

Chapter Seventeen

of circumstances, but not that his anger had ever been baseless or the punishment undeserved. Thus he had held always his own self-respect, and from his self-respect had proceeded his iron and effective rule.

So in the case of the young man with whom now his thoughts were occupied. Twice he had warned him from the country without the punishment which the third attempt rendered imperative. The events succeeding his arrival at Conjuror's House warmed the Factor's anger to the heat of almost preposterous retribution perhaps—for after all a man's life is worth something, even in the wilds—but it was actually retribution, and not merely a ruthless proof of power. It might be justice as only the Factor saw it, but it was still essentially justice—in the broader sense that to each act had followed a definite consequence.