

With all his capacity for advising others, the book-keeper was weak. Like most other men he had his own dim shrine, where he had set up a little altar to a false god, and where, in moments of relaxation, he would kneel to burn incense. Love of admiration was Mr. Soady's Baal. And thus it came to pass that he, all incontinently, was delivered into the hands of Krum.

That Janus-tongued vagabond encountered the book-keeper—not, be it stated, by accident—at a church meeting; religion, masonry, carousal, were with Krum all means to an end. Soady, who was none too respectably dressed himself—the busier the man the shabbier his coat—was undismayed by the bandit's cloak, the hat of broken rim, the bulging shoes, and the lack of linen, which were the outward characteristics of the man who introduced himself suddenly. When this keen-eyed stranger, whose manner throughout the meeting had been devotional, smiled in his superior manner, and gave him the masonic grip, Soady's heart opened like a wayside flower touched by the sun, and he returned the greeting of this "brother" with unction, mingled with respect. In five minutes the book-keeper was, metaphorically speaking, gagged and bound, the Philistine's prisoner.

"Regarding my outward appearance, I beg you not to be over-hasty in your criticism," said the magnetic Krum, halting as he spoke to adjust a refractory boot, during their progress from the meeting-house. "Manners, and not clothes, make the man. I am, as a gentleman of your innate intelligence and discernment will have instantly perceived, one who has been singularly persecuted by fortune. But believe me, my dear sir, it is not