

Few would recognize in the shabby, seedy-looking and half-tipsy individual, sullenly seated with his feet stretched on the fender, the once handsome, dashing, well-dressed Richard Glanvill. He might now be a "bonnet" of a low gambling house, a haunter of billiardrooms, a thorough *chevalier d'industrie*, but of a very low order, fallen indeed, in every way.

Few—notwithstanding the hidden anguish, the hollow cheeks, the eyes red with weeping, but retaining about her still the remains of her marvelous and softened beauty—but would have recognized Mary Trescott, the hapless girl who had become the victim and the prey of the heartless and desperate adventurer.

"Oh, Richard," she was saying in an imploring plaintive voice, "I do not reproach you with your long absence—nor that you do not give me sufficient for a bare subsistence. I can earn a crust for myself and my baby—but do me that justice you have sworn so often—so very often—to do. I implore you, in the name of all you hold good!"

"Why, what the devil would the girl have?" was his coarse rejoinder.

"Marry me, Richard, marry me! Give me back my self-respect; do not let your child be pointed at—as—I cannot speak it—but as you hope for mercy—for good—marry me!"

The man turned his coarse, heavy face—a young face that had grown hideously, viciously old in the intelligence, the knavish cleverness, that marked it—and gave a low whistle and a mocking laugh.

"Marry you, Molly! That would be a game; and next week I should be pulled up, and tried for bigamy!"

The woman gave a shrill, wild cry—a burst of hysteric laughter followed, and then she fell on the floor as one dead.

Calling up help to her, he quitted the room, with a black and scowling brow, and left the place—wandering heedless, careless whither he went, yet with a sort of blind purpose, which led him at last into a tavern, in a retired, noisome nook at the West End, where villainy held her councils, where crime concocted its plans, and the victim was settled upon and doomed, by the members of the dark fraternity who leagued and banded together, and held there its high head-quarters.

In a private room, he found an individual—an attorney's clerk, of no very good repute—seated musingly over a solitary glass.

"By Jove! Dick," the latter exclaimed,

"you're the very fellow I wanted. There's something, I expect, we can work together."

"What's the matter?" asked Glanvill, flinging himself on a chair.

"Such a capital thing in the wind. You know Troughton, don't you? I've heard you speak of it. Ah, I see you do."

"Yes," replied Glanvill, not a little surprised however to hear the name.

"Well, I've got to hunt up the person and family of one Jack Trescott, a horse-dealer—a sad rascal, I fear. His daughter's coming in for fifteen thousand pounds, and I should like to find her, and nobble the lady and the rhino!"

Richard Glanvill started as though electrified. Could it be possible! Fifteen thousand pounds coming to Mary Trescott! It was incredible.

"I'll go with you," he said. "I can help you; but tell me all about it."

"It begins with a pedler, who died there mysteriously, and who, it turns out, was making enquiries through that part about a daughter, or a niece, who had vanished some twenty years before. The name was Berthold, and it has been partly traced that she married the horse-dealing fellow, you see."

"Berthold!" murmured Glanvill, with a beating heart. "The very name on the paper which Trescott took from the pedler! How lucky I should have taken it! Well," he added, aloud, "fire away, old *fiery facius*, as they say, and let us know all about it."

"All about it," was at present not so distinct as to make the whole plain and clear! but what was clear, amounted to this, as Glanvill learned from the clerk's recital—That, from some papers or information his master had ferreted out, the horse-breaker's wife, Berthold, had, for some reason or other, quitted her home and friends—that the pedler had gone in search of her, and perished—that something was wanting to fill up the link; but it was certain that if she or any child descended from her, could be found, the money—with accumulated interest—would be paid to her: the attorney of course (and the clerk), stipulating for a handsome gratuity!

The two were not long in making their arrangements. Glanvill for the present keeping to himself what he did know, in order to see to what account he could turn it. If it were true, what more easy than to marry her? only he had mentioned the ugly word, "Bigamy!" Why was that? We shall presently see.

In the meantime, after having emptied