

"You might as well keep a civil tongue in your head, I should think. You would have been dead most likely by this time, if it hadn't been for me, and if this is the line you are going to take, I think the world would be a sweeter place at this minute if I had minded my own business instead of interfering in yours."

To his amazement, the old man became suddenly more amiable on being talked to in this fashion, which after all was perhaps the kind of treatment with which he was most familiar.

"Hoity toity, then, young feller, keep your hair on, or else you will be bald before you are twenty, and that would be a pity," said Reuben, with the nearest approach to a smile of which he was ever guilty. "So you are the young shaver what saved me from getting my head bashed in by those two ruffians who ran away with my money, in order to get me out of my entrenchments, so that they could knock me about. Well, they did not get all they wanted, or expected, not at that time at least, though I dare say they have helped themselves since. But I will be revenged on them before I've done, or my name is not Reuben Shore."

"I hope that you will soon be quite strong again; good afternoon," said Elgar, lifting his cap again, and preparing to move on. In his opinion the old man was a little touched in his head, and he did not care to linger longer talking to him.

"Here, wait a minute! What's your hurry? But there, young people have no sympathy with the old and the poor," whined Reuben, in a tone so melancholy that Elgar at once pulled up and asked how he could serve him.