

"I am quite sure he would rather you stayed here, and I also, Ellinor."

She obeyed him, but she was uneasy with

used his name. Now I am going to beg once more—for my daughter—for Ellinor Stop this thing from becoming public; save

tack I had to-night was from the heart."

"And my son?"

"Tell him if you think it right; do as you like. Send him abroad. I will tell Ellinor she must wait for my return, but let it fall upon her gradually—gently; do not break her heart."

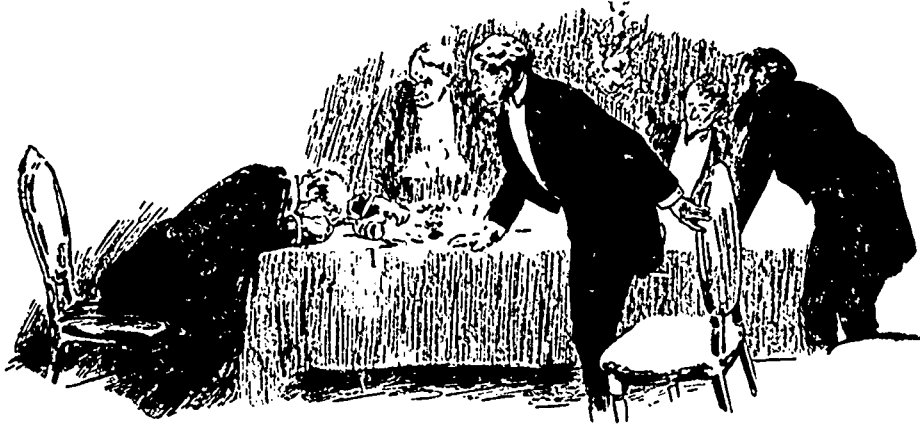
There was something in the absolute simplicity of the men's pleading that touched Sir Arthur's heart—not an unkindly one; also the plan proposed seemed the best for them all.

He did not know that Matthew Rawdon looked to the possibility that, with his self-effacement, his crime might be forgiven—to his little girl; that he hoped much from Guy's strength and Sir Arthur's need of that £300,000.

Sir Arthur hesitated. "I think," he said, slowly, at last, "it will be the best plan."

"You consent, then? You can assure this man's silence——"

"I consent. And as for Mr.—Mr.—yes, I can silence him."



"THE HOST HAD FALLEN FORWARD IN HIS CHAIR."

foreboding, especially when Sir Arthur did not return, and longed to see the list of her guests, that she might be free.

In the library lay the master of Firholt. He had shrunk in this last hour. He was more wizened: his hands and feet seemed drawing themselves up into clothes that had suddenly grown loose and baggy; his face was livid, even to the lips. He lay with his eyes closed.

Sir Arthur Peyton was walking up and down in the room, limping still from the gout, his face working; he was in a terrible passion.

"You own to it—that this man's story is true; that you have plotted to bring disgrace upon an honourable house; added crime to crime, the taint of it to fall upon the children of my son?"

The shrivelled figure on the couch trembled.

"I believed that it would never become known. I did it for her."

"Known or not known, the disgrace was there—the d—disgrace! Good God! how can I tell what Guy will do! The exposure alone——"

"Must that exposure come?" said Mr. Rawdon, faintly.

"Come? who is to prevent it?" said the man of title. "The scandal will half kill Lady Peyton. To be sure I have stopped that—American's mouth for the present. No one but he and myself know for certain."

A faint tinge of colour was coming back to Mr. Rawdon's face. He reached a cordial that was upon a table near, and drank it. Then he stood upright. There was a touch of dignity in his bent figure, his thin hands were folded quietly, his feet shuffled no more.

"Sir Arthur, when I forged that cheque my wife was dying, and I had no money—none. I had begged five pounds from the father of the man who dined at my table to-day, and he refused it; then I

her from knowing. It will be better for you, too; and I—I will go to-night. I cannot stay here. I will write to her—telling her that the love of the old roving life is upon me—what you will. I cannot live long. I know it. The at-



"THE SHRIVELLED FIGURE ON THE COUCH TREMBLED."

When length Ellinor was rid of her guests, she went to seek her father. She found that he had gone to his room, and that the door was locked.

He answered back to her inquiries that he was better—anxious to sleep: she might go to bed without fear. She went back to Guy, who was waiting in the drawing room. He declined a seat in his mother's carriage and meant to ride home. Ellinor slipped her arms about his neck—

"Guy, what is the matter to-night? Something has happened, or is going to happen. What is it?"

He gathered her in his arms, crushing the chiffons of her yellow gown—

"Nothing but your own nervous fears, sweetheart."

"Guy, we have never talked much about our love. Tell me now how much you love me."

"An idle question, Nell. I love you, dear. If you were alone, and poor——"

"And dishonoured—say dishonoured, Guy."

He paused a moment, then said quietly—"And dishonoured, Nell—outwardly; in your own pure heart you never could be