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lently, whilst a profound astonishment was depicted upon his face. Quickly recovering himself, however, he strode forward and with a note of challenge in his voice, asked—

"How do you know who I am?"

The doctor's lips widened into an ungenial smile—

"No doubt you are surprised," he said. "You were not aware perhaps that I include clairvoyance and crystal-reading amongst my multifarious accomplishments; and have, therefore, means of knowledge superior to those of ordinary mortals; or am I wrong, and is it in this capacity that you wish to consult me?"

With a quick movement of head and hand Dick seemed to wave assertion and suggestion alike contemptuously aside—

"Try your mountebank tricks on others," he said. "They are lost on me." Then, standing so close to the short square figure that he seemed to tower over it, he continued—

"Since you know my name—no matter how—you can perhaps guess the purport of my coming."

"I prefer to wait for information; you are not encouraging to my poor talents. Take a chair, Mr. Emberson."

As he spoke, Dr. Kalfian, obviously uncomfortable in the young man's close proximity, edged round to the other side of the large writing-table by which they were both standing; and having by this simple manoeuvre secured in case of emergency a very effectual barricade, seated himself and faced his visitor. Dick remained standing—his face was white and set, his grey eyes gleamed with a sombre fire; his whole expression was that of a man who is putting an iron constraint upon himself.

"I have come here to-day to strike a bargain with you," he said slowly. "If I listened to my natural instinct, I should shoot you down like a mad dog. No, you need not fear," he continued, as the doctor, whilst keeping his eyes fixed steadily on him, stealthily opened the drawer of the table and slipped his hand inside. "I tell you I have come in peace—not in war. What is done, cannot be undone; but it may be avenged, and shall be, if my conditions are not complied with."

Dr. Kalfian's hand emerged empty from its hiding-place. Arching his sinister brows, and shrugging his shoulders ostentatiously, he replied, with an affectation of carelessness which did not altogether hide a very real apprehension—

"My good sir, you are speaking in riddles; I am a busy man, and have neither time nor inclination to solve them. Come to the point; you mention conditions—clearly, therefore, you are of opinion I can be of some service to you. Let me know in what way."

"There is a certain object now in your possession which must be given up to me."

Dick paused, his eyes rivetted on his companion. The latter's face paled to a livid grey, and big drops of moisture stood out on his forehead.

"I don't understand you; I don't understand you!" he muttered volubly.

"Lies and prevarication are alike useless!" cried the young man, bringing his hand down on the edge of the table with such sledge-hammer force that the other instinctively recoiled. "I know all, I tell you—all!—offence and punishment. If you refuse my conditions, I shall place certain facts in the hands of the police which will go far towards proving the identity of the murderer of Carlton Emberson."

A cunning light crept into Dr. Kalfian's narrow black eyes.

"The murderer of Carlton Emberson!" he repeated as if in surprise. "Ah, yes, I understand. You mean the man responsible for the conflagration in which the latter lost his life."

"I mean nothing of the sort, and you know it," interposed Dick sternly; but the other, unheeding the interruption, continued reflectively—

"Perhaps I, too, might throw some light upon that dark and mysterious affair, which seems to have baffled your police. On the whole, I don't think it would be advisable for you, Mr. Emberson, to stir in the matter—awkward facts might come out—awkward questions might be raised."

"I am prepared to risk that," replied Dick sternly. "Once more I ask you which is it to be, restitution or—revenge? One I will have, I swear it!"



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