

II

WILMOT buttoned his coat over fifteen one-thousand-dollar bills. Only supreme necessity could have persuaded him to take them, since, although he had not put his name to a paper of any kind, he felt a little as if he had sold himself to the devil. But Blizzard had shown him no deviltry; only kindness and a certain whimsicality of speech and a point of view that was engaging.

The transaction finished, Wilmot was for leaving, but being under obligation to the legless man was at pains not to be abrupt. He lingered then a little, and they talked.

"The first time we met," said the beggar, "you were roller-skating with a pretty child. She was so pretty that I asked you her name. And I have never forgotten it."

He did not add that he had watched that pretty child's goings and comings for many years; that he had lain in wait to see her pass; that he had bribed servants in her father's house to give him news of her; and that the day approached when, fearing neither man nor God, he proposed that she should disappear from the world that knew her, and go down into the infamous depths of that vengeance which had been the key-note of his life. Nor did he add