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A man doesn't have to pull the trigger himself in order to commit suicide. He doesn't even need a gun or any kind of weapon. All he need do is work hard and at the same time neglect his health. Death will do the rest. Men nowadays are all in a hurry. They bolt their food, and get indigestion and torpid liver. The blood gets impure. When the blood is impure, sooner or later something will "smash." The smash will be at the weakest and most overworked point. In a marshy country it will probably be malaria and chills. A working man will probably have a bilious attack. A clerk or bookkeeper will have deadly consumption. A business, or professional man, nervous prostration or exhaustion.

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SYNOPSIS.

Peter Clephane and Andrew Kilgour are cousins, students at Edinburg University, between whom is a better feud. The former is the son of a rich city lawyer and his cousin is the heir of an estate in the Highlands that has almost passed into the hands of creditors. After a bitter fight with his cousin, Kilgour is on his way home when he falls in with company at the "Hound and Stag" inn at Perth. Arrived home his companion on the journey turns out to be his uncle, Peter Clephane's father. To retrieve his family's fortune Andrew is sent to I dia.

CHAPTER XII (Continued.)

It was now well on in the afternoon. The sun, though scorchingly hot, was near our tent, and the water was deepening in purple and crimson. I was beginning to think we were to have a night at sea, when the captain gave the order to put the helm hard down. We swung round and sped on a landward course, sailing free and very swift.

"We shall make land a good hour ere sundown," said the captain to his chief officer, giving me the first authentic information of the day.

By this time my faculty of curiosity had lost its edge, but at the mention of land I sat up to keep a lookout, and in less than an hour we sighted the shore. The general character resembled that of the part we had left earlier in the day, though I soon saw we were not returning to the death scene of the luckless Bird of Paradise. Instead of a shallow beach the water ran close to high rocks, penetrated by rugged gorges, into which the sea flowed. No port, town, or human habitation was to be seen. But that, all things considered, was not surprising.

We shot into a narrow opening under the darkening brows of lofty cliffs, and immediately the sails fell together with a flap. Almost before they ceased fluttering they were in and furled. Then a boat was lowered, half a dozen steel sinewed men got into it, and rowed, pulling the ship by a cable. Light and of small draught, she followed easily, and in half an hour or so, after manifold windings, we came to a rude jetty, hewn, as it appeared, out of the solid rock. Here we disembarked, the vessel being made fast to a rough stone pillar.

As we leaped from the bulwarks to the ledges of rock that formed the pier, my heart beat quickly with conjecture and apprehension, for it was plain that a crisis was at hand. To guess what it might be was enough to make the stoutest tremble. The black precipices, the yawning caverns, and hoarse roar of warring waters were of evil suggestion, but of far darker import than any menace or ugliness of nature were the lowering faces of my companions. These men had shown during the day, by a hundred expressive tokens, that they resented my presence among them, and now I fancied I caught them casting sidelong looks at one another, then at their weapons, then at me, as if settling by such glances of intelligence the manner of getting rid of me.

With quaking limbs and the worst forebodings, I fell into line at the bidding of the captain, and we struck, single file, into a craggy path, at its best no broader than a sheep run in the Highlands, and in places so narrow as scarcely to afford foothold for a weasel. Looking upward from the bottom one could not imagine how it sealed the darkening precipices that frowned upon us in vast swellings and jutting with the savage, solitary pride of the inaccessible. If the ascent did not prove utterly impossible, it was because every man of us had the feet of a goat and the sinews and agility of a monkey.

Our ribbon of a path wound in crazy coilings and twistings, now rising vertically in steps higher than our heads, now dropping treacherously at a critical point, ceasing suddenly and again appearing beyond some perilous projection that a chance would hardly have attempted to pass. Often we had to go on our hands and knees, scraping with toes and clutching with

finger nails as we crawled over some slippery mass, like ants on the polished knob of a glacier, or scrambled up a jagged rock, the point of which cut and rent like sharpened flints, or slid down, face inward, twice our own length to a scarcely perceptible crevice, forming a fresh starting point.

I was a hunter and knew what it was to tread dizzy ways. I had followed the fox to his lair when the hounds had turned tail and robbed the eagle's eyrie when the hardest of my companions stood holding his breath in awe. But the self-possession and free spirit of audacity which prompted to such hazards and gave them relish were utterly gone. To speak the truth I shivered like one suddenly take with an ague.

It was not the terror of the place alone that appalled me. To go leaping and scrambling on a hair line along the brink of a tumbling, hissing gulf that sent the spumes of its wrath high up in clouds, with no outlook or hope of escape, was indeed disconcerting enough, yet scarcely of itself sufficient to take the heart out of a born mountaineer. The tremours and shakings, the alternate spasms of heat and cold, were due—I trust it is not cowardly to confess it—not to the threatenings of cliff and chasm, but to the hostile weapons that gleamed in front and rear and might at any moment be dived in my blood.

How easy it would be to prod me there and send me toppling mortally wounded into the abyss, to be ground as between millstones at the bottom! A sudden stab in the back, a push, a giddy, headlong fall, and the deed would be done, and no word of it need ever get to the outside world. More

than once, as my mind dwelt on this, I clung to the rocks shuddering like a child in mortal fright. The gruesomeness of the situation was enhanced, too, by the eerie shadow of light. Here and there buttress and jutting promontory flushed into rose and shone in gold and amethyst, but these points of radiance only gave a hideous emphasis to the prevailing gloom of the gorge. They were like the ghastly mockeries of a world I had once known, but was never to know again.

I am no judge of how long or how far we had struggled when upon turning a sharp angle we came upon an open space, or circular ledge, of the dimensions of a small room. Here we stopped, our sides heaving like the flanks of a spent hound, and the best of us glad to breathe himself.

Whether by accident or the unsuspected design of those about me, I stood on the outer rim, the very edge of the wall that fell fifty fathoms sheer, the surging, unsounded depths beneath. Under that unaccountable species of fascination which lures a man to gaze on the horrible and awful, I bent forward and looked into the black pit at my feet. With a swimming head I drew back, to feel myself seized roughly from behind. An icy sensation thrilled through me. I gave a great gasp, and my knees knocked violently together. The fearful moment I had been anticipating had come.

They bandaged my eyes, and bound my hands to my sides, and thus made helpless, left me standing. I shut my lips tight and my eyes also, although they were covered, and awaited the fatal thrust and giddy whirl into space. Not a word was spoken. I heard the rustle of garments and the rattle of arms, and away below the sullen, muffled voice of the sea, but other sound there was none. The ill-boding silence was more terrifying than the menacing tongues of a hundred enemies. It was the very extremity of torture to have my captors make their arrangements for disposing of me with such healthy secrecy.

In the crowding fears and agitations the idea flashed upon me that they meant not only to slay but to torture me. I thought of all I had read about living men being flayed and cut into bits by savages, and my flesh crept and shrank as if at the touch of the knife. It was only by keeping teeth and lips clenched that I managed to hold from venting my agony in shrieks.

To my great astonishment and unutterable relief, the procession began to move on again, I being given the muzzle of a musket to direct my steps.



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Bruised, cut, bleeding, and panting with fear and fatigue, I stumbled, often causing my guide to curse savagely and threaten to pitch me head foremost down the cliff. I could not help thinking that if he were blindfolded he might go just as clumsily, though I had to keep the opinion guardedly behind my teeth.

(To be Continued.)

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