

CHAPTER II

THE CORDS TIGHTEN

ACTING in the character of a man relapsing into a stupor, I turned abruptly away from them, and blundering a little in my walk, set out for the nearest building. My guard would have been at my side in an instant had not the doctor detained him with an imperative signal. I heard, as I walked away, the low murmur of voices, that of the doctor betraying, though I could not hear the words, a note of exasperation at the guard's slowness in understanding his instructions.

Presently, however, the man overtook me, and, guiding me by the elbow, turned me into the entrance of the building I had set out for.

The broad entrance hall with its polished floor and graceful stairway contained as little to suggest the purpose to which the building was put as the exterior of it did. I caught a glimpse through a doorway of a number of well-dressed people reading, and heard educated voices carrying on what seemed to me like perfectly normal, casual