

was from time to time twisted and distorted with pain, and from time to time there came into the dark, melancholy eyes a look of almost malignant fury. It was evident that the newcomer suffered from racking pain, for his lips were twitching, and Venner could see that his even, white teeth were clenched together. Altogether, it was a striking figure to intrude upon the smooth gaiety of the dining-room, for it seemed to Venner that death and the stranger were more than casual acquaintances. He had an idea that it was only a strong will which kept the invalid on this side of the grave.

The sufferer sank at length with a sigh of relief into a large armchair, which had been specially placed for him. He waved the servants aside as if he had no further use for them, and commenced to study his *menu*, as if he had no thought for anything else. Venner did not fail to note that the man had the full use of his arms: his eye dwelt with critical approval on the strong, muscular hands and wrists.

"Now, I wonder who that fellow is?" he said. "What a magnificent frame his must have been before he got so terribly broken up."

"He is certainly a fascinating personality," Gurdon admitted. "Somehow, he strikes me not so much as the victim of an accident as an unfortunate being who is suffering from the result of some terrible form of vengeance. What a character he would make for a story! I am ready to bet anything in reason that if we could get