

hesitated. There is always a difficulty to the sensitive mind in speaking of the newly dead.

'The late Sir Robert Arden, Bart., lies, sir, in Number Four. My wife will usher you there if you wish it, but Mr. Howard begged particularly to have a few words with you first. He is now in your sitting-room. Mr. Walcot begged that he might be at hand in case of your arrival during his own absence. Selina!'

A very stout, but by no means vulgar-looking woman—she looked like the housekeeper in a family of distinction, and full ten years her husband's senior—here made her appearance.

'If you will kindly walk this way, sir,' said she, in a hushed voice.

She leads the way upstairs to a sitting-room on the first floor, where a young man of Gresham's age is sitting by the fire (for it is cold at 'The Point' still) reading a book in the French tongue—doubtless a scientific work on surgery. With a natural modesty he crams this into the pocket of his shooting jacket as the visitor is announced, and then comes forward with a grave smile of greeting. 'So glad to see you, Gresham, though alas on a most melancholy occasion. We have been expecting you these three days.'

'I only got Mr. Walcot's letter yesterday morning,' returned Gresham; 'there must have been some wretched mistake about it.'

'Mr. Walcot certainly wrote to you on the twenty-first,' answered the other, 'for I saw him direct the envelope. I am sorry for the mischance—for a certain reason.'

'What is that?'

'No matter, my dear fellow, that will keep. How well you are looking? You are not changed in anything since we parted at college, while I—I suppose it is being anchored so near the shore here in all sorts of weather—I have become a wreck this long time.'

If this had really been the case, sal-

vage was certainly due to somebody, for Mr. Howard still presented a very seaworthy and even taut appearance.

For a surgeon in so out-of-the-way a spot he was very smartly dressed, and had a certain air of fashionable idlesse, though far removed from ennui. The whiskers that sentinelled his handsome face were exceptionally well looked after, and he had an admiring way of regarding his boots which revealed the dandy.

'I was right,' thought Gresham, noticing this, 'about my friend here, so far as honesty is concerned, but it remains to be seen whether that scoundrel has not made a fool or a tool of him.'

'My dear Howard,' said he aloud, 'I present myself to you as an old friend in sad trouble, who may need your help; at all events I must ask of you to behave towards me with perfect frankness.'

'You mean as regards what has happened here, and especially with respect to Mr. Walcot's conduct,' was the unexpected reply. 'Most certainly I will do so, and the more willingly since I have been requested by that gentleman himself to conceal nothing.'

'Why should he suspect you of concealing anything?' put in Gresham quickly. 'Why should he have hinted at concealment at all!'

'Because he foresaw what would happen,' answered the young surgeon, with a smile. 'He knew you would want to pump me because you mistrust him. "Your friend Gresham thinks I am a rogue," said he, "because his interests and mine happen to be somewhat antagonistic, and he honestly thinks it. I cannot stoop to contest that point, but must leave you to judge for yourself. Only when he comes, for Heaven's sake answer all his questions without reserve, else he will at once believe that I have murdered his poor uncle, and that you have connived at it." I think that "and that you have connived at it," was a capital joke,' observed Mr.