

She listened for Susan's limping footstep on the stairs. Why did it not come? Something wrong there, or at least unusual! Leaving her candle, she wrapped herself hurriedly in a flannel garment she called her dressing-gown, and went downstairs to the landing. All was dark below, and the door was shut, to the street. She called in a loud whisper:—"Is that Susan?" and no answer came:—"Who is that?" and still got no answer.

She went back quickly for her candle, and descended the stairs, holding it high up to see all round. No one in the kitchen itself, certainly. The little parlour-door stood open. She thought she had shut it. Could she be sure? She looked in, and could see no one—advanced into the room, still seeing no one—and started suddenly forward as the door swung to behind her.

She turned terrified, and found herself alone with the man she most dreaded—her husband. He had waited behind the door till she entered, and had then pushed it to, and was leaning against it.

"Didn't expect to see me, Polly Daverill, did you now? It's me." He pulled a chair up, and, placing it against the door, sat back in it slouchingly, with a kind of lazy enjoyment of her terror that was worse than any form of intimidation. "What do you want to be scared for? I'm a lamb. You might stroke me! This here's a civility call. For to thank you for your letter, Polly Daverill."

She had edged away, so as to place the table between them. She could only suppose his words sardonically spoken, seeing what she had said in her letter. "I wrote it for your own sake, Daverill," said she deprecatingly, timidly. "What I said about the Police was true."

"Can't foller that. Say it again!"

"They *had* put on a couple of men, to keep an eye. They may be there now. But I'd made my mind up you should not be taken along of me, so I wrote the letter."

"Then what the Hell . . . !" His face set angrily, as he searched a pocket. The sunken line that followed that twist in his jaw grew deeper, and the scar on his knitted forehead told out smooth and white, against its reddening furrows. He found what he sought—her letter, which she recognised—and opened it before he finished his speech. "What the Hell," he repeated, "is the meaning of *this*?" He read it in a vicious undertone, biting off each word savagely and throwing it at her.

She had rallied a little, but again looked more frightened than