

The words seemed to him written in letters of flame: they burnt into his very soul.

The Jew entered the room. Until the servant had closed the door, he stood respectfully, bowing to his host, who eyed him with a fierce glance of hatred, like an animal at bay.

"Vot," said the Jew, and is this the vay you receive an old friend? Ma tear young gentlemans, this is not goot manners."

"Hold!" said Harold. "I will secure the outer door of the passage to prevent interruption. Then let no unnecessary word drop from your lips. Say all you have to say—say it quickly, and be gone."

"Bless my heart! just the same high-spirited, joking gentlemans he always vos."

"You have come about that deed."

"Just for a settlement. It's true there's four more years to run, but I thought now you was such a great gentlemans, you'd like to have the matter put an end to. Sho for old friendship's sake, I went to all the expense of coming down here to see you."

"Have you got the deed with you?"

"Ma friend has down stairs."

"Well, what am I to do?"

"Vhy, you see, Mr. Macfarlane, ve've made a very sad discovery—the names on the deeds, Sir, are forged, every one of 'em. Ve've the witnesses attesting it ready to swear they never wrote a letter of their names, moreover your respected father mentions in his will these very leases, and declares them free of mortgage. Oh, Mr. Macfarlane, Mr. Macfarlane, vot ish to become of you?" and the old hypocrite held up his hands with an air of intense commiseration.

"How much do you want?" said Harold, sternly.

"Oh, it ish'nt me, ma tear gentlemans, I wouldn't hurt a hair of your head; but, look you, it's ma friend in the City; bless your lives, he's a terrible bad man, and he declares he'll transport you."

"How much does *he* want?"

"Oh, tear, tear, vot a funny gentlemans it ish," and he laughed aloud in admiration of the joke.

"Vell, look you, Sir, ma friend thought under the circumstances that as you'd come——"

"To the point at once!" cried Harold, impatiently.

The old Jew looked all around the room with a mysterious air, then dabbing one fat finger emphatically on the palm of his hand at every syllable he uttered, he said,

"Thir-teen thou-sand—pounds."

Waiting to enjoy the blank look of utter astonishment depicted on his victim's countenance, he added, "ten for ma friend in the City and three for me."

For a few minutes Harold was silent. Then turning upon his persecutor with all the intensity of a fixed desperation, he said,

"I will not pay you one penny more than five thousand pounds."

"Now, ma tear young gentlemans," said the Jew, with an air impudent-