



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE ABBEY OF HAPPY PEACE

FROM a distance I had already seen it, lying low on a spur of the mountains—a grey mass, embosomed in vague foliage. It was visible from the balcony in front of my bedroom window. It was barely four miles off, but Mr. St. John told me it would take me two hours to get to it, a fact I could hardly credit till experience showed me the reason. The reason was that the only road to it was a mule track, which traversed a series of deep ravines or valleys, and climbed amongst rocks over the steep ridges that separated them.

Yielding to advice, I again had recourse to a mule, Scotty and a guide accompanying me on two others. We took the road I had descended with the tandem yesterday till we came to the spot where the leader had first shown a liking for the precipice; and there the guide did what the horse had mercifully forborne to do: he rode, as it seemed to me, like Quintus Curtius, directly over the brink into the