

UNDER AN AFRIC SUN.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER X.

Digby's awakening from his stupor was stranger and more wild than his recovery from the stunning fall. It was hours before he could grasp where he was, and then he found himself lying upon the soft dust, so stiff that he could hardly move an inch. It was dark as ever; and he lay listening and hoping for the relief which did not come, trying to be cool and think out some means of escape, and still telling himself that he had exaggerated, and that Helen was safe; this was but an accident. As he lay there, longing to rise, and dreading the pain that followed every movement, he became conscious that the air was cool and pleasant and refreshing to his burning brow. Then, by slow degrees it struck him that the wind came in a soft steady current on one cheek; and by-and-by, reason suggested to him that this cool current of air must come from some opening far away in the great cavern. He shivered at first at the idea of plunging farther into the darkness, for how did he know where his faltering steps might lead him, and what hideous chasms might be yawning in his path? Still, there was the cool current of air; so, forcing himself to rise, he began to walk slowly and cautiously in the direction from which it came, with the result that, after about an hour's slow progression over what was really but a short distance, he suddenly caught sight of a pale greenish ray of light, and his heart seemed to give a bound. The rest was easy. Ten minutes' cautious progress over the dust brought him to the opening; a rift in the rock overgrown with hanging creepers; and pushing these aside, he found himself gazing out of what was like a roughly broken natural window in the perpendicular rocky face of the barranco, which seemed to go down hundreds of feet below. How far up, he could not tell. It was dull, and the wind blew in fitful puffs, which swept the leaves aside, as he stood there for a time, asking himself what he would do. He was in no trim for climbing up such a place as this; but would it be possible to get down? To seem a risk; but anything was better than staying in that loathsome place; so, seizing the stoutest creeper within his reach, he began to descend; and, to his great delight, found, after cautiously going down about a hundred feet from creeps to creeps, that the rocky side of the barranco grew less perpendicular, and less and less so, till there was no danger, only an awkward descent a slope, which landed him at last by a trick of stream; while, on gazing up right and left, there were the rocky sides of the ravine, and above them, the dull gray sky, with one tiny orange speck far ahead. Then he grasped the idea that it was early morning—before sun rise, and that he must have passed the night in a feverish slumber in that dreadful place. The next step was easy. He knew that if he followed the little stream, sooner or later it would lead him to the seashore; and after slaking his thirst at one of the pools he bathed his feverish temples and set off refreshed. Somehow, he could not think about Helen. He felt as if he dared not. He could only dwell upon the fact that a pitfall had been prepared for him; and he wanted to call Ramon to account! Then, too, he wanted to know where Fraser was; why he had not come to his help, and why he had gone off before him? Strange problems these for an injured man to solve, and the only result of his attempt was for his head to grow more confused. It was a long and painful journey; and the sun had risen hours before Digby had crept out on to the black sands, where quite a gale was blowing, as the great Atlantic billows came rolling in. Then he made his way round to the little inn. The landlady gazed at him in horror, and began talking to him volubly in Spanish, to which Digby could not reply. "The senior—Senior Fraser?" he said; but the woman only shook her head, and he was the point of starting off, when Redgrave came hurriedly to the door to ask if Fraser and he had returned. "Ah, you are here!" cried Redgrave excitedly. "What does all this mean? Where is Fraser? Why are you hurt? Helen?" "Yes—Helen?" gasped Digby excitedly. "How is she?" "Gone!" cried Redgrave, with a fierce vindictiveness in his tones which made the young man gaze at him wondering. "Gone!" gasped Digby, gasping sharply at the table, for everything seemed to be whirling round. "Yes, you do not know! How is it you are hurt like this?" "Don't question me. A fall. But Helen? Ramon?" "No," said Redgrave sadly; "he swears he knows nothing." "It is not true," cried Digby fiercely. "It is his work. He planned to murder me, and he has taken her away." Redgrave stood gazing at him wildly for a long space; and then he gripped him by the arm. "Come," he said, ironically, "and almost ready to fall with bodily weakness, but with his agonizing thoughts spurring him on, Digby thrust his arm through Redgrave's and walked with him step by step. In a few minutes he saw whether he was being led; and ten minutes later, with his heart sinking lower, Redgrave was going down the path which led to Ramon's house. "You will not find him," groaned Digby; but Redgrave, whose face looked stony in its despair, made no reply, strode on to the door and knocked. A quiet-knocked Spanish servant answered the summons. "Where is your master?" said Redgrave sternly. "In bed, ill," replied the man. "What does he say?" asked Digby hoarsely. "That Ramon is in bed ill." "He is not here," Redgrave, lighted horses; "we must follow and hunt him down." "What is this noise?" said a familiar voice; and Ramon, looking painfully sallow and ill, came into the open hall. "Ah, Redgrave!—My dear Digby, what is this? Some one has attacked you?" "No," said the young man. "Yes," he added fiercely. "An enemy—a cowardly, treacherous enemy struck at my life, so as

to separate me from the woman I love. Do you hear? you Spanish dog!—from the woman I love and who loves me. Now, answer, if you value your life—where is Helen?" "Helen? Why do you ask me?" "Because I can see through your cursed plot. Now, sir, once more, if you value your life, speak the truth. Where is Helen?" "Is the young senior mad, Redgrave?" said Ramon coldly. "Let me answer, Redgrave.—Ye, sir, mad—mad against you. Once more, if you value your life, where is Helen?" "Oh, yes," said Ramon mockingly, "I value my life." "Then where is she?" "The senior thinks I have taken her away!" "Don't madden me, Ramon. I am a quiet, easy-going fellow, but dangerous when roused. Where is she?" "I do not know." "You lie, hound!" cried Digby; and, weak as he was, he sprang at the Spaniard and caught him by the throat. The moment before, Ramon was calm and smooth and soft of word; but, as he felt Digby's hands at his throat, he flashed out into a rage that was almost volcanic. He struggled, but vainly, weak as his aggressor was; for he too seemed to be suffering from some injury which turned him faint. But his eyes were fierce and strong, and his words were fierce and strong, and his eyes glittered as he cried menacingly: "Ah, then, the senior is jealous. He feels pang, and fierce with rage, does he, because the pretty child is not here?" "Will you cease this before I strangle you!" cried Digby, savagely. "Where is Helen?" "Fool! I do not!" hissed out the Spaniard, delivering each word as if it were a deadly blow. "Don't ask me. Go and ask your cunning false friend. Ask Fraser, when you can find him. He has taken her away." "What? It is not true. It is another of your cowardly tricks to throw us on the scent." "Indeed? Then, where is Fraser?" "Murdered, for aught I know, as you tried to murder me," cried Digby fiercely, but with a horrible suspicion gaining upon him fast. "You are a boy—a weak boy," snarled Ramon. "Your friend, where is he? Ah, it is always the friend who deceives." "Ramon, for Heaven's sake, the truth," cried Redgrave. "My child! my child!" "Gone, with this idiot's false friend. There, go, both of you—I tell you I am ill.—Pedro, your arm." He reeled and would have fallen but for his servant's quick action; and as he was lowered fainting to the matting-covered floor, Digby saw that his head had evidently received some severe injury.

CHAPTER XI.

"I cannot understand it," said Redgrave wearily. "I was out the greater part of yesterday; and when I returned, Helen had disappeared." "But you heard what he said, Mr. Redgrave—Fraser—gone.—Oh, it seems impossible!" "Redgrave sank wearily upon a stone, and let the cool wind which came fiercely from the north blow upon his brow. "You don't speak, sir," cried Digby, passionately. "What can I say, sir? Tell me about yourself. What did you mean by charging Senior Ramon with an attempt to murder you?" Digby impatiently explained. "It is strange," said Redgrave; "but I cannot think he would go so far as that." "Never mind whether he could or would," cried Digby. "Helen—we must find Helen. Is that man deceiving us?" Redgrave shook his head. "You saw the condition he was in. There was no deceit in that." "Could he have taken her away? Is she hidden at some place he owns?" "No, it is too improbable. These are not days of abductions, young man.—Could Helen have deceived me?" he muttered. "But Digby caught what he said. "No," he cried proudly, "she is incapable of deceit." "In an instant his hands were grasped tightly, and Redgrave was gazing almost affectionately in his eyes. "God bless you for that, my boy!" he cried in a choking voice. "God bless you for that!" Digby returned the warm frank pressure; and from that moment it seemed as if they worked together with renewed spirit and as one. "I cannot think that Fraser would fight against me or play a deceptive part," cried Digby warmly, after a long discussion which followed a vain search for news. "It is hard to doubt one you believe to be a friend," said Redgrave. "But there is no doubt of one thing." "And that is?" "Fraser loved my child." "Oh! Impossible!" Digby's ejaculation was wonderment and doubt. "Was she not sufficiently beautiful and true and good?" "Don't talk like that, as if she were no more." "I noticed it from the first," continued Redgrave. "I saw how he was struck by her; and in my trouble with Ramon's advances, I found myself thinking how much happier she would be with the quiet, grave, middle-aged student, and I hoped that she would return his affection." "And I, sir?" cried Digby resentfully. "Ah, yes. I saw that you loved her too; but I looked upon you as the hot changeable lover of a day attracted by the first pretty face he saw. But Helen chose you." "And Fraser—did he ever?" "Speak to me? No. I watched him carefully, as a man would who had his daughter's happiness at stake; but he seemed to think his chances were hopeless, and to acquiesce in your position. I do not think Helen ever suspected his love." "She could not. I never dreamed of such a thing." "No," said Redgrave sadly; "when one is young, one is selfish and blind to all but self. You both were blind." "Then all this points to the fact that Fraser has been playing a double part against us all; and that by some cunning jugglery, he has persuaded Helen to listen

to him—to accompany him.—No, I'll never believe that. My old friend has fallen a victim to the fate I escaped. No, Mr. Redgrave, I can't believe that." Inquiries were made in every direction, especially down in the port; but no vessel had touched there; not even a fishing boat had left the little place; and it was blowing so hard off shore that no boat would have dared to approach or leave from that side of the island. "Let's go back to Ramon's; I am sure we shall learn something there," cried Digby at last. "That scoundrel is at the bottom of it all, I'm sure." They went straight to the Spaniard's house, to meet the English doctor of the place, about to leave. "Bad, sir—very bad. Quite insensate. Concussion of the brain from a fall or from some blow. The case is serious, I'm afraid." Redgrave and Digby exchanged looks. "Do not have him disturbed. I shall be here again in a couple of hours," said the doctor; and he walked briskly away. "No deceit here," said Redgrave. "No; but question his man Pedro. Promise him any bribe so that we may get at the truth." "We are on the wrong scent," said Redgrave, as they walked away. "Pedro knows nothing, I am sure." Digby did not feel convinced; but he could do no more, and he followed Redgrave to the desolate home, sick and wearied out, his injuries from his fall forcing him to keep his bed for the next three days, and submit to the doctor's ministrations. At the end of those three days, during which time Redgrave had scoured the island in every direction, Digby was able to leave his bed, while the news of the doctor as he tended Ramon was of the darkest. "He may recover; I can say no more," was the only reply Digby could obtain. It was on the fourth morning that, with the gentleness of one who bore for him a real affection, sallow and haggard-looking, Redgrave helped Digby to a seat in front of that once pleasant villa, where he could breathe the sweet pure sea-air, and at the same time be sheltered from the fierce rays of the sun, once more shining in all its glory. For the gale had blown over, and the sea softly lapped in the gentle breeze. "No news—no news!" groaned Digby, as he lay back with his head resting upon the pillow his host had placed at the back of his chair. "And I used to think this place a perfect heaven!" That day had nearly passed, and after being within doors during the hottest time, Digby was again seated beneath the tree, gazing sadly out to sea, and asking himself how long it would be ere he recovered his strength. "I must find them—I must find them," he groaned. "And then he started up, tottered, holding on by the back of the chair, dizzy with excitement, for unmistakably that was Fraser's voice he heard; and directly after the gate was opened, and Helen entered with him; leading affectionately upon his arm. The moment they were inside the gate, Helen darted into the house; and from where he sat, Digby could hear Redgrave's cry of joy, and realize as well as if he had seen it, that the sobbing girl had thrown herself into her father's arms. "My darling!" said Fraser softly, as he took off his hat and stood gazing toward the house. Then with a bitter sigh, he turned away, and caught sight of the pale drawn face of Digby standing motionless in the shadow beneath the tree. "Ah, my dear old Tom!" he cried; and his whole manner changed, as he literally ran at him. "What is it?"—"Hurt?" "Keep back!" cried Digby, in a suffocating voice. "You mean, despicable traitor!" "What—Oh, I see," said Fraser genially; and then a mocking look came into his face as he added slyly, "Don't take on about it, Tom. We can't all win." Digby was too weak to reply; he merely darted a bitter look at his friend, and sank helpless, and with his brain swimming in the chair. He was conscious of voices and of seeing figures come as if through a mist. Then, as he struggled back to himself, it was to find that Helen was leaning over him with her arms about his neck. "You?" he panted. "I don't—I don't understand." "Have you not told him, Fraser, my dear fellow?" cried Redgrave. "I? No. Poor boy, he was too cross. No; too upset.—There, Tom, my dear lad," he cried, going down on one knee and taking his friend's hand, "don't let's play at cross-purposes." "I—I don't understand," said Digby hoarsely. "Soon, my dear lad. I was very suspicious of Ramon as you know, though you snubbed me, and after the last pressing way in which he proposed that we should visit the head of the barranco, I felt sure there was something on the way. I was a plan to get rid of us for the time, I said. And after turning the matter over in my mind, I thought I would let him think we were going, and see us start, then step back and watch." "Yes!" cried Digby, eagerly. "Well, I started early and left a line for you to follow; and of course I let you go on while I dropped into the bushes and watched you first, then our friend." "Quick! you torture me," cried Digby. "That ought not to be torture," said Fraser quietly, as he glanced at where Helen stood to her injured lover. "Well, there is little to tell. I saw you go; and an hour after, when I was beginning to grow suspicious of myself and my doubts, I saw Ramon come out, and I followed him right up to here." "Here he came as with a message imploring help for you, old fellow. You had fallen from one of the rocks down by the seashore, and wanted brandy and bandages." "The scoundrel was very sorry our host here was out—so he said, but glad to escort poor little Helen down to her wounded lover. She followed blindly, thinking only of you; and when she reached the spot, you were not lying there, but a boat was ready to sail somewhere or another, Ramon only knows." "And then, Tom," cried Helen, who had been listening excitedly, "Mr. Fraser came up as he was trying to drag me into the boat." "Come," cried Fraser, laughing; "that isn't fair. Let me tell my own story. You'll knock all the gilding off. I don't have a chance every day to play knight-errant." "Go on, for pity's sake," cried Digby. "All right. He dragged her on board,

pushed off; and I thought I was too late; but a wave checked him; and I rushed into the water and got hold of the side. Then he raised the boathook and struck me. Well, that naturally made me feel savage. My hand went to my belt; and somehow, I hardly know how, I gave him a tupper with my geological hammer, and the next thing I saw clearly was Ramon crawling out of the sea, while I was trying to manage the boat, for a fierce puff of wind came down the barranco and nearly capsize us.—That's all." "No, no; that can't be all," cried Digby excitedly. "Well, not quite. The squall increased to a gale. It was impossible to land; and we were blown right out to sea—ocean, I mean—and after being nearly swamped about a hundred thousand times, we managed to get under the lee of Palma, right across yonder; Miss Helen here behaving like a heroine; and there we stayed with some friends of Mr. Redgrave till the weather lulled, and then we sailed back There—that is all." "No; that is not all," cried Helen, flushing. "He has said nothing hardly about his gallantry in defending me from that, nor about his brave true chivalry all through our perilous trip. You ought to be proud!" She paused, and took Digby's hand between hers as she looked blushing in his eyes. "We ought to be proud to have so true a friend." "Horace, old man," whispered Digby as he held out his hand, "can you?" "Can I?" cried the other, warmly grasping the extended hand. An hour later, when they two were alone, and after all further explanations had been given, Fraser said softly, his face nearly hidden by the cloud from his cigar: "Yes, old fellow, why should I deny it? Who could help loving so sweet and pure a woman? I love her too well ever to let her think otherwise of me than as her true and chivalrous friend. The rest is our secret, Tom." And after a pause: "She loves you—her every thought is yours; and as for me I have but one wish—to see her happy. There; you see I can take your hand." "There is little more to tell," Ramon did not die but he was still, anything; but the same man, when the Redgraves returned to England, with an escort—Redgrave's poverty having found means to pay off his indebtedness to the Spaniard, not a very large amount—when he had successfully parted with his interests in an island of which he had long been weary. How he obtained the money he did not say. Digby suspected that it came from Fraser; but the latter would not confess. The other matter was a year later and there were no cards. [THE END.]

WATER FOR FUEL.

An Alleged Invention that is Calculated to Revolutionize Everything. What appears to be an important invention, has recently been made public in Phillips, Wis., says *Light, Heat, and Power*. It is no less than the practical and cheap use of water as fuel. The appliance consists of nothing but a piece of gaspipe from 2 inches to 6 inches in diameter, as may be desired, and of convenient length to fit a cook-stove or a parlor or other heater, with short legs or stable support to keep it in position. This is placed in the stove with one end slightly projecting, to which is attached a vessel of water with stop cock conduit from the water vessel into the pipe. Before reaching the steam chamber, the water passes through the important part of the invention, the part that constitutes or contains the great discovery. By means of the water may pass into the steam chamber, while the steam can not pass out. The part of the pipe containing the steam chamber is within the stove, although a small part may be without if desired. To this the heat of a moderate wood or coal fire is applied, so as to heat the steam to a high temperature, say 300 or nearly 400 degrees, when it passes out of a small orifice immediately into the midst of a bed of coals or flames from burning wood or coal, when it is at once raised to the required temperature, 400 degrees or more, to be immediately decomposed into its gases—oxygen and hydrogen—which instantly become flame. Only a moderate summer fire of wood or coal will be required the coldest day in winter the gasous flame furnishing the balance of the heat needed in the coldest room. The capacity for reducing heat in burning five times greater than carbon, or about 2,000 degrees, one may form some idea of the capacity of this little contrivance for producing heat. By increasing the temperature of the gas pipe to about 400 degrees the vapor may be decomposed into its gases before exit from the pipe, and in such cases it is emitted in a jet of blue flame. In either case the oxy-hydrogen flame is easily produced, and with a very small consumption of fuel.

TWO POUNDS OF WOOD.

An Alabama Woman Loses Her Life from a Strange Cause. Mrs. J. J. Murphy, of Birmingham, Ala., died a few days ago from a disease which had been puzzling physicians for eight years. About eight years ago the woman began to complain of pain in the stomach. She slowly but gradually grew worse until she died. A dozen physicians had treated her but none of them were able to say what was the matter. For two years past she had constantly suffered the most intense pain, and she said she felt something growing in her stomach. The doctors could feel a hard substance in her stomach, but could not determine what it was. The woman was too weak for an operation. When Mrs. Murphy died an autopsy was made, and in her stomach the doctors found two pounds of wood. For twenty years Mrs. Murphy had been addicted to the habit of dipping snuff. She used small wooded brushes for snuff-dipping, and would often bite off and swallow small pieces of the brush. The small particles of wood had formed a solid mass in her stomach, and the block weighed just two pounds. The physicians say this was the cause of her death. It is the only case of the kind on record.

Wanted to See Bella Jump.

Bobby (who has been sitting patiently half an hour)—"Mr. Boomer, I wish you would pop the question to Bella." "Bella—Robert, you naughty boy, what possessed you to make such a preposterous remark?" "Bobby (milkily)—"Well, anyway, ma said if he did, you'd jump at the chance, and I want to see you jump."—[Texas Sittings.]

ELECTRICITY AS THE EXECUTIONER.

A Protest Against the Debasement of Science and Invention. At this writing the judicial inquiry in the State of New York to determine whether or not an electric current is a good substitute for the hangman's hempen rope is still in progress, and is watched with deep interest by the general public. How it may eventuate we will not undertake to predict, but in behalf of the social and material progress of mankind dependent on science and invention, we are bound to utter a protest against the proposed debasement of the grandest agency of human advancement. Whether killing by an electric shock would be less or more cruel than killing by the scaffold and rope we do not certainly know nor do we readily care, but we do know that it would be a degradation of science to substitute the electrician for the hangman. It is the province of science to help the race in all its aspirations, in all its movements toward higher planes of life. In order that scientific discoveries and appliances may be in the largest degree beneficial to humanity, we must avoid associating them in the public mind with things that are repulsive, with events that excite horror or dread, with circumstances that are regarded as disgraceful. Ever since Franklin identified the thunder bolts of heaven with the electric sparks produced by friction, all the uses to which electric science has been applied have been exalted. It has been made a grandly beneficent helper to mankind. It has brought all nations into closer relations. It has been and is a leading factor in the advancement of civilization. It has reduced days to seconds, leagues to inches, in the transmission of intelligence. As a protector of society against crime, it has won some of its brightest laurels. No criminal can travel so fast or so far that his arrest cannot get ahead of him. It lights up the alleys where crime was wont to work in darkness. It rings bells when crime attempts to invade a bank, a store, or a dwelling. It is no debasement of science to use this agency for prevention and detection of crime, but when the criminal has been brought to justice, when the jury has convicted the murderer, and the court has placed him in the hands of the Sheriff to be killed, we submit that it would be such a debasement to tell the hangman to step down and out with his rope, and direct the electrician to the front with his battery. It will be urged that the execution of a murderer is as necessary for the protection of society as his arrest, trial, and conviction. We shall go into no discussion on that point. Taking facts as we find them in Europe as well as in this country, the executioner is a synonym for all that is horrible. So repulsive is the taking of life, so loathed is the man who takes it under the obligations of official duty that the hangman in this country is always concealed, so that it may not be known by whose hand a felon dies. It is proposed now to load all this odium, all this horror, all this popular execration on electric science—to make the electrician the hangman. Against this we protest, and we do so with a firm conviction that our protest is in the interest of civilization, of the advancement of society in all that contributes to our material, moral, intellectual, and social well-being. [Inventive Age.]

Does it Pay to Live?

"If any man can tell me how it pays to live I want him to step right out and do it," said the Rev. W. T. Mealy of the first United Presbyterian church yesterday morning. He was discussing the time-honored question "Is Life Worth Living?" and he succeeded in drawing a very gloomy picture of the value of mankind's presence in this vale of tears. "The saddest fact in the world," said he, "is the fact that we live. We are placed here without our volition. We have no choice about the fact of existence. Good and evil, light and darkness, happiness and misery are blended in the kaleidoscope of life, and the darker colors invariably overshadow the lighter ones. And yet, their is nothing to which the human race clings more tenaciously than to life. And at the same time there is nothing that is treated with so little consideration as life. Men shorten its existence by crime, dissipation, and overwork, and when the structure which they have thus undermined begins to totter and fall they seek to prop it up with all sorts of unnatural devices." "Is life worth living? Is not a question whether we will live or not, but simply resolves itself into the all-absorbing query: 'Does it pay to live?' This question must be determined by us. The question of existence has been determined for us." "From a worldly standpoint life is a complete failure. It is a game that must be played, but in which we are certain to lose. What is life? To breathe and then stop; to work until the heart bleeds and the eyes overflow with tears; to gather wealth for whom we know not and to leave it to whom we know not. The things which men esteem most are those in which they are most disappointed." "The gifts of God are what make life enjoyable, and he usually gives more than we ask. He does not give us relief from pain, but he gives us strength to bear our burdens. Life is not a perfection; but simply a preparation for a better state, and it is this view alone that gives value to our existence." [Texas Sittings.]

Then Took the Responsibility.

There are times when a subordinate must use his own discretion, orders or no orders. A striking instance occurred on the Pennsylvania Railroad on the awful afternoon of the Johnstown disaster. A train with two locomotives, running cautiously and laboriously up the already inundated Conemaugh River Valley, reached the bridge, over the river and stopped, the conductor having orders to wait there on account of the supposed insecurity of the bridge. The warnings of the threatened breaking at the dam came into his ears, and, realizing the danger to his freight of human lives, he sent forward one of his engines, a very large one, to test the bridge. The experiment seemed to justify him in venturing forward, as the choice of two perils. He recouped the locomotive, and proceeding carefully, took his train in safety over the bridge. Ten minutes after he had crossed, the dam burst and the bridge and several waiting trains were swept away with the ill-fated city.