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Among the Brigands

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CHAPTER I.

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Mr. Moses V. Sprole had passed the greater part of his life in his native village, and being anxious to see the world, resolved upon a tour in Europe. As he did not care to go alone, he offered to take with him his four nephews, who were great favorites with their bachelor uncle, and his chief associates. This

offer met with an eager response from the boys, and a willing assent from their parents, who fully believed that a tour of this description would be of immense benefit to them. This brief explanation will serve to account for the appearance of Uncle Moses in Naples, where he landed on a mellow day in February, *en route* for Switzerland, bowed down with the responsibility of several heavy trunks, and the still heavier responsibility of four fine lumps of boys, of whose troubles, trials, tribulations, and manifold adventures, he seemed, on the present occasion, to have a mournful presentiment.

These troubles began at once; for scarcely had they landed when they found themselves surrounded by the lazzaroni, and the air was filled with a babel of exclamations.

"*Signori!*" "*Signo!*" "*Moosoo!*" "*Meestaire!*" "*Sare!*" "*Carra ze baggage!*" "*Tek ze loggage!*" "*Show ze hotel!*" "*Hotel della Europa!*" "*Hotel dell' Inghelterra!*" "*Hotel dell' America!*" "*Eccelenza, you wanta good, naisy, rosbif, you comma longsida me!*" "*Come long!*" "*Hurrah!*" "*Bravo!*" "*O, yais.*" "*Ver nais.*" "*O, yais. You know me. American Meestaire!*"

All this, and ever so much more, together with scraps of French, German, Bohemian, Hungarian, Russian, and several other languages which the lazzaroni had picked up for the purpose of making themselves agreeable to foreigners. They surrounded Uncle Moses and his four boys in a dense crowd —grinning, chattering, gesticulating, dancing, pushing, jumping, and grimacing, as only Neapolitan lazzaroni can; and they tried to get hold of the luggage that lay upon the wharf.

Bagged, hatless, shirtless, blessed with but one pair of trousers per man; bearded, dirty, noisy; yet fat and good-natured withal; the lazzaroni produced a startling effect upon the newly arrived travellers.

Uncle Moses soon grew utterly bewildered by the noise and disorder. One idea, however, was prominent in his mind, and that was his luggage. He had heard of Italian brigands. At the sight of this crowd, all that he had beard on that subject came back before him. "Rinaldo Rinaldini," a charming brigand book, which had been the delight of his childhood, now stood out clear in his recollection. The lazzaroni seemed to be a crowd of bandits, filled with but one purpose, and that was to seize the luggage. The efforts of the lazzaroni to get the trunks roused him to action. Springing forward, he struck their hands away with a formidable cotton umbrella, and drew the trunks together in a pile. Three lay in a row, and one was on the top of these. The pile was a small pyramid.

"Here, boys," he cried; "you keep by me, Don't let these varmints get the trunks. Sit down on 'em, and keep 'em off."

Saying this, Uncle Moses put the two Clark boys on a trunk on one side, and the two Wilmot boys on a trunk on the other; and mounting himself upon the middle trunk, he sat down and glared defiantly at the enemy.

This action was greeted by the lazzaroni with a burst of laughter and a shout of,—

"Br-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-ra-vo!"

To which Uncle Moses and the boys made no reply. In fact, it would have been a little difficult for them to do so, as not one of them understood a word of any language spoken among men except their own. So they said nothing; but constituting themselves into a beleaguered garrison, they intrenched themselves within their citadel, and bade defiance to the foe.

The foe, on the other hand, pressed round them, bombarding the garrison with broken English, broken French, and broken German, and sometimes made an assault upon the trunks.

Time passed on, and the garrison sat there, holding their own. At length they all became aware of the fact that they were excessively hungry. It was very evident that this kind of thing could not last much longer.

Meanwhile Uncle Moses had recovered his presence of mind. He was naturally cool and self-possessed, and after mounting the trunks, and gathering the boys about him, he quickly rallied from his confusion, and looked eagerly around to find some way by which he might be extricated from his difficulty.

At last a way appeared.

Around him, in his immediate neighborhood, stood the lazzaroni, as urgent, as patient, and as aggressive as ever, with their offers of assistance. Beyond these were people passing up and down the wharf, all of whom were foreigners, and therefore inaccessible. Beyond these again was a wide space, and in the distance a busy street, with carriages driving to and fro.

Uncle Moses looked for a long time, hoping to see something like a cab. In vain. They all seemed to

him to be "one-hoss shays," and what was worse, all seemed to be filled.

"Boys," said he at last, "I'm goin' to make a move. You jest sit here, and hold on to the trunks. I'll go an hunt up one of them one-hoss shays. There ain't nothin' else that I can do. Hold on now, hard and fast, till I come back."

With these words off went Uncle Moses, and the boys remained behind, waiting.

A very fine-looking set of boys they were too.

There was Frank Wilmot, about fifteen years of age, tall, stout, with fine, frank face, and crisp, curly hair.

There was Clive Wilmot, about fourteen, tall and slight, with large eyes and dark hair.

There was David Clark, about Frank's age, rather pale, with serious face, and quiet, thoughtful manner.

And there was Robert, or, as he was always called, Bob Clark—an odd-looking boy, with a bullet head, pug nose, comical face, brown eyes, and short shingled hair.

Uncle Moses was not gone long. By some wonderful means or other he had succeeded in procuring a vehicle of that kind which is universal in this city, and he now reappeared to the delighted boys, coming at a tearing pace towards them, seated in a Neapolitan caleche.

The Neapolitan caleche is a wonderful machine, quite unequalled among wheeled vehicles. The wheels are far back, the shafts are long, and horse draws it. But in the caleche it is a very common thing for any quantity of people to pile themselves. There is a seat for two, which is generally occupied by the most, worthy, perhaps; but all around them cluster others,—behind them, before them, and on each side of them,—clinging to the shafts, standing on the axle, hanging on the springs. Indeed, I have heard of babies being slung underneath, in baskets; but I don't believe that.

At any rate, Uncle Moses and his party all tumbled in triumphantly. Two trunks were put in front, one behind, and one suspended underneath. David and Clive sat behind, Frank and Uncle Moses on the seat, while Bob sat on the trunk in front, with the driver. The lazzaroni looked on with mournful faces, but still proffered their services. In patient perseverance few people can equal them.

The driver saw at once the purpose of the Americans, though they could not tell him what they wanted. So he drove them to a hotel in the Strada Toledo, where he left them, after having been paid by Uncle Moses the largest fare he had ever received in his life; for Uncle Moses gave him about five dollars, and felt grateful to him besides.

Their apartments were very nice rooms in the sixth story. The hotel was a quadrangular edifice, with a spacious court-yard. Around this court-yard ran galleries, opening into each story, and communicating with one another by stairways, which were used by all the occupants of the house.

From the gallery in the sixth story a door opened into their parlor. On the left side of this was a snug bedroom, of which Uncle Moses took possession; on the right side was another, which was appropriated by David and Clive; while the third, which was on the other side, and looked out into the street, was taken by Frank and Bob.

Thus the four boys paired off, and made themselves very comfortable..

That night they all went to bed early. Uncle Moses retired last.
All slept soundly, for they were very much fatigued.

But just before daybreak, and in the dim morning twilight, Frank and Bob were suddenly roused by a most tremendous uproar in the parlor—kicks, thumps, tables upsetting, chairs breaking, and a general row going on; in the midst of which din arose the voice of David, calling frantically upon themselves and Uncle Moses.

This was certainly enough to rouse anybody.

Up jumped Frank, and rushed to the door.

Up jumped Bob, and sprang after him.

The noise outside was outrageous. What was it? Could it be robbers?
No. Robbers would prefer to do their work in silence. What was it?

Slowly and cautiously Frank opened the door, and looked forth into the parlor. It was as yet quite dark, and the room into which he peered was wrapped in the shades of night. What little he could see he saw but indistinctly. Yet he saw something.

He saw a dark, shadowy figure in rapid motion backward and forward, and at every movement some article of furniture would go with a crash to the floor. Sometimes the figure seemed to be on the table, at other times it was leaping in the air. Suddenly, as he looked, the door, which opened out into the parlor, was banged back with a violent blow, and shut again. Frank was nearly knocked down.

"What is it?" asked Bob.

"I don't know," said Frank, "unless it's a madman."

"What shall we do?"

"If we were all together," said Frank, "we might make a rush at him, and secure him. I've a great mind to make a start, as it is."

"It must be a brigand!" said Bob; for his mind, like the minds of the rest of the party, was largely filled with images of Italian bandits.

"Perhaps so," said Frank; "but at any rate let's make a rush at him. Will you do it?"

"Of course," said Bob.

At this Frank carefully opened the door again, and looked forth.
The noise had ceased for the time. Bob poked his head forth also.
They looked eagerly into the room.

Suddenly Frank touched Bob.

"Look!" he whispered, "by the table."

Bob looked.

It was certainly a singular sight that met their view. In the midst of the gloom they could see two balls of light that seemed like eyes, though there was no form visible to which these glaring, fiery eyes might belong. And the eyes seemed to glare out of the darkness directly at them. All was still now; but the very stillness gave additional horror to that unseen being, whose dread gaze seemed to be fastened upon them.

Suddenly David's voice was heard from the next room,—

"Frank! Bob!"

"Hallo!" cried both boys.

"What shall we do? Can't you do something?"

"I'll see," cried Frank. "Bob, light the lamp."

"I haven't any matches," said Bob.

"What a pity!" said David. "Can't you wake Uncle Moses? Your room is next to his."

At this Bob went to the wall between his room and that of Uncle Moses, and began to pound with all his might. Uncle Moses did not respond, but there came a response from another quarter. It was from the thing in the parlor. Once more the fearful uproar began. Crash! went the chairs. Bang! went the tables. A rapid racket of hard footfalls succeeded, mingled with the smash of the furniture.

Frank closed the door.

"If I only had a light," said he, "I should know what to do. But what can a fellow do in the dark?"

"I wonder what's the matter with Uncle Moses."

"He? O, he would sleep through anything."

"I wonder if it is a brigand, after all," said Bob.

"I don't know. I still think it may be a madman."

"I don't like those glaring eyes."

"If I only had a fair chance, and could see," said Frank, fiercely,
"I'd soon find out what is behind those glaring eyes."

Louder grew the din while they were speaking—the rattle, the bang, the smash, the general confusion of deafening sounds.

"I should like to know," said Frank, coolly, "how much longer this sort of thing is going to last."

For some time longer the boys kept the door shut, and the noise at length ceased as suddenly as it had begun. It had now grown much lighter, for in these southern countries twilight, whether in the morning or the evening, is but of short duration, and light advances or retires with a rapidity which is startling to the natives of more northern latitudes.

This increase of light gave fresh courage to Frank, who, even in the dark, and in the face of the mystery, had behaved very well; and he began to arrange a plan of action. His arrangements were soon completed. He simply drew a jackknife from his pocket, and opened it.

"Now, Bob," said he, "you follow me."

"All right," said Bob, cheerily.

Frank quietly opened the door, and looked forth, while Bob, in eager curiosity, looked out the same instant. There was now sufficient light for them to see every object in the room. A scene of wild disorder revealed itself. All the furniture was turned topsy-turvy. The door leading to the gallery was open, and there, before their eyes, standing on the sofa, was the being that had created such excitement.

One look was enough.

One cry escaped both the boys:—

"A billy goat! A miserable billy goat!" cried they.

And the next moment both of them sprang forward and seized the animal by the horns.

Then began a struggle. The goat was strong. He was also excited by the singularity of his surroundings and the suddenness of the attack. So he showed fight, and resisted desperately. Frank and Bob, however, clung most tenaciously to the horns which they had seized. Backward and forward the combatants pushed and dragged one another, with a new uproar as loud as the previous one.

In the midst of this they were interrupted by the appearance of
Uncle Moses.

The door of his room opened, and that venerable personage made his appearance in a long night-gown, which reached to his heels, and wearing a long, starched night-cap, which nearly touched the ceiling.

"Wal, I never!" was his ejaculation. "What's this, boys? Why, whatever *air* you doin' with that thar goat?"

The boys returned no answer, for they were struggling with their enemy. By this time David and Clive made their appearance, and each seized one of the goat's hind legs. This additional help decided the contest. The animal was thrown down and held there, still kicking and struggling violently.

Scarcely had they taken breath when there was another interruption. This time it was at the outside door. A burly Italian made his appearance there—very brown, very bearded, very dirty, and very unsavory. For some time he stood without saying one word, staring into the room, and fixing his eyes now on the goat as it was held down by the boys, again on the broken furniture, and finally on the long, and somewhat ghostly figure of Uncle Moses.

"*Santissima Madre!*"

This Was the exclamation that at last burst from the big, burly, brown, bearded, dirty, and unsavory Italian. At this the boys looked up, unconsciously loosening their grasp as they did so. The goat, feeling the grasp relax, made a mighty effort, and rolled over. Then he leaped to his feet. Then he made a wild bound to the door, over the prostrate forms of David and Clive. The big, burly, brown, bearded, dirty, and unsavory Italian made an effort to evade the animal's charge. He was not quick enough. Down he went, struck full in the breast, and away went the goat into the gallery, and down the stairs, and so into

the outer world.

CHAPTER II.

How in the World did it get there?—A joyous Ride.—Hark! Hark! The Dogs do bark! Beggars come to Town; some in Rags, some in Tags, and some in a tattered Gown!—A pleasant Meditation on a classic Past very rudely, unexpectedly, and even savagely interrupted, and likely to terminate in a Tragedy!—Perilous Position of David and Clive.

Fortunately, no bones were broken. The Italian slowly picked himself up, and casting a stupid look at the boys, moved slowly away, leaving the occupants of the standing there in their night-clothes, and earnestly discussing the question,—How in the world did the goat get there?

This was indeed a knotty question, till at length it was unravelled by Uncle Moses.

"Wal, I declar," said he, "ef I didn't go an leave the door open."

"You!" cried all.

"Yes," said he. "You see it was dreadful close an suffocatin last night; so when you went to bed, I jest left that door open to cool off. Then I went off to bed, and forgot all about it."

That was clear enough as far as it went, but still it did not account for the presence of a goat in the sixth story of a hotel. This they found out afterwards. That very day they saw flocks of goats being driven about from house to house. At other times they saw goats in their own hotel. They were hoisted up to the various stories, milked, and left to find their way down themselves. The fashion of using goat's milk was universal, and this was the simple way in which families were supplied. As to their visitor, the billy goat, he was undoubtedly the patriarch of some flock, who had wandered up stairs himself, perhaps in a fit of idle curiosity.

"If it hadn't been dark," said Frank. "If it hadn't been so abominably dark!"

"We were like Ajax," said David,—who was a bit of a pedant, and dealt largely in classical allusions,—"we were like Ajax, you know:—

'Give as but light, and let as *see* our foes,
We'll bravely fall, though Jove himself oppose.'"

"O, that's all very well," said Uncle Moses; "but who's goin to pay for all that thar furnitoor? The goat can't."

"Uncle Moses," said Bob, gravely, "there's a great deal in what you say."

Uncle Moses turned away with a look of concern in his mild face, and retreated into his room.

(It may as well be stated here, that Uncle Moses had to pay for that furniture. The landlord called up an interpreter, and they had a long and somewhat exciting interview. It ended in the landlord's recovering a sum of money which was sufficient to furnish a whole suit of apartments in another part of the house.)

Being now fairly introduced to Naples, the boys were all eager to see the place and its surroundings, and Uncle Moses was quite willing to gratify them in any way. So they hired a carriage, found a guide, named Michael Angelo, who could speak English, and, thus equipped, they set out first for Baiae.

Through the city they went, through the crowded streets; past the palaces, cathedrals, gardens; past the towers, castles, and quays; till at last there arose before them the mighty Grotto of Posilipo. Through this they drove, looking in astonishment at its vast dimensions, and also at the crowds of people who were passing through it, on foot, on horseback, and on wheels. Then they came to Pozzuoli, the place where St. Paul once landed, and which is mentioned in the New Testament under its ancient name—Puteoli.

Here they were beset by beggars. The sight of this produced strange effects upon the little party. Uncle Moses, filled with pity, lavished money upon them, in spite of the remonstrances of the guide.

Clive's sensitive nature shuddered at the spectacle. Frank tried to speak a few words of Italian to them, which he had caught from Michael Angelo. David muttered something about the ancient Romans, while Bob kept humming to himself these elegant verses:—

"Hark! hark! The dogs do bark!
Beggars come to town,
Some in rags, some in tags,
Some in a tattered gown!"

The beggars followed them as far as they could, and when they left them, reinforcements always arrived.

Thus they were beset by them at the crater of the extinct volcano of Solfatura.

They encountered them at the gateway of Cumae,

At the Grotto of the Comaean Sibyl,

At Nero's Baths,

At the Lucrine Lake,

At Baiae,

At Misenum,

In fact everywhere.

Still, they enjoyed themselves very well, and kept up their pursuit of sights until late in the day. They were then at Baiae; and here the party stopped at a little inn, where they proposed to dine. Here the beggars beset them, in fresh crowds, till Uncle Hoses was compelled to close his purse, and tear himself away from his clamorous visitants. Frank and Bob went off to see if they could find some donkeys, ponies, or horses, so as to have a ride after dinner; while David and Clive strolled off towards the country.

"Come, Clive," said David, "let Frank and Bob enjoy their jackasses. For my part, I want to get to some place where I can sit down, and see this glorious land. It's the most classic spot in all the world."

"It's the most beautiful and poetic," said Clive, who was given to sentiment.

Walking on, they came to a place which projected into the sea, and here they sat down.

"O, what a glorious sight!" exclaimed Clive. "Look at this wonderful Bay of Naples! How intensely blue the water is! How intensely blue the sky is! And look at Vesuvius opposite. What an immense amount of smoke is coming from the crater!"

"Yes," said David, clearing his throat, "this is the place that the elder Pliny sailed from at the time of the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii. And look all around. That little town was once the luxurious Baiae. Over yonder is Lake Lucrine, which Virgil sings about. On that side is Misenum, where the Roman navy lay. There is Caligula's Bridge. What a glorious place! Everything that we have ever read of in classic story gathers about us here. Cicero, Caesar, Horace, Virgil, Tiberius, and Juvenal, seem to live here yet. Nero and Agrippina, Caligula and Claudius,—every old Roman, good or bad. And look, Clive, that is land out there. As I live, that is Capraea! And see,—O, see, Clive,—that must be the —"

"*Datemi un carlino, signori, per l'amor di Dio. Sono povero—molto povero!*"

It was in the middle of David's rather incoherent rhapsody that these words burst upon his ears. He and Clive started to their feet, and found close behind them a half dozen of those miserable beggars. Two of them were old men, whose bleary eyes and stooping frames indicated extreme age. One was a woman on, crutches. Number Four was a thin, consumptive-looking man. Number Five and Number Six were strong-limbed fellows, with very villanous faces. It was with one universal whine that these unwelcome visitors addressed the boys.

"*Datemi un carlino, signori, per l'amor di Dio.*"

David shook his head.

"*Sono miserabile*," said Number Five.

"I don't understand," said David.

"*Noi abbiam fame*," said Number Six.

"*Non capisco*," said Clive, who had learned that much Italian from Michael Angelo.

"*O, signori nobilissime!*"

"I tell you, I don't understand," cried David.

"Non capisco," repeated Clive.

"*Siamo desperati*," said Number Six, with a sinister gleam in his eyes, which neither of the boys liked.

"Come, Clive," said David, "let's go back. Dinner must be ready by this time."

And they turned to go.

But as they turned, Number Five and Number Six placed themselves in the way.

"*Date qualche cosa*," they whined; and each of them seized a boy by the arm. The boys tried to jerk their arms away, but could not.

"Let us go," cried David, "or it will be the worse for you."

The two beggars now talked in Italian without relaxing their hold. Then they tried to pull the boys away; but the boys resisted bravely, and began to shout for help. At this the other beggars came forward menacingly, and Number Five and Number Six put their arms round the boys, and their hands over their mouths. Neither David nor Clive could now utter a cry. They could scarcely breathe. They were at the mercy of these miscreants!

It was, in truth, a perilous position in which David and Clive found themselves. Those ragged rascals, the beggars, were as remorseless as they were ragged. They had the boys at their mercy. The place was sufficiently far from the town to be out of hearing; and though the road was near, yet there were no people living in the vicinity. It was, therefore, sufficiently solitary to permit of any deed of violence being done with impunity.

David and Clive gave themselves up for lost With a last frantic effort, David tore his head loose, dashed his fist into the face of beggar Number Six, who was holding him, and tried to escape.

"*Scelerate!*" cried Number Six; and he threw David to the ground, and held him down, while he caught him by the throat. But though thus overpowered, David still struggled, and it was with some difficulty that the big brute who held him was able to keep him under.

Suddenly, at this moment, when all hope seemed lost, a loud cry was heard. There was a rush of two figures upon the scene; and the next instant Number Six was torn away, and rolled over on his back. A firm grasp was fixed on his throat, and a tremendous blow descended on his head from a stout stick, which was wielded by the youthful but sinewy arm of Frank Wilmot. At the same instant, also, Bob Clark had bounded at Number Five, leaped on his back, and began beating him about the head.

The attack had been so sudden, and so utterly unexpected, that it carried all before it. Away, with a wild cry of terror, fled the four decrepit beggars, leaving Number Five and Number Six on the field to themselves and the four boys. Number Six groaned with pain, and struggled furiously. He wrenched himself from beneath his assailants, but they again got the upper hand, and held on firmly. But Number Six was too strong to be easily grappled with, and it went hard with his assailants.

Meanwhile Clive, relieved by Bob, had become an assailant also. Snatching up a stone, he dashed it full in the face of Number Five. The man staggered back and fell, and Bob narrowly escaped falling under him. But Number Five sprang up instantly, and before Bob or Clive could close with him again, darted off without attempting to help Number Six, and ran for his life. Cowardly by nature, the beggars did not think of the size of their assailants; their fears magnified the boys to men; and they only thought of safety in a panic flight But Number Six was there yet, with Frank Wilmot's sinewy arms about him, and Bob and Clive now rushed to take part in that struggle. This addition to the attacking force turned the scale completely.

The struggle that now followed was most violent, the Italian making the most furious efforts to free himself; but Frank was very large and strong for his years; he was possessed of bull-dog tenacity and high-strung courage, and was strenuously assisted by the other three; so that the union of all their forces formed something to which one man was scarcely equal. In a very short time, therefore, after the arrival of Bob and Clive, the would-be robber was lying on his face, held firmly down by the four boys.

"Boys," said Frank, who was sitting on his shoulders, "fold his arms over his back."

As they did this, he twisted his handkerchief tightly, and then bound it around the man's hands as firmly as if it had been a rope. Bob and Clive held him down by sitting on his legs, while David sat on his neck. Frank now asked for their hand, kerchiefs, twisted them, tied them together, and then directed Bob to fasten the man's feet. This was Bob's task, and he did it as neatly as though he had been brought up to that particular business exclusively.

The man was now bound hard and fast, and lay on his face without a word, and only an occasional struggle. The weight of the boys was so disposed that it was not possible for him to get rid of them, and Frank watched all his attempted movements so vigilantly, that every effort was baffled at the outset. Frank also watched Bob as he tied the knots, and then, seeing that the work was well done, he started up.

"Come, boys," said he, "let's give the rascal a chance to breathe."

At this the boys all got up, and the Italian, relieved from their weight, rolled over on his back, and then on his side, staring all around, and making desperate efforts to free himself. He was like the immortal Gulliver when bound by the Lilliputians, except that one of his assailants, at least, was no Lilliputian, for in brawn, and sinew, and solid muscle, Frank, boy though he might be, was not very much, if at all, his inferior. As he struggled, and stared, and rolled about, the boys looked on; and Frank watched him carefully, ready to spring at him at the first sign of the bonds giving way. But the knots had been too carefully tied, and this the Italian soon found out. He therefore ceased his useless efforts, and sat up; then, drawing up his feet, he leaned his chin on his knees, and stared sulkily at the ground.

"And now," said David, "what are we to do?"

"I don't know," said Frank.

"Let's go for Uncle Moses," said Bob, "or Michael Angelo."

"We'd better hunt up a policeman," said Clive.

"No," said Frank, "let's get Uncle Moses here first. You go, Bob; and be quick, or else those other beggars'll be back here and release him."

Upon this Bob set out, and the others guarded the prisoner. Bob was not gone long, however, but soon returned in company with Uncle Moses. Bob had found him at the inn, and in a breathless way had told him all, but he had scarcely understood it; and as he now came upon the scene, he looked around in wonder, and seemed utterly bewildered. Had he found his beloved boys captured by bandits, he would have been shocked, but not very much surprised—for that was the one terror of his life; but to find the tables turned, and a bandit captured by his boys, was a thing which was so completely opposed to all his ordinary thoughts, that he stood for a moment fairly stupefied. Nor was it until David had told the whole story, and thus given him a second and Davidian edition of it, that he began to master the situation.

"Dear! dear! dear!" he cried, looking slowly at each of the boys in succession, and then at their silent and sulky captive, "and so you railly and truly were attacked and made prisoners by bandits. Dear! dear! dear!"

He looked inexpressibly shocked, and for some time stood in silence amid the loud clatter of the boys.

"Well, Uncle Moses," said Frank, at last, "what are we to do with him?"

To this Uncle Moses made no reply. It was certainly a somewhat puzzling inquiry; and his own life had been so peaceful and uneventful, that the question of the best way of dealing with a captured bandit was, very naturally, a somewhat perplexing one to answer. He stood, therefore, with his head bent forward, his right hand supporting his left elbow, and his left hand supporting his forehead, while his mild eyes regarded the captive robber with a meek and almost paternal glance, and his mind occupied itself in weighing that captives destiny.

"Well, Uncle Moses," said Frank a second time, somewhat impatiently, "what, are we to do with him? We must do something,—and be quick about it too,—or else the other beggars'll be back."

"Wal," said Uncle Moses, slowly and thoughtfully, "that's the very identical pint that I'm a meditatin on. An the long an the short of it is, that I'm beginnin to think, that the very best thing you can do is to take your handkerchees back, and come back with me to the inn, and get some dinner. For I've every reason to believe that dinner's ready about this time, bein as I remember hearin a bell a ringin jest

before Bob came for me."

At this the boys stared in amazement at Uncle Moses, not knowing what in the world to make of this.

"What do you mean," said Frank, "about our handkerchiefs, when we've tied up the bandit with them?"

"Why," said Uncle Moses, "I think if you come you may as well bring yer handkerchees with you—as I s'pose you prefer havin em."

"But we'd have to untie them," said Bob.

"Wal, yes," said Uncle Moses, dryly; "that follers as a nat'ral consequence."

"What!" cried Frank, in an indignant voice, "untie him? Let him go? And after he has nearly killed David and Clive?"

"Wal, he didn't *quite* kill em," said Uncle Moses, turning his eyes benignantly upon the two boys. "They seem to me jest now to be oncommon spry—arter it all. They don't look very nigh death, as far as appearances go. No harm's done, I guess; an so, I dare say, we'd best jest let em go."

At this Frank looked ineffably disgusted.

"You see, boys," said Uncle Moses, "here we air, in a very peculiar situation. What air we? Strangers and sojourners in a strange land; don't know a word of the outlandish lingo; surrounded by beggars and Philistines. Air there any law courts here? Air there any lawyers? Air there any judges? I pause for a reply. There ain't one. No. An if we keep this man tied up, what can we do with him? We can't take him back with us in the coach. We can't keep him and feed him at the hotel like a pet animule. I don't know whar the lock-up is, an hain't seen a policeman in the whole place. Besides, if we do hand this bandit over to the _po_lice, do you think it's goin to end there? No, sir. Not it. If this man's arrested, we'll be arrested too. We'll have to be witnesses agin him. An that's what I don't want to do, if I can help it. My idee an aim allus is to keep clear of the lawyers; I'd rather be imposed on; I'd rather pay out money unjustly, be cheated, humbugged, and do any thin, than put myself in the power of lawyers. Depend upon it, they're as bad here as they air home. They'd have us all in jail, as witnesses. Now, I don't want to go to jail."

The words of Uncle Moses produced a strong impression upon the boys. Even Frank saw that handing the man over to the authorities would involve some trouble, at least, on their part. He hated what he called "bother." Besides, he had no vengeful feelings against the Italian, nor had Bob. As for David and Clive, they were the only ones who had been really wronged by the fellow; but they were the last in the world to harbor resentment or think of revenge. Their victory had also made them merciful. So the end of it was, that they did according to Uncle Moses' suggestion, and untied the bonds.

Number Six was evidently amazed. He rose to his feet, looked warily at the party, as though expecting some new attack, then looked all around, and then, with a bound, he sprang away, and running towards the road, soon disappeared. The rest did not delay much longer, but returned as soon as possible to the inn, where they found their dinner ready. This they ate, and then drove back to Naples.

The opportune arrival of Frank and Bob was soon explained. They had been riding on donkeys, and had seen the crowd around David and Clive, and the struggle. Fearing some danger for their companions, they had hastened to the spot, and reached it in time to be of service. The adventure might have been most serious to David and Clive; but as it happened, the results were of no very grave character. They felt a little sore; that is all. Bob, also had a bad bruise on his left arm; but on the whole, very little harm had been done, nor did the boys regret afterwards that they had let the scoundrel go free.

As for their guide, Michael Angelo, he had been busy in another direction, during this adventure, and when he heard of it, he was very anxious to have them arrested; but Uncle Moses, for reasons already stated, declined to do anything.

CHAPTER III.

Out into the Country.—The Drive.—The glorious Land.—Sorrento and eternal Summer.—The Cave of Polyphemus.—The Cathedral.—The mysterious Image.—What is it?—David Relic-hunting.—A Catastrophe. —Chased by a Virago.—The Town roused.—Besieged.—A desperate Onset.—Plight.—Last of the Virago.

A few days after the affair related in the last chapter, our party set out from Naples on an excursion round the environs. With the assistance of their landlord they were able to get a carriage, which they hired for the excursion, the driver of which went with them, and was to pay all their expenses for a certain given sum. They expected to be gone several days, and to visit many places of surpassing interest; for Naples is a city whose charms, great as they are, do not surpass the manifold loveliness with which it is environed, and the whole party would have been sorry indeed if they had missed any one of those scenes of enchantment that lay so invitingly near them.

As they drove along the shore they were all in the highest spirits. The sky was cloudless, and of that deep blue color which is common to this climate; and the sun shone with dazzling brightness, being only warm enough to be pleasant, and not in any way oppressive. For many miles the way seemed nothing else than a street. Houses arose on each side; crowds of people, and multitudes of wagons, and droves of cattle constantly met their eyes. Caleches dashed about in all directions. The street itself was paved with the large lava blocks which prevail throughout the city; and in fact it seemed as though Naples was prolonging itself indefinitely.

At length they emerged from the close-built city, and entered the country. All the way the scenery was exquisite. On the left extended green fields, and orchards, and vineyards; spreading away for miles, they rose up the sides of high mountains. Upon these were small villas and hamlets, while occasionally a castle perched upon some inaccessible height threw an air of romantic attraction about the scene. They passed several villages, and at length reached Castellamare, a town on the shore of the bay. Passing beyond this, they found a change in the scenery. The road wound along cliffs which overhung the sea, and was ornamented by trees. The road itself was a magnificent one, as smooth as a floor, and by its circuitous course afforded a perpetual variety. The far white houses of Naples, the towers that dotted the shore on every side, the islands that rose from oat the waters, the glorious bay, the gloomy form of Vesuvius, with its smoke clouds overhanging, all united to form a scene which called forth the most unbounded admiration. Besides all these general features there were others of a more special character, as from time to time they came to some recess in the shore; and the road running in brought them to some little hamlet, which, nestling here, seemed the abode of peace, and innocence, and happiness. Through such variations of scenery they passed, and at length arrived at Sorrento.

This little town is most beautifully situated near the month of the Bay of Naples, and around it arise high, encircling hills which protect it from the cold blasts of winter and the hot winds of summer. Sorrento has a perfect climate, All the seasons are blended together here, and in the orange groves, that surround the town, there may be seen at the same time the strange spectacle of trees in blossom side by side with trees that are loaded with fruit fully ripe.

It was evening when they arrived, and they had not much time to spare; so they at once procured a guide from the hotel, and set forth to see what they could before dark. First, the guide took them to a deep chasm, which was so wild and abrupt, so deep and gloomy, that it looked like the work of a recent earthquake. Not far from this were some ancient reservoirs, the work of the times of imperial Rome. The arches were yet perfect, and over the reservoir was a garden of orange trees. Not far distant was a ruined temple, in the enclosure of which was a myrtle plant, five hundred years old, and so large that it formed a respectable tree.

After showing them these things and several others, the guide took them to the sea-shore, to a place which goes by the name of the Cave of Polyphemus. This is a large cavern in the cliff, in front of which is a huge fragment of rock. Here the boys recalled the story of Ulysses; and David volunteered to give it in full to Uncle Moses. So David told how Ulysses ventured to this place with his companions; how the one-eyed Cyclops caught them; how he imprisoned them in the cabin, shutting up its mouth by means of a huge rock, which David thought might have been that very fragment that now lay on the shore before their eyes; how the monster began to devour them; how Ulysses devised a plan of escape, and succeeded in putting out the eye of the monster; how he then effected his escape from the cave, and regaining his vessel, put forth to sea.

Then they went to visit the house in which Tasso was born. They were not able to enter it, and as it was now dark, they retreated to their hotel.

Oh the following morning they all set oat without the guide, to see the town for themselves. A festival of some kind was going on, which attracted many people, and the cathedral was filled. The boys, haying

nothing else to do, wandered away towards the common centre of attraction. They soon lost one another in the crowd, and one by one they worked their way into the interior of the place. The organ was sounding forth, the priests were intoning service, on the altar candles were burning, and far on high, through the lofty vaulted nave, there rolled "the smoke of incense and the wail of song!"

David found himself a little distance away from a side chapel, which was evidently the chief attraction to the worshippers within the sacred edifice. A dense crowd assembled about it, and in front of it. Through these David managed to make his way, full of curiosity about the cause of their interest. He at length forced himself far enough forward to see inside the chapel. He saw a structure, in the centre of the chapel, covered with drapery, upon which was a cushion. Lying on this cushion was the image of a child, clothed in rich attire, and spangled with jewels, and adorned with gold and silver. Whether it was made of wood or wax he could not tell, but thought it was the former. The sight of it only tempted his curiosity the more, and he longed to look at it more closely. It was evidently considered by the surrounding crowd to be an object of great sanctity, for they regarded it with the utmost reverence, and those nearest were on their knees. Upon the altar, at the end of this chapel, lights were burning, and a priest was engaged in religious ceremonies.

David's desire to go closer was so strong, that he waited patiently in this one spot for the opportunity of gratifying his curiosity. He had to wait for a long time; but at length he had the satisfaction of seeing a movement among the people, which showed that they were on the point of dispersing. After this the crowd lessened, and the people began to take their departure. At length but a few remained, some of whom were still on their knees around the image.

David now, in a slow and unassuming manner, advanced towards the image. He could go close to it, and was able to see it perfectly. An iron rail surrounded the structure on which it was laid, preventing too close an approach; but standing here, outside of the rail, David saw that the image was very rudely carved out of wood, and was intended to represent a child. Why such an image should be the object of such interest and devotion he could not for the life of him imagine. He could only postpone any investigation into this until he could find out from some one.

And now there came over him an overwhelming desire to obtain a fragment from some portion of this image, or, its dress, or its surroundings, to serve as a relic. His relic-hunting propensities had never been stronger than they were at this moment, and no sooner did the idea suggest itself than he looked all around to see what were the chances.

As he looked around he saw that the cathedral was nearly empty: a priest was near the high altar, two boys were in the middle of the nave, by the chief entrance was a little group just preparing to leave. Nearer him, and close by the image, were two women. They were on their knees, and appeared to be absorbed in their devotions. It seemed to David that it would be quite easy to possess himself of some small and unimportant portion of the drapery. He was quite unobserved, for the two women who were nearest were not regarding him, the drapery was within easy reach, and a row of tassels, upon which he could lay his hand, offered an irresistible temptation. If he could but get one of those tassels, what an addition it would be to his little stock of treasures!

David once more looked all around. The priests were still at the altar; but the boys had gone from the nave, and those who had been near the door had departed. The women seemed as intent as ever upon their devotions. David looked at the drapery once more, and upon one of the tassels which was nearest him.

Once more he looked all around, and then, stretching forward his hand, he touched the coveted tassel.

Then he drew back his hand, and putting it in his pocket, he drew forth his knife, which he opened.

Then he looked around once more.

Then, for the last time, he put his hand forward, holding the knife so as to cut the tassel. But the cord which bound the tassel to the drapery was strong, and the knife was very dull, and David found that it was not so easy as he had supposed. But he was determined to get it, and so he sawed away, with his dull old knife, at the cord, severing one by one the filaments that composed it, but doing this so slowly that he began to grow impatient. The women were not looking. There was no danger. To work with one hand was useless, and so he reached forth both hands, and began sawing away more vigorously than ever. But his impatience, and his vehement pulls and tugs, produced an effect which he had not expected. The heavy drapery, which had been loosely thrown over, began to slide off towards him as he pulled. David did not notice this, but continued his work, looking around to see whether the women were noticing him or not. At length he had sawed the cord almost through, and gave a quick pull at it to break it.

The next moment the heavy drapery came sliding down towards him, and, to his horror, the wooden image came with it, falling with a crash on the marble pavement.

In an instant the two women started to their feet, staring with wild eyes at the image and the drapery. Then their wild eyes caught sight of David, whose frightened face would have revealed him as the guilty cause of this catastrophe, even if it had not been shown by the tassel and the knife, which were in his hands.

With a sharp, shrill scream, one of the women sprang towards him.
David instinctively leaped back, and eluded her. The woman chased.
David dodged her around a pillar.

The woman followed.

David dodged behind another pillar.

The woman cried out, "*O Scellerato! Birbone! Furbo! Ladrone!*" And though David's knowledge of the Italian language was but slight, yet it sufficed to show him that these names which she yelled after him had a very direful signification.

Thus David fled, dodging, the woman behind pillar after pillar, until at length he came near to the door. Had the other woman taken part in the chase, David would certainly have been captured. But the other woman did not. She stood as if petrified—motionless and mute, staring at the fallen sanctuary, and overwhelmed with horror. So the flight went on, until at length, reaching the door, David made a rush for it, dashed through, and ran as fast as his legs could carry him. The woman followed, but at a slower rate of speed, and saw him go into the hotel. Then she returned to the church, after which she went abroad with the story of the horrible desecration through all Sorrento.

On reaching the hotel, David found the rest of the party there, at dinner. He said nothing of his recent adventure, but took his seat at the table.

Before long, the party became conscious of a great tumult and uproar in the street in front of the house. Frank and Bob went to the windows, and looked out. A sudden exclamation of surprise brought Clive and Uncle Moses to their side. David followed slowly, with a strange feeling of apprehension, and with the recollection of his late flight still strong in his mind.

He looked out.

A great crowd presented itself to his horrified eyes—a crowd representing all Sorrento; old, the middle-aged, the young; the rich, poor; male and female; old men, old women, boys, and children. At the head of this, and immediately in front of the door, was the very old woman who bad discovered his sacrilege, and had chased him through the cathedral. Now he had hoped that the old woman had forgotten him; but her appearance now was tenfold more terrible than ever. Here she was—a virago—with a great following, whom she was exciting by violent harangues, and urging by wild gesticulations, to do something or other which David could not understand, but which he could well imagine to be something that had reference to his own humble, unworthy, and very much terrified self.

Before they had fairly grasped the whole of the scene that was thus so suddenly presented, they were accosted by the landlord and the driver, who entered the room hurriedly, and in some excitement, in search of them.

"One grand meesfortune haf arrive," said the landlord. "De people declare you haf insult de Bambino. Dey cry for vengeance. How is dis?"

"What?" asked Frank; "insult what?"

"De Bambino."

"Bambino?"

"Yes. It is de consecrate image—de Bambino—does miracles, makes cures; wonderful image, de pride of Sorrento; an dis is de day sacred to him. What is dis meesfortune dat I hear of? It is one grand calamity—for you—eef you do not take care."

"Bambino? insult?" said Frank. "We haven't insulted anything whatever. They're crazy."

Here David, finding concealment useless, confessed all. The boys listened in astonishment The landlord shook his head with an expression of concern and perplexity.

Then he had a long conversation with the driver.

Then they both left the room. The landlord went outside, and tried to appease the crowd. He might possibly, have succeeded, had it not been for David's old woman, who shook her fists in his face, stamped, appealed to Heaven, raved, and howled, all the time he was speaking. The consequence was, that the landlord's words had no effect.

He then entered the hotel once more, and after seeing the driver, and speaking a few words, he hurried up to our party, who by this time were in a state of general alarm.

"You must run—fly—leaf Sorrento—now—widout delay," he cried, breathlessly. "I haf order de carriage. I sall tell de people dat you sall be arrest, an pacify dem for a few moments, till you get start."

The landlord once more left them, and going out to the crowd, he made a few remarks, to the effect that the hotel was being searched now for the offender against the Bambino, and when he was found he would at once be handed over to the authorities. He urged them to wait patiently, and they should see that justice would be done.

The crowd now grew calmer, and waited. The landlord then went back, and led the party down to the court-yard. Here the carriage was all in readiness, and the driver was waiting. They all got in at once, unseen by the crowd in the street; and then, cracking his whip, the driver urged the horses off at full speed through the gates. The crowd fell back on either side, so as to make away, and were not in a position to offer any obstacles to so sudden an onset. They also had the idea that the culprit was inside the hotel, in the hands of the authorities.

But the old woman was not to be deceived; she saw it all in a moment, and in a moment she raised the alarm. Having, howling, gesticulating wildly, dancing, and jumping, she sprang after the carriage. The crowd followed. But the carriage had already got a good start; it had burst through the people, and those who stood in the way were only too glad to get out of it, and thus, with the horses at full speed, they dashed up the street; and before long they had left Sorrento, and the hotel, and the insulted Bambino, and the excited crowd, and the raving old beldam far behind.

David's adventure in Sorrento had been a peculiar one, and one, too, which was not without danger; but if there was any satisfaction to be got out of it, it was in the fact that the tassel which he had acquired, remained still in his possession, to be added to his little stock of relics.

CHAPTER IV.

Salerno and the sulky Driver.—Paestum and its Temples.—A great Sensation.—An unpleasant Predicament.—Is the Driver a Traitor?—Is he in League with Bandits?—Arguments about the Situation, and what each thought about it.

After a very pleasant drive through a country as beautiful as it had been ever since they left Naples, the party reached Salerno, where they passed the night. Salerno is a lovely place, situated at the extremity of a bay, like Naples, of which it may be called a miniature. It is protected from the wind by the high hills that encircle it, and its delicious climate makes it a great resort for invalids. But formerly Salerno had a different character, and one far more prominent in the eyes of the world. Salerno has a history full of events of the most varied and stirring character. Fought for by Greek, and Roman, and German, and Saracen, and Norman, its streets have witnessed the march of hundreds of warlike arrays, and it has known every extreme of good or evil fortune. Two things make. Salerno full of interest to the traveller who loves the past. One is, its position as a seat of learning daring the middle ages. Here once arose the greatest school of medicine in, the world, the chairs of which were thrown open, to Jewish and Arabian professors, who at that time far outstripped the students of the Christian world in scientific attainments. The other thing is, that here the great pope, Gregory VII., found refuge, after his long struggle, and, flying from Rome, obtained rest here among the friendly Normans, for it was in Salerno that he uttered those memorable dying words of his: "I have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, and therefore I die in exile."

Here at Salerno they had a slight misunderstanding with their driver. He insisted on getting more pay. As they had already made a full contract with him, this demand seemed like an imposition, and was rejected by the whole of them. The driver grew furiously excited, gesticulated vehemently, stamped, his feet, rolled his eyes, struck his fists together, and uttered language which sounded like

Italian oaths, though they could not make it out. Uncle Moses seemed a little appalled at his vehement, and was inclined to yield to his demands for the sake of peace; but the boys would not listen to this for a moment. After watching the raging Italian till they were tired, Frank at length started to his feet, and in a peremptory tone ordered him out of the room. The Italian was so unprepared for this decisive conduct on the part of one who appeared to be but a boy, that he stopped short in the midst of a most eloquent tirade against them, in which he was threatening to denounce them to the authorities for sacrilege; and having stopped, he stared at Frank, and seemed unable to go on once more. Frank now repeated his orders, accompanying them with a threat that he would call in the police. At this the driver's brow lowered into a sullen scowl, and muttering some expressions of rage and vengeance, he left the room.

The boys chatted a little about the mutiny of the driver, as they called it, but soon dismissed the thought from their minds.

After passing the night at Salerno, they prepared, on the following morning, to continue their journey. Early in the day, the driver made his appearance. He was quiet, and not communicative, and much changed from his former self. Frank addressed a few remarks to him, but perceiving that he was sulky, he gave up all attempts to appease his wrath. In fact, he began to think that it might, perhaps, have been as well to comply with his request, for the request for more money had been based upon his recent rescue of them from the hands of the mob at Sorrento. Had the driver made his request a little more meekly, and not presented it with such an assertion of right, there is no doubt that they would have cheerfully given what he asked. But his tone excited their resentment; and afterwards, when the driver chose to lose his temper and scold them, they were more determined than ever to refuse. Had he appeared at this time with his former good-natured expression, and had he shown any signs of compunction for his insolent behavior, there is no doubt that they would have brought up the subject of their own accord, and promised him as handsome a sum as his exploit deserved. But his continued sulks prevented them from introducing the subject, and so they concluded to defer it to some other time, when he might be restored to himself.

They now drove along the road en route for Paestum. At first they drove along the sea-shore, but after a few miles the road turned off into the country. All around them were fields, which were covered with flocks and herds, while in the distance were hills that were clothed with vineyards and olive groves, that adorned their sloping declivities with mantles of dark green and light. In the country, on either side, they also saw some indications of Italian life, which excited strong feelings of repugnance within them; for here and there, in many places, women were toiling in the fields just as the men, with heavy hoes, or with ploughs, or with harrows. In some places it was even worse, for they saw women laboring in the fields, while the men lolled on the fences, or sat smoking under the shade of some tree. The implements of labor used excited their surprise. The hoes were as ponderous, as clumsy, and as heavy as pickaxes; the ploughs were miserably awkward things—a straight pole with a straight wooden share, which was sometimes, though by no means always, pointed with iron. These ploughs were worked in various ways, being sometimes pulled by donkeys, sometimes by oxen, and on one memorable occasion a donkey and a woman pulled the plough, while a man, who may have been the woman's husband, guided it through the furrow.

The road was a good one, and was at first well travelled. They met soldiers, and priests, and peasants. They met droves of oxen, and wine carts, and large herds of those peculiar hairless pigs which are common to this country. As they drove on farther, the travel diminished, and at length the country seemed more lonely. It was still fertile, and covered with luxuriant vegetation on every side; but the signs of human habitation decreased, until at length they ceased. The reason of this lies in the unhealthy character of the country, which, like many places in Italy, is subject to malaria, and is shunned by the people. This is the nature of the country which lies around ancient Paestum; and though the fields are cultivated, yet the cultivators live at a distance upon the slopes of the mountains.

At about midday they arrived at Paestum. Here they descended from the carriage, and giving instruction to the driver to remain at this place until they should return, they started off to explore the ruined city. It had been their intention to make use of the driver as guide, to show them the objects of interest in the town; but his long-continued sulks drove this from their minds, and they concluded to trust to themselves and their guide-books. The carriage was drawn up on the side of the road, not far from where there stood an archway, still entire, which once formed one of the gates of Paestum.

Towards this they directed their steps. The gateway was formed of large blocks of stone laid upon each other without cement, and by their great size they had resisted the ravages of time. On either side of this could be seen the foundation stones of the city walls, which have fallen or have been removed in the course of ages. But the circuit of the walls can be traced by the fragments that yet remain, and from this circuit the size of the city may be judged. Beyond the gates and in the enclosure of the walls are some majestic and world-famed ruins, some of which are little else than masses of rubbish, while

others are so well preserved, that they might now be used for the purpose to which they were originally devoted. There are the remains of a theatre and of an amphitheatre, which, however, are confused heaps, and some public edifices in the same condition. The foundations of some private houses may also be seen. But the most noted and most interesting of the remains of Paestum are its two Temples and Basilica—edifices whose origin reaches back to the depths of an immemorial antiquity, but which still remain in a state of preservation so perfect as to be almost incredible. For these edifices are as old, at least, as Homer, and were probably in existence before his day. Phoenician sailors or merchants may have set eyes on these temples, who also saw the Temple of Solomon at its completion. They existed in the age of the Pharaohs, and rival in antiquity, in massive grandeur, and in perfect preservation, the Pyramids of Egypt. In the age of imperial Rome, and even of republican Rome, these temples were ancient, and the Emperor Augustus visited them, and regarded them as remains of venerable antiquity.

Of these three edifices, the most majestic, and probably the most ancient, is the one which is called the Temple of Neptune. The stone of which it is built, is found in the neighborhood still, and presents a most singular appearance. At a distance it appears very rough and full of holes, like cork. A closer examination shows that it is really composed of innumerable fragments of wood, compressed together in a vast, solid mass, and petrified. The stone is exceedingly hard and durable. The blocks of this stone out of which this temple, and the others also, are built, are of such enormous size, that they can only be compared to those immense masses that were heaped up to form the Pyramids of Egypt and the Temples of Karnak. Piled up here upon one another without cement, they have defied the ravages of time.

The Temple of Neptune is approached by three immense steps, which extend around every side of it. It is about two hundred feet in length, and eighty in breadth, while on every side there is a row of enormous columns of the Doric order, thirty-six in number. They are all fluted, and have an aspect of severe and massive grandeur that is unequalled in any other temple. Above these columns rise an enormous Doric frieze and cornice, the height of which is equal to half the height of the columns; and these proportions give such vastness to the mass above, that it heightens the sublime effect. The columns, which extend round the Temple, are thirty feet high, and seven feet in diameter at the base. Inside, the pavement is well preserved; and, though the altar is gone, yet the place where it stood can easily be seen. There is no roof above, and probably never was any; for many of the vast edifices of antiquity were open to the sky—a circumstance which made the task of the architect much easier, since it relieved him of the necessity of sustaining a vast weight in the air, and also of the equal difficulty of lighting the interiors of his buildings. From within the temple enclosures, as from within the theatres and amphitheatres, the blue sky could be seen overhead, while the too fervid rays of a midsummer sun, or the storms of winter, could be warded off from those within by means of an awning thrown over the open roof, and stretched on cables.

Near the Temple of Neptune is another, which is called the Temple of Ceres. It is neither so large nor so grand as the former, but it possesses more elegance and beauty. It is about a hundred feet long and fifty feet wide. Like its companion, it is surrounded on all sides by a colonnade, six pillars being in the front, six in the rear, and twelve on either side. The altar here is gone, but its foundations remain. Various signs show a greater degree of splendor in the interior adornment of this temple, especially the fact that the pavement was mosaic work. There is reason to suppose that this temple was turned into a Christian church some time in the fourth century. Such a transformation as this was common enough throughout the Roman empire during that great triumph of Christianity which took place under Constantine, and after him, so that in this, case there need be little room for doubt as to the truth of the statement.

Not far from this is the third of the great edifices of Paestum. It is about as large as the Temple of Neptune, being nearly two hundred feet long, and about eighty feet wide. Like the others, it is surrounded by a colonnade, but the architecture is less massive than that of the first temple. Of these columns, nine are in front, nine in the rear, and sixteen are on either side, making fifty in all. In this edifice there are no signs whatever of an altar; and this circumstance has led to the belief that it was not a temple at all, but a court of law. Accordingly, it is called the Basilica, which term was used by the Romans to indicate a place used for public trials. Inside, the pavement yet remains, and there are the remains of a row of columns which once passed along the middle of the building from front to rear, dividing it into two parts.

Of all the three, the Temple of Neptune is the grandest, the best preserved, and the most famous. But the others are fit companions, and the giant forms of these mighty relics of hoary antiquity, unsurpassed by any other edifice, rise before the traveller, exciting within him emotions of reverential awe.

The party visited all these various objects of interest, and at length returned to the gate. They had spent about two hours in their Purvey of Paestum, and had seen all that there was to be seen; and now

nothing more remained but to return as soon as possible, and spend that night at Salerno. They had seen nothing of the driver since they left him, and they accounted for this on the ground that he was still maintaining himself in his gigantic sulk, and brooding over his wrongs; and they thought that if he chose to make a fool of himself, they would allow him to do so as long as it was agreeable to him.

With these thoughts they approached the gateway. As they drew near, they were surprised to find that there were no signs of the carriage. The view was open and unobstructed. Here and there mounds or fragments of stone arose in the place where once had been the wall of the city of Paestum, and before them was the simple arch of the massive gateway, but no carriage or horses were visible.

This excited their surprise, and also their alarm. They remembered that the sullen mood of the driver made him quite capable of playing off some malicious trick upon them, and they recalled, also, his threats of the evening before. Could he have chosen this way to put his threats into execution? It seemed, indeed, very much like it.

Still, there was one hope left. It was just possible that the carriage had been drawn up more under the arch, so that it was hidden from view. As this was the last hope that was left them, they hurried forth to put an end to their suspense as soon as possible. Nearer and nearer they came.

At last they reached the arch.

They rushed through it, and beyond it.

There was nothing there!

No carriage! No horses! No driver!

At this they all stopped, and stared at one another in silent consternation.

"He's gone," cried Clive. "He's left us here—to get back the best way we can."

"He swore last night," said David, "that he'd pay us up; and this is the way he's done it."

"Yes," said Bob; "he's been sulky all day. He's been concocting some plan."

"I don't see what good it'll do him," said Frank.

"He'll lose his fare. We won't pay him."

"O. he'll give up that for the pleasure of revenge," said Clive.

"Wal, wal, wal," cried Uncle Moses, looking all around with a face of dark and doleful perplexity. "This here doos beat all I ever seen in all my life. An now, what upon airth we can do—I'm sure I can't tell."

"Whatever we do," said Frank, "it won't do to wait here. It's too late now."

"Perhaps he hasn't run off at all," said David, who always was inclined to believe the best of people. "Perhaps he has driven up the road, and intends to return."

Frank shook his head.

"No," cried he. "I believe the scoundrel has left us. We paid him half of his fare at Sorrento; the rest was to be paid at Naples; but he has thrown that up, in order to have the pleasure of being revenged on us. And where he's gone to now is a mystery to me."

"O, I dare say he's driven off to Naples."

"Perhaps so. But he may intend something more. I've heard that there are brigands about here."

"Brigands!"

"Yes. And I shouldn't wonder if he has gone off with the intention of bringing some of them here to pay their respects to us. He may have started off immediately after we left him; and, if so, he's had two hours already—time enough, as I think, to do a good deal of mischief."

"Brigands!" cried Uncle Moses, in a voice of horror. He stared wildly around, and then looked, with moistened eyes, upon the boys.

"O, boys," he sighed, "why did we ever ventoor out so far in this here I-talian land, or why did we ever come to Italy at all? Brigands! It's what I've allus dreaded, an allus expected, ever sence I fust sot foot

on this benighted strand. I ben a feelin it in my bones all day. I felt it a comin over me yesterday, when the mob chased us; but now—our hour hev come!"

"Nonsense, Uncle Moses!" cried Frank, in a hearty, joyous voice. "What's the use of giving up in that fashion? Cheer up. We'll be all right yet."

CHAPTER V.

They discuss the Situation.—They prepare to foot it.—A toilsome Walk and a happy Discovery.—The Language of Signs once more.—The Mountain. Cavalcade.—Bob's Ambition.—Its Results—Bob vanishes.—Consternation of the Donkey Boy.—Consternation of the Cavalcade.—E Perduto!

The mention of brigands produced a startling and powerful effect upon the whole party, and after Uncle Moses' wail of despair, and Frank's rebuke, there was silence for a time.

"Well," said David, "I don't know. I don't believe in brigands altogether. Millions of people come to Italy without seeing anything of the kind, and why should we? For my part, I still think it very likely that the driver has driven back to some place on the road where he can get better entertainment for man and beast than is offered at Paestum."

"Where could he go?" said Frank. "There isn't any inn for miles."

"O you don't know," said David. "There are some by-roads, I dare say, that lead to houses on the hills. I dare say he'll soon be back. From what I've seen of the Italians, I think they'd stand a great deal before losing any money. The driver would wait till he got his pay, and then try to take his revenge."

"Well, it may be so," said Frank; "burin any case, it will be best for us to start off at once. There's no use waiting here any longer. We can foot it, after all. And we may come to houses, or we may pick up a wagon, and get a lift."

This was evidently the best thing that could be done, and so they all at once set off on foot, on their way back to Salerno.

Fortunately for them, they were quite fresh. They had been driving all the morning; and for two hours they had been strolling up and down within a small circuit, looking at temples, or sprawling on the grass. They had eaten a good lunch before leaving the carriage, and had not had time yet to feel hungry. The weather was mild and pleasant. The sun shone brightly, without being too hot, and everything was favorable to a walk. More than all, the road was very good, and not being much travelled, it was grass-grown to a great extent, and this grass afforded an easy and agreeable path for their feet.

They set out in high spirits, walking pretty vigorously, yet not too rapidly, for they wished to husband their strength, chatting all the while, and debating the point as to the driver's intentions. Frank maintained that he had deserted them out of malice, and Bob coincided with this view. David, on the other hand, believed that he had merely driven away to find refreshment, and would return, and Clive sided with him. But, as mile after mile was traversed, and still no signs of the driver appeared, David's theory grew weak, and Frank's grew strong. As for Uncle Moses, he said nothing, his feeling being chiefly one of intense anxiety to get the boys home before meeting with brigands. The awful images of Italian banditti, which Frank's words had called up in his mind, were not to be easily got rid of.

They walked on for about two hours, and by that time had succeeded in putting some seven or eight miles between themselves and Paestum. The road now became wider, and quite free from grass, giving every indication of being a well-trodden thoroughfare, and exciting the hope that they would find some wine cart at least, or other mode of conveyance, by means of which they could complete their journey to Salerno.

Suddenly, on making a turn in the road, they saw before them some moving objects, the sight of which elicited a shout of joy from Bob.

"Donkeys! Donkeys!" he cried. "Hurrah, boys!"

"Why, what good are they?" said David.

"Good?" cried Bob; "every good in the world. We can hire them, or buy them, and ride back to Salerno."

"That's a capital idea," cried Frank, in great delight. "I hoped to find wine carts, or ox carts; but donkeys are infinitely better."

Hurrying forward, they soon overtook the donkeys. There were six or eight of them, guided by an old man and a boy. Frank instantly accosted them. Of course he could not speak Italian, but by means of signs he succeeded in conveying to the old man's mind the requisite idea. On this occasion he felt most strongly the benefit which he had received from his intercourse with Paolo. Frank thus pointed to his feet, and then backward, and then forward, and then pointing to the donkey nearest, he made a motion to mount, after which he showed the old man some money, and tapping it, and pointing to the donkey, he looked inquiringly at him, as if to ask, "How much?"

The old man made some signs which seemed to Frank to be a question,
"How far?" so he roared out, in stentorian tones, "Salerno."

Upon this the old man stood for a little while in silent thought. Then he looked at Frank, and then, pointing with one hand at Frank's money, with the other he touched the donkey which seemed to say that he would let the donkey go for that price. As there was not quite a dollar in Frank's hand, in loose change, the charge seemed to him to be very reasonable, and even, as he expressed it, dirt cheap. So thought all the rest, and they all proceeded to bring forth their loose change, and pass it over to the old-man. The hands of the latter closed over the silver, with a nervous and almost convulsive clutch, and after one long, hungry look at each lot that was given him, he would insert each very carefully in the remote corner of an old sheepskin poach that hung in front of him, suspended around his waist.

But now arose a difficulty. The donkeys had no saddles. That was a small matter, however, and was not the real difficulty. The real difficulty lay in the fact that they had no bridles. How could they guide them?

Frank tried by signs to express this difficulty to the old man, and the latter understood him, for he smiled, nodded, shrugged his shoulders, and then pointed to his boy, and waved his band in the direction they wished to go. The boy also smiled and nodded, and made signs of his own, by which he plainly showed them that he intended to accompany them as guide, and lead the drove, while they might ride.

This being understood, the boys felt satisfied, and each one now proceeded to select the donkey which was most to his taste. Bob had already made his selection, and was mounted on the back of the biggest donkey of the lot—an animal whose size, breadth of chest, and slender limbs gave him an air of actual elegance. All the boys envied Bob his mount; but none of them complained. Frank secured a solid animal, that had a matter-of-fact expression, and looked as though he had no nonsense in him. Clive chose one that had a slight shade of melancholy in his face, as though he had known sorrow. David's donkey was a shaggy, hard-headed, dogged-looking animal, that seemed bent on having his own way. Uncle Moses' mount was rather eccentric. He chose the smallest animal of the lot,—a donkey, in fact,—which was so small that its rider's feet could only be kept from the ground with difficulty. Uncle Moses, indeed, if he had chosen, might have taken steps on the ground, and accelerated the motion of his beast by propelling him with his own feet.

Great was the laughter that arose among the party as each one mounted his gallant steed, and turned to look upon his companion. Jeers, and jokes, and light chaff arose, and the boys found no end of fun in this new adventure. But Uncle Moses wasn't able to see any fun in it at all. He sat with an expression on his face that would have done honor to a martyr at the stake, and the boys respected him too much to include him in their good-natured raillery.

The Italian boy took David's donkey by the ear, and started. David's donkey, in spite of his appearance of obstinacy, followed without resistance, and trotted nimbly off, the Italian boy running easily by his side. The other donkeys followed. As they had no bridles and no saddles, some of the party had a little difficulty in preserving their balance, but managed to do so by grabbing the coarse hair of the donkey's mane. The pace was a rapid one, and it was wonderful to see how well the Italian boy kept up with them without losing breath, or slackening it. This he did for a long time.

Among those who cared nothing for saddle or bridle was Bob. On the back of a donkey he felt as comfortable as though he was sitting in an easy-chair. As they trotted along the road, Bob sat with his arms folded, and his legs now hanging loosely, now drawn up in front of him, and at other times pretending that he had a side-saddle. At length he became discontented with the subordinate position that he was occupying, in merely following in the rear of a leader like David. He was a far better rider than David, and his donkey a far better donkey than the leading one. With the ambitions desire to

obtain the post of honor for himself, he beat, pounded, and kicked at his donkey. For a long time this had no effect whatever; the donkey not only was not stimulated by it, but he did not even seem to be conscious of it. At last Bob determined to resort to other methods. Drawing a pin from his shirt collar, where it was filling the place of a lost button, he stuck it two or three times in the donkey's flanks.

This was too much. The patience of Bob's donkey had reached its farthest limit. It could endure it no more.

With a wild bound the donkey sprang forward, and in three paces had cleared the way to the first. Another leap, and he was beyond them.

The donkey ran like a race-horse. His slender, sinewy limbs seemed as fitted for running and for speed as the limbs of an antelope. His head was down, his neck arched, his tail in the air, and his long, rapid strides bore him with astonishing velocity far ahead and far away.

The Italian boy tittered a cry of dismay, and stopped short. The donkey which he was holding stopped also, and the others did the same. The Italian boy looked with a face of consternation after the runaway. All the rest looked with vague fears in the same direction, and with a half hope that Bob might stop the animal, or turn him.

"*E perduto!*" exclaimed the Italian boy; and though they did not understand Italian, yet there was something in his tone, and look, and gesture, which told them the meaning of those words—"He's lost!"

CHAPTER VI.

Flight of Bob.—Difference between a tame Donkey and a wild Ass.—Carried off to the Mountains.—The Headlong Course.—The Mountain Pass.—The Journey's End.—Ill-omened Place.—Confounded by a new Terror.—The Brigands.

When the donkey first bounded off, the feelings of Bob were nothing but pure, unmitigated delight. As his spirited animal, roused from his indifference, burst through the crowd and reached the head, Bob's heart swelled with triumph. As he rushed along the road, far ahead of the rest, his triumph increased. He turned his head, and waved his hands to his friends. Then he waved his cap in the air, and shouted, "Hurrah!" Then he rode side-saddle fashion for a little while, then he drew both legs up in front, and then he indulged in a series of absurd and fantastic tricks.

All this Bob did because he supposed that he was riding ahead of his friends, and that they were following him, and admiring him. He had not made any calculation as to the great rate of speed at which his donkey was carrying him, and had no idea how quickly he was leaving all the rest behind. So, while he had been indulging in his pranks for the amusement of those whom he supposed to be following him, he was, in reality, already beyond the reach of their eyes.

For his donkey was an animal very far superior to the common herd. He was not a donkey—he was an ass—spirited, slender, sinewy, and fleet as a race-horse. There was something so peculiarly easy in the ass's gait that it deceived the rider. It seemed to him to be a gentle ambling trot, or something midway between that and a canter. In reality this easy pace was exceedingly swift, and before long Bob was out of sight of his friends. This discovery burst upon him as he turned, with the intention of shouting back some nonsense to them, when, to his utter amazement and consternation, he saw no signs of them whatever.

It must be confessed that the shock which this discovery gave to Bob was a very powerful one. He looked all around in anxious curiosity, with the endeavor to comprehend his situation. His first thought was, that some accident had happened to the party which was delaying them; but soon he became aware of his own tremendous progress, and understood the true state of the case'. He was now in a place where the road ran straight for over a mile. At the end of this it turned. As Bob reached this turning-place, he looked back again, and far away, just at the entrance upon the straight piece of road, he saw the party coming. A few seconds and he was once more carried out of sight.

And now Bob began to feel that his situation was a serious one. It was not pleasant to be carried away in this manner, in a strange country, on the back of an animal like this. Had it been a runaway horse, he would have felt less troubled. He would, in fact, have felt quite at home, for he had been frequently run

away with on horseback. He understood horses, but of asses he knew nothing. A horse was to some extent a sensible animal. He would run away, and in due time would come to a pause. But an ass! Was an ass possessed of any sense of decency—any conscience? Would the well-known obstinacy of the ass be shown on an occasion like this? and would this ass, merely out of that obstinacy, keep on running for all the rest of the day? It was a startling thought.

Bob all this time had been making desperate efforts to stop the ass. He was considerably embarrassed by the fact that there was no bridle, and no way of getting at the ass, so as to exert his strength upon him. He tried various ways. First he pulled at his long ears. For this the ass cared not a whit. He did not seem to be conscious of it. Then he wound his hands about his neck, and tried to pull his head back. The effect was useless. Bob's strength was unavailing. He could no more move that bent and stubborn neck, than he could straighten the crooked fluke of an anchor. Then he pounded wildly upon the neck, shoulders, and flanks of the ass, and kicked against his sides. This, too, was useless, for his puny blows seemed to affect the animal no more than so many puffs of wind. Then Bob tried other means. He sat upright, and suddenly called, in a short, sharp, peremptory voice, "Whoa!" This he repeated over and over, but without any success; and at length he reflected that *whoa* was English, a language which, of course, an Italian ass could not understand.

While Bob had been putting forth these efforts, the ass bad been flying along at an undiminished rate of speed, and the country swept past him on either side. He passed long lines of trees by the roadside, he saw field after field flit by, and the distant hills went slowly along out of the line of his vision. Hitherto he had met with no one at all along the road, nor had he seen any cattle of any kind. His efforts to arrest the ass had been fruitless, and he gave them up, and looked forward for some opportunity to get assistance. He remembered that the road had no towns or inns between Paestum and Salerno, and he began to fear that he would be carried all the way to the latter place before he could stop.

His fears, however, were unfounded; for now an event occurred which made him full of other thoughts. It was a sudden change in the course of his flight. Thus far they had been going along the main road. Now, however, they came to a place where a road led away on the right, apparently to the mountains. Without the slightest pause or hesitation, but with undiminished speed, and the headlong flight of one familiar with the way, the ass turned from the main road, and ran into this side road.

The anxiety and fear which Bob had thus far felt were trifling, indeed, compared with the emotions that now seized upon him. Thus far he had not felt altogether cut off from his friends. He knew all the time that they were behind him, and that at the worst he could not be carried farther than Salerno, and that they would come up with him there, and thus they would all be reunited before dark. But now he was suddenly carried off helplessly from the main road, and in a moment seemed severed from his friends. Where was he going? When would the ass stop?

Before him arose the mountainous country, not many miles away, the declivities in some places slight and gradual, in other places abrupt. Cultivated spots appeared here and there, and white villages, and old castles. It was not, however, an inviting country, and the nearer he drew to it the less he liked it. The road here was not so broad, and smooth, and easy as the one he had just left, but was narrow and rough. At length he reached the skirts of the mountains, and the road now began to ascend. After a while it grew somewhat steeper, and decidedly rougher. And now Bob found, to his immense relief, that the pace was at last beginning to tell upon the tough sinews of the fiery animal which he bestrode. The ass could not keep up such a pace while ascending the mountain. Gradually his speed slackened, and Bob at length began to look about for a soft place, where he could jump.

But by this time the road entered what looked like a pass among the mountains. On one side the hill rose, wooded in some places, in others rocky; while on the other side it went down steep for about thirty, feet, where a mountain torrent brawled, and dashed over its rocky bed. It was about here that the ass slackened his pace sufficiently for Bob to jump from his back; but just here it was impossible to jump without the risk of breaking some of his bones, and he was not yet quite desperate enough to run such a risk as that. As the road went on through the pass, it grew narrower and steeper, quite impassable for carriages, and Only fit for travellers on horse or foot. The farther on it went, the rougher and steeper it became, and it went on with many a winding. No houses appeared, except at a great distance, and those which did thus appear seemed separated by deep valleys from the place where he was.

Bob could have easily dismounted from the donkey now; but he hesitated. He thought with some dismay upon the distance that lay between him and the main road. He thought that his friends must have passed beyond the place where he turned off, and that if he did go back he could not hope to meet them. Besides, to go so long a distance on foot was too formidable a task just now. He hoped that the ass had some aim in directing his course here, and that he was seeking his home. Perhaps that home

was close by. Perhaps it was some village in the mountains. If so, he might be able to obtain a mount for Salerno, and still reach that place before night was over.

He hoped thug to find help—to get a horse or an ass, and also something to eat, and thus set forth for Salerno. As the road wound on, and as he traversed it, he looked eagerly at every projecting cliff before him; and as he rounded each projection he still looked forward eagerly in search of the place, whether house or village, where he might obtain the help of which he stood in need. But the road continued lonely. He saw no houses, no villages, in its vicinity. He met with no living things, whether men or cattle. It was the loneliest path he had ever traversed.

At last he rounded a projecting spur of the mountain; and here he beheld a scene which was more promising. A little distance off there was a bridge, which crossed the torrent. Beyond this the mountains sloped away in an easy declivity, where appeared several houses. On the other side of the bridge were two men. The sight filled Bob with joy, and fearing that the ass might once more take it into his head to run, he at once leaped off the animal's back, and walked towards the bridge. The ass, freed from his weight, trotted briskly away, and Bob followed. The noise of me ass trotting over the bridge roused the two men, and they walked across and caught him. One of them then held him, and the other walked towards Bob.

As the latter approached, Bob noticed that he was dirty and bearded, and rather shabby. He had a coarse jacket, with brass buttons; a red flannel shirt, which was open, and disclosed a hairy breast; and coarse leather breeches with leggings. A conical felt hat was on the top of his head. Thusfar he was simply the counterpart of hundreds of other peasants in this part of the country, shepherds, drovers, wine-sellers, etc., such as he had encountered during his drive. But in one important respect ne was different.

He had a gun in his hand.

This gun at once made him seem more than a simple peasant. It made a profound impression upon Bob. And as the Italian approached, with his eyes fixed on the new comer, a strange and very natural suspicion was roused in Bob's mind.

"It's a brigand!" he thought. "I'm lost!"

CHAPTER VII.

The Lurking-place of the Brigands.—The captive Boy.—The hideous Household.—The horrible old Hag.—The slattern Woman.—The dirty Children.—The old Crone and the evil Eye.—Despondency of Bob.—Is Escape Possible?—Night.-Imprisoned.—The Bed of Straw.—Outlook into the Night from the Prison Windows.

A brigand!

Such was the appalling thought that came to the mind of Bob, as the Italian advanced towards, him. As he came closer, his face became more distinctly revealed. It was not a face which reassured him. Heavy, shaggy black eyebrows, from beneath which gleamed black and fiery eyes, a skin browned by the hot, Italian sun, and white teeth, that glistened from behind a vast matted mass of tangled beard and moustache,—such was the face that appeared. It seemed an evil and sinister face—a face that revealed a cruel and treacherous soul. No wonder that Bob's heart sank within him as he saw himself confronted by one like this.

The Italian stood looking at him with sharp and close scrutiny.
Then he said something.

Bob could not understand him, and tried to explain by signs that he had lost his way, and that the donkey had run away with him. He also pointed to himself, and said, "Americano," and waved his hand in the direction of the road up which he had come, and said, "Salerno." This was very well for Bob, especially when his anxiety of mind is taken into account, and his signs seemed intelligible to the Italian. He looked at Bob carefully, and finally seemed to make out an explanation of his appearance, which satisfied him, after which he motioned to him to follow, and walked back towards the bridge.

Bob's first impulse was to rush away, and run as fast as his legs could carry him; but the thought of the Italian's gun checked the impulse, and he followed.

Meanwhile, the other brigand, who had caught the ass, stood stroking it and examining it. The animal seemed perfectly quiet and docile; altogether a changed animal, different far from that wild beast that had torn Bob away from all his friends, and thrown him here among these dread associates. This other man had very much the same general appearance as the first one. His beard was reddish, and his eyes were smaller, the general expression of his face was more sinister, as Bob thought, and though he had no gun, yet he seemed none the less formidable.

The two men stood talking together for some time. One of them seemed to be narrating to the other Bob's account of himself, as he had understood it from the signs that had been made. After this they seemed to be discussing the subject of Bob and the ass, for they looked at him and at the animal from time to time during their conversation. At length they seemed to have made up their minds about the subject, for they stopped talking; and motioning Bob to follow, they walked away, leading the ass with them.

Again a strong impulse rose in Bob's mind to fly; but again the dread of being shot at prevented him. He therefore followed as before.

There was in this place a circular sweep of hills enclosing a valley, through which the brook ran. Crossing this by a bridge, the road wound along a gentle declivity, and not very far away were one or two houses. One of these was two stories high, much dilapidated, and looked as though it might once have been a wind-mill, or something of that sort. It stood on the edge of the torrent, and the door-way was towards the road. The other buildings seemed to be barns of some sort, or sheep-folds. The grassy declivity spread away till it reached a steeper ascent, and here there began a forest which covered the mountain-sides.

Towards this old mill Bob was led by his captors. As he drew near he saw some dirty children at play, in front of the door-way. Soon an old woman came out, followed by another, who was younger. The old woman was a hideous old crone. Her hair was a matted gray mass, her teeth were gone, and her face was pinched, and so seamed with wrinkles, that she looked as though she might be over a hundred years old. The other woman was very dirty and slatternly. She had a dirty baby in her arms; her hair was in disorder, her face was greasy and smouched, and a filthy cloth, which might once have been white, was on her head. The women and children were all barefoot. As Bob approached, they all stared at him with the most intense curiosity; the two women stood still and stared; the children stopped their play and stared; and there was something in the glow and glitter of all these fiery, black, Italian eyes which seemed horrible to poor Bob, and made his flesh fairly creep.

The men then began to talk to the women, evidently explaining about Bob and the ass; and as they talked the eyes of all of them were most of the time fixed upon these two. As for the children, they glared for a time with very evil looking faces at Bob; but at length the ass seemed to offer superior attractions to them, for they made a rush at it, climbed on its back, pulled at its ears and tail, and tormented it in various ways. Strange to say, this animal, that had punished poor Bob's little trick so fearfully, showed no resentment whatever at his present treatment, but stood there, no longer the fiery wild ass, but the very living image of a patient donkey.

Bob stood there looking upon the scene with his heart sinking within him, yet by no means despairing. He had too high a spirit and too stout a heart to give up so soon; and as he stood there, in the power of this evil company, he turned over in his mind a hundred different modes of escape. If he could once effect his escape from these people, he might easily go back by the mountain path. But how could he escape? That was the difficulty. Thus far, to his amazement, they had not inflicted any cruelty upon him, nor had they tied his hands; but that was, no doubt, owing to their contempt for him, and their conviction that he would not venture to fly. All that Bob had ever heard about the manners and customs of Italian brigands now came to his mind—how they detain their prisoners subject to a ransom, treating them well enough until the ransom comes, but if it fails, then inflicting upon them the most horrible cruelties. To Bob it now seemed certain that they intended to hold him for ransom, and that they would treat him well till he should be freed. As he felt certain about obtaining his ransom, he began to feel less anxious, and his bold and enterprising spirit began to conceive various ways by which he might baffle the brigands.

At length one of the men went off, and the younger of the women went into the house. The brigand with the gun remained, and talked for a little while with the old woman. It was evident to Bob, by the glances which they threw at him, that he was the subject of their conversation. To him the old woman was by far the most obnoxious of the whole crowd. The slatternly woman, the dirty, impish children, the brigands,—all these were bad enough; but the old woman was far worse to his imagination. There was in her watery eyes, in the innumerable wrinkles of her leathery skin, in her toothless jaws, something

so uncanny that he almost shuddered. She reminded him of some of those witches of whom he had read, who, in former and more superstitious ages, were supposed to have dealings with the evil one, and whose looks certainly sustained such a supposition. To Bob, at that time, it seemed that if ever any one did in reality have dealings with the evil one, that one was the old hag behind him. To him she seemed a witch; he thought of her as a witch; and if she had at that time put on a peaked hat, straddled a broomstick, and flown off through the air, it would scarcely have surprised him.

At length the brigand went off, and the old woman came up to Bob. At her approach Bob involuntarily shrank back a step or two. The old hag fixed her small, watery eyes on him, mumbled with her toothless jaws, and after a few efforts croaked out something in Italian, followed by some gestures with her hands, which Bob understood to convey a general assurance of safety. For this he was prepared, since his mind was now fixed upon the idea that he would be kept for a ransom. Then the old woman came nearer, and put one of her thin, bony, shrivelled hands on his shoulder. The touch was like the touch of a skeleton, and suggested horrible thoughts to poor Bob. A thrill of disgust and terror shot through him; but he stood it, for he did not like to show his disgust, for fear of offending his hideous companion. The old woman, then standing before him with her hand on his shoulder, looked at him for a long time in silence. Bob looked back at her, and it seemed to him that he had never seen in all his life, such a hideous face. The wrinkles were now more plainly visible, the jaws seemed to be more retreating, the cheeks were sunken, the cheek-bones projecting, the eyes, small and weak, showed tears that slowly trickled down.

Suddenly the old hag gave a low groan, which Bob attributed to some pain or other, and turned away. He noticed that she was trembling, and thought it was the weakness of her extreme old age. He was puzzled by these movements of hers, and felt sure that they meant no good. After a few minutes she, turned again, and beckoned to him to follow. She led the way into the house. On reaching the door Bob hesitated, and stood without looking in. He saw a large apartment occupying all the lower story of the old mill, with some rude seats and rough beds. A long ladder led up to the upper story. The old woman beckoned for him to come in, and Bob did not like to refuse. So he went in. She then brought forth some cold mutton and black bread, which she offered him. Bob was ravenously hungry; but at that moment an idea came to him—a suspicion that was created by the very sinister aspect and very singular behavior of the old crone. The suspicion was, that it was drugged or poisoned. This suspicion was not at all in accordance with the idea that they were keeping him for a ransom, but it was an irrepressible one, and though hungry, he did not dare to eat. So he shook his head. Upon this the old hag took the things away, and Bob went out again.

The dirty children had been playing with the donkey all this time, and still kept up their sport but in the midst of their sport they still had curiosity enough to keep their eyes from time to time upon the strange boy who had come thus suddenly into their midst. The furtive, sinister glances of their wicked black eyes had something uncanny in them, which made Bob feel more uncomfortable than ever. He took a seat upon a stone in front of the house, on one side of the door-way, and looked all around. The mountains arose there, rising first gently in an easy acclivity, and then sweeping up with a greater incline. Their sides, and even their summits, were here all covered with forests. On the left he could see the bridge over which the road passed—the road that led to safety. Could he but escape for a few moments from the eyes of his jailers, he might be saved. And why not? Two women, and some dirty children—why should he care for such guards as these? One rush, one leap, and he would be free. Willingly would he walk all the way to Salerno. Anything would be welcome after such a captivity as this.

But Bob was doomed to disappointment; for just as he had made up his mind to fly, just as he was looking all around to see if the coast was clear, he saw, to his deep distress, the two brigands approaching from the outhouse. They were carrying something which, on nearer approach, turned out to be a sheep, which they had just killed. Of course all thoughts of flight now departed, and Bob could only deplore his own stupidity in allowing that one chance of escape to pass away.

After this they began to boil portions of the sheep in a pot; and soon the savory odor of a stew filled the room, and came to Bob's nostrils. As he was half starving, the delicious odor excited the utmost longing to taste it, and he at once began to feel rather satisfied that he had not fled. He felt that a flight after dinner would be far better. In due time the dinner was ready. It was a stew,—mutton, with vegetables, cooked deliciously,—and Bob's hunger was so great that if it had been worse cooked it would have been a banquet. He had no fears of poison, no suspicions of drugging, for the whole family prepared to partake' of the repast—the two brigands, the old hag, the slatternly woman, and the dirty children. The stew was poured out into a huge wooden platter; they used no plates, but dipped with their fingers. The sight awakened a little disgust in Bob, but he was too hungry to be squeamish, and he succeeded in picking out various morsels which had not been touched by the dirty hands of his companions.

During the repast Bob noticed that they all kept looking, from time to time, at him, and their furtive glances met his eyes whenever he turned them. The old woman sometimes seemed to devour him with a greedy, hungry sort of gaze, that was very horrible. It was an ogrish look, and Bob's appetite was somewhat checked by the horror that he found in her eyes, and he was unable to have that free play with the repast which he might otherwise have had.

After the repast Bob once more went outside, hoping now to have the opportunity which he had missed before. The dirty children went outside too. The two brigands followed, and occupied themselves with various employments. Escape from such surroundings as these was impossible. At length one of the brigands mounted the ass, and rode away down the road by which he had come. This circumstance seemed suspicious to Bob at first, but afterwards he thought that perhaps he had gone to Salerno to get the ransom.

After this, darkness came on so suddenly that he was amazed. He had already noticed that the twilight in Italy was very much less than that to which he had been accustomed at home, but had never been so impressed by it as now. There seemed but a minute Between day and night It was quite bright, and then in a wonderfully short time it became dark.

Upon this they all entered the house. Bob had to go with the rest. The room was feebly illuminated by a small oil lamp. Bob noticed that they fastened the door with a huge chain. The fastening of that door was ominous to him, and the clanking of that chain smote him to the heart, and echoed drearily within his soul. It seemed to him now like real imprisonment, shut in here with chains and bars, within this stone prison.

Soon they all prepared to retire; and the brigand who had first met Bob beckoned to him, and taking the lamp, climbed the ladder to the upper story. Bob followed him. The upper story was about eighteen feet above the lower one. On reaching it, Bob saw that it was all one apartment. There was no bed here, or bedding, or furniture of any description whatever. Sheep-skins hung from the rafters, and dried mutton, and some vegetables. In one corner was a pile of straw. To this the brigand pointed, and Bob went over there. He understood that he was to pass the night on this pile of straw. Once more Bob looked all around as he stood there by the straw. He saw the farther end of the room in dark shadows; he saw the articles hanging from the rafters. He noticed, also, that there were two windows, one in front and the other in the rear. In these windows there were no sashes. They were open to the night air. One glance sufficed to show him this.

The brigand now said something which Bob supposed to mean good night, so he very civilly said the same in English. The brigand grinned, and then descended the ladder, taking the lamp with him.

On his departure, Bob's first act was to take off his boots. He then felt his way along the wall to the front window, for it was so intensely dark inside and outside, that not a thing was visible. Reaching the window, he put his head out and looked down. He could see nothing. All was the very blackness of darkness. He looked up to the sky. All there was blackness also and darkness. Then he looked down again. If he had only some means of getting down, he could venture the descent; but he had nothing. There were no sheets here for him to tie together; he could not make a rope out of that straw strong enough to bear his weight. To jump down was not to be thought of, for he knew very well that at least twenty feet separated him from the ground.

He turned away from the window in despair, and groping his way back to his rude bed, he sat upon the straw, and gave himself up to his gloomy and despondent thoughts.

CHAPTER VIII.

The worn-out Captive.—Light Slumbers.—Fearful Wakening.—The stealthy Step.—The overmastering. Horror.—The lone Boy confronted by his Enemy.—The hungry Eyes.—Is it real, or a Nightmare?—The supreme Moment.

The darkness of the night and the impossibility of escape filled Bob with the most gloomy and distressing thoughts, which at first quite Overcame him. But at length other thoughts came, which were of a less distressing character. His mind once more reverted to the idea that he was held for ransom, and that for the present, at least, he was in safety; and not only so, but well cared for. These people certainly had given him of their best. They had made him share at the common meal, and

though this bed of straw was not very elegant, it was at least comfortable, and was no worse than they themselves used to sleep upon.

He flung himself down upon the straw, and found that it was a soft and a refreshing couch. Far better was this fresh straw than any formal bed could have been, for in such a house as that, a mattress or a bed would certainly have been hideous thing, as dirty, as greasy, and as squalid as the people of the house. On the whole, Bob was pleased with his bed of straw, and with its clean, fresh smell.

Escape being thus cut off for the present, Bob's frame of mind grew more placid. As long as he entertained the idea of immediate flight, his mind was constantly on the strain; but now, when that idea had been dismissed, he grew calmer, and thought over his circumstances with more deliberation. He remembered that one of the brigands had already gone away, and, as he supposed, to Salerno. If so, he would, no doubt, either see his friends, or at least hear from them, some time on the following day.

The more he considered his situation, the more free from all immediate danger did it seem, and the more did his hopes increase. He looked forward with eager hope, to the following day. That would, without doubt, bring him news of his friends, or, perhaps, restore him to liberty. Under the pleasant influence of thoughts like these, his mind grew more calm and cheerful every moment, and passed into a state of tranquil contentment Besides, he was tired, and his weariness brought on drowsiness. As long as his excitement lasted, he could not feel the drowsiness; but now, as calmness returned, the weariness and sleepiness became stronger, and by degrees overpowered him.

Gradually the thoughts of his mind became intermingled with the fancies of dreams, and blended the realities around him with things at a distance. All was still, outside and inside. No sound whatever arose from below. The family seemed all asleep. At last Bob dozed off also, and passed into the land of dreams.

His sleep was not heavy. Many things conspired to keep his senses somewhat on the alert even in that slumber of his, and he was in that condition which is called sleeping with one eye open. The fact is, the extraordinary excitement of his donkey ride, and especially of his last adventure in thus falling into captivity, had so roused his faculties, so affected his nerves, and so sharpened his senses, that even in his sleep there still predominated the thoughts and the purposes of his waking hours.

In this state he remained for some time, sleeping, yet vigilant, the body gaining rest and refreshment, but the wary soul on the alert, as though to guard against danger.

How long this sleep continued, whether minutes or hours, Bob could never afterwards remember; but with a sudden shock through all his nerves, he opened his eyes. He was lying, as he had flung himself on the straw, on his back, with his head elevated against a bundle of straw, in such a way that he could see the length of the room.

It was a noise that he heard. He listened breathlessly, and looked with all his eyes.

Around him all was dark. It might be near morning, or it might be early night; he could not tell. All was still, outside and inside—the blackness of darkness and the stillness of death.

Yet now, in the midst of that black darkness and that deathly stillness, he became aware, of a sight and a sound.

It was a low, creaking sound, which was repeated at short intervals, accompanied by a sliding, shuffling noise. It sounded in the direction of the opening by which the ladder led up from below. Looking there, he saw a ray of light, faint and flickering, yet visible enough in that deep darkness; and as the grating, shuffling sounds succeeded one another at regular intervals, even so did the faint, flickering ray of light grow brighter and brighter.

As Bob looked at this and took it all in, one thought came to him in an instant,—

Somebody was coming up the ladder!

The thought went through him with a pang.

Somebody is coming up the ladder!

Who?

What for?

That mysterious somebody was coming slowly and stealthily. It was the tread of one who wished to come unobserved.

On waking out of sleep suddenly, the mind is often confused; but when, after such a sudden awakening, it is confronted by some horrible presence, the shock is sometimes too great to be endured. So was it with Bob at this time. His awaking had been sudden; and the horror that he found in the object that now presented itself was, that the shuffling sound that arose from the ladder was the step of Doom,—and the mysterious visitant was stealing towards him to make him its prey. There arose within him an awful anticipation. His eyes fixed themselves upon the place where the light was shining; all his soul awaited, in dreadful expectation, the appearance of the mysterious visitor, and as the stealthy step drew nearer and nearer, the excitement grew stronger, and more painful, and more racking.

At length the figure began to emerge above the opening.

Bob's eyes were fixed upon the place.

He saw first the light. It emerged above the opening—an old oil-lamp held in a bony, grisly, skinny hand. Then followed an arm.

Bob's excitement was now terrible. His heart beat with wild throbs. His whole frame seemed to vibrate under that pulsation which was almost like a convulsion.

The arm rose higher! Higher still!

It was coming!

There arose a matted shock of greasy, gray hair. The light shone down upon it as it was upheld in the bony hand. The hair came tip, and then, gradually, a face.

That face was pale as ashes; it was lean and shrivelled; the cheeks were sunken; the cheek bones projected; and a million wrinkles were carved upon the deep-seamed brow and corrugated cheeks. Over that hideous face the gray hair wandered. Bob's blood seemed to freeze within his veins. The old fable tells of the Gorgon, whose face inspired such horror that the beholder stiffened into stone. So here. Bob beheld a Gorgon face. He felt petrified with utter horror!

As the face came up it was turned towards him. It emerged higher and higher, and at length stopped about a foot above the opening. Here it fixed its gaze upon Bob, bending itself forward, and holding forth the light as far as possible, so that it might light up the room, and peering through the gloom so as to see where Bob was.

There seemed something indescribably evil, malignant, and cruel, in those bleary eyes which thus sought Bob out, fastened themselves upon him, and seemed to devour him with their gaze. There was a hideous eagerness in her look. There was a horrible fascination about it,—such as the serpent exerts over the bird. And as the bird, while under the spell of the serpent's eye, seems to lose all power of flight, and falls a victim to the destroyer, so here, at this time, Bob felt paralyzed at that basilisk glance, and lost all power of motion. He could not speak. He tried to scream. No cry came. He was dumb with horror. He was like one in a nightmare; but this was a waking night-mare, and not the fanciful terrors of dreamland.

But the horror was too great to be endured. He closed his eyes tight, and thus shut out the sight.

But though he shut out the sight, he could not shut oat sound; and soon he became aware of something which brought a fresh terror over his soul.

It was a stealthy step.

It was advancing towards, him.

Slow, cautious, cunning, yet steady, and nearer and still nearer, came the awful step! Bob opened his eyes, to assure himself once more of the worst. He opened them by a resistless impulse.

The figure was now half way between the opening and the bed. The old hag stood now fully revealed. Her bleary eyes were fixed on Bob. One hand upheld the flickering lamp, and in the other was a sharp weapon.

Bob closed his eyes in an anguish of horror. He was dumb. He could utter no cry. He could not move. The blow was coming. The destroyer was here, yet he could not make one motion to ward off that blow. His brain whirled, his heart seemed to stop beating.

There was a terrible moment of dumb, motionless, breathless expectancy.

The old woman knelt by his side.

She put the lamp on the floor.

Then she reached out one of her long, lean, bony, skinny, shrivelled hands, and took Bob by the hair of his head, while with the other she raised her sharp weapon.

CHAPTER IX.

The Cavalcade in Pursuit.—Hopes and Fears.—Theories about the lost Boy.—A new Turn to Affairs.—Explanations.—On to Salerno.—Inquiries.—Baffled.—Fresh Consternation and Despondency.—The last Hope.

Meanwhile the party on donkeys trotted along the road after Bob. At the exclamation from the donkey boy they had all experienced a shock; but soon they recovered from it, and the shock only served as a stimulus to make them push the donkeys onward more rapidly. They rode on for some time without making any remarks, each one looking eagerly forward to see if Bob might reappear; but he had vanished behind a turn in the road, and as they advanced, there were other turns to be encountered, and so they were unable to see him. This began to create uneasiness. At first they all had hoped that Bob would be able to stop the ass, or that the animal, after indulging his paces for a short time, would stop of his own accord; but the farther they went, the more they became convinced that this affair had something serious in it.

At length they reached that long, straight piece of road already mentioned. At one end of this was a rising ground; as they ascended this and reached its summit, they looked ahead, and there, far away before them, was a single rider. They recognized Bob at once. He was more than a mile away; but the sight of him filled them all with joy, and they at once stimulated their donkeys to greater exertions. In spite of the distance that intervened, they all shouted as loud as they could; but of course the distance was too great, and their cries were lost before they reached nearly as far away as Bob. In a short time he turned in the road, and passed out of sight.

They now rode on for a long time, and at length came to the road that led to the mountains, up which Bob had gone. This road was not even noticed by them. They had passed other roads of the same kind, which, like this one, led to the mountains, and attached no more importance to this than to those. In the minds of some of them, however, these side-roads suggested a fear, that Bob's ass might have turned off into some one of them; but of course, as they were all alike, they could not conjecture which one would have been taken by the runaway. As they rode on, they still looked ahead. At every turn in the road they still expected to see the fugitive; and it was not until the donkeys themselves gave signs of fatigue, that they were willing to slacken their pace. But the nature of these donkeys was, after all, but mortal; like other mortal things, they were subject to weakness and fatigue; and as they were now exhausted, their riders were compelled to indulge them with a breathing space, and so they slackened their pace to a walk.

And now they all began to consider the probabilities of Bob's fortunes.

"I'm afraid something's happened," said Clive. "Perhaps he's been thrown."

"Thrown?" cried Frank, cheerily. "Why, if so, we would have found him long ago. But the idea of Bob being thrown from any animal that ever lived is simply absurd. Hell stick to that donkey as long as the donkey runs."

"It seems to me," said David,—who was a very thoughtful and observant boy,—"it seems to me that the donkey may have taken some of those roads that go off to the mountains."

"Pooh!" said Frank. "Why should the donkey take the trouble to do anything of that sort? A runaway animal don't generally indulge in freaks of that kind. He generally goes it blind, and runs straight ahead along the road that happens to be before him."

"But perhaps he lives among the mountains," said David, "and, in that case, he would merely be running home."

"I don't believe that," said Frank. "I hold that it requires some thought for an ordinary donkey to quit the high road, and take one of those by-roads."

"Not if a by-road leads to his home."

"But how could his home be there," objected Frank, "when we found him away down there near Paestum?"

"Easily enough," said David. "I dare say they were going home at the very time we came up with them."

"I wish we could ask the boy about it," said Clive. "He could tell as just what we want to know."

"Yes," said Frank; "but, unfortunately, we couldn't understand all of it."

David heaved a sigh.

"How I wish," he exclaimed, "that I had studied Italian before I came! But from this time forth, I'm determined not to rest till I've learned the language."

Uncle Moses was deeply distressed at Bob's disappearance. He had only one idea in his mind. He told the other boys what it was. It was the idea of brigands. They had met poor Bob; they had seized him, and had carried him off to their lurking-places in the mountains. Even now he was in captivity. And the heart of Uncle Moses yearned over the poor prisoner. He expressed these fears in a few words, for he was too agitated to say much.

Clive and David both shook their heads over this, and thought there was something in it. Both of them now thought that Bob might have been carried by his donkey to the mountains; and, if so, his capture by brigands would be almost certain. To them, these mountains seemed to be full of them; the whole population, in their opinion, was a community of brigands.

Clive had also another idea. It was this. The driver had deserted them and had gone off vowing vengeance. He had gone to the mountains, and returned with a band of brigands to capture all of them. They had met Bob, seized him, and taken him off.

At all this Frank laughed.

"Pooh!" said he. "I don't see why you should go out of your way to torment yourselves about nothing at all. It all seems plain enough to me. The donkey has run off, and intends to keep running till he drops. There's a long, straight, smooth road before him, and he'll stick to that without bothering his head about by-roads or mountains. And if he's obstinate enough, I don't see why he shouldn't keep on running till he gets to Salerno. And it's my opinion, if we don't pick him up on the road, well find him at Salerno when we get there."

"O, that's all very well," said Clive, "but think how certain you were about the driver—"

He was interrupted by the sound of galloping horses and rolling wheels. The sound came from behind. At once they all turned their heads. Emerging from behind a torn in the road, they saw two horses galloping at full speed, and drawing a carriage. The driver was whipping the horses furiously, and calling and shouting. The carriage was empty. In a moment they recognized the truth. It was their carriage and their driver.

They all stood still, and looked in surprise, and the carriage rolled swiftly up. The driver at once stopped the horses, and jumped to the ground. Then, coming to the boys, he burst forth into a strain of the most profuse and vehement apologies. He implored them to forgive him, and began to explain the cause of his absence from the place where they had left him.

It seems that he found this place an inconvenient one, and had driven across the fields for about half, a mile, to some trees. Here he had taken his horses out, and allowed them to feed. He himself lay down in the carriage, and took a *siesta*. He overslept himself. On awaking, he was horrified to find how much time had passed, and at once proceeded to search for the horses. But during his sleep they had both wandered off, and could not be found until after a long search. When at length he was ready, and had driven back, he found to his horror that they were not there. Thinking that they were still among the ruins, he had gone over the whole place, which took up still more time. At last he saw that they must have left. He at once drove off. Knowing that they were on foot, he expected every minute to catch sight of them. He drove on for miles without seeing any trace of them, and at length came to the conclusion that they had, perhaps, found the carriage of some other visitors, and had obtained seats in that. He knew that they must have gone, and could only account in that way for their rapid progress.

This explanation of the driver was perfectly satisfactory to them all, and their joy at getting the carriage again was so great that they excused his unfortunate slumbers. The driver also, on his part, had now forgotten all about his sulks, and was the same genial and companionable soul as before. On

learning about Bob's mishap, he at once assured them that the donkey must have run along the road, and that they would undoubtedly soon catch up with him. So the whole party got into the carriage, the driver whipped up the horses, and away they went towards Salerno.

Mile after mile was traversed.

Still there were no signs of Bob,

"Something's happened," said Clive.

"He's been carried to the mountains," said David.

"It's the brigands!" groaned Uncle Moses.

"O, it's all right," said Frank, confidently. "That donkey's a regular race-horse. We'll find him at Salerno."

At length they reached Salerno. They drove up to the hotel.

No signs of Bob!

Hurrying in, they made inquiries, and found that he had not come. This filled them all with the greatest concern; and the driver, and the landlord, and all others who heard of it, asserted that he must have been carried to the mountains. It was now dark. Nothing more could be done; and so they could only resolve to drive back on the following day, and make a more careful search after the lost boy.

CHAPTER X.

The captive Boy and his grisly Visitant.—The Hand on his Head.—Denouement.—The Brigand Family.—The old Crone.—The Robber Wife.—The Brigand Children.—A Revolution of Feeling.—The main Road.—The Carriage.—In Search of Bob.

Paralyzed with terror, dumb with horror, Bob lay motionless and almost breathless; and the grisly old hag reached out her long, lean, thin, bony, withered, shrivelled hand, and took his hair, while with the other hand she raised her sharp weapon.

She took his hair very lightly and tenderly; so lightly, indeed, that Bob was just conscious of her touch; and though he expected that he would be torn from his bed and struck dead the next instant, yet this fate was delayed.

She took his hair then in her hand very gently and tenderly, and in her other hand she raised the sharp weapon.

Now, the sharp weapon was a pair of sheep-shears.

These shears she held forward, and with them she snipped off, as noiselessly as possible, a lock of Bob's hair.

She pressed the lock of hair to her thin lips, looked at it steadfastly for some time, pressed it once more to her lips, and then put it in the folds of her dress.

Then kneeling by Bob's side, she looked at him long and earnestly. She bent over him, and looked down upon him. She laid the shears upon the floor, clasped her withered hands together, and gazed upon the boy. He lay still. His eyes were closed; but the delay of his fate and the snip of the shears in his hair bad roused him somewhat from his abyss of terror. He opened his eyes wide enough to see what was going on. He could not see the old woman's face, but he saw her kneeling, and he saw her thin hands clasped before her, like one in prayer, and tremulous.

The old woman bent over him; and if Bob could have seen her face he would have known that this old creature was an object of any other feeling rather than fear. Pale it was, that face that was over him, and wrinkled, and emaciated; but there was upon it a softened expression—an expression of yearning and of longing. That which at a distance had seemed to his frightened fancy a hungry, ghoulish look,

was now nothing more than the earnest, fixed gaze of a love that longed to be satisfied—a gaze like that of a bereaved mother who sees some one who reminds her of her lost boy, and looks at him with a look of unutterable yearning. So, now, it was with this poor old decrepit creature. Perhaps in her past life some son had been torn from her, of whom Bob reminded her, and she had come now to feast herself with his face, which reminded her of her lost boy, to take a lock of his hair, to bow down over him in speechless emotion. Here, then, she knelt, her poor hands clasping each other tremulously, her aged breast heaving with repressed sighs, while from her weak eyes there fell tears which dropped upon the face of the boy.

Those tears had a wonderful effect.

As Bob's half-opened eyes saw the old woman's attitude, his grisly terror left him; his heart regained its ordinary pulsation; the tremendous pressure that had been upon his soul was removed; warm, and fresh, and free, his young blood sped through his veins, and all his frame was quickened to a bounding life and vigor. By the force of this reaction he was roused from his stony lethargy, his paralysis of horror, and his presence of mind was restored. Then there came those tears which fell upon his face. This completed the recovery of his self-command. It did more. It assured him that he was an object, not of murderous fury, but of tender love, and that the one whom he had feared had come, not with purposes of cruelty, but with yearnings of affection. Why this should be he knew not; he was content to know that it was so; and in this knowledge all fear died out. Bat even now he felt somewhat embarrassed, for the old woman was evidently only giving way to her emotion because she believed him to be asleep; and thus he was an unwilling witness of feelings which she supposed to be seen by none. In this there seemed to be something dishonorable, and he wished the scene to end. He chose to do so therefore by making a few movements without opening his eyes; that is, he changed his position several times, turned himself over and back again, and thus gave signs of waking. Upon this the old woman silently took her lamp and shears, and left the apartment by the way she had come.

So ended the adventure.

The effect produced upon Bob was a varied one. He still felt the consequences of that horror into which he had fallen, that spasm and convulsion of terror which had seemed to turn him to stone, yet the relief that had been found was inexpressibly sweet. In spite of the pain which still lingered about his heart, there came a calmer and happier frame of mind; the pain itself also gradually died out, and its only result was a general languor. So commonplace a termination to what seemed a terrible event made his whole situation and his other prospects seem commonplace, and he even began to think that his captors might turn out to be as commonplace as the old woman.

He fell again into a deep sleep, and did not wake till it was broad day. On descending, the people all respectfully bade him good morning. Breakfast was ready, consisting of black bread, stew, and some coffee. Outside, the view was superb; the rising sun had not yet ascended high enough to shine down into the valley, but the glowing heavens, and the shadows of the mountains, and the light green of the little space nearest, with the darker green of the forests that clothed the mountain-sides, all made the spectacle a memorable one.

Bob's whole state of mind was more healthy, and cheerful, and hopeful than it had been. Everything appeared bright and favorable. The old woman, as he looked at her this morning, did not seem to be at all repulsive. Her face was shrivelled, it is true, and her eyes were weak; but she looked gentle and mild, and treated him with very great favor and attention. The slatternly woman did not seem worse than any other Italian peasant woman. The children were dirty, no doubt; in fact, very dirty; but then they were brown, and healthy, and merry, not inclined to mischief, and quite respectful to him. In short, Bob found himself surveying his situation and its surroundings with much complacency, and he began to feel that he had misjudged these people altogether the night before.

But other things were yet in store which were to redeem still more the character of these people. He was standing outside the house after breakfast, when, to his surprise, he saw the second "brigand" approach. He knew that he had not had time to go to Salerno and return; so he saw that he could not have been to Salerno at all. He seemed to Bob to be going there now, for he was mounted on a donkey, and led another by the bridle. The one which he led was no other than the ass which had carried Bob to this place.

Bob's only thought at seeing this was, that the "brigand" was now setting forth for Salerno, and was about to take the donkey with him, either to sell it, or to return it to the owner, and get a reward. But this idea was not left long in his mind.

The first "brigand" came out, and the two men talked to one another, after which they turned to Bob, and the first brigand explained to him that he was to mount the donkey. He pointed to the animal, smiled, waved his hand towards the road by which Bob had come, and uttered the word "Salerno."

Bob's heart gave a wild leap; he could scarcely believe what he heard; but the faces of the two men were smiling, and they continued to nod, and gesticulate, and repeat the word "Salerno." They looked like two benevolent farmers, and Bob wondered how he could ever have seen anything malignant in their very good natured faces.

Of course there was nothing to do now but to hurry away to his friends. Yet Bob was not willing to take too abrupt a leave. He remembered the old woman, and thought with a softened heart about her emotion. He went back into the house, and shook hands with her for good by. He even knew enough Italian to say "*Addio*." The old creature was much softened and burst into tears. Bob gave her one of his cuff-buttons as a souvenir, for he had nothing else to give, and the cuff-button was an uncommonly elaborate affair; and he had the satisfaction of seeing that the old woman took it as though it was of inestimable value. He then went around among them all, shook hands with all of them, from the slatternly woman down to the smallest of the dirty children, and gave each one of them something—to the woman, a pencil case; to one child, his pocket knife; to another, a watch key; to a third, a shirt stud; to a fourth, a memorandum book; and to the fifth, a handkerchief.

"Brigand" number two was going to accompany him, and it was now evident to Bob that the delay which had taken place in his restoration to his friends was probably owing to the fact that they had to wait to procure bridles, or another donkey. It only remained for him now to bid good by to "brigand" number one, which he did with great earnestness, and cordiality, and fervor; presenting him at the same time with his neck-tie, a very brilliant piece of satin, which the Italian received with a great flourish, and profuse expressions of thankfulness. Bob had several times regretted his ignorance of the Italian language since his arrival in the country, but never had his regrets been more sincere than on this occasion. Had he been able to speak Italian he would have made a speech then and there, and have invited them all, from the old woman down to the smallest child, to come and visit him and his friends either at Salerno, or at Naples, or in far-off America. But alas! Bob's tongue was tied, and so the invitation remained unuttered. He did what he could, however, and utterly exhausted the whole language of signs in the attempt to express to them his thanks, and his good wishes for their happiness. The simple people seemed to comprehend him, for they were by no means dull, and gesticulated in return many things which seemed to convey the same meaning; and when at last Bob rode away, the humble inhabitants watched him until he passed out of sight.

CHAPTER XI.

The Return.—The tender Adieus.—Back to Salerno.—On to Castellamare.—A pleasant Scene.—An unpleasant Discovery.—David among the Missing.—Woes of Uncle Moses.—Deliberations over the Situation.—Various Theories.—The Vengeance of the Enemy.—Back to Sorrento in Search of the lost One.

Returning to the main road with his guide, Bob traversed the same way by which his donkey had carried him on the preceding day. His progress now was very different. It would not do to dash furiously down the narrow and steep mountain pathway; so they had to go at a slow pace, until they reached the plain. Bob's animal also had changed. He was no longer the fiery, wild ass of the day before, which had borne him helplessly away from his friends, but a tractable animal, with sufficient spirit, it is true, yet with all the signs of subordination and obedience. He obeyed the slightest touch of the bridle, and moved along after the rider in front of him, as quietly as though he was the most patient and gentle of the donkey tribe.

In two or three hours' time they reached the main road, and turning to the right, rode towards Salerno. Thus far Bob had not noticed much of his surroundings, but now his eyes gazed most eagerly upon the road ahead of him, for he expected to meet his friends. He rightly supposed that they would have driven to Salerno on the preceding day, hoping to find him there, and that they would drive back in search of him at the earliest dawn of another day.

Bob's conjecture turned out to be rights He had not ridden more than a mile when he saw a carriage approaching, which he soon recognized as belonging to his party. In it were his friends, who had recognized him as soon as they had caught sight of him, and whose joy at meeting with him again, and amazement at the sight of his companion, knew no bounds. The carriage stopped, and the boys flung themselves out, and tore Bob from the back of the donkey, and hugged him, and hustled him, and danced about him in their joy. Uncle Moses was not so quick as the others, and held back. Bat if his

greeting was last, it was not least fervent, as Bob well knew by the moistened eye, the quivering lip, the tremulous voice, and the convulsive grasp of that venerable relative.

Then and there, on the road, Bob had to satisfy the hungry curiosity of his friends, and give them some sort of an outline of his adventures. The particulars he reserved until a future occasion. Bob's account of his friends in the mountains at once roused the enthusiastic interest of the whole party in their favor, and they all proceeded to shake hands with the Italian. Nor did they content themselves with this, for on the spot Uncle Moses and the boys made up a handsome purse, which they presented to him, not because he deserved it, exactly, but partly because they were so rejoiced at finding the lost boy, and partly on account of Bob's urgent appeal to them. For now Bob's sentiments about the humble people in the sequestered valley had undergone the last phase which was necessary to complete a perfect revolution of feeling; and he had come to regard them not by any means as brigands,—far from it,—but rather as a family of peaceful, innocent, harmless, affectionate, quiet, benevolent, warm-hearted, good-natured, hospitable, and virtuous peasants.

The Italian received the gifts with a series of gesticulations, by which he seemed to be invoking the blessing of Heaven upon them, and vowing endless gratitude; and after the boys and Uncle Moses had one by one shaken hands and bidden him good by, he still stood there, smiling, bowing, and gesticulating; and as they drove away, they saw him standing motionless in the road till they passed out of sight.

Bob's adventures had not been without some serious consequences, for the strain on his mind during the previous day, and especially the horror of the night, combined with the fatigues to which he had been subjected, had been somewhat too much for him. As soon, therefore, as the first excitement of the joyous meeting was over, a reaction took place, and he complained of utter weariness and exhaustion. As Bob was a boy who never complained except under sore pressure, the boys perceived that he was now in need of quiet and repose, and therefore tried to put a check upon their eager curiosity. On reaching Salerno, they put up at the hotel again, and gave Bob the opportunity of a long rest. Had it not been for Bob's adventure, they would by this time have been back in Naples; for their intention had been to go on from Paestum without stopping; but now they were forced to delay somewhat. Still they were anxious to resume the journey back, and as Bob seemed refreshed after a rest and a good repast, Uncle Moses thought they had better set out and go as far as they could before dark. The driver mentioned Castellamare as a convenient stopping-place, and it was thereupon decided to drive on as far as that place, and pass the night there.

They had passed through Castellamare before, when on their way to Sorrento, and again, when returning from that place, on their way to Salerno, so that it seemed quite familiar. But on quitting the carriage and looking out from the windows of the hotel, they were surprised to find how much the beauty of the place was enhanced by this new outlook. Before, they looked at it as hasty travellers, snatching a passing glance; but now they could take a leisurely survey. Before them was the Bay of Naples; on the right, the city with its suburbs, extending far along the shore; on the left, the isle of Capri; in front, the shores of Baiae; while in the rear was the verdant landscape, with a background of mountains, over which reigned supreme the gigantic form of Vesuvius, from whose summit was still floating the wrathful smoke cloud.

It was decided to pass the night here, and go on to Naples early on the following day. All the party were tired and went to rest at an early hour. The night was calm, and beautiful, and bright; and as they went to sleep, they were lulled by the plash of the waters as they gently rippled upon the pebbled beach.

Frank arose pretty early on the following morning, and found that David was already up, and had gone forth. The others were still asleep. Frank thereupon went forth for a walk, and one by one the others awaked also. They had ordered breakfast at an early hour, and they were to start immediately after. When Uncle Moses went down stairs he found breakfast ready, and departed to hunt up the boys. He found Frank, and Clive, and Bob, watching the driver groom the horses.

"Boys," said Uncle Moses, "breakfast's ready."

"All right, sir," said Frank; "we'll be along."

Upon this Uncle Moses went back, and after a few moments Frank, and Clive, and Bob entered.

"Where's David?" asked Uncle Moses.

"I don't know, sir."

"Well," said Uncle Moses, "I suppose he'll be along; so let's sit down and begin."

They all sat down.

When they were about half through breakfast, Uncle Moses began to wonder what was keeping David.

"Which way did he go, boys?" he asked.

"I didn't see him," said Frank.

"I didn't," said Clive.

"Nor I," said Bob.

"He was up before I was." said Frank, "and had gone out. I didn't see him at all. I only saw his empty bed, and found his clothes gone. I dare say he's gone off on a walk."

"O, he's all right," said Bob.

"Yes," said Uncle Moses, "I don't doubt it He's a very careful, quiet boy, I know; but he is always so punctual, that it seems kind o' odd for him to be so late."

"O, I dare say he's misunderstood about the hour," said Clive.

"Perhaps so," said Uncle Moses.

The boys now went on finishing their breakfast; but Uncle Moses began to fidget in his chair, and look around, and sigh, and gave other signs of growing uneasiness of mind. Feeling in himself, as he did, the care of all the boys, he never was altogether free from anxiety; and the various adventures which the boys had encountered, had not, in any way, tended to lessen his uneasy vigilance over them. Bob's last adventure, in particular, had wrought upon him most painfully, so that he was ten times more careful over his young and somewhat flighty charges than he had been before. The absence of David at such an important time seemed unaccountable. If it had been any one of the others, it would have been intelligible; but for David, who was the soul of order, regularity, and method, to fail an appointment, was something so extraordinary, that he could not but feel alarmed. Still he restrained himself, for he felt a little ashamed of his fears; and though he was evidently very restless, uneasy, and worried, he said not a word until the boys had finished their breakfast.

"I don't know what to make of it," said Uncle Moses at last, starting from his chair and going to the window. Standing there, he looked uneasily up and down the street, and then returned and looked earnestly at the boys.

"I don't know what to make of it, at all," he repeated. "Did you say you didn't see him, none of you? Didn't you see him, Clive?"

"No, sir," said Clive. "When I waked, all the boys were up."

"Didn't he say anythin last night about intendin to do anythin this mornin?"

"I didn't hear him say anything."

"O, I'm sure he's misunderstood about the hour," said Frank. "That's it He's off on a walk. I dare say he's found some old ruin; and if that's the case, he won't know anything about time at all. Put him in an old ruin, and he'd let all the breakfasts that ever were cooked wait before he'd hurry."

"Wal," said Uncle Moses, "there's somethin in that too. David's dreadful fond of old stones, and old bones, and tumble-down edifices, and old sticks an weeds. Why, he's all the time collectin; an if he keeps on, his baggage'll become nothin else but that."

Pleased with this thought, which brought up before his mind what to him was an inexplicable peculiarity of David, Uncle Moses drew a breath of relief.

"Wal," said he, "we'll have to wait patiently, till David's done with that there old ruin; an meantime I think I'll take a turn an see if I can see anythin of him."

Upon this Uncle Moses went out of the room, and down to the street. Reaching the street, he walked up and down the entire length of the town, looking eagerly in every direction, peering into the doors of houses, staring into space, scanning groves and vineyards, and every half minute taking out his watch and looking at it. At the end of about half an hour, he returned more troubled than ever, and met Frank, Clive, and Bob in front of the hotel.

"I can't find him anywhere," said he.

Thus far the boys had thought nothing of David's disappearance; but the deep anxiety of Uncle Moses now excited their alarm; and though, if left to themselves, they would have seen nothing to fear in the fact of David's being an hour or so behind time, yet, after all, they began to see that, in one like David, such conduct was most extraordinary; and in this foreign country, of whose ways they were so ignorant, there might possibly be danger in such absence. They at once began to comfort Uncle Moses; and then all of them volunteered to go in different directions and see if they could find him. Uncle Moses again set out, walking up the road in the direction of Sorrento; Frank went down the road; Clive took a by-road that led towards the hills; while Bob, who was rather weak yet, and not capable of much exertion, said that he would watch from the window of the hotel, and be at home, in case of David's return, to explain matters.

In this way they began their search, and Bob waited patiently in the hotel. After about an hour Uncle Moses came back. On finding that David had not returned, he looked unspeakably distressed; and when, after a short time farther, both Frank and Clive returned without any tidings of the fugitive, he began to look quite heartbroken.

Then they talked to the driver about it; but the' driver could give them no information whatever. They sent him over the hotel to question all the people, but this search was as vain as the others had been. There was no one in the hotel, from the big landlord down to the scullion, who could tell anything at all about David.

By the time all these examinations and searches had been made it was after ten o'clock. Breakfast had been served at seven, and seven was the hoar at which David should have been among them. He had been gone, therefore, more than three hours.

Even the boys now began to feel uneasy. Uncle Moses and all the boys began to rack their brains to find some way of accounting for David's absence.

"Did any of you ever hear of his walking in his sleep?" asked,
Uncle Moses, in an agitated voice.

"No," said Bob, "never. I know he never did such a thing."

"He couldn't have taken a walk anywheres," said Uncle Moses, "or he'd been back long ago."

"O, yes; he wouldn't have started on a three hours' walk," said
Clive.

"Perhaps he's tried a donkey ride, and been ran away with, like me," said Bob.

"O, no," said Frank, "he isn't fond of riding; he'd never get on the back of any animal, unless he had to."

"Did he say anything about—about—?"

Uncle Moses hesitated at the question which he was about to ask.

"About what, Uncle Moses?" asked Clive.

"About—bathing?" asked Uncle Moses, in a faltering voice.

"No," said Clive.

Uncle Moses drew a long breath.

"It would be dreadful dangerous," said he.

"But, Uncle Moses," said Clive, "David would never think of such a thing. He might go in if all of us fellows went in too, just for company; but he doesn't care enough about it to go in alone. The fact is, he doesn't care much for any kind of sports. He's too fond of books."

Uncle Moses sighed heavily.

"I wonder," said Bob, "if any of those Sorrento fellows have been about here, and seen him."

At this suggestion every one of them started, and stared at one another.

"Sorrento fellers?" repeated Uncle Moses.

"Do you think there's any chance?"

"O, I don't know," said Bob. "I only thought it might be possible. You see Dave made no end of a row there about that tassel that he took, and you know how we had to run for it. Well, you know Sorrento isn't very far from here, and I just thought that some of the Sorrento people might have seen us come here yesterday. If they did, they might have tried to pay up poor old Dave for what he did out there."

"It may be so," said Uncle Moses, with a groan. "The whole population were ravin mad, an we had hard enough work to get away."

"Well," said Frank, "it's the only thing that can account for Dave's absence. He may have taken a little stroll this morning, and fallen into the hands of some of those fellows. Perhaps they've been watching all night for the chance. They would watch, not only all night, but a fortnight, for the sake of revenge. There's no people so revengeful as the Italians. Poor Dave! What can we do? I'll go and ask the driver."

Saying this, Frank hurried out of the room and down stairs to talk to the driver about it. All the others followed. On suggesting this Sorrento theory to the driver, that worthy shook his head, and thought that there might be something in it. He evidently began to look upon David's absence as something very serious, and his seriousness over it only added to the anxiety of Uncle Moses and the boys.

"If this is so, we ought to drive off to Sorrento at once," said Frank, "before it is too late. If Dave is in their hands, he needs us now, and I only wish we had thought of this before."

"But he mayn't be there at all," said Bob, who generally had a mind of his own.

"Where else is he?"

"I don't know."

"There's no need for all of us to go," said Uncle Moses. "I'll go alone, and you boys stay here till I come back. But I don't know, either. I'm afraid to leave you. If David's got into trouble, how can any of you hope to escape? No, you must all come, for I declare I'm afraid to trust one of you out of my sight."

"But some of us ought to stay," said Bob, "for Dave may turn up all right, and how'll he know what's become of us?"

"Wal," said Uncle Moses, "I'll leave word for him here at the hotel."

"Yes." said Frank, "that's the best way. None of us want to dawdle our lives out in this place all day, and you don't want to leave any of us behind, Uncle Moses; so if we all go together, we'll all be satisfied."

A few minutes afterwards the carriage rolled out of Castellamare, carrying the party back to Sorrento.

CHAPTER XII.

The Waking of David.—A glorious Scene.—A Temptation.—David embarks upon the wide wide Sea.—Youth at the Prow and Pleasure at the Helm.—A daring Navigator.—A baffled and confounded Navigator.—Lost! Lost! Lost!—Despair of David.—At the Mercy of Wind and Sea.—The Isle of the Brigands.—The Brigand Chief.

On the morning of that day David had waked very early, feeling refreshed with his slumbers, and not at all inclined to prolong them. The others were all asleep, and the house was silent. As he lay he could hear the gentle ripple of the water upon the beach, and feel the sweet, balmy air of morning as it tanned his cheeks. For some little time he lay enjoying his situation, and then jumped out of bed and went to the window.

Immediately in front of him lay the Bay of Naples, a dark blue expanse, with its border of green shores and white cities, overhung by a sky whose hue rivalled that of the sea beneath. The beauty of the scene was so exquisite that it called him forth, and unable any longer to remain within doors, he dressed himself and walked out. On his way out he met no one, for all were still asleep. He had to unlock the door to let himself out, and when outside he saw that the street was as deserted as the

interior of the hotel.

Standing at the door, he saw the eastern sky all ruddy and glowing. The sun was not yet up, but these hues indicated its approach, and announced that it was at hand. The fertile plains, all covered with vineyards, spread afar, extending from the outskirts of the town to the slopes of the mountains, which in the distance rose up grandly, their sides covered with groves, and resting in dark shadows. There, too, was Vesuvius, as ever, monarch of the scene; and the smoke that hung over its summit stood revealed in a black mass against the blue sky.

David left the hotel, and, after walking a few paces, turned his steps towards the sea-shore. Here the attractions were greater than on the land, for the blue expanse of water spread itself out before him, encircled by shores and islands, and all the congregated glories of the Bay of Naples were there in one view before his eyes. There was a beach here of fine pebbles, which sloped gently into the water, and upon this beach a number of boats were drawn up. After wandering along the beach for a little distance, David entered one of these boats, and sat down. It was a small boat, with: a mast and sail, the latter of which was loosely furled. Here David sat and looked out upon the water.

The glorious scene filled his whole soul with enthusiastic delight. Upon that deep blue surface his eye was attracted by several white sails far away, that moved to and fro. At that moment it seemed to him that to move thus over such a sea would be equal to a bird's flight in the blue of heaven; and as he watched the boats he longed to be in them.

Suddenly he thought of the boat in which he was. Could he not have a little sail up and down along the shore? True, he did not know how to sail a boat, but he could learn; and this seemed as good a time to learn as any other. He did not know the owner, but on his return he could pay him what the excursion might be worth. He could float over this glorious water, and move up and down within easy reach of the shore, so as to land whenever it might be desirable.

David was not at all an enterprising boy, or an adventurous one. He was essentially quiet, methodical, and conservative. It was not because this sail was a risky thing that he tried it, but rather because it seemed so perfectly safe. There was a breeze,—he felt it,—and the progress of the boats, afar off on the water, tantalized him and tempted him on. The result was, that without taking much time to think about it, David yielded to the inclination of the moment, and pushing the boat from the land into the water, he let loose the sail; and then seating himself in the stern, he prepared to glide over the water.

About sailing David knew absolutely nothing. He was not even acquainted with the theory of sailing; nor did he know, how, or on what principle, a sail-boat moves. About steering he was equally ignorant, nor did he know how a boat obeys its rudder. But he knew that the one who sails a boat sits in the stern, and holds the tiller; so David did the same, holding the tiller in his right hand, and the sheets in his left.

The wind was not very strong, and it happened to be blowing in such a way that, as he unfurled the sail, it filled at once, and the boat moved lightly and pleasantly along. The motion filled David with delight. He saw himself borne on past the shore, at a gentle rate, and felt that the moment was one of supreme happiness. Thus, holding sheet and tiller, he resigned himself to the joy of the occasion.

The wind was moderate, and there was nothing whatever in the movement of the boat to excite the slightest uneasiness. The wavelets dashed pleasantly against the bows, and the course of the boat remained sufficiently straight to keep her sail filled. David saw that whatever the secret of navigation might be, he had unconsciously stumbled Upon it; and finding that the boat was doing so admirably, he was very careful to hold the tiller straight, and not to move it to either side. So he leaned back, and luxuriated in the pleasant motion, and looked up at the deep blue sky that bent above him, and around at the wide expanse of water, the green verdurous hills, the vine-clad meadows, and the purple mountains.

From time to time he noticed, with satisfaction, that his course ran along the shore, parallel to it, as it appeared. He noticed, however, that he was now farther away from it than when he started; but as yet the distance did not seem excessive; in fact, it seemed on the whole preferable, since it gave him a finer view. Before him the shore ran on until it terminated on a headland, and David thought that this would be a good place to fix as the limit of his voyage.

Never was any human being more utterly out of place than David in this sail-boat, and never was any human being more serenely unconscious of his unfitness. David's frame of mind was one of calm, beatific enjoyment. He was quite unconscious of the increase of the distance between his boat and the shore, which grew greater every moment, and equally unobservant of the lapse of time. In times of great enjoyment the hours fly quickly by, and in David's high exaltation of feeling the time thus fled.

At length, even in the midst of his happiness, the sober practical thought obtruded itself of time and space. How long had he been out? How much time would he have? How far had he gone? He looked at his watch. To his utter amazement and consternation, he found that it was seven o'clock—the time fixed for breakfast. He had been sailing for two hours at least. As to distance, he could not grapple with that thought, but turned hastily, and looked back. That look gave him but little satisfaction. He could see a line of white at the skirts of the sea; but whether it was Castellamare, or Naples itself, he was unable to guess.

It was a wide, sharp; and painful awakening from his bliss and serene delight, and it was an effectual one. No more placid gliding now; no careless voyaging. Two hours! Seven o'clock! Already they were at breakfast, and waiting for him. They were wondering about his absence. And when could he join them again? Two hours! If it had taken two hours to come thus far, it would also take fully as much time to go back. Go back? And where should he go, or how could he get back?

Thus far, David's idea about his course, if he can be said to have had an idea, was, that it lay along the shore, and that somehow he could go back as easily as he had come. But now that the necessity for going back was upon him, he instantly became aware of his utter ignorance, for he had not the faintest idea how to turn the boat. There was no time for delay, however. Something had to be done, and that immediately. David knew this much at least, that a boat could be turned by means of the rudder; so he began to experiment upon this part of the vessel. He palled the rudder towards him. The boat turned, and as it turned the sail began to flap, and toss, and snap, in such a way that he grew exceedingly nervous. Suddenly a puff of wind came, and the sheets where whipped out of his nerveless hand, while the sail thus loosened blew forward.

David's heart quaked at this, and he knew not what to do. With some vague idea of bringing the boat back to her former position, and beginning all over again, he pulled the tiller first to one side and then to the other; but to his dismay he found that the boat no longer obeyed it. Then he tried to get possession of the sheets again, and, clumsily crawling forward, he managed to secure them; after which he crawled back to the stern, and clinging to the sheets, began, as well as his nervousness would allow him, to try a series of experiments. First, he pulled the tiller towards him. At this the boat came up to the wind, and resumed her former course. But this was the very course on which he did not wish to go; so he pushed the tiller from him. Upon this the boat fell away; and the flapping, jerking, whipping, and snapping, which had so alarmed him before, recommenced, and alarmed him more than ever. For some time he continued this, until at length, as he brought the boat up to the wind once more, there came a fresher puff than any which had thus far blown, and the boat lay far over on her side. Terrified out of his wits, David had just sense enough to put her off, and then dropping sheets and tiller, he sank back and looked all around in a panic.

This puff was the beginning of a somewhat stronger breeze—a breeze which would have rejoiced the heart of a sailor, but which carried nothing but terror to the heart of David. What to do now he did not know, nor for some moments did he even think. The wind to his inexperienced senses seemed a hurricane, and the wavelets seemed formidable waves. For a time he lay paralyzed in the stern, expecting every instant to be ingulfed; but as the time passed, and his doom was delayed, he began to recover himself, and think about what he should do next.

To him, in his terror and anxiety, the first necessity seemed to be to get rid of that dangerous sail. As it flapped in the wind it seemed to endanger the boat. At all hazards that must be furled or taken down. So once more, by a mighty effort, he crawled forward, and grasping the flying sheets, he drew them in, and tied the sail to the mast, performing, the work in a manner which was very clumsy, yet quite efficient. The upper part of the sail still remained free, bagging out a little, like a balloon; but the lower part was tied up in a way that would defy the tempest itself. After this David felt safer, and crawling back, he drew a long breath, and threw a fearful glance around.

Some time had been taken up with these experiments in navigation, and as David looked, he saw that the result had been not to bring him nearer to Castellamare, but to take him farther out from the shore. The nearest land to him now was an island, but what island he could not say. As his eyes wandered around, they saw nothing that was familiar. A mountain appeared over the land astern, and the smoke on its summit showed that it must be Vesuvius; but it had a different appearance altogether from that with which he was familiar. He could form no idea of the course which he had taken, and could only guess, in a general way, where Castellamare might be.

Some time before, he had been troubled at the thought that he would keep his party waiting; but now he had no trouble whatever on that score. His only trouble or anxiety was about himself. He felt as though he was in a position of tremendous danger, and was being tossed about by pitiless waves, which were hemming him in on every side, like ravening beasts of prey. In reality the pitiless waves were scarcely waves at all, the breeze was only moderate, and there was no possible danger; but David did

not know this, and so he suffered as much as though his imaginary danger was real.

Meanwhile a portion of the sail had been left loose, as has been said, and afforded something for the breeze to act upon. The consequence was, that the boat moved along slowly before the wind, and gradually approached the island which David had already noticed. For some time he remained with his eyes fixed upon the land astern, and Vesuvius. When he withdrew them and looked around, the island was much nearer. He began to see that he was approaching that island, and that before long he would reach it. This prospect excited in his mind the utmost hope, and all his attention was now directed towards that place. The time passed slowly, but it did pass; and at length, about three hours after he had first tried to turn the boat, he found himself so close to the island that he could step ashore.

It was now about ten o'clock. The place where David landed was a pebbled beach, bordered by rocks, above which grew trees. As he approached the island he saw houses and people. The houses were plain and small, and the people seemed laboring in the fields. David's habit of considering all Italian peasants as brigands now excited in his mind a fear which brought fresh anxieties. On this lonely island the whole population might be brigands, who would treat him as lawful prey, and from whom he could hope to fare no better than those early shipwrecked mariners in these seas about whom he had read and studied so much. He congratulated himself that his boat had borne him to a sequestered spot like this, where he might be secure from observation, and have time to look forth and see what manner of men these island brigands might be.

And so, full of anxiety, David drew his boat cautiously upon the beach as far as he could, and secured it; after which he stole up to the shelter of the trees and rocks, so as to reconnoitre. The trees grew along the edge of the rocks, which rose above the beach, to a height of about twenty feet, and formed a grove, which was sufficiently dense for David to feel secure from observation. The grove ran along the edge of the bank for some distance, bat was of no great depth; and David, as he peered through the trees, could see an opening beyond, and the glimpse of white buildings. Here, then, David found himself close to the dreaded neighborhood of the brigands of the island, and it was with a feeling of great trepidation that he recognized the frailty of his present shelter, the insufficiency of his place of concealment, and the necessity that there was of leaving it before long.

To quit it and communicate with the inhabitants of the place, he plainly saw, could not long be avoided. He had as yet eaten nothing, and already he began to feel the cravings of hunger. He would also have to take measures to effect his return to his friends. His hunger and his desire to get back to his friends alike made him desperate; and so, after a few minutes of concealment and fearful inspection of the scene, he began to move forward cautiously, so as to make a more thorough survey of the open ground on the other side of the grove.

Stealing forward as noiselessly and as warily as possible, and keeping himself carefully under the shelter of the heavier foliage and denser underbrush, David worked his way on, and at length found himself on the other side of the grove, where he could peer forth through the leaves of a laurel bush upon the scene.

He saw here a green meadow, which ran up a moderate declivity till it reached a house. The house was a small cottage, of simple and neat appearance, and it stood not more than a hundred yards from the edge of the grove. Cattle were feeding in the meadow. To the right was a vineyard, and on the left an olive grove. On one side of the olive grove there ran a row of cactuses, up from the bank towards the house.

All this David took, in at a glance; but he also saw something which made his heart, beat quick with excitement and anxiety.

He saw a man!

The man was standing in front of the house. He was a big, burly, broad-shouldered, bearded ruffian, with a red shirt, and a slouching felt hat. A short pipe was in his mouth, stuck into the mass of hair which covered the lower part of his face. His hair was long, and dark, and glossy, and curling; falling in rich clusters below his broad felt hat. He had gaiters and stout shoes, and was engaged upon a rifle, which he seemed to be cleaning.

At the sight of this great, big, bearded, Burly, broad-shouldered ruffian, David's' heart gave a great leap, and suddenly seemed to stop beating. He sat as though petrified, crouching low, as though to avoid observation.

This, then, he thought, was what he had feared, and while trying to avoid the brigands, he had stumbled upon the chief of them all. In that formidable figure he recognized the true brigand style, and in that bearded face, with its bushy eyebrows and slouching hat, he saw what seemed to him, from that

distance, like the ferocity of the implacable Fra Diavolo himself.

So overwhelmed was he, that for some time he could not move. At last he felt a wild impulse to fly. He started back, determining to seek his boat once more. So hurried was he that he was less cautious than before, and catching his foot in a long tendril of some creeper, he fell. In falling, he struck his hand against some cactus or other thorny plant, and the spine pierced his flesh, causing severe pain. In spite of himself a cry burst from him. The cry was instantly repressed, and David, raising himself, prepared to continue his retreat. But first he looked fearfully around to see whether his cry had discovered him.

As he did so his heart sunk within him.

The brigand chief had heard him!

He was walking straight towards him!

CHAPTER XIII.

David Captured.—The big, bluff, burly, brusque, bearded, broad-shouldered, beetle-browed Bully of a Brigand.—A terrific Inquisition.—David's Plea for Mercy.—The hard-hearted Captor and the trembling Captive.—A direful Threat.—David carried off helpless and despairing.—The Robber's Hold.

So this great, big, bluff, burly, brusque, bearded, broad-shouldered, beetle-browed brigand came straight towards the place where poor David was; walking with great strides; and David, seeing all hope lost, stood still, and awaited the arrival of his formidable enemy. The consciousness of his utter helplessness filled him with despair, and his ignorance of Italian put it out of his power to disarm the fury or deprecate the wrath of his fierce pursuer. In the few moments that intervened between the first discovery that he was seen and the arrival of his enemy, his brain was filled with confusion, and his bewildered thoughts turned helplessly to his friends whom he had left behind. He thought of their grief. He thought, too, of his home. He thought, of his mother. That home, those friends, that loving, mother, he now might never see again. Farewell, all dear ones! Farewell, bright past! Farewell, sweet life, and glad light of day! Such were the thoughts, gloomy and despairing, that filled his mind, and tormented his heart; and at the moment that his pursuer entered the grove and stood before him, David looked up with pale face and frightened eyes, and something like a sob escaped him.

The big, burly brigand stood before him, and eyed him from head to foot. He was very tall, and, indeed, to David he seemed gigantic, while his right hand held the rifle like a walking-stick. He looked at David in silence, and scanned him curiously all over; and David's eyes, which had at first sought those of his captor in timid entreaty, now sank before his stern gaze.

"*Cosa volete?*" said the brigand. "*Donde venite?*" in a deep voice.

"*Non capisco*," faltered David, bringing forth the only Italian that he knew.

At this the brigand was silent, and again surveyed him.

"*Parlate Italiano?*" he asked, at length.

"No," said David, in a tremulous voice; for he understood the meaning of those words well enough.

"Hm—" said the brigand, and then, "*Parlez vous Francais?*"

"No," said David.

"*Habla usted Espanol?*" asked the brigand once more, apparently quite curious to find out the nationality of his prisoner, so as to form some basis of communication with him.

David shook his head.

The brigand paused, and frowned, and stared fixedly at David, as though trying to gather from his looks and dress what his country might be. David's dress showed him to be a respectable youth, while his face might belong to any nationality; for his complexion was dark, and somewhat sallow, his eyes dark, his hair black and straight, and his frame slender.

"*Sprechen sie Deutsch?*" asked the brigand, once, more returning to the examination.

David shook his head.

At this the brigand frowned, and once more relapsed into silence for some time. At length he made a further effort.

"*Russo?*" he asked, in an interrogative tone, elevating his eyebrows.

David shook his head.

"*Turco?*" asked the brigand again, in the same tone and manner.

Again David shook his head, wondering why the brigand should for one moment imagine it possible that he could be a Russian or a Turk.

"*Greco?*" asked the brigand, in a tone of voice which seemed as though he was about to give it up as a hopeless conundrum.

When David shook his head at this, the brigand turned away in disgust, and stood for a few moments meditating. David felt his fate to be hanging in the balance, and stood in deep suspense, watching with anxious eyes the face of his captor. But the heavy beard and mustache, and the slouched felt hat, concealed all expression; nor could David see anything there which could at all lessen his anxiety. He thought, however, that if he could only communicate in some way his mournful story, and let his captor see that he had come here unintentionally, and only wanted to get back to his friends, he might excite his compassion, if indeed there was any compassion in the stern soul of this awful being. It was David's only chance, however; and so, putting his hand timidly on the brigand's arm, he pointed towards the shore, and waved his arm towards Naples.

At this the brigand stared; but seeing that David persistently pointed in that direction, he walked off through the grove for a few paces, till he reached the top of the bank, where the beach appeared before him, and the boat drawn up on it. David followed him, and as they came in sight of the boat he pointed towards it, and then touched his breast, meaning by that to show that the boat was his. This the brigand at once understood, and after once more staring hard at David, as though anxious to ascertain whether he was speaking the truth or not, he bounded down the bank, and strode towards the boat, which he examined narrowly, inside and out. Daring this time he paid no attention to David; but to the poor lost lad this indifference gave no hope. He knew that there was no escape for him. He felt that on this island the brigand was supreme, and any effort to fly would only be worse than useless. So, instead of trying to fly, he followed the brigand, and came up to where he was standing beside the boat.

The brigand examined it very narrowly outside and inside. He inspected the bow, the stern, and the rudder. He knelt down and looked underneath. He stepped inside and examined David's clumsy fastenings of the sail. These excited much interest, apparently, and caused prolonged study on his part. To David all this appeared perfectly intelligible, and very natural. The brigand was evidently examining his plunder, to see what it was worth. David felt an additional pang of grief at the thought that he had sequestrated the property of some innocent Castellamare fisherman, and diverted it into the possession of brigands; but he consoled himself by the thought that if he ever escaped he could hunt up the owner and make good the loss. Escape for himself was the first thing, and he tried to hope that the boat might prove a prize sufficiently valuable to mollify the mind of the brigand, and dispose him to mercy and compassion. So, as the brigand inspected the boat, David stood watching the brigand, and looking earnestly to see whether there were any signs of a relenting disposition. But the face of the brigand preserved an unchanged expression; and after he had examined the boat to his satisfaction, he once more confronted David, and the poor, forlorn, despairing lad saw that his aspect was as malign, as ferocious, and as truculent as ever.

David determined to make a further effort. There was nothing else to be done. He felt that he must pacify this ferocious being, disarm his hostility, appease his cruelty, and, if possible, excite his compassion. To do all this, it would be necessary to express himself by signs—for he could not speak the language; and though signs seemed very inadequate, yet he had to resort to them. He had heard, however, of the skill of the Italians in expressing ideas by means of gestures, and he hoped that this man might gain some meaning from his unskilled efforts.

So, first of all, he tried to tell the brigand that he was from. America. He laid one hand on his heart, and waved the other towards what he supposed to be the west.

The brigand nodded solemnly, and seemed to comprehend what he wished to state. It gratified David to see this, and to notice also that the brigand was very attentive, and fixed his dark, stern eyes upon him with closest scrutiny.

The next thing that David tried to tell him was, that he had friends with him.

This he did by patting his breast, waving his arms around him, smiling, and touching four of his fingers.

The brigand nodded. He had apparently got idea.

David was very much encouraged.

The next thing to be told was, that he and his friends had gone on an excursion into the country.

This he did by prancing along the sand, and snapping an imaginary whip; after which he pointed to the opposite shore, waving his hand along the country.

The brigand nodded again, and appeared deeply interested.

The next thing to be told was, that he had put off in this boat.

He waved his hand towards Vesuvius. Then he lay down on the sand, and pretended to be asleep. He then rose, yawned, and rubbed his eyes. Then he went to the boat, pretended to push off and hoist sail.

The brigand now nodded very vigorously, and it began to be evident to David that his story was making some impression.

He now wished to explain that the boat had got beyond his control, on account of his ignorance of navigation, and that he had drifted or been blown upon this shore.

To do this, he pointed to the boat, then to himself; after which he sighed and looked down in a melancholy way. Then he got into the boat and shook the sail. Then he jumped out and rocked it as violently as he could. Then he sank back on one knee with folded arms and upturned face, intending by that to indicate despair. Then he waved his hands all about, and pointed to the boat and to the sea; and then, pointing alternately to the boat and to the sea, he waved his hands, trying to indicate the track over which he had passed while approaching the island. After this he paused, and turned a supplicatory look at his captor.

Thereupon the brigand nodded vehemently, as before.

And now one thing yet remained for David to explain, and that was, his own position. He wished to tell the brigand that he knew he was in his power, and that he would pay any ransom, if he would only restore him to his friends.

To explain this, David took the big hand of the brigand, and put it upon his head, stooping down low as he did so. Then he waved his arms all around, and mournfully shook his head. Which meant, that he was in the brigand's power, and would not and could not escape. Then he drew forth his purse, tapped it several times, held it out to the brigand, waved his hands towards Naples, slapped his breast, and pointed to the brigand and to himself. Which meant, that he would pay any money, that he had friends in Naples who would treat with the brigand for his release on his own terms. Having explained this much, David stopped, for he felt that there was nothing more for him to do, and watched the effect of his story, and his concluding offer.

The brigand seemed gratified. He nodded several times gravely and thoughtfully. Then he looked at the boat, and then at David, and then at the sea. To David it seemed as if the brigand was trying to trace the boat's devious track over the water, so as to see whether his story was true or not. He did not offer any further explanations, but allowed the brigand to think it out for himself. That worthy accordingly devoted his mind to the consideration of the situation for some time, until at length he seemed to have mastered it, and also to have come to a decision about his own course of conduct.

He reached out his brawny hand, and laid it on David's head. After which he pointed to himself, and nodded.

By this David saw, unmistakably, that the brigand was claiming him as his own captive. Although the fact was already painfully evident, yet this formal statement of it produced a very depressing effect upon David's mind, and made him feel that he had been indulging in hopes too soon. Then the brigand waved his hand towards the fields, and the cottage beyond the grove. After this, he waved his hand in a general direction, and then swept it over the surrounding scene. He pointed to the island and nodded, pointed to Naples and shook his head.

By which David understood him to say, "You are my prisoner. I live in that house. You shall be kept there. You can't escape."

Then the brigand raised his gun, and nodded at David. Then he slapped the stock of it several times, fixing his keen, glowing eyes gloomily upon the lad as he did so. Then he waved his hand towards the sky.

By which David understood the following:—

"You're my prisoner! You cannot escape! If you dare try it, I will shoot you! You can no more escape than you can fly in the air!"

Then the brigand pointed to the boat, and touched his breast.

By which David understood,—

"This boat is mine, and I will keep it as my lawful prize."

Then he waved his hand to the house, and then pointed to Naples. After which he brought forth a purse from his pocket, tapped it significantly, pointed to David, and then to Naples.

By which David understood,—

"I will keep you as a prisoner up there in my house till I communicate with your friends about your ransom, and find out how much I can get for you."

After this the brigand pulled the boat farther up on the beach, and then, beckoning to David to follow, he strode off towards the house.

Slowly and sadly poor David followed; and hope, which had for a moment revived, began to die out within him. He had been deceived by the demeanor of the brigand, during his own description of his woes and wandering, and had mistaken for compassion what was only ordinary attention. The manner of the brigand, when he had began to gesticulate, changed hope to fear, and fear to despair. The merciless allusion to David's captive state; the rude appropriation of him as a prisoner by the grasp of his head; the ferocious threat with the gun; and, finally, the display of the purse, and the coarse reference to money and ransom, all convinced David that he had to do with one who was a stranger to compassion—a ferocious and ruthless nature, without pity, and without remorse. And now, as his captor led the way to the house, he felt that he was being conveyed to a prison, from which his escape was, indeed, uncertain; for, though he knew that Uncle Moses would pay any ransom, yet he could not know whether the brigand would ever be able to communicate with him or not. On the whole, it was the darkest hour of his life; and the stride of the ruffian in front of him seemed like the march of inevitable Fate!

They climbed up the bank, and then went through the grove. Emerging into the field, they walked on towards the house. As they drew nearer, David saw signs that were not altogether in keeping with the tough exterior of his enemy, for in front of the cottage there were flowers in bloom, which appeared to be cultivated by some careful hand; but a moment's thought showed David that this might be the work of the robber's wife. The prospect of meeting with a woman afforded hope; for whatever the husband might be, the wife might be gentle, and pitiful, and womanly; and David drew hope from the flowers; for the one that would have tastes like these might not be altogether hard and implacable; and as the giants and ogres of the fairy books had wives who generally were willing to help the victims of their husbands, so here, in the wife of this Italian ogre, David hoped to find one who might be as merciful as those of fairy lore.

At length they reached the house, and the brigand, after waiting for a moment for his prisoner to come up, entered the door. David followed, and found himself inside.

The door opened immediately into a room. It was large and low. The floor was paved with red tiles, and the walls were of wood, varnished. Around the walls hung numerous pictures without frames. In different places there were confused heaps of clothing and drapery. The clothing was rich, though fantastic. In one corner was a frame with armor suspended; while over this, on the wall, he saw arms of different kinds—pistols, carbines, daggers, and blunderbusses. The fashion of all these was somewhat antique, and there was a richness in their ornaments which even David noticed, in spite of his trouble and anxiety. The furniture about the room was old-fashioned, formed of massive mahogany, carved most elaborately, and was of so many different styles that the pieces seemed thrown together at random. A Glastonbury chair stood beside an Elizabethan sofa; a modern Davenport, a Louis Quatorze side-board, and a classic tripod, stood in a row. Some Chinese tables were in one corner. In the centre of the room was a table of massive construction, with richly carved legs, that seemed as old as the middle ages; while beside it was an American rocking-chair, in which lay a guitar. The whole scene struck David as being perfectly in keeping with his captor; for this interior looked like some pictures which he had seen of robber holds, where the accumulated plunder of years is heaped indiscriminately

together, and reminded him vividly of the descriptions which he had read of the abodes of pirates or brigands, in the novels of Cooper, in Francisco, the Pirate of the Pacific, Lafitte, the Pirate of the Gulf, and Rinaldo Rinaldini.

CHAPTER XIV.

On the Way to Sorrento again.—A mournful Ride.—A despairing Search.—A fearful Discovery.—The old Virago again.—In a Trap.—Sorrento aroused.—Besieged.—All lost.—A raging Crowd.—The howling Hag.—Hurried Consultation.—The last forlorn Hope.—Disguise, Flight, and Concealment.

So, as I have said, the carriage rolled out from Castellamare, along the road to Sorrento, freighted with its anxious load. All were silent. Uncle Moses was weighed down by an anxiety that was too deep for words, and sat bent forward with his head buried in his hands. The boys respected his feelings too much to say anything, and consequently they, too, sat in silence. They were far from feeling anything like despair, however, on David's account. Before they started, Bob had assured them that "Dave" was "all right," and would turn up before long somewhere—an assurance which Frank and Clive accepted as a perfectly sound and reliable statement; and so, if they were silent, it was not so much the silence of care or sadness, as of sympathy with Uncle Moses.

As they went along they met people from time to time, some wayfarers, some in carriages, some in wagons, and some on horseback. In accordance with the earnest request of Uncle Moses, the driver questioned all these without exception, and asked the same question of all.

"Have you seen anything of a boy about fifteen years old—pale, with dark hair, sallow face, and gray dress?"

And to this question there was one uniform answer from every one,

"No."

And at each fresh answer Uncle Moses would feel more and more disheartened, and sink into a new abyss of despondency and anxiety.

Far different was this journey to Sorrento from that former one which they had made a few days before. Then they were all together, and every one was filled with joy and enthusiasm. Then no one in that little party was penetrated with a more profound and heartfelt joy than David, who, in addition to a boy's delight at novelty, brought forth all that classical glow and fervor which were peculiarly his own. And now, where was he? The nearer they drew to Sorrento, the more urgent and pressing did this question become; and as each one asked it of himself, there was no answer. Gradually the spectacle of the woe of Uncle Moses began to affect the boys, and in spite of Bob's confidence they began to feel an unpleasant fear stealing over them.

A little way out of Sorrento the driver halted and spoke to Uncle Moses.

He felt a little troubled, he said, about taking the carriage into the town. He reminded them of the recent uproar of the people, and their narrow escape, and warned them that if they were recognized they might again be assailed.

But this warning fell on heedless ears. Uncle Moses was decided to go on. If David was anywhere, he might be in that very town, a prisoner in the hands of those foolish people who took offence at nothing. If they wished to save him, they must go into the very midst of the people, and gave him from their vengeance.

At this the driver drove on.

About a half a mile outside the town they overtook an old woman, and the driver stopped, and put to her the usual question. As the woman looked up they all recognized her at once.

She was their old friend, or rather enemy—the virago herself, and no other!

At the driver's question she stared at them, and at once recognized them all. A dark and gloomy expression came over her, and if glances could have injured them they would have been blasted on the spot.

She stood there, and after the driver had asked the question she glared at them for some time in silence, looking from one to the other. Then she stretched forth a long, bony, skinny hand, and shook it at them. Then she burst forth in a long, shrill, venomous strain of denunciation, of which the boys could not understand one word; but the meaning of which they could easily conjecture.

"What does she say?" asked Uncle Moses of the driver.

"O, nothing," said the driver. "She only does curse; and she say she will haf vengeance." And once more the driver urged Uncle Moses go back.

But this appearance of the virago and her threats only roused Uncle Moses to fresh determination. He was now confident that David had been seized by the Sorrentonians, and that this woman was, perhaps, the instigator and leader in the act. He urged the driver to talk to her; but the driver assured him that it was useless, that she was crazy, and that if they wanted to gain information they must make inquiries elsewhere.

They now resumed their progress, and before long entered the town, and reached the hotel. Uncle Moses at once sought the landlord. At the appearance of the carriage and passengers the landlord looked a little uneasy, and at the inquiry of Uncle Moses he looked still more troubled. But as to David he knew nothing whatever.

"Had he heard of a boy being arrested anywhere?"

"No—nothing at all."

"Had he heard of any one being arrested?"

"No."

"Had he heard any people making any threats against them?"

"O, certainly!"—for the whole of the next day there was nothing but threats against the sacrilegious foreigners; but the feeling had subsided since. Still their appearance in Sorrento would undoubtedly rouse the people again, and the landlord urged them for their own sakes to hurry away as fast as possible back to Castellamare.

But Uncle Moses refused to think of this. He was here, and here he would remain until he had found David. He wanted the landlord to help him in this task. Let him go out and mollify the people in any way, and see if he could find anything about the lost boy. He promised to pay any sum to the landlord, or anybody else, if they would only effect his rescue.

This promise acted powerfully upon the landlord's cupidity, and he thought that at any rate it would be well to try. So he told Uncle Moses to wait, and he would see what could be done. He thereupon left them, and Uncle Moses and the boys walked up stairs to that same room in which they had dined before, when the uproar of the people reached their ears. Here they sat down and waited in silence.

They did not have to wait very long. It was not more than a quarter of an hour, or twenty minutes, when hurried footsteps were heard, and the landlord rushed in, followed by the driver. Both were agitated and disturbed. At the same instant an outcry arose from without, and a tumult of eager and excited voices burst upon their ears. The landlord clasped his hands, and stood listening. The driver rushed to Uncle Moses, and cried,—

"Dey haf come!—de people! You are lost!"

At this Uncle Moses and the boys started to their feet aghast, and Frank rushed to the window, and standing so as to be as little observed as possible, he looked out.

In the street in front he saw an excited crowd, which was not so large as it had been on that former memorable occasion, but which promised to be so before another quarter of an hour, for people were running up every minute, and adding to the uproar. The cries grew louder and louder, and though Frank could not understand the words, he perceived plainly enough that they were fierce cries of anger and vengeance. And there, conspicuous among this crowd, was that identical old woman—that villanous old virago, who had caused all the former trouble, and seemed now bent upon the full accomplishment of her furious purpose. Dancing, howling, shrieking, she stood close by the door of the hotel, which was now shut and barred, and shook her fists at the building, and yelled out curses at those within, and

called upon her fellow citizens to break into the hotel, and seize the sacrilegious and barbarous foreigners. Frank was a bold boy, but this sight was too much for him. His heart sank within him, and he involuntarily shrank back farther out of sight.

Soon the people outside began to throw at the party within something harder than words. Stones came flying through the open windows, and one of these missiles came very close to the head of Uncle Moses. The landlord rushed forward, and closed all the shutters, and barred them, while the boys gathered around Uncle Moses as though to protect him from those savage assailants without.

"What shall we do?" asked Frank of the driver.

The driver shrugged his shoulders.

"Can't we drive through them as we did before?"

"Dey have put a guard at de gate. Dey prepare dis time—an not let us go."

"Isn't there any back way?" asked Frank, once more, of the landlord, who now rejoined them, after having barred all the windows.

"Dere is; but de people are on de guard."

"Are there no soldiers about—no police? Can't some one go and get help?"

The landlord shook his head despondingly.

"But there must be some way of getting rid of the mob," said Frank, impatiently. "Can't you explain that it was all a mistake?"

The landlord sighed.

"I haf try," he said, in a doleful voice. "And dey say I mus put you out of de house. Dat I can not do—so I sall haf to soffaire. Listen!" And at that moment the crash of glass below interrupted him, and formed a striking commentary on his remarks. "Dey vill break de vindow," said he, "an dey vill try to break de door; but I haf barricade as well as I can."

"Are we at all safe?" asked Frank.

The landlord shook his head.

"Not mooch. If dey get enrage enough, dey break in, and den"—a significant shrug ended the sentence.

"Have you any arms—fire-arms?" asked Frank, after a thoughtful pause.

"I haf a small shot gun."

"Give me that," interrupted Frank.

"But I haf no powdaire," said the landlord.

At this Frank turned away in despair.

"Can't we get to some other room than this?" he asked of the driver. "Isn't there a place where we can have some chance of defending ourselves?"

The driver had been silent for some time, and buried in thought. He did not hear Frank's words, but as he spoke, he looked earnestly at him, and said,—

"I haf a plan. It may be no good—but it is de only one."

"Ah," asked Frank, eagerly, "what is that?"

"You must all disguise."

"Disguise?"

"Yes—female dress. I sall try to get some."

"But they would recognize us all the same."

"No—de plan is dis. You all disguise—stay below—I sall sit in de carriage; de horses are all ready

now. Ef de people do break in, dey will all rush up stair to here. You sall be down stair in de stable. De moment de crowd come, I will haf de gates opened. You sall spring in—an den I whip up, an make a fly for life. You ond'stan?"

The driver spoke hurriedly. Frank understood him, and at once approved. At this the driver went off to get the landlord to procure female dresses. That worthy hurried away, and soon returned with about twenty gowns, bonnets, and petticoats. These he threw upon the floor, and implored them to make haste, for the people outside were talking of getting a beam to batter in the door. He had implored them not to, but they scorned his prayers.

Upon this the boys began to put on the dresses, disguising themselves as well as they could. It was very clumsy work, and they were very uncertain about the proper way of fastening them; but the driver and the landlord assisted them. The dresses were those of Italian peasant women, and required no very elaborate adjustment. Some coarse bonnets, of an antique type, were stuck on their heads, and served to conceal their short hair and faces.

With Uncle Moses they had very much trouble. At first he refused positively, and only consented when he was assured that the safety of the boys depended upon his disguise. So he yielded reluctantly, and allowed the driver to officiate as lady's maid.

No sooner was this task concluded, than the landlord and driver hurried them down stairs, and through a passage-way into the barn. Outside, in the court-yard, was the carriage, with the horses ready. The hostler was sent to the gate to fling it open at the driver's signal, and the landlord, stimulated by a promise from Uncle Moses of a large reward hi case of his rescue, returned to the hotel, to operate upon the crowd from that quarter.

CHAPTER XV.

In the Robber's Hold.—The Brigand's Bride.—Sudden, amazing, overwhelming, bewildering, tremendous, astounding, overpowering, and crushing Discovery.—The Situation.—Everybody confounded.—The Crowd at Sorrento.—The Landlord's Prayers.—The Virago calls for Vengeance.

The brigand put his gun down upon the sofa, and motioned to David to take a seat. He then left the room, and David heard his voice calling,—

"Laura! Laura!"

A light footstep sounded in the next room, and the brigand returned, followed by a woman.

This woman's appearance astonished David. She was a lady. She was young, beautiful, bright as a vision, dressed simply, but in the modern fashion altogether. She had a very sweet face, and a bewitching smile, and as she entered she looked at David in some surprise.

Then this great, big, bluff, bearded, broad-shouldered, beetle-browed, brusque bully of a brigand; this fierce, ferocious, bloodthirsty, relentless, ruthless ruffian; this hard-hearted, implacable, inexorable villain; this cruel, vengeful, vindictive, griping, grasping, scowling fiend; this demoniac miscreant, without pity, and without remorse, opened his month.

And this is what he said, in first-rate ENGLISH!—"See here, Laura; I've picked up a poor wretch of a Bohemian—can't speak a word of any language, and had to explain by signs. Well, you know I'm great on gestures; so I worked his story out of him. It seems he came to Naples with his father, mother, and two sisters, and they all went on horseback up Vesuvius. Well, somehow they were captured by brigands, and were carried off; but the father, who, I believe, is a medical man, managed to drug the food of the scoundrels, and carried off his family. Well, they got to the shore, found a boat, and set out for Naples. After sailing a little distance, a squall struck the boat, and it upset. All were drowned except this poor lad, who managed to cling to the boat, and drifted, or was blown, ashore here on the cove, just down there, last night. He was senseless all night, and only came to himself a little while ago, and I picked him up just as he was reviving. He says he is alone in the world, and has appealed to me to help him. Poor lad! my heart fairly aches for him. He says he hasn't got a penny of money, and implores me to help him. Of course I've tried to comfort him; for I've told him that he may make my house his home, and I've promised to give him whatever money he wants, and move heaven and earth to get him back to

his friends, if he has any."

During this astounding speech the lady had stolen over to David, and sitting by his side, she placed a soft hand tenderly on his head. As the story was being told, her eyes filled with tears, and leaning forward, she kissed the poor boy's pale brow. When it ended she murmured in English, that was even better than that of the "brigand,"—"Poor boy! poor boy! O, Walter, dearest, how I do wish I could speak Bohemian, so as to tell him how sorry I feel!"

And what of David?

What did David think—feel—say?

Nothing. Not a word!

David was paralyzed. He was stunned. He gasped for breath.

And so this was his brigand—the brutal, the beetle-browed, the cruel, the bloody-minded, the inexorable, the demoniac, and all the rest of it! He gasped for breath, as I think I have already remarked; and as the ex-brigand went on with his narrative, David listened in a dazed way, and began to understand that the language of gestures has its little uncertainties. But when the lady kissed him, and when her sweet voice spoke those tender words of pity, he could stand it no longer. His voice came to him. He burst forth,—

"O, how I thank you! O, how good you are! O, what a fool I am!"

And he could say no more.

Not a word more, on my honor.

It was now the turn of the others to be surprised.

The lady started back in wonder, and looked at David, and then at her husband. The ex-brigand started back also, and stared at David in utter bewilderment.

"What!" he roared, in a deep, thunderous bass voice. "Say that again."

"O, I'm an American—and I'm such a fool!" said David. "Why didn't
I tell you so?"

"An American!" roared the ex-brigand. "An American!"

Upon this he burst into a perfect thunder-peal of laughter. The laughter came forth, peal after peal, in long and deafening explosions, till the house vibrated with the sound, and till at last the ex-brigand sank exhausted into the Glastonbury chair.

"An American!" he cried; "and think of me—ha, ha, ha!—asking you if you spoke every language in the world—ha, ha, ha!—but the right one—ha, ha, ha!—and speaking every language—ha, ha, ha!—but my own—ha, ha, ha! And to think of us two Americans—ha, ha, ha!—after trying Italian—ha, ha, ha I—and French, and Spanish, and German—ha, ha, ha!—rushing into gestures!—ha, ha, ha!—gestures!—only think, Laura—ha, ha, ha! He and I—ha, ha, ha!—spending an hour in making signs to each other—ha, ha, ha!—but 'pon my life it's too bad in me to be howling out in this fashion, my poor lad, when you're in the midst of such deep affliction. I swear I'm sorry. I forget myself."

"But I'm not in any affliction at all," said David.

"What! What's that?" cried the ex-brigand. "Didn't you lose your father?"

"No."

"But your father, and mother, and the rest of them—"

"No," said David. "You didn't quite understand what I wanted to say." And he then proceeded to tell his story in plain English. He was listened to with deep attention; but as his story turned out to be so different from the first report of the ex-brigand, the lady stole an arch look at her husband, and her eyes fairly danced with fun and merriment. But the ex-brigand bore it admirably; and as David ended, and showed himself to be in no such deep affliction as had been supposed, he once more burst forth in a fresh peal of riotous laughter.

Upon this David ventured to hint at his own late fears, and on being questioned by the lady he confessed frankly what had been the interpretation that he put upon the signs of the ex-brigand.

"Well," said that worthy, "I'm not a brigand at all. I'm an artist."

"I'm sure I don't wonder, Walter," said the lady. "You dress yourself up in such an absurd fashion—and I've always told you that this room looks like a bandit's den."

"No, no, Laura; say an artist's studio. How could I get along without my furniture. As for my dress, it's quite in keeping with the place and the people. It's picturesque, and that's all an artist is bound to consider."

Further explanations followed, in the course of which it appeared that this ex-brigand was Mr. Walter Ludlow, an American artist, who, for the time being, was living here with his bride. They had been married three months. The island was Capri. They were enjoying love in a cottage, which cottage was furnished in an artistic, rather than a fashionable way. They lived here quite free from restraint, and the artist occupied the time partly with his art, and partly with general enjoyment. Neither of them felt at all inclined to leave Capri for some time to come, but thought it the pleasantest place in the world.

Ludlow happened that day to be cleaning his gun, with the intention of going on a shooting excursion. The noise which had been made in the wood by David had startled him, and he had gone to see what it was, with the idea that some cattle had strayed along the shore, and were coming into the fields and gardens.

When Ludlow explained his gestures to David, and the latter confessed what interpretation he had put on them, further laughter was elicited from the fun-loving artist, in which his wife joined, and David also. Ludlow, as soon as he was in a condition to speak, proceeded to explain what he really meant. His gestures were all intended by him to express the following ideas:—

1. I'm an American.
2. I don't live here—I only lodge.
3. I'm an artist.
4. I'm very sorry for you, and I'll take care of you.
5. I'm going out shooting soon.
6. Don't fret. I'll take care of you, and the boat too, as long as you like.
7. I live in that house up there, and you can stay there till you hear from your friends.

But Mrs. Ludlow now retreated, and before long she had a table set for their young guest, at which David took his seat, and ate with an appetite that had been sharpened by his long fast. While at the table Ludlow questioned him more particularly about his friends, and where he had left them.

"Well, David, my lad," said the artist, at length, "I should like very much to have you stay with us for a time; and if you could, I feel confident that I could show you what would well repay you. Are you aware that on this island is one of the wonders of the world—the famous grotto? I should like to take you there—but I see how it is. As you say, your uncle will be wild with anxiety about you, and will have no peace till he hears from you. So I suppose the best thing I can do for you, is to restore you to him first of all, and then arrange for a visit from you all on some future occasion."

David thanked him very earnestly, and dwelt strongly upon the anxiety of Uncle Moses under the circumstances.

"Well, my lad," said Ludlow, "I think you'd best go off at once, and I mean to go with you. Unfortunately there is a head wind, just now, so that we cannot go to Castellamare without taking too long a time. The best way will be to go over to Sorrento from this place, and take a carriage, or horses, to Castellamare."

This proposal pleased David, greatly, and as Ludlow was ready to start, he rose to go. Mrs. Ludlow bade him good by, and pressed him affectionately to come back with his friends.

In a short time they were in the boat and afloat. Ludlow was a good sailor, and the wind was favorable for a passage to Sorrento. The distance was traversed quickly and pleasantly; and then, leaving the boat, they walked up into the town towards the hotel, to see about getting a conveyance to Castellamare.

As they approached the hotel they became aware of a great and unusual crowd in front of it. The crowd reminded David very forcibly of that one which had been raging there a few days before, and excited some trepidation in his breast. Involuntarily he hung back.

"What's the matter?" asked Ludlow.

"The mob," said David; "do—do you think it's safe to venture among them?"

"Safe? Pooh! why not?"

"They appear to be excited. Hark! how they shout."

"O, nonsense! These Italians are always shouting."

But David still hesitated, and finally told Ludlow about the trouble with the tassel, and the old woman, and the mob, and their escape.

At this story Ludlow laughed heartily, and then proceeded to reassure David.

"Don't be alarmed," said he; "they won't remember you. If they did, I've got something that'll make them keep at a respectful distance;" and he touched his breast significantly. "A six-shooter, David, my boy, is a very convenient thing to carry about one in this country, and it is surprising how the native mind respects it. So come along, and we—that is, I and my six-shooter'll—take care of you. Don't be uneasy. They've got something else on their minds now."

With these words Ludlow walked on, and David followed, full of fear.

The crowd in front of the hotel was in a great state of rage and excitement. Some were banging at the door, others pounding against the window shutters, which had been closed by the terrified landlord; others were standing at a distance, and trying to find stones to throw. Fortunately there were no loose stones of any size, few being larger than a pebble, and therefore, as yet, no very great damage had been done. But the crowd was evidently capable of any amount of mischief. Every one was howling, and yelling; and in the midst of them was an old woman, whose shouts and shrill cries made her conspicuous in the scene. She was encouraging and stimulating a number of men who were carrying a beam to the house, which they evidently purposed to use as a battering-ram, so as to burst open the door.

The moment that David caught sight of this woman he shuddered, and falling behind Ludlow, caught at his hand, and tried to pull him back. Ludlow turned in surprise.

"It's the same woman," said David, in an agitated voice, "who chased me."

"Is it?" said Ludlow, with a smile. "O, well, you've got me with you now. So be a man.—cheer up, my boy. It's all right."

Saying this, Ludlow again walked forward, this time keeping his left hand on David's arm. David felt that it was not "all right," but he had to follow Ludlow, and so he followed him into the midst of the crowd. Working their way on through the people, they at last came near to the door, and found themselves close by the men who were carrying the beam. They had laid it on the ground, and were hesitating for a moment. Overhead Ludlow heard the voice of the landlord pleading with them in piteous tones.

"O, good citizens! O, dear citizens! Don't destroy my furniture! Don't ruin me! There is a mistake. On my honor, the strangers are innocent."

At this the old virago howled out some insane maledictions, and urged the crowd on. Some on the outskirts yelled, and the old hag, whirling around in the midst of her tirade, found herself face to face with David. The terrified lad shrank back, and tried to hide himself; but the old woman recognized him at once, and with a howl sprang at him.

Ludlow saw the movement.

He put himself in front of David, and, seizing the old woman's arm in a grasp like a vice, held her back, and asked her sternly, in Italian,—

"Accursed one! what do you mean?"

"O, citizens of Sorrento!" shrieked the hag. "O, pious citizens! Help! This is the accursed boy! This is the sacrilegious one! the blasphemer! the insulter of the Bambino! the—"

"Silence!" roared Ludlow, in a voice of thunder. "Men of Sorrento, is this the way you treat strangers? Does this mad thing govern the city?"

"The boy, the boy! the blasphemer! the sacrilegious! the accursed!" shrieked the hag. And at her yells some of the mob seemed inclined to respond. They were already ripe for mischief, and when the hag

diverted their attention to David, they felt quite ready to take him in hand. So now a ring of dark faces was formed around Ludlow, and the yells of the hag directed them to seize David.

Ludlow pushed the hag from him, drew his revolver from his breast, and took two strides towards the house, which was close by, dragging David after him. Then he put his back against the wall, and holding the revolver in an apparently careless manner, with its muzzle turned towards the crowd, he once more opened his mouth.

"Men of Sorrento!" said he, "what foolery is this? The woman is mad. I have just come from Capri, with this boy. Many of you know me, for I am often here; and now, when I come, am I to be insulted by a madwoman? Are you—"

"Seize him! seize the boy! the boy! the blasphemer!" yelled the hag.

Ludlow placed his hand on David's head, and looked with a smile on the crowd nearest.

"Does her madness usually take this form, gentlemen?" he added; "does she usually show this animosity to little boys and children?"

At this question, which was asked in an easy and natural manner, the crowd looked abashed.

They began to think that the woman was crazy. Those to whom Ludlow had spoken were the very men who had brought the beam but a few minutes before. They now edged slowly away, and began to think that they had done a very silly thing.

"What's the trouble, signori?" asked Ludlow, in the same easy tone, of those who were nearest.

"Well, they say there are some people inside that desecrated the church—some boys—"

"What—boys?" said Ludlow, with a smile. "Who says so?"

The men shrugged their shoulders.

"She says so."

Ludlow thereupon shrugged his shoulders.

"Seize him! seize him! seize him!" yelled the hag, who all this time had kept up her insane outcry.

"Somebody had better seize *her*," said Ludlow, with a laugh. "Why, gentlemen, she will give your town a very bad name."

The crowd nearest had already undergone a revulsion of feeling. The assault of the old woman on two harmless strangers seemed too wanton to be tolerated. Ludlow's easy manner and calm language restored them fully to their senses, and the sight of his revolver effectually overawed the more excitable or reckless. They were also jealous of the good name of the town, and now began to be enraged with the old woman. A murmur passed through them. Curses were freely lavished upon her, and the threats which but a short time ago had been directed against the landlord and his guests, were now hurled at her. The hag, however, in her fury, was quite unconscious of all this, and continued to yell as before, endeavoring to hound them on against David. But the crowd was now disgusted with her and her yells.

"Stop your diabolical yells!" cried an angry voice. "Go home, and stay home, or you'll have a strait jacket put on you."

The hag stopped short, as though thunderstruck, and looked around with staring eyes. It was a young man who thus addressed her: he was grasping her arm and looking savagely at her. Evidently he was some relative, of whom she stood in awe, for with something like a gasp she seemed to shrink into herself, and then, gathering her clothes about her, slunk away through the crowd.

Ludlow had often been at Sorrento before, and saw some familiar faces among the people. These he accosted, and soon found out what the trouble was. Although some of these very men had been howling like maniacs a short time before, yet they now were as quiet, and gentle, and amiable as lambs. They sneered at the old hag, deplored. the excitement, and assured him that no harm had been done.

Soon the crowd dispersed, and the landlord, who had been watching the scene in deep anxiety, came down, opened the doors, and gave Ludlow and David a most eager, exuberant, and enthusiastic welcome.

CHAPTER XVI.

More Troubles for poor David.—Onset of four Women.—Seized by an old Crone and three Peasant Girls.—Fresh Horror of David.—A new Uproar in the Yard of the Inn.—Uncle Moses bent double.

Ludlow began to talk to the landlord about a conveyance to Castellamare, and David walked through the house into the yard. David's only desire now was to hurry on and join his friends as soon as possible. He had not the remotest idea that they were in Sorrento, and that the trouble had arisen about them, but fancied that they were in Castellamare, full of anxiety about him. Sympathizing with their anxiety, he longed to go to them, so as to put an end to it; and seeing a carriage in the yard, he naturally walked in that direction. Reaching, the yard he noticed that the horses were in it, and that it was a barouche, like the one in which his party had been travelling. Not for one moment did he suppose that it was the same one, nor did he notice it very closely; but giving it a careless glance, he looked around to see those to whom it belonged.

As David went out into the yard, the driver had just gone into the barn to tell Uncle Moses and the boys that the trouble was over and the crowd was dispersing. Their joy may be imagined. They were just hastening from the barn to return to the hotel, and had just reached the barn door when David approached.

David was walking along towards the barn, looking around to see where the people were, when suddenly he heard a wild cry, and saw a figure rush straight towards him. It was a woman's figure, and she appeared quite old. Like lightning, the thought flashed through him that this was his old tormentor, the hag; and with a gasp he started back, and was about to run. But the other was too quick for him, and David felt himself seized by his dreaded enemy. This dreaded enemy then behaved in a frantic way, hugging him and uttering inarticulate words. David struggled to get free from her, and throwing a frightened glance at her face, which was but partly visible, beneath a very shabby bonnet, he saw that she was quite old, and that tears were streaming down from her eyes. This frightened David all the more, for now he was sure that she was insane.

But now, to David's horror, he found himself surrounded by three more women, in coarse dresses and horribly shabby bonnets. They all made a simultaneous rush at him, seizing his hands and arms, and seemed about to tear him to pieces. In vain he struggled. He was helpless. A cold shudder passed through him, and a thrill of horror tingled every nerve.

All this had been the work of an instant. So sudden had been the onset, and so overwhelmed was David with utter horror, that he could not even scream for help. But at last he got his month open, and was just about to give one piercing yell for help, when the words were taken out of his mouth, and his voice stopped, and a new and greater surprise created within him.

"David! David! My boy! my boy!" moaned the first old woman.

"Dave! You rascal! What do you mean by this?" cried woman Number Two.

"Dave! Old boy! What in the world is the meaning of this?" cried woman Number Three.

"Dave! How did you find us?" cried woman Number Four.

"Where have you been?" "Where did you come from?" "When did you get here?" "What made you go off?" "Did they seize you?" "Was it the old woman that did it?" These questions, and scores of others, came pouring forth into his astonished ears. As for David, he could not utter one single word. At length the yearning affection of Uncle Moses seemed to be satiated, and the boisterous greetings of the boys exhausted, and one by one they released their grasp, and allowed David to extricate himself.

Thereupon David stood off at a little distance, and gazed at them in mute amazement. The sight which they presented to his astonished eyes was one which might have excited strong emotions in the breast of any beholder.

There stood Uncle Moses, his figure concealed under a tattered gown, and his venerable head enfolded in a battered bonnet of primeval style.

There stood Frank, looking like a strapping peasant woman, with a bonnet that was stuck on the top of his head like a man's hat.

There stood Clive, looking like a pretty peasant girl, quite Italian in his style, with a dress that was a

trifle neater than the others.

And there was Bob, an utter and unmitigated absurdity,—with s dress that was tangled about his legs, and a bonnet that had no crown. The four of them looked more like escaped lunatics than anything else, and no sooner had David taken in the whole scene, than he burst forth into a perfect convulsion of laughter.

Thus far the disguise had possessed nothing but a serious character in the minds of the wearers. By means of this disguise they had hoped to escape, and the costumes, being thus a help to safety, had been dignified in their eyes. But now, when the danger was over, and safety assured, there was nothing to hide from their eyes the unutterable absurdity, the inconceivable ludicrousness of their appearance. As David's laugh burst forth, each turned his eyes upon the other, and saw how it was.

Then they all burst forth! It was a cataclysm of laughter. The boys swayed backward and forward, and danced up and down, and shouted, and yelled with laughter. Uncle Moses stood with his eyes shut and his figure bent double. Frank stared at each one in succession, and then at himself, giving a scream at each figure. Clive laughed till he sank down; and Bob, flinging himself upon the ground in a perfect paroxysm, rolled over and over, and kicked, and yelled, and fairly howled in one prolonged and uproarious cachinnation.

The uproar aroused the house.

The driver hurried out of the barn and joined in the roar.

The hostler followed him.

The servants came from the hotel, and lent their voices.

The landlord came out, and was at once seized with a convulsion.

After the landlord came Ludlow. He didn't altogether understand it; but he saw David, and he saw the four figures; and from what the landlord had been telling him, he knew who they were. The sight overwhelmed him. He opened his mouth. He burst forth. It was tremendous. It was Olympian. It was the laughter of Homer's immortals. It was a thunder-peal. It was too much. He could not keep his feet, but sank down on the stone steps, and burying his face in his hands, gave way utterly.

Thus it Was, then, that David, the most solemn of boys, returned to his distracted and anxious friends.

At length the laughter ceased, and the costumes were set aside, and they all sat in the dining-room, asking and giving explanations. David had to tell the story of his adventures. The boys had to tell about their search after him, and Ludlow had to tell the story of his meeting with David at Capri. These mutual explanations had nothing in them but what was pleasant, so that there was nothing to detract from the joy of the occasion.

And now Ludlow, finding the friends so happily reunited, pressed them all to come over to Capri at once, and stay as long as they felt inclined to. David's eyes sparkled at this, and the other boys, who had fallen in love with Ludlow at first sight, were more eager to go than they could tell. But Uncle Moses demurred. He felt afraid of giving trouble, and thought they had better get back to Naples. Ludlow, however, pooh-poohed his scruples, answered every objection, and would not take any refusal whatever; so that the result was, the final departure of the party for Capri.

But before they went, several things had to be attended to. First of all, they had to dismiss the driver. With the exception of his sulk at Paestum, he had behaved admirably, and had been of immense service to them in more than one hour of need. The consequence was, that Uncle Moses gave him a reward so liberal that it elicited an outburst of benedictions, thanks, and prayers for the future welfare of the whole party.

The other business was to see about the return of the boat which David had taken. This, however, was arranged without difficulty. Ludlow knew an honest fisherman who could be intrusted with the task of returning the boat, and making explanations to the owner. By this man they sent a sufficient sum to repay the owner for the use of it.

They engaged another boat to take them to Capri. A gentle breeze wafted them over the intervening water, and they soon stood before the artist's picturesque abode. Mrs. Ludlow received them all with her brightest smile and warmest cordiality, and the boys soon began to feel towards the artist and his wife as though they were near and dear relations. They found the artist's cottage a perfect storehouse of curiosities, and a museum of antiquities; they found also that it was of large dimensions, and contained sufficient accommodations for the party; and thus they were able to feel that they were not a

burden in any way on their warm-hearted friends.

Ludlow took them all over the island, and showed them all that was to be seen. He was not only an enthusiastic artist, but also an antiquarian of no mean attainments; and while he could point out to them the most beautiful spots on that lovely isle, he could also talk learnedly about the ancient Capraea, and raise out of ancient ruins theories about the pleasure-grounds of Tiberius.

But the most wonderful thing which they found there was the famous grotto, so familiar to all from the accounts of tourists, and from the well-known description in Hans Andersen's Improvisatore. After that glowing, poetic, and enthusiastic narrative, no other need be attempted. Here they passed three or four days, and when at length they bade adieu to the artist and his wife, it was with many sincere regrets on both sides, and many earnest wishes that they might meet again.

After which they all went back to Naples.

CHAPTER XVII.

Vesuvius.—Ponies and Sticks.—Sand and Lava.—The rocky Steps.—The rolling, wrathful Smoke-clouds.—The Volcano warns them off.—The lost Boy.—A fearful Search.—A desperate Effort.—The sulphurous Vapors.—Over the sliding Sands.

The sight of Vesuvius from a distance had filled David with an ardent desire to visit it, and all the rest shared this feeling. Vesuvius was before them always. The great cloud of dense, black smoke, which hung over it like a pall, was greater, and denser, and blacker than usual. The crater was disturbed. There were rumbling noises in its wondrous interior; and all around and all beneath the volcano gave signs of an approaching eruption. Sometimes the smoke, as it ascended from the crater, would tower up in the air for thousands of feet, far into the sky, a black pillar, which at the summit spread out on all sides, giving to the spectator the vision of a colossal palm tree—the shape and the sign which is the inevitable forerunner of an approaching eruption. At other times the sulphur-laden clouds would hang low over the crest of the mountain, and roll far down its sides, and envelop it in its dense, black, voluminous folds.

As yet, in spite of these appearances, the ascent might be made in safety, though every day lessened the chances of an ascent by increasing the danger. This they learned from Michael Angelo, their guide, whom they had engaged to make the ascent; so they determined to go without any farther delay. Accordingly, two days after their excursion to Baiae, they set out, going first to Portici, where they hired ponies to take them to the foot of the cone; each one supplied himself with a good stout stick to assist his ascent, and Michael Angelo went with them as general manager of the expedition.

On riding, up they found the road good at first, but soon it became somewhat rough. It left the fertile meadows and vineyards at the base of the mountain, and ran over a wild, rocky country, which looked, as Uncle Moses said, like the "abomination of desolation." No verdure appeared, no houses, no flocks, and herds—all was wild, and savage, and dismal. After passing over these lava fields, the party reached what is called the "Hermitage" —a kind of refreshment station near the foot of the cone. Resting here, for a little way they proceeded on foot. The path was now rugged and difficult, and ascended at so steep an angle that it became rather climbing than walking. After a toilsome walk this path ended at the foot of the cone.

Here the mountain arose grandly before them, with its smoke-cloud overhanging its steep sides, ascending from where they stood to where the view was lost in smoke. At one part there was a surface of loose sand, and at another wild, disordered heaps of crumbled lava blocks. Over these last Michael Angelo led them, for these blocks formed stepping-stones by which to make the ascent. A number of men were here with chairs and straps, who offered them assistance; but they all declined, even Uncle Moses choosing to rely on his unassisted muscle.

Then they began the ascent of the cone. The lava blocks were of all sizes, and lay strewn loosely down the steep side. It was like ascending a long, rough stairway, where all the steps are irregular. It was laborious and tedious. Often they had to stop and rest. Uncle Moses felt it most, and the boys had frequently to stop rather on his account. But when they had traversed about two thirds of the way, they began to grow more excited, and in Bob this excitement was most evident. Thinking that the others would take sufficient care of Uncle Moses, he started off alone, and soon was far up, clambering over

the rocks like a young chamois.

Usually there is one side of the crater which is accessible. There is almost always some wind which blows the smoke away, and on the windward side the visitor can stand and breathe freely. On the present occasion, however, there was little or no wind; and the smoke, which was far denser than usual, gathered in thick, black folds, and sometimes rolled down the sides of the cone, and hid the crest from view. Michael Angelo expressed a fear that they would not be able to reach the crest; and as they drew nearer, every step showed that this fear was well founded. At last, when they were within easy distance of it, there came rolling down a cloud of smoke, so dense and so full of sulphurous vapor that they all had to stop and cover their faces with their clothes.

It was now evident that they could go no farther. They waited for a time in great distress from the smoke. It rolled away at last, yet still hovered near them, every little while moving threateningly down, as though to drive them back, and prevent the crater from desecration by human footsteps. They had evidently reached their farthest limit, and could go no farther.

But where was Bob?

Scarcely had they discovered the impossibility of going farther than this thought came to them. Where was Bob? He had left them some time previously, and had gone far ahead of them. They had expected every moment to come up with him. But there were no signs of him anywhere.

Frank called out with all his strength. David and Clive joined in the cry.

There was no response.

Fear came to them—a sickening, awful fear. All shouted—the boys,
Uncle Moses, and Michael Angelo.

Still there was no response.

Again, and again, and yet again, they called, by this time in an agony of apprehension; but to all these cries the surrounding stillness gave forth not one answering sound.

And the deep, dark, wrathful smoke-clouds rolled around, and above, and downward, moving close to them, and over them, as though eager to involve them in that dread fate which they feared had overwhelmed the lost boy.

"I can't stand this any longer!" cried Frank, at last. "I'll go and hunt him up."

"We'll all go," said David.

"Wait," said Uncle Moses, as the boys were starting. "We must hunt him up as we do in the woods. We can't tell where he is. Let's form a line, an walk as nigh abreast of one another as we can get, an yet far enough away to cover the ground. In that way well be more likely to find him."

At this the party formed themselves in a line, so that about twenty or thirty feet intervened between each. The five thus extended for a long distance. Michael Angelo was at the extreme right, next to him was Uncle Moses, then Clive, then David, while Frank was on the extreme left. In this way they determined to go as far forward as the smoke would permit. The prospect was gloomy enough; but the situation of Bob nerved them all to the effort. Besides, they were encouraged by the fact that the smoke would sometimes retreat far up, exposing the surface to the very crest of the crater. So they advanced, clambering over the rough blocks, and drew nearer and nearer to the summit. At length a heavy mass of black smoke came rolling down. It touched them. It enveloped them. It folded itself over them and under them. Each one fell flat on his face at Michael Angelo's warning, and covered his mouth and nostrils with his handkerchief, so as to keep out the sulphurous vapors. It was almost suffocating; breathing was difficult and painful, and it seemed a long time before the blackness of the darkness was mitigated. But at last the smoke withdrew itself, and the whole party stood up, and looked around painfully for one another, panting heavily, and drawing laborious breaths.

"You can't go any further," said Uncle Moses. "I ain't goin to let you resk your lives, boys. You must all go back, an I'll go for'ard."

"No, uncle; I'll go," cried Frank.

"And I," cried David.

"And I," cried Clive.

"None of you shall go," said Uncle Moses, firmly. "I tell you I'm goin. I order you to stay here, or go

back." Uncle Moses was deeply agitated, and spoke with unaccustomed sternness. "Go back," he said; "I'll find Bob, or leave myself there. Go back. D'ye hear?"

He darted forward, and turned to wave his hand at the boys. But Frank had already sprung upward, swiftly and eagerly. Onward he went, going first to the left and then to the right. David and Clive also rushed forward. Uncle Moses toiled after them, calling on them to come back. Michael Angelo followed slowly, looking on with a face of fearful apprehension.

Frank was far ahead. He had come to a place where the lava blocks ended, and the soil was sandy. Here he paused for an instant, and took a swift glance around. He started. He had seen something. He made a quick gesture and then sprang away to the right.

All this had not taken many minutes. It was an act of desperation on the part of Frank, but he was determined to save Bob or perish. Fortunately the smoke did not descend just at that moment, but was floating up from the summit, so that the edge of the crater could be seen, with a dull yellow gleam, caused by the sulphur that lay mingled with the sand.

Frank had seen a prostrate figure. It lay on the sand beyond the edge of the lava blocks. His first feeling was one of surprise that Bob had succeeded in penetrating so far; his next was one of horror for fear that he might be beyond the reach of help. With frantic haste he rushed towards him, and reaching the spot, he raised Bob in his arms.

He was senseless!

And now, as Frank stood there, close to the perilous edge, the treacherous smoke, which had thus far held back, rolled down once more. To face it was impossible. Frank flung himself down, and buried his face as before, looking up from time to time to see if the smoke was lessening. The time seemed protracted to a fearful length. The dense fumes which penetrated through the thick folds of the clothes which he held over his mouth nearly suffocated him. He began to think that he, too, was doomed.

And where were the others?

Scattered, apart from one another—and thus they had been caught by the rolling smoke. They could do only one thing, and that was what they had done before. Uncle Moses alone refused to yield. He tried to toil on so as to get nearer to his boys. He had a vague idea of getting near to Frank, so as to die by his side. But physical pain was stronger than the determination of his soul, and at length he involuntarily flung himself down, and covered his face.

But at last even that ordeal was passed. The smoke lifted. It rolled away. There was air again for them to breathe. Frank roused himself before the smoke had all passed, and lifting Bob in his arms, carried him swiftly downward. He reached the place where Uncle Moses was standing, gasping for breath; and the other boys who had seen him hurried towards him, and tried to help him carry his senseless burden. Uncle Moses also tried to take Bob in his own arms, and prayed Frank, with tears in his eyes, to let him carry him; but Frank refused them all, and insisted on doing it himself. A few paces more, however, over the lava blocks, showed that Frank's strength would not be sufficient for such a journey. He sank down exhausted by his excessive exertions, and waited a few moments to take breath.

While he was thus recovering his breath, Michael Angelo reached the spot, and explained that there was another place of descent not far off, and led the way towards it. Here they found the side of the cone all covered with loose sand. Down this they went. At every step they sank in up to their ankles, and the sliding soil bore them down, so that for every step they took they were carried the length of two or three steps.

Frank clung to Bob till he had got beyond the reach of the smoke, and then he fell backward, gasping for breath. The others scrambled towards him, eager to help him; and Michael Angelo, who had exerted himself the least of all, and was fresher than any of them, raised Bob in his arms, and said that he would take care of him now. At this Frank gave up his precious burden, and resuming their descent, they were soon at the foot of the cone.

Here they sat down, and Bob was laid upon the sand. With trembling hands they felt for his heart, and found, to their unspeakable, joy, that it was still beating. There was no water near; but they chafed his feet and hands, and did what they could. For a long time their efforts were unavailing; but at last Bob opened his eyes, and drawing a long, breath, looked around him with a face full of astonishment.

"What's—the—matter?" he murmured, in a feeble voice.

At this tears of joy flowed into the eyes of Uncle Moses, and his lips murmured inaudible words of prayerful gratitude.

"O, nothing," said Frank, who by this time had completely recovered from his fatigue. "Nothing of any consequence. Don't bother. You'll be all right soon."

Bob seemed too weak to say much, and even to think. He lay there in silence, and with an expression of bewilderment on his face, evidently trying to collect his scattered faculties, so as to account for his present situation.

And now, the question was how to get Bob home. The men with chairs and straps had gone away, so that this mode of conveyance seemed denied them. After waiting a short time, however, they saw a party approaching who were evidently about to try the ascent. They consisted of ladies and gentlemen, and were accompanied by some chair and strap men. Seeing Bob and his friends, they made inquiries; and on learning what had happened, the ladies refused to make the ascent on so unfavorable a day, but preferred postponing it to a more auspicious time. Michael Angelo therefore was able to obtain one of the chairs for Bob; and setting him upon it, they carried him towards the Hermitage, where they arrived without any further mishap.

Here Bob grew rapidly better, and was able to tell his story.

He had felt very anxious to see the crater, and equally anxious to see it first. Taking advantage of a time when the smoke had retreated, he had made a rush, and had just attained the very edge of the crater, when suddenly he found himself overwhelmed by a tremendous cloud of smoke. To resist it, or to endure it in any way, was impossible. He thought only of flight He turned mechanically, and ran, with this idea of flight alone in his mind. That was all he remembered. He must have run for at least a hundred feet, for that was about the distance which lay between the summit and the place where he was found.

Michael Angelo started off and got a carriage, by means of which Bob was taken to Naples. He did not seem to have suffered any very serious injury; but for some days he was quite languid and miserable, and complained of a taste of sulphur in his mouth; his coat, too, which on going up was of a dark-blue color, had become quite faded, from the action of the powerful sulphurous fumes.

On the whole, Bob, as well as the rest of the party, had ample reason to feel thankful.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Pompeii, the City of the Dead.—The Monuments of the Past.—Temples, Towers, and Palaces.—Tombs and Monuments.—Theatres and Amphitheatres.—Streets and Squares.

A few days after their ascent of Vesuvius, the whole party started off to visit Pompeii. The prospect of this journey gave them unusual delight. Bob had now completely recovered his health and spirits. Clive's poetic interest in so renowned a place was roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. David's classical taste was stimulated. Frank's healthy love of sight-seeing was excited by the thought of a place that so far surpassed all others in interest; and Uncle Moses evidently considered that this was the one thing in Europe which could repay the traveller for the fatigues of a pilgrimage. Thus each, in his own way, felt his inmost heart stirred within him as they approached the disentombed city; and at length, when they reached the entrance to the place, it is difficult to say which one felt the strongest excitement.

They found a number of other visitors there, consisting of representatives of all nations—Russians, Germans, Americans, French, and English; ladies, gentlemen, and boys. Michael Angelo was with them, and was more useful to them than any mere guide-book could have been.

The first emotions of awe which filled their minds as they entered the streets of the mysterious city gradually faded away, and they began to examine everything with great interest. The first thing that struck their attention was the extreme narrowness of the streets. There was only room for one carriage to pass at a time. The sidewalks were a foot higher than the carriage-way. There were crossing-stones that stood high above the pavement. The sidewalks were paved with brick, and the carriage-way with lava blocks, which were very neatly joined together. Clive took a piece of brick as a relic, and David broke off a fragment from one of the crossing-stones for the same purpose.

They soon came to a ruined edifice, which Michael Angelo called the Basilica. It was two hundred feet

in length, and seventy in width. At one end still remained the Tribunal or Seat of Justice, seven feet above the pavement; and all around the walls were columns formed of brick, covered with plaster. The boys picked off some of the plaster as relics.

Leaving this, they went on and came to another ruined edifice, which Michael Angelo called the Temple of Venus. It was built round a courtyard, with porticos. Here David and Clive obtained some more relics.

Beyond this was an open square surrounded by pillars, of which only the lower parts remained. This was the Forum Civile; and beyond this stood the Temple of Jupiter, which they visited without finding anything that was particularly interesting. After this Michael Angelo took them to a place which he said was the Public Bakery. Here they saw millstones, ovens, water-vessels, and some other articles of which they could not guess the use. Not far away were some bakers' shops. In these shops loaves of bread were found by the diggers. Of course they were burned to charcoal; but they retained their original shape, and showed marks upon them which were probably intended to indicate the bakery from which they came. Heaps of corn were also found.

Going down the street where these were situated, they came to one of the gates of the city. Beside this was a niche in the wall, used as a sentry-box, upon which, all the party gazed with a profound interest; for in that sentry-box those who disentombed the city found a skeleton, in the armor and with the equipment of a Roman soldier. Evidently the sentry had died at his post.

They took a good look at the walls here, which they found to be about twenty-five feet high, and formed of huge stones, that were joined together without cement. The gates had evidently been double.

Passing through this gate, they found themselves outside the city, in what Michael Angelo called the "Street of Tombs." Looking down it, they noticed a number of edifices of a monumental character, lining it on either side. These were the tombs of wealthy citizens. They visited several of them, and found them all alike. The interiors were all simple, the walls being pierced with niches, in which were deposited the urns that held the ashes of the dead. This was the first time that they had seen anything of this kind, and they examined it with deep and solemn interest. Here, too, Clive and David succeeded in finding some relics in the shape of some burnt fragments of human bones.

After this Michael Angelo led them to what was once the finest mansion of the city, now known as the Villa of Diomede. They entered here, and wandered through the halls, and rooms, and courtyards. They saw rich mosaic pavements; the basins of what once were fountains; the lower parts of marble pillars that once belonged to stately colonnades. They saw some rooms that once had been used for cold baths, and others that had been used for vapor baths. Dining-rooms, reception-rooms, bed-rooms, kitchens, libraries, opened up all around, and told them of that vanished past which had once peopled all these apartments with busy human life. Far more than basilicas, or temples, or streets, or walls, were they affected by this glimpse into the home of a household; and they traversed that deserted home in eloquent silence. After going through all the house, they descended into the cellars. These were very spacious, and extended beneath the entire villa. Here, at one end, they saw what is called the Wine Cellar. Many wine jars were standing there—huge earthen vessels, as large as a hogshead, with wide mouths and round bottoms, which made it impossible for them to stand erect, unless they were placed against some support. In these wine jars there was now no wine, however, but only dust and ashes.

Here Michael Angelo had much to tell them.

He told them that several skeletons had been found in these vaults, belonging to hapless wretches who had, no doubt, fled here to escape the storm of ashes which was raging above. One of these skeletons had a bunch of keys in its bony fingers; and this circumstance led some to suppose that it was the skeleton of Diomede himself; but others thought that it belonged to his steward. Whoever he was, he had fled here only to meet his doom, and to leave his bones as a memorial to ages in the far distant future.

Leaving this place, they visited another house, which is called the Villa of Caius Sallust. At one corner of the house they saw something which at once struck them all as being rather singular. It was nothing else than a shop, small in size, fitted up with shelves and counters; a row of jars was fixed on one side, and in the rear were furnaces. Michael Angelo informed them that it had once been an eating-house. The boys thought it excessively odd that the occupants of such a house—people, too, who bore such a name as Sallust—should tolerate such an establishment; but there was the undeniable fact before their eyes. Afterwards their surprises diminished; For in many other houses in Pompeii—they found shops of the same kind, and saw that the ancient Pompeians were not above trade; and that, if they did not keep the shops themselves, they were at least very willing to hire the fronts of their houses to other parties who did wish to do so. In Sallust's house they saw the traces of very elegant ornaments, and learned

from Michael Angelo that many of the articles discovered here showed that it must once have been the abode of a luxurious and refined family.

The elegant house of the Dioscuri was visited next. It is in the Via dei Mercurii, and is a very interesting and extensive ruin, and contains some handsome fresco paintings. After this they visited many other houses, a description of which is not necessary; they were all like the Villa of Diomede, though less interesting; and among them all there was the same general character. In all these only the lower stories remained, though in a few a small part of the second story was visible.

As the chief part of the Pompeian house was on the ground floor, the loss of the upper story did not make any particular difference. Among these they found another temple, called the Pantheon—a large edifice, which showed signs of great former beauty. It was two Hundred and thirty feet long, and nearly two hundred feet wide. An altar is still standing, around which are twelve pedestals, upon which once stood twelve statues. A few houses and temples followed, after which Michael Angelo informed them that he was about to take them to one of the greatest curiosities in the city.

The building to which he led them was in much better preservation than the majority of the edifices in Pompeii, though not nearly so large as many that they had seen. It was about sixty feet wide, and a little longer, being nearly square in shape, and was evidently a temple of some kind.

"What is this?" asked David.

"This is the Temple of Isis," said Michael Angelo.

"The Temple of Isis!" exclaimed David, in eager excitement. "Is it, indeed!" and he looked around with a face full of intense interest. Hitherto, though all the boys had shown much interest, yet, David had surpassed them all in his enthusiasm. This was partly on account of his taste for classical studies, and his love for all connected with classical antiquity, but more especially from the fact that he had very recently read Bulwer's *Last Days of Pompeii*; and on this occasion that whole story, with all its descriptions and all its incidents, was brought vividly before him by the surrounding scene. Most of all was the Temple of Isis associated with that story, and it seemed more familiar to him than anything else that he had found in the city. Glaucus and Ione, the Christian Olynthus, and the dark Arbaces seemed to haunt the place. In one of the chambers of this very temple, as Michael Angelo was now telling,—even while leading the way to that chamber,—had been found a huge skeleton, with an axe beside it; two walls had been beaten through by that axe, but the desperate fugitive could go no farther. In another part of the city had been found, another skeleton, carrying a bag of Coins and some ornaments of this Temple of Isis. David listened to Michael Angelo's account with strange interest, for it seemed to him as though the fabled characters of Bulwer's story were endowed with actual reality by Michael Angelo's prosaic statements.

After inspecting the chamber just mentioned, they were taken to a place where they saw what had once been the pedestal of a statue. Here Michael Angelo showed them a hollow niche, which was so contrived that one might conceal himself there, and speak words which the ignorant and superstitious populace might believe to come from the idol's own stony lips. This one thing showed the full depth of ancient ignorance and superstition; and over this Michael Angelo waxed quite eloquent, and proceeded to deliver himself of a number of impressive sentences of a highly important character, which he uttered with that fluent volubility peculiar to the whole race of guides, ciceroni, and showmen, in all parts of the world. These moral maxims were part of Michael Angelo's regular routine, and the moment that he found himself here in this Temple of Isis, the stream of wisdom would always begin to flow.

The next place to which Michael Angelo intended to take them was the amphitheatre, which could be seen from where they were standing. All this time David had been more eager than any of the others, and far more profoundly moved. He felt his soul stirred to its inmost depth by the thrilling scenes through which he had been moving. It seemed to him as though there were revealed here to his eyes, in one glance, all that he had been laboriously acquiring from books by the study of years. But this was better than books. These Roman houses, into which he could walk, were far better than any number of plans or engraved prints, however accurately done. These temples afforded an insight into the old pagan religion better far than volumes of description. These streets, and shops, and public squares, and wall, and gates, and tombs, all gave him an insight into the departed Roman civilization that was far fresher, and more vivid, and more profound, than any that he had ever gained before. It seemed to him that one day was too small for such a place. He must come again and again, he thought. He was unwilling to go on with the rest, but lingered longer than any over each spot, and was always the last to quit any place which they visited.

They stopped on their way at the Tragic and Comic Theatres, and at length reached the Amphitheatre itself. This edifice is by far the largest in the city, and is better preserved than any. It is built of large blocks of a dark volcanic stone, and constructed in that massive style which the Romans lived, and of

which they have left the best examples in these huge amphitheatres. As this Amphitheatre now stands, it might still serve for one of those displays for which it was built. Tier after tier those seats arise, which once had accommodations for fifteen or twenty thousand human beings. On these, it is said, the Pompeians were seated when that awful volcanic storm burst forth by which the city was rained. Down from these seats they fled in wildest disorder, all panic-stricken, rushing down the steps, and crowding through the doorways, trampling one another under foot, in that mad race for life; while overhead the storm gathered darker and darker, and the showers of ashes fell, and the suffocating sulphuric vapors arose, and amid the volcanic storm the lightnings of the sky flashed forth, illuminating all the surrounding gloom with a horrid lustre, and blending with the subterranean rumblings of the earthquake the thunder of the upper air.

From this cause the Amphitheatre may be considered the central spot of interest in Pompeii. What little has been told of the fate of the city gathers around this place, and to him who sits upon those seats there is a more vivid realization of that awful scene than can be obtained anywhere else.

On reaching the Amphitheatre they seated themselves on the stone steps, about half way up the circle of seats, and each one gave way to the feelings that filled him. They had walked now for hours, and all of them felt somewhat wearied, so that the rest on these seats was grateful. Here they sat and rested.

CHAPTER XIX.

Lofty classical enthusiasm of David, and painful Lack of feeling on the Part of Frank.—David, red hot with the Flow of the Past, is suddenly confronted with the Present.—The Present dashes Cold Water upon his glowing Enthusiasm.—The Gates.—Minor, Aeacus, and Rhadamanthus.—The Culprits.

As they thus rested on the seats of the Amphitheatre, the classical enthusiasm of David rose superior to fatigue, and his enthusiastic feelings burst forth without restraint, in a long and somewhat incoherent rhapsody about the fell of Pompeii. Full before them, as they sat, rose Vesuvius; and they saw that which helped them to reproduce the past more vividly, for even now the dense, dark cloud of the volcano was gathering, and the thick smoke-volumes were rolling forth from the crater. Far into the heavens the smoke clouds arose, ascending in a dark pillar till they reached the upper strata of the atmosphere, where they unfolded themselves, and spread out afar—to the east, and the west, and the north, and the south. Some such appearance as this the mountain may have had, as it towered gloomily before the Pompeians on that day of days. Some such scene as this may have appeared, only deepened into terrors a thousand fold more gloomy, to the population of the doomed city, as they gathered here on these seats for the last time.

Such were the ideas of David Clark; and these ideas he poured forth in a long rhapsody, full of wild enthusiasm. At length, however, that enthusiasm flagged, and he was compelled to stop for want of breath.

"O, that's all very fine," said Frank, suddenly, as David stopped, and breaking the silence which had followed his eloquent outburst,—"that's all very fine, of course. You have a habit, David, my son, of going into raptures over old bones and old stones, but after all, I'd just like to ask you one question."

"What's that?" asked David, a little sharply.

"Why, this. Has this place, after all, come up to your idea?" And
Frank looked at him with very anxious eyes.

"This place?" said David. "What, Pompeii? Come up to my idea? Why, of course it has. What makes you ask such a question as that? I never spent such a day in all my life."

"Well, for my part," said Frank, in a very candid tone, "I'll be honest. I confess I'm disappointed."

And saying this, Frank shook his head defiantly, and looked at all the other boys, with the air of one who was ready and willing to maintain his position.

"Disappointed!" exclaimed David, in an indescribable tone, in which reproach, astonishment, and disgust were all blended together.

"Yes," said Frank, firmly, "disappointed—utterly, completely, and tee-totally. I'll tell you what my idea was. My idea was, that the streets would be streets, in the first place. Well, they're not *streets* at all. They're mere *lanes*. They're nothing more than *foot-paths*. Secondly, my idea was, that the houses would be *houses*. Well, they're not. They're old ruins; heaps of dust and bricks—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted David, in indignant tones. "How could the houses be standing after being buried for so many centuries? You forget what a tremendous weight of ashes, and stones, and earth, lay upon their roofs. Houses! Why, did you expect to find couches to lie on? or chairs—"

"Well," said Frank, "my quarrel with Pompeii doesn't end here. For, you see, even if the houses were whole and uninjured, what would they be? Poor affairs enough. Just think how small they are. Rooms ten by twelve. Narrow passage-ways for halls, that'll scarcely allow two people to pass each other. The rooms are closets. The ceilings were all low. And then look at the temples. I expected to find stone walls and marble columns. But what have I found? Nothing but shams—pillars built of bricks, and plastered over to resemble marble. Do you call that the right style of thing? Why, at home we sneer at lath-and-plaster Gothic. Why should we admire lath-and-plaster Greek because it's in Pompeii? Then, again, look at the Forums —miserable little places that'll only hold about fifty people."

"Pooh!" said David; "as if they didn't know what was large enough!"

"I don't doubt that they knew it," said Frank. "But what I say is, that if these were large enough for them, what a poor lot they must have, been!"

"After all," said David, "Pompeii was not a great city. It was only a small city. You expect to find here the magnificence of Rome."

"No, I don't. I merely expect to find something that'll carry out the promise of those pictures that they make of scenes in Pompeii. Why, there isn't anything in the whole town, except, perhaps, this place, that looks large enough for an ordinary person to move about in. Look at the walls—miserable things twenty feet high. Look at the streets—only wide enough for a single cart. Look at the sidewalks—only wide enough for a single man. The only thing in the whole town that comes up to my idea is the Amphitheatre. This is respectable. It corresponds with the pictures, and the descriptions of travellers. But as to all the rest, I have only to remark that they are, first, mean; secondly, small; and thirdly, in outrageously bad taste."

Frank ceased, and looked steadfastly at David.

David looked at Frank, but his feelings were too strong for utterance. His indignation at this desecration of a place that was so hallowed in his eyes could not be expressed. He turned his face away in silent scorn, and fixed his gaze on Vesuvius.

They waited a long time, and when at length they prepared to leave Pompeii, it was late in the day. All the other visitors had left long before, and they were the last in the city. They walked along looking round them till the last, and at length reached the entrance. Michael Angelo went off to get the carriage. They waited a little while to take a last look, and then passed through the gate. Here they found themselves confronted by three officials, the custodians of the place.

One of these addressed them in very fair English.

"Messieurs," said he, "before you leave, I haf to inquire—Deed you take anyting out from Pompeii?"

"Take anything?" said Uncle Moses, in an indignant voice. "What do you mean?"

"A tousand pardons, sare," said the other, politely. "It ees a formaletee. I mean de leetle stones, de pieces of steek, wood, plastair. Ha! De reliques, de souvenirs."

He was rather an unpleasant looking man, with a very sallow face, high cheek-bones, and a heavy goatee on the tip of his chin, which wagged up and down as he talked in quite a wonderful way.

"Stones, sticks, plaster?" said Uncle Moses. "Course not."

The official looked intently at him, and then at the boys. After this he conversed with his companion in Italian. These companions were quite as unprepossessing in their appearance as himself. Then the first speaker turned to the boys.

"You, sare," said he to Frank, in rather an unpleasant tone, "haf you de stones or de bones?"

"Not a stone, not a bone," said Frank, smilingly. "I did take a few at first, but I pitched them away."

"And you, sare?" said he to Bob.

"Don't deal in such articles," said Bob, with a grin—"not in my line—not my style."

"Pardon," said the official, with a sickly smile, "but I must put de usual interrogatoree. You, sare?" and he addressed himself to David.

David turned pale.

He hesitated for a moment.

"Well," said he, "I believe I *have* got a few little stones, just two or three, you know; little relics, you know."

"Ah! ver good, ver nais," said the official, with the sunshine of perfect content illuminating his sallow features. "And you, sare?" he continued, turning to Clive.

"Well, yes," said Clive, "I've got a few, I believe; but they really don't amount to anything in particular."

"O, no, not at all," said the Italian; "dey don't amount to notin; but look you, de govairement haf made de law dat no pairson will take no stone, nor steek, nor relique, nor bone, nor souvenir, from Pompeii. You mus geef dem all oop."

"Why? They're only two or three," pleaded David, in a heartbroken voice.

"So, dat is eet. Look you. Eet ees de law. O, yais. I cannot help. Everybody will take two or tree. Very well. Ten tousand, twenty tousand, hundred tousand come here every year, and all take away hundred tousand pocket full. Ah, ha! See you? What den? Why, den all Pompeii be carried away. Aha! dat great shame. Too bad, hey? ha? You ondstand. So you sall gif dem all oop into my hand."

David and Clive remonstrated most vehemently, but the official was obdurate. He pleaded the law. He insisted on the full restoration of everything.

So the two lads began to disgorge, with the following result:—

> 1 piece of brick from the Sidewalk. 1 bit of stone, Street. 1 stucco, Basilica. 1 do. Temple Venus. 1 do. Forum. 1 do. Temple Jupiter. 1 bit of stone, Public Bakery. 1 do. Sentry box. 1 do. Wall. 1 do. Gateway. 1 do. Street Tombs. 1 do. Villa Diomede. 1 do. do. 1 bone, Sepulchre. 1 do. do. 1 package dust, do. 1 do. Villa Sallust. 1 do. do. 1 pebble, Eating House. 1 do. House of Dioscuri. 1 bit of plaster, Pantheon. 1 do. Temple Mercury. 1 do. do. Isis. 1 brick, Tragic Theatre. 1 do. Comic Theatre. 1 stone, Amphitheatre. 1 do. do.

The above is by no means a complete inventory of, the articles produced by Clive and David, but will serve to give an idea of the nature of that heap which was spread upon the table before the stern officials. One by one they were turned out from the well-filled pockets of David and Clive. Slowly and reluctantly, the two boys turned out those precious treasures. Sadly and mournfully they laid them on the table, under the stern, the inflexible, the relentless gaze of the three inexorable custodians, who, to David's mind, seemed the impersonations of Minos, Aeacus, and Rhadamanthus. Yea, all these, and many more,—fragments from houses, bits of mosaic stone, little chips,—all were seized, and all were confiscated. Not a word was spoken. It was a sorrow too strong for words; and Minos, Aeacus, and Rhadamanthus stood, individually and collectively, inflexible and inexorable. The rueful countenances of the two culprits excited the sympathy and pity of their companions; but it seemed a case where no help could avail them. Frank and Bob looked upon the scene with a strong desire to interfere in some way, and Uncle Moses looked quite as distressed as either David or Clive. Suddenly a new actor entered upon the scene.

It was Michael Angelo.

He came in with a quick step, started as he noticed the sadness on the faces of his party, and then threw a rapid glance around. One glance was sufficient to show plainly enough what had happened. He saw the table covered with the stones and bones already described. He saw the heart-broken expression that was stamped upon the faces of David and Clive as they gazed upon their parting treasures. He saw the attitude and the expression of Uncle Moses, and Frank, and Bob, as they watched their friends.

That one glance not only explained all to Michael Angelo, but suggested to him a course of conduct upon which he instantly proceeded to act.

He stepped up to the aide of Rhadamanthus, and accosting him in

Italian; he spoke a few words in a low voice. What he said was, of course, unintelligible to the boys. After these few words, Michael Angelo then slipped something into the hand of the inexorable one.

Then he turned to the despairing boys.

"It's all right," said Michael Angelo, cheerily. "I haf explained. You may keep de tings."

David and Clive looked up, and stared at Michael Angelo in wonder, not fully comprehending him.

"It's all right," said Michael Angelo. "Dey onderstand. I haf explained. You put dem back into your pocket. You sall keep de tings. It's all right. Dey are yours now. It's all r-r-r-r-right. All r-r-r-r-right, I say."

David and Clive still hesitated, and looked at Rhadamanthus.

Rhadamanthus gazed benignantly at them, smiled a gracious smile, and waved his hands with the air of a judge dismissing a case.

"All r-r-right," said Rhadamanthus; "he haf explained."

This language was somewhat unintelligible. What there was to be explained they could not imagine. If the law prohibited the carrying off of relics from Pompeii, no amount of "explanation" could give them a claim to their unlawful possessions. But neither David nor Clive was at all inclined to hesitate about the legality of their possessions, or to make any inquiries about the nature of the explanation which had been made by Michael Angelo. It was joy enough for them to know that the difficulty was over, and that the relics were theirs once more.

So the pile of relics went back from that table into the pockets of David and Clive with a rapidity that is inconceivable. Away from their faces passed that heart-broken expression which had been upon them; the shadows passed away from their brows, the sunshine of joy and exultation overspread them, and they looked at Michael Angelo in silent gratitude.

A few minutes more and they were-in the carriage.

Then David asked Michael Angelo how it was that he had changed the stern resolve of the inexorable Rhadamanthus into such easy, gracious, and good-tempered indulgence.

Michael Angelo laughed.

"I gif him," said he, "just one half dollar. Dat was what he wanted all de time. Aftaire dees you know what to do. All r-r-right. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

And Michael Angelo burst into a peal of laughter.

Upon this Uncle Moses began to moralize about the corrupt morals of the Italian race, and went on to speak of tyranny, priestcraft, slavery, aristocracy, monarchy, primogeniture, brigandage, and ten thousand other things.

And the carriage rolled back to Naples.

CHAPTER XX.

The Glories of Naples.—The Museum.—The Curiosities.—How they unroll the charred Manuscripts exhumed from Herculaneum and Pompeii.—On to Rome.—Capua.—The Tomb of Cicero.—Terracina.—The Pontine Marshes.—The Appii Forum.

The party remained in Naples some time longer, and had much to see. There was the Royal Museum, filled with the treasures of antique art, filled also with what was to them far more interesting—the numerous articles exhumed from Herculaneum and Pompeii. Here were jewels, ornaments, pictures, statues, carvings, kitchen utensils, weights, measures, toilet requisites, surgical instruments, arms, armor, tripods, braziers, and a thousand other articles, the accompaniments of that busy life which had

been so abruptly stopped. All these articles spoke of something connected with an extinct civilization, and told, too, of human life, with all its hopes, fears, joys, and sorrows. Some spoke of disease and pain, others of festivity and joy; these of peace, those of war; here were the emblems of religion, there the symbols of literature.

Among all these, nothing was more interesting than the manuscript scrolls which had been found in the libraries of the better houses. These looked like anything rather than manuscripts. They had all been burned to a cinder, and looked like sticks of charcoal. But on the first discovery of these they had been carefully preserved, and efforts had been made to unroll them. These efforts at first were baffled; but at last, by patience, and also by skill, a method was found out by which the thing might be done. The manuscripts were formed of Egyptian papyrus—a substance which, in its original condition, is about as fragile as our modern paper; the sheets were rolled around a stick, and were not over eight inches in width, and about sixteen feet in length. The stick, the ornaments, and the cases had perished, but the papyrus remained. Its nature was about the same as the nature of a scroll of paper manuscript would be after passing through the fire. Each thin filament, as it was unrolled, would crumble into dust. Now, this crumbling was arrested by putting over it a coating of tough, gelatinous substance, over which a sheet of muslin was placed, the gelatinous substance acting also upon the charred sheet in such a way as to detach it from the rest of the scroll. In this way it was unrolled slowly and carefully, two inches at a time, and on being unrolled a facsimile copy was at once made. Of course there was no attempt to preserve the manuscripts; they were, too perishable; and after a short exposure, just long enough to admit of a copy being made, they shrank up and crumbled away.

There were other places of attraction in this beautiful city—the Villa Reale, the chosen promenade of the Neapolitans, which stretches along the shore, filled with trees, and shrubbery, and winding paths, and flower-beds, and vases, and statues, and sculptures, and ponds, and fountains, and pavilions. There was the Castle of St. Elmo, with its frowning walls; the Cathedral of San Francisco, with its lofty dome and sweeping colonnades; and very many other churches, together with palaces and monuments.

But at last all this came to an end, and they left Naples far Rome. They had a carriage to themselves, which they had hired for the journey, and the weather was delightful The road was smooth and pleasant, the country was one of the fairest on earth, and as they rolled along they all gave themselves up to the joy of the occasion. They passed through a region every foot of which was classic ground. Along their way they encountered amphitheatres, aqueducts, tombs, and other monuments of the past, some in ruins, others still erect in stately though melancholy grandeur. Capua invited them to tarry—not the ancient Capua, but the modern, which, though several miles distant from the historic city, has yet a history of its own, and its own charms. But among all these scenes and sights which they encountered, the one that impressed them most was Cicero's tomb. It is built on the spot where he was assassinated, of immense stones, joined without cement. In shape it is square, but the interior is circular, and a single column rises to the vaulted roof. Of course whatever contents there may have been have long since been scattered to the winds; no memorial of the great orator and patriotic statesman is visible now; but the name of Cicero threw a charm about the place, and it seemed as though they were drawn nearer to the past. The boys expressed their feelings in various ways, and David, who was most alive to the power of classical associations, delivered, verbatim, about one half of the first oration of Cicero against Catiline. He would have delivered the whole of it, and more also, beyond a doubt, had not Frank put a sudden stop to his flow of eloquence by pressing his hand against David's mouth, and threatening to gag him if he didn't "stop it."

On the afternoon of the second day they arrived at Terracina. This town is situated on the sea-shore, with the blue Mediterranean in front, stretching far away to the horizon. Far out into the sea runs the promontory of Circaeum,—familiar to the boys from their studies in Homer and Virgil,—while over the water the white sails of swift-moving vessels passed to and fro. The waves broke on the strand, fishing-boats were drawn up on the beach, and there were wonderful briskness and animation in the scene.

Terracina, like all other towns in this country, has remains of antiquity to show. Its Cathedral is built from the material of a heathen temple, probably that of Apollo, which was once a magnificent edifice, but is now in ruins. But it was the modern beauty of the town, rather than this or any, other of its antiquities, that most attracted the boys,—the sea-beach, where the waters of the Mediterranean rippled and plashed over the pebbles; the groves and vineyards, that extended all around; the wooded hills; the orange trees and the palm, the thorny cactus and the aloe; and above all, the deep, azure sky, and the clear, transparent atmosphere. To the intoxication of all this surrounding beauty they gave themselves up, and wandered, and scrambled, and raced, and chased one another about the slumberous town.

They slept soundly that night, lolled to rest by the long roll of the Mediterranean waters, as they dashed upon the beach, and on the following morning resumed their journey. The road now passed through the Pontine Marshes, and they all entered upon this part of their journey with strong feelings

of curiosity.

The district which goes by the name of the Pontine Marshes is one of the most famous places in Europe. It is about forty-five miles long, and varies in breadth from four to eleven miles. The origin of these marshes is not known. In the early ages of the republic of Rome numerous cities are mentioned as existing here. But all these gradually became depopulated; and now not a vestige remains of any one of them. From a very remote period numerous efforts were put forth to reclaim these lands. When the famous Appian Way was constructed through, them, they were partially drained. Afterwards a canal was formed, which ran by the road-side; and of this canal Horace speaks in the well-known account of his journey to Brundusium. Julius Caesar intended, among other great works, to enter upon the task of reclaiming them; but his death prevented it. Under various successive emperors, the attempt was made, and continued, until at last, in the reign of Trajan, nearly all the district was recovered. Afterwards it fell to ruin, and the waters flowed in once more. Then they remained neglected for ages, down to modern times. Various popes attempted to restore them, but without success, until at last Pope Pius VI. achieved the accomplishment of the mighty task in the year 1788, ever since which time the district has been under cultivation.

The road was a magnificent one, having been built on the foundations of the ancient Appian Way. It was lined on each side with trees, and was broad and well paved. It is considered one of the finest in Europe. Along this they rolled, the blue sky above them, on the right hand the mountains, on the left the sea. The air was damp and chill; but at first they did not feel it particularly, though Uncle Moses complained of "rheumatics," and took precautionary measures against his insidious enemy by wrapping himself up warmly. As they went on they saw crowds of peasants coming to work in the fields. These peasants lived in the hill country on the right, and had to walk a great distance to get to their place of labor,—for to live on the marshes was impossible. Men, women, and even children were there; and their pale, sickly faces and haggard looks showed how deadly were the effects of the noxious exhalations from this marshy soil.

At about midday they reached an inn, which stood about half way over the marshes, by the road-side. David speculated much as to whether this place might or might not be the Forum Appii mentioned in the book of Acts as a stopping-place of St. Paul on his way to Rome; but the others were too hungry to take any interest whatever in the question. They remained here nearly two hours, got something to eat, and then resumed their journey.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Pontine Marshes.—A Change comes over the Party.—The foul Exhalations.—The Sleep of Death.—Dreadful Accident.—Despair of Frank.—A Break-down.—Ingenuity of the Driver.—Resumption of the Journey.

For the first half of the day the boys had been in great spirits. Laughter, noisy conversation, jests, chaff, and uproarious songs had all been intermingled, and the carriage was a miniature Bedlam. But after their stoppage at the wayside inn a change took place, and on resuming their journey, they seemed like a very different company. The air of the marshes now began to act upon them. They felt it to be raw, and chill, and unpleasant. A general feeling of discomfort and a general sensation of gloom pervaded all of them. Bob held out most bravely, and strove to regain the jollity which they had felt before. For a long time his fun and nonsense provoked a laugh; but at length his fun grew fainter, and his nonsense more stupid; and the laughter grew less hearty and more forced, until at length the fun, and the nonsense, and the laughter ceased altogether.

Frank felt upon himself the responsibility of the rest to an unusual degree. He was only a few weeks older than David, but he was far stronger and more mature in many respects. David was a hard student, and perhaps a bit of a book-worm, and had a larger share of the knowledge that may be gained from books; but Frank had seen more of the world, and in all that relates to the practical affairs of common life he was immeasurably superior to David. For this reason Frank often assumed, and very naturally too, the guardianship of the party; and so appropriate was this to him, that the rest tacitly allowed it. As for Uncle Moses, none of them ever regarded him as their protector, but rather as an innocent and simple-hearted being, who himself required protection from them.

Frank, therefore, on this occasion, kept warning the whole party, above all things, not to let

themselves go to sleep. He had heard that the air of the Pontine Marshes had a peculiar tendency to send one to sleep; and if one should yield to this, the consequences might be fatal. Fever, he, said, would be sure to follow sleep, that might be indulged in under such circumstances. The anxiety which was created in his own mind by his sense of responsibility was of itself sufficient to keep him awake, and left him to devote all his energies to the task of trying to keep the others awake also, and thus save them from the impending danger.

At first they, all laughed at him; but after a time, as each one felt the drowsiness coming over him, they ceased to laugh. Then they tried to sing. They kept up this for some time. They exhausted all their stock of school songs, nigger songs, patriotic songs, songs sentimental and moral, and finally tried even hymns. But the singing was not a very striking success; there was a lack of spirit in it; and under this depressing sense of languor, the voice of music at last died out.

Singularly enough, the one who felt this drowsiness most strongly was Bob. Frank had not thought of him as being at all likely to fall asleep; but whether it was that his mobile temperament made him more liable to extremes of excitement and dullness, or whether the reaction from his former joviality and noisiness had been greater than that of the rest, certain it is that Bob it was who first showed signs of sleep. His eyes closed, his head nodded, and lifting it again with a start, he blinked around.

"Come, Bob," said Frank, "this won't do. You don't mean to say that *you're* sleepy."

Bob said nothing. He rubbed his eyes, and yawned.

"Bob," said Frank, "take care of yourself."

"O, I'm all right," said Bob, with a drawl; "never fear about me.
I'm wide awake."

Scarce had he finished this when his eyes closed again, and his head fell forward.

Frank shook him, and Bob raised himself up with an effort at dignified surprise which was, however, a failure.

"You needn't shake a fellow," he said in a husky, sleepy voice.

"But I will shake you," cried Frank.

"Le'—me—'lone," said Bob, in a half whisper, nodding again.

"Here," cried Frank; "this'll never do. Bob! Bob! wake up! Bob!
Bo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-b! Wa-a-a-a-a-a-a-ake u-u-u-u-up!"

But Bob wouldn't wake up. On the contrary, he bobbed his head in a foolish and imbecile way towards Frank, as though seeking unconsciously to find a place on which to rest it. But Frank wouldn't allow anything of the sort He made Bob sit erect, and held him in this way for some time, bawling, yelling, and occasionally shaking him. David and Clive were a little roused by this, and surveyed it with sleepy eyes. Uncle Moses, however, was as wide awake as ever—he had his usual anxiety about the well-being of the boys, and this made sleep out of the question. He now joined his entreaties to those of Frank; and the two, uniting their shouts, succeeded in making considerable uproar.

Still Bob would not wake.

"I'll make him get out and walk," said Frank. "This'll never do.
If he sleeps here, he may never wake again."

Saying this, Frank turned to open the carriage door to call to the driver. As he did so, he loosed his hold of Bob, who, being no longer stayed tip on that side, fell over on Frank's lap with his face downward.

Upon this, Frank turned back, and determined to lift Bob up again.

Shaking him as hard as he could, he yelled in his ears and shouted to him to get up.

Now Bob was asleep, yet in his sleep he had a kind of under consciousness of what was going on. He was stupidly conscious that they were trying to raise him up to an uncomfortable sitting posture—a bolt-upright position. This he was sleepily unwilling to submit to. There wasn't any particular strength in his hands, and his drowsy faculties didn't extend farther down than his head. He felt himself lying on something, and to prevent them from raising him from it, he seized it in his teeth.

"Bo-o-o-ob! Bo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-b!" yelled Frank. "W-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-ake u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-p!"

But Bob wouldn't.

He only held on the tighter with his teeth.

Upon this, Frank seized him with all his strength, and gave Bob a sudden jerk upward, when—

C-r-r-r-r-i-k-k-k-k!—

A sharp, ripping sound was heard, and as Bob's head was pulled up, a long, narrow piece of cloth was exhibited, hanging down from his mouth; and held in his teeth.

Frank looked at it in dismay, and then looked down.

He gave a cry of vexation.

Bob had seized Frank's trousers in his teeth, and as he was pulled up, he held on tight. Consequently the cloth gave way, and there was poor Frank, reduced to rags and tatters, and utterly unpresentable in any decent society.

He gave up Bob in despair, and began to investigate the extent of the ruin that had been wrought in his trousers. It was a bad rent, an irretrievable one, in fact; and all that he could do was to tie his handkerchief around his leg.

Bob now slept heavily, held up by Uncle Moses.

The other boys grew drowsier and drowsier. Frank was just deciding to get out of the carriage and make them all walk for a time, when a sudden event occurred which brought a solution to the problem.

It was a sudden crash.

Down sank the carriage under them, and away it went, toppling over on one side. A cry of terror escaped all of them. Every one started up, and each one grasped neighbor.

There was something in this sudden shock so dreadful and so startling, that it broke through even the drowsiness and heavy stupor of Bob, and penetrated to his slumbering faculties, and in an instant roused them all. With a wild yell he flung his arms round Uncle Moses. Uncle Moses, fell backward, and all the others were flung upon him. They all lay thus heaped upon the side of the coach, a straggling mass of humanity.

Frank was the first to come to himself, and regain his presence of mind.

"All right," said he, in a cheerful voice. "We haven't gone over quite. The horses have stopped. All right."

A groan came from below the pile of humanity.

"Get off, get off!" exclaimed Bob's voice. "You're smothering Uncle Moses." Frank, who was uppermost, disengaged himself, and helped off the others; and finally Bob scrambled away, giving every indication by this time that he was at last perfectly wide awake.

This restored Uncle Moses. He was able to take a long breath.

By this time Frank had torn open the carriage door, and jumped down. The others followed.

He saw the driver holding the horses. The carriage was tilted over.
One of the hind wheels lay underneath, a shattered wreck.

Now all was bustle and confusion.

The driver proceeded to put into execution a plan by which they could go forward, at least far enough to traverse the marshes. The boys all helped, and their efforts drove away the last vestige of drowsiness.

The plan consisted in taking out the tongue of the wagon, binding it upon the fore axle, and letting its other end drag on the ground. Now, as the tongue sloped down, the hind axle rested upon it, and thus the trailing wood served to keep the coach erect, and to act as a runner, which supplied very well the place of the lost wheel. The horses were then hitched on by the traces, without any tongue, and in this way they pulled along the broken carriage.

CHAPTER XXII.

The March ended.—A lonely Inn.—Evil Faces.—Beetling Brows.—Sinister Glances.—Suspicions of the Party.—They put their Head together.—Conferences of the Party.—A threatening Prospect.—Barricades.—In Time of Peace prepare for War.—The Garrison arm themselves.

After completing their arrangements they resumed their journey; but this time they all went on foot, with the exception of Uncle Moses. They went on foot for two reasons: first, because it was impossible for the horses to pull them all when one of the wheels was gone, since it was as much as they could do to maintain a walking pace even with the empty carriage; and the other reason was, that by walking they would be better able to fight off the drowsiness which had menaced them. In truth, as far as drowsiness is concerned, there did not now seem to be any particular danger; for the shock of the break-down had been sufficient to rouse even Bob, and the effects of that shock still remained. Uncle Moses, however, on account of his years, his infirmities, and his tendency to "rheumatics," together with his freedom from drowsiness, was installed in the carriage, with all due honors, as its sole occupant. Walking on thus, they did not regret, in the slightest degree, the hardships of their lot, but rather exulted in them, since they had been the means of rousing them out of their almost unconquerable tendency to sleep. Frank felt the highest possible relief, since he was now freed from the responsibility that had of late been so heavy. In Bob, however, there was the exhibition of the greatest liveliness. Bob, mercurial, volatile, nonsensical, mobile, was ever running to extremes; and as he was the first to fall asleep, so now, when he had awaked, he was the most wide awake of all. He sang, he shouted, he laughed, he danced, he ran; he seemed, in fact, overflowing with animal spirits.

Fortunately they were not very far from the end of the marshes when the wheel broke, and in less than two hours they had traversed the remainder. The driver could speak a little English, and informed them that they could not reach the destination which he had proposed; but he hoped before dark to get as far as an inn, where they could obtain food and lodging. He informed them that it was not a very good inn; but under the circumstances it was the best that they could hope for. To the boys, however, it made very little difference what sort of an inn they came to. As long as they could get something to eat, and any kind of a bed to lie on, they were content; and so they told the driver.

Leaving the marshes, the road began to ascend; and after about a half hour's farther tramp, they came, to a place which the driver informed them was the inn.

It was by no means an inviting place. It was an old stone edifice, two stories high, which had once been covered with, stucco; but the stucco had fallen off in most places, disclosing the rough stones underneath, and giving it an air of dilapidation and squalor. The front was by the road-side. A door opened in the middle, on each side of which was a small, dismal window. In the second story were two other small, dismal windows. At the end they law a window on each story, and a third in the attic. These were all small and dismal. Some of them had sashes and glass; others had sashes without glass; while others had no sashes at all.

A group of men were outside the house, all of whom stared hard at the carriage as it drew near. There was something in the aspect of these men which was indescribably repulsive to the boys: their dirty, swarthy faces, covered with shaggy, jet-black beards; their bushy eyebrows, from beneath which their black eyes glowed like balls of fire; their hats slouched down over their brows; their lounging attitudes, and their furtive glances; all these combined to give them an evil aspect—a wicked, sinister, suspicious appearance, by which all the boys were equally impressed. They said nothing, however; and much as they disliked the look of the place and its surroundings, they saw that there was no help for it, and so they made up their minds to pass the night here as well as they could.

Leaving the carriage, they waited a few moments to ask the driver about the prospects for the next day. The driver had everything arranged. Velletre was only five miles away, and he was going to send there for another carriage, or go himself. They would all be able to leave early on the following day.

This reassured them somewhat, and though they all would have been willing to walk to Velletre, rather than pass the night here, yet Uncle Moses would not be able to do it, and so they had to make up their minds to stay.

On entering the house, they found the interior quite in keeping with the exterior. The hall was narrow, and on either side were two dirty rooms, in which were some frowsy women. One room seemed to be a kitchen, and the other a sitting-room. A rickety stairway led up to the second story. Here they came to a room, which, they were informed, was to be theirs. The door was fragile, and without any fastening. The room was a large one, containing a table and three beds, with one small wash-stand.

Two windows looked out in front, and at either end was one. At the south end the window had no sash at all, but was open to the air.

The aspect of the room was certainly rather cheerless, but there was nothing to be done. So they sat down, and waited as patiently as they could for dinner. Before it came, the sun set, and a feeble lamp was brought in, which flickered in the draughts of air, and scarcely lighted the room at all.

The dinner was but a meagre repast. There was some very thin soup, then a stew, then macaroni. There were also bread and sour wine. However, the boys did not complain. They had footed it so far, and had worked so hard, that they were all as hungry as hunters; and so the dinner gave as great satisfaction as if it had been far better. While they were eating, an evil-faced, low-browed villain waited on the table; and as he placed down each dish in succession, he looked round upon the company with a scowl that would have taken away the appetites of any guests less hungry than these. But these were too near starvation to be affected by mere scowls, and so they ate on, reserving their remarks for a future occasion.

So the dinner passed.

And after the dinner was over, and the dishes were removed, and they found themselves alone, they all looked round stealthily, and they all put their heads together, and then,—

"I don't like this," said Frank. do. said Clive. do. said David. do. said Bob.

"I don't feel altogether comfortable here," said Uncle Moses.

"Did you notice that scowl?" said Bob. do. said Clive. do. said David. do. said Frank.

"He's the ugliest creetur I ever see," said Uncle Moses. "I've been expectin somethin o' this sort."

The boys looked all around, for fear of being observed. Frank got up and closed the rickety door. Then he resumed his seat.

Then they all put their heads together again.

"This is a bad place," said Frank. do. said Clive. do. said David. do. said Bob.

"It's the onwholesomedest lookin place I ever see," said
Uncle Moses.

"I distrust them all," said Clive. do. said. Frank, do. said David. do. said Bob.

"I don't like the looks of that ere driver," said Uncle Hoses. "I b'leve he contrived that there break-down a purpose, so as to bring us to this here den."

Uncle Moses' remark sank deep into the minds of all. Who was the driver, after all? That break-down was certainly suspicious. It might have been all pre-arranged. It looked suspicions. Then the men below. There were so many of them!

"There are a dozen of them," said Bob. do. said Frank. do. said David. do. said Clive.

"Thar's too big a gatherin here altogether," said Uncle Moses, "an it's my idee that they've come for no good. Didn't you notice how they stared at us with them wicked-looking eyes o' theirs?"

"I wish we'd gone on," said David. do. said Bob. do. said Clive. do. said Frank.

"Yes, boys, that's what we'd ort to hev done," said Uncle Moses.
"Why didn't some on ye think of it?"

"We did; but we thought you'd be too tired," said Frank.

"Tired? tired?" exclaimed Uncle Moses. "Tired? What! me tired! *me!*" And he paused, overcome with amazement. "Why, boys, ye must all be ravin distracted! *Me* tired! Why, I'm as fresh as a cricket; an though rayther oldish, yet I've got more clear muscle, narve, and sinnoo, than all on ye put together."

At this little outburst' the boys said nothing, but regretted that they had not, at least, proposed going on.

"We're in a fix," said Clive. do. said Bob. do. said Frank. do. said David.

"We're in a tight place, sure," said Uncle Moses.

"There's no help near," said Frank. do. said David. do. said Bob. do. said Clive.

"It's the lonesomest place I ever see," said Uncle Moses.

"It's too dark to leave now," said David. do. said Clive. do. said Bob. do. said Frank.

"Yes, and they'd all be arter us afore we'd taken twelve steps," said Uncle Moses.

"They're the worst sort of brigands," said Bob. do. said Frank. do. said David. do. said Clive.

"Yes, reg'lar bloodthirsty miscreants," said Uncle Moses.

"The door has no lock," said Frank. do. said David. do. said Bob. do. said Clive.

"O, yes, it's a reg'lar trap, an we're in for it, sure," said Uncle Moses. "I only hope we'll get out of it."

"That window's open, too," said David, do. said Frank. do. said Clive. do. said Bob.

"Yes, an thar ain't even a sash in it," said Uncle Moses; "no, nor even a board to put agin it!"

"They'll come to-night," said Clive. do. said Frank. do. said Bob. do. said David.

"No doubt in that thar," said Uncle Moses, in lugubrious tones; "an we've got to prepar ourselves."

"What shall we do?" said Frank. do. said Bob. do. said Clive. do. said David.

"The pint now is," said Uncle Moses,—"the pint now is, what air we to do under the succumstances? That's what it is."

At this Frank rose and opened the rickety door.

He looked out.

He closed it again.

Then he went to each of the windows in succession.

He looked out of each.

Then he resumed his seat.

"Wal?" asked Uncle Moses, in an inquiring tone.

"There's no one to be seen," said Frank; "but I thought I heard voices, or rather whispers, just under the end window."

There was a solemn silence now, and they all sat looking at one another with very earnest faces.

"It's a solemn time, boys," said Uncle Moses, "a deeply solemn time."

To this the boys made no reply, but by their silence signified their assent to Uncle Moses' remark.

At length, after a silence of some time, Frank spoke.

"I think we can manage something," said he, "to keep them out for the night. My idea is, to put the largest bedstead against the door. It opens inside; if the bedstead is against it, it can't be opened."

"But the windows," said Clive.

"O, we needn't bother about the windows, they're too high up," said Frank, confidently.

And now they all set themselves fairly to work making preparations for the night, which preparations consisted in making a barricade which should offer resistance to the assaults of the bloody-minded, murderous, beetle-browed, scowling, and diabolical brigands below, Frank's suggestion about the bed was acted upon first. One of the bedsteads was large, ponderous, old-fashioned, and seemed capable, if placed against a doorway, of withstanding anything less than a cannon ball. This they all seized, and lifting it bodily from the ground, they placed it hard and fast against the door. The result was gratifying in the highest degree to all of them.

They now proceeded to inspect the room, to search out any weak spots, so as to guard against invasion. As to the windows, they thought that their height from the ground was of itself sufficient to

remove all danger in that quarter.

But in their search around the room they noticed one very alarming thing. At the south corner there was a step-ladder, which led up into the attic, thus affording an easy entrance to any one who might be above. Frank rushed up to the step-ladder and shook it. To his great relief, it was loose, and not secured by any fixtures. They all took this in their hands, and though it was very heavy, yet they succeeded in taking it down from its place without making any noise. They then laid it upon the floor, immediately underneath the opening into the attic. They would have felt, perhaps, a trifle more secure if they had been able to close up the dark opening above; but the removal of the step-ladder seemed sufficient, and in so doing they felt that they had cut off all means of approach from any possible enemy in that quarter.

Frank drew a long breath of relief as he looked around. He felt that nothing more could be done. All the others looked around with equal complacency, and to the apprehensions which they had been entertaining there now succeeded a delicious sense of security.

"We're safe at last," said Clive. do. said Bob. do. said David. do. said Frank.

"Yes, boys," said Uncle Moses, "we're jest as safe now as if we were to hum. We can defy a hull army of them bloody-minded miscreants, fight them off all right, and by mornin there'll be lots of wagons passin by, an we can git help. But before we go, let's see what weepins we can skear up in case o' need. It's allus best to have things handy."

"Well," said Frank, "I'm sorry to say I've got nothing but a knife;" and saying this, he displayed an ordinary jackknife, not particularly large, and not particularly sharp. "It isn't much," said he, as he opened it, and flourished it in the air, "but it's something."

"Well," said Clive, "I haven't got even a knife; but I've heard that there's nothing equal to a chair, if you want to disconcert a burglar; and so I'll take this, and knock down the first brigand that shows his nose;" and as he said this, he lifted a chair from the floor, and swung it in the air.

"I rely on the barricades," said David, "and don't see the necessity of any arms; for I don't see how we're going to be attacked. If we are, I suppose I can use my knife, like Frank."

"Well," said Bob, "I've given my knife away, and I'll have to take a chair."

"Wal," said Uncle Moses, "I've got a razor, an it's pooty ugly weepin in the hands of a savage man—a desprit ugly weepin."

"And now let's go to bed," said David, do. said Bob. do. said Clive. do. said Frank.

"Yes, boys, that's about the best thing we can do," said Uncle
Moses, decisively.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The sleepless Watch.—The mysterious Steps.—The low Whispers.—They come! They come!—The Garrison roused.—To Arms! To Arms!—The beleaguered Party.—At Bay.—The decisive Moment.—The Scaling Ladders.—Onset of the Brigands.

So they all went to Bed.

So great was the confidence which they all felt in their preparations, precautions, and barricades, that not the slightest thought of danger remained in the mind of any one of them to create alarm, with the single exception of Bob.

For some reason or other Bob was more excitable at this time than the others. It may have been that this was his nature, or it may have been that his nerves were more sensitive since his tremendous adventures during the night of horror near Paestum; but whatever was the cause, certain it is, that on this occasion he remained wide awake, and incapable of sleep, while all the others were slumbering the sleep of the innocent.

He and Frank had the same bed, and it was the bed which had been placed against the door. It had

been placed in such a way that the head of the bed was against the door. On the north side of the room, and on the left of this bed, was another, in which Uncle Moses slept; while on the south side, or the right, was the bed which was occupied by David and Clive. In this way they had disposed of themselves.

Bob was very wakeful. The beds were father unprepossessing, and consequently they had all retired without altogether undressing themselves; but in spite of this comparative discomfort they soon fell asleep. Bob alone remained awake.

He tried all he could to overcome his wakefulness. He resorted to all the means for producing sleep that he had ever heard of or read of. He tried counting, and went on counting and counting tens, and hundreds, and thousands. He counted fast, and he counted slow. In vain. Counting was useless, and when he had reached as high as four thousand seven hundred and thirty-seven, he gave it up in disgust.

Then he tried another infallible recipe for sleep He imagined, or tried to imagine, endless lines of rolling waves. This also was useless.

Then he tried another. He endeavored to imagine clouds of smoke rolling before him. This was as useless as the others.

Then he tested ever so many other methods, as follows:—

Waving grain.
Marching soldiers.
Funerals.
A shore covered with sea-weed.
An illimitable forest.
A ditto prairie.
The vault of heaven.
The wide, shoreless ocean.
A cataract.
Fireworks.
The stars.
A burning forest.
Looking at his nose.
Wishing himself asleep.
Rubbing his forehead.
Lying on his back,
do. do. right side.
do. do. left side.
do. do. face.

And about seventy-nine other methods, which need not be mentioned, for the simple reason that they were all equally useless.

At last he gave up in despair, and rising up he sat on the side of the bed, with his feet dangling down, and looked around.

The moon had risen, and was shining into the room. By its light he could see the outline of the beds. Around him there ascended a choral harmony composed of snores of every degree, reaching from the mild, mellow intonation of Clive, down to the deep, hoarse, sepulchral drone of Uncle Moses. In spite of his vexation about his wakefulness, a smile passed over Bob's face, as he listened to those astonishing voices of the night.

Suddenly a sound caught his ears, which at once attracted his attention, and turned all his thoughts in another direction.

It was the sound of footsteps immediately in front of the house, and apparently at the doorway. How much time had passed he did not know; but he felt sure that it must be at least midnight. He now perceived that there were some in the house who had not gone to bed. The footsteps were shuffling and irregular, as though some people were trying to walk without making a noise. The sound attracted Bob, and greatly excited him.

In addition to the footsteps there were other sounds. There were the low murmurs of voices in a subdued tone, and he judged that there must be at least a half a dozen who were thus talking. To this noise Bob sat listening for some time. It remained in the same place, and of course he could make nothing out of it; but it served to reawaken all the fears of brigands which had been aroused before they went to bed.

At length he heard a movement from below. The movement was along the ball. It was a shuffling movement, as of men walking with the endeavor not to make a noise.

Bob listened.

His excitement increased.

At last he heard the sounds more plainly.

They were evidently at the foot of the stairway.

Bob listened in increasing excitement.

Then there came a creaking sound. It was from the stairway. They were ascending it.

He thought of waking Frank, but decided to wait.

The sounds draw nearer. There must have been six or seven men upon the stairway, and they were walking up. What for?

He had no doubt what it was for, and he waited, knowing that they were coming to this room in which he was.

They tried to walk softly. There were low whispers once or twice, which ceased as they drew nearer.

Nearer and nearer!

At last Bob knew that they were outside of the door, and as he sat on the bed, he knew that there could not be more than a yard of distance Between himself and those bloody-minded, beetle-browed, ruthless, demoniac, and fiendish brigands.

His blood ran cold in his veins at the very thought.

He did not dare to move. He sat rigid, with every sense on the alert, his eyes fixed on the door, listening.

Then came a slight creaking sound—the sound of a pressure against the door, which yielded slightly, but was prevented by the heavy bed from being opened at all. It was an unmistakable sound. They were trying to open the door. They were also trying to do it as noiselessly as possible. Evidently they thought that their victims were all asleep, and they wished to come in noiselessly, so as to accomplish their fearful errand.

For a moment it seemed to Bob as though the bed was being pushed back. The thought gave him anguish inexpressible, but he soon found that it was not so. Then he expected a savage push at the door from the baffled brigands. He thought that they would drop all attempts at secrecy, and begin an open attack.

But they did not do so.

There were whispers outside the door. Evidently they were deliberating. They were unwilling, as yet, to resort to noisy violence. They wished to effect their full purpose in secret and in silence. Such were Bob's thoughts, which thoughts were strengthened as he heard them slowly move away, and descend the stairs, with the same carefulness, and the same shuffling sound, with which they had ascended.

"They are going to try the windows," thought Bob.

And now as this thought came to him, he could restrain himself no longer. It was no time for sleep. He determined to rouse the others.

He laid his hand on Frank's forehead, and shook his bead. Then, bending down dose to him, he hissed in his ear,—

"Wake! wake! Brigands! Don't speak! don't speak! silence!"

Frank was a light sleeper, and a quick-witted lad, who always retained his presence of mind. At Bob's cry he became wide awake, and without a single word sat up in bed and listened. All was still.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

Bob told Him all in a few words.

Upon this Frank got up, stole noiselessly to the window on tiptoe, and listened. Bob followed. As they stood close to the window, they heard the sound of murmuring voices immediately beneath. Several of the panes of glass were out of this window, so that the voices were perfectly audible; though of course their ignorance of the language prevented them from understanding what was said.

As they listened, there arose a movement among them. The voices grew louder. The men were evidently walking out of the house. The listeners heard the sound of their footsteps on the ground as they walked away, and at a little distance off they noticed that the voices became more free and unrestrained.

"They'll be back again," said Frank.

"Let's wake the others," said Bob.

Upon this suggestion they both proceeded at once to act, waking them carefully, and cautioning them against making any noise. The cautions against noise were so earnest, that not a word was spoken above a whisper; but Clive and David, and finally Uncle Moses, stepped out upon the floor, and the whole party proceeded to put their heads together.

"I've got a chair," said Clive.

"I've got a knife," said Frank.

"I've got a chair," said Bob.

"I've got a knife," said David.

"An I've got my razor, which I shoved under my pillow," said Uncle
Moses; "an so let em come on. But where are they now?"

"H-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-h!" Said Frank.

All were silent, and listened. There came out from without the sound of footsteps approaching the house, and of low voices.

"They're coming back again," said Bob.

The rest listened.

Frank stole to the window and looked cautiously out.

By the moonlight he saw plainly the figures of four men. They were coming from the road to the house, and they were carrying a ladder. The ladder was very long. The sight sent a shudder through him. He had thought of the windows as being out of the reach of danger; the idea of a ladder had never entered his head at all. Yet he now saw that this-was one of the most simple and natural plans which could be adopted by the brigands.

He came back and told the others. All felt the same dismay which Frank had felt. None of them said a word, but they all stole up to the window, and looking out they saw for themselves.

The brigands approached the house, carrying the ladder; and on reaching it, they put their load on the ground, and rested for a short time. As they did so, the boys noticed that they all looked up at the upper windows of the house.

Then they saw the brigands gathering close together, and the murmur of their conversation came up to their ears.

It was a thrilling sight. The boys stood in dread suspense. No one said a word, not even a whisper.

The conversation among the brigands was followed by a movement on their part which brought things nearer to a climax. They raised the ladder once more, and moving it a little farther away, they proceeded to put it up against the house. The ladder was put up at the south end of the house, and as it was being carried there for the purpose of erection, the boys and Uncle Moses all stole over to that south window, where, standing a little distance back, so as to be out of observation, they looked out. Each one grasped his weapon of defence.

Clive his chair.

Frank his knife.

Bob his chair.

David his knife.

Uncle Moses his razor.

"Be ready, boys," said Uncle Moses, in a firm voice, as he grasped his razor. "The hour air come, and the decisive moment air at hand!"

He said this in a whisper, and the boys made no reply whatever.

The brigands meanwhile elevated the ladder, and the upper end struck the building. The dull thud of that stroke sent a thrill to the hearts of those listeners in the room. As they saw one of the brigands seize the ladder in order to mount, they all involuntarily shrank back one step.

"It isn't this window, at any rate," said Frank, in a whisper.

This remark encouraged them for a moment. No, it was not their window, but the attic window. They watched in silence now, and saw the four brigands go up.

Overhead they heard the sound that announced them as they stepped in through the window.

One brigand!

Two brigands!!

Three brigands!!!

Four brigands!!!!

And now the momentary relief which they had experienced at seeing that the attack was not made upon their window was succeeded by the darkest apprehensions, as they heard the entrance of those four brigands, and knew that these desperate men were just above them. They were there overhead. The hatchway was open. Through that opening they could drop down one by one.

The same thought came to all of them, and with one common impulse they moved softly to where the step-ladder lay on the floor. Frank made this movement first; the others followed.

They stood ranged along the step-ladder.

First, Frank, with his knife.

Second, Bob, with his chair.

Third, Clive, with his chair.

Fourth, David, with his knife.

Fifth, Uncle Moses, with his razor.

Every one held his weapon in a grasp which the excitement of the moment had rendered convulsive. Every eye was fixed upon the hatchway above, which lay concealed in the gloom. Overhead they heard, whispering, but no movement whatever.

"Let's jump out of the windows and run," whispered Bob, hurriedly.

"No," said Frank, "they are watching below—no use."

But further remarks were prevented by the sudden glimmer of a light above. It was a light in the attic, not very bright, yet sufficiently so to show the opening through which their enemies were about to come.

The brigands had lighted a lamp!

The excitement grew stronger.

Voices arose, low and hushed.

Then footsteps!

The light above the opening grew brighter!

It was an awful moment!

The suspense was terrible!

Yet in the midst of that suspense they had no thought of surrender. In fact, they did not think that surrender would be possible. These bloody-minded miscreants would show no quarter; and the besieged party felt the task imposed upon them of selling their lives as dearly as possible. And so it was, that as the brigands came nearer to the opening,—

Frank grasped his knife more firmly.

Bob do. " chair do.

David do. " knife do.

Clive do. " chair do.

While Uncle Moses held up his razor in such a way, that the first brigand who descended should fall full upon its keen edge.

The light grew brighter over the opening. The shuffling footsteps drew nearer. Then there was a pause, and low whispers arose. The brigands were immediately above them. The light shone down into the room.

The suspense was now intolerable. It was Frank who broke the silence.

"*Who's there?*" he cried in a loud, strong, stern, menacing voice, in which there was not the slightest tremor.

At this the whispering above ceased. Everything was perfectly still.

"WHO'S THERE?" cried Frank a second time, in a louder, stronger, sterner, and more menacing voice.

No answer.

All was still.

What did it mean?

"WHO'S THERE?" cried Frank a third time, in the loudest, strongest, sternest, and most menacing tone that he could compass, "SPEAK, OR I'LL FIRE!!!!!!!!!"

This tremendous threat could not have been carried out, of course, with the knives, chairs, and razor of the party below; but at any rate it brought a reply.

"Alla raight!" cried a voice. "O, yais. It's onalee me. Alla safe. Come up here to get some straps for de vettura. Alla raight. I haf joosta come back from Velletre. Haf brot de oder vettura. Scusa de interruption, but haf to-get de straps; dey up here. Alla raight!"

It was the voice of their driver!

At the first sound of that voice there was an instantaneous and immense revulsion of feeling. The dark terror of a moment before was suddenly transformed to an absurdity. They had been making fools of themselves. They felt this very keenly. The chairs were put quietly upon the floor; the knives were pocketed very stealthily; and Uncle Moses' razor was slipped hurriedly into the breast pocket of his coat.

"O!" said-Frank, trying to speak in an easy, careless, matter-of-fact tone. "We didn't know. Shall we leave in the morning?"

"O, yais. Alla r-r-raight," said the driver.

Soon after the party descended the ladder, and took it away. The boys and Uncle Moses made no remark whatever. They all crept silently, and rather sheepishly, back to their beds, feeling very much ashamed of themselves.

And yet there was no reason for shame, for to them the danger seemed real; and believing it to be real, they had not shrunk, but had faced it with very commendable pluck.

This was the end of their troubles on the road. For the remainder of that night they slept soundly. In the morning they awaked refreshed, and found a good breakfast waiting for them. They found also another carriage, in which they entered and resumed their journey.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A beautiful Country.—Magnificent Scenery.—The Approach to Albano.—Enthusiasm of the Boys.—Archaeology versus Appetite.—The Separation of the Boys.—The Story of the Alton Lake and the ancient subterranean Channel.

As they rolled along the road on this last stage of their eventful journey, they were all in the highest spirits. On to Rome! was the watchword. It was a glorious day; the sun shone brightly from a cloudless sky; the air was pure, and brilliant, and genial, and it also had such a wonderful transparency that distant objects seemed much nearer from the distinctness with which their outlines were revealed. The road was a magnificent one,—broad, well paved, well graded,—and though for some miles it was steadily ascending, yet the ascent was made by such an easy slope, that it was really imperceptible; and they bowled along as easily and as merrily as if on level ground. Moreover, the scenery around was of the most attractive character. They were among the mountains; and though there were no snow-clad summits, and no lofty peaks lost amid the clouds, still the lowering forms that appeared on every side were full of grandeur and sublimity. Amid these the road wound, and, at every new turn some fresh scene of beauty or of magnificence was disclosed to their admiring eyes. Now it was a sequestered valley, with a streamlet running through it, and the green of its surface diversified by one or two white cottages, or the darker hue of olive groves and vineyards; again it was some little hamlet far up the sloping mountain-side; again some mouldering tower would appear, perched upon some commanding and almost inaccessible eminence—the remains of a feudal castle, the monument of lawless power overthrown forever. Sometimes they would pass through the street of a town, and have a fresh opportunity of contrasting the lazy and easy-going life of Italy with the busy, energetic, restless, and stirring life of their own far-distant America.

On to Rome!

This day was to land them in the "Eternal City;" and though they enjoyed the drive, still they were eager to have it over, and to find themselves in that place which was once the centre of the world's rule, and continued to be so for so many ages. Their impatience to reach their destination was not, however, excessive, and did not at all prevent them from enjoying to the utmost the journey so long as it lasted. Uncle Moses was the only exception. He was most eager to have it over, and reach some place of rest. True, no accident had happened; but he had gone through enough tribulation, both in body and in mind, to furnish the working, material for a dozen very serious accidents indeed; and the general effect produced upon him was precisely what might have resulted from a really perilous journey.

At length they arrived at the town of Albano, where they intended to remain two hours, and afterwards resume their journey. The town stood on the side of a hill, and the hotel at which they drew up was so situated that it commanded a boundless view.

Few places cherish a stronger local pride than Albano. Tradition identifies this town with no less a place than Alba Longa, so famous in early Roman legends; for though, according to the old accounts, Tullus Hostilius destroyed the city proper of Alba Longa, yet afterwards another town grew on its site, and all around rose up the splendid villas of the Roman nobility. Here, too, Tiberius and Domitian had palaces, where they sought relaxation from the cares of empire in a characteristic way.

On reaching this place, their first care was to order dinner, and then, as there would be some time taken up in preparation for that meal, they looked about for some mode of pastime. The landlord recommended to them a visit to a convent at the top of the hill. He informed them that it stood on the site of a famous temple, and that it was visited every day by large numbers of travellers. On, referring to their guide-book, the boys learned that the temple referred to by the landlord was that of the Latian Jupiter.

As they had nothing else to do, they set out for the convent, and soon reached it. Arriving there, they found spread out before them a view which surpassed anything that they had ever seen in their lives. Far down beneath them descended the declivity of the Alban hill, till it terminated in the Roman Campagna. Then, far away before their eyes it spread for many a mile, till it was terminated by a long blue line, which it needed not the explanation of the monk at their elbow to recognize as the Mediterranean; and this blue line of distant sea spread far away, till it terminated in a projecting promontory, which their guide told them was the Cape of Terracina. But their attention was arrested by an object which was much nearer than this. Through that gray Campagna,—whose gray hue, the result of waste and barrenness, seemed also to mark its hoary age,—through this there ran a silver thread, with many a winding to and fro, now coming full into view, and gleaming in the sun, now retreating, till it was lost to sight.

"What is this?" asked David.

"The Tiber!" said the monk.

At the mention of this august historic name, a thrill involuntarily passed through them. The Tiber! What associations clustered around that word!

Along this silver thread their eyes wandered, till at length it was lost for a time in a dark, irregular mass of something. The atmosphere just now had grown slightly hazy in this direction, so that they could not make out what this was, exactly; whether a hill, or a grove, or a town; but it looked most like a town, and the irregularities and projections seemed like towers and domes. Prominent among these projections was one larger mass, which rose up above all the others, and formed the chief feature in that indistinct mass.

"What is all that?" asked David, in a hesitating way, like one who suspects the truth, but does not feel at all sure about it.

"Dat," said the guide, "dat is Rome; and dat black mass dat you see is de Church of St. Peter's. It's not clear to-day—some time we can see it all plain."

At this the boys said nothing, but stood in silence, looking upon the scene. It was one which might have stirred the souls of even the least emotional, and among this little company there were two, at least, who were quick to kindle into enthusiasm at the presence of anything connected with the storied past. These were David and Clive, who each, though from different causes, now felt himself profoundly moved by this spectacle. David's enthusiasm was that of a scholar; Clive's was that of a poet; yet each was keen in his susceptibility, and eloquent in the expression of his feelings.

As for Frank and Bob, they were far less demonstrative; and though they had plenty of enthusiasm of their own, yet it was not often excited very violently by either poetic feeling or classical reminiscences. The scene before them certainly moved their feelings also, on the present occasion; but they were not in the habit of indulging in exclamatory language, and so they looked on in quiet appreciation, without saying anything.

Not so the other two, David and Clive. Each burst forth in his own way.

"How magnificent!" cried Clive. "What a boundless scene! How fortunate we are to have our first view of Rome! I don't believe there is such another sight in all the world. But what a scene must have appeared from these heights when Rome was in its glory!"

"Yes," said David, chiming in, "such a place doesn't exist anywhere else in all the world. It's the cradle of history, and modern civilization. Here is where the mighty Roman empire began. There is the Rome of the kings and the consuls; and down there is the arena, where they fought out that long battle that arranged the course of future ages."

"Besides," said Clive; "there is the scene of all the latter part of the Aeneid, and of all the immortal legends that arose out of the early growth of Rome. What a place this would be to read Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome!—

"Hail to the great asylum!
Hail to the hill-tops seven!
Hail to the fire that burns for aye!
And the shields that fell from heaven!"

At this moment Frank's attention was attracted to a place not very far away, where the sheen of some silver water flashed forth from amid the dark green hue of the surrounding hills.

"What is that?" he asked of the guide. "It looks like a lake."

"It is de Alban Lake."

"The Alban Lake!" cried David, in a fresh transport of enthusiasm; "the Alban Lake! What, the lake that the Romans drained at the siege of Veii?"

"It is de same," said the guide.

"Is it really? and is the canal or tunnel still in existence?

"It is."

"Is it far away?"

"Not ver far."

"Boys, we must go there. It is the greatest curiosity of the country about here."

"Well," said Frank, "I'm in for any curiosity. But how long will it take for us to see it?"

"It will take more dan one hour," said the guide.

"More than an hour!" said Frank. "Hm—that won't do—we've got to go back at once to get our dinner. It's ready by this time, and then we must leave for Rome."

"Well, it's a great pity," said David, sadly. "I think I should be willing to go without my dinner, to see that wonderful tunnel."

"I shouldn't, then," said Frank, "not for all the tunnels in the world."

"Nor should I," said Bob.

"But what a magnificent effect the lake has when embraced in our view!" said Clive. "How finely is the description in Childe Harold adapted to this scene—

'And near, Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley; and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
The Latian coast, where sprung the Epic war,
"Arms and the man," whose reascending star
Rose o'er an empire; but beneath thy right
Fully reposed from Rome; and where yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts thy sight,
The Sabine farm was tilled, the weary bard's delight.'

"Clive," said David, who had waited patiently for him to finish his poetical quotation, "you'll come—won't you?"

"Come? Come where?"

"Why, I want to visit the tunnel of the Alban Lake, and it'll take an hour to do it. If we go, we'll lose our dinner. What do you say? You don't think a dinner's the most important thing in the world?"

"Of course not," said Clive. "Besides, we can pick up some scraps when we return, and eat them in the carriage."

"That's right," said David. "Boys," he continued, appealing to
Frank and Bob, "you'd better come."

"What! and lose our dinners?" cried Frank, scornfully. "Catch us at it. No. We require more substantial food than poetry and old ruins. Don't we, Bob?"

"Certainly," said Bob. "For my part poetry and old ruins never were in my line. As for 'Arms and the man' and the 'Sabine farm,' why, all I can say is, I always hated them. I detested Virgil, and Horace, and Cicero, and the whole lot of them, at school; and why I should turn round now, and pretend to like them, I don't know, I'm sure. Horace and Virgil, indeed! Bother Horace and Virgil, I say."

At such flippancy as this both David and Clive looked too much pained to reply. They turned away in silence, and spoke to the guide.

"So you're not coming back to dinner?" said Frank.

"No," said David; "we want to see that tunnel."

"Well, you'll lose your dinner; that's all."

"Of course. We don't care."

"At any rate, don't go and forget about us. We want to leave, for Rome after dinner, and you ought to be back in one hour, at the very farthest."

"O, yes; the guide says it'll only take an hour. We don't intend to spend any more time there than we can help."

"Well, I think you ought to come back," said Bob; "you know very well how poor old Uncle Moses will

fidget and worry about you."

"O, no; it's all right. Tell him that the guide is with us, you know."

After a few more words, Frank and Bob, who were ravenously hungry, hurried back to the hotel, and David and Clive, who were also, to tell the truth, equally hungry, resisted their appetites as well as they were able, and accompanied their guide to the Lake Albano.

Most boys are familiar with the story of the Alban Lake; but for the benefit of those who may not have heard of it, or who, having heard, have forgotten, it may be as well to give a brief account of the famous tunnel, which was so very attractive to Clive and David.

The city of Veii had been besieged for nine years, without success, by the Romans; and at length, in the tenth year, a great prodigy occurred, in the shape of the sudden rising of the waters of the Alban Lake to an extraordinary height, without any apparent cause. The Romans, in their bewilderment, sent a messenger to the oracle of Delphi to inquire about it. Before this messenger returned, they also captured a Verentine priest, who informed them that there were certain oracular books in Veii, which declared that Veii could never perish unless the waters of the Alban Lake should reach the sea. Not long afterwards the messenger returned from Delphi, who brought back an answer from the oracle at that place to the same effect. Upon this, the Romans resolved to draw off the waters of the lake so as to let them flow to the sea. Such an undertaking was one of the most laborious kind, especially in an age like that; but the Romans entered upon it, and worked at it with that extraordinary tenacity of purpose which always distinguished them. It was necessary to cut a tunnel through the mountain, through rock of the hardest possible description. But the same age had seen the excavation of other subterranean passages far larger than this, and in the same country, preeminently the Grotto of Posilipo, at Naples, and that of the Cumaean Sibyl, and at length it was accomplished. The people of Veii heard of it, and were filled with alarm. Ambassadors were sent to Rome, with the hope of inducing the Romans to come to some other terms less severe than the surrender of the city; but they were disappointed, and according to the legend, could only comfort themselves by announcing to the Romans a prophecy in the oracular books of Veii, to the effect that, if this siege should be carried through to the capture of the city, Rome itself should be taken by the Gauls soon after. This prophecy, however, had no effect. whatever upon the stern resolution of the Romans.

The subterranean passage to the lake was also supplemented by another, which led to the citadel of Veii. As the time approached for the final assault, the Roman Senate invited all the Roman people to participate in it, and promised them a share of the booty. This promise induced a vast multitude, old and young, to go there. The time at last came. The water of the Alban Lake was let out into the fields, and the party that entered the subterranean passage to the citadel were led by Camillus, while, at the same time, a general assault was made upon the walls by the rest of the army. At that moment the king of Veii happened to be sacrificing in the Temple of Juno, which was in the citadel, and Camillus, with his Romans, were immediately beneath, close enough to hear what he said. It happened that the attendant priest declared that whoever should bring the goddess her share of the victim should conquer. Camillus heard the words, and at once they burst forth upon the astonished Veientans, seized upon the altar, offered the sacrifice, and thus performed what had been declared to be the conditions of victory. After this they held the citadel, and sent a detachment to open the gates to the assaulting army outside. Thus Veil fell; and this is the legend which, like many others belonging to early Roman times, is more full of poetry than of truth.

The tunnel still remains, and is one of the chief curiosities left from ancient times. It is about two miles long, six feet high, and three and a half feet wide.

To this place the guide led David and Clive, and entertained them on the way with the account of its origin, which accorded in most particulars with that which is given above; and though both of the boys were familiar with the story, yet it was not unpleasant to hear it again, told by one who lived in the neighborhood of the place, and had passed his life amid these scenes. It seemed to them to give a certain degree of authenticity to the old legend.

There was not much to see, except an opening in the rock, the mouth of the tunnel, with rushes, and mosses, and grasses, and shrubbery growing around it. Having seen it, they were satisfied, and turned to go back to the hotel. After a short distance, the guide showed them where there was a path turning off through the fields, which formed a short cut back. Upon this they paid him for his trouble, and he went back to the convent, while they went along the path by which he had directed them.

CHAPTER XXV.

The lonely Path.—The sequestered Vale.—The old House.—A Feudal Castle.—A baronial Windmill.—A mysterious Sound.—A terrible Discovery.—At Bay.—The Wild Beasts Lair!—What is It!—A great Bore!

The path by which Clive and David returned to the hotel, went down a slope of the hill into a valley, and led over a second hill, beyond which was Albano. There were no houses visible, for the town was hidden by the hill, except, of course, the convent, which, from its conspicuous position, was never out of sight. As they descended into the valley, they came to a grove of olive trees; and beyond this there was a ruined edifice, built of stone, and apparently long since deserted. It was two stories in height, but the stories were high, and it looked as though it might once have been used, for a tower of some sort. The attention of both of the boys was at once arrested by it, and they stood and looked at it for some time.

"I wonder what it has been," said David.

"No doubt," said Clive, "it is the ruin of some mediaeval castle."

"It does not have much of the look of a castle."

"Why not?"

"O, why, there are no architectural features in it; no battlements; it has, in fact, a rather modern air."

"Not a bit of it," said Clive. "See those old stones grown over with moss; and look at the ivy."

"Yes, but look at the windows. They didn't have such large windows in castles, you know."

"Yes, but these windows were probably made afterwards. The place was once a castle; but at length, of course it became deserted, and began to fall to ruins. Then somebody fixed it tip for a dwelling-house, and made these windows in the walls."

"Well, that's not improbable."

"Not improbable! Why, I'm sure it's very natural. Look how thick the walls are!"

"They do seem pretty thick."

"O, they are real castle walls; there's no doubt at all about that," said Clive, in a positive tone. "Why, they are three feet thick, at least. And, you see, there are signs of an additional story having been above it."

"Yes, I dare say," said David, looking up. "The edges there look ragged, as though some upper portion has been knocked off."

"And I dare say it's been a great place for brigands," said Clive.

"O, bother brigands," said David. "For my part, I begin to think not only that there are no brigands now, but even that there never have been any such people at all.

"Well, I won't go as far as that," said Clive, "but I certainly begin to have my doubts about them."

"They're all humbugs," said David.

"All of our brigands have been total failures," said Clive.

"Yes," said David; "they all turned out to be the most amiable people in the world. But come; suppose we go inside, and explore this old ruin. It may be something famous. I wish the guide were, here."

"O, well look at it first all over, and then ask at the hotel."

"Yes, that's the way."

"But have we time?"

"O, of course; it won't take us five minutes."

Upon this Clive started off for the ruined structure, followed by David.

It was, as has been said, two stories in height. In the lower story was a small, narrow doorway. The door was gone. There were no windows, and it was quite dark inside. It was about twelve feet wide, and fifteen feet long. At one end were some piles of fagots heaped together. The height was about fifteen feet. Before them they saw a rude ladder, running up to the story above. Its feet rested near the back of the room. There was no floor to the house, but only the hard-packed earth.

"There's nothing here," said David, looking around.

"Let's go into the upper story," said Clive.

To this proposal David assented quite readily; and accordingly they both entered, and walked towards the ladder. Clive ascended first, and David followed. In a few moments they were in the upper story.

Here it was light, for there were two windows in front. There was a floor, and the walls were plastered. Fragments of straw lay about, intermingled with chaff, as though the place had been used for some sort of a store-house.

Overhead there were a number of heavy beams, which seemed too numerous and complicated to serve merely for the support of a roof; and among them was one large, round beam, which ran across. At this both of the boys stared very curiously.

"I wonder what all that can be for," asked David.

"O, no doubt," said Clive, "it's some of the massive wood-work of the old castle."

"But what was the good of it?"

"Why, to support the roof, of course," said Clive.

"Yes, but there is too much. They would never have needed all that to support so small a roof. It's a waste of timber."

"O, well, you know you mustn't expect the same ingenuity in an
Italian builder that you would in an American."

"I don't know about that. Why not? Do you mean to say that the Italians are inferior to the Americans in architecture? Pooh, man! in America there is no architecture at all; while here, in every little town, they have some edifice that in America would be considered something wonderful."

"O, well, you know they are very clumsy in practical matters, in spite of their Artistic superiority. But apart from that I've just been thinking that this is only a part of some large castle, and this lumber work was, perhaps, once the main support of a massive roof. So, after all, it would have its use."

David said nothing for some time. He was looking earnestly at the wood-work.

"I'll tell you what it is," said he, at last. "I've got it. It isn't a castle at all. It's a windmill."

"A windmill!" exclaimed Clive, contemptuously. "What nonsense!
It's an old tower—the keep of some mediaeval castle."

"It's a windmill!" persisted David. "Look at that big beam. It's round. See in one corner those projecting pieces. They were once part of some projecting wheel. Why, of course, it's a windmill. The other end of that cross-beam goes outside for the fans to be attached to it. This big cross-beam was the shaft. Of course that's it."

Clive looked very much crest-fallen at this. He was unable to disprove a fact of which the evidences were now so plain; but he struggled to maintain a little longer the respectability of his feudal castle.

"Well," said he, "I dare say it may have been used afterwards for a windmill; but I am sure it was originally built as a baronial hall, some time during the middle ages. Afterwards it began to go to ruin; and then, I dare say, some miller fellow has taken possession of the keep, and torn off the turrets and battlements, and rigged up this roof with the beams, and thus turned it into a windmill."

"O, well, you may be right," said David. "Of course it's impossible to tell."

"O, but I'm sure of it," said Clive, positively.

David laughed.

"O, then," said he, "in that case, I've got nothing to say about it at all."

In spite of his reiterated conviction in the baronial castle, Clive was unable to prevent an expression of disgust from being discernible on his fine face, and without another word, he turned to go down.

David followed close after him.

As Clive put his feet down on the nearest rung of the ladder, he was startled by a noise below. It came from the pile of fagots, and was of the most extraordinary character. It was a shuffling, scraping, growling, snapping noise; an indescribable medley of peculiar sounds.

Clive instantly drew back his foot, as though he had trodden on a snake.

"What's the matter?" cried David, in amazement.

"Didn't you hear it?"

"Hear what?"

"Why, that noise!"

"Noise?"

"Yes."

"What noise?"

Clive's eyes opened wide, and he said in a low, agitated whisper,—

"Something's down there!"

At this David's face turned pale. He knelt down at the opening, and bent his head over.

The sounds, which had ceased for a moment, became once more audible. There was a quick, beating, rustling, rubbing noise among the fagots, and he could occasionally hear the rap of footfalls on the floor. It was too dark to see anything, for the narrow door was the only opening, and the end of the chamber where the fagots lay was wrapped in deep gloom.

Clive knelt down too, and then both boys, kneeling there, listened eagerly and intently with all their ears.

"What is it?" asked Clive.

"I'm rare I don't know," said David, gloomily.

"Is it a brigand?" whispered Clive, dismally.

"I don't know, I'm sore," said poor David, who, in spite of his recent declaration of his belief that all brigands were humbugs, felt something like his old trepidation at Clive's suggestion.

They listened a little longer.

The noise subsided for a time, and then began again. This time it was much louder than before. There was the same rustling, rubbing, cracking, snapping sound made by something among the fagots; there was a clatter as of feet on the hard ground; then there was a quick, reiterated rubbing; then another peculiar noise, which sounded exactly like that which a dog makes when shaking himself violently after coming out of the water. After this there was a low, deep sound, midway between a yawn and a growl; then all was still.

David and Clive raised themselves softly, and looked at one another.

"Well?" said Clive.

"Well?" said David.

"I don't know," said Clive.

"I don't know," said David.

"What shall we do?" said Clive.

David shook his head. Then, looking down the opening once more, he again raised his eyes, and fixing them with an awful look on Clive, he said, in a dismal tone,—

"It's not a brigand!"

"No," said Clive, "I don't think it is, either."

David looked down again; then he looked up at Clive with the same expression, and said in the same dismal tone as before,—

"Clive!"

"Well?"

"*It's a wild beast!*"

Clive looked back at David with eyes that expressed equal horror, and said not a word.

"Don't you think so?" asked David.

"Yes," said Clive.

Then:—

"How can we get down?" said David.
do. said Clive.

"I, don't know!" said David.
do. said Clive.

Once more the boys put their heads down to the hole and listened.
The noises were soon renewed—such noises as,—
Snapping, with variations.
cracking, " do.
deep-breathing, " do.
scratching, " do.
sighing, " do.
yawning, " do.
growling, " do.
grunting, " do.
smacking, " do.
thumping, " do.
jerking, " do.
rattling, " do.
pushing, with variations,
sliding, " do.
shaking, " do.
jerking, " do.
twitching, " do.
groaning, " do.
pattering, " do.
rolling, " do.
rubbing, " do.
together with many more of a similar character, all of which went to indicate to the minds of both of the boys the presence in that lower chamber, and close by that pile of fagots, of some animal, in a state of wakefulness, restlessness, and, as they believed, of vigilant watchfulness and ferocity.

"I wonder how it got there," said David. "That olive grove—that's it—O, that's it. He saw us come in here, and followed us."

"I don't know," said Clive. "He may have been among the fagots when we came in, and our coming has waked him."

"I wonder that the guide didn't warn us."

"O, he never thought, I suppose."

"No; he thought we would keep by the path, and go straight to the hotel."

"What fools we were!"

"Well, it can't be helped now."

"I wonder what it is," said Clive, after another anxious pause.

"A wild beast," said David, dismally.

"Of course; but what kind of a one?"

"It may be a wolf."

"I wonder if there are many wolves about here."

"Wolves? Of course. All Italy is fall of them."

"Yes, but this beast has hard feet. Don't you hear what a noise he makes sometimes with his feet? A wolf's feet are like a dog's. I'm afraid it's something even worse than a wolf."

"Something worse?"

"Yes."

"What can be worse?"

"Why, a wild boar. Italy is the greatest country in the world for wild boars."

After this there followed a long period of silence and despondency.

Suddenly Clive grasped the upper part of the ladder, and began to pull at it with all his might.

"What are you trying to do?" asked David.

"Why, we might draw up the ladder, and put it out of one of the windows, you know, and get out that way—mightn't we?"

"I don't know," said David. "We might try."

Upon this both boys seized the ladder, and tried to pull it from its place. But their efforts were entirely in vain. The ladder was clumsily made out of heavy timbers, and their puny efforts did not avail to move it one single inch from its place. So they soon desisted, and turned away in despair. Clive then went to one of the windows, and looked down. David followed him. They looked out for some time in silence.

"Couldn't we let ourselves drop somehow?" asked Clive.

David shook his head.

"It's nearly twenty feet from the window ledge," said he, "and I'm afraid one of us might break some of our bones."

"O, it's not so very far," said Clive. "Yes, but if we were to drop, that wild boar would hear us, and rush out in a moment."

At this terrible suggestion, Clive turned away, and regarded David with his old look of horror.

"It's no use trying," said David; "that horrible wild boar waked up when we entered his den. He saw us going up, and has been watching ever since for us to come down. They are the most ferocious, most pitiless, and most cruel of all wild beasts. Why; if we had the ladder down from the window, and could get to the ground, he'd pounce upon us before we could get even as far as the path."

Clive left the window, and sat down in despair, leaning against the wall, while David stood staring blankly out into vacancy. Their position was now not merely an embarrassing one. It seemed dangerous in the extreme. From this place they saw no sign of any human habitation. They could not see the convent. Albano was hidden by the hill already spoken of; nor had they any idea how far away it might be. This path over which they had gone had not appeared like one which was much used; and how long it might be before any passers-by would approach was more than they could tell.

"Well," said Clive, "we've lost our dinner, and it's my firm belief that we'll lose our tea, too."

David made no reply.

Clive arose, and walked over to him.

"Dave," said he, "look here. I'm getting desperate. I've a great mind to go down the ladder as quietly as possible, and then run for it."

"No, don't—don't," cried David, earnestly.

"Well, I'm not going to stay here and starve to death," said Clive.

"Pooh! don't be impatient," said David. "Of course they'll hunt us up, and rescue us. Only wait a little longer."

"Well, I don't know. If they don't come soon, I'll certainly venture down."

After an hour or so, during which no help came, Clive did as he said, and, in spite of David's remonstrances, ventured down. He went about half way. Then there was a noise of so peculiar a character that he suddenly retreated up again, and remarked to David, who all the time had been watching him in intense anxiety, and begging him to come back,—

"Well, Dave, perhaps I'd better wait They ought to be here before long."

So the two prisoners waited.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Despair of Uncle Moses.—Frank and Bob endeavor to offer Consolation.—The Search.—The Discovery at the Convent.—The Guide.—The old House.—The Captives.—The Alarm given.—Flight of Uncle Moses and his Party.—Albans! to the Rescue!—The Delivering Host!

On leaving the convent, Frank and Bob had hurried back to Albano, where they found dinner ready, and Uncle Moses waiting for them in anxious impatience. This anxious impatience was not by any means diminished when he saw only two out of the four coming back to him, nor was it alleviated one whit when they informed him that David and Clive had gone to see some subterranean passage, of the nature or location of which they had but the vaguest possible conception. His first impulse was to go forth at once in search of them, and bring them back with him by main force; and it was only with extreme difficulty that Frank and Bob dissuaded him from this.

"Why, they're perfectly safe—as safe as if they were here," said Frank. "It isn't possible for anything at all to happen to them. The convent guide—a monk—is with them, and a very fine fellow he is, too. He knows all about the country."

"O, yes; but these monks ain't to my taste. I don't like 'em," said Uncle Moses.

"It'll take them an hour to get back here from the place. There's no use for you to try to go there, for you don't know the way; and if you did go, why, they might come back and find you gone, and then we'd have to wait for you. So, you see, the best thing to do, Uncle Moses, is for us all to set quietly down, get our dinner, and wait for them to come back."

The numerous frights which Uncle Moses had already been called on to experience about his precious but too troublesome charges had always turned out to be groundless; and the result had invariably been a happy one; yet this did not at all prevent Uncle Moses from feeling as anxious, as worried, and as unsettled, on this occasion, as he had ever been before. He sat down to the table, therefore, because Frank urged it, and he hardly knew how to move without his cooperation. He said nothing. He was silenced, but not convinced. He ate nothing. He merely dallied with his knife and fork, and played listlessly with the viands upon his plate. Frank and Bob were both as hungry as hunters, and for some time had no eyes but for their food. At last, however, they saw that Uncle Moses was eating nothing; whereupon they began to remonstrate with him, and tried very earnestly to induce him to take something. In vain. Uncle Moses was beyond the reach of persuasion. His appetite was gone with his wandering boys, and would not come back until they should come also. The dinner ended, and then Uncle Moses grew more restless than ever. He walked out, and paced the street up and down, every little while coming back to the hotel, and looking anxiously in to see if the wanderers had returned. Frank and Bob felt sorry that he should feel so much unnecessary anxiety, but they did not know what to do, or to say. They had done and said all that they possibly could. Uncle Moses refused to be

comforted, and so there was nothing more for them to do.

At length the hour passed which Frank had allotted as the time of their absence, and still they did not come. Uncle Moses now came, and stared at them with a disturbed face and trembling frame. He said not a word. The situation was one which, to his mind, rendered words useless.

"O, come now, Uncle Moses," said Frank; "they're all right. What's the use of imagining all sorts of nonsense? Suppose they are delayed a few minutes longer—what of that? They couldn't reckon upon being back in exactly an hour. The guide said, 'about an hour.' You'll have to make some allowance."

Uncle Moses tried to wait longer, and succeeded in controlling himself for about half an hour more. Then he found inaction intolerable, and insisted on Frank and Bob accompanying him on a search for the lost ones. Frank suggested the necessity of going to the convent first, and getting another guide. He left word at the hotel where they had gone, and why, so that David and Clive might follow them, or send word; and then they all three set forth for the convent.

On reaching the place, the first man that they saw was no other than the guide himself. At this sight even Frank was amazed, and a little disturbed. He asked him hurriedly where the boys were.

"De boys?" said the guide. "Haf dey not come to de hotel?"

"No."

"But I did leave dem on de road to go back, and dey did go. Dey must be back."

"But they're not back. And I want to hunt them up," said Frank.
"Where was the road where you say you left them?"

"I will go myself and show you de ver place," said the guide. "Do not fear. Dere can come no harm. It is not possibile."

With these words the guide set forth to take them', to the place. These words of the guide added; if possible, to the deep distress and dismay of Uncle Moses. He was only conscious now that the boys were without any guide in some unknown, perhaps dangerous place. If he feared while he supposed that they had a guide, his fears under these new and worse circumstances were far greater.

On the way the guide explained all about it. He told about the tunnel, about the path which he had recommended as a short cut. He declared that it was perfectly straight, and that it was impossible for any one to get lost between Albano and the place where he left them. There was no place, he declared, for them to get lost in. It was quite open—a little valley—that was all.

But this gave no comfort to poor Uncle Moses. He walked along looking ten years older, with his face full of grief. At length the guide came to the path along which he had sent David and Clive, and turning into this, he walked along in the direction where he had seen them go.

"We haf now," he said, "to walk to de hotel at Albano, and you sall find dey did come back, and will be dere at dis moments."

"What a joke it would be," cried Frank, "if they have got back, and have started off after us! I wonder whether they would. Not they. I don't believe it. They're starving, and will think of nothing but their dinners."

But poor Uncle Moses refused to see any "joke" at all. It was a deeply solemn reality to his poor, distracted breast.

At length they came within sight of the house.

As they walked on, there came to their ears a long, shrill yell. All of them started. At first they did not detect the source of the sound. Then it was repeated.

"Hallo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!"

They looked all around. Frank saw two figures, one at each window of the old house.

"Hallo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!"

The cry was repeated. It came from these two figures. Those must be David and Clive; but how in the name of wonder had they got there, and what were they doing? But he said not a word. He merely pointed, and then started off at a full run, followed first by Bob, then by the guide, and last by Uncle Moses, who did not yet comprehend why Frank was running, or where.

A smart run of only a few minutes brought them to the place. There they saw David at one window, and Clive at the other. Both of them appeared to be tremendously excited, and were shouting to them most vociferously, both together, in an utterly confused an unintelligible manner. At length some words in the midst of their outcries became distinguishable.

"Keep back! O, keep back! The wild boar! The wild boar! Run for help! Keep back! You'll be torn to pieces! Keep back! Run for help."

At this Uncle Moses shrank back in spite of himself, and the guide looked much disturbed; but Frank and Bob stubbornly stood their ground.

"What do you mean?" cried Frank. "Don't kick up such a row. What wild boar? Where is he?"

"Underneath!" bawled Clive.

"He's watching us," shouted David.

"He was hid in there, and we came in and waked him. We got up here, and he won't let us out!"

"He'll spring at you if you come any nearer," shouted David.

"Keep back! O, keep back! I hear him now," bawled Clive.

"Go and get help!" cried David. "Get a gun—or something!"

"Help us out soon," cried Clive; "we're starving!"

"Keep back!" cried Clive.
do. cried David.

"Go and get help!" cried Clive.
do. cried David.

"Get a gun!" cried Clive.
do. cried David.

"Help!" cried Clive.
do. cried David.

"Take care!" cried Clive.
do. cried David.

"He'll tear you to pieces!" cried Clive.
do. cried David.

Etc., etc., etc.!

"Come back," said the guide, in evident anxiety. "We are too near.
We can do notin', We mas get arm."

"But do you think there really is a wild boar there?" asked Frank.

The guide said nothing, but shook his head solemnly, and looked unutterable things. Mean while he continued to retreat, watching the small door of the old house, and the rest followed him, as they thought he knew better what ought to be done than they did. The guide took up that line of retreat which led towards Albano, and as he did so he watched the door of the house with evident anxiety, as though fearful of seeing at any moment the formidable beast bound forth to rush upon them. But at length, after he had placed a considerable distance between himself and the old house, he began to breathe more freely, and to think about what ought next to be done.

"Do you think it really is a wild boar?" asked Frank once more of the guide.

"Dey did say dat, dey did see him," said he.

"Yes; but how do they know? They never saw a wild boar," objected
Frank.

"Any man dat sees a wild boar will know him," said the guide.

"I didn't know that there—were any about here."

"About here?"

"Yes; so near the town, and public roads. I thought that an animal like the wild boar prefers the moat solitary places, and will never come near where men are living."

"Dat is right," said the guide. "Dat is so. Bot sommataime dey go wild—dey lose der young—or sommatin like dat, so dey go wild, and wander, an if dey happen to come near a villa, dey are terrible."

"But how could this one have come here?"

"Italia is full of dem—dey wander about like dis."

"But they live so far off."

"O, no; dis one come from de mountain—not far—dat old house in de valley, just de place for his den."

After this Frank could doubt no longer, although he had been so obstinate in his disbelief. The affair of the previous night had produced a powerful effect on his mind; and he was exceedingly unwilling to allow himself again to be beguiled into a belief in any danger that was not real. Had the guide not believed this so firmly, and insisted on it so strongly, he would have felt certain that the animal in the house was some commonplace one—a goat—a dog—anything, rather than a wild boar. However, as it was, he had nothing left but to believe what was said.

As for Uncle Moses, he was now quite himself again. The boys were safe, at any rate. True, they were confined in the loft of an old house, with a ferocious wild beast barring the way to liberty; but then he reflected that this ferocious wild beast could not get near them. Had it been a bear, the affair would have been most serious; but a wild boar, as he knew, could not climb into a loft. For among the intelligence which David and Clive had managed to communicate, was the very reassuring fact that the boar could not get at them, as the loft was only reached by a ladder. The return to Albano was in every way satisfactory to his feelings, for he saw that this was the only way of delivering the boys, who could not be rescued without some more formidable arms than their own unassisted strength.

In a short time they were back in Albano, and soon the news flew about the town. In accordance with the invariable rule, the story was considerably enlarged as it passed from mouth to mouth, so that by the time it reached the last person that heard it,—a poor old bed-ridden priest, by the way,—it had grown to the following highly respectable dimensions:—

Two wealthy English milors had gone into the Alban tunnel in search of adventures. While down there they had discovered the lair of a wild boar, and had killed the young, the old ones being away. They had then made good their retreat, carrying their slaughtered victims with them. The wild boar had returned with the wild sow, and both, scenting their young pigs' blood in the air, had given chase to the murderers. These last had fled in frantic haste, and had just succeeded in finding a refuge in the old windmill, and in climbing into the upper loft as the infuriated animals came up. Seeing the legs of the murderers just vanishing up into the hole, one of the beasts had leaped madly upward, and had bitten off a portion of the calf of the leg of one of them. Then, in sullen vengeance, the two fierce animals took up their station there, one in the chamber below, the other in front of the door, to guard their prey, and effect their destruction. They had already been there a week. One of the prisoners had died from the effects of his terrible wound, and the other was now dying of starvation. Fortunately, Brother Antonio (the guide) had been told about this in a vision the night before, had visited the surviving milor, had talked with him from a safe distance, had seen the terrible animals, and had now come to Albano to get help towards releasing the unhappy survivor.

From the above it may readily be conjectured that the call for help was not made in vain. The sufferings of the imprisoned captive excited universal sympathy, and the presence of the wild boars in so close proximity, filled all men with a desire to capture them or slay them. The story that was generally believed was one which may be briefly described as occupying a position somewhere about midway between the above startling fiction and the truth. Such as it was, it had the effect of drawing forth the population of Albano as it bad never been drawn forth before; and as they went forth they presented a scene such as those of which the mediaeval legends tell us, where the whole population of some town which had been desolated by a dragon, went forth en masse to do battle with the monster.

So they now marched forth,— Men with scythes. do. " hoes. do. " rakes. do. " shovels. do. " tongs. do. " brooms. do. " bean-poles. do. " carving-knives. do. " umbrellas. do. " stones. do. " earthen pans. do. " bricks. do. " charcoal. do. " chairs. do. " spits. do. " bed-posts. do. " crowbars. do. " augers. do. " spades. do. " stakes. do. " clubs. Men with staves, do. " opera-glasses. do. " sickles. do. " colters. do. " ploughshares. do. " wheelbarrows. do. " pitchforks. do. " posts. do. " beams. do. " bolts. do. " bars. do. " hinges. do. " pokers. do. " saucepans. do. " mallets. do. " hammers. do. " saws. do. " chisels. do. " ropes. do. " chains. do. " grappling irons. together with a miscellaneous collection of articles snatched up at a

moment's warning by an excited multitude, men, women, and children, headed by Frank, who wielded triumphantly an old fowling-piece, loaded with a double charge, that could do no damage to any one save the daring individual that might venture to discharge it.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Arma Virumque cano!—The Chase of the Wild Boar!—The Prisoners at the Window.—The Alban Army.—Wild Uproar.—Three hundred and sixty-five Pocket Handkerchiefs.—Flame.—Smoking out the Monster.—A Salamander.

Arma puerosque cano!

Sing, O muse, the immortal Albanian Boar Hunt!

How outside the doomed town of Albano lurked the mighty monster in his lair.

How the frightened messengers roused the people to action.

How the whole population, stimulated to deeds of bold emprise, grasped each the weapon that lay nearest, whether bolt, or bar, or tool of mechanic, or implement of husbandry, and then, joining their forces, went forth to do battle against the Fell Destroyer.

How the pallid victims, imprisoned in the topmost tower, gazed with staring eyes upon the mighty delivering host, and shouted out blessings upon their heads.

How the sight of the pallid victims cheered the bold deliverers, and drew them nearer to the lair of the monster.

And so forth.

Very well.

To resume.

Stationed at the window, David and Clive saw their friends vanish in the direction of Albano, and knew that they had gone for help. This thought so cheered them, that in spite of a somewhat protracted absence, they bore up well, and diversified the time between watchings at the window, and listenings at the head of the ladder. From the window nothing was visible for a long time; but from the head of the ladder there came up at intervals such sounds as indicated that the fierce wild boar was still as restless, as ruthless, as hungry, and as vigilant as ever.

Then came up to their listening ears the same sounds already described, together with hoarser tones of a more pronouncedly grunting description, which showed more truly that the beast was in very truth a wild boar. But Clive did not venture down again, nor did he even mention the subject. His former attempt had been most satisfactory, since it satisfied him that no other attempt could be thought of. In spite of this, however, both the boys had risen to a more cheerful frame of mind. Their future began to look brighter, and the prospect of a rescue served to put them both. into comparative good humor, the only drawback to which was their now ravenous hunger.

At length the army of their deliverers appeared, and David, who was watching at the window, shouted to Clive, who was listening at the opening, whereupon the latter rushed to the other window.

The delivering host drew nigh, and then at a respectable distance halted and surveyed the scene of action.

Frank and Bob came on, however, without stopping, followed by Uncle Moses, after whom came the guide. Frank with his old fowling-piece, Bob with a pitchfork, Uncle Moses with a scythe, and the guide with a rope. What each one proposed to do was doubtful; but our travellers had never been strong on weapons of war, and the generous Alban people seemed to be in the same situation.

As Frank and his companions moved nearer, the rest of the multitude took courage and followed, though in an irregular fashion.

Soon Frank came near enough to speak.

"Is he there yet?" was his first remark.

"Yes," said Clive.

"Where?"

"At the left end of the lower room, under a pile of fagots."

"Can't you manage to drive him out, so that I can get a shot at him?" asked Frank, proudly brandishing his weapon.

"O, no. We can't do anything."

"I wish you could," said Frank.

"I wish we could too." said David, fervently.

Upon this Frank talked with the guide. The question was, what should they do now? The most desirable thing was, to draw the wild beast out of his lair, so that they might have a fair chance with him; but, unfortunately, the wild beast utterly refused to move from his lair.

After some talk with his guide, Frank suggested that a large number of the crowd should go to the rear, and the left end of the house, and strike at it, and utter appalling cries, so as to frighten the wild boar and drive him out. This proposal the guide explained to the crowd, who at once proceeded with the very greatest alacrity to act upon it. Most of them were delighted at the idea, of fighting the enemy in that fashion; and so it happened that the entire crowd took up their station in a dense mass at the rear of the building; and then they proceeded to beat upon the walls of the house, to shout, to yell, and to utter such hideous sounds, that any ordinary animal would simply have gone mad with fright, and died on the spot. But this animal proved to be no ordinary one in this respect. Either he was accustomed to strange noises, or else he had such nerves of steel, that the present uproar affected him no more than the sighing of the gentlest summer breeze; indeed, David and Clive were far more affected, for at the first outbreak of that tumultuous uproar, they actually jumped from the floor, and thought that the rickety old house was tumbling about their ears.

During this proceeding, Frank stood bravely in front of the door, about a dozen yards off, with his rusty fowling-piece; and close beside him stood Bob with his pitchfork, Uncle Moses with his scythe, and the guide with his rope.

"He doesn't care for this at all," said Frank, in a dejected tone.
"We must try something else. What shall we do?"

And saying this, he turned once more and talked with the guide.

Meanwhile David and Clive, who had recovered their equanimity, rushed to the opening, and began to assist their friends by doing what they could to frighten the wild boar.

"Shoo-o-o-o-o-o!" said David.

"Hs-s-s-s-s-s-s!" said Clive.

"Bo-o-o-o-o-o-o!" said David.

"Gr-r-r-r-r-r-r!" cried Clive.

But the wild boar did not move, even though the uproar without still continued.

Then Clive went down the ladder a little distance, far enough down so that by bending, his head was below the upper floor. Then he took his hat and hurled it with all his might and main at the pile of fagots.

Then he went up again.

But the wild boar did not move.

Thereupon David went down, and he went a little lower. He took his hat, and uttering a hideous yell, he threw it with all his force at the fagots.

But even this failed to alarm the wild boar. David stood for a moment after this bold deed and listened. The only satisfaction that he had was the sound of a low, comfortable grunt, that seemed to

show that the present situation was one which was rather enjoyed than otherwise by this formidable, this indomitable, this invincible beast.

They came back to the windows in despair, and by this time Frank had finished his discussion with the guide. He was looking up anxiously towards them.

"Look here," said he; "that miserable wild boar won't come out. The guide thinks the only way to get at him is to smoke him out. The only trouble is about you. Will the smoke bother yon, do you think?"

"I don't know," said Clive.

"Can you stop up the opening?"

"No."

"Can you keep your heads oat of the windows?"

"We'll try. But I wish you'd only thought of bringing a ladder, so as to get us out first, before smoking him."

"Yes, I wish we had," said Frank, thoughtfully. "But never mind," he added, cheerily, "there's no use going back for one, because, you see, we'll have you out of that long before a ladder could be brought here."

It was only by yelling at the top of their voices that they were able to make themselves heard by one another, for the crowd behind the house still kept up their yells, and knockings, and thumpings, and waited to hear that the wild boar had fled. As the time passed without any such news, they were only stimulated to fresh efforts, and howled more fearfully and yelled more deafeningly.

"There's an awful waste of energy and power about here, somehow," said Frank. "There ought to be some way of getting at that wretched beast, without all this nonsense. Here we are,—I don't know how many of us, but the whole population of a town, at any rate, against one,—and what's worse, we don't seem to make any impression."

Meanwhile the guide had gone off among the crowd, and while Frank was grumbling, he was busying himself among them, and was engaged in carrying out a very brilliant idea that had just suggested itself to him. In a short time he returned with an armful of something, the nature of which Frank could not quite make out.

"What have you got there?" he asked. "What are you going to do?"

"Dey are all handkerchiefs."

"Handkerchiefs?"

"Yes; de handkerchiefs of de population of Albano. Dey are as many as de days of de year."

"I should think so," cried Frank, in amazement. "But what are you going to do with them?"

"Do wit dem? I am going to make a smoke."

"A smoke? What? Are you going to burn them up?"

"Dere is notin else to burn; so I must burn what I can. See, I make a bundle of dese. I set fire to dem. Dey burn—dey smoke—and de boar smoke out. Aha! he suffocate—he expire—he run!"

"Well, if that isn't the greatest idea I ever heard of!" cried Frank. "Handkerchiefs! Why, you must have hundreds of them in that bundle."

The guide smiled, and made no answer. It was a brilliant idea. It was all his own. He was proud of it. He was pleased to think that the number of them was equal to the number of days in the year. Three hundred and sixty-five handkerchiefs collected from the good, the virtuous, the self-sacrificing people of Albano, who were now yelling and howling as before, at the rear of the house, and diversifying the uproar by loud calls and inquiries about the wild boar.

The guide smiled cheerily over the handkerchiefs. He was so proud of his original idea! He went calmly on, forming them into a rough bundle, doing it very dexterously, so that the bundle might be tight enough to hold together, yet loose enough to burn, Frank watched him curiously. So did Bob. So did Uncle Moses. So did Clive. So did David. Three hundred and sixty-five handkerchiefs! Only think of it!

At last the work was finished. The handkerchiefs rolled up into a big ball, loose, yet cohesive, with ends hanging out in all directions.

"You had better be careful what you do," said Clive. "The end of the chamber below is full of dry fagots. If they were to catch fire, what would come of us?"

"O, alla right," said the guide. "Nevare fear. I trow him so he sall not go near de wood. He make no flame, only de smoke. Nevare fear."

At this the trepidation which these preparations bad excited in the minds of Clive and David, departed, and they watched the subsequent proceedings without a word.

The guide now took the bundle which he had formed out of the handkerchiefs of the population of Albano, and holding it under his left arm, he drew forth some matches, and breaking off one, he struck it against the sole of his boot. It kindled. Thereupon he held the Same to the bundle of handkerchiefs. The flame caught. The bundle blazed. The guide held it for some time till the blaze caught at one after another of the projecting ends of the rolled-up handkerchiefs, and the flame had eaten its way into the mass, and then venturing nearer to the doorway, he advanced, keeping a little on one side, and watching for an opportunity to throw it in. Frank followed with his rusty gun, Bob with his pitchfork, and Uncle Moses with his scythe. All were ready, either for attack or defence, and all the while the bellowing of the crowd behind the house went on uninterruptedly.

The guide reached at length a point about ten feet from the door.
Then he poised himself and took aim. Then he threw the burning ball.

But his aim was bad. The ball struck the side of the doorway, and fell outside. In an instant Frank rushed forward, and seizing it, threw it inside. It fell on the floor, and rolled towards the foot of the ladder, where it lay blazing, and smouldering, and sending forth smoke enough to satisfy the most exacting mind.

Then Frank drew back a little, poising his gun, while Bob, Uncle
Moses, and the guide, took up their stations beside him.

The smoke rose up bravely from the burning mass; but after all, the result was not what had been desired. It rolled up through the opening above, and gathered in blue masses in the room where Clive and David were imprisoned. They felt the effects of the pungent vapors very quickly, more especially in their eyes, which stung, and smarted and emitted torrents of tears. Their only refuge from this new evil was to thrust their heads as far out of the windows as was possible; and this they did by sitting on the window ledge, clinging to the wall, and projecting their bodies far forward outside of the house. For a time they were sustained by the hope that their enemy below was feeling it worse than they were, and that he would soon relax his vigilant watch and fly. But alas! that enemy showed no signs of flight, and it soon became evident to them and to those outside, that all the smoke went to the upper room, to oppress the prisoners, and but little spread through the lower room; so little, indeed, that the wild boar did not feel any inconvenience in particular.

"Can't you do something?" asked Clive, imploringly.

"We can't stand this much longer," said David, despairingly, with streaming eyes, and choking voice.

Their words sounded faint and low amidst the yelling of the crowd behind the house, who still maintained their stations there, from preference, and kept up their terrific outcry. Amid the yells there came occasional anxious inquiries as to the success of their efforts. At times messengers would venture from the rear to the front to reconnoitre. These messengers, however, were only few in number, and their reconnoitring was of the most superficial description possible.

The latest experiment of the guide was the cause of more frequent and more urgent inquiries. So many handkerchiefs had been invested in this last venture, that it was brought nearer home than before. Each man felt that he was concerned personally in the affair; that, in fact, he, in the shape of a representative of so important a kind as his own handkerchief, was already inside, and assailing the obstinate monster with a more terrible arm than any which had yet been employed—smoke and fire.

But the clamor of the crowd had not so much effect on the little band in front, as the sight of poor Clive and David, who, clinging to the window with their faces flushed, and their eyes red, swollen, and streaming with tears, appeared unable to hold out much longer.

"Do something or other, quick," cried Clive.

"I'll have to jump down," said David.

And both, of them tried to push themselves farther out, while their faces were turned down, and they seemed anxiously measuring with their eyes the distance between themselves and the ground.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Salamander inaccessible to Fire.—The last Appeal.—Frank takes Action.—He fires.—Casualty to Frank and Bob.—Onset of the Monster.—Flight.—Tremendous Sensation.—The Guide's Story.—Another Legend of Albano.—On to Rome.

For some time Frank had felt an intolerable impatience, and had been deliberating in his own mind about the best way of ending a scene which was not only painful to the poor prisoners, but humiliating to himself. In spite, however, of the immense odds in favor of the attacking party, Frank could not think of any way of making those odds available under present circumstances, when the last plaintive appeal and the desperate proposal of Clive and David came to his ears. He saw that they were suffering tortures from the smoke, that they could not endure it much longer, and that they would have to make a descent from the window. To prevent this, and the danger that might result from it, Frank resolved upon immediate action.

So he grasped his rusty fowling-piece with a deadly purpose, and rushed to the narrow doorway of the old house. Bob followed at once with his pitchfork, resolved to go wherever Frank led the way, and to stand by him at all hazards. The guide stood looking on. Uncle Moses also stood still, and made a feeble attempt to order the two boys back; but his words were neither heard nor heeded. At this David and Clive stopped in their desperate design, and looked down at Frank and Bob.

Frank stood by the doorway.

He put his head inside, and looked all around, cautiously, yet resolutely. The interior, however, was always a dark place; and now the fumes of blue smoke made it yet darker. But though his eyes saw nothing of the fierce beast, his ears could detect the rustle and the crackle which were produced by the motion of something among the fagots. This noise showed him plainly where it must be.

Thereupon he hesitated no longer.

He raised his rusty fowling-piece to his shoulder!

He took deadly aim!

He fired!

Bang!!!

The flash illumined the dark interior, and the smoke from the gun united with the smoke that was already there. Bat simultaneous with the bang and the flash, Frank felt himself hurled back-ward, and to the ground, knocked down by the recoil of the gun, flat on his back.

Up rushed Bob, full of the deepest anxiety.

But just as he reached the prostrate form of Frank, there was a hurried clatter from within, and then —down he also went—head first—over and over—struck down by some rushing figure that had emerged from the pile of fagots, burst through the doorway, and was now careering wildly over the fields.

Uncle Moses saw that figure, and then hurried up to his two prostrate boys.

David and Clive from their stations at the window saw it, and then instantly hurried down the ladder, and out of the house, where they stood panting and staring wildly at vacancy.

The guide saw it, and as he saw it there came over his face an expression of an utterly indescribable kind. He clasped his hands together, and then uttered a series of exclamations for which the English language, or indeed any other language but the Italian, can afford no equivalent.

While he was thus standing with clasped hands, vociferating and staring, in company with David and Clive, at the receding figure, Frank had sprung to his feet, and so had Bob; Uncle Moses, too, stood gazing at the object of universal interest; and thus all of them stood staring, with feelings that defy

description, at the scene before them.

What was this scene that thus held their gaze?

Well, in the first place, there was that valley, already so familiar to David and Clive—a smooth slope on either side, some olive trees near, but beyond that all bare, and no houses visible in that direction. Now, over this open space there was running—so swift and so straight that it was evidently impelled by pain or panic—what?

A little black pig!

A pig, small, as has just been said, an ordinary domestic pig—of no particular breed—the commonest of animals. Moreover, it was black. It was also, undoubtedly, as has just been remarked, either suffering from some of the shot of Frank's rusty gun, or from the terror that might have been excited by its report. And now this little black pig was running as fast as its absurd little legs could carry it—far away across the fields.

"O, holy saints!" cried the guide; "it's the little black pig, that we missed from the convent yesterday morning—the pig—the little black pig—the pig—the pig! Is it possible? O, is it possible?"

Every word of this was heard by the boys. They understood it all now. It seemed also that the little black pig, having accomplished as much mischief as any single pig can ever hope to bring about, was evidently making the best of its way to its home, and steering straight, for the convent. This they saw, and they gazed in silence. Nothing was said, for nothing could be said. They could not even look at one another. David and Clive were of course the most crestfallen; but the others had equal cause for humiliation. After all their gigantic preparations, their cautions advances, and their final blow,—to find their antagonist reduced to this was too much. Now, the fact is, that if it had really been a wild boar, Frank's act would have been the same; and as he acted under the belief that it was so, it was undoubtedly daring, and plucky, and self-sacrificing; but, unfortunately, the conclusion of the affair did not allow him to look upon it in that light.

Now, all this time the crowd behind the house maintained their shouts and outcries. Under the circumstances, this uproar became shockingly absurd, and out of place; so the guide hastened to put an end to it. On the whole, he thought it was not worth while to tell the truth, for the truth would have so excited the good people of Albano, that they would, undoubtedly, have taken vengeance on the strangers for such a disgrace as this. Therefore the guide decided to let his fancy play around the actual fact, and thus it was that the guide's story became an idealized version.

It was something to the following effect:—

The terrible wild boar, he said, had been completely indifferent to their outcry, or had, perhaps, been afraid to come forth and face so many enemies. He (the guide) had therefore determined to try to smoke him out, and had borrowed their handkerchiefs for that purpose, as there were no other combustibles to be had. Of this they were already aware. He had tied these handkerchiefs together in such a way that they would burn, and after setting fire to them, had burled the blazing mass into the house. There it emitted its stifling fumes till they confused, suffocated, frightened, and confounded the lurking wild boar. Then, in the midst of this, the heroic youth, armed with his gun, rushed forward and poured the deadly contents of his piece into the body of the beast. Had it been any other annual, it would undoubtedly have perished; but the wild boar has a hide like sheet iron, and this one was merely irritated by the shot. Still, though not actually wounded, he was enraged, and at the same time frightened. In his rage and fear he started from his lurking-place; he bounded forth, and made a savage attack upon the party in front of the house. They stood their ground firmly and heroically, and beat him off; whereupon, in despair, he turned and fled, vanquished, to his lair in the Alban tunnel.

In this way the guide's vivid imagination saved the travellers from the fury of the Alban people, by preventing that fury, and supplying in its place self-complacency. The Alban people felt satisfied with themselves and with this story. They accepted it as undoubted; they took it to their homes and to their hearts; they enlarged, adorned, improved, and lengthened it out, until, finally, it assumed the amplest proportion, and became one of the most popular legends of the place. What is still more wonderful, this very guide, who had first created it, told it so often to parties of tourists, that he at length grew to believe every word of it himself; and the fact that he had been an actor in that scene never failed to make his story quite credible to his hearers.

At this time, however, he had not advanced so far, and he was able to tell the actual facts of the case to the boys and Uncle Moses.

They were these:—

At the convent they kept a number of pigs, and on the previous day, early in the morning, they had missed the very animal which had created this extraordinary scene. He had escaped in some way from his pen, and had fled for parts unknown. They had searched for him, but in vain. He must have wandered to this old house at the first, and taken up his quarters here until he was so rudely driven out from them. The guide could only hope that the little black pig would learn a lesson from this of the evils of running away from home.

To all this the boys listened without any interest whatever, and did not condescend to make any remarks. The guide himself became singularly uninteresting in their eyes, and they got rid of him as soon as possible, paying him liberally, however for the additional trouble to which they had put him. Uncle Moses also had some words of remonstrance, mingled with congratulation, to offer to David and Clive; but these also were heard in silence. They might have found ample excuse for their delay in this ruined house; but they did not feel inclined to offer any excuses whatever.

The fact is, this reduction of the great wild boar to the very insignificant proportions of a little black pig—commonplace, paltry, and altogether contemptible—was too much for their sensitive natures. It had placed them all in a false position. They were not cowards, but they had all been alarmed by the most despicable of animals. Frank felt profoundly humiliated, and reflected, with a blush, upon the absurd figure that he had made of himself in hesitating so long before such an enemy, and then advancing upon it in such a way. Bob's feelings were very similar. But it was for David and Clive that the deepest mortification was reserved. They had been the cause of it all. It was their vivid imaginations which had conjured up out of nothing a terrible wild beast, which had kept them prisoners there for hours in loneliness and hunger, and which had thrown ridicule upon the population of Albano, by drawing them forth to do battle with one poor little harmless runaway pig.

As they walked back to the hotel, they kept far in the rear of the citizens of Albano; and Uncle Moses began to "improve" the occasion, and moralized in a solemn strain.

"Wal," said he, "my dear boys, I must say that you hev one and all the greatest talent for gittin' yourselves into trouble that I ever see. Ever sence we landed on these ill-fated shores you've ben a-goin' it, and a drivin' of me wild with anxiety; and the only thing I can say is, that thus far your misadventoors hain't turned out so bad as I have feared in each individdool case. In fact thar's allus ben what they call a anticlimax; that is, jest at the moment when thar'd ought to be a te-rific di-saster, thar's ben nothin' but some trivial or laugherble tummination. Now, I'm free to confess, boys, that thus far my fears hev ben gerroundless. I'm free to say that thus far thar hain't ben what we can conscuentionsly call a accident. But what of that? The incidents hev all ben thar. Every individdool thing that can make a accident has ben thar—it's ony the conclusion that has somehow broke down. And now I ask you, boys, what air we goin' to do about it? Is this to go on forever? Is it perrobable that advuss circumstances air goin' to allus eventooate thus? I don't believe it. The pitcher that goes often to the fountain is broke at last, and depend upon it, if you go for to carry on this way, and thrust yourselves in every danger that comes in your way—somethin'll happen—mind I tell you."

This, and much more of the same sort, did Uncle Moses say; but to all of it the boys paid very little attention. In fact, the subject was to all of them so painful a one, that they could not bear to have it brought forward even as the text of a sermon. They only wanted to forget all about it as soon as possible, and let it sink into complete oblivion.

On reaching the hotel they found that it was quite late; but they were eager to go on. Albano, the historic, had lost all its charms for them. They did not wish to remain, a moment longer. They could not hope now to see Rome to advantage, for the daylight would be over long before they could enter the city; still they were determined to go on to Rome, even if they had to enter it after dark. Accordingly, the carriage was made ready as soon as possible; Clive and David procured some fragments of food, which they took into the carriage with them, to devour on their way; and thus they left Albano, and drove on to Rome.

END

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