

Baring laid the light on the table, and drew one of the chairs right into a corner of the room. The other chair lay at the head of his bedstead; and, as he sat down in his corner, his eye somehow fell upon the vacant seat, and kept itself fixed in a dreamy gloomy kind of reverie.

"Heavens!" he cried, striking his forehead with his right palm. "Heavens!" he repeated, "what shall I do?"

He turned his eyes towards the white wall, and he was startled to see some one just near him! He rose suddenly, and the stranger made a corresponding motion. Only then, he saw he had been frightened by his own shadow! "Wretched man," he exclaimed, "what is the matter with me? Am I going to get mad?"

He flung himself again into the chair. The candle burned dimly, and everything around was as dreary as the light was miserable. He looked like a condemned culprit, and the room looked like a condemned cell, where the culprit was preparing for a hangman's rope on the morrow.

The impressions of such a moment color everything; and, what is strange enough, even the accidental often falls in with the impressicns. Thus, when Baring's gloom was gloomiest, and his moroseness most morose, a rat stood before him on the floor. The creature was quite at home, and looked with fiery eyes into the eyes of Baring! The young man started with a cry! But the horrible thing did not stir! He made a kick at the monster; but looking down, the horrible thing was no longer there!

Baring then, according to his own account, began to brood! He brooded a long time. He knew not how long. He raised his eyes to the vacant chair at his bed's head. It was no longer vacant! Some one had stolen in, and occupied it.

Baring started up once more; and was on the point of seizing the intruder, when he lost heart, and sat down quite subdued.

"I ask pardon," the stranger said, "but I come as your friend. I know your difficulties, and I am one of experience. I come to give you counsel?"

"Counsel!"

"Yes, counsel!" And Baring could not withdraw his eyes from the severe but genial looks of the "friend" who came to give him "counsel."

"And, sir,——"

"Do not worry yourself, Mr. Baring I have my tastes. I know your needs, and I come to speak about them. Indeed, I am an old follower of many of your family!"

Baring became silent.

"You are wretchedly off in the case of that thousand pounds."

Baring started.

"It is a hard thing to be exposed—and proved a liar! Very hard!—and your enemy has no pity."

"Well, sir, who the——"

"Quiet for a moment. Are there not some ways of getting that thousand pounds?" and the stranger raised a pair of dark brows, revealing dreadfully dark and very small black eyes.

"Ways?"

"Yes, Mr. Baring. What a triumph that Kinravn will have, and how the puppies who envied you will exult! It is a real pity."

"Well! Well!"

"I was going to add that forgery on Commerford for five hundred will be discovered early next month; and your own note to Kane for a like sum will expose you so horribly!"

And the stranger stared horribly at Baring.

"Many a man would end it all by a bullet through his own brain, Mr. Baring."

Baring thought the same, but made no reply.

"Now, it is a sad thing that old men like your uncle heap up money uselessly and wickedly, while so many people need it. It has struck many a one, that such peoples' lives are useless to society—or, rather, great evils to it."

Baring sighed.

"Really, a young man has great temptation to rid himself of such a foe to his life. It takes nothing from a wretched old creature like Mr. D'Alton—for he has not long to run—and it removes the great obstacles to a life of delight and triumph."

"There's a gallows!" cried Baring bitterly.

"Yes, yes," replied the stranger, with