

desiring Mrs. Willinton to leave the room, as his visitor asked if he might speak with him alone, he motioned him to a chair. When they were left to themselves, the stranger drew towards his host, and said :

"Last Thursday an attempt was made to rob you?"

The voice sunk into the Captain's heart. He nodded.

"Should you like to know the robbers?"

The Captain nodded again.

"I can identify them."

"You can?" said the Captain, speaking for the first time. "Who are they?"

"Not so fast, sir," said Whitley. "In one of them, the least guilty of the three, I have an interest. If you will be satisfied with the principal robber I shall hunt him up for you. If you are not, there are no witnesses here; and besides, I trust to your honor to forget what has passed. We are 'as you were,' Captain."

The Captain had been eyeing his visitor and catching the sound of his voice, and not a doubt remained upon his mind that he had before him the meaner villain. He controlled himself, however, and did not say so, being determined to find a clue to the business if he could, without binding himself by any promise.

"I cannot promise what I can't perform," he said. "Impunity for crime is but too easily obtained without aid of mine; besides, I know of no degree of guilt between them. One was a meaner villain than the others, and I am not sure that he was not the worse man. In which of them do you take an interest?"

"In him who came first towards the door. He had in vain urged his comrade to be off, and it was against his will that the attempt upon your life was made at all?"

"This I believe," was the reply; "but, if I mistake not, it was at the instigation of this same catiff that the stables of Captain Willinton were pointed out as worth the plundering."

While he spoke he fixed his eye keenly upon the face of Whitley, and he read there a confirmation of all he had suspected. But his words were daggers to the ruffian. He remembered that he had made use of language such as this in the forest cave, but he did not remember that he had again spoken them under the porch of Captain Willinton's house; he, therefore, imagined that the whole had been betrayed, and the fear that he was too late for his own safety rushed upon his mind.

Dr. Greenleaf, who had been paying an early visit to young Bradshaw, who in the interim had been removed to his father's house, called to

make a report of his condition to Captain Willinton, and without ceremony entered the breakfast parlor. The host warmly welcomed him, saying,

"My dear sir, your calling is most opportune. I have just found a clue to the robbers. Mr. Whitley has kindly called to tell me he can identify them."

"That's fortunate indeed!" replied the Doctor. "Young Bradshaw seems to be in a bad way. I would give something beyond a trifle to know who the villain is to whom he is indebted for the horrible wound he bears. I could swear that the man who gave the blow is a murderer by trade."

Whitley was in agony. He began to think his treachery was about to recoil upon himself. The cold sweat burst from every pore, and he longed for some excuse to leave the room. Captain Willinton, who saw his agony, however, was determined not to spare him. He believed the fellow's errand was to buy his own safety by denouncing his comrades; and, although he had no means of proving it, he determined to administer a little salutary punishment, through the man's fears, should nothing turn up to furnish a reason for detaining him in custody. He touched a bell which stood upon the table. Mrs. Willinton herself, who was anxious about the meaning of Whitley's visit, opened the door.

"My love," said Willinton, "will you tell Anderson and Greene not to leave the house, but to remain within call. I shall, probably, want them shortly."

Mrs. Willinton retired to comply with the request of her husband, and left the three to their consultations.

The plot seemed to thicken. Whitley's terror increased. He could not conceive where all this was to end. He was certain that he was suspected, but he did not know, nor could not guess how far the knowledge of Willinton extended. What course to pursue it was beyond the power of his mind to decide. Had the Captain or the Doctor taken advantage of the craven spirit which crushed him down, they might have elicited every necessary information; but the Captain felt such a loathing for the man that he could not bring himself to seek for information at his hands, and the good-hearted Doctor did not share either his penetration or the knowledge which he had gained from Whitley's voice.

The men, in the meantime, paced in the adjoining room, waiting their master's orders, and every step, sent a chill to the heart of the miserable Whitley. Greene entered the room on some