

seated himself between me and the fire.

"A madman," I whispered to Bolton.

We were all silent again, with our eyes fixed on our strange visitor. His eyes were fixed on the fire. After a while Bolton reached for a bottle and poured out a glass of wine and timorously handed it to him. He drank eagerly.

"You are very kind," he said.

"You seem to be in trouble," I ventured.

Just then a night-hawk screamed high overhead. The man started and became deathly pale.

He was calm again. "Trouble!" he said, bitterly, "I have such a trouble that no human power can cure. Every sound fills me with dread and the stillness terrifies me. I shun the daylight and fear the darkness. My mind is unhinged and my body a wreck. There is nothing left me but death, and I fear even its unknown terrors. Alas! where shall I fly; where escape this awful torture?" He placed his hands to the sides of his head and rocked to and fro as one in agony. Suddenly he sat up and gazed into the fire again. "You shall hear," he exclaimed, "you shall hear how hardly fate has dealt with me. You will understand and pity my sad condition. I have had a terrible experience—an experience that was never intended for any human being." Bolton passed him another glass, and he drank it at a draught.

"Let me tell you all." He made a long pause, then, "fifteen years ago," he said, "my father suddenly left Edinburgh and came to America. He gave no definite reason for so doing. But I had noticed that he had been troubled with some secret, gnawing trouble, for over a year before we left. One day he called me to him and said, 'Duncan, I am going to renounce my claim to the

Mac—estates," (I withhold our name) "and start over again in America. I am the direct heir, and yet, for a reason that I trust you shall never know, I am going away to leave it all behind forever. God forgive me if I do you any wrong in this, but now it is imperative we go." In three days we started for America. You must understand that my father had not long returned from India, where he had been for several years. He had left me in charge of a good tutor and I spent most of my time away in the highlands. So I had been very seldom at the Hall. Once when I was about nine years old, I was there for a few days. I remember distinctly every little detail connected with that visit, for it was then that I received the first faint impression that a sword heavier and sharper than that of Democles was suspended over our heads. It was a faint impression then, and being young I forgot it. I had heard two of the grooms talking together. I had heard my father's name mentioned and with boyish curiosity I listened. They talked of some horrible monstrosity that had been born into our family two generations ago. They said that this monster had been the heir to the Mac—estates: that it was so utterly inhuman and monstrous that the family were ashamed to give notice of its birth. That this monster had been shut up in a blind room where the window was high above the floor, and further, they said, that this terrible thing with outrageous proportions, hideously enlarged, *was still alive in that room*. I told father. He laughed at me and told me not to talk any more about such nonsense. But I afterwards noticed that it was from that day that his troubles began. And a year later we were in America. Here my father's health began to fail him. I saw him grow old before my eyes, in a few years. He ap-