

What was it going to say ? No—I was not in love with my mystery, I maintain it ; but my fingers trembled as I broke the seal. There were not many words :—

“ I told you that I should some day demand my fee. The day has come, sooner than I looked for. ‘ To help you, if ever you want me ’—those were your own words yesterday, on which you offered me your hand. If your words meant nothing, do not come. I shall think none the worse of you. But, if they meant what words should mean, you are strong enough to travel now : get a horse, and take the straightest road to Lugos. There are reasons why I can say no more.—A. M.”

Of course there was but one thing for a man with the smallest remnant of a head on his shoulders to do ; and, of course, that was just the one thing which could not be done. She had not spared herself in my service ; for aught I could tell, it was on my account that she was in peril ; and that she might well be in some most complicated peril followed from what I had seen a few hours ago, and had been so utterly unable to read. To have been prudent would have been brutal.

“ Phil,” said I, “ you know this place. Buy me the best horse you can find in an hour—a horse for the road. I have had a message that obliges me to leave at once, ill or well.”

“ And a good job too,” said Phil. “ ‘Tis time ! And, faith, I’ll go as well.”

“ You ? ”

“ To be sure. If there’s any master that wants a man, ’tis yourself ; and if there’s any man that