

Varney's eye fell upon it and absently held it. It was Mary Carstairs's light, though, of course, he had no means of knowing that.

Presently Peter lolled around and looked at him. "H'm! Sunk in a sodden slumber, I suppose?"

"Not at all. Interested by your conversation — fascinated. Ha! Here is something to vary the evening's monotony. A row-boat is drifting downstream towards us. Let us make little wagers with each other as to who 'll be in it."

He looked over his shoulder upward at the moon, which a flying scud of cloud had momentarily veiled. Peter, who had sat down again, glanced up the river.

"I don't see any boat."

"There is where the wager comes in, my son. Hurry up — the moon will pop out in another minute, and spoil the sport."

"Drifting, you say. Bet you she's empty — broke away from her moorings and riding down with the current. Bet you half a dollar. My second bet," he said, warming to the work, "is an old washerwoman and her little boy, out on their rounds collecting clothes. It's Monday. In case both firsts are wrong, second choices get the money."

"My bet is — Ha! Stand ready with your half! There she comes — Jove!"

"Good God!" cried Peter and sprang up.

For the moon had jumped out from behind its cloud like a cuckoo in a clock, and fallen full upon the drifting boat, now hardly fifty yards away. In