

praisers, accountant's clerks, etc.—were bribed with gifts. Their silence was bought. No expert was ever admitted until Stuart, Copland, and their accomplices had first got hold of him and corrupted him.

And did not the irrefutable logic of facts support Mr Lamplough? The fraud could be sustained only by a perpetual bleeding of the public. This man, Gregory Stuart, in a few years had extracted something like five millions sterling from the public; then he withdrew, and the extraction of new capital ceased; and in a year the true state of affairs disclosed itself. The dividends dropped to nothing; debts accumulated; the company was hopelessly insolvent.

Lamplough, the virulent pamphleteer, said he could prove all this, was given every opportunity of proving it—and lamentably failed. Official Receiver with all his questions can do no more than Lord Brentwood did with his questions. It is impossible to unravel the tangle left behind him by the great Sir Gregory. With every question you ask, your suspicion deepens, but you are no nearer to giving it a firm basis. Figures tally with figures, everything seems accounted for; and yet you obscurely feel the veils of fraud, though you cannot tear them and rend them.

Copland himself is here to answer questions—and not recruiting his health on the Continent. He is examined day after day. Some days he seems half rogue and half fool; other days he seems wholly rogue or wholly fool; but generally things look bad for Copland. He owns that his accounts are muddled; but he swears that in the circumstances this is natural. He explains the muddle by the multiform character of his relations with the late Sir Gregory. First of all, Stuart was his very dear friend—"a heart of gold," says Copland with emotion. Then again, Stuart was his partner—a sleeping partner in the furniture business—that is to say, Stuart propped him on his legs by loans. Stuart was merely his patron when he gave out contracts for the hotels. And again, Stuart was his private customer. Copland worked for Stuart in the ordinary way of trade. For instance, he renovated the octagon hall at Knightsbridge; and, quite recently, he furnished and decorated a house for Sir Gregory in Curzon Street.

It thus naturally followed that Copland never quite knew how he stood financially. The hotel contracts were never