

"That is a poor recommendation to bring before this court," said one of the lesser judges, with a vicious leer upon his lean face. "Where is your home?"

"No home have I had these ten years, save the wide sky or the cover of a tent, and the hard ground; and I require no recommendation before this court but my innocence."

"Have you no friend to vouch for you?"

"None, but this friend by my side." I touched the spot where the hilt of my sword should have been; but even that last refuge had been taken away, and I was naked in the courthouse of my enemies.

"Then," said the Chief Justice, "we shall provide you with a home, more secure, if not so commodious as that in which you are wont to lie." A quick smile of gratification passed over his heavy face, as if he lusted in the infliction of pain.

"I desire to be heard!"

"And to the question you shall be heard."

"I desire to know why I am here. I am an Englishman, and by the law of England I ought not to be taken, nor imprisoned, nor called in question, nor put to the answer, but according to the law of the land, which I challenge as my birthright on my own behalf, and on behalf of all who may stand in like case with me."

"Sirrah! We are here to do justice, to tell you what is law, and not you us."

"You are not here to threaten me, nor are these menaces fit for the mouth of a judge. The safety of the prisoner, which I am, stands in the indifference of the court, and you ought not to behave yourselves as parties seeking every advantage against me."