

"All right, your Honor; I don't like the job of doing it, neither;" and ranging aside, the worthy Sergeant gave place to Calvert to pass.

Rejoining his friends, he detailed to them the particulars of his interview with Barney.

They were still engaged discussing the inexplicable re-appearance of the Irishman, and also the new light that through his means might yet be thrown on the mystery attaching to Madeline's birth, when a servant came with a summons from the Colonel to attend him in the hall below.

With some little trepidation on the part of the two younger members of the company, but a resolved and haughty smile on the face of the elder, they prepared to obey.

Descending the broad stair-case, the appearance of matters below was sufficiently daunting.

The military detachment was drawn up in line before the closed outer door.

At a table in front of them was seated in his high-backed chair of carved and crimson-lined oak the Colonel, with his arm in a sling, and his countenance now pale, and again flushed by fever, wearing a stern and threatening expression.

At his right, sat McWhirter, vainly striving to appear at his ease, while his usually hang-dog expression was intensified into that of malicious villainy.

At the left end of the table sat Delaval, busily engaged sorting and arranging various documents.

One other figure, dilapidated and shrinking, crouched into a corner, seemingly anxious to shun observation.

Calvert was stepping forward to salute his parent, but was repelled by the stern injunction—

"Keep your distance, sir. Remember where you are; and wait till you be interrogated by the Court."

Confused, petrified by the cutting contrast of tone with that of the evening before, when his father was all tenderness and trust, the youth stood still; and with out-stretched hand and trembling lip, ejaculated—

"Oh, father! Don't."

Catching sight at the instant of the Frenchman's look of mocking triumph, he turned on him in a sudden fury—