

interest in his future, his confidant. So, in a pause of the conversation over their wine, he found himself unbosoming his secret regarding his father, and relating the whole of the facts, as he knew them, ending with the recovery of the package, and its mutilation in so tragic a manner. Monmouth heard him out, to the end, in evident interest; then, when he had finished, he looked at him steadily for a moment, as if trying to gauge the strength of his character, then asked in grave tones:

"Are you really determined to solve this secret?"

"Is it not a natural desire?" returned Etherington.

"If you are so determined," said the other slowly, as though weighing each word, "it may surprise you to know that I am the only person on this continent who can gratify your curiosity."

"You?" cried Etherington, in amazement.

"Yes," continued Monmouth gravely, and still watching the other to see the effect of his words; "but it will be a knowledge for which you will pay dearly. It will, when gained, if indeed I know your character, stand between you and all the happiness and hope of this world, and wreck your life," he added significantly, "as it has mine."

"Listen to me," he said, speaking with more serious feeling than Etherington had ever known him evince, "listen before it is too late," and he leaned forward toward the young man: "I was once like you, young, happy, hopeful, and on the road to a great military career. I was the light-hearted gay friend of men who