

naturally occurred to him that he might communicate with the police, but added to his inexperience in such matters came the thought that he must keep his counsel until he had sufficient facts to go upon. After all, the landlord's estimate of these men might be true—that they assembled at the Wolf merely to indulge in drunken boastings and threats. "Their bark," as he had said, might be "worse than their bite."

Meanwhile he had been a little puzzled by a stranger who had been staying at the inn for several days, and who, in the energetic prosecution of his business, had that afternoon been trying to sell him some historical works, the merits of which he had explained in glowing terms. This stranger was a well-set-up man of perhaps five and thirty, with a keen eye, an affable manner, and an inexhaustible flow of talk. But, strange to say, he was so deaf that Fritz had to speak to him in a very loud voice to make him hear.

"Halleck is my name, sir; John Halleck, purveyor and supplier of the best kind of literature. Literature, sir, is the food of the mind. I can see at a glance, Mr. ———," and he looked inquiringly at Fritz.

"Kingstone," said Fritz.

"I beg your pardon," said the man, hollowing his hand and putting it to his ear.