

his eye on Rake, though, while nothing more came of the deeds of these bold men than making the agent pay for bread for the starving, the detective did not see why he should interfere.

That same afternoon Detective Carlyle rang the visitors' bell at the manor.

"I've called to see Lady Trethyn," he said to the housekeeper, when the servant who had answered the bell brought that worthy person to the door.

"Then I'm afraid, sir, that you can't see her."

Detective Carlyle looked at her searchingly.

"Why do you say that?" he asked.

"Because my lady is very ill indeed," replied the housekeeper, "and no fit to see anybody."

"Nobody?"

"Only the doctors."

"Well, ma'am," said the detective humorously, "surely they're not nobody?"

"Oh, yes, they are. They're obliged to see her."

Mr. Carlyle smiled.

"There be one of the doctors in with her now," said the woman, plainly irritated at the detective's manner.

"Dr. Burns?" queried Mr. Carlyle.

"Bless your life—no. My lady would never consent to see that gentleman after his scandalous behaviour towards poor Mr. Edward. It's Dr. Shearer that visits here now, and his assistant."

"Is Dr. Shearer inside now?"

"No; it's his assistant; a very clever young man, I'm told."

"Young man?"

"Young man, of course. Be not all the assistants young gen'l'men?"

"To be sure, to be sure," said the detective; "how very stupid of me! What made my lady choose Dr. Shearer? Dr. Mulligan is much nearer Trethyn, and a splendid fellow."

"My lady is some way related to Dr. Shearer, sir."

Detective Carlyle raised his brows in pure astonishment, and his tongue was on the point of framing the question, How? But he refrained.

"My lady is often ill now?" he asked.

"Always," replied the housekeeper;

"she's confined to her room altogether, and sees no one."

"But I think she'll see me," said the detective.

"That I'm sure she won't," replied the housekeeper emphatically.

"At all events," said the detective, "you will go and ask her."

The woman was shaking her head vigorously, but the detective went on calmly—

"I will just step inside while you do," he said. "My lady expects to see me, and I've called on private business with her. Will you now go and ask her?"

Still the woman shook her head, and at the same time did her best to bar the detective's entrance.

"Well, ma'am," said the detective coolly, "it just means this. Either you go and ask her or I go myself."

As he said these words Mr. Carlyle, with a quick movement, slipped past the housekeeper, and the next moment was quietly contemplating one of the great oil-paintings which hung in the hall.

"I'll give you another chance, ma'am," he said, without turning his head in the slightest to see the effect his action had produced upon the housekeeper; "it's either you or I that must go. You can tell my lady that it's the gentleman from London that wants to see her."

Startled at the strange man's action, the woman stood staring at him for several moments, scarcely knowing what to do or say. Had she dared she would at once have given the stranger the length of her tongue, to put it forcibly. But supposing, after all, that Lady Trethyn did expect this man? If so, it would be wise for her own sake to restrain her feelings. It was, however, with the greatest difficulty that she could manage it, and she had to bite her tongue severely to keep it from wagging hotly.

"Are you going, ma'am?" calmly asked the detective, as he moved from one picture to another, and surveyed them with leisurely indifference to the woman's anger. "If you don't, you know, I must go myself."

Driven to it, at last the woman slowly proceeded to Lady Trethyn's room and knocked gently.

"Only me, ma'am," she said, in answer to Lady Trethyn's inquiry as to who was there. "There's a