

"I suppose I don't look much like a man with a past," he went on; "like a man who is the victim of a great sorrow. I'll tell you the story presently, but not here; I really could not do it in surroundings like these. I've tried everything, even to money-making, but that is the worst and most unsatisfactory process of the lot. There is nothing so sordid as that."

"Oh, I don't know," Gurdon laughed. "It is better to be a multi-millionaire than a king to-day. Take the case of this man Fenwick, for instance; the papers are making more fuss of him than if he was royalty travelling incognito."

Venner smiled more or less contemptuously. He turned to get a casual glance of a noisy party who had just come into the dining-room, for the frivolous note jarred upon him. Almost immediately the little party sat down, and the decorous air of the room seemed to subdue them. Immediately behind them followed a man who came dragging his limbs behind him, supported on either side by a servant. He was quite a young man, with a wonderfully handsome, clean-shaven face. Indeed, so handsome was he, that Venner could think of no more fitting simile for his beauty than the trite old comparison of the Greek god. The man's features were perfectly chiselled, slightly melancholy and romantic, and strongly suggestive of the early portraits of Lord Byron. Yet, all the same, the almost perfect face