Hollow Ash... Hall

BY MARGARET BLOUNT.

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

Mr. Cowley's jaw dropped. His face would have been a study for a painter as he gazed at his unearthly visitants with his hands resting upon his knees.

"He had threatened such visitors with the tongs it is true, but placing their noses was the thing furthermost from his thoughts at that moment.

With his heart beating almost to suffocation, he watched their movements. He longed to speak, but the words died upon his lips and his throat felt parched and hot.

Slowly they advanced towards his chair—the nun's sad eyes bent silently on his face—the outstretched hand of the black man pointing towards his heart.

He bore it manfully for a moment, but nearer, still nearer they came—the hand almost touched his shoulder.

It was too much for poor flesh and blood to bear.

He gave a sort of stifled cry, threw himself back in his chair, cowled the shadowy group, and dashed headlong from the room.

In the dark stairs he flew and fled, the hue-and-cry rather by a mile than by sight, he slammed his door behind him, and cried out, "Let anything come in now!"

CHAPTER XI.

[illegible]

CHAPTER XII.

[illegible]

"Your father will never own he is afraid, my dear; and I can see that we are killing him by inches. He is getting so thin, and, really, he does not eat enough to keep a sparrow alive. If we should worry him into a fever or a consumption, I should never forgive myself.

"No fear of that, aunt while his obstinacy lasts," replied her nephew cheerfully. "But I wish, to goodness, he would get frightened and give us a chance of seeing a little more of this round world than we can expect to see while we are cooped up here. For my part I feel that if I was a knight iron mask I should contrive to make me a handsome present for anders-ing the imprisonment aunt."

"So I will, my dear, if it ever comes to an end."

"Here—I'm the worst of [illegible] "Wonder if he ever [illegible] Mad [illegible]

"My dear, [illegible] Hush! If a woman now, I [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]