his way on board.

The brig was quite large for a vessel of her class, and though not built with much regard to speed, yet she was a good sailer. She carried twelve guns, six on each side, and her crew consisted at the present time of forty men, most of whom were hardy looking fellows.

"Ah, Cecil," exclaimed he, who seemed to hold the command, "I'm glad you've come, for under the present circumstances the old Ranger would be lost without you. You see that customer astern?"

"Yes, Buntnell," returned Cecil; "I see her, and she's an ugly one, too."

"That she is, for we are so heavily loaded that we cut the water slowly, while she's coming along at a furious rate. I'm afraid that she'll overhaul us yet, for we can't carry this sail much longer."

"Neither can the man-of-war," returned Cecil, as he cast his eyes aloft, and then running his glance along the storm-lined sea, he added:

"We must take in the top-gallant-sails, Buntnell."

"You can do as you please," replied the old smuggler, "for the brig is now under your com-

mand. You know, since our old pilot died, you and Garl Tamell, are the only two that can safely run into the Lollards. I know every other place but that, and even there, I might do on a pinch in calm weather."

"Then let the top-gallant-sails be taken in at once," ordered Cecil, and as he spoke, he turned to look at his pursuer.

Hardly had he turned his gaze upon the man-of-war, when the gale struck her and carried away both her main top-gallant sheets, and in another moment he saw that they were making preparations to take in the fore top-gallant sail.

"Buntnell," said the young man, after the brig had been put in a comparatively safe trim, "you have made some alteration in the old Ranger, since I was last on board, as I perceive."

"Ah, how so, Cecil?"

"You have more guns, and more men."

"Why—yes—you see, we have to guard against danger," returned Buntnell, with considerable hesitation in his manner. "In fact, the officers have got their eyes on us, and we thought it best to be prepared. 'Twas Garl Tamell's order."

"Tamell has made some changes, I take it?" remarked the young man, in an interrogating manner.

"Yes—he has some."

"Are they for the better?"

"That is as one takes it."

"Well, how do you take it, Buntnell?"

"For the better, if we succeed—for the worse if we don't."

"I'm afraid we shall have to lighten her," said Buntnell, "and yet I hate to do that, for the most valuable part of our cargo is stowed on top."

"No, I guess there'll be no need of that," replied Cecil. "Fifteen minutes, at this rate, will bring us to the island, and once behind that we are safe. The chaser may reach us with her shot, but we'll run the risk of them. Let all the sheets and braces be well attended, with men enough stationed by them to work them cheerily. See that the halyards are looked to,

and if they don't cut away our sticks, I'll carry the old Ranger safely into her berth."

Meanwhile, the man-of-war was gaining hand-over-hand, and twice more did she discharge her bow-chasers, but they did no damage. She certainly could have had no idea of the immediate vicinity of the smuggler's home, or she would have kept up her firing, for had she done so, she might have disabled the Ranger, as the last shot she fired struck directly under her stern.

"Cecil," said Buntnell, after he had seen the men all stationed, "this is going to be a bad affair for us, at best."

"How so?"

"Why, even if we escape the enemy, they cannot fail of seeing where we enter, and though they cannot follow us, yet they will discover our haunt, so they can lay off and on till this gale dies away, and then send their boats in after us. And then, again, if we were able to drive their boats off, which we could certainly do, they would yet have a knowledge of our secret, and we should be no longer safe in our bay."

"Buntnell, I could prevent even that."

"How?"

"I say, I could prevent it."

"And how could you do it?" asked Buntnell, in surprise.

Cecil took two or three turns up and down the quarter-deck, and then stopping in front of the old smuggler, he said:

"Most of those on board have been friends to me, and I will save them, even though by so doing I destroy the man-of-war. I can run our vessel through the Beak-reefs."

"That is impossible!" uttered Buntnell, in a tone of deep surprise.

"I tell you, I can do it: I have sounded a channel among them when I have been out there fishing, and I know I can take the brig safely through, though there is not another man on earth can do it. The sea doesn't run heavy yet."

"By my own life, Cecil, if you can do that, we are safe; but we must be quick about it, for they are not more than a mile ahead."

"Nor over three-quarters," returned Cecil. "There is no need of touching the braces; but you take the helm, and I will go forward. Mind every word I utter, and the enemy shall be taken in our trap. Let her fall off three points."

The Beak-reefs were a chain of sunken rocks, which commenced at a cliff upon the shore and extended out to sea nearly two miles, consisting of cob-stones, and so peculiarly were they arranged that in many places they gave no ripple upon the surface, even in the most furious storms. It was over quarter of a mile across their bed, and to the present time none had ever thought of such a thing as hunting up a channel among them.

The smuggler was now about four miles from the shore, and as she was kept away according to the directions of her temporary commander, she headed towards the centre of the reef, which centre, from the angle thus made, was nearly a mile distant.

"Now take the helm, Buntnell, and let every movement be quick, for in one or two places the variation of a fathom either way would be fatal. You see where the sea gathers around that point, just over the starboard anchor-stock?"

"Yes," returned Buntnell, gazing in the direction pointed out.

"Well, the entrance to my channel is just to the westward of that. I'll go forward, now, and if you don't miss my orders, the old Ranger will go through."

As Cecil spoke, he started forward, and at the same time a shot from the enemy came dashing through the starboard quarter-rail, but as the brig was heeling over considerably to leeward, and as, by her change of course, her larboard quarter had been brought next to the chaser, of course the shot passed off without doing any other damage than merely to shatter the rail.

"Now leff!" shouted Cecil, who had stationed himself so as to look over the bows.

"Steady—so!"

The brig had reached the entrance to the dubious channel, and the heart of every man on

board arose fluttering to its owner's mouth as the crew comprehended the perilous manœuvre that was about being performed. The brig was going nine knots through the water, and they all knew that were she to strike, heavily laden as she was, she must inevitably be dashed in pieces; but the confident manner of their young pilot inspired them with a clear hope, though it was with breathless anxiety that they awaited the result.

"Port a little!" shouted Cecil, and on the instant the hardy helmsman obeyed.

"Steady!"

"Steady it is!" returned Buntnell, as he nervously threw the wheel back.

"Port again!" cried Cecil.

"Ay, ay."

"Now starboard, quick!"

"Ay, ay!" returned Buntnell, in quick, nervous accents, as he gave her half a turn of starboard helm.

"Steady—so!"

"Steady it is," cried the helmsman, in an easier tone.

"*And we are safe!*" shouted Cecil, as he turned from the bows and walked aft to the quarter-deck.

A low murmur of joy ran through the brig's crew, as they heard the startling words, and when Buntnell cast his eyes back over the stern and saw on each side where the huge rocks were lifting the water into dashing piles, he could not but remember the God that made him, and when Cecil approached his side, he eagerly grasped the young man by the hand and blessed him.

"See, Buntnell, she has already taken the bait," exclaimed Cecil.

"By the lasting ocean, she has," returned the old smuggler, as he cast his eyes towards the man-of-war.

In truth the pursuer was making for the trap, for she had kept away towards the Beak-reefs!

About half a mile seaward of the smuggler was a small island, and the chaser evidently thought that the chase was making for some hiding-place that lay in shore abreast of said

island, thinking, too, perhaps, that if they ran around the island they might lose their prize.

Just as the man-of-war trimmed her sails on her new course, she clewed up her mainsail and fired two guns in quick succession. The first missed its mark, but the second struck the brig's main-yard just inside of its larboard quarter, entirely severing it, so that the larboard arm came thundering down upon the deck, but the lift broke the fall so that it did no damage, as the men had timely warning enough to get out of its way.

"You'll soon pay dearly for that, my dear fellow," exclaimed Cecil, as he turned to assist Buntnell in clearing the wreck of the yard.

The sail was cut from that portion of the yard which had fallen, and as it had of course split the canvass in its descent, that part of the sail was severed entirely from the rest, and as the starboard yard-arm still hung safely by its lift and the slings, the remainder of the sail was easily clewed up to it, and temporarily secured.

Just as this was accomplished, and before the cumbering yard-arm was moved out of the way, all eyes were turned towards the man-of-war. She was within half a cable's length of the reef. In another moment she would be upon it. She was dashing madly through the water—the men were crowding about her bows—when suddenly, arising above the fierce battle-song of the wind, was heard a piercing cry! The vessel's head began to come up—her yards quickly traversed so as to throw her sails aback, but, alas! the poor doomed men had discovered their fatal position too late—a velocity such as theirs might not be stopped in a moment—and on the next instant she struck! A single second her tall masts quivered in the air—then reeled a moment to and fro—and then they fell from their giddy height into the boiling surge! The ill-fated vessel stood not the shock long. Once or twice she rocked, as if in the arms of a giant—then struggled like a dying deer—and then the vast fabric was rent in twain, and, with its whole load of humanity, it sank to rise no more!

## CHAPTER IV.

A FEARFUL OATH IS CANCELLED BY A FEARFUL EVENT.

THE larboard yard-arm of the smuggler brig was soon cleared of its rigging, and then lashed beneath two of the gun-carriages, after which the men were ready to give all their attention to the working of their vessel. The gale still continued, but its height had passed, and the men had now no fears, for their young pilot had proved himself equal to the task he had undertaken.

Cecil ran the brig along outside of the rocks that guarded the southern entrance to the bay, keeping off to the eastward until he had cleared a large island that stood opposite its northern jaw, beyond which, but more in shore, was a huge pile of rocks known as the Red-headed cliffs, from the color of the upper rocks. At this point, the yards were braced up and the brig put in between the island and the cliffs, where the water was much smoother, though the wind still blew strongly against the sails. Another island, further in, was cleared, and then Cecil himself took the helm, and at the expiration of fifteen minutes from that time, the Ranger was smoothly clearing the tranquil waters of Lol-

lards' Bay, or, as the brig's crew more generally termed it, the "*Smuggler's Safe*," for it was a safe to them.

There was just wind enough within the bay to give the brig headway, and after having fairly entered, she hauled upon the larboard tack and stood towards the towering cliffs that bounded the southern side of the inlet, and having come within two cables' lengths of the frowning shore her anchor was dropped, and shortly afterwards her sails were all snugly furled.

"Now," said Buntnell, as he took Cecil by the hand, "ere you go on shore, we will go into the cabin and take some refreshment. I have some choice old wine there, and such fruits as may suit your palate. Come."

Cecil needed no urging, for his exertions had somewhat fatigued him, and without remark, other than to signify his assent, he followed the old smuggler below.

The cabin was well furnished, and might even be called splendidly so, many additions of luxury having been made since the young man was last there, but what most puzzled him was the

sight of some forty or fifty bales of stuff which looked not unlike silk, and which were piled up against the bulkhead. Several small, iron-bound boxes, too, which were disposed of within one of the after lockers, the door of which had been accidentally thrown open, struck him with a peculiar sensation, and the doubts which had arisen in his mind when he first boarded the brig, began now to take a palpable form and feature.

"You seem to have overloaded, this trip," carelessly remarked Cecil, as he sat down his glass after having taken a sip of wine.

"How so?" asked Buntnell, as he poured himself out a second glass.

"O, I judge so from the looks of your cabin."

"Ah—yes. The hold was a little too full to take in the whole, so we had to make a virtue of necessity."

"This looks like silk," remarked Cecil, still in a seemingly careless tone, while a sort of twinkling smile played about his features, and at the same time laying his hand upon one of the aforementioned bales.

"Ha, ha—yes, 'tis silk," returned the old smuggler, as he tossed off his second glass.

"Why, that's something new, isn't it, Buntnell?"

"New? How so?" asked Buntnell, as a slight shade of apprehension passed over his features.

Cecil saw that if he would get anything out of his companion he must hide all his anxious curiosity, so he called for another glass of wine, answering, as he did so:

"O, nothing—only silk is something that we of Northumberland never got hold of before. I didn't know but you had been coming some new dodge. Ha, ha, ha."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Buntnell, in return, as he poured out his third glass. "Ha, ha, ha—yes, 'twas a *dodge*, Cecil."

The smuggler seemed inclined to go no further without urging, and as he drank the last glass of liquor he had poured out, the young man said:

"How was it? Been buying at a discount?"

"O, yes—decidedly."

"How great?"

"Well, considerably less than the king's value."

"Come, come, Buntnell—I think I have proved myself a friend to the brig, and *perhaps*, if there was an inducement, I might like to go in with you."

"Ah, i' faith, Cecil, say you so?"

"Yes, if there was anything worthy of consideration."

The young man spoke with a frankness that was slightly tinged with seeming reserve, and the peculiar wink of his eye appeared to convey the intelligence that if all was as he suspected he would not object to take hold of the enterprise. Old Buntnell regarded him for some moments in silence, and at length he said, while the former smiles upon his countenance gave place to an expression of careful consideration:

"If you don't join us, Cecil, you wouldn't betray us?"

"Buntnell," returned the young man, as he extended his hand frankly to his companion; "I never will betray one of my old friends. Those who used to caress me in childhood, and fondle me as I gained in years, will ever hold a home in the love of my heart, and I would risk my own life to save them, but I never could betray them. Think not so meanly of me as that."

"By heavens, Cecil, I did not think so meanly of you. I know you too well," returned the old smuggler, with enthusiasm, and then relaxing his face to a meaning smile, he continued:

"I'll tell you, Cecil—we took part of our cargo in rather a free way."

"Stopped some merchantman and made an exchange, I suppose?"

"Exchange?"

"I mean you took such of their cargo as you wanted, and exchanged hard knocks, and perhaps you gave them a few pounds of cold iron."

"Ha, ha, ha, Cecil, you've hit it exactly. We did stop a poor Indiaman—or rather, I should say, a *rich* one, and made free with her cargo—and a good haul we made of it."

"To speak plainly, Buntnell, you've made our old Ranger a regular *pirate*," said the young man, with a forced smile.

"Well, perhaps we might as well call things by their true names, though I'd rather still stick to the name of smuggler."

"Where did you do this?"

"Well, I should judge 'twas about half-way between here and the coast of Denmark."

"What! Here in our own sea?"

"Yes."

"But you'll surely get nabbed if you carry on such works so near home. Some of the Indiaman's crew may be cruising about here and recognize you."

"Ah, there's no fear of that, Cecil," said Buntnell, who could not repress the shade of sadness that crept over his features. "The poor fellows have all gone upon that cruise that never makes a port on earth again."

"And do you mean to say that you murdered them all?" asked the young man, with a shudder.

"All! Every soul! and then sank the ship."

"Ah! Buntnell, there was no need of that. That was too cruel. I did not think that of the old Ranger's crew."

"But Garl Tamell ordered it," returned the old man, who could not himself avoid shuddering as the dreadful scene came back to his mind.

"And I will wager all I'm worth," said Cecil, "that if Garl Tamell had never come on board, no piracy would ever have been committed by the crew."

"You are right there, Cecil; but since we allowed him to urge us into it we've no right to complain. Only, do you know, sometimes I almost wish we hadn't listened to his proposals, for then I should have now been commander of the brig."

"And you richly deserved it, too, Buntnell."

But tell me, do you know who this Garl Tamell is?"

"All I know of him is, that he's our captain. I never saw him before—though sometimes I must say, his countenance looks familiar."

"That's just the way I feel," returned Cecil.

"Now what say, will you join us?" asked the old smuggler, after a few moments of silence on both sides.

"To be frank with you," answered the young man, "I could not join the brig under such circumstances. I can fight when there is need of it, but I cannot coolly commit murder. But do not fear me—I will not break the pledge I gave you, but I will rather serve you whenever opportunity offers."

"Well, I can't blame you, Cecil," frankly said the old man, "nor do I doubt you. But come, I must go on deck now."

"Yes, and I must be making my way homeward," said Cecil, and as he spoke, he followed his companion up the ladder.

When they reached the deck the hatches had been removed, and the young man could not fail of seeing that the hold also contained many boxes and bales of Indian stamp, but he appeared to take no notice of it, and turning to where his skiff was still safely swinging at the stern, he hauled it alongside and leaped into it, and in a moment more he was shooting swiftly up the bay.

The sun was already hidden behind the trees, for the western heavens were now clear—and our hero had another night walk through the forest before him.

"Now, now!" he murmured to himself, while a look of deep gratitude rested upon his features, "that fearful oath is cancelled. I swore to be faithful to the *smugglers*—to assist *them* when they needed it, but I never swore to turn my hand to *PIRATES*! Now, Garl Tamell, you can fling that oath at me no more. We stand now upon equal footing. No—I am your superior in everything, and ere long I'll prove it. When they told you of the awful pledge I had given my dying father, you resolved to

make the best use of it you could, but your tongue can no longer command me. I have promised Buntnell that I would never betray those who had been my friends in childhood, and I never will; but to you that promise does not extend! Earl Tamell, villain as thou art, I can thank thee that thou hast set thy bloody mark upon the old brig, for it has broken the last link that bound me to an occupation I loathe.

No more will I lend myself to your schemes. Thank God, I'm free!"

With renewed vigor, Cecil Leland plied his oars, and ere long he reached the small inlet where we have seen him once before. Here again he hauled up his skiff, but instead of taking the woodland path, he kept on by the bank of the stream, which was his nearer route home.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE REJECTED AND THE ACCEPTED.

**W**ITHIN a sumptuous apartment of the old castle sat Sir William Cleaveland, Earl of Belford, and Lord John Cleaveland, the earl's only child. Sir William had passed the goal of threescore and ten, but yet he was hale and hearty, possessing a strong constitution, and one of those kind, gentle dispositions that are so much calculated to induce longevity. His son was somewhat over one-and-twenty, and though he was in most respects good-looking, yet there was a peculiar spark in his eye, and a curl about the lips, that betrayed an uneasy, jealous disposition. His hair was sandy, and that detracted somewhat from the looks of his features.

The earl and his son had been engaged in a long and interesting conversation, and upon the face of the latter there rested a look of beaming hope, slightly tinged with a sort of firm determination.

"Now go, John, and send Ida to me," said the old earl, as he gathered up a lot of papers which lay upon the table before him, and tied them up with a ribbon.

The young man left the apartment, and in a few minutes afterwards Ida Stanley entered.

"Here, Ida, take a seat by my side," said Sir William, as the fair young girl closed the door behind her. "There, now I've got something serious to say to you."

"O, Sir William, now don't load me with anything too serious, for you know I can't bear it."

"No, you little gipsy, the matter shan't be serious enough to hurt you. But now listen."

"I'm all ears."

The old man regarded the gentle being by his side a moment in silence, and then, while his features assumed a really serious aspect, he said:

"Ida, have you ever entertained a thought of marrying?"

"Why, what an idea!" exclaimed the young girl, in unfeigned astonishment.

"But for one in your situation it would not be an unreasonable one."

"Who—who, should I marry?"

"I will tell you, my child. Ever since I

took you under my roof, it has been my cherished desire that you should wed with my son."

"What, with John?"

"Yes."

"Why, that would almost seem like marrying my own brother."

"So much the better, for you will the better understand each other's dispositions."

"I declare, Sir William," said Ida, while the smile that had dwelt upon her face gave place to a serious look, "that is something I have never thought of, and besides, I don't think John has any such ideas."

"O, yes he has. We have been talking about the matter to-day—just before I sent for you—and he is anxious that you should become his wife. I have never mentioned the thing to you before, because I wished not to broach the subject till I knew my son's feelings with regard to it; but now that I find he ardently desires it, I could wish that you would accede. Of course you can have time to think of it, only John returns to Oxford in a few days, where he will remain in the university but one term more, and I would like your answer before he goes."

For several moments, Ida Stanley remained in deep thought. At first, the idea had struck her as so novel that it caused only surprise, but as she reflected upon it, a look of anguish gradually stole over her features, and at length she threw her arms around the old man's neck, murmuring, as she did so:

"Dear Sir William, I shall always love John as a brother, but I cannot marry him. I cannot, indeed I cannot."

"But you haven't had a chance to think of the matter yet," returned the old earl, while a shade of disappointment passed over his features.

"There is no need that I should think more on it, for my own heart tells me that such a union would make me miserable. You will not insist upon it—I know you will not."

"But tell me, Ida, what reason you have for such a decision," said Sir William, in an earnest tone. "John is of a proper age, and he

loves you. I have but a short time longer to remain on earth, and I had fondly hoped that I might see yourself and my son united ere I died."

"O, sir, you have been kind to me—you have been a father to me," uttered Ida, bursting into tears, "but do not urge me to this. I can give you no reason for my wish—I can give myself none, but I know I never could be happy with him as my husband. O, forgive me if in this I offend—but I cannot—indeed I cannot."

"There, don't weep, Ida," said the old man, in a soothing tone. "God forbid that I should do aught to make you unhappy. We will say no more about it now; but yet I wish you would think of it. Of one thing, however, you may rest assured: if, on the day that John leaves for Oxford, you are still of the same opinion, I will press the matter no further. Here, now brush away your tears."

"But you will not love the less for this?" said the fair girl. She threw back her golden tresses and gazed imploringly up into her foster-father's face.

"No, no—indeed I will not, my own sweet dove," exclaimed the old earl, drawing the gentle being to his bosom, and imprinting a kiss upon her brow. "No, Ida, what I would have done I meant for your happiness, but were I to be the means of making you miserable, I never should forgive myself. Now let it trouble you no more."

Ida Stanley again fell upon the old man's neck and blessed him for his kindness. The load that had been so suddenly thrown upon her heart was removed, and again she felt happy.

"I trust, my dear Sir William," she at length said, "that your son will not be much disappointed. He cannot have formed an attachment too strong to be broken."

"O, no," replied the old earl. "I think John will bear it easily. It will wound his pride more than it will pain his heart."

Ida brushed away her tears, and allowing her eyes to fall upon a point where a huge Pegasus was carved in the quaint old wainscot-

ting, she fell into a fit of musing. There was no direct point to her thoughts, but gradually a feeling of melancholy stole over her heart as an ill-defined phantom of dread arose before her. What it was she feared, she knew not, only she knew that her heart was heavy, and that fate seemed to be frowning upon her. The Pegasus seemed to raise its wings and menace her, and as her eyes became more intently fixed upon the figure, she imagined that its wide nostrils were distending. The air became oppressive, and excusing herself to the earl, she arose and left the apartment.

"How foolish," she exclaimed to herself, as soon as the fresh air of the open corridor had imparted its invigorating influence to her system. "How very foolish for me to feel so. Of course, I have nothing to fear. John won't blame me."

"Ida, Ida," cried a young girl, who at that moment came tripping along the corridor, "he's come, and is waiting for you in the hall."

"Who has come, Annette?" asked the young lady of her merry maid.

"Why, Cecil, to be sure—Cecil Leland. He has come to go out with you after the flowers."

In an instant every cloud vanished from the face of Ida Stanley, and the bright gleams of sunlight danced in every feature. She thanked Annette for her information, and tripping away to her room, she procured a light shawl, and in a few moments she joined Cecil in the hall.

"Now, Mr. Truant," commenced the happy girl, in her joyous, rattling manner, "you are true to your engagement. Come, let's be off."

Cecil smiled a reply, gazed fondly upon the sweet features that were beaming upon him, and then turned to lead the way out into the court. Ida tripped along gaily by his side, and when they had passed out through the small gate at the back of the castle and began to ascend the rocky eminence beyond, she took hold of his hand. The path into which they had struck was narrow and circuitous, winding through a miniature defiles and around projecting cliffs, until at length it opened upon a small lawn

which spread itself out in front of an old stone chapel.

This chapel was built against a huge rock, which protected it in a measure from the storms that came sweeping up from the German Ocean. Its entrance was open, though there were seldom any had storms from the quarter to which it was thus exposed. Within it presented a plain, unassuming appearance, with its roughly ornamented altar hewn out from the rock that formed the rear wall, upon which were some half dozen stone taper-stands, while on either side were low, moss-covered stone benches.

"They tell some curious things of this old chapel," said Ida, as she and her companion stopped for a moment upon the lawn in front.

"Yes, I've heard them," returned Cecil.

"They say the old place is haunted."

"By bats and owls, I suspect; but there's nothing else, I think, Ida."

"I don't know," returned the fair girl, while she gazed curiously at the old pile, "but some of the servants at the castle tell stranger stories than that."

"And what do they say?"

"O, they say they have seen gigantic forms passing in and out at night, and old Maloolm once took shelter here from a storm, and he heard such horrible noises that he dared not remain."

"Surely, I never heard of that before," said Cecil, gazing with an inquisitive wonder into the face of his companion. "If there were any secrets about the old place, I think I should have known them, for this is an old play-ground to me since childhood."

"O, I think imagination has much to do with these reports," returned Ida, "but still there must be some foundation for them."

"Undoubtedly there is," Cecil said, in a half thoughtful manner, "though I cannot see or imagine from whence that foundation springs."

As the young man spoke, he started on, and at the expiration of a few minutes, he reached a spot overlooking the sea, where, in luxuriant abundance, were several descriptions of wild

flowers. Ida uttered an exclamation of delight as her eyes fell upon the beautiful blossoms, and for half an hour she wandered about the spot, culling the most lovely of the flowers, and arranging them into a bouquet.

"Now, Cecil," said the fair girl, as she tied up her bouquet with a strip of tenacious vine, "let us return."

"In one moment," returned the young man. "Come up here, and let us look off upon the ocean ere we go."

There was a peculiar shade of sadness swept over Cecil's features as he spoke, and as he extended his hand to assist his companion upon the gentle eminence, it trembled perceptibly.

"What a lovely sight," uttered Ida, as her eyes ran over the boundless expanse of the blue deep that stretched away from the base of the cliff upon which they stood.

"And wherein is it lovely?" asked Cecil, bending his head low as he spoke, and gazing with an irrepressible fondness into his companion's features.

"Why, it is lovely in its very grandeur—in its awful sublimity. It leads us to think of Him who stays its mighty tides and breathes upon its heaving bosom. Look off, Cecil, to where the heavens and the sea meet together. You can see no boundary, no line of vision, and yet we know that the great continent lies beyond. That is like the providence of him who made it—inscrutable, unsearchable."

Cecil gazed with surprise into the radiant face of the speaker, for he never before knew that such thoughts had a home in her bosom.

"You wonder to hear me talk so seriously," she continued, noticing her companion's manner, "but such thoughts are often mine. Nature has made me light-hearted and gay, and sometimes I am giddy and thoughtless, but there are times when my soul takes a higher flight. Often, when alone, I think of God, of his power and goodness—and I think of heaven, too, for I have a father and mother there. Ah, Cecil, the orphan is not always gay, though she is seldom unhappy."

"I asked you to look with me once more upon

the broad ocean," said the youth, after a few moments' silence, "because it may be the last time for years that we shall have the privilege again. I am about to leave the scenes of my childhood."

"Cecil!" uttered the fair girl, starting with a sudden emotion and regarding him with surprise.

"I am indeed, Ida, going to leave you."

"To leave us? Going to leave the home of your childhood? Going to leave *me*? No, no, Cecil, you will not go."

"I must go, Ida."

"Then who—tell me who, will be my companion? With whom shall I search the forest and the meadow? Who will go with me upon the bay and sail me upon its sweet bosom? O, no, Cecil, you are jesting. O, I should indeed be unhappy if you were to leave me."

Ida Stanley spoke warmly, earnestly. She faltered not, nor did she seek to hide a single feeling of her heart, but she looked fixedly, imploringly, into Cecil's face as she uttered forth her thoughts, and she laid her small hand confidently upon his shoulder. For a moment the youth stood speechless beneath the music that thrilled through his soul. He wondered if the gentle being could love him as he loved. He dared not hope it, and at length, taking the hand that rested upon his shoulder within his own, he said:

"Ida, when I am gone, the only grief that distance can impart will be the separation from you; but still I must go. You seem to forget that we are no longer children. The thoughts, the feelings, and the impulses of childhood have given place to new incentives of action. Even were I to remain, we could not maintain the habits of our younger days. I should love to be ever near you, to be ever with you; to serve you as best I could, but yet we must part."

As Cecil spoke a new light seemed to break in upon Ida's soul, for she trembled, and her eyes fell to the ground.

"I see not why we should separate," she at length said, in a low, tremulous tone.

"Does not your own heart tell you?" asked

the youth, more warmly pressing the hand which still he held.

"I have asked my heart the question, Cecil, but it tells me not why we should voluntarily separate from those we love."

"Be careful, Ida," exclaimed the young man with sudden energy. "Do not thoughtlessly say that which may make me forever unhappy. Now I hold my soul under the guard of reason, but a single breath might fan the spark that slumbers there to a flame, which should envelope my heart in its destroying folds."

"Cecil," whispered the fair girl, slowly raising her eyes, from the lustrous depths of which her whole soul seemed beaming, "you said you should love to be ever with me."

"And can you doubt it?"

"If you leave me I might."

"But I *must* leave you. 'Twere madness for me to stay. I have grown from a child to a man, and with manhood has come manhood's feelings. You remember Tantalus, who was plunged into the water and there secured, while the most delicious fruits were suspended above his head, but just out of his reach, and who was thus doomed to dwell within the vicinity of sweets which he could not possess."

"Tantalus must have been very miserable," murmured Ida, as she again bent her eyes to the ground.

"And so should I be to remain here," returned Cecil.

"Then love would make you miserable?"

"Yes, Ida—love unrequited."

"And do you love another?"

"Another?"

"Yes—another."

"I do not understand you, Ida."

"Perhaps, I do not understand you."

"Yes, you must understand me," exclaimed the youth, throwing off at once all reserve. "I mean that I love you, fondly, truly, and that to live and move within the sphere of your influence without possessing you would make me miserable."

Ida Stanley hung down her head for a moment—her hand trembled violently in that of her companion—a pearly tear gathered in her eye and dropped upon the flowers she held. At length she looked up into the face that beamed upon her, and again her head fell forward, but this time it rested upon the youth's bosom, and she gently murmured:

"Stay, Cecil—stay. Separated we should both be miserable. Let us be happy!"

"Do you know what you say?" cried Cecil, as he raised the fair girl's head from his bosom.

"Do you know what you mean?"

"Yes, Cecil," returned the noble girl, without hesitation. "I mean that my own heart is as tender as yours. The playmate of childhood, who has been ever kind, ever generous, and ever forbearing—who has sacrificed self to please and profit me, and who has betrayed a soul as noble as it is kind, has not done all this without leaving his image upon my heart. I can love as well as you."

"Dearest, noblest girl!" cried Cecil, and as he did so he caught her to his arms. He could not resist the impulsive movement, and when he again looked into Ida's face, he saw that she was not offended. "Then you love me, and will be mine?"

"Yes, Cecil."

The young man was upon the point of speaking further, when a shade passed over his features. Ida noticed it, and she said:

"Why do you look so sad?"

"I thought of the old earl."

"And what of him?"

"You are his ward. He is proud, while I am poor."

Ida thought a moment, and she, too, looked sad. She knew, however, that the old man loved her, and that he was kind, and she strove to hope that he would not refuse Cecil as her lover. At all events, they resolved to be faithful to each other, let come what would, and, with their tongues running upon their new-found, joyous theme, they started for the castle.

## CHAPTER VI.

A STRANGE SCENE IN THE OLD CHAPEL.

**W**ARDLY had the twain cleared the spot where the flowers had been found, when Cecil felt a cold drop fall upon his cheek. At the same moment a sweeping cloud shut out the rays of the declining sun, and on casting up his eyes the young man found that while he had been shut out to all but the thoughts of love, a storm had been gathering above the hills to the westward. Another drop, and then another, fell—faster and faster they came, and Cecil knew that ere long the storm would be upon them.

"Hasten, dearest Ida, hasten," he exclaimed, as he placed his arm around her waist to assist her in descending the rocky path. "We may reach the old chapel before the storm comes fully on. 'Tis but a short distance."

"Fear not for me," returned Ida, as she drew her shawl more closely over her head and shoulders. "The path is narrow here—you lead the way, and I will follow. I can run."

Cecil let go of his companion's arm as she thus spoke, and started at a quicker pace along the narrow way, while Ida tripped lightly along

behind him. They did reach the chapel before the storm had swept up the cliff, but they cleared it only by a moment, for they had barely time to get beneath the sheltering roof ere the torrent came rushing along.

"How dark it grows," said Ida.

"Yes," returned Cecil, "and it will be darker yet. It would almost seem that this storm is the same that passed over us yesterday. That, you know, swept quickly by, and among the mountains it has been reinforced, and now it's coming back."

"O, mercy!" cried Ida.

At that instant, a shaft of vivid light streamed in the heavens, and then came a crash of thunder. The trembling girl clung closer to her companion and closed her eyes. Another flash, and another roar, and then the heavens seemed to have donned the black robes of an ill-timed night!

"O, would I were at the castle."

"Fear not, sweet one," urged Cecil, as he pressed the gentle being more fondly to his bosom. "This storm is too fierce to last long,

and when it passes off it will be lighter. We are safe here."

"Yes, I know," murmured Ida; "but then 'tis so dreadful—the storm, the darkness, and the place."

"Come, sit thee down here by my side. Let not the joy of our hearts be clouded upon the occasion of its first blossom."

As Cecil spoke he drew Ida to one of the stone benches. The seat was near the altar upon the left hand, and snuggling herself closely to her lover's embrace, the young girl gazed forth into the gloom without.

Two or three minutes had they sat thus when they both became aware that some one was entering the chapel. Ida would have uttered a scream, but a sudden pressure from the hand of Cecil restrained her. The figure slowly advanced up the chapel pavement towards the altar. A stream of fire at that moment lit up the heavens, and the figure was plainly revealed. It was clothed in a long black gown and cowl. Its step was firm, and though the rain dripped in streams from its sombre garment, yet it stopped not to shake it off.

Again the liquid fire danced in the heavens, and Cecil caught a view of the intruder's features. They were pale as death, seeming to wear a sort of livid, ghastly hue, and even the young man's stout heart trembled as his eyes dwelt upon that form. He spoke not—he moved not, for he knew that, be the dark visitor either spirit or incarnate, he and his companion had not been discovered. For several seconds that face, half averted, was visible beneath the glare of the lightning. Ida had fairly fallen powerless upon the bosom of Cecil, and he turned to support her; when he again looked for the mysterious presence it had gone. The young man thought he heard a sound as of the sliding of some heavy body—then came a sharp click, and again the same grating noise as at first. He listened longer, but could hear nothing save the heavy falling of the rain, and the dying reverberations of the thunder.

The strange scene had passed, and while Cecil reflected upon what he had seen, an emo-

tion, so sudden and powerful came over him, that he had well nigh dropped his priceless burden upon the cold pavement. He would have darted to the altar, but he could not leave Ida behind. The cold sweat began to gather upon his brow—a fearful tremor shook his frame, and he pressed his right hand hard upon his temple.

Ida gradually revived from her temporary swoon, and starting back, as she felt the touch of her companion, she uttered in a quick, low cry:

"Cecil!"

"I'm here, dearest," returned the youth, recalled by the voice of his beloved from the racking gulf into which his mind had plunged.

"We are safe, Ida."

"In the old chapel?"

"Yes, sweet girl."

"O, what a fearful scene was that. Did you not see it, Cecil?"

"What, Ida?"

"That presence which came in. Is it gone?"

"Yes, I saw it, dearest, but fear nothing. It has gone."

"And did you see its face?"

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed Cecil, with a cold shudder.

"Was it not a ghastly face. O, how dreadful!"

"It was pale as death, but 'twas harmless."

"Let us go from here. Let us go," murmured Ida, seeming to have gained complete consciousness, but yet in tones so low that she appeared to be afraid of waking some spirit from its rest. "O, I would rather brave the storm than remain here."

"Wait only a few moments longer," said Cecil, "for the storm is already breaking. I can see from here that the west is beginning to streak with its golden light. What we have seen must not affect you so. Strive to forget it if you can."

"Forget it? No, no, I cannot do that. Cecil," she continued, in more fearful accents, while her hands trembled in their rest, "I saw that face plainly."

"So did I."

"And I have seen it before."

"So I think I have," returned the youth, with a renewed shudder.

"And do you remember it?"

"Alas! I fear I do."

Ida clung convulsively to the arm of her companion as she heard him thus speak, for his very tones struck her with a new dread.

"Who was it? Who?" she uttered.

"Do you remember him whom you used sometimes to see with me, years ago?"

"Who?"

"My father!"

"Merciful heavens!" ejaculated Ida, as the memory of the personal appearance of Murtell Leland came back to her mind. Faint though it must have been, yet she could remember it, and her face grew paler as the thought became more vivid.

"That was indeed my father's face, Ida, every line, every lineament."

"Let us go," again urged the girl, looking furtively about the gloomy place, through which the struggling light of departing day was now faintly beaming. "The storm has nearly passed, and I would be gone from here."

Cecil arose and went to the entrance. The storm had indeed swept by, and though a slight dripping of the moisture-laden atmosphere was still apparent, yet he resolved to accede to Ida's request, and bidding her draw her garments as closely about her person as possible, he led her from the chapel. It was with much difficulty that the twain made their way down the narrow path, for the water was rushing down in miniature torrents, and at almost every step they were in danger of being washed from their

feet. Several times did Cecil urge his companion to return to the chapel, but she preferred to brave the perils before her rather than go back, and besides, it would ere long be dark, and not for worlds would she remain in that fearful place after nightfall.

On they passed, now climbing over some shaggy rock where the gullying water ran swiftest, and, where the thing was possible, Cecil took Ida in his arms and bore her along. They reached the level ground in safety, and ere long they passed through the back gateway of the castle wall. Ida promised not to say anything concerning the mysterious scene they had witnessed, and at the hall door the young man took leave of his charge, promising to call in the morning and see how she withstood the effects of the afternoon's adventure.

All that night, Cecil Leland's brain was racked by the memory of what he had beheld within the old chapel. He slept, but his sleep was nothing save a succession of frightful dreams. His heart was stout, and his soul was free from any contaminating influence, but yet he was not exempt from the peculiar superstitions of the times. A thousand ghostly traditions hung about the wild coast and the deep forest of his native land, and he felt, he knew, that he had seen the spirit of his father! Several times he had made up his mind to speak with his mother on the subject, but at length he resolved that he would give the chapel a thorough search, and satisfy himself that there was no human solvency to the mystery. A vague, undefinable idea that he was to be an instrument for the accomplishment of some strange work, took possession of his mind, and perhaps the presence he had seen had somewhat to do with the event.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE FOILED VILLAIN.

THE morning broke most beautifully over the coast, the ocean, and the forest, and as the first golden beams of the day-kings came skipping along from the water-bound horizon, Cecil started forth from his home upon his mission of determined investigation. At the butler's lodge, at the castle, he stopped to inquire after the health of Ida, but as she had not yet arisen he kept on his way. When he began to ascend the steep eminence behind the castle he found that the water had done running, save where here and there a small, trickling stream still oozed out from the crevices in the rocks.

A peculiar, fluttering sensation about the heart obtained in the young man's bosom as he entered the old chapel, and for some minutes after he had reached the interior, he stood and reflected upon the circumstance that had brought him to his present position. He saw the track the dark spectre had taken, and at length he followed it to the altar.

The altar, as has been before stated, was a projection from the solid rock, and upon that side where he had last seen the phantom, Cecil

commenced his examination. He searched the wall, and he searched the pavement, and he searched the altar, but not a crevice, even, could he discover. The back wall presented everywhere the same smooth, unbroken surface, having been chiselled out from the face of the cliff; the altar was solid in every part, and the pavement, which might have afforded the best means of any secret passage seemed to offer nothing of the kind. It was composed of large flags, firmly cemented together, and taking a small dagger, which he usually wore about him, the young man got down upon his knees and tried the seams between the flags, but he found the cement all firm and unbroken, and after a fruitless search of nearly half an hour he gave up in despair of discovering aught to indicate any means of human exit from the back part of the chapel.

"'Twas indeed my father's spirit," uttered Cecil to himself, as he desisted from further examination. "The fancied creaking and snapping I heard was but the effect of some rolling stone or grating bush without. That he has re-

visited earth is obvious—but why should he thus come. Is it a communion he would have with me? If so, what? Ha! Perhaps 'tis so. He knows that in my heart I have resolved to aid the smugglers no more. For that he would see me. But surely, he would not have his son leagued with *pirates*!”

Thus talked Cecil Leland with himself, and thus murmuring, he passed out from the chapel.

While our young hero was thus performing his fruitless search, let us look for a time in at the castle. Ida Stanley had arisen, and though upon her naturally strong and healthy system the adventure of the previous day had left no marks, yet her mind was in a strange state of excitement. The day had been, in fact, one of the most eventful in her life. She had received and rejected the proposition of Lord John—she had accepted and acknowledged her return of the love of Cecil Leland, and to close all, she had seen one of the spectre dwellers of the old chapel. Feeling a sort of oppressed sensation from the confined air of the castle, and seeing the glorious sunbeams, and hearing the birds sing without, she resolved to walk out and gain vigor from the sweet breathings of nature.

As she passed out through the hall she met old Malcolm, who informed her that young Leland had called there about an hour before, and that he had gone out through the postern and up over the hill.

“Did he say when he was coming back?” asked Ida.

“No, my young lady,” returned the butler, “he only asked if you were well, that’s all.”

“Did you notice which path he took?”

“He took the one to the right—that which leads up by the old chapel.”

Ida shuddered and passed on. She thought at once what must be the object of her lover’s visit, and gradually her fear and dread began to give place to curiosity. Beyond the postern, and between that and the hill, was a wide spread-lawn-like garden, cultivated, however, only for shrubs and fruit, and towards this the young girl took her way. Here she resolved to walk about till Cecil returned from the chapel, and

after she had idled away some ten minutes she began to tie up some of the vines which had been loosened from their proper places by the storm, and in this vocation she wandered on through arbor after arbor until she reached the extremity of the garden, which was at some distance from the main castle wall. Here she was engaged in securing a long vine of wild grape, when the sound of approaching footsteps fell upon her ear, and on turning, she beheld Lord John Cleaveland.

“You are out early this morning,” said John, as he came up to the young girl’s side, while upon his face there was a blending of forced solicitude and ill-concealed sarcasm.

“I generally choose the fresh morning air for my pleasantest walks,” returned Ida.

“But *sometimes* an afternoon walk proves full as agreeable, I should judge,” said John, while the bitter curl of the lip became more apparent.

Ida Stanley blushed at first, but in a moment she caught the sneer upon the young man’s lip, and a sense of offended dignity crept over her.

“All walks are pleasant if the associations be pleasant,” returned she, proudly.

“So I thought,” said Lord John, and then changing his tone to one of more than ordinary import, he continued:

“I followed you out here this morning because I would speak with you upon an important subject. It is one, connected with which are all my hopes of the future. Sit down here by my side.”

“I can stand as well.”

“Then be it so. I choose to sit.”

As his young lordship spoke, he took a seat upon one of the many wooden benches that were arranged beneath the arbor, and then looking up into Ida’s face, he continued:

“I would ask you now, Ida, that when I return from Oxford you will become my wife?”

“Your father asked me the same question yesterday,” said the young girl, in trembling surprise.

“I know he did.”

“And I gave him my answer.”

“I know that, too.”

“Did he not tell it to you?”

“Yes.”

“Then why need you trouble me further on the subject?”

“Because *I* would have a different answer.”

“I can give none different from that.”

“But you must.”

“*Must?*” iterated Ida, starting back, and gazing into the face of her companion.

“You need not start so, for I mean just what I say, and it is a very simple matter, too.”

“Really, John, I know not what you mean. You surely would not take a wife upon compulsion; neither could you desire one who could not love you as such.”

“When we love a thing, Ida, we generally desire to possess it without regard to other considerations. Now I have loved you long and well, and I can ill brook to lose you. You must promise me that you will be mine.”

“I cannot, John—indeed I cannot,” said the fair young girl, while a look of anguish began to overspread her features, for she saw something in the flash of the young lord’s eye, and in the nervous twitching of his nether lip, that made her feel afraid.

“Then you must have a reason for your refusal,” returned John, fixing his eye keenly upon his auditor.

“If you possessed the least delicacy of feeling, sir,” uttered Ida, while a quick flash of her deep blue eyes told that for the moment, at least, her native pride had gained the ascendancy, “you would not insist upon an answer to such a query. Is it not enough that I have refused your proffered hand kindly, but firmly?”

“Look ye, Ida Stanley,” exclaimed John, as anger began to expose itself, “I can tell you why you have refused me. You love another.”

Ida trembled, but she replied not.

“I have not been blind,” continued the young man. “You have refused me, because you love that miserable vagrant—that plebeian smuggler—that vile outlaw.”

“’Tis false! ’Tis a base, a cowardly lie!” cried Ida, roused at once from her fear.

“Do you mean to say that you do not love young Leland?”

“I meant not that. I meant that he was no smuggler.”

“By heavens, he is!” exclaimed John Cleaveland, starting up from his seat.

“And by the great heavens above me, he is not!” retorted Ida, now put upon her woman’s love—all powerful and unconquerable. “I know what I say. Only three days ago, I heard a conversation between Cecil and one whom I took to be the smuggler captain of some band, and then I read the young man’s heart. Annette and myself had been to take a stroll in the woods down towards the small river that runs into the bay, when the sound of voices arrested our attention, and I there heard that which makes me know that the outlawed business is hateful to him. They were about to separate and we ran home as fast as we could; but Cecil is not a smuggler, indeed he is not.”

“A very pretty excuse, indeed, and I suppose you told my father of it?”

“No, I did not.”

“But you do not deny that you love this low-bred boy.”

“With regard to Cecil Leland, sir, I have no more to say to you. Let me go to the castle.”

“Not yet, pretty one,” said John, laying his hand upon Ida’s arm. “Listen to me a moment more. You have been brought up under my father’s roof—he has cherished and protected you, and he has done it that you might be my wife. Now do you think I am thus to lose the prize? Do you think that that miserable fisher-boy is thus going to steal my jewel? No! by all the saints of the holy church, I’ll kill him ere the thing shall be done, and then, do you prove refractory still, I’ll lay you up for safe keeping in the other world! You may work by your tears upon the childish heart of my old father, but they’ll have no influence upon me. Mine you must be—you shall be.”

“Let me go! let me go!” shrieked Ida, struggling to free herself from the grasp that was growing tighter upon her arm.

"Not till you promise," hissed the villain.

"I will never promise!"

"But you will, though!"

The poor girl now fairly cried with the excruciating pain of her arm, and a piercing shriek broke from her lips as the villain would have placed his hand over her mouth.

"Another cry like that, and it shall be your last," exclaimed the enraged brute. "Speak that promise, or—"

Lord John Cleaveland's half uttered threat was not finished, for at that instant the entrance to the arbor was darkened by the form of Cecil Leland. A single moment the new comer's eyes flashed upon the scene, and then he sprang forward with the lion's bound and struck the villain a blow upon the side of the head that sent him to the extremity of the arbor, where he fell like a stricken ox.

"Ida, Ida—dear, dear Ida, are you hurt?" uttered Cecil, as the fair girl tottered to his embrace.

"Safe, safe," was all she could murmur, and then her head fell upon her lover's bosom.

A moment it rested there, and then lifting Ida in his arms the young man carried her from the arbor. She had not swooned, and the fresh air, together with the presence of a protector, soon revived her. On their way to the castle she recounted to Cecil all that had transpired.

"And do you mean to tell Sir William?" asked Cecil, as she closed.

"I hardly know what to do. Advise me, Cecil."

"Then I would not tell him at present. Lord John goes to Oxford in a day or two, and until he goes I would not be without an attendant. This is his first ebullition of wounded pride and anger at finding himself supplanted in your virgin affections, but it may not be his last. Even were Annette with you, he would not dare to trouble you. Be not afraid, Ida."

"But you, Cecil—he will surely wreak some vengeance on you," said the fair girl, with much concern.

"He will not attempt it if he has any regard for his own welfare," returned the youth, in a

confident tone. "I expect I shall hear from him."

Before Cecil left the castle court he explained to Ida the result of his visit to the old chapel, and also informed her that he should bring the butler some fish before night, after which he bade her an affectionate adieu, and then hurried on his way, while Ida sought her own room, where she sunk upon a chair, and shuddered with renewed fear as she thought upon the startling events that had transpired.

She was for the time out of danger, but where, in her next steps, might she not meet it. She had ever felt that John Cleaveland was a reckless youth, and that he had grown to be a reckless man, but she had never thought him such a villain. In the pure innocence of her own soul she could not conceive of the state of that man's heart who could thus abuse her. She knew not the power of disappointed passion over the feelings of the native born villain. Her arm still ached where Lord John's grasp had tortured the flesh, and, as she saw the livid marks, hot, scalding tears rolled over her cheeks.

Another thought came in turn through Ida Stanley's mind. She loved Cecil Leland—she had loved him long and ardently, and now she had pledged him that love. Yet she knew that Sir William Cleaveland had the bestowal of her hand. Would he consent to the course she had chosen for her own happiness? The old earl had always allowed Cecil to play, when a boy, in the castle, and while John had been away to school, the fisher-boy had been her companion. In youth he had been with her, and Sir William had always looked with peculiar favor upon him as he grew up. The old man could not have been blind to the result of such a companionship. Perhaps, however, he thought not that his beautiful ward could love one so humble. A proud daughter might not have done it, but the heart of the poor orphan dependant was different.

Ida Stanley argued with herself, and she allowed herself to hope.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ENCOUNTER IN THE FOREST.

TWO days had passed away. The sun had just turned to the westward from its noontide height, when Cecil Leland drew his boat up to its usual landing-place, and having secured it, he took his way up the path that led through the forest. At the present time he wore a sword—an accompaniment which he seldom indulged in; but he knew that the young Lord Cleaveland was upon the watch to kill him, and he liked not to be unprepared. The weapon he carried was heavy, and its virtues had been tested by his father in many a hard-fought battle; and he who now carried it was no novice in its use.

The young man had proceeded some twenty rods on his way, when the sound of quick footfalls fell upon his ear. The path ahead of him was shut out from his view by an abrupt turn, and starting back a pace he waited to see who was coming. He had to wait but a moment, however, for hardly had he come to a stand when the figure of Lord John Cleaveland appeared at the turn. The latter's steps were quick and nervous, and he had been walking

with his eyes bent to the ground, but when he cleared the bend in the path he instinctively raised his head, and he started with a sudden exclamation as he beheld his humble rival.

The young lord stopped, and for a moment he gazed upon the fisherman. His small gray eyes flashed with a vivid fire, and with a hasty movement he drew his sword from its sheath. He took a step forward, and then stopping again, he dropped the point of his weapon upon the ground. A new emotion seemed to have possessed him, for he trembled, and a nervous hesitation was visible in his manner. Rage and fury were depicted upon every lineament of his features, but yet they were strangely blended with something that looked not unlike a momentary disappointment.

"Armed!" at length fell involuntarily from the lips of the young lord.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Cecil, with bitter scorn, at once seeing the cause of John Cleaveland's hesitation. "And did you think to find me unarmed, that you might assassinate me?"

"I sought to punish thee—I sought to remove

a poisonous viper from my path; but I like not to fight with one so low."

"Then you can easily avoid it, for I seek not an encounter. Let me pass, and you shall be relieved from what you so much fear."

"You pass not this spot alive! You have struck me, and your life shall pay the penalty."

"I struck you, Lord John Cleaveland, because you were acting the cowardly villain. I struck you that an innocent girl might be saved, and as such I would strike you again, even were it to the death. You are a coward, and a base, mean-hearted villain! I looked for this meeting, and since I have expected it I have been prepared for it. For your information I will tell you that few men are my superiors in the use of the weapons we carry."

"No man shall strike me and live!" exclaimed Cleaveland, as he advanced. "The epithets you have now applied affect me not, for you are too far beneath me to give them weight."

The looks and manner of the young lord belied his words, for the language of Cecil Leland had stung him to the quick, and he started forward literally boiling over with rage.

"Stand back! stand back!" uttered Cecil, as he drew his own weapon. "Pause ere it be too late, for I would not have thy blood on my hands."

"But I would have thine—and I will have it. Take that!"

Cecil did take the thrust that was made at him, but he took it upon the point of his own weapon and then threw it harmlessly off. Again and again Cleaveland lunged, but each time the quick eye of his antagonist caught the direction of the stroke and warded it off. Cleaveland raged and foamed with passion, while Cecil was cool and collected, but yet the former handled his sword with skill, and the latter saw that he could not much longer keep up the contest. Twice already had his enemy's bosom been open, but he had not taken advantage of it.

"Draw back! draw back! John Cleaveland, for I would not harm you," uttered Cecil, as, for the third time he knocked the young lord's

sword point to the ground, thus leaving his bosom exposed. "I would not make your father childless."

John Cleaveland spoke not in reply, but again raising his sword he pressed on. His teeth were set firmly together, his lips were colorless, and between them stood a few drops of white foam. Cecil Leland stepped back, caught one stroke of his antagonist's sword and threw it off over his right shoulder. He took one more step back, and with increased confidence Cleaveland followed him up. Cecil watched with an eagle eye the whirling motion of the weapon that was turned against him. He gently turned its point up, and then, with a motion so quick and powerful that nothing could have withstood it, he dealt John Cleaveland's sword a blow close upon the hilt that sent it whizzing from its owner's hand. The young fisherman knew that he should not miss his object, and the moment the sword fell, he sprang and picked it up.

Just at young Leland's right hand stood a doubled trunked oak tree, only separated at the height of five feet by one or two inches, and quick as thought he ran the conquered sword into the crevice, and then, with a sudden jerk, he snapped the bright blade in twain.

"Now are you satisfied?" coolly asked Cecil, as he cast the bladeless hilt upon the ground.

For some time, John Cleaveland gazed upon his victor without speaking. His bosom heaved, and his hands nervously clutched the open air at his side.

"You shall not escape me thus," he at length exclaimed. "I will have the blood of thy dastard heart yet; so look to yourself."

"Now look ye, John Cleaveland," returned the young fisherman, while a look of anger began to mantle his fine features, "I will not let you off so easily again. If you seek my life after this, either you shall have it, or your own shall be the forfeit. Beware, now, for I speak not idly."

"Look to yourself—that's all, for I may be upon you when you least expect it," uttered Cleaveland between his clenched teeth.

"As long as you remain in Northumberland,

you may be sure I shall watch you, for the man who can descend to brutish violence upon a defenceless female will not hesitate to seek vengeance upon him who has thwarted him in his diabolical plans. Never fear, sir, but that I shall watch you, and when we meet again may you be a better man."

As Cecil spoke he advanced, and passed his late antagonist. He still held his naked sword in his hand, and Lord John involuntarily stepped aside. The latter remained in a deep, troubled thought, with his eyes fixed upon the jewelled hilt of his broken sword, which lay upon the ground a few feet from him, while the former, once more thrusting his trusty weapon into its sheath, soon turned the bend in the path, and was beyond a view of the scene of the late conflict.

Cecil's way lay towards the old castle, for he had received a summons to attend the earl, and as he walked along, his mind was of course wholly occupied by the affair that had just transpired, though the meditation lessened not the speed of his motion. He had reached the high rock, around the base of which the path took a turn, and near which we first met the smuggler captain, when he was startled by a large black adder that lay half coiled up in his way. The serpent raised its flat head as the young man approached, ran out its forked tongue and sent forth a sharp hiss, and then moved off into the wood to the right. Cecil drew his sword and followed the poisonous viper, but at the distance of one or two rods it wormed its way beneath a large stone, and for a moment our hero stood irresolute. He liked not to move the stone with his hands, but yet he wished to destroy the venomous reptile, and to this end he searched about for a stick. He found none, however, save a few rotten ones, and so he cut a bough off with his sword, and having suitably

trimmed it he went back to the stone and pried it over. The adder started out, but ere it could move beyond the reach of Cecil's stick it was writhing in the agonies of death. As soon as the youth had despatched the serpent, he was upon the point of turning back again, when a folded paper, that lay in the bend of the overturned stone, caught his eye, and stooping over he picked it up. It bore no address, but on opening it he read as follows:

"GARL:—I do not know when you will find this, but I put it here on Friday. Beware, for there is a spy upon your track. Be careful above all things, to steer clear of the castle. There is more thought by others than perhaps either you or I are aware of. You need not fear for Cecil, but I would advise you not to trust him further. M."

Again and again the young man perused the strange missive, and he knew that the handwriting was that of his mother. He knew that his mother was sworn to assist and protect the smugglers as far as lay in her power, but in this note he thought he could detect her knowledge of their piracies. Who could this spy be? Cecil thought it must mean himself, though the writer did not dare say so, for he remembered the conversation he had held with his mother with regard to Garl Tamell. At any rate, the youth felt sure that Garl would not return till the first of the week, and as the present day was Friday—the very date of the letter—he resolved to keep his own counsel and await any result that might flow from his mother's suspicions, little doubting that he could circumvent any plot that might be made against himself.

Once more the youth took the path. Lord John Cleaveland was yet in sight, and with a somewhat quickened step Cecil resumed his way towards the castle.

## CHAPTER IX.

## AN IMPORTANT CONFERENCE.

THE old earl was seated in his large arm chair when Cecil was introduced into his presence, and with a kind smile he welcomed the youth to his present interview. Cecil gratefully acknowledged the kindness, and then, at a sign from the old man, he took a seat.

"Cecil," commenced the earl, as soon as the attendant had withdrawn, "I have called you upon an important subject, but ere I proceed, I have two requests to make. The first is, that you will not deceive me in any of your answers, either directly or indirectly."

"As God lives, sir, I will not."

"And the second is, that you will not even hint to others the subject of my business."

"You may trust me with your life," returned Cecil, proudly, but yet with considerable show of nervous anxiety, for the thought of his love for Ida flashed through his mind. "I will not deceive you, sir, nor will I betray whatever of confidence you may repose in me."

"What I have to say concerns the smugglers that infest this coast, and knowing that you—"

"Hold a moment," interrupted Cecil, while a sudden painfulness flitted across his handsome face; "I told you I would not deceive you, but still I must beg permission to retain such knowledge as I may desire."

"Of course, Cecil, I will ask no more than you are willing to give," frankly returned the earl. "I have received from the king letters commanding me to use my exertions in ferreting out and bringing to justice the smugglers that infest our coast, and he also intimates that they have a haunt near my own castle. Now I have long known that contraband goods were frequently landed somewhere along our coast, but I knew not that they had any particular place near here. I know that your father was a smuggler, and I have reason to believe that even since his death, you have been acquainted with many of their ingoings and outcomings, though I know that you are not by heart one of their number."

"I thank you, Sir William, for your good opinion, and I assure you that I have in truth merited it. I have known much of the smug-

glers' affairs, for when my father was upon his death-bed he gained from me a most fearful, binding oath, that I would assist his old comrades whenever they might need it. I have feared to break that oath, but now it no longer binds me. I am free from the lawless compact against which my soul has ever revolted."

"Have you been with the smugglers on any of their recent excursions?" asked the old earl, as he gazed with a peculiar admiration into the face of the youth.

"No, sir—not for over four years."

"But yet you have known of those excursions."

"Yes, sir; for I have frequently helped them get their goods on shore."

"Ah, and do they make a practice of landing them near here?"

"Yes, sir—they sometimes run their brig into the Lollards, run their cargoes by night up the stream in boats, hide them in the forest, and then, as opportunity offers, convey them to the high road. Some, however, are landed to the southward, and some to the northward, of here."

"And now, Cecil, I have another question, still more important, to ask you. An assertion has been made before the Admiralty that these same smugglers have been guilty of the most fearful piracy and wholesale murder. Can you tell me aught of this?"

The young man started at this announcement, and hesitated for a moment; but soon he regained his composure, and looking steadily into the old earl's face, he replied:

"Sir William, ere I proceed any further in this matter, I would ask of you a pledge?"

"Name it, my boy."

"I would ask you to give me your pledge that you will not use the intelligence I may give you, until such time as I may give you my consent."

"You might never give such consent."

"But I will—and that, too, within a month," confidently returned Cecil.

"Well," said Sir William, after a moment's thought, "I give you my pledge to that effect."

"Then, sir, I will answer your question, and give you my reasons for the condition I ask; but had you asked this question one week ago, I could not have answered it. The smugglers who frequent the Lollards' Bay have committed some most atrocious piracies, and I think they are even now upon such an expedition, and, sir, I had in my own heart resolved that some of them should be brought to justice."

"Some of them, Cecil? Are they not all equally guilty?"

"Let me explain, Sir William. Among that smuggler band there are some who have been friends to me—friends who laughed and played with me in childhood—who taught me the rudiments of my present knowledge—who took pleasure in seeing me happy, and who protected me from danger, sometimes even at the risk of their own lives. To them I am bound by a solemn oath not to betray their liberties; but throwing that oath aside, I could not give myself as a tool for their arrest. Were they, by their own means, to fall into the hands of justice, I could not feel sorry—I could sorrow for the deed that led them to the fate, but not for the fate itself; but were I to betray them—still friends as they are—I should trample upon the purest feelings and impulses of my own heart. The pure heart will shun the society of old friends when that society involves bad example, but it ought not to betray them."

The old earl had gazed fixedly into the illumined features of the young speaker, and as he now came to a momentary pause he started up from his chair, and caught the youth by the hand.

"Humble as you are, Cecil, you are yet a noble fellow," exclaimed the old man, "and I honor you for the pure sentiments of your heart. I know I may trust you fully in this matter."

Here Sir William sank back into his old arm-chair, and then continued:

"Now tell me the secret of this affair."

"I can tell you in a few words," returned the young man, with a glow of grateful pride. "Since my father's death, until within a year or two, Mark Buntnell has had command of the

smuggler brig, but he was superseded by a man named Garl Tamell, who offered the crew golden inducements to make him their leader. They were pleased with the prospects of speedy wealth which he held up, and they elevated him to the command he sought. Ere long, after Tamell took charge of the brig he introduced some fifteen or twenty men of his own kidney on board, and then he showed his true colors. He was bound to turn the smuggler into a pirate, and partly by persuasions and promises, and partly by threats, he succeeded in his villanous plans. Now this Garl Tamell and his own immediate followers I will myself contrive to deliver up, but the rest—my old comrades—I must first get out of the way, for I know that when they are once clear of their present compact, they will never again return to it. Now you understand my position."

"Perfectly," returned the old earl, "and you shall have it all your own way. There has already been a man-of-war brig sent on to our coast, so my letters say, to hunt up this smuggling pirate, and she may yet fall into their hands."

"Alas, Sir William," returned Cecil, while a shudder ran through his frame, "the government will never see their brig again, and I fear that not a soul of her crew will ever tell the tale of her loss."

"How!" exclaimed the old man, starting with a sudden surprise. "Surely these pirates have not destroyed a king's vessel?"

"No, sir, she was dashed in pieces on the Beak Reefs."

Cecil hesitated a moment as he thus spoke, and then he went on and recounted the facts as they had happened, from his meeting with Garl Tamell in the forest, to his conversation with Buntnell in the Ranger's cabin. After he had closed his minute account, the earl sat for some moments in a deep troubled thought; but at length he said:

"Well, Cecil, under all the circumstances I cannot blame you for the hand you had in the

affair, for it will yet all turn out for good; but I would like to know how they disposed of their cargo."

"I suppose, sir, that such portions as they wished to land here were conveyed up the river that night, where they were placed in the hands of confidential agents. Early on the following morning the brig was off, and I suppose the remainder of her cargo was carried further up towards the coast of Scotland, for they have an extensive secret agency in Berwick."

"Have you any idea when the smugglers will be here again?"

"No, sir, but when they are you may rest assured I shall be on the alert."

"I hope you will. But about this Garl Tamell, who is he?"

"That is more than I can tell you, though I must confess that a strange suspicion has taken possession of my brain that I have seen him before, and under different circumstances."

"How old a man is he?"

"I should say he was not far from forty, though not older than that."

"You said he had gone upon a land route somewhere."

"Yes, probably to see some of his agents."

"When will he return?"

"Let's see—to-day is Friday. He may be back Sunday, and perhaps not until Monday."

"Then you may see him?"

"Perhaps so."

"Why not arrest him, then, at once?"

"Because," returned Cecil, "by so doing we may lose the rest of the villains, for there are others on board the brig as bloody as himself, and who would undoubtedly be glad to take the command, and pursue the same atrocious course. No, I think it best not to trouble him till we can take the rest with him. If a sufficient force could only be held in waiting, we might entrap them the first time they came into the bay, and I shall probably discover when that occurs."

"As for that matter," said the earl, "I can give from my own household a sufficient force. I cannot have less than fifty stout men about the castle—take my hostlers, woodmen, game keepers, and other servants all together."

"Then the matter may be easily arranged, and I will give you early intelligence of the pirates' approach," said Cecil.

"But where will Tamell join his vessel?" asked Sir William, as a sudden thought seemed to flash through his mind.

"I do not know. He has of course appointed some rendezvous, but in all probability it is some way north of here."

"Then I may consider the matter settled for the present; but I tell you, Cecil, if you succeed, your reward will be a handsome one."

"Reward, sir!" iterated the young man,

while his eye seemed to emit a succession of bright sparks. "No, Sir William, for any other labor than this I might take pay, but I would not have the world point its finger at me, and say, 'There goes the man that betrayed his brothers for money!'"

"You take a wrong idea of the matter."

"Perhaps I do, sir, but such are my feelings, and I would not trample upon them."

"Well, have your own way," returned the earl, in a kind tone; "I do not blame you, and if I were in your position I might act the same; but nevertheless, you shall not go without a suitable reward."

Cecil made no objections to the proposition, and ere long afterwards he took his leave of Sir William, and passed out from the room.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE SURPRISE.

SABBATH morning dawned. It was a calm, beautiful morning, and within the large hall of the old castle were assembled the household for divine worship. Lord John Cleaveland was not there—he had started for Oxford; but Cecil Leland was there, and he knelt by the side of Ida Stanley. The old earl alone remained in his seat, but while the others were upon their knees, he bent his head forward at the foot of the temporary altar.

The venerable priest commenced the services, and when he closed them each one present felt more happy and more devout. There was considerable confusion when the household began to separate, and taking advantage of the scene, Ida pulled Cecil by the sleeve, and made a motion for him to follow her. He did so, and she led the way to the garden back of the castle. There was a strange mixture of anxiety and curiosity upon her features as she passed along, and the young man wondered not a little at its import.

"Cecil," she commenced, as soon as they had reached one of the arbors, where they took

a seat, side by side, "early this morning, before the dew had been all drank up by the warm rays of the sun, I took a walk up the hill towards the old chapel. I had intended to go only part way up, but the fresh morning air was so inviting, and the scene was so lovely, that I found myself in sight of the chapel before I was aware that I had walked half the distance. Instantly on seeing that dismal looking place—"

"Only dismal from associations," interrupted Cecil. "For of itself 'tis a lovely spot."

"Perhaps so," continued Ida. "Well, as I was saying, the moment I saw the chapel I turned to retrace my steps; but hardly had I done so when I was intercepted by a man who came bounding down from one of the craggy, sloping cliffs to my left. He stopped directly in front of me, and raised his laced hat from his head. At first I should have screamed, for the intruder was a savage, repulsive looking man, but when I saw that he was so apparently polite, I thought it might be some casual traveller, and I stopped."

"But he offered no violence," uttered Cecil, in tones of anxiety.

"No—listen. He smiled, and told me I was beautiful."

"He was a truth-teller, at all events," said Cecil.

Ida blushed, and then continued:

"He advanced a step and took my hand, and pressed it to his lips. Then I would have screamed, but I dared not."

"The villain!" ejaculated Cecil.

"Then he let go of my hand and told me that the sight of me had filled his heart with love, and that he should see me again. I trembled with fear, and begged of him to let me pass. He smiled again—but 'twas a half-sarcastic smile, and stepped on one side. 'I shall see you again,' he uttered, as I fled past him, and with all the speed I could command I ran towards the castle; but he made no movement to follow me, for at the foot of the path I instinctively turned my head back, and I saw him standing where I had left him, gazing after me."

"How did he look? How was he dressed?" asked the young man, in nervous excitement.

"He was a stout, dark looking man."

"With shaggy black hair?"

"Yes."

"And black beard—long?"

"Yes."

"Did he wear a blue and white feather in his hat?"

"Yes, yes."

"He is a villain, Ida—a deep, black-hearted villain."

The fair girl shuddered, and moved closer to her companion.

"He is the captain of a gang of bloody pirates!"

Ida uttered a low cry of fright.

"It is *Garl Tamell* whom you have met; but I think he meant you no harm. He must have met you accidentally."

"But what did he mean by saying he should see me again?"

"O, only a mere piece of gallantry," returned Cecil, hoping to quell the fears of his companion, but still having fears of his own, for the thought that Tamell might often have seen Ida about the grounds of the castle, and fallen in love with her beauty, flashed upon his mind, and with that thought came the conviction that the villain would not hesitate to use any means in his power to gain the fair girl into his possession if so he wished. But he hid his thoughts from Ida, and taking her hand, he continued:

"You need not fear, sweet one, though for the present I would not risk myself alone away from the courtyard. There you will certainly be safe."

"But what business could he have about here?"

"O, the smugglers have haunts all along our coast."

"I thought you said he was a pirate?"

"Yes, Ida, I did. Many of the smugglers have turned their hands to that fearful business."

"And do they congregate about here?" asked Ida, as she involuntarily looked about her in alarm.

"Not often, dearest. Sometimes they run a cargo into the Lollards, but they will not do it much longer."

"I thought Buntnell was captain of the smugglers," said Ida, as she began to regain her composure.

"Buntnell? and how did you know him?" asked Cecil, in some surprise.

"Why, don't you remember the man that some of our folks found between two and three years ago, who had fallen and hurt him near the old chapel? the one whom I nursed till he got well?"

"Ah, yes—I remember."

"Well, after he had gone, old Malcolm told me he was the smuggler captain."

"So he used to be, Ida, but he is not so now. This *Garl Tamell* has superseded him. But cheer up, sweet love; you have nothing to fear, for I will watch over you as I would over

my own life. Only you must not for the present venture too far away alone."

"I will not again, Cecil."

"Do not, for I should be most miserable should evil befall you."

As the young man spoke he gazed tenderly into the eyes of the fair girl, and she, too, gazed into his. There must have been magic in that look, for gradually Cecil's arm had been finding its way around his companion's slender form, and at that moment their lips came together.

The tide of love rolled forth its sweetest, purest waters, but in a moment that tide fell against a hidden rock, its waves fell for an instant to a dead calm, and then rolled back to their fountain! The aged form of Sir William Cleaveland darkened the entrance to the arbor!

The old earl gazed in speechless wonder upon the scene that met his eye. Cecil withdrew his arm from its welcome rest, and sat trembling beneath the keen glance that was fixed upon him, while Ida, with a half stifled exclamation of pain, nestled her head upon her lover's shoulder.

"Cecil," at length said Sir William, while a painful expression rested upon his time-wrought face, "is this the way you repay me for all that I have done for you?"

"Indeed, Sir William," uttered the young man, in a hesitating, embarrassed manner, "you misunderstand me."

"I surely can understand what I see," returned the earl.

"But you cannot see what I feel," said the young man, arising from his seat and taking a step forward, while he bowed his head respectfully. "I trust, sir, that I have not offended you?"

The old man ran his eye over the noble form of the youth, and then he regarded the shrinking form of Ida Stanley. A pleasant look struggled half way up to his brow, but he instantly repressed it, and turning again to Cecil, he said:

"I had not thought, when I extended to you the hospitalities of my roof, that you would repay me thus. Ah, now I see who has robbed my son of a bride."

"Sir William," uttered Cecil, gaining confidence as he proceeded, "had you given me only the shelter of your roof, I might never have raised my eyes to your ward, but you gave to my companionship the sweet angel of your home—you asked me to guide her in her forest rambles, to sail with her upon the bay, to protect her among the rugged cliffs, and to beguile her leisure moments. I did it, and when I found pleasure in her society I began to long for it. I considered not then the deep passion I was cherishing in my bosom, and still I held the sweet cup to my lips and quaffed the love-stream that flowed from it. At length I understood the power that had sanctified the altar of my soul, and then I would have burst the bonds that bound me, but I had not the power. My heart is not made of such adamant material that it could pass unscathed through the ordeal to which you yourself subjected it."

The old earl's face had been stern, but it now struggled between the shades of pain and kindness. He did love the humble fisher-boy, for his young heart had ever been good and true, and his happy face had shed many a ray of sunshine over the old man's heart. Sir William had many a time joyed to see the happy children play, and as he stood and gazed upon them now, he could not find it in his heart to be angry; but *pride* yet whispered in his soul.

"Cecil," he said at length, "if you had been honest towards me—honest to yourself—you would have checked this intimacy when you began to feel its power."

"Father—Sir William," murmured Ida, springing forward, and throwing her arms about the old man's neck, "Cecil is not to blame for this. It is I, I, who am to blame. He told me that he should leave me—that he might never see me more, and he would have bidden me farewell. I could not bear the separation, and I asked him why he was going. He wished not to tell me, but still said he must go. At length I knew that he loved me—that he dared not confess it, and that he would remove himself from the influence of a passion which he deemed hopeless. I made him confess, and

then I told him that I, too, had loved in return. This was after you spoke to me about your son. Then I knew not that Cecil loved me. Blame me, Sir William, and on me let your censure fall."

The old earl put the fair suppliant from him and commenced pacing up and down the arbor. There were two powerful emotions at work in his bosom. One was the natural love and kindness of his nature, the other was the deep pride of his noble blood.

"Ida," he said, as he stopped in front of where she stood, "when your noble father left you to my care, he gave not only your happiness, but your honor, into my keeping. You are to me as my own daughter, and the blood that flows in your veins is as pure as my own. I am sorry this thing has happened, for I have been to blame—I have been blind to the natural result of my own doings, yet I dare not allow your union."

"O, say not so," cried Ida, again flinging her arms about the earl's neck, while a flood of tears rolled over her cheeks.

The old man was moved, for when he turned his eyes upon Cecil, he found him, too, in tears, though the youth was struggling hard to keep them back. He felt Ida's heart throbbing against his bosom, and a bright teardrop gathered in his own eye. At length he turned to Cecil, and said:

"Cecil, now I am not prepared to settle this momentous affair, though I would have given half my fortune had it not have happened, for in either case I must be the sufferer. Either I must break through and trample under foot the stern law of our proud nobility, or I must crush the heart of this sweet child. But I would ask of you one promise. Pledge me your word that you will not again speak with Ida,

till Earl Tamell is in my power. I ask this because I have heard that the pirate chieftain meditates some dire calamity against my house."

"How! What! Who told you this?" uttered Cecil, aroused in an instant from his dejection.

"I know not who," returned the earl, "but last night I received an anonymous letter bidding me be on my guard against him."

"By heavens! the villain met Ida this very morning, near the old chapel, and 'twas to tell me this that she drew me hither. I tell thee, Sir William, 'tis 'gainst her the blow is aimed. She knew him not then, but the moment she described him to me I recognized him."

The earl turned an inquiring glance towards Ida, and she told him all that had transpired. He listened attentively to the end, and then, while a dark cloud passed over his face, he said:

"The villain must be taken. He cannot be very far from here."

"Too far to be captured, at all events, returned Cecil. "If you will guard your castle, and look well to Ida, I will ere long trap Earl Tamell, and in the meantime I will give you the pledge you ask."

"Cecil, I thank thee," uttered Sir William, extending his hand to the youth as he spoke. "I begin to fear this wicked man, and I would have him safe."

"And so you shall, sir."

"Now, Ida, come with me to the castle," said the earl, "and you, Cecil, follow on, for I would see thee alone."

As the old man spoke, he took his fair ward by the hand, and led her on through the homeward path, while Cecil Leland, with his heart strangely working, followed slowly on after them.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE WARNING.

THE subject of the earl's interview with Cecil was only a further arrangement for the capture of Earl Tamell and his band, but they arrived at nothing more definite than had previously been understood. Not a word was spoken about the affair of the young people's love, though the young man every moment expected it would be broached. Whatever may have been Sir William's feelings in regard to the matter, it affected him not in the least towards his young companion, for his manner was as frank and open as ever, and no reserve marked his usual deportment. Upon this circumstance, however, Cecil placed no undue weight in favor of his suit with Ida, for he too well knew the disposition of the old man. He knew the earl to be one of those who never allow useless troubles to perplex them, and he knew, too, that the kind old man relied implicitly upon the assurance he had received from himself that he would not speak with Ida, other than in way of common courtesy, till the appointed time.

It was some time past noon when Cecil left

the castle, and on his way homeward he took the path towards the river, as he wished to take some fishing tackle along with him from his boat. He walked fast, and in a comparatively short space of time he reached the spot where his skiff was hauled up. To was just in the act of stepping over the gunwale after his tackle, when a rustling in the bushes near him attracted his attention. He sprang instantly back, laid his hand upon the hilt of his sword, and was about to draw it from its scabbard, when he saw that the intruder was a small boy, and one whom he had seen on board the Ranger.

"Ah, what are you doing here?" inquired Cecil, not a little surprised at seeing the boy in his present position.

"I have been watching for you, sir," returned the lad, stepping forward.

"And what do you want with me?"

The boy cast a furtive glance about him, and stepping nearer, he said, in a low, anxious tone:

"You wont betray me, sir?"

"Betray you? No."

"Nor the one that sent me?"

"No, speak on."

"Swear—swear, that you wont betray us," continued the boy, again casting about him the same nervous glance.

"Then, I swear."

"By the holy cross."

"Yes, by the holy cross, that I wont betray you," returned Cecil, whose curiosity was now wrought up to the highest pitch. "Now speak out."

"Well, sir," and again he looked about him, "Earl Tamell seeks your life. You must beware of him."

"Ha! how learned you this?"

"Mark Buntnell overheard him last night, talking with one of the men."

"And what did he say?"

"I don't know, exactly. Buntnell told me to come here and stay till I saw you, and inform you of Tamell's plan. All he told me was, that Tamell suspected that you meant to betray him into the hands of the officers, and that he had sworn to have your life."

"But where did this conversation take place?"

"In the cabin, sir."

"Of the brig?"

"Yes."

"But where is she?"

"At Wing Cove."

"And where is Tamell?"

"I don't know. He came on board yesterday, but he went away again before daylight this morning."

"Buntnell sent you, did he?"

"Yes, sir."

"And where are you to join the brig again?"

"At the cove."

"Do you know where Tamell is going to join her?"

"Buntnell knows, but he didn't tell me. The brig is going to stop at the cove till tomorrow to take in water, and I shall get back long before midnight."

Cecil Leland gazed into the face of the boy

for several moments in profound silence. The intelligence he had thus received, was of course unexpected, but the subject matter of it was by no means new to his thoughts; yet the warning was timely, for he knew that the villain was even now in the vicinity, or, at least, he had every reason to believe so.

"Tell me one thing more, boy," said Cecil, at length. "Where is the brig bound on her next trip?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Well, did Buntnell say anything about how Tamell intended to meet me?"

"No—I guess he didn't hear anything about it, only that the captain meant to kill you."

Again our hero fell into a fit of musing, and ever and anon he would cast over the features of the boy a keen, penetrating glance. Once or twice a question, or a remark of some kind, seemed struggling upon his lips, but it was quickly holden back, and another searching glance would follow. At length Cecil bent his eyes to the ground, placed his forefinger upon his nether lip, and after a moment's meditation in that manner, he looked up to his young informant, and said:

"Buntnell would not have trusted you with this errand unless you had been perfectly safe with a secret."

"I owe my life to Mark Buntnell, sir, and though I can't say that I much admire the life I am forced to lead, yet between him and me there is a tie that can't be broken."

"Then will you deliver to Buntnell an errand from me, and beware that not another soul hears it?"

"I will, certainly," returned the boy, in a frank tone and manner.

"Then tell him that the next time the brig lands anywhere near here, he must let me know of it. Tell him that his own safety, and that of our old crew, depends upon it; and above all, warn him not to mention this to another soul. Tell him that whatever may come, Cecil Leland will protect his *old friends*, and that under whatever circumstances they may be

brought on this coast I will stand by them. Will you tell him this?"

"Yes, sir—I will."

"Mind now," repeated Cecil, with emphasis, "tell him that the very first time the brig lands upon the coast of Northumberland, I must know of it, and that 'tis for his own and his old companions' safety that I ask it; and, bid him not breathe it to a living soul. And you, too, will be secret."

"As I live I will. But, O, tell me, sir, if this all comes to pass, shall I be forever free from those fearful, bloody scenes?"

"If Buntnell consents, you shall."

"O, then I know I shall, for I have heard him say that he wished himself clear of the scrape."

"Tell me, my boy, what relation are you to Buntnell?" asked Cecil, as he regarded the lad with more than an ordinary degree of interest.

"I am the child of his only sister," returned the boy, in mournful accents. "When my parents died he took me in charge."

"And your name?"

"Harry Millbank, sir."

"Well, Harry, you can return now, but mind what I have told you, and in the meantime you shall not go unrewarded for your services. Though I have nothing to pay you now, yet I may have ere long."

"Think not of that, Mr. Leland," uttered the boy, in an earnest, half-supplicating tone; "for if you even exert yourself to free me from the bloody decks of the Ranger, I shall be eternally your debtor."

Cecil was pleased at the good heart which the lad thus manifested, not less than by the remarkable degree of intelligence which he evinced, and after bidding him be careful and expeditious in his way back to Wing Cove, he

shook him warmly by the hand and bade him farewell, again reminding him of the pledge he was under.

The boy quickly disappeared among the bushes, seeming desirous of avoiding any beaten path, and as soon as he was out of sight, Cecil took his fishing tackle from his boat and started on towards home. As he wended his way along the bank of the small river his thoughts were busy, not exactly with what he had heard, but with a concomitant idea. He thought of his mother—he thought of the letter he had found beneath the rock, and he could not drive the belief from his mind that she had warned Garl Tamell of his probable treason. He could not, of course, think that his mother would do aught that she deemed would endanger his life, but he was well aware of her principal incentive to action. She received nearly all her sustenance from the smugglers, and therefore she felt a lively interest in their welfare. She knew that her son was opposed to their method of life as smugglers, and she had ample reason to believe that he would desert them entirely if he knew of their piratical propensities. Cecil believed his mother knew that the crew had become pirates, and that she felt a desire to keep him ignorant of the fact, so she had merely advised Tamell not to trust him, thinking that with regard to himself the matter would there rest. Our hero, however, felt certain, from his knowledge of the pirate chieftain's character, that such a hint as his mother had innocently, perhaps, thrown out, would serve to raise Tamell mortally against him; and the more he thought, the more he became convinced that his mother's hint had been the sole basis upon which the villain founded his deadly resolution, a resolution, however, the effects of which he felt himself duly prepared against.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE DEADLY GLASS.

IT was nearly sundown when Cecil reached his home. His mother received him with her usual coolness, and shortly after he entered the house his supper was prepared, and he sat down to the repast.

"What have we here?" he asked, as he took up a bottle, the neck of which was decorated with silver foil, and which had the appearance of having been recently opened.

"Ah, that is some wine—capital old Burgundy," returned his mother.

"Where did it come from?" asked Cecil, as he poured out some into his glass.

"It is some that the brig brought in on her last trip."

"Garl Tamell sent it to you, I suppose," the young man remarked, as he raised the glass to his lips.

"It might have been him," returned Mrs. Leland.

Cecil did not taste of the wine, for just as he was upon the point of turning his glass for the draught, he caught an expression upon his mother's face that made him hesitate. There

was a peculiar restlessness in her eyes, and a slight quiver—almost imperceptible—at the corners of her mouth.

"By the way," said the young man, setting the untouched glass down without exhibiting the least sign of suspicion, "did not Tamell bring this wine himself?"

"Why do you ask that?" returned the widow, with a perceptible embarrassment.

"O, nothing—only if he did, I should liked to have seen him. Wont you have a little of the wine, mother? 'Twill do you good."

"No, no, my son, I do not like to drink so late, it makes me restless."

"But you took some at supper last night, I think."

"Yes, and I suffered from it."

"Well, just as you like," returned Cecil, without betraying any other emotion than that of mere filial solicitude. "But you have not answered my question."

"To what question do you allude?"

"Whether Garl Tamell did not himself bring

this wine—or, what I wish to know is, whether he has been here."

"Yes, he has been here," answered Mrs. Leland, in a tone too calm for pure artlessness.

"Have you seen my handkerchief?" asked Cecil, suddenly feeling about his bosom as if startled at missing the thing he asked for.

"No—indeed I have not."

"I declare, I believe I've not had it to-day."

As the young man spoke, in a tone and manner that gave the truth to every word and movement, he arose from his chair and hastened to his small sleeping room. Instead, however, of procuring anything like a handkerchief, he unlocked his chest and took therefrom a small ivory box, which he placed in his pocket, and then returned to the table.

"I've found it just where I left it," he remarked, as he once more took his seat.

If the widow had entertained any suspicions that her son mistrusted aught out of the way, such suspicions were lulled into rest, for she was eating with total unconcern, and the restless look of her eyes had passed away.

"Wonder if this Burgundy is good?" queried Cecil, again taking up his glass and looking at it.

"'Tis excellent," said his mother.

"Is it old?"

"Look at the label."

"Five—three—two—seven; seventeen years in the bottle. I declare, it must be good."

"Just try it, and see."

"Hold, a moment," uttered Cecil. "I hardly think that wine has been bottled so long."

"But why don't you taste it?" urged his mother, the slight trembling, or twitching, again being perceptible about the corners of her mouth.

"I have a better test than that, mother," returned Cecil, with perfect coolness—"a test by which I can tell almost to a day how long a wine has been bottled. Here it is," he continued, as he took the small ivory box from his pocket. "You remember old Norna, the fortune-teller and reputed witch?"

"Yes," returned the widow, with a shudder.

"Well, she gave it to me. You will see now its effects."

As the young man spoke, he took a single grain of the powder, which was of a dull, yellowish hue, upon the end of his spoon, and stirred it into the glass. In a moment the wine began to sparkle and foam, leaping up in small globules, and running over upon the cloth, and at length it emitted a light, fleecy vapor.

"What think you of the test?" asked Cecil, as he regarded his mother with a sparkling eye and flushed cheek.

"First tell me its purport," uttered Mrs. Leland, turning pale, in spite of her exertions to preserve her composure.

"Do you not know it?"

"No."

"Mother," pronounced the young man, in a low, meaning tone, "I would fain believe you. I hope you speak the truth. *That wine was POISONED!*"

"Impossible!" ejaculated his mother, turning paler than before, and trembling violently.

"It is true, and had I drunk that glass of cruel liquid, which dwells there in the guise of wine, I should now have been tortured in the iron grasp of death! When old Norna gave me that box she assured me that no poison could escape it. This is the first time I have had occasion to try it, and you yourself have seen how truly she spoke. It has saved my life."

"If the wine was indeed poisoned, I believe Garl Tamell knew nothing of it," and then, while her countenance brightened up with a seemingly happy idea, she continued;

"Surely he would not have done aught that could have risked your life, for you are the best pilot the brig can command."

A bitter smile passed over the features of the young man as his mother thus spoke, and he regarded her with a look that made her quail.

"Mother," he said, at length, as he arose from the table and stood proudly before her; "I do not accuse you of a hand in this villainous business, but if you try much more to shield Garl Tamell from blame, I shall begin to look

upon you in a different light. As for him, I can read him as though he were a scroll, and mark me—I shall watch that he comes not to this house again. If he does, he goes not away alive. Let me but learn of his presence here when I am away, and from that hour this cot shall be under the surveillance of the officers of justice."

"Ha! then you *would* turn traitor," uttered the widow, with sudden energy. "You mean to betray the smugglers?"

"Smugglers! Ha, ha, ha," bitterly laughed Cecil. "But hold. Do you suppose I have one drop of blood in my veins that would not curdle with indignation at the heart that gives it force if I were to betray the old companions of my father? You know I would not do it; but I tell thee, Garl Tamell had better beware. He has sought my life, and henceforth I'll hold him to the death! Now mark me, mother—give him not audience beneath this roof, or it shall be the worse for both of you."

"What, do you dare to threaten *me*?" exclaimed Mrs. Leland, rising to her feet, and bending a flashing eye upon her son.

Cecil spoke not, but he took up the glass of poisoned wine and held it towards his mother. The language of firm determination that was written upon his proud features could not be mistaken, and after gazing first at the fatal glass, and then at the speaking countenance of her son, the widow sank back into her chair.

"Now, mother," said the young man, as he sat down the glass, and fixed upon his parent a steady gaze, "answer me one question. When does Garl Tamell return to the brig?"

"How should I know?" returned his mother, endeavoring to assume an independent tone and manner.

"I care not how you know, I merely asked the question, and you will do best to answer me."

"Then plainly, I know not."

"Will he be here again before the brig sails upon another cruise?"

"No."

There was that about his mother's answer but assured Cecil she spoke the truth, and after a moment's hesitation, he asked:

"Where will he join the brig?"

"You would betray him if you knew."

"I will not lisp to a human being one word that you tell me."

"He joins it at the old cove this side of Brwick."

"And he has now gone to do so?"

"Yes."

"And he has taken the great mail road to that place?"

Mrs. Leland hesitated.

"I will not follow him, nor will I put a soul upon his track," said Cecil, as he noticed his mother's hesitation. "I ask so that I may know what course to pursue for my own safety."

Mrs. Leland knew that her son would not lie, and she told him that Tamell had taken the high road to the north, where he would join the brig as she had described, stopping at Belford to transact business with one of the secret agents.

"So much for Garl Tamell," said the young man, and then he took several turns up and down the room. At length he stopped in front of his mother, and while his face assumed a serious, thoughtful tone, he said:

"Now I would come to a matter nearer home. If I remember rightly, my father was buried at sea?"

"Yes, 'twas his own request, that his body should be taken out and buried in the ocean that had always been his home," answered Mrs. Leland, gazing up with strange surprise into the face of her son.

"Have you seen him since?"

"Seen him? Who?"

"My father."

"Why, what is the matter, Cecil?"

"Has my father's spirit ever appeared to your sight since that time?"

"No, indeed," returned the smuggler's widow, with a strange mixture of wonder and curiosity upon her features. "Why do you ask that question?"

"I thought I saw him the other night."

'Twas the next night after I piloted the brig into the bay."

"Saw my husband?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"At the old chapel."

A fearful tremor shook the woman's frame, but quickly subduing it, she asked:

"How did you see him? What were the circumstances?"

"I had taken shelter in the chapel from the fierce storm. The atmosphere was dark—dark as night. Suddenly a human form, enveloped in a black robe, which covered its head and hung down to its feet, entered the chapel. A flash of lightning illumined the place for a moment, and revealed to me the pale, ghastly features of my father! He suddenly disappeared, but how, or where, I know not."

"And did you not search?" uttered Mrs. Leland, shaking with a fearful emotion.

"The next day I did, but I found nothing—not even a crack where a worm could have crawled away. I could not have been mistaken in those features. They were my father's!"

A strange succession of emotions passed over the working features of the woman during this short recital, but when it was closed she some-

what regained her composure, though there was yet a look upon her face which Cecil could not fathom. It was not the incredulous wonder he had expected, but it was rather a look of momentary relief.

"It must have been an image of your brain," she said, as she wiped the cool perspiration from her brow.

"I know what I saw."

"But did it not recognize you?"

"No—I was in one corner, and escaped its notice."

Mrs. Leland regarded her son for some time as though she would have read his very soul, but the look that dwelt upon his face spoke only of simple, honest truth.

"I have never seen what you speak of," she uttered, and then half averting her face she began to clear away the supper things.

Cecil watched her with an attentive eye, and he could not fail to discover that what he had said, had made her very uneasy; but it seemed far from being the effects of superstitious dread. It seemed, rather, the result of some less extraneous fear. He wondered at his mother's strange and inexplicable emotions, and as he wondered he dove into new thoughts. There might be a deep meaning to what he had witnessed at the old chapel.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE ABDUCTION.

**D**URING a week after the old earl received the anonymous letter, bidding him be on his guard against Carl Tamell, Ida ventured not herself without the courtyard. Several times had she and Cecil met, but they only passed the usual civilities of the occasion, though from their eyes there beamed a language which they had not the power nor the desire to hush—a language, too, which might prove full as dangerous to the human heart in its shower of love's subtle arrows, as that oral speech which Sir William would guard against.

The thoughts of danger had nearly passed from Ida Stanley's mind. She was not of a nature to cherish suspicion long, nor could she allow herself to be made miserable by a continuous fear of distant evil. Through the week she had heard nothing, seen nothing, calculated to excite further fear, and she saw not why the free air should be longer shut out to her.

"Annette," she said to her maid, one pleasant afternoon, "now for a trip in the park. We've been shut up in the courtyard long enough."

"So I think," returned the pretty maid, clapping her hands in delight.

"There can certainly be no danger," half mused Ida.

"None in the world," said Annette. "There will be two of us—what can harm us?"

Ida smiled at the confident courage of her maid.

"Run up to my room, Annette, and get my shawl. We'll have a short run at all events."

The girl did as directed, and ere long the mistress and maid were prepared for their walk.

"What an idea—to be afraid of such a place as this," uttered Annette, as she began to skip about in the garden park.

"To be sure," responded Ida, who felt once more free and happy.

For half an hour the two girls roamed about among the shrubs and trees and through the arbors, until at length they found themselves at the wicket which opened to the chapel path. For several moments Ida looked at the small gate, and then she turned away. Annette approached it, unbolted it, threw it open, and

looked forth. The scene beyond was really inviting.

"Only a few steps, Ida," said the maid, as she passed through the gateway.

"There certainly can be no danger," murmured Ida.

"Of course not," said Annette.

"Of course there cannot," repeated Ida, with increased assurance.

Annette had already passed out, and Ida followed her, and together they tripped away up the winding path. Half way up the hill they turned to the right and climbed upon a large rock, from the top of which they could see the castle and the wide park beyond. For some time they gazed in silence upon the beautiful scene thus opened to their view, and Ida was upon the point of making some remark when a footfall arrested her attention.

"Did you hear that, Annette?" she nervously whispered.

"I heard a footstep."

"So did I."

"Let's go," said the maid, as all her light-hearted courage vanished in an instant.

"Hark! Did you hear it again?"

"Yes."

"It's above us."

"It sounds so."

"Then let us hasten back."

As Ida spoke she made her way down from the rock, followed by her companion; but she found too late that in the direction of the footfall she had been deceived; for no sooner had she entered the path, than she saw two men about a rod below her. Had they been a rod above her she would have fled, but now that expedient was lost to her, for she must either pass them, or else turn towards the old chapel. Her fears, however, soon rendered even fleeing in any direction utterly out of her power, for in one of the men she recognized Garl Tamell.

Annette had come down from the rock, and as she saw the savage-looking intruders she uttered a low cry of fear, and caught hold of her mistress's arm as if for protection.

The pirate chieftain regarded the two girls for

a moment with a look of fiendish satisfaction, and then stepping forward, he said:

"So, my fair lady, I told you I should see you again. I have watched some time for this happy moment."

"I trust, sir, you mean me no harm," uttered Ida, while the color forsook her cheeks.

"Not by any means, lady."

"Then you will let me pass."

"And you, too, sir," tremblingly pronounced Annette.

"To tell you the truth, ladies, I have other intentions regarding you."

"You said you meant us no harm, sir," said Ida.

"Neither do I."

"Then let me pass."

"No."

"I shall call for help."

"Do so, if you please. 'Twill be a stronger voice than yours that reaches the castle."

"Then what do you mean to do? Tell me, I implore you."

"Simply then, I mean to make you my wife."

"O, no, no, no—you do not mean that!" cried Ida, trying to hope that it might all be a jest.

"But I do mean it, my fair lady," returned Garl Tamell, while a bitter smile, half made up of sensual admiration, rested upon his features. "You shall be the queen of my vessel. I have seen you often, and your beauty has fixed my heart upon you. Come, go with me to our free home."

"No, no—you do not mean it," cried the fair girl, sinking upon her knees, and clasping her hands in supplication. "O, let me go to the castle, sir—let me go!"

"No, you shall go with me. For three days have I watched for you here, and now that I have won the prize I shall not let it go so easily. Here, Waldron," he continued, turning to his companion, "if you would have the maid, you must secure her; 'twill not do to let her run at large, or she will have all hands after us."

As the villain thus spoke, he stepped for-

ward and laid his hand upon Ida's arm. The poor girl trembled a moment beneath his touch, and then, with an instinctive movement, she broke away and darted up the path, followed closely by Annette. Garl Tamell stood for a full minute and gazed after the fleeing girls, during which time a dark smile played over his features.

"Let us follow them, or they will escape us," said Waldron, as he came up to his leader's side.

"Never fear for that."

"But they are out of sight even now."

"They cannot get beyond the outer cliff, my good Waldron, unless, indeed, they leap into the sea."

"But they may escape us by another route."

"There is no other. This path is the only accessible means of passage between the chapel and the castle. The further they go from the castle the less risk we shall run in taking them. Now we'll go."

As Tamell said this, he started at a swift pace up the path. The two men passed the chapel, merely glancing within to assure themselves that the fair fugitives had not taken refuge there, and then kept on up the cliff. Near the spot where Cecil and Ida had found the flowers the poor girls had sunk upon a stone, and were weeping bitterly.

"O, why, why did we venture out!" murmured Ida, as she sank her head upon her companion's bosom.

"It was all my fault—all, all mine," cried Annette, who half forgot her own sorrows in the deep distress of her young mistress.

"No, no, Annette, the blame is mine."

"So, so, my pretty ones, you've saved us some trouble, at any rate," said Garl Tamell, at that moment coming up.

Ida Stanley gazed up through her hot tears into the wicked man's face, and once more she got upon her knees.

"O, whatever man you be, I implore you, by all you hold sacred on earth, and by your hopes of heaven, to let me return to my home."

"Let me tell thee, my sweet one," returned

the pirate captain, "that I hold nought so sacred that it can overcome my love. No, no, you are mine now and forever. Come."

Ida felt the villain's firm grasp, and though she screamed for help and struggled with all her strength, yet it availed her nought. She was raised from the stone upon which she had kneeled—she knew that she was being borne along in the powerful arms of her captor, and she knew that Annette was also a prisoner. From that moment all consciousness left her: not so, however, with Annette, for she continued to scream and struggle until Waldron silenced her with a threatening pistol, and even then the fire that flashed from her black eyes, told that her soul was far from being crushed.

Garl Tamell followed the path half way back towards the old chapel, but here he turned through a narrow ravine to the left, which, after various circuitous windings, brought him out again upon the cliff that overlooked the sea, some half-mile to the southward of the spot where he had captured his prize. From here there was a narrow shelf upon the face of the cliff that gradually sloped down to the water's edge, and bracing his burden more firmly in his arms, the pirate began to descend the dubious way.

"Now if you move a muscle you'll be lost," said Waldron, as he stepped upon the angling shelf; "for you see that a single false step will throw us over the precipice. But mind you, I shan't go with you, for if you struggle, or make the least resistance, I'll let you go alone."

It needed no further argument to keep Annette still, for as she cast her eyes over the edge of the shelf and saw the jagged rocks far, far below her, she rather nestled more closely to the bosom of him who bore her.

The water's edge was gained in safety, and in the little cove that made in at the foot of the path was found a boat, in which were six men. The two girls were at once put on board, and at an order from Tamell, the oarsmen pulled out to sea. At the distance of half a mile further to the southward, towards Wing Cove, lay the Ranger, with her maintopsail to the mast, and ere long, Ida and Annette were ushered into her cabin.

## CHAPTER XIV.

DIM SUSPICIONS ARE PUTTING ON A MORE PALPABLE GAZE.

**W**ILD confusion reigned at the castle. The afternoon had passed away—twilight had succeeded to the light of day, and yet no Ida, no Annette, had returned. The wicket of the garden park was found open, and in some sandy spots in the path beyond were found the girls' footprints—departing prints they were, but none that designated a return. The old earl remembered the warning he had received, and the name of Garl Tamell dwelt upon his lips. His soul was tortured by the fearful conviction that his fair ward was in the hands of the pirate chieftain! The servants were sent in every direction; the cliffs, the ravines, and the paths were searched, but all to no purpose. No traces, beyond the few sand-beds just without the gate, were to be found. A horse was saddled, and one of the hostlers was despatched for Cecil Leland.

The young man was found at his mother's cottage, and leaping into the saddle he left the hostler to make his way back on foot. It was dark when Cecil reached the castle, and with-

out any attention to etiquette, he hastily made his way to Sir William's room, having first ascertained that the old man was there.

"O, Cecil, Cecil, she is gone!" cried the earl, as the young man entered.

"So the servant told me. Tamell is at the bottom of it all, sir. O, God! why did she venture forth?"

"But you must find her, Cecil," uttered Sir William, half tottering forward and laying his trembling hand upon Cecil's arm. "You must find her."

"I will find her, though I may not do it readily. And if I do—O, if I do, may not the prize be mine?"

"Cecil," returned the old earl, in a low, painful tone, "do not take advantage of this old heart. I trust you to find her because you alone know the villain's haunts. Will not your love for her—for me—incite you on to the rescue? Cecil, gladly, most gladly, would I make you happy, but you know the reasons

I have given you. Throw away the thought, and let, at least, your promised time flee by."

The old man wiped a tear from his eye as he spoke, while Cecil hung down his head.

"Forgive me, Sir William," the youth exclaimed, at length, as he raised his face, now beaming with a noble look. "'Twas my heart that spoke, but 'tis passed now. I would not, for ten thousand loves, break the sacred bond of my word."

"Noble, generous boy!" burst from the old earl's lips, as he put out his hand towards Cecil. "By Saint Paul, I could almost trample upon the law that makes noble blood to lead mankind. If the heart be noble—if that fountain of all blood be generous and true—then why should not the blood that flows from it be noble too? But haste thee, Cecil, take torches and search."

"There's but little use of that, sir," returned the young man, in a thoughtful mood.

"No use in searching?"

"Not among the cliffs. Old Malcolm told me, as I came through his lodge, that the tracks of Ida and Annette were found, in the chapel path."

"They were, but what of that?"

"And that they returned not that way."

"True."

"Then there are no hopes of finding them on shore, for ere this they must be safe on board the brig."

"O, God! tell me not so! Tell me not that my sweet Ida is fully in his power!" cried the earl, beating his breast in anguish.

"Garl Tamell, sir, would never have seized upon Ida unless his vessel was somewhere near to take her. However, there is one place I fain would examine, for if the girls were taken in the chapel path there is but one way by which they could have been taken to the water, and if they were taken thus, I can certainly find some tracks."

"Then go, boy, and make the search. Be not long, my old heart will break with anxiety."

"I will return as soon as possible, but the way is tedious, and it is distant, too."

"Then haste and overcome the distance as soon as may be."

Cecil was not long in preparing for his mission. He took with him six of the woodmen, each well armed and bearing a torch, and set out. At the chapel he stopped a moment, but finding no traces there he kept on till he came to the narrow defile that turned off to the southward, and following on he kept in the same track as that taken by Tamell and Waldron. At the head of the descending shelf two of the party hesitated to proceed, but the young man soon shamed them into compliance, and they nervously followed.

At the cove all Cecil's suspicions were confirmed, for he found the deep imprint of the boat's keel in the small sand bed, beside the footprints of the men.

"But here's only the marks of one female foot," said one of the woodmen, who had been searching about by the light of the torches.

"It's a wonder there are any," returned Cecil, who had noticed the same thing, "for don't you see that the first man who came down the shelf handed his burden at once into the boat, while the other, probably, placed his upon the sand."

The woodman acknowledged the probability of the thing, and shortly afterwards the party turned to re-ascend the cliff.

It was nearly midnight when Cecil and his companions reached the castle, but yet they found all hands up and waiting for them. The young man explained to Sir William the result of his search, and concluded by expressing his assurance that the girls had been conveyed on board the brig.

"Then, then, they are indeed lost—and yet, Cecil, you are wonderfully calm," exclaimed the old man. "If you loved Ida as I do, you would not be thus."

"I am thus calm, Sir William, because a new hope has dawned upon me."

"A hope, Cecil?"

"Yes."

"No, no—all hope is gone."

"Not all. I tell thee, Sir William, that I have friends on board the brig, and so have you—and so has Ida. Earl Tamell has taken a serpent in his hand that shall yet turn and sting him to the death?"

"And have you hopes, then?" eagerly asked the old earl.

"I have indeed, and though my heart is tortured at this melancholy event, yet I sincerely believe that harm will not come to Ida Stanley. There is not one of our old crew, who were with my father, that have not seen and loved her in her joyous childhood, and I know their hearts too well to fear that they will see harm come to her now."

"O, would I could hope!"

"Mark me, Sir William. If Ida Stanley or her maid be harmed on board that brig, I will revoke the decision I have made with regard to her crew, and, save one boy there is on board, they shall all be delivered up. But my heart bids me hope."

There was something so confident in the manner of the young man, that Sir William could not avoid feeling a degree of relief from it, and in a calmer tone, he said:

"Well, I will try to hope with you; but what then? How shall we proceed? The brig must be captured by some means. I will send to Newcastle, for I have no doubt there is a war vessel of some kind there."

"That would be of no use," returned Cecil, "and it might be the worst thing we could do, for the pirates would fight hard ere they would be captured, and thus we should only expose Ida to a new danger. No—I have a better plan. Let us keep our men ready for any emergency. The first time the brig makes land on our coast, I shall have immediate warning of it, and, when Tamell least expects it, we can make a descent upon him."

The young man then explained to Sir William the circumstance of his having met the boy on the bank of the small river—of the warning he had received, and of the errand he had sent back to Mark Buntnell; and he informed him,

too, of the strange manner in which Tamell had endeavored to poison him.

"O, what a systematic villain!" murmured the old earl, as Cecil concluded.

"He is, indeed."

"But do you think this Buntnell will obey your summons?"

"I know he will."

"And how will you then proceed?"

"I cannot tell till I see him; but we will have our men ready, at all events."

"You shall command them at fifteen minutes' notice," said the earl, who was now quite assured that Ida was not so dangerously situated as he had at first feared.

And thus it is with the human heart. The first shock of grief needs not always to be assuaged by utter relief. Like the poor invalid under the most excruciating torture, when the insupportable passes away, the pangs that remain seem hardly like sources of pain at all.

Yet all about the earl was dark and gloomy, and though the most acute pangs of fear had passed off, still the bright sunlight of his house had gone. The heart of joy had sunk, but his strong energies had returned to him.

"Sir William," said Cecil, after a silence of some minutes had elapsed, during which each had been busy with his own thoughts, "I have a question to ask you."

The old man raised his eyes to the face of his interlocutor.

"Who built the castle?"

"That is more than I can tell. It was built, however, previous to the seventh century, for Edwin, the Anglo-Saxon King of Northumberland, passed some time here, before he founded Edinburgh."

"You received it, I believe, of the king?"

"Yes, and I have made many repairs since I took it. As near as I can judge it was almost entirely rebuilt during the reign of William the Conqueror, for much of its present cast is purely Norman. But before that, during the reign of Alfred, it was, according to tradition, a favorite haunt of *Hastings*, the famous Norman pirate, who styled himself the '*Sea King*,' and

who even attempted to subjugate the Saxon power in our country; and in all probability that daring rover made many repairs on it. Could this old castle speak, it would tell some strange tales."

"So I should think," returned Cecil, in a deeply thoughtful mood. "But what of the old chapel? Who built that?"

"I cannot tell who built it originally. When I came here—that was long before you were born—I found it a mass of ruins, though some one had evidently used it, even in that state, as a place of worship, for to and from the altar, which you know is cut out from the solid rock, I found a well cleared path, from which the fragments of rock and cement had been carefully removed. I also found that the stone benches on the sides were whole, so I took a fancy to rebuild it; most of the walls, however, were standing."

"That is some distance from the castle to build a chapel," remarked Cecil.

"Yes, but still 'tis a beautiful spot," returned the earl.

"Ay, and perhaps a very handy one," said Cecil, in a peculiar tone.

"But what mean you, Cecil, by these questions?" asked Sir William, who had thought that mere desire for information on chronological points had dictated them, until he was now struck by the manner of the last remark.

"Do you know aught of the old chapel beyond what you have told me?" asked Cecil, instead of directly answering the question.

"No, I do not."

"But you are aware of the stories about ghosts, hobgoblins, and so on, connected with the place?"

"I have heard them as tales of idle superstition."

"And yet, Sir William, there may be a solid foundation for those stories, after all, and 'tis to this end that I have asked the questions you have had the kindness to answer."

"Foundations, Cecil? What mean you?"

"I mean that there may be a reality in those stories about the old chapel; but you need not ask me to explain, for I cannot, save that I will solve the mystery if I live."

"But you have some idea, Cecil," urged the old man, with much anxiety.

"Only as I have told you. I have reason to think there is a *bottom* to this affair, and I mean to find it. You yourself have probably had suspicions so vague that to attempt their explanation would only make you appear foolish, and yet at the same time their weight was as effectual in your own mind as though each had been a written scroll."

"I understand what you mean."

At that moment the castle bell was struck.

"One o'clock," continued the earl, as the deep reverberations died away. "We must seek our rest. You will remain in the castle, to-night, Cecil, for I would see you in the morning. Go down to the porter's lodge, and demand of him the keys of the best chamber he has. Good night. God bless us both, and may he, too, watch over and protect those who are away!"

There was a bright tear-drop in the old man's eye as he uttered the last sentence, and when Cecil uttered "Amen," his nether lip trembled, and he, too, wiped away a tear.

"Alas, poor Ida!" he murmured, "how dark and sad must be your heart. These old walls give back the sound of my footfall, and each echo seems a groan for thy absence. O, God guard thee and shield thee from all harm, and blessed shall be his name forever!"

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE TRAPPERS ARE TRAPPED.

THE excited state of Cecil Leland's mind did not court much sleep, and hardly had the sun begun its daily course ere he was up and dressed. He naturally supposed that the old earl would sleep some time longer, and so instead of calling him he descended at once to the courtyard, where he found several of the servants already congregated. They seemed to be engaged in a deeply interested conversation, and after watching them for some moments, he approached the spot where they stood.

"Michael," said he, addressing a forester, who was one of the number, "is there anything new turned up?"

"Ah, Master Cecil, we were talking of our poor young lady—God bless her sweet soul."

"But I thought I heard you speak of men—strangers—whom you had seen somewhere?"

"Yes, you did," returned the forester. "I was down in the forest at daybreak this morning to examine a fox-trap that I set yesterday, and half-way down the path that leads to the river, I saw two men. They were both stran-

gers to me, and I was wondering what business they had there."

"What were they doing?" asked Cecil.

"They were standing just on the edge of the path, talking, but when they saw me they moved off towards the river."

"How were they dressed?"

"Well, I should say they were sailors of some kind."

"You couldn't see their faces plainly, I suppose?"

"O, no—'twasn't light enough for that."

"Some fishermen, probably," uttered the young man, half turning away his face to hide the strange light that beamed upon it.

"It couldn't be, for where would fishermen come from? and then what would they be doing up there?"

"O, there are plenty of people who come from Alnwick, Charlton, and Warrenford, across to our stream after salmon."

"But they've no right to fish in Sir William's streams," exclaimed Michael, bringing his hands together with much emphasis.

"A great many people often do what they have no right to do," returned Cecil with a smile.

"But we'll rout these fellows out, at all events. Come, boys, let's after them."

"Hold a moment," interrupted Cecil. "Let no one leave the courtyard till the earl is up. I am going down to the river, and I assure you if I find the two men you speak of committing depredations, I'll come back and send you after them."

The men knew the present authority with which Cecil was invested, and even had they so desired, they would not have dared to disobey him; so, as the young man turned towards the castle, they resumed their conversation.

Cecil's movements were quick and decisive, for the thought that these two men, whom Michael had seen, were come to him from Mark Buntnell, was the first that struck his mind. Yet it seemed somewhat strange that the boy had not been sent; but perhaps Buntnell had not wished to trust an important message, such as he had reason to suppose Cecil intended to send to him, to one so inexperienced. Then, too, there were plenty of men on board the brig who were perfectly trustworthy; so, after all, it might be better that the boy had not come. Still, the utmost precaution would not be out of place, and ere the young man started forth he carefully loaded a brace of heavy pistols, which he concealed within the bosom of his laced shirt, and then buckled on his sword.

The young man hastened out from the courtyard—first, however, leaving word with old Malcolm, for the earl, that he would be back in less than two hours—and took his way at once down towards the forest. As he entered the path he commenced looking carefully to the right and left, but as he passed on some distance without seeing or hearing anything of the men, he concluded that they might be awaiting him at his boat-landing, and thither he hastened.

When he reached the boat he was somewhat disappointed at not seeing any one, and after

looking about him for a few moments, he slowly turned his steps back; but he had not taken a dozen paces when he heard the crackling of bushes to his left, and at the same moment some one pronounced his name. On looking up he beheld the forms of two men just emerging from the wood a short distance ahead of him, and though they wore the usual dress of the smuggler's crew, yet he was not a little startled at seeing that they were not of the old gang. If he had any doubts, however, of who the new-comers were, they were put to rest the moment they came fully into the path, for he at once saw them to be two of Tamell's men.

"Stop where you are!" said Cecil, as he took a step back, thus leaving a distance of about a rod between himself and them.

"Do not be alarmed, sir," said one of the pirates.

"I am not alarmed, fellow, but before you approach me nearer, I would know your business."

"Our business is of a private nature, Mr. Leland, and must not be spoken too freely."

"Tell me your name?"

"Kent."

"And if I mistake not, your companion is called Cressy?"

"Yes, sir."

"You both belong on board the Ranger?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now tell me your business."

"We will tell you privately. Trees may have ears sometimes."

"The trees in this forest have not. Hold! Not another step!"

"But we must speak with you," said Kent, in a sort of impudent manner, and at the same time he began to advance.

In an instant, Cecil snatched the two pistols from his bosom, and cocking them, he presented one in each hand, shouting, as he did so:

"The first one that advances another step dies on the spot! Now, if ye have aught to say, say it. Ha, beware!" he continued, as he noticed Cressy laying his hand upon the butt of his pistol. "Offer to draw a weapon and

you drop. Ha, ha—I tell thee, pirates, I am not to be taken so easily.”

“Pirates!” iterated Kent.

“I said pirates,” returned Cecil. “So you see, I know you. Now speak out.”

“Put up your pistols, sir, and then we’ll give you our errand. You’ll hear of something to your advantage.”

“I shall keep my weapons as they are, and you can take your choice, either to speak the subject that brought you here, or else to turn about and march off. Those who know me, know that I never miss my shot.”

Cecil spoke the last sentence with a marked emphasis, and the two pirates seemed to comprehend the meaning, for they regarded each other with significant looks, though by their manner our hero could see at once that they were afraid to speak their thoughts aloud. It would have been, under ordinary circumstances, a very easy matter to have drawn their pistols, but those weapons were now comparatively useless, for a ball would surely reach them more quickly than they could prepare them for use. And again, there was something in the noble, self-confident bearing of the youth, that cowered them. Debased, underhanded villany may not stand unabashed before honest manhood.

A minute, perhaps, the two pirates gazed in silence upon the young man before them—then Kent, who stood a pace in advance, turned half around to his companion and muttered something which Cecil could not understand. That instant, however, Cressy’s right hand dropped upon the butt of his pistol.

Young Leland’s eye caught the movement, and ere the villain’s pistol was half-way from his belt, he fired his left hand weapon. A sharp, quick cry broke from Cressy’s lips—he dropped the weapon he had seized, and the hand that had held it fell powerless at his side. As Cecil had calculated, Kent instinctively turned as he heard his companion’s cry, and at that moment our hero clubbed his empty pistol, and with one bound he reached the pirate’s side. Kent heard the sound of the spring, but

ere he could save himself, he received a blow upon the temple that felled him to the earth.

“You’ll have the headache after that, villain,” muttered Cecil, as he put his foot upon the fallen man’s breast; then turning to Cressy, while he presented his remaining loaded pistol, he said:

“Now throw away that other pistol in your belt—quick!”

The villain groaned, and obeyed.

“Now tell me where you are hit.”

“Here,” groaned Cressy, laying his left hand upon his right shoulder. “You’ve shattered the bone.”

“Had I fired with my right hand ’twould have been your heart instead of your shoulder.”

As Cecil thus spoke, he stooped over and drew Kent’s two pistols from his belt, then drew forth his sword, which latter weapon he threw back towards the boat, where it struck against a tree and bounded off into the water. The pistols he placed within his own girdle, and then picking up the two that Cressy had dropped, he placed them with the others.

“Don’t offer any resistance, sir,” said the young conqueror, as he stepped forward and laid his hand upon the hilt of Cressy’s cutlass. “I want this.”

The pirate did not resist, and in a moment more his sword was following that of its companion.

“Now, sir, I think you will deliver your errand upon my own terms,” said Cecil, with a bitter smile.

“No, sir, I shall not speak.”

“Will not this make thee speak?”

“Not of my errand,” returned the villain, as he regarded the pistol which his captor held out to him.

Cecil would have spoken further, but at that moment he was startled by a loud shouting, and on casting his eyes up the path, he beheld a party of the old earl’s servants, led by Michael, the forrester.

“Ah, it’s lucky we didn’t obey you,” exclaimed Michael, as he cast a look of wonder

upon the hands and belt of the young man, all of which were full of pistols.

“And why didn’t you?” asked Cecil, who showed by his looks that he was glad of the assistance thus come to hand.

“Because, sir, as soon as you were gone, we told old Malcolm, the butler, about what I had seen in the forest, and he said he knew ’twas for no good that the two men were there. Then he shook his head, and said he knew something that he couldn’t tell, but that we must follow you as soon as possible, so we armed ourselves, and started off. When we were up at the great rock, by the bend, we heard a pistol, and we hurried on. But, by the saints, you’ve fixed ’em!”

“Yes, Michael,” returned Cecil, with a smile, “though I did not exactly expect this, yet I was prepared for it. But there’s no time now for explanation. Some of you rouse up that fellow with the cracked skull, while I see to this one’s wound.”

Cressy allowed the clothing to be removed from his right shoulder, and after some examination it was found that the man had been more scared than hurt, for the ball had struck the shoulder blade and glanced off without breaking it, though the concussion had so sprained the ligaments, that the arm was even now powerless. The wound was soon bandaged, and in the meantime, Michael had succeeded in arousing Kent to consciousness. The villain was somewhat surprised when he saw the crowd that had collected around him, but he soon learned that he was trapped and utterly disarmed, and in a sullen mood he allowed himself to be bound.

Ere many minutes afterwards the party moved on towards the castle, but Cecil took good care that the two pirates should be kept so far apart that they could have no chance for communication, for he intended in some measure to make them tools for his service.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE TORTURE CHAMBER.

THE old earl walked up and down his apartment with slow and trembling steps, and ever and anon a pearly drop would start forth and glisten for a moment upon his long gray lashes, and then drop off upon the time-wrinkled cheek. Some of the heart messengers he wiped away, and some trickled down the deep furrows into which they had fallen and lost themselves in the white beard below. Sad, sad was that old man's heart, for the bright daylight of his love and his joy had been wrested from him.

"O, Ida, Ida!" he murmured, as he clasped his hands in agony, "why hast thou gone! Hadst thou been of my own flesh and blood I could not have loved thee more. Thou wert the sweet flower in the garden of my soul, the fountain of my love, the bright star of my life's declining day, and the pride of my power; for to make thee happy made me proud. O, and can I hope? They would fain plant that sweet spirit in my bosom, but it cannot live there. Hope cannot blossom upon a soil so seared and burned by grief! O, Ida, Ida!"

The old man's bosom heaved—the tears started forth afresh, and bowing his head in pain, he sank into his chair, and again he murmured: "Ida, Ida!"

Not long had the earl sat thus, when the door of his apartment was thrown open, and young Leland entered.

"Ah! thank God you are safe," ejaculated Sir William.

"I am safe; but arouse thee, Sir William, for I have stirring news to tell thee."

"Of Ida?"

"Not directly, but I think I have the means in my power to gain intelligence of her. But listen."

The old man did listen, and Cecil went on to relate the occurrences of the morning. As he proceeded with his narrative, Sir William's eyes began to sparkle, and at length his immediate sorrow became overwhelmed by surprise and curiosity. For several moments after the young man closed, the earl gazed upon him in rapt wonder.

"And the two villains are now in the castle?"

## THE EARL'S WARD.

67

he at length exclaimed, while his eyes flashed with the wonted fire of former years.

"Yes."

"There's no mistake but that they came from Tamell, you think?"

"Not the least; nor have I any doubt that Tamell sent them to entrap me; but we will question them."

"Think you they'll answer?"

"I'll make them," uttered Cecil, with his lips firmly compressed.

"How?"

"You have an old room at the end of the western corridor," returned Cecil, with a peculiar look.

"Ha! the torture?"

"Would you object?"

"By Saint Paul, no!" exclaimed the old man, starting from his chair. "The blood-thirsty villains have robbed me of my child and attempted your life. God knows I would not torture for revenge, but in such a cause—to gain intelligence of my Ida—I would."

"Then let us have them conveyed to that chamber at once."

"But hold," uttered the earl, as he stopped suddenly in the centre of the room. "Even if we torture them, may they not deny all knowledge?"

"They cannot deny it. I know they are aware of where the brig was last night, and of course they know the errand they received from Tamell, with regard to myself."

"All that may be, and yet they may lie in both cases."

"We can avoid that."

"How, pray?"

"By examining them separately, and giving them to understand that if they disagree they shall repeat the ordeal."

"But may they not have a lie already concocted?"

"No, for they have not spoken together since I shot Cressy in the shoulder."

"Then lead the way," said the old man, while something like a hope gleamed upon his features. "Let them be carried to the chamber."

"Twill be the first time I ever used it, but the circumstances justify it now."

The room to which allusion has been made was situated in the southwestern corner of the castle, beneath a lighted turret, and was adorned with various implements of torture. Sir William Cleaveland had left this apartment just as he found it when he took possession, partly as a matter of curiosity, and partly because such a thing might happen as its coming in use.

Cecil determined that Kent should be the first one examined, and to this end he had him conveyed to the room, accompanied by four of the stoutest servants, while himself and Sir William followed.

The villain gazed about upon the curious articles that met his eye, and he seemed to comprehend their meaning, for he shut his teeth hard together, and a grim, dark smile of defiance passed over his features.

"Kent," said Cecil Leland, in a calm, meaning tone, "I have some important questions to ask you. Will you answer them?"

"Ask them," moodily returned the pirate.

"First, then—for what purpose were you sent after me, and who sent you?"

"Garl Tamell sent me."

"Ah, I thought so—I knew it; but for what did he send you?"

"No matter."

"Beware how you answer. Again—for what purpose respecting me, did Garl Tamell send you to the forest path?"

"I'll not tell."

"Then you shall be tortured to it."

"You may take my life, but you cannot take from me my knowledge."

"I know," said Cecil, "by what fearful oaths you are bound to your pirate chieftain, but God records not such oaths in heaven, for they are made against every principle of humanity, and against the good of your fellows. There's murder hidden beneath your oaths—there's the life and happiness of youth and innocence cloaked there, and I would have it out. Will you speak?"

"No," said Kent, without moving a muscle.

Cecil made a motion to the attendants. They silently bowed and prepared to execute the young man's will.

From one of the stout oaken beams were suspended two chains, at the lower extremities of which were fixed two iron bands for the wrists, and connected to these latter were powerful thumb-screws. Directly beneath these, upon a slightly raised form, was an arrangement of a similar character for the ankles and toes. Upon this form the pirate was placed. The bands were firmly secured about his wrists and ankles, and the screws fixed to his thumbs and toes.

"Now," said Cecil, as all was prepared, "you have one more chance to answer my questions without suffering, and mind you, you cannot deceive me by falsehood, for Cressy will be subjected to the same ordeal after you are released, and if your answers vary you shall both be tortured again, and with renewed severity. Now, what was Garl Tamell's object in sending you on the mission you undertook this morning?"

The villain looked savagely up at his interlocutor, but made no answer.

"Once more."

Cecil waited a full minute, but the silence was only broken by the heavy breathing of the excited earl. He then made a motion to the attendants. They turned the screws, and the iron jaws pressed hard upon the flesh of the pirate.

"Once more! Will you answer?" asked the young man, in a low, calm voice.

Again the screws were turned. Another minute, and the incensed servants applied the power in their hands with more force than Cecil could have wished.

"O, God!" groaned the suffering villain, and his chin sank upon his bosom.

"Answer," said Cecil.

Kent's bosom heaved—his muscles quivered beneath the torturing pain—his face worked in agony, and every limb shook in sympathy with his burning thumbs; but he spoke not!

Again the screws were turned. The villain

roared with pain—quivered a moment beneath the torture, and then raising his face, he looked with imploring agony into the face of young Leland. He did not seem to speak, but rather a pent up sentence appeared to burst from his livid lips:

"O, save me from this, and I will tell all, all!"

The screws were instantly turned back, and again Cecil bade him answer.

"Garl Tamell sent us on shore to murder you."

"Then why did you not shoot me when you had the chance?"

"Because he made us swear not to spill your blood in or near the forest path. We were to seize you, or entice you, as best we could, to our landing near the entrance to the Lollards, there to murder you, and then sink your body in deep water."

"O, horrible, horrible!" murmured the old earl.

"Now, Kent," continued Cecil, "were not two young girls conveyed on board the Ranger, last night?"

"Yes."

Sir William sank into a chair, buried his face in his hands, and groaned aloud.

"And now," uttered the young man, as he took a step forward, while his eyes flashed, "I have the most important question of all to ask. Where, and when, were you ordered to join the brig?"

The pirate hesitated. He met the stern look of his youthful captor, and then his eyes sank to the floor.

"Shall I betray my companions?" he at length murmured.

"They have betrayed you into your present danger," returned Cecil.

"How?"

"By sending you to do a murder out of the mere malice of your captain."

"No, not malice. Garl Tamell said you were a traitor—that you would betray us, and for that we took the office of your executioners."

"Ha! now I have the whole secret," uttered Cecil. "But yet Garl Tamell lied. As I live, I believe he had a different motive for seeking my life. But answer my question."

Again the pirate hesitated, and Cecil looked towards his attendants. They placed their fingers to the screws.

"O, don't torture me again!" the villain cried. "I'll answer! I'll answer!"

"Then tell me—where, and when, were you ordered to join the brig?"

"She is to come next Friday, at midnight, and lay-to off the entrance to the Lollards, and send a boat for us."

"To-day is Tuesday," said Cecil to himself, while his eyes sparkled at the intelligence he had received. "But," he continued, "where was the boat to find you?"

"At the cave where we sometimes land our goods."

"That will do. Take him down and convey him back to the cell from whence you took him, and let some kind of balsum be prepared for his bruises."

Kent was taken away, and Cressy was ordered to be brought in.

"Did that man not speak of a cave?" asked Sir William, as soon as Kent had been led out.

"Yes," returned Cecil. "In the face of the cliff that rises on the southern side of the bay, there is quite a large cave—nearly a hundred feet deep, where the smugglers have often been in the habit of storing their goods when

they could not carry them up the river. The entrance is quite narrow, and very obscure, being at the top of a craggy ascent, and protected from observation by stunted shrubbery.

"I never heard of it."

"None have known it save the smugglers. But here comes Cressy."

The second pirate was led in, and as his eyes ran over the various instruments of torture; a perceptible tremor shook his frame. He was weak from the loss of blood, and his resolution at once forsook him.

"Cressy," said Cecil, "Kent has answered every question I asked him, though he stood it out till his limbs were shaken with torture. I shall put the same questions to you, and if you answer as he did, I shall know you speak the truth, but if you vary you shall both try it over again."

The young man then commenced his questioning, and though at some points the pirate hesitated, yet he answered all without the application of torture, and in no point did he vary an iota from the testimony of his companion. He was then led away, and the old earl and Cecil passed out from the torture chamber.

"What now?" asked Sir William, as he entered his own apartment.

"We must think," returned Cecil.

"But can the pirate be captured?"

"Garl Tamell shall be in my hands before another week passes away. I swear it!"

"God grant it!" murmured the old man, as he sunk into his chair.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE BOY.

**W**HEN Ida Stanley returned to consciousness, she found herself upon a soft couch, and on looking about she was struck with the peculiarity of things around her. She again closed her eyes and tried to remember what had passed, and then she became aware of the strange motion that affected her resting-place. At first she thought 'twas the result of her own disordered brain, but as her eyes again dwelt upon the trappings about her, and her mind grew stronger, she knew that the motion she experienced was caused by the heaving sea. Her mind drank in the past, and she felt sure she was on board the pirate vessel!

"Ida," whispered a sweet voice at her side, and on starting up she beheld her faithful Annette sitting upon a low stool near her cot.

The place was lighted by a hanging cluster of wax tapers, and Ida saw that her maid had been weeping.

"O, Annette, where, where are we?" she exclaimed, as she sprang from her cot and sank upon her attendant's bosom.

"We are in the cabin of the pirate vessel."

"And am I in Carl Tamell's power?"

"Yes, dear Ida. We were both borne directly here."

"And have I been insensible long?"

"Many hours, for 'tis now past midnight."

"O, Annette, what will become of us! Would that I were dead!"

The faithful attendant could weep for her own misfortunes, and she could weep, too, for those of her mistress, but for years it had been her office to soothe and comfort, to advise and console, and now that she saw Ida so stricken she almost forgot her own part of the burden and endeavored to cheer her companion.

"Do not despair, Ida."

"How can I help it? All, all is despair. O, fatal day!"

"No, no, sweet mistress, while God lives, there is hope. Do not give up your trust in his mercy. Weep not so."

"Weep! I'll not weep, Annette. There—are not my eyes dry? Now if the wicked man will kill me I shall be happy in heaven!"

"He shall not kill you. He cannot seek your death. O, he will not be so cruel."

Ida gazed into the face of her companion with a strange look of agony. She bent forward her head, and in low, mournful accents, she murmured:

"'Tis sweet to die in purity—to breathe the last breath of mortal life in blissful innocence; but O, think of that death that poisons and stings—that blackens and scars—that drives out life by eating up in flames of fire the very flowers of the soul! O, what a death must that be that only gains its power over mortality by crushing out of existence one after another of those sweet gems of purity that make life valuable!"

Annette gazed earnestly into the strangely lighted features of her young mistress, and gradually a sense of the fearful truth seemed to creep over her soul, for she threw her arms about Ida's neck, and half wildly she uttered:

"He shall not! O, Ida, drive out that wretched thought, for while I live you shall not be harmed! You know not how strong I am. Trust with me—hope with me, for God strengthens the arm of virtue. Come, rest your head upon my bosom."

Ida Stanley wondered at the feelings of her gentle maid, yet thanked her for the assurance she gave.

"Ah, Annette," she uttered, "you know not the power against which you speak. Little can our strength avail us now."

"You know not the strength which a woman may exert," exclaimed Annette, while her black eyes flashed. "Let them beware what a simple girl can do."

Ida made no answer to this, but sinking her head into her companion's lap she sent forth her feelings in low, stifled sobs.

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Morning broke over the German Ocean. The two girls arose from the low stool where they had passed the last hours of the night, and looked forth from the small windows upon the wide expanse of heaving blue that bore them upon its bosom. The first golden streaks of

sunlight were jewelling the wave crests, and beauty dwelt over the scene.

"O, is it not beautiful!" uttered Annette, as she became absorbed in the novel view.

"Beautiful?" murmured Ida. "So is the bright colored serpent, with its glowing skin and diamond eyes, beautiful! Yet the venom of a horrible death dwells within it all!"

"Ay, and the serpent can be killed!" exclaimed Annette, over whose soul the bright scene had sent a quickening influence.

Ida would have spoken, but as she turned to gaze upon her companion, a light, cautious foot-fall upon the ladder arrested her attention. She turned further around and observed a boy just stepping down upon the cabin floor.

"I have been sent, ladies," said he, "to see if you would have any refreshments?"

As he spoke, he looked nervously around and took a few steps forward.

"Who sent you?" asked Ida, gazing with mingled curiosity and surprise upon the fair and intelligent face of the boy.

"The captain."

"Who is the captain?"

"Carl Tamell."

Ida shuddered as she heard that fearful name.

"We should like refreshments," said Annette, "and a little wine for my lady."

"Tell me," said Ida, "where is your captain?"

"He is on deck. But I will bring the refreshments."

As the boy spoke, he turned and re-ascended the ladder.

"O, Annette," exclaimed Ida, as soon as the cabin door was closed, "how the human countenance can lie."

"How, Ida?"

"Did you not note the features of that boy?"

"Yes."

"And yet he lives and acts in such a place as this."

"So do we."

"Upon bare compulsion."

"And perhaps, Ida, that poor boy lives here the same."

"But he moves at freedom—he acts for the wicked men who rule here. There was no sorrow on his countenance."

"Habit, dear Ida, may have made him used to the place he fills, but as I live I do not believe him a volunteer here."

"If he be, then I will never trust a human countenance again," said Ida.

"Hush! Here he comes."

The boy re-entered the cabin, bearing in his hands a small tray, upon which were some tarts, a bottle, and two wine-glasses. He set his burden upon the table, and then opening a small locker near the bulkhead, he took therefrom a corkscrew. As he took the wine bottle in his hand, he cast a furtive glance about him, and then stepping nearer to Ida, he whispered:

"Be silent—be cautious, lady."

Ida gazed in wonder upon the boy, and a faint hope fluttered in her bosom. He placed the winding point of the screw upon the cork, and again looking back towards the ladder, he said, in a low, cautious tone:

"Take heart, lady—you have friends here."

"Friends! O, God be praised!" uttered Ida, as she clasped her hands in gratitude.

"—sh! Speak not so loud—we may be overheard."

"But tell me—who, where are they?"

"All over the brig, but there is—"

The boy hesitated, and gazed for a moment into the faces of the two girls.

"You will be secret," he said, at length.

"Yes, yes."

"You will not lisp a word to any one. You will not act as though you had hope?"

"No, we will not."

"You swear it upon the holy cross."

"Yes," fervently ejaculated Ida, whose heart was almost ready to burst with anxiety.

"Then there is one in the brig who will save you even at the sacrifice of his own life; but you must strengthen your heart and hand to one bold exertion first."

"Anything, anything. But who is this man? Why should he help me?" asked the fair girl, trembling lest, after all, she might be merely a contested prize.

"Do you remember Mark Buntnell?"

"Buntnell?"

"Yes—the man whom you nursed at the castle when he was so badly hurt."

"O, yes—I remember him now. Thus, thus, great God, my kindness to the poor invalid comes back a thousand fold from thy store of mercies! And Buntnell will aid me—will save me."

Yes, lady."

"And you—who are you?"

"Harry Millbank."

"And you will aid me, too?"

"With my life," returned the boy with fervency; "for something tells me that when you are free, I, too, shall be clear of this horrible place. There, ask me no questions further, for I must go, or I shall be suspected. Only one thing let me say. Your friends cannot at once act openly—you will have to be bold and help them. Speak not a word of this under any circumstances."

Ida and Annette followed the form of the boy till he had passed out of sight, and then, with hearts overflowing with gratitude and hope, they fell into each other's arms.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A FEARFUL CEREMONY.

**B**EARING southeast from Holy Island, and distant about ten miles, off the northern coast of Northumberland, there are several small lumps of land rising out of the sea, known as the Staple Islands. Towards the one farthest seaward the pirate brig made her way, and shortly after eight o'clock, on the morning that Harry Millbank held his interview with the girls in the cabin, the vessel was hove-to within two cables' length of the shore.

Garl Tamell moved about the deck with a firm, determined tread, issuing his orders in short, quick sentences, and ever and anon casting an exulting look towards the cabin companionway.

"Buntnell," said he, after the courses had been clewed up and the main-topsail laid a-back, "have my gig lowered, and let her crew be called away. I shall not be gone over two or three hours, and if the brig falls off a great ways you may tack and stand in again."

Buntnell promised obedience, but as he turned away to obey the orders he had received there was a look upon his countenance which

it was well that Garl Tamell did not see.—The pirate captain gazed about his deck for a moment, to see that all was in order, then turning upon his heel he descended to the cabin. Ida and Annette were gazing out at the windows when he entered, but they quickly turned, and a cold shudder ran through their frames as they beheld their fearful visitor.

"I bid you good morning, ladies," said Tamell, as he advanced, "and I trust that you like your accommodations?"

Ida gazed up into the chieftain's face, but she returned him no answer.

"I have come," he continued, "to offer you a trip on shore. So come, prepare yourselves as quickly as possible."

"On shore, sir!" iterated Ida.

"Ay, on shore. We are only a short distance from a charming spot."

"And wherefore shall we go?" asked Ida, who began to fear new dangers.

"You will find out after you get there," returned Tamell, as a dark smile passed over his features.

"O, God! what new wickedness have you now in store? No, no—let us remain here!"

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the pirate chieftain, "and so you like your new quarters. Well, I'm glad of it; but you need not fear, for you shall return here in two hours as safe and well as you are now. Come, get ready at once. My boat waits."

The two girls dared not disobey, but again Ida begged to know for what purpose they were to go on shore. The only answer she received was, to prepare, and ask no more questions. The fair girl trembled like an aspen while Annette was drawing her shawl about her shoulders, and she wept bitterly as she followed her captor up the ladder.

The boat was in readiness at the gangway, and into it Ida and Annette were handed, and as Tamell took his place by their side in the stern-sheets, it was shoved off, the oar-blades fell into the water, and swiftly they were darting on towards the island. It took but a few minutes to reach the shore, and as the boat's keel grated upon the smooth sand, the girls were led forward to the bows, where one of the men stepped into the water and lifted them on to the dry land.

Carl Tamell drew Ida's arm within his own—she dared not resist—and started up through a pleasant path that wound along the side of the island hill. Only one of the men followed, and though Annette trembled lest he should offer to conduct her, yet he kept at a respectful distance, and the fair maid walked unmolested by the side of her mistress.

Though the scenery was beautiful, and the air calm and delightful, yet Ida had no feelings of appreciation for it. The gentle bluebells and violets that nodded at her feet, the honeysuckle that smiled amid the shrubbery about her, and the warbling birds that chirped and sang about her, all went unheeded. Poor Ida could only wonder where she was being thus led, and fear for the fate that the future might have in store for her. Annette would have whispered words of hope, but she dared not, lest

the pirate should mistrust the source of the hope she would give.

Nearly half a mile had been traversed, when the path opened to a beautiful clearing, on one side of which stood a hermit's lodge, and towards this the pirate chieftain turned.

"Now, Ida," said he, "I will tell you our purpose in coming here. *We are to be married!*"

"O, no, no, no!" shrieked the poor girl, as she instinctively struggled to free herself from the villain's grasp. "This is no place—no time! O, you will not—you cannot!"

"This is the place—and it is the time," muttered Carl Tamell. "I will, and I can. The holy father waits within the lodge. Come."

"No, no, no,—if he be—"

"Speak not, but come!" thundered the pirate, as he pulled Ida along.

"Go, go, Ida," whispered Annette. "You may make it worse."

Ida gazed back imploringly into the face of her faithful attendant, and again Annette bade her go on.

The man who had followed them now stepped ahead, and threw open the door of the small lodge, and Carl Tamell entered, half-bearing and half-leading Ida Stanley with him, while Annette followed immediately after. Within was a rude altar, built of untrimmed boughs, and by its side stood an old man habited in the garb of a priest.

"We have come, holy father," said Carl Tamell, at the same time bending his head in token of reverence.

"God's blessing be with thee, my children."

"Now," continued Tamell, "let the ceremony proceed. This is my bride, and here's her maid and witness."

The old man opened his book and commenced reading.

"Hold! Stay this ungodly proceeding!" cried Ida, suddenly breaking in upon the ceremony. "If ye be a true priest of the living God you will not sacrifice a poor orphan upon the altar of this man's wickedness."

"Ah, my child, if this man be your guardian

I may not gainsay his will," returned the priest.

"He is not my guardian, as God lives, he is not. He basely—"

"Stop thy noisy tongue," cried Tamell, in fiery anger. "Thou'dst better be a wife than mistress! Go on, holy father."

Ida gazed for a moment upon the priest—she heard him read, and she heard him call her—WIFE! The book, the altar, and the priest swam before her eyes—the air grew hot and oppressive—she reeled and tottered, and with a heavy groan she sank utterly senseless into the strong arms of the pirate chieftain.

Carl Tamell smiled grimly as he bore his prize from the lodge, and though a thousand hot, burning, bitter words arose to the lips of Annette, yet she wisely kept them back and followed silently on.

The fresh air soon began to operate upon Ida, for before they had gone many rods she opened her eyes; but she quickly closed them again, for they had only rested upon the dark features of the pirate. Soon, however, a powerful tremor shook her frame, and as she slightly struggled, Carl Tamell stopped and stood her upon the green sward.

"Can you walk, dearest?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," murmured Ida, with a cold shudder.

"Then you are better?"

"Better!" She looked up into the pirate's face as she spoke, and at the same instant she felt Annette touch her upon the elbow. Reason came to her aid, and she added:

"O, yes, yes—much, much better."

"I'm glad. Perhaps you will be able to conquer this weakness. But come, you can take my arm, and we'll go on."

Tremblingly the poor girl obeyed, and ere long they reached the shore. The boat was where she had been left, and with little difficulty the two females were lifted on board, after which Tamell took his seat, and the oarsmen pulled back to the brig.

Once more Ida and Annette were alone in the pirate's cabin. The former wept not, for her fountain of tears was parched and dry. Her bosom lay quiet beneath a fearful calm, and not a muscle told of life. Her eyes seemed set motionless in their sockets, while her face looked like the image from a sculptor's chisel;—cold and passionless.

Annette wept, not for herself but to see her dear mistress thus. She had tried to soothe, to comfort, but no words could move her heart from its icy prison-house. She saw no means of joy more on earth; with her tongue tied, her silence had given consent to the fearful banishment, and she felt herself to be irrevocably, the *pirate chieftain's wife!*

The afternoon had passed half away, and the brig was standing out to sea. The sunlight traced bright streaks along the cabin floor, and upon one of these rested Ida's eyes. The vessel gently rocked upon the cradling waters, and with its motion the poor girl swayed to and fro; but she raised not her eyes from that sunstreak, nor did she seem to notice the sobs of her gentle companion. The whole world of thought and feeling seemed shut out to her, and though she sat with sustaining strength, yet that strength was rigid and ice-like. Misery had bound her nerves and muscles—had frozen her heart, and spread its pall of cold night over her whole soul!

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE VULTURE IS STOPPED IN HIS COURSE.

THE sun had dipped its disk half-way below the distant forest-bound horizon, when the two girls were started from their reveries by the appearance of Harry Millbank. He came boldly down the cabin ladder, but when once his foot touched the floor, a slight, nervous tremor ran through his frame.

"Will you have any refreshments, ladies?" said he, and then he looked around again.

"I want none," said Ida.

"You'd better have some," urged the boy, in a sort of imploring tone.

Annette thought she detected a desire in the boy's manner, and hastily concluding that that desire was for their benefit, she quickly said:

"Yes, good, kind Harry, we do want some refreshment. My poor lady's brain is almost turned, and she hardly knows what she needs. Let us have wine, and a few tarts."

An expression of gratification passed over the boy's features as he received this order, and turning away he re-ascended the ladder.

"Indeed, Annette," uttered Ida, "I cannot eat anything; neither can I drink."

"—sh! Did you not notice the boy's manner? He desired to communicate something to us."

"Then why did he not do it?"

"Why, I suppose he was simply sent to ask us our wants, and under those circumstances he could have no excuse for remaining; but when he brings our refreshments he may reasonably be supposed to stop and arrange them. I know that must be the case, for he looked disappointed when you told him you did not want anything."

"Ah, Annette, you are a good girl."

"I love you, at all events, dear Ida."

"I know you do, I know you do," returned Ida, resting her head upon her companion's shoulder. "But, alas! I fear the boy can help me no more. O, God! what can I urge now to the pirate, since he is my husband!"

"—sh! Here comes the boy."

Harry Millbank re-entered the cabin and sat his tray upon the table. He prepared to uncork the wine, and while he made arrangements he said, in a low whisper:

## THE EARL'S WARD.

77

"Now, ladies, the time has come for you to act. Be firm, and all may yet be well, but if you flinch a hair we may not help you."

"What, what shall we do?" asked Annette, in the same low tone. "Tell me, and if the thing lies within the power of woman you shall not find me behind."

"Lady," said the boy, turning to Ida as he spoke, "your pretended husband will be here ere long, and—"

"Pretended!" uttered Ida, starting forward and gazing earnestly into the boy's face.

"Does he not pretend so?"

"Yes, yes—but is he not my husband?"

"No—by heavens he is not."

"But the priest—"

"Was one of Earl Tamell's wicked agents, who assumed the holy garb for the occasion. No, lady, he is not your husband."

"O, great God, I thank thee," ejaculated the fair girl, as she covered her face with her hands and wept tears of relief.

Harry gazed back towards the ladder, then bent his ears a moment to listen, and then turning towards the girls, he drew from his bosom two pistols.

"Here," said he, as he handed one of them to Ida, "take this, and fear not to use it, for with you now lays the only chance of escape. In the brig's crew we are nearly equally divided, and an open opposition on our part would only lead to a conflict that could but prove fatal; but when once Earl Tamell is gone, Mark Buntnell by right comes to the command. Tamell will be here ere long, and I need not tell you of his designs; but O, as you value your own liberty, your own happiness, do not fear to use the means I thus give you."

Ida Stanley took the deadly weapon with a trembling hand, and as she gazed along the bright barrel a faint flush came to her cheek; but yet she tried to gain courage equal to the task.

"And to you," continued the boy, turning to Annette, "I give this one. It will help your mistress if you use it with a steady hand."

"My hand and heart shall be as steady as

the mountain rock," returned Annette, as she took the pistol with a flashing eye. "If my mistress fears, I will not."

"Now hide the weapons within the folds of your dresses, and be careful that Tamell sees them not too soon," said the boy, as he again gazed anxiously about, "and O, remember," he added, "that one error now may prove fatal to all. Do not fail."

"We will not," said Annette, with a confidence that Ida could not feel.

"Then I must leave you, and God grant that when I see you again, Mark Buntnell will be commander of the brig."

As the boy spoke, he turned away and left the cabin, but when he was half-way up the ladder, he looked back and endeavored, by an assuring expression, to strengthen the girls in their duty.

"O, Annette," murmured Ida, as they were left alone once more, "and can I do this?"

"Do what, Ida?"

"Take the life of a fellow-being."

"Ida, dear Ida," urged Annette, as she laid her hand steadily, firmly, upon the shoulder of her mistress, "do not let such a feeling enter your soul. God has given you a life, and he gave it for your good. Should you lose it the world would lose one of its sweetest flowers, and hundreds would mourn. You must protect it, and if so to do, it be necessary to shoot Earl Tamell, then let him die, and the world will have occasion to bless you for the deed. Do not flinch, for heaven itself must approve the act. Remember, Ida, virtue, honor, peace, and joy are at stake—your own unsullied soul against the life of the blackest villain that ever trod. My hand is steady, and my nerves are all calm. Be you the same, and all shall be well."

Ida gazed up into the face of her companion with a grateful look, though some of the allusions had made her shudder; but yet she grew more calm, and placing the pistol within the bosom of her laced vest, she said:

"I'll try, I'll try."

"Then be firm, and we may be safe. Re-

member the poor old earl, and remember Cecil Leland!"

Ida started at that name—the rich blood mantled her cheek, and pressing her hand hard upon her bosom she bowed her head, and though she had gained composure, yet the warm tears dropped silently from her lashes.

The sun had sunk to rest—twilight had come and gone, and the bright stars were twinkling in the heavens. Ida Stanley had tried to nerve herself for the fearful ordeal through which she had to pass, but yet her heart fluttered wildly in her bosom, and as time fled noiselessly by, she felt her nervous anxiety fast gaining the mastery over her. Annette, on the contrary, sat firm and immovable. Her hands were pressed hard upon her knees, and the compression of her finely chiselled lips told that the heart was firm within.

At length the door of the companionway was opened, and Ida nestled more closely to her companion, but it proved to be only the steward with lights. He took no notice of the girls, but having fixed the tapers in their places he returned to the deck, and in a few moments afterwards, Carl Tamell himself descended. There was an exulting expression upon his countenance, and his tread was confident and easy.

"Be firm! Remember the fearful price of hesitation," whispered Annette.

"Ah, my fair bride," said the pirate chieftain, as he stopped in the centre of the cabin, "you look more blooming than ever. I trust the rites of matrimony set easily upon you?"

Ida looked tremblingly up into Tamell's face, but she spoke not, neither did she rise from her seat.

"Come, Ida—my bride—" continued the pirate, "this is not the way to welcome your husband. I had expected you would have flown to my arms. Come."

"Touch me not, sir! touch me not," cried Ida, as the villain approached.

"How, now, pretty one?" uttered Tamell, stopping and gazing upon the glowing face of

the fair girl. "What shall keep a husband from his wife?"

"You are not my husband, sir."

"I am."

"You are not—God knows you are not."

"Come, girl, away with this folly. The priest tied us with a knot which no earthly power can sever."

"'Twas no priest! 'Twas a villain like yourself!"

"Ha! Who—But no, you think to browbeat me. Come, I'll no more of this!"

As Tamell spoke, his face was flushed with anger, and he took a quick step forward. Ida sprang from her seat and started back to the stern windows.

"Touch me not, sir!" she cried, as she drew the pistol from her bosom. "If you approach another step I will fire!"

"By the saints of heaven!" exclaimed the pirate, stopping short in his way, "who gave thee that?"

"I found it."

"Ha, ha, ha, 'tis not loaded."

"'Tis loaded, for I have tried it."

"You dare not fire it! If you do but place your finger upon the trigger, I swear by all the powers of heaven, I'll treat ye as I would a dog! Beware, now, for I mean what I say!"

Ida Stanley quailed before the lightning fury of that dark face. The pirate's words rang like thunder through her soul, and as she heard his fearful threat, she forgot that she possessed the means of defence. Her weapon dropped harmless at her feet, and Carl Tamell sprang forward!

The pirate chieftain laid one hand upon Ida's arm. Annette raised her weapon, but Carl Tamell saw it not. Her face was white as marble, for her blood all lay still and quiet in her motionless heart. Her hand trembled not, nor did the muzzle of her pistol vary from its point in the estimation of a hair. She pulled the trigger—the sharp report rang through the cabin, and on the same instant the pitiless buccaneer uttered a low groan, pressed his hands up to his side, and staggered back to a seat.

Ida Stanley fell fainting upon the floor, and Annette, after gazing for a moment upon the work she had done, sprang forward to her assistance. In a few moments the companionway was thrown open, and some of the crew came rushing down, foremost among whom was Waldron. The boy came, too, and springing quickly to Annette's side, he whispered a hurried sentence in her ear.

"Here's a nice mess!" exclaimed Waldron, as he sprang to his commander's side.

"Ah, Waldron," groaned Tamell, as he leaned heavily against his faithful follower, "I'm done for. The jade fired with a good aim."

"Where did you get those pistols?" asked Waldron, as he bent a stern look upon Annette.

"We found them in that locker," deliberately and unhesitatingly returned the girl, pointing to an open locker in the bulkhead.

Harry Millbank returned Annette a grateful look.

"This comes of having women on board," muttered Mark Buntnell, as he helped Waldron move the captain to a lounge. "I never knew luck where there was one of 'em on the salt water."

"I believe you're right," returned Waldron, "and after all, I don't know, for all I helped bring 'em on board, that I can blame the lady for defending herself."

Mark Buntnell's heart leaped with delight as he thus found that nothing was suspected, and leaving some of the rest to take care of Tamell, he went to the assistance of Ida. The girl was soon restored to consciousness, while the pirate captain, groaning with pain, was conveyed to the small house on deck. The surgeon of the brig was called to examine the wound, and he found that the ball had shattered the fourth rib, but how far it had entered beyond, he could not ascertain, as the probing gave such pain that the operation became dangerous. At any rate, he did not hesitate to give it as his opinion, that the wound was mortal, though the sufferer might linger along several days and perhaps weeks.

A general gloom settled over the crew, though a close observer might have seen that upon many faces it was assumed, yet none thought of revenging their commander's death upon the poor girls. A counsel was held upon the quarter-deck, and Mark Buntnell was almost unanimously recognized as the legitimate commander of the Ranger, and he accordingly assumed the blue and white feather.

The question then came up as to what should be done with the girls. Some, who blamed them not for what they had done, were yet so far influenced by fear, that they proposed to throw them overboard, but men who could murder men, could not thus coldly put to death innocent and injured girls, so at length it was resolved that Carl Tamell, if he were able, should decide. Buntnell and Waldron were appointed to confer with him. They entered the house where he lay and asked the surgeon if the captain could speak.

"Yes, yes," groaned Tamell, as he turned his head half-way over his pillow. "What would you, Waldron?"

"We have come, captain, to ask what shall be done with the two girls."

A painful shadow flitted across Carl Tamell's face, and after a moment's thought, he asked: "Is Ida recovered?"

"Yes," returned Buntnell. "Her swoon only lasted a few minutes. Probably it was only the deed she had done that shook her nerves."

"Ah, you mistake there, Mark. 'Twas not Ida Stanley that fired. She, poor thing, had not the courage. 'Twas her maid that gave me my death; but do not blame her."

Here the wounded chieftain groaned with pain, and after closing his eyes for a few moments in apparent thought, he re-opened them, and said:

"Let the brig be run into the Lollards, and there they shall be set on shore."

"But there's danger," said Waldron.

"No, Kent and Cressy are there, and you know we were to take them."

Here a grim smile passed over the pirate's face, and half muttering to himself, he continued:

"Fear not—the young traitor is dead ere this. There'll be none to harm us. Kent and Cressy have done their work before now. Ah, my fair Ida, you'll wheedle with *him* no more, at all events. Yes, take the brig into the Lollards, for I may land there myself. Ask no

questions now, only do just as I bid you."

As the wounded man spoke, his head sunk back upon the pillow, and Buntnell and Waldron silently withdrew.

Carl Tamell's wishes were made known to the crew, and though there were some objections to such a course, yet the brig was brought about upon the necessary course, and once more she headed towards the Lollards.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE MOUNTAIN TORRENT AND ITS VICTIM.

**N**IGHT, black, moonless and starless, had fallen down upon the old castle. Ere the daylight had gone, black, huge masses of clouds had been gathering upon the horizon, and now the heavy drops of rain began to patter upon the pavement and the greensward. The wind was almost dead—a sighing, moaning whisper woke the air, but the falling of the deluge almost drowned it. Thicker and thicker, heavy and more heavy, grew the big rain-drops, and ere long it seemed as though the very ocean had been drawn up into heaven and was now being emptied upon the earth.

Cecil Leland stood within the doorway of the old butler's lodge, and looked forth upon the scene. Broad sheets of flame began to light up the heavens, and the loud thunder rolled like tumbling mountains through the ink-black vault.

"I've lived hard upon sixty years, and I never saw it rain like this before," said old Malcolm, as he withdrew from the spattering spray that came in from the door-stone.

"'Tis indeed heavy," returned Cecil, still retaining his position at the door.

"I saw a woman go up over the chapel cliff this afternoon," observed Malcolm, again ap-

proaching the door. "I wonder where she is."

"A woman!" iterated Cecil.

"Yes. However, there's the old chapel; she may take shelter in that, unless, indeed, she has already returned."

"Who was it, Malcolm?" asked Cecil, with a sudden interest.

"Well, 'twas a long distance to see, for she came up from the lower forest and went around outside of the wall, but I thought at the time, 'twas your mother."

"My mother! Impossible."

"Very likely I may be mistaken."

"No, no, Malcolm—perhaps 'twas my mother," uttered Cecil, while he shuddered at the thought.

Another stream of fire ran through the heavens, and instinctively the young man cast his eyes towards the cliff, and he could plainly see the rivulets that were beginning to run down the ravines and path. Another sheet of lightning, and he could see that through the chapel path the water was rushing in a torrent.

Steadily did Cecil Leland keep his eyes fixed upon a point towards the cliff, and as sheet after sheet of fire enveloped surrounding

objects in its vivid light he could see the crags even through the thick rain.

"O, God! Malcolm, did you not see it?"

"See what?" exclaimed the old man, peering out into the thick gloom.

"Look off toward the chapel path, and wait till the heavens are light again.—There!"

"Great heavens! 'tis a woman, Cecil!"

"My mother!"

"It must be."

"Look! look there!"

When they both looked again they could distinctly make out a female form standing upon a large rock by the side of the chapel path, nearly at the foot of the slope, while all around her the rushing torrent was hissing and boiling in its mad wrath.

"I could not help her now," said Cecil.

"No—there is no human power can reach her while that torrent lasts," returned Malcolm.

"She has sought that rock for safety, and there she must remain till this deluge subsides."

Again and again, by the livid glare of the lightning did the two look forth towards that female form. Old Malcolm thought not of the spray, he thought not of the chill, he only thought of the tenant of that isolated rock.

"See, see! does it not move? Does it not shake before the flood?" ejaculated Cecil.

"What?"

"The rock! the rock!"

"I noticed it not."

"Wait till it lights again——. Hark! O, hark! what a scream was that!" cried the young man, as he caught hold of the old man's arm. "Will it not light again?"

"Yes—there!"

They both strained their eyes towards the spot where last they saw the rock, but nought was to be seen, save the torrent that came rushing down the frightfully widened path! The rock and its occupant had gone!

"Great God! she's lost!" exclaimed Cecil, as he shuddered at the idea of any human being being so fearfully engulfed. "Though God may have meant this for thy punishment, yet will I aid thee if I can. Malcolm, start up

the household, and see who will go forth with me to the assistance of a fellow-mortal. Let me have lanterns—quick!"

It was soon spread over the castle that a female had been swept down the chapel path by the torrent, and ere many minutes a dozen stout men offered to follow Cecil to the rescue. Lanterns of horn were provided, and after seeing that they were close and safe, the party set forth. The rain still fell in torrents, but as there was little or no wind, the way was by no means difficult, nor did the men think of the saturated garments that clung about them.

The lightning still continued to play in the heavens, and as the almost blinding glare would for the time pass away, the lanterns seemed only capable of "making darkness visible;" but still Cecil led on, and at length he reached the outer wall, where he soon found the wicket, and as he opened it he stepped forth into the space beyond. At that instant the heavens were fired, and O, what a scene opened to the view. The mad flood was sweeping down from the distant cliff, and near the wall it had spread itself into a broad river, upon the bosom of which huge rocks, and trees, and masses of loosened earth were being swept away towards the forest.

The followers instinctively drew back, but Cecil urged them on, pointing out that there was no danger near the wall, and at length they stepped forth through the wicket. Cecil then led the way some rods up towards the cliff, and having ranged his men along so that they could command a view of the scene, he bade them halt and wait for the lightning. It came—and then all was dark once more. Again, and again it came, and Cecil began to despair. Once more the broad flame wrapped the earth in its light, and one of the men nearest the wicket uttered a shout.

Cecil sprang to the spot.

"Did you see her?" he asked of the man, who had cried out.

"I think so. Wait till it lights——. There! See that?"

Cecil looked off, and at a spot where a huge rock had stopped in its course, he saw a female

form washed by the surge. To the point where the female lay the water was not deep, but yet it ran so swiftly that 'twould be dangerous to venture out there. The young man thought a moment, and then turning to his companions, he shouted:

"To the park—back to the park, and let us obtain staffs, and then we may venture out there."

What, between the quickly following flashes of lightning, and the dim glow of the lanterns, they received of light enough to enable them to be somewhat expeditious in their movements. They proceeded at once to some of the larger arbors, and tore off a number of the largest transverse slats, and then returned to the scene outside of the wall. The trial was perilous, but Cecil hesitated not. He planted the end of his staff firmly upon the ground and stepped into the water. The rushing tide was powerful, but the youth heeded it not. The others saw him safely in the flood, and seizing their lanterns so as to save them, they planted their own staffs and followed.

Slowly, yet steadily, the adventurers advanced, and at length they reached the woman in safety. They seized her by the limbs, and—'twas the best they could do—dragged her to the wicket. They lifted her through—then four of them took the inanimate form upon their shoulders and bore it to the castle. A fire was built in one of the large chambers, a bed prepared, and the body of Margaret Leland—for she indeed it was—was placed upon it.

Cecil bent over the cold form, and though he could not weep, yet he gazed anxiously upon those marble features, and with his fingers he parted the hair from the deep wounds that the ruthless rocks had made. The white forehead was scarred by a livid spot, and the neck and shoulders were bruised in many places. The young man waited the appearance of the old

earl's physician, and while he thus waited, he wondered if there was life still left there—life which might be extended into the future on earth. Then, as he gazed, he thought of the deep, dark guilt that might lurk around the chambers of that still heart, and he thought, too, how unlike the true woman she had been. True he was a son, but in his noble heart he could not excuse or silence even a mother's iniquities.

At length the doctor came. He examined the patient, and dubiously he shook his head; yet he ordered such restoratives as he deemed proper, and with warm liniments he chafed her breast, temples and limbs. Ere long she opened her eyes, and some half-murmured sentences fell from her lips. Cecil spoke to her, but she knew him not. Life came upon her apace, and she began to rave. Cecil gazed a while in silence, and then with a heavy heart, he left the room, having first seen that proper female attendants were appointed to minister to the invalid.

It was after midnight when Cecil Leland left the chamber to which his mother had been conveyed. The rain had ceased falling, and the heavy clouds had rolled off over the sea. Here and there, a bright spot of blue was visible beyond the down-like masses of white clouds that hung in the air, and a few sparkling stars were set in the azure. The water still roared upon the side of the cliff, but Cecil knew that its fountain had gone, and that it could not run much longer. He felt not like sleep, and so he stepped forth into the court. For half an hour he wandered to and fro, deeply buried in the varied thoughts that resulted from the strange events of the past, and at the end of that time he re-entered the castle, and sought the chamber which had been set apart for his use. He breathed a prayer for the peace of Ida Stanley, asked God to forgive his mother, and then sought the repose of his pillow.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE PLOT THICKENS.

THE next morning dawned, and though the meadows were overflowed by the swollen streams, yet the soft air bore upon its bosom a thousand fragrant sweets that arose from the rain-trampled verdure. Margaret Leland had sunk into a deep swoon, and the physician unhesitatingly pronounced that she could not recover. Cecil may have wondered what led her up the chapel path, but yet he felt that he had the clue to the truth.

The forenoon had passed half away. The old earl was seated in his large chair, and Cecil Leland stood by his side.

"'Twas a fearful deluge," said the old man, as he cast his eyes off to where the meadows still lay beneath the water.

"Yes, but how fair and beautiful 'tis now," uttered Cecil.

"O," murmured the earl, "would that all storms could be thus ended."

"There is a God!" said Cecil.

"I thank thee," returned Sir William, with a moistened eye, and as he spoke, he looked gratefully upon his young companion.

"Hark! Heard you not that murmur—that unusual stir just now among the servants, Sir William?"

"Yes—what is it?"

"Hark! Some one ascend the stairs."

"Go, see what it is, Cecil."

"No—hark! That footfall! How light! how bounding!"

The door of the apartment was swung wide open, and Ida Stanley rushed in. The old earl sprang from his chair, and with one deep throo of bliss he clasped the returned dove to his bosom. A moment she rested there, and then raising her eyes she encountered the fond, thankful gaze of Cecil Leland. She turned a half imploring glance up into the old man's face; he understood its import, for he loosed his embrace and smiled his free assent. On the next moment, the fair Ida's head was pillowed upon the bosom of him she so fondly loved, and as the young man felt her heart throbbing against his own, he raised his eyes to heaven, and uttered forth a prayer of thanks and praise. His soul was full; the throbbing pulsation of grati-

tude beat high, and, as joy sparkled from his eyes, he gave full vent to the feelings of his surcharged and exuberant emotion.

Annette had followed her mistress, and from her lips the earl and Cecil listened to the strange tale of their adventures. The brig had been put about for the Lollards, as the reader already knows, and she reached a point off Smugglers' Island before noon on the preceding day, where they had intended to lay-to till after nightfall. But the approaching storm had driven them into the bay much sooner than they had intended, where they had lain all night.

"This morning," continued Annette, "Mark Buntnell came to us, and told us we might prepare to go on shore, and when we were ready the boat was lowered, and Buntnell accompanied us. We ran, we jumped—or, at least, I did—and here we are safe—safe once more at home."

"And all, all, we owe to you," exclaimed Ida, as she turned from her lover and wound her arms around the form of her faithful Annette.

The pretty maid could not but weep when she found herself the recipient of such love and gratitude as she received from her mistress, nor could she but feel proud when the earl and Cecil, in turn, pressed her hand in thankfulness and joy.

"You said Mark Buntnell accompanied you on shore," remarked Cecil, as soon as he could turn his mind to other matters than those of joy.

"Yes, he did," returned Annette.

"And did he leave you at the landing?"

"No, he came with us to the castle, and he wishes to see you in the court-yard."

Another beam of gratification passed over the young man's features, and taking his cap from the stand near the door, he excused himself to the happy party, and then withdrew.

"Ah, Buntnell," exclaimed Cecil, as he joined the old smuggler in the court; "God bless you for the part you've done."

"Never mind that now, my dear boy," returned the old man, as he shook Cecil warmly by the hand. "Let us to other subjects. You sent a message by Harry, and I am here to meet you. I had feared that you had been trapped, but God knows I am happy to find you safe and sound. By heavens! Cecil, I knew not till after we had sailed, that the villain Tamell had set those two men upon your track."

"Never mind. I believe you, Mark, and I thank you for the warning you sent me, for it saved my life."

"Old Malcolm told me of your adventure just now, and I almost leaped for joy at its result. Believe me, Cecil, no man could have felt more joy. Now to your business, for from the manner in which Harry gave me your hint, I am inclined to think 'tis somewhat of moment."

"'Tis, indeed, Buntnell. I wish to save your own life, and also the lives of our old companions."

"Save my life!"

"Yes—but ere I tell you all, you must pledge me your honor that you will not divulge it to any save such as I shall name."

"To you, Cecil, I will give that pledge, for I know I may trust you."

"Then, plainly—the king has become cognizant of your doings, and he has set his ministers at work to hunt you up. For the present, he has left the business in the hands of Sir William. The old earl called upon me for information. I could not lie, nor did I desire to, and I told him all I knew."

"Cecil!"

"Hold, till I tell you all. Ere I gave him this information, I gained from him a pledge that he would urge no proceedings till I gave him my consent, at the same time giving him my reasons. Now, Buntnell, I have sworn to deliver Garl Tamell, and his own gang, into the hands of justice, and ere the sun shall have set they shall be in irons; but those who were the old smugglers of the coast—those who were my early friends—I will save. I know that they richly deserve punishment, and I know

that I am transgressing the law when I thus shield them, but my heart bids me do it, and it shall be done."

For several moments, Mark Buntnell remained apparently absorbed in deep thought, but at length he said:

"Cecil, you may not believe me, but yet I had resolved, when I ran the Ranger into the Lollards last night, that I would never tread her decks more, and a dozen of our old men have made the same determination. The work is revolting to us. From early youth we have been taught to disregard the revenue laws because they were unjust, and so, as smugglers, we have lived outlawed. When Garl Tamell first made his proposition of turning our hands to piracy, we hardly realized the consequences. The idea of murdering whole crews had never entered our heads, but Tamell set the example, and his own men did the bloody work. If we once get clear of the scrape, we will never turn to even smuggling again, for we have enough to live upon. But now tell me, Cecil, how you mean to proceed? for if we all leave the brig, Tamell's men will have suspicions."

"That is easy enough," returned the young man. "I shall lead my men down this afternoon. Some I shall station so as to cut off escape by land, only taking about thirty men with me in the boats. At the sight of such a force the pirates will of course think to make an easy defence. Let's see—how many of the old men are there?"

"Nineteen, including myself."

"And how many of the others?"

"Tamell is flat—then there's the two that you trapped—so there are only eighteen of them, all told."

"Eighteen. They'll be easily conquered. Now will you be sure and draw off your men, as soon as we board?"

"Yes, yes—I will."

"And will you grant me one more request?"

"Name it."

"Thoroughly wet the priming of those guns that bear up the bay."

"I will, Cecil—as I'm a living being."

"I believe you, Mark, and I assure you that not one of the old crew shall be harmed. Such articles as you can save, you had better attend to at once, for you know the old brig must be delivered up."

"'Twill seem like losing one's own father to lose the old Ranger," said Buntnell, "but then we can't complain. There's nothing on board now of much consequence, so there'll be no trouble about that."

"Then let us feel that this is arranged. You will be sure and draw our men off."

"I will."

"And if you choose to render any assistance you would render me a service."

"I cannot promise, Cecil, that I will lift my hand against my shipmates, but this much I will say; I will strike down any man that lifts his hand against you, if I think your life is thereby in danger."

"Thank you, Mark—and now of Garl Tamell; how was he this morning?"

"I did not see him."

"Nor the surgeon?"

"No—I supposed the surgeon was with Tamell, and that he had better not be disturbed."

"Well, do you think he can live?"

"Not long."

"O, I trust he may survive till I know him better."

A peculiar shade passed over Mark Buntnell's features, but he made no reply to his young companion's remark, and without noticing the emotion, Cecil continued:

"Go, now, Mark, or your stay may excite suspicions; but before you go, pledge me once more that you will not betray my confidence?"

"I will not, Cecil—I swear it."

"I accept the pledge—now go, and may success attend us both."

As the young man spoke, the old smuggler turned from the court-yard, and after watching him till he passed out from view, our hero re-entered the castle, and sought the chamber of the earl, where he related what had passed, and where arrangements were made for future action.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE SECRET OF THE OLD CHAPEL.

**L**ONG before the time arrived at which Cecil was to set forth upon his mission, the earl's stout men were all assembled in the court-yard. There were fifty of them, and each was armed with a brace of pistols and a cutlass, and their looks and movements told that they flinched not from the work before them.

At the appointed time, our hero set forth and took the forest path. At his old landing were hauled up all the boats he could obtain, and they were in every way sufficient. Twenty of the men were left upon the shore, with orders to make their way along under cover of the bushes that skirted the bay, to a point where they could cut off any of the pirates who might take to the water, while the remaining thirty leaped into the boats, shoved off, and rowed with powerful strokes towards the brig, which lay at her old berth just under the southern cliff.

As the boats approached, Cecil could see that there was considerable movement on board the brig, and by glimpses which he was enabled to catch through the port-holes he could see

that the crew were arming themselves. Once he saw a lighted match carried along the deck, but no gun was discharged.

"Boat ahoy!" shouted Buntnell, as the boats drew near.

"We wish to board you," returned Cecil.

"For what purpose?"

"To see if you have contraband goods on board," returned our hero, whose boat was now almost alongside.

There was a hurried consultation on board the Ranger, and the words—"Let them come and search," were distinctly made out.

Cecil's three boats came alongside at the same moment, and his men began to pour in over the bulwarks. Some of the pirates would have sprang forward at once to repel the invasion, but seeing their new captain remain a silent spectator of the scene, they were for a few moments undecided what to do; but when they saw their exact position, it was too late for resistance, for their enemies outnumbered them nearly two to one, and then the strange conduct of one half their crew in a measure dumfounded

them. Some blood was spilt, but no mortal wounds were given, and in less than ten minutes after Cecil boarded, the pirates were all in subjection and securely ironed. They seemed now to comprehend that they had been duped, but ere they could spit out much of their bitter invective, they were removed to the boats, where they cursed and swore at their leisure.

"Now, Buntnell," said Cecil, while the old smugglers pressed around him with grateful looks, "where is Garl Tamell?"

"He has gone," returned the old man.

"Gone!" echoed Cecil, perfectly thunder-struck.

"Yes, he went away in his gig last night, accompanied by the surgeon and Waldron."

"But where did he go?"

"I don't know. His leaving was done while I was in my bunk, but some of our men who were on deck, say he started towards the cave, and this morning we picked the gig up adrift, nearly out to the mouth of the bay."

"Then he must have taken refuge in the cave."

"No—we've searched it in every nook and corner."

"But do not some of those fellows in the boats know where he was carried?"

"No, I think not, for they were all astonished when they found he had gone. He has evidently only given his secret into the hands of the surgeon and Waldron."

"But did they not tell you of this before you came on shore this morning?"

"No, I went away early, and the watch that had the deck when they took Tamell away, were then in their hammocks."

Cecil was troubled. If Garl Tamell should escape him now, he cared not what became of the rest. A moment he meditated, and then drawing Buntnell away from his companions, he said, in a low, earnest tone:

"Mark, will you answer me one question truly and faithfully, without prevarication or hesitation?"

"I will. Ask it."

"Do you know of any hiding-place beyond the main body of our cave?"

"As God is my judge, I do not. But why do you ask? Do you suspect?"

"No, no—I only asked because, if you have searched the cave all through, and not found the chieftain, I wondered where he could have gone."

As Cecil spoke, he turned towards the spot where stood the rest of the men, and though he spoke not further of Garl Tamell, yet a close observer might have seen by his eyes, and by the quick, flashing light that came and went upon his features, that he had a purpose, and that that purpose had a point. He spoke to his father's old crew, and he told them what he had told Mark Buntnell. He pointed out the cause and course of his actions, and he desired them to remain on board the brig till he saw them again, assuring them that the Earl of Belford had pledged his word for their safety. The men gratefully acknowledged the young man's kindness, and they promised implicit obedience to his request, and after embracing young Harry Millbank, and assuring him that he should be faithfully rewarded, Cecil stepped over the side, and in a few moments the boats put back for the shore.

It was nearly sundown when our hero reached the castle with his prisoners, and after having seen them safely disposed of in the strong vaults beneath the basement, he called aside six of the stoutest and most ready of the servants, at the head of whom stood Michael, the forester.

"Now, boys," said Cecil, "will you join me in an important expedition?"

"What is it?" asked Michael.

"'Tis to capture Garl Tamell."

"We will!" responded the six men, as if with one voice.

"Then listen, for it must be done to-night. Let each man procure himself a torch, but light them not here. I will see that means for that purpose are at hand when needed. Your arms you will look to of course."

"But where will you seek him?" asked Michael.

"Never mind now; but make haste and prepare. We will meet in the garden park in

fifteen minutes. Be secret, speak not a word of this to the others, and ere midnight I am confident the pirate chieftain will be in our hands."

The men knew by the young man's manner and tone of assurance that he had a good clue to what he sought, and with eager haste they set about the necessary preparations.

In addition to the usual arms and torches, Cecil procured a heavy battering hammer, or sledge, and two stout iron bars, which he gave to the care of some of his party, and thus equipped they set forth. The way lay once more up through the old chapel path. The water had in some places swept away huge masses of rock and earth, gorging the path to considerable depth, while in others it had heaped up impediments in the way; but steadily Cecil and his followers pushed on, and by the soft light that came from the cloudless evening sky they were enabled to easily overcome the difficulties that the flood had placed before them.

At length they reached the old chapel, and as the men followed their young leader within its precincts, they shuddered.

"Why stop we here?" asked Michael.

"Because here lays the mystery I would unravel," returned Cecil, as he drew a pistol from his belt.

"I would not like to make too free with the shade of their ghostships," remarked one of the woodmen.

"If I do not prove these ghosts to be made up of good solid flesh and blood," returned Cecil, "then I'll do penance by living here one long year. Michael, your torch is charged with brimstone, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Then let me take it."

As Cecil took the torch he applied it to the pan of the pistol he had drawn, the barrel of which was empty, it only being primed, and upon snapping the weapon the light combustible immediately took fire. The other torches were soon lighted, and as all was thus prepared, the young man took the sledge and approached the altar. His followers gazed with curious wonder

upon his movements, but gradually a dim sense of the truth began to work its way through their brains, and they gathered closely about him.

With heavy strokes Cecil sounded one after another of the flags that formed the pavement, but the dull, heavy sound that came back told that all was solid beneath. Then he tried the face of the rock that formed the back wall, but with no better success. The same solid sound was all he heard.

"Then there must be something in this altar," muttered the young man, as he turned his attention towards the massive projection.

As he spoke, he approached the altar, and bade the men stand on one side. He swung the heavy sledge over his head with a full sweep, and on the next instant it fell upon the rock. The sound was as solid as though the stroke had been made against the mountain's base, and Cecil Leland dropped the sledge in despair.

"It moved! It moved!" cried Michael, as he started forward. "I saw it tremble! Strike again!"

Quicker than thought the young man raised his sledge and poised it in the air. Again he struck, and this time, though the sound was as solid as before, he thought he saw the whole mass tremble.

"What's here?" uttered Michael, as he sprang to the altar and laid his hand upon two of the taper-stands which appeared to have been carved out from the native rock. "I saw them both move."

The torches were held over the spot, and Cecil and Michael examined the stands. In the hollow of the one nearest the front of the altar our hero thought he detected a small glistening plate, which he was enabled to reach with his finger. He pressed hard upon it, and as he did so its neighbor instantly started over an inch up from its resting-place, revealing a stout iron rod that connected it with the main stone. Cecil took hold of the raised taper-stand, and endeavored to move it; he tried it first one way and then another, and at length, on turning it he found that its connecting rod was a pivot, and

hardly had he given a three quarters revolution, when the whole massive altar began to swing out from what had always appeared the solid wall, revealing in the spot it had so effectually covered, an aperture some three feet square, below which was a flight of stone steps which at a short distance lost themselves in darkness.

Cecil's heart bounded with a quick thrill of delight, as he saw this, and he asked his men if they were willing to follow him. Not one hesitated. The spirit of adventure had now gained fast hold upon them, and they eagerly pressed forward to follow their leader. The steps by which they descended had evidently been hewn from the solid rock, though the ragged sides and roof of the narrow way told that nature had herself cut it out. There were seventy-five of these steps, but even after they were left behind, the way was still descending. Our adventurers had brought their sledge and bars with them, but yet they found no use for them, for no obstructions blocked up their novel path. Ere long, as Cecil turned an abrupt angle, the glimmer of a light was visible at some distance ahead, and halting his companions, he bade them look well to their weapons, and follow on.

The tread of the party became catlike in its silence, and with hearts beating with anxiety they slowly advanced. As they approached the spot where the light was seen, it became evident that the beams streamed through a half open massive door, which had evidently been thrown ajar to let the air into the cave beyond, as by the cool current that circulated where they now were, Cecil judged that there must be an aperture somewhere over his head.

The adventurers reached the door, which proved to be a huge rock that swung upon central pivots, and upon halting, they distinctly heard the hum of voices beyond. Cecil gave a few hurried orders, and then drawing his sword, he passed through the aperture. He found himself in a large vaulted cave, half filled with various kinds of merchandise, some of which looked as though it had laid there for ages. Upon his left, his eyes rested upon a low cot on which lay a human form, and by the side of

which sat two men, both of whom our hero instantly recognized—one as Waldron and the other as the pirate surgeon.

"Ha! ye gods! We are betrayed!" cried Waldron, seizing a cutlass that lay by his side, and springing to his feet.

"You are too late," said Cecil, as he came up with his followers. "Yield, for you are both prisoners."

"Not while life is mine!" fiercely shouted the pirate, as he placed himself upon his guard, while the surgeon followed his example.

The conflict was but a short one, for they were both surrounded, and without being wounded they were secured.

"Cecil Leland!" groaned a sepulchral voice from the cot, in accents of astonishment.

"Yes, Garl Tamell," returned the youth; "'tis Cecil Leland. When you sent your two cut-throats after me, you mistook the game you sought. They are at the castle now, safe and secure, and God be praised that you will soon join them."

"O, oh-h-h! who, who has betrayed me?" cried the pirate chieftain.

"Your own wickedness," returned Cecil. "Do you think man can long run the atrocious race you have run, and not be caught at last?"

Garl Tamell gazed a moment up into the face of his young captor—a bright flame of fire seemed to shoot across his haggard face, and then with a movement so quick that none could prevent it, he caught the cutlass that Waldron had dropped, and turned its keen point upon his own bosom, but ere he could accomplish his self-murder, Cecil wrenched the weapon from his grasp. The wicked man's life was not to be upon his own hands!

Two of Cecil's men led Waldron and the surgeon forward. A litter, scarred by age, but yet firm and strong, was found in the cave, and upon this the wasted form of the pirate chieftain was placed. The once bold, strong man groaned heavily as he was raised upon the shoulders of his bearers, and for the last time he turned his weakening gaze around upon the walls of his old haunt.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### AN ASTOUNDING DEVELOPMENT.

IT was midnight. Sir William Cleaveland still walked the floor of his apartment, for he could not sleep till he heard the result of Cecil's mission to the chapel. Ida and Annette had both sought their pillows, and though the old earl felt happy and joyous that the sweet girl had been restored to him, yet there was a deep, black cloud insensibly drawing its curtain over his soul. He could not tell whence it came, nor what was its purport, but yet he felt it clinging in cold, damp folds about him.

At length the wished-for moment arrived, and Cecil Leland entered the apartment. His face was flushed with excitement, and his step was nervous and hurried. He called up a faint smile to his features as the earl greeted him, and throwing his cap upon the floor, he lifted his sword-sheath from the way, and sunk into a chair.

"Sir William, my mission is accomplished," he uttered.

"And is Garl Tamell safe?"

"Yes, within your own castle."

"And the rest of them—"

"Are here also. Your stout walls encompass them all."

"To the Almighty God my thanks are due," ejaculated the old man, as he sunk into his own chair. "But how, how, Cecil, and where, did you find him?"

"Do you remember when I asked you concerning the former history of the castle, and of the old chapel on the cliff?"

"Yes, yes," returned the earl.

"Well, I had reasons, as I then partially told you, for desiring such information. The night that Ida and myself took refuge in the chapel from the storm, while we sat upon one of the side benches, a human form, enveloped in a long black robe, entered, and while I supported Ida, it disappeared near the altar. By the glare of the lightning I caught a view of the figure's face, and I thought I recognized the features of my father. That must have been an image of my own brain—the resemblance I mean—but still I resolved to search. I did so, but could find nothing. Subsequent to that I had a conversation with my mother on the sub-

ject, and though she denied me any knowledge, yet I knew that she had possession of facts of which she would not tell me. When I learned from you the character of some of the former occupants of the castle, and also of the peculiar state of the chapel when you took possession, I at once made up my mind that there was some means of communication between the chapel and the bay, and I resolved to search it out. Yesterday, when I learned that Tamell had escaped from the brig, they told me his boat steered in the direction of the smugglers' cave, but that they had searched the cave throughout and could not find him. Then I knew that he had a secret passage beyond that cave, and I resolved to do as I have already done."

The young man then explained how he had found out the secret of the altar, and the manner in which he had captured Tamell and his two companions.

"But the rest of the crew must have known of this secret," said the earl, as soon as he recovered somewhat from the astonishment Cecil's narrative had occasioned.

"No, I think 'twas Tamell's own secret, unless, indeed, Waldron and his surgeon were his confidants, for those two were his particular friends, and they generally accompanied him when he made excursions ashore."

"But from your account this must have been for a long time a rendezvous of free traders?"

"Yes, for if I can judge, most of the goods I saw there must have been stored for many years."

"'Tis strange that I should have never known this."

"Not at all," said Cecil, "for one might live here a century and not discover it. The secret was most artfully contrived. But I hope yet to gain more intelligence."

"Where have you placed Tamell?" asked the earl, at the end of another pause.

"In the same chamber with my mother. You know the apartment is separated by a heavy arras, and we placed him there so that the physician might have less trouble. But how is my mother?"

"I heard from her two hours ago, and she was then quite comfortable, but yet too weak to talk. Her reason has returned to her, and she has asked for you several times. There seems to be some strange remorse gnawing at her heart, but what it is we cannot ascertain."

"Ah," murmured Cecil, "I fear there are many sources of remorse for my poor mother. Would that God could blot them all out before she dies, for otherwise she will carry to his throne a fearfully blackened soul!"

For several moments the old earl sat in deep thought, but at length he started up from his chair, uttering, as he did so:

"Cecil, I must see Garl Tamell, ere I sleep."

"Then come. We will both go."

Cecil led the way to the apartment where the pirate chieftain lay. The earl followed close behind him, and ere long they stood by the fallen man's bed. The old physician was there in attendance. Tamell heard the approaching footsteps, and he turned heavily upon his pillow to see who had come. His gaze rested upon the aged features of Sir William, and with a deep, painful groan he closed his eyes.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed the earl, as he half started forward, "I've seen those features before!"

Again the pirate chieftain opened his eyes and gazed upon the old man.

"Speak!" uttered Sir William. "Whoever thou art, speak and let me know."

"I can live but a short time," said the pirate, in a low, painful tone; "but if 'twould afford you gratification to know me, you shall be satisfied."

As the pirate spoke, he raised his right hand to his face. It trembled there for a moment, but 'twas only for a moment, for on the next he seized the black shaggy hair and beard that covered his face and head, and with a quick movement he tore them away. A score of years seemed blotted out from his life-book by the transformation, and the sandy hair that had been thus confined, dropped lazily upon his pale brow and temples.

Sir William gazed upon those features, and for the moment he seemed like one in a dream, for he closed his eyes, and pressed his hand upon his brow; but again he looked, he stepped nearer to the bed, and placed his hand upon the pirate's brow. For a full minute that vein-marked hand remained there, and when it was withdrawn, the old earl sank forward upon the bed, and a heart-rending exclamation broke from his lips:

"My son! My son!"

Cecil Leland was thunder-struck, but he soon realized his full senses, for though his mind had not prepared itself for this, yet he was looking for some strange and astounding development.

"O," murmured he whom we have so long known as Garl Tamell, but who was none other than Lord John Cleaveland, as he turned a fiery glance upon Cecil, "I could die in peace if you had gone before me. You have stung me, trampled upon me, and now you exult in my downfall; but you can never enjoy the sweets of which you have robbed me. My father dares not give you Ida Stanley's hand. O, may curses light upon you, and wither you in your youth!"

"O, John, John!" uttered the old man, as he started back from the bed, "why have you stung me thus?"

"Tis you who have stung yourself. Why did you set that hound upon me?" returned the pirate, in weakening tones. "You sent me to Oxford while I wished to join the navy. I had a good opportunity, and you refused me. The sea was open in more ways than one, and I embraced the opportunity that I could, and I became what I am. While you thought me plodding through the trash of a university, I was cleaving the blue sea under a free flag. I'll die as I have lived, afraid of no one. O, curses, curses on you, Cecil Leland!"

"O, oh—oh," groaned the old man, and he would have fallen but for the supporting arms of Cecil.

The pirate had fallen back exhausted, and casting one more look upon his strangely altered features, Cecil bore the old earl to his own

apartment, where he chafed his brow and temples till he brought him to.

"Cecil," murmured the old man, while he put out his hand as if to feel that he really spoke to flesh and blood, "have I been dreaming?"

"I know not what you may have dreamed," returned the young man, in a tremulous tone, "but you have witnessed a fearful reality."

"But that room—that pirate chieftain, I saw him, Cecil."

"Yes, Sir William."

"And 'twas my own son?"

"Yes, yes."

"O, God! Would that the cold grave had opened to receive me, before I had known this!"

"Be calm, Sir William. Remember that 'twas no fault of yours. The sin is all his own."

"The fault—but O, the shame—the deep, the blasting misery of this foul stain upon the fair fame of my house! Friendless and childless I shall pass away!"

"Say not friendless," urged Cecil, as he laid the old man's head upon his bosom, and swept the long white locks back from his temples. "Ida is still left to you, and she has heart enough for all your love."

"Poor Ida," ejaculated the earl, as he sunk back once more into his chair, "how will her tender heart bear this blow?"

"I think she will suffer, but not irrecoverably, for John has been cruel, very cruel, to her."

"He has, he has, Cecil."

As the earl thus spoke, he fell into a fit of painful thought, which lasted some minutes, and when he at length raised his head he looked more calm, more composed, though the sadness had settled heavily about his heart.

"Cecil," said he, "'tis strange—almost passing belief—that John could have done this so long and I not have known it?"

"Have you not always trusted to his own account of his doings?"

"Yes, yes, but O, I thought not he could have deceived his poor old father."

"His method of deception, then," said Cecil, "was easy. His disguise made him look much older than he really was, and then the very anomaly of such a truth shielded him, perhaps, when his disguise alone might have failed, for none would dare to think that Lord John and the bloody Garl Tamell were one and the same person. Three or four times a year he would leave the brig and be gone a week, and on such occasions—I see it now—he would throw off his disguise, come to the castle, and pretend that he had just arrived from Oxford."

"I see, I see," exclaimed Sir William. "O, what misery! And even now, upon the very brink of the grave, he is impious still!"

"Come, Sir William, you had better seek your rest now. Sleep may revive you. In the

morning we will see what shall be done with the other prisoners."

"I may seek my bed," murmured the old man, "but there's no sleep there for me. You may sleep, Cecil, but it has fled from my pillow, and perhaps for aye. Go, go, for I know you must be fatigued. In the morning I will see John again. If he will but repent—if he can die penitent, part of my grief may be removed. Good night, Cecil."

The young man returned the warm "good night," and then he left the room, but ere he had closed the door behind him he heard the old earl sob, and he knew that he was weeping. Ah, what a load of sorrow had fallen upon that aged heart!

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### CONCLUSION.

ON the next morning all was mingled grief and consternation in the old castle; but none of that grief was for Lord John Cleaveland—except, indeed, such as dwelt within the bosoms of the old earl and his fair ward; but none others could feel for him, for towards them all he had ever been haughty and overbearing. Yet all were astounded at the development that had been made, and a cold shudder crept through the souls of the servants as they told to each other the bloody deeds of Lord John.

With feeble, tottering steps, the earl sought the bedside of his son. His aged face was calm, though wet by many tears, and his eyes were cast in a prayerful, supplicating mould. He approached the cot whereon lay the wasted form of the fallen chieftain, and tremblingly he laid his hand upon the pale brow. John started

as he felt the touch, and slowly he turned his head towards his father.

"Ah," he uttered, in a low, sepulchral tone, "you've come to see me once more, but you needn't think to make amends now for all that you've done against me."

"O, my son, speak not so!" exclaimed the old man, in sudden agony. "What, what, have I ever done to harm thee? what to wrong or offend thee?"

"Were you not always cold—always stern, and always harsh towards me?"

"No, no! As God is my judge, I was not. I have been strict, John, and I've often had to chide you, for you were wayward and unruly; but I was never unkind—never ungenerous."

"Did you not join Ida Stanley against me?"

"No."

"When she refused her hand to me, you winked at her disobedience."

A quick flush passed over the old man's face as John thus spoke, even as though a viper had stung him.

"O, thank God," he murmured, "that that sweet flower was not placed under your charge. What a heart must yours be, to dictate such feelings at such a time as this? Would you place that blood-stained hand of yours upon Ida's arm and claim her as your bride? Could you calmly press her pure form to your sin-laden bosom and ask her to share your miserable lot?"

"Did I not try it?" uttered John, in a sort of hissing tone. "Would I? Ay, ere I would be trampled upon by such as she, I'd drag her even to a worse fate than that of my wife. I relented somewhat when I was first wounded, but had I known that Cecil Leland lived, she never should have returned to you."

"O, my son, my son! I came now to see if I could not find repentance in your heart. The holy father of our castle will attend you, and O, John, let your soul turn towards your God ere you die."

"Bring no priest to me, I only repent that I had not killed young Leland!"

The old earl started back aghast. He could hardly credit the evidence of his own senses. He could not conceive how a dying man could thus profane every principle of humanity—and that man, too, his own son. He gazed upon the face of the wicked being, and then, with his heart almost bursting with its fill of grief, he turned from the scene. He would have spoken one word more—he would have fallen upon his knees and prayed for his boy—but he dared not trust his heart further. He feared that he should only be met by scoffs, and that he could bear no more.

The old earl passed out from the place, but instead of seeking his own room, he descended to the court-yard. The servants bowed low as he walked slowly by them, and many an eye was wet as it rested upon that sorrowing old man, for all loved him, he was so good and kind to all.

Not long had he walked thus when he felt a light touch upon his arm, and on turning he beheld Ida Stanley. She threw her arms about her guardian's neck, and their tears were mingled together. Sir William could weep now, for the gentle sympathy of his sweet ward broke open afresh the warm fountains of his soul, and as he gazed into the pure, heavenly features that were turned so affectionately upon him, he forgot that he who could so have wronged her was his own son.

"Have you seen Cecil this morning?" asked Sir William, as they approached the extremity of the court.

"I met him, but he was hastening to his mother's room, and I did not stop him."

"Cecil is a noble youth, Ida."

"He is a good man," murmured the fair girl, as her eyes fell to the ground.

She felt a drop upon her hand, and on looking up she found that the earl was weeping afresh. She would have spoken, but at that moment Cecil Leland joined them.

"Sir William," said the young man, "my mother desires your presence in her chamber; and you, too, Ida."

"For what purpose?" asked the earl, wiping the tears from his eyes.

"I know not," returned Cecil. "She feels that she is dying, and she desires to see you. Something weighs hard upon her mind. Come quickly, for I feel that what she has to say may have much interest for you."

"Lead the way, Cecil, and Ida and myself will follow."

Margaret Leland lay upon the bed where she had been placed on that fearful night when she was brought into the castle, and though she had suffered much, yet at the present time her body had put off its pain. She was weak, and though wasted and wan, still her dark eyes burned as brightly as ever. A strange expression rested upon her countenance, and over and anon a quick flush would pass across it.

Her son returned to her bedside, and with him came Sir William and Ida.

"Is not Carl Tamell beyond that arras?" asked Mrs. Leland, as she pointed to where the heavy crimson drapery hung across the apartment, dividing it in halves.

"Lord John Cleaveland is there," returned the old earl, with a shudder.

"Never mind," said the invalid, with a strange look, "he is as much Carl Tamell now as he ever was. But I would have his couch moved nearer to me. Let that arras be withdrawn, and roll his bed upon this side."

The physician was in attendance, and he and Cecil complied with the curious request. The pirate chieftain gazed upon Margaret Leland, and one could have plainly seen that he wondered what it all meant.

"Sir William Cleaveland," said the widow, as soon as all was arranged to her liking, "I feel that the finger of death is upon me; but before I leave this earth, I would make some slight reparation for the sins I have committed; first, however, I will clear up one thing that must appear to you a mystery, and that is, the secret of the old chapel. This I would never have done, had you not already discovered it. My husband learned the secret of the caves between the bay and the cliff from an old smuggler

captain who preceded him, and as it was one of so much importance he never communicated it to any one till he lay upon his death-bed, and then he left it with me. Had occasion of safety required of him that he should have taken his crew in there he would not have hesitated, but none such occurred, and so he kept his own counsel. When he left the secret with me, he left it for Cecil if I should find him trustworthy, but I found his heart was alienated from the smugglers' interests, and I would not trust him with the secret. By the time I had made this determination, Carl Tamell was captain of the brig. He was young, but I found he had a heart as hard as flint, and I gave him the secret. His disguise was well chosen, for it made him look like an older man, but I knew him at a glance."

"You did not know me," exclaimed the pirate, half-raising himself upon his elbow, even his curiosity excited.

"I did, Carl. But wait till you hear all. On that fearful night that I went up to the chapel, I wished to assure myself that you, Cecil, had not penetrated the secret, and the rest of that you know. You risked your own life to save mine, even though you had reason to believe that I had been accessory, at least, to an attempt for your murder."

"O, mother," exclaimed the young man, "I cannot believe you so guilty."

"Never mind that," returned Mrs. Leland. "I am guilty enough, God knows; but now to another subject. Sir William Cleaveland, to you I would speak. Listen."

The old earl drew near to the bed, and bent his head in earnest anxiety. A cold shudder seemed to shake the poor woman's frame, and for a moment she covered her face with her hands.

"Sir William," she said, at length, "you know that from the time I was a mere child, to the age of womanhood, I lived beneath your roof?"

"Yes, yes, Margaret, I know it," returned the earl.

"And do you remember why I left?"

"I think you were turned away."

"Do you not know that I was turned away?"

"Yes, for I gave the orders."

"You sent them. You were at that time in France."

"Yes, yes, I remember."

"I was about to become a mother, and the countess, your wife, swore that I was dishonored."

"So she wrote me, and I sent word back for her to discharge you."

"Ay, and so she did, but I was not dishonored, for I was lawfully married, and so I solemnly swore, but they would not believe me. I was taunted with a shame that belonged not to me."

"But why did you not confess who was your husband?"

"Because he was the young captain of the notorious Northumberland smugglers, and I feared for his safety. I loved him for the very wayward life he led, and determined not to expose him."

"But you know you were obliged, after all, to acknowledge him."

"Yes, when I found that he was safe in his haunts, I did, but I dared not then. I loved Murtell Leland, and you denounced him as an outlaw."

"I never raised my power against him."

"I know it, but still you stung my heart by your language. You wrote that if I was dishonored, I must go, and you wrote, too, that if I had married any of those miserable outlaws that swarmed the coast, I must leave your roof. Then when you came home, I met you in the forest, and you taunted me with my husband's crimes."

"Why, why bring up these things now?" urged the old earl. "Have I not made amends for all my harshness by my kindness to your boy? Have I not treated him like an own child?"

A dark smile played over the widow's features, and for a moment she closed her eyes as if she would look through her memory upon the past.

"Sir William Cleaveland," she said at length, "my child was born in your stable at midnight, and the surgeon of my husband's vessel was with me."

"Do you speak the truth, woman?" exclaimed the old man. "Were you in such needy circumstances as that?"

"Ha, ha—I chose that place, Sir William, for on the same night your wife gave birth to a boy!"

"Woman! Speak!—What!—No, no."

"Sir William," continued Margaret Leland, without seeming to notice the old man's sudden ejaculation, "do you remember the features you bore when you were in your youth?"

"I have them in my gallery."

"Now look upon yonder bed, and tell me if you see any of them there?"

Instinctively the earl cast his eyes towards the pirate chieftain, and a fearful tremor shook his frame.

"No, no," he uttered, "they were never there."

"Look now upon that fair form at your side."

The woman raised her bony hand towards Cecil as she spoke, and the old man followed the direction thus given. He trembled and turned pale. A mountain seemed heaving within his bosom. He gasped for breath, but his tongue could find no utterance.

"Cecil," said Mrs. Leland, without seeming to notice the powerful emotion of the earl, "do you remember that night when you sought shelter in the old chapel? You told me of it."

"Yes, yes—I remember."

"And you remember, by the livid glare of the lightning, of having seen one whom you thought to be your father?"

"Yes," breathlessly answered Cecil.

"Look now upon Garl Tamell, and say if those are not the features you saw?"

"By all that's true, they are!" exclaimed the young man, as he cast upon the buccancer a searching look.

"Woman," cried the old earl, in a half frantic tone, "explain this mystery. By all you hope for in heaven, I implore you."

"I hope but for little there, Sir William," returned Mrs. Leland, in weakening accents, "but yet I will explain all this. When I was turned from your doors, I swore to be revenged. The night that I knew my child was to be born I went to your stable. When I found that the countess was also delivered of a boy, I bribed a woman of my own class—the wife of one of the smugglers—to assist me. She worked her way into the castle with my own boy under her shawl, and when she returned she had left

mine and brought me yours. The infants were changed, and when your wife received back from the hands of the midwives the little being that was to nurse at her bosom, she took to her embrace the smuggler's child! What I had at first meant for revenge, my mother's heart cherished as the good of her boy, for I hoped to see him the lord of these wide domains; but alas! my wickedness could not thrive—my child inherited his father's waywardness and his mother's sternness of will and hardness of heart. Cecil, forgive me for the part I've done. Your soul was too pure, too noble for the herd in whose company you were reared, while my own child was not fit for the place I would have made his own. Sir William, take back your boy—for Cecil is indeed your son. Your heart has ever yearned towards him, though you knew not why, and it is only strange to me that you had not discovered your own remarkable likeness in him. As for my own son, he will soon follow his mother, and I trust that God, in his infinite mercy, may have compassion on our souls."

The old man turned towards Cecil, and while the warm tears trickled down his cheeks, he opened wide his arms, and his new found son was clasped to his beating bosom. The gentle Ida, too, laid her head upon her guardian's shoulder, and her right arm was wound around the neck of Cecil. Their tears of gratitude and joy flowed freely, and their hearts beat in a holy unison.

"O," murmured the old man, as he raised his eyes and gazed into the face of Cecil, "how blind must I have been. O, my son, my son! My noble, noble boy!"

But the happy trio were interrupted.

"Foul fiends! What tale is this?" exclaimed Garl Tamell, who had, by an almost superhuman exertion, raised himself to a sitting posture in his bed. "Margaret Leland, what sorcery are you conjuring now?"

"It is no sorcery, Garl," weakly replied the dying woman. "Your own heart must tell you that I speak the truth. Let us both ask pardon of Him alone who can now grant it."

"And I—I—am after all, but a—" the pirate did not speak further, but a strange light glared lividly upon his features, every muscle in his system seemed strung to its utmost capacity, and with his eyes half starting from their sockets, he sprang from his bed. He put forth his hands and started towards the bed of his true mother. Half the way had he gained, when his eyes rolled wildly—his steps faltered, and his head half sunk upon his bosom. Still his arms were stretched forth, and he staggered on. He fell across the couch of his mother! Margaret Leland uttered one low, rattling groan, one arm was half stretched out, but it fell powerless ere it reached its object.

Cecil led the gentle Ida from the apartment, and then he returned and approached the doubly laden bed. Sir William stood by his side, and silently they gazed upon the scene. That bed supported only two cold clods of earth! The spirits that had animated them were passed away, for almost at the same moment had the souls of both mother and son taken their flight to that world where sin can never hide itself, and where, as here, God rules as seemeth to him good.

Cecil laid his hand upon the brow of her whom he had always thought his mother, and raising his eyes to heaven, he murmured:

"Great God, have mercy on her soul!"

"O, and on thine, too!" ejaculated the old earl, as he cast a shuddering glance upon the form of the pirate chieftain.

Again a beautiful Sabbath morning dawned in loveliness upon the old castle. There had been busy scenes there, and stirring ones, too. The pirate gang had been all given up to the hands of justice. Margaret Leland and her son had been interred in a quiet spot back of the garden park, where the dews of heaven alone shed tears upon their graves, for none could weep, none could sorrow, that they had gone from the world of the living.

Mark Buntnell had given up the brig into the hands of the earl, but the government never gained possession of her, for shortly after the smugglers left her she sunk beneath the bosom of the deep waters of her old haunt. She may have been scuttled, or she may have sank from age; but at all events, after the Northumberland smugglers left her decks they were never trod by human footsteps more.

The old smuggler's crew were scattered here and there. Some went to tilling the soil, some still followed the sea, and some sought the shelter of other lands and other laws. Harry Millbank, the faithful boy, alone remained in Northumberland, and he was domiciled as the page of the young Lord Cecil, at the castle.

Some quaint old relics were found in the vaults between the chapel and the bay, and much wealth was stored there, too, but the old earl kept it all for his son, for to him it of right belonged. The race that had garnered it there, had passed away, and no representatives had been left behind.

The vast hall of the old castle was crowded. The priest was there, and a happy smile lighted up his serene countenance as he gazed around upon the scene. The servants, both young and old, looked happy, and joyousness seemed to reign supreme.

The young Lord Cecil Cleaveland (the old earl could call him nought but Cecil), led Ida Stanley forward to the altar, and while all gazed in love and sympathy upon that beautiful pair, the holy father pronounced that magic decree that made them one for life. Together the young husband and wife knelt, and as the

priest concluded, the old earl stepped quickly forward. Happy tears trickled down his furrowed cheeks, and a bright smile dwelt upon his features. He placed his hands upon the heads of his son and daughter and raised his eyes to heaven. His lips moved, and though no audible sound came forth, yet, as the smile upon his features grew to a flood of heavenly light, and the pearly tears became mere sparkling and bright, all knew that that joyful old man was calling down the choicest of heaven's blessings upon those two pure and noble souls.

THE END.

Jax