

"Not proved! his guilt—my son's guilt not proved. God have mercy upon me!"

"Amen! and on him too," ejaculated Mr. Morgan. "Will you give me your son's address, for I wish to write to him. I cannot believe he has done it. I feel convinced there has been foul play somewhere."

Mr. Brereton sneered. "I should have thought, Mr. Morgan, you had seen enough of young men to know they will do almost anything if they can do it without danger of immediate detection. As for your offer, I decline it. I will write to my son, myself."

Then they parted.

The rest is soon told. Mr. Brereton wrote to his son in no measured terms, ordering him to return immediately.

Owing to some delay in the postal arrangements, and more than that, to a slight change in his route, neither the summons which had been forwarded to him, nor his father's letter, reached him whilst he was abroad. He had remained longer in Italy than he had originally intended, and consequently was obliged to proceed at once for Oxford without going home, as the vacation was over. He went to see Mr. Morgan on his arrival, and learned from him, for the first time, of what a heavy crime he was suspected.

Frank expressed such astonishment at the charge, and declared so candidly that he owed Mr. Newton £50, which he had promised to pay at the beginning of the term, that Mr. Morgan could not help believing in his innocence, which, from his previous knowledge of Brereton, he was already prepared to do.

"You mean to say, Mr. Morgan," Frank burst out indignantly, after a moment's pause, "you mean me to understand that there is a warrant out against me, and in fact, that I am in danger of being taken up for forgery at any time!"

"I do, indeed," was the sorrowful reply; "for the police are on the look out for you. The best advice I can give you is to go home and tell your father the same tale you have told me, and see if he will endeavour to smooth matters over for you. I believe you, Brereton; and whether you stay and stand trial, or whether you leave the country without incurring the risk of being condemned, you may always count me amongst the number of your friends, although I freely confess appearances are against you."

Frank followed the advice he had received, left Oxford, and succeeded in reaching home without being discovered.

His father, when informed of his arrival, refused to see him, and ordered the servant to desire him to leave the house without delay.

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