

"Well, I'm doing my best; and perhaps when the fog is all out, we'll come to the revelations of the Beast."

There was a silence, in which the gross impostor shifted heavily in his seat, while a hand twitched across the mouth, and then caught at the breast of the threadbare black coat abstractedly.

Rawley leaned forward, one elbow on a knee, the cheroot in his fingers. He spoke almost confidentially, as to some ignorant and misguided savage—as he had talked to Indian chiefs in his time, when searching for the truth regarding some crime—

"I've had a lot of revelations in my time. A lawyer and a doctor always do. And though there are fools who say I'm no lawyer, as there are those who say with greater truth that you're no doctor, speaking technically we've both had 'revelations.' You've seen a lot that's seamy and so have I. You're pretty seamy yourself. In fact, you're as bad a man as ever saved lives—and lost them. You've had a long tether, and you've swung on it—swung wide. But you've had a lot of luck that you haven't swung high, too."

He paused and flicked away the ash from his cheroot while the figure before him swayed animal-like from side to side, muttering.

"You've got brains, a great lot of brains of a kind—however you came by them," Rawley continued; "and you've kept a lot of people in the West from passing in their cheques before their time. You've rooked 'em, chiselled 'em out of a lot of cash, too. There was old Lamson—fifteen hundred for the goitre on his neck—and Mrs. Gilligan for the cancer—two thousand, wasn't it? Tincture of Lebanon leaves you called the medicine didn't you? You must have made fifty thousand or so in the last ten years."