

ever. It cost her a gasping effort to say:—"You are reading it wrong! Do give an eye to the words, Daverill."

"Read it yourself," he retorted, and threw the letter across the table.

She read it through and remained gazing at it with a fixed stare, rigid with astonishment. "I never wrote it so," said she at last.

"Then how to God Almighty did it come as it is? Answer me to that, Polly Daverill."

Her bewilderment was absolute, and her distress proportionate. "I never wrote it like that, Daverill. I declare it true and solemn I never did. What I wrote was for you to keep away, and I made the words according. I can't say no other, if I was to die for it."

"None of your snivelling! How came it like it is?—that's the point! Nobody's touched the letter." He used his ill-chosen adjective for the letter as he pointed at it, so that one might have thought he was calling attention to a stain upon it. He dropped his finger slowly, maintaining his reproachful glare. Then suddenly:—"Did you envelop the damned thing yourself?"

She answered tremulously:—"I wrote it in this room at this table, where you sit, and put it in its envelop, and stuck it to, firm. And I put back the blotting-hook where I took it from, not to tell-tale. . . ."

He interrupted her roughly. "Got the cursed thing there? Where did you take it from? . . . Oh—*that's* your blotting-hook, is it? Hand it over!" She had produced it from the table-drawer close at hand, and gave it to him without knowing why he asked for it.

There is no need to connect his promptness to catch a clue to a forgery with his parentage. The clue is too simple—the spelling-book lore of the spy's infancy. The convict pulled out the top sheet of blotting-paper, and reversed it against the light. The second line of the letter was clear, and ended "now not." The "not" might, however, have been erased independently—probably would have been. But how about the end of the fourth line, also clear, with the word "run" on an oasis of clean paper, and nothing after it. That "no" in the letter was not the work of its writer.

"I put it in its envelop, Daverill, and not a soul see inside that letter from me till you . . ."

"How do you know that?" He paused, reflecting. "It