

to the bottom of his history it would be a most dramatic one. It regularly appeals to the imagination. I can quite believe our friend yonder has dragged himself out of bed by sheer force of will to keep some appointment, whereby he can wreak his long nursed revenge."

"Not in a place like this," Venner smiled.

"Why not? In the old days these things used to be played out to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning on a blasted heath. Now we are much more quiet and gentle in our methods. It is quite evident that our handsome friend is expecting someone to dine with him. He gives a most excellent dinner to his enemy, points out to him his faults in the most gentlemanly fashion, and then proceeds to poison him with a specially prepared cigar. I can see the whole thing in the form of a short story."

Venner smiled at the conceit of his companion. He was more than half inclined to take a sentimental view of the thing himself. He turned to the waiter to give some order, and as he did so, his eyes encountered two more people who, at that moment, entered the dining-room. They were a man and a woman. The man was somewhat past middle age, with a large bald head, covered with a shining dome of yellow skin, and a yellow face lighted by a pair of deep-sunk dark eyes. The whole was set off and rendered sinister by a small hook nose and a little black moustache. For the rest, the man was short and inclined