CHAPTER XXII.-CONTINUED.

Sie looked at me in a frightened irresolute voy, and then she formed with her lips rather than spoke the words.

"Yes-rather cold-now." one of the rooms up-stairs while the fogs last?" I insinuated shyly.

But I saw that her breath was beginning to come fast, and the faint pink to tinge her cheek as it did when she was excited.

"Did any one tell you to say that to me?"

she a hel in a whisper.

Instead of looking grateful for this proof | scream; I had forgotten her. of her husband's thoughtfulness, she became agitated, and at last her agitation grew al- figure which had been crouching on the morning, when the cook had promised to most uncontrollable; she trembled and stairs sprang up. It was Sarah. clung to the bars inside the window, and I saw that her forehead was wet with the nise the savage frightened face, her foot dicted; she turned her head from side to effect of some strong emotion—it looked like | slipped, and, with a piercing cry, she fell

long," she gasped.

cal good the charge might do her. The wild | bottom. look was coming into her eyes which I had

gently-

you to go if you did not wish it." face between the bars to be closer to me, she | a string fastened across. said, in a low broken voice-

when Sarah carries them out?" terror was so real that it infected me, and for the moment I almost shared the poor me to my senses.

pitecusly. "I always thought you were; but then you were kind to my child-and I don't know, I den't know whom to trust!"

' You may trust me, dear Mrs. Rayner, indeed," said I earnestly. "I would not have suggested your leaving your room it I thought it would cause you so much pain. Indeed I did not know you were so much | tinguish. attached to it,"

ing which she stared at me sternly and scarchingly. But I had no cause to fear her poor mad eyes, so I returned her gaze, and size grew gradually calmer.

"Miss Christie," said she at 'ast, in a wrisper, "you have influence in this house. That night when Haidee was ill you made Strate obey you. If I may trust you, give me this priof-get me one day's respite. Let me stay in my own room till-to-morrow."

the last werds.

"I will try," said I softly. "And, oh, Mrs. Rayner, shall I tell Sam to take the dead leaves a way in a wheelbarrow? I am sure it can't be wholesome to have them so close to your window."

"No, no, leave them-never mind," said she burriedly. "You must be in the water. You will catch cold. Go-Heaven bless you !"

She shut down the window in a frightened way, and disappeared into the room. I could not see in, for the window-sill was some eight or ten inches above my head. I turned and splashed my way back, with my teeth chattering, to the house, and changed my wet shoes and stockings, half crying for pity for the poor, helpless, forlorn lady for whom I could do so little.

At tea time she came into the dining-room. and, as Sarah was there, I practised the innocent deception of pretending not to have seen her before that day. I thought it better that the lynx-eyed guardian should not discover that I had found a way of commurichting privately with her unlucky charge. So I said again at tea-time that I had had a letter from Mr. Rayner, and that he thought that on Saturday she had better move into spare rocm.

"Saturday!" interrupted Sarah sharply. 'Yes," said I, rather frightened at telling such a story. "Do you think you would like to go to-morrow, or would you rather go to-night, Mrs. Rayner?" I asked gently.

"To-morrow," said she, with a steady look which I took as an acknowledgment; and I urned to Sarah.

"I will answer for it to Mr. Rayner, if there has been any mistake," I said, as modestiy as I could, for it was an awkward thing to have to give orders before the mistres of the house, however tottering her reason might be.

"Very well, miss," said Sarah, to my surprise.

For the second time my use of Mr. Ray. ner's name had acted like a charm; and I wondered how this woman, who had dared so much to cut me off from communication with Laurence, could camly submit to receive orders from me.

After tea, Mrs. Rayner in her turn surprised me by a warning which seemed to show keen observation. She came and stood by me at the fire-place while Sarah was clearing the table, and once, while the latter was for a moment out of the room, breathed softly into my ear, without turning her

dangerous.

I glanced up quickly; but Sarah was already hack in the room, and Mrs. Rayner's

face was as impassive as ever. I was so much used to living in fear of Sarah that the warning did not make any particular impression upon me, and I went to bed neither more nor less afraid of her

machinations than usual. I woke up in the night without being conscious of any cause for doing so. I had started at once into full wakefulness, and I saw that Haidee was sleeping quietly, and that the fire was still alight, but had burnt

low: and I thought I would replenish it. Then, as I raised myself on my elbow. I thought I heard a sound, too faint to be less. How did the accident happen?" ca'led a noise, outside the door. So I kept quite still and listened intently. I heard nothing for some time, then again a muffled noise as of something being shuffled softly from one stair to another, then again no The turret staircase was uncarpet- | guesses?" sound.

ed : it had once being po'ished, but the beeswax a worn off long since and had not been renewed. I got out of bed softly, lighted my candle by putting a match to the dying fire to avoid the noise of striking it, crept to the door, and literally put my ear to the keyhole. And, after a few moments, I heard the same soft shuffling again. might be Nap, Mr. Rayner's retriever, try-"Wouldn't you be more comfortable in | ing to find a stair softer than the rest to lie upon; yet they were surely too narrow for

him to make the attempt. Whoever or whatever it was seemed to be making it way down by very slow degrees, or seven stairs from the top. I screwed up ay courage and resolved to give the intrud-"I told Mr. Rayner, when I wrote, that er, human or otherwise, a fright. All the we had a slight fog here on Tuesday night, locks were kept in good condition at the the ground-floor when the mists had begun key with ut the least noise, then the handle, the treatment of Sarah, he left the house. to rise high, and that he had told Sarah to and flung open the door, stamping my foot prepare the large front spare-room for you." | and brandishing the candle. I heard Haidee | she was by no means the ill used creature

My plan succeeded only too well.

"At last at last! I have been here too | had one turn. I, trembling at the door, saw | muttering and moaning incoherently. Pres-I thought that the effect on her nervous to save herself at the corner; but she had had gone to sleep. I think I must have so drawn and livid that I seemed to be look. temperament of making her leave the room | fallen, and I heard a heavy thud, and then | dezed myself for a few minutes, when I | ing at the face of a dead woman. She made against her will would outweigh any physi- a groan. She had fallen headlong to the

For one second I leaned against the wall seen there twice before, and I was afraid of | unable to move; then, trembling so that I her being seized with a paroxysm while I | could scarcely find the top stair, I stepped stood there on the other side of the barred forward to go down. But on the second window, powerless to help her; so I said | stair my foot suddenly slipped, and, if I had not been going very slowly because of my "Of course Mr. Rayner would not wish agitation, I must have fallen. On the next stair I slipped again; on the next to that, But she shook her head, and, putting her | putting out my foot very cautiously, I found

With a sudden suspicion, I sat down with-"Do you know what his wishes mean out advancing farther, and slid my hand along the stair. It was slippery; so were | herently-I stood looking at her, appalled. Her the others. The turret staircase was dark even by day; if I had been running downstairs at my usual pace, nothing could have lady's mad belief that there was a conspinacy | saved me. It was a trap set by Sarah, if against her. But her next words restored | not for getting rid of me altogether, at least for seriously injuring me. She was greas-"Are you against me too?" she asked ing the stairs one by one when I had heard her; in her alarm at my sudden appearance, she had sprung up, her foot had s'ipped on the greasy plate below which she had been using, and she had fallen herself a victim to | you through thick and thin. Why don't the trap she had laid for me. And, as the you marry me, Jim?" horrible truth broke upon me, I heard another groan and a murmur I could not dis-

Sick at heart, and for the moment almost She shuddered. There was a pause, dur- as helpless as she, I crawled down the stairs, wondering and fearing what spectacle would meet my eyes at the bottom.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

All the stairs below where Sarah had slipped were safe and in their usual state. At the bottom, an almost senseless heap, lay Sarah, with one arm twisted under her and her head in a pool of blood. She was moaning, with closed eyes, and did not know me Her voice sank till I could hardly catch | when her eyes opened and she stared round

> The noise of her tall had by this time brought out Jane from the distant nursery and she ran for the cook, who was an older you're so shy of touching him? You've done and more experienced woman, and who indeed proved useful in this emergency. was past midnight; but, late as it was, I was obliged to send Jane into the village for fiend after that. I seemed to see murder in Sam, to tell him to take one of the horses her fierce fiery eyes; and I shuddered even and ride as fast as he could to Beaconsburgh | as I moistened her dry lips and touched her for the doctor. Meanwhile the cook declar- burning forehead. She rambled on in the ed her belief that one of Sarah's arms were broken, for she fainted when it was touched; never heard, and not a word of me or Mr. and then, having discovered that the blood was flowing from a great gash at the back of until she broke out argrilyher head, she bound it up as well as she could to stop the bleeding. Then I ran down-stairs for some brandy, which we put to her lips from to time, but in vain tried to make her swallow. And then we sat in the crouched on the flor, the cook supporting of years before? There suddenly woke up | part of the house sacred to Mrs. Rayner.

consciousness and know me. Jane, who had not dared to come up stairs | never even seen him! again since she went to send off Sam, opentread on the stairs.

It was Doctor Lowe. He called first for more light. Jane brought a lamp, and he signed me to bid her to go away. After asking me whether I was hysterical, and hearing | plate'll clean. Come on." me answer "No," he told me to hold the lamp while he made his examination. He said afterwards that I had strong nerves; but nothing but fear of him kept me steady at my post, as, with averted head, I heard | wind of it somehow. Jim's that gone on her the sharp little cries the wounded woman gave two or three times. The cook had been right; the arm that lay under Sarah was whether her spine was not injured too. He cut off her long black hair and strapped up might affect the brain, he said; and he set and bandaged the broken arm. Then we "Take care—she lates you, and she is brought a mattress, and very carefully lifted her on to it, carried her to her room, and fascinated, nearer to the bed as she saidput her on the bed.

"Who is going to sit up with her?" asked "I will," said I, but added doubtfully,

"If what?" said the Doctor, turning upon

me sharply.

I drew him a little apart and said-"Doctor Lowe, do you think the sight of any one she disliked very much would be bad for her?"

He looked at me very keenly as he answered-"No. She won't be able to recognize

anybody; but I warn you she will be rest-"She fell down stairs."

"The staircase leads to your room, doesn't it? How came she to be there at this time of night? Why don't you tell me the truth. and save me the trouble of making stupid

I told him the truth, and his only comment was-

"And don't you think the moral of that is that you should leave this place as soon as possible ?"

"I sha'nt stay here long," said I, smiling, and thinking of Laurence. "Oh, you think that young fellow at the Hall is going to marry you ?"

"Well, I tell you frankly, I wouldn't take a wife from this house."

"Bat then you wouldn't take a wife from anywhere, Doctor Lawe. If you did, you until it seemed that it must be about six | would think more of the girl than of the place she came from, just as Laurence does." "You have a sharp little tongue. I pity Laurence when he comes home late."

He asked after Haidee; but I could not and this morning I had a letter saying that | Alders, and there was not such a thing as a | let him see her, as the staircase was not yet he thought it was bad for you to sleep on | creaking door in the place. I turned the | ready; so, after giving me instructions about

There was a fire already in her room, for she liked to think herself. I seated myself in a chair beside it, prepared to watch until take my place. Before long the patient be-Before I had time to do more than recog- | gan to grow restless, as the Doctor had preside, tried to raise her broken arm, which backward down the stairs. The staircase had been set and bandaged tightly down, her long thin hands clutching and struggling ently she was quite quiet, and I hoped she eyes so sunken in their sockets, and her lips was startled into full wakefulness by a low hoarse cry of "Jim."

She had managed to move her head so that her great black eyes, glittering now with fever, were fixed full upon me; and my heart beat fast, for I though she must know

me. But she repeated, still staring at me-"Jim!" Then she added in a whisper, "They are after you, Jim! It's about the cheque. You must be off to-night. Go to the old place. I'll put 'em off, and I'll let you know."

Then more mutterings and exclamations, and before long she began again to speak co-

"It's too risky, Jim. I'll do it, if you want me to; but it's putting yourself in danger as well as me. All right, I'll pass it." Then she broke out passionately—

"It's an ill thing you're going to do, James Woodfall. What do you want of a lady for a wife? Her money's none so much, and, as for her pretty face, it's the face of a fool. I'm twice the woman to look at that she is, and I'm only twenty-five; and I've stuck to

And it fiashed across me, as she went on addressing to me reproaches, coaxings, encouragement, and defiance, that she was living over again some long-past passages in her life—passages, I could not but gather, of a very questionable character. For it was plain that this Jim, or James Woodfall, who occupied all her thoughts, had been a very bad man indeed, and that Sarah had assisted him in everyway in his wicked deeds.

"Don't go for that, James," sho said once imploringly. "It'll be a lifer if they can catch you; and they've had their eye on you lately. There's many a safer way of getting | stout. money than that."

Another pause, and then came a speech which chilled me with horror.

"Dead men tell no tales, Jim," said she, in another fearful whisper. "It's easy done, and it's safer. What's an old man's life that many a riskier thing. Why do you always

It turn coward at that?" I could scarcely sit and watch this woman. same style, mentioning other names I had and Mrs. Rayner, or even of Tom Parkes,

"Jim's mad about that little Christie girl, Tom, and he says he'll marry her in spite of everything, and I've got to bring it about," she hissed between her teeth.

cold, in the dim light of a candle, both of us | there to connect me with her criminal lover | of the left wing and entered that mysterious the wounded woman against her knee, I a in my mind the remembrance of the evening | Oh, how cold it was as the door closed belittle way behind, lest she should recover full when, hidden in my "nest," I had over- | hind me! I was growing nervous after the heard a conversation between her and Mr. | a iventures I had had lately, and I did not It was a ghastly thing to be sitting there | Rayner's mysterious visitor, who had afterwith that horrid stain on the floor within a | wards turned out to be Mr. Carruther's manfew feet, listening to the feeble moans of the servant, and I remembered that she had wretched woman whom we hardly expected | then expressed jealousy of some man called | to live until help came, holding our breath "Jim." Was it the same man? How was | which opened it. I shivered. It was colder when for a few moments the moaning ceas- it that he never appeared? I had thought | than ever in there, a great bare room, with ed, I thinking of the awful retribution her at the time that she must mean Tom Parkes, malice had brought down on her, not daring and that the woman she was jealous of was to speak to tell her I forgave her, lest my Jane; but, on the whole, she got on well voice should have some terrible effect upon with Jane; and the only person in the house her wandering mind. And so we sat shiver. against whom her animosity took any seriing not with cold alone, until the front-door ous form was myself. And now she fancied bell sounded through the silent house, and this "Jim" wanted to marry me-and I had

She was rambling again into the present, ed the door, and we heard the doctor's heavy | though, for the next speech that caught my | attention was-

lent you a hand. The water's deep in the cellar; but it won't hurt the jewels, and the

was on her mind now? I held my breath i

while she went on-"Tom, that sneaking Christie girl's got he won't listen to me; and, if I don't pre-

vent it, she'll be his ruin." Again that strange confusion of my name broken; the Doctor could not tell yet with that of the unknown Jim! My brain seemed to be getting as much confused as her own. I held tightly to the arms of my her head, which had received a gash which | chair as I listened to her ravings, as if in a futile attempt to steady body and mind. was mad to discover who this James Wood-

> "Take care, Jim. You risk too much. There must be some thief-taker in the world clever enough to recognise the forger James Woodfall in jewel-robber-"

> pulses beating high and eager eyes for the name, the door opened, and the sick woman, distracted by the noise, cried, "What's

> It was the cook come to take my place. But the reaction from the high-pressure tension of my nerves during the last few hours was too much for me. I fell fainting to the

The next morning I awoke late, with a headache and an unpleasant feeling of having gone through some horrible adventure. I told Haidee, who had been very much growers will be compelled to seek other alarmed, poor little thing, by my antics at | markets. the door when I frightened Sarah, and by the noise of her fall, a much modified story of the whole occurrence, and then ventured | ions ; they hold him.

down the stairs very cautiously; but Jane, instructed by the cook, had air ady removed the grease and made them safe again.

But I never again went down those stairs at night-time without a shudder.

I telegraphed to Mr. Rayner to inform him of the accident, without, of course, mentioning the cause, as soon as the Doctor's early visit was over -he said she was suffer ing from krain fever, and ought to have a regular nurse. 1 received a telegram from Mr. Rayner before dinner time-

"Am much distressed about accident. Give her every cars. Have sent off an experienced norse a'ready."

And by the afternoon train she arrived—a silent, middle-aged woman, the very sight of whom inspired respect, which in my case amounted to awe.

The fright in the night had made Haidee rather feverish again, so that I thought it better to delay her coming down-stairs yet another day. But she got up and sat by the fire in my room, and I sat with her during a great part of the day. Just before dinner we hear la light unaccustomed step on the stairs and a knock at the door, and Mrs. Rayner came in. Seeing her in the full light of my four windows, I was shocked by the change in her since I had first come to the Alders, little more than two months before. Her cheeks were so wan and hollow, her little reference to the previous night's adventure, only saying-

"I hear Sarah is ill. I had to go in search of my breakfast myself this moraing. hope she is better.

But the look on her worn face of relief from a hated burden belied her words. She had not dared even to visit her child while that harpy was about. I was serry Sarah's illness had been caused by me; but I could not feel much sympathy with her; her wandering speeches of the night before had shown her real crael, vindictive self too plainly.

When we were called to dinner, which Mrs. Rayner said she would have with me to-day, I went down first, in order to leave her with her child for a few minutes. At the foot of the turret stairs, where a mat had been put to hide the traces of the horrible stain, I found the elfish Mona, as dirty as usual, playing with a large bunch of keys-Sarah's housekeeping keys. I thought they would be safer in my care than in Mona's; so I took them from her, nor without a struggle and many tearless screams and howls on her part. I did not come into much contact with this young person now, as, when neither Mr. ner Mrs. Rayner appeared at meals, she had hers in the nursery with Jane, which she much preferred, as it did not entail so much washing and combing.

I thought to myself how much annoyed Sarah would be if she knew her keys were in my possession; but I was glad I had found them when, later in the day, after tea, Jane came to me and said Mrs. Saunders, the nurse, could not drink the draught a's from the cask, and wanted some bottled

"And cook says, 'What shall we do?" miss. She's making such a fuss about it." "Where is the bottled stout kept, Jane?" said I, thinking of my keys.

"It's either in the cellar, miss-but Mr. Rayner keeps the key of that-or else in Sarah's store cupboard."

"That is in the left wing, isn't it?"-"Yes, miss."

"Very well, Jane. I have found Sarah's keys; so I will look in there and see if I can

find any," said I. I did not much like taking this task upon myself; but it would not do to offend the nurse; and I thought it better to venture ia-

duty to Jane. "Oh, and, if you please, Miss Christie, could you get us out candles and some moist sugar? Iney are in there I know, for Sarah

t > Sarah's domain myself than to trust the

went to Beaconsburgh for them yesterday." I said I would; and, lighting a candle, I What awful confusion in her mind was rather nervously pulled open the heavy door like the muffled thud of that door as it swung to after me The storeroom was the first door on the right, I knew; and I tremblingly tried the keys until I came to the one shelves and cupboards, and old hampers and boxes, and odds and ends of lumber. could not help thinking how angry Surah would be if she knew I was in the room, where no member of the household but her. self ever ventured, and which had therefore grown into an importance it did not deserve, for it was a very ordinary apartment, and the cupboard I first opened, in search of candles and moist sugar, was a very ordinary apartment, with the usual store of jams "It's a good weight Tom-Jim might have | and pickle jars and household stores of all kinds, except, of course, I thought angrily, The only Company in Canada that has paid a claim. as I shivered again with the cold, the candles and moist sugar of which I was in search. Was it the Denham Court robbery that I opened another cupboard, I searched on the open shelves, but could not find either of the things I wanted.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## A Large English Orchard.

It may surprise our fruit-growing friend to learn that fruit-growing is being tried on a very extensive scale in the British Islands. We learn by the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society that Lord Ludley has already planted on his estate in Gloucesterfall was, and I left my chair, and drew, as shire 500 acres with fruit trees, and is intending to plant 200 more. Before planting, the land was deeply ploughed with a stem plough, and well manured. Standard apples, pears, plum, and cherry trees were put out 16 feet apart each way, using about 50,000 At that moment, while I listened with trees in all. Between these were planted gooseberry, raspberry, current bushes and strawberry plants—100 acres of strawberries and 60 of raspberries. The gooseberry bushes numbered 130,000, the red and black currants 228,000. Among the trees at regular intervals, are planted win l-breaks of Scotch fir, and he has ten actres of osiers growing, from which are manufactured baskets for carrying the frait to market. Should the enterprise prove successful, and orchards on such a magnificent scale become numerous, our American and Canadian

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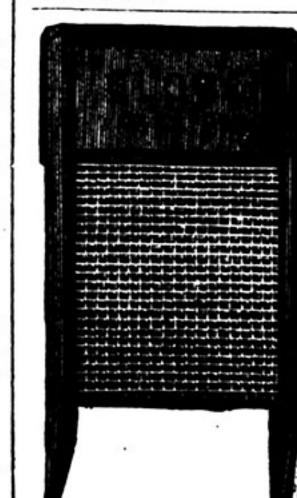
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Bat I was most struck

appearance. It was

set her off sniveling. the whole lot of you take her with you." When we had exam of the house and emer remarked to my compa surprised at finding without his coat, livin Who and what is he: thorough-paced a raca. a day's marching," wa tainly was surprised t he had left the neighbor I should have suppose glad to do so, conside escape he had of bein penal servitude, prob woman you just now in the affair I am allue she was more to be p the share she took in i She should have kno the fellow, and she o mother. It was a que Naturally I was curi its queerness consisted effect. "Well, the tru "if I knew all the d should only spoil it by

There is only one inui properly, and that is t rather, I should say, the dirty shirt-sleeves There is not much of re he continued, laughi characters who played it. You have seen ! wife. Their confeder who, for many years, a sly fortune teller, bu kept out of the way s. hero of the tale is a fe keeps a general store i a few minutes walk for a desire to hear the st you to the chandlery and he'll relate it rea will understand it b

made acquainted with

led up to it.

"The chandlery bus was not always in th sent proprietor. It b sen whose name I for her Mrs. Ingledew. Hamshire's wife is he her assisting in the bu It was a valuable con the good-will and leas £700 probably, and it stool in the neighbo course, that the niece continue the business dew died. It seems stood at all events, lived thereabout—by tell you anything as t he seems to have been his wits without re criminality. He was smartly dressed, ha being good-looking, a prudence, and on the he formed the desig Martha—the niece—v with a view to marr into the comfortable! Mrs. In ledew must her. And she, li simpleton she is, liste him, though she care the old lady, her aun still had a vixenish t one thing more than

objected to it was M But that didn't preve stitution seemed to l and Mister Hamshir good a thing in har secure it without de's the niece, and they not so quietly, howe lady, who was bed somehow heard of offended that she mad the old one, in which the legatee, and see object than to incres relative's disappoint with a small except property, including t past-middlo-aged bac supied a room in t harm'ess individual pension paid him sin some government mentioned was that the furniture as it st the premises, and the

in them rent free f months after the aur happened about a mo and you need no shire was furious wh He was first dispose fortunate inheritor, timid and nervous p easy-it would be affected to make iigh with his wife, took apartments provided Wicks, the bachelor,

particular to do, resc chandlery business having revealed so n medical friend in c