

Any one who held an interview with the old and eccentric merchant was obliged to do the most of the talking. His nature seemed to be extractive and absorbent. To simple-hearted Nicholas these qualities were irresistible, and with a few suggestions and questions here and there, Mr. Coates managed to draw out from the young man the whole story of his experiences and experiments with the rogues he had taken upon his hands. The old man carried a sober face through it all, but suffered through certain inward convulsions, which, on rising to his throat, in the direction of laughter, were suddenly shunted off into a cough.

He had heard many praises of Nicholas from his wife and daughter, as well as from Glezen, with whom he had become well-acquainted ; but this was the first time he had ever enjoyed the privilege of a good look into him. He was pleased with him and more than ready to serve him.

"D—did you ever skin an eel?" said he.

"Never."

"Sl—ippery," said Mr. Coates.

"You think these are slippery fellows, I suppose."

"H—handle 'em with m—mittens. D—don't make too m—uch of 'em."

"My mittens are the police," said Nicholas. "They have seen the rough side of my hand, and felt it too. All that I want to have you understand is that my whole heart is in the enterprise of saving these men. I believe it can be done. I have the advantage of them, and I propose to keep it. If one of these men dares cross the line back into his old life and associations, I shall put him where he will have an opportunity to repent at leisure."

"You w—want me to t—take Y——"

"Yankton, yes."

"I d—don't see how I c—can."

"I'm very sorry. Have you nothing for him to do?"

"Y—yes, I could m—make a light p—porter of him, but I c—couldn't speak his n—name once a f—fortnight."

Nicholas laughed heartily, and responded :

"Then we must get a new name."

"C—call it T—Twitchell," said Mr. Coates. "He'll r—recognise the t—translation."

"So you'll take Twitchell will you?"

"Y—yes, I g—guess so. I suppose a r—rose by any other name would s—smell a g—good deal sweeter."

"Oh, I'll see that he is cleanly dressed," said Nicholas.

"W—what are you g—going to d—do with the other one?"

"I don't know."

Mr. Coates, who sat in a revolving chair, wheeled around to his desk,