

proper regard for its dignity, safely on board the yacht, and then bring it at once to me."

When he had finished speaking the Prince turned, and without looking at the King, passed on with the others across the terrace and disappeared in the direction of the shore, where the launch lay waiting.

Gordon crossed the room and picked up the crown from the table, lifting it with both hands, the King and Barrat watching him in silence as he did so. He hesitated, and held it for a moment, regarding it with much the same expression of awe and amusement that a man shows when he is permitted to hold a strange baby in his arms. Turning, he saw the sinister eyes of the King and of Barrat fastened upon him, and he smiled awkwardly, and in some embarrassment turned the crown about in his hands, so that the jewels in its circle gleamed dully in the dim light of the room. Gordon raised the crown and balanced it on his finger tips, regarding it severely and shaking his head.