

"I am not insolent—I only tell you the truth, and the whole world may know it. Your name is 'Amilton.' You ruined a poor girl, under a promise of marriage, and left her and her child to perish of grief and hunger! And, as sure as there's a God in heaven, I'll make you answer for your wickedness toward 'em!"

"Ugh!" groans the surrounding crowd of navvies, always ready, at the least excuse, to take part against the "bloated hairestocracy."

"I don't know what you're talking about. You must have mistaken me for some one else," replies Muiraven, who cannot resist refuting such an accusation.

"Surely you are not going to parley with the man!" interposes Stratford.

"You don't know of such a place as Hoxford, maybe?" shouts Joel, with an inflamed countenance, and a clinched fist, this time brought well to the front—"nor of such a village as Fretterley?—nor you've never heard tell of such a girl as Myra Cray?—Ah! I thought I'd make you remember!" as Muiraven, turning deadly white, takes a step backward. "Let go, mates—let me have at him, the d—d thief, who took the gal from me first, and ruined her afterward!"

But they hold him back, three or four of them at a time, fearing the consequences of any thing like personal violence.

"Muiraven, speak to him!—What is the matter?" says his cousin, impatiently, as he perceives his consternation.

"I cannot," he replies at first; and then, as though fighting with himself, he stands upright and confronts Joel boldly.

"What have you to tell me of Myra Cray?—Where is she?—What does she want of me?—Why has she kept her hiding-place a secret for so long?"

"Why did you never take the trouble to look after her?" retorts Joel. "Why did you leave her to die of a broken heart? Answer me that!"

"To die! Is she dead?" he says, in a low voice.

"Ay! she's out of your clutches—you needn't be afraid of that, mister—nor will ever be in them again, poor lass! And there's nothing remains to be done now, but to take my satisfaction out of you."

"And how do you propose to take it? Do you wish to fight me?" demands Muiraven, calmly.

"Better not, mate!" says one of his comrades, in a whisper.

"Bleed him!" suggests another, in the same tone.

As for Joel, the quiet question takes him at a disadvantage. He doesn't know what to make of it.

"When a fellow's bin wronged," he begins, awkwardly—

"He demands satisfaction," continues Muiraven. "I quite agree with you. That idea holds good in my class as much as in yours. But you seem to know very little more than the facts of this case. Suppose I can prove to you that the poor girl you speak of was not wronged by me—what then?"

"You've bin a deal too 'asty," whispers one of his friends.

"But your name's 'Amilton'—ain't it?" says Joel, mistily.

"It is one of my names. But that is nothing to the purpose. Far from shirking inquiry, I am very anxious to hear all you can tell me about Myra Cray. When can you come home with me? Now?"

"Muiraven! in Heaven's name—is this one of your infernal little scrapes?" says Stratford.

"In Heaven's name, hold your tongue for the present, and you shall know all.—Is there any reason why this man should not accompany me to my place of residence?" continues Muiraven, addressing one of the by-standers.

"He can go well enough, if he likes to. He's only here by the job."

"Will you come, then?" to Joel.

"I'm sure I don't know what to say," retorts Joel, sheepishly. "'Tain't what I call satisfaction to be going 'ome with a gentleman."

"Come with me first, and then, if I don't give you entire satisfaction with respect to this business, we will fight it out your own way afterward."

"Gentleman can't say fairer than that," is the verdict of the crowd. So Joel Cray, shamefacedly enough, and feeling as though all his grand schemes for revenge had melted into thin air, follows Muiraven and Stratford out of the Docks, while his companions adjourn to drink the health of his enemy in the nearest public-house.

"Where are you going to take him?" demands Stratford, as a couple of hansoms obey his cousin's whistle.

"To Saville Moxon's. You must come with us, Hal. I have been living under a mask for the last five years; but it is time I should be true at last."

"True at last! What humbug, Muiraven! As if all the world didn't know—"

"Hush, Hal!—you pain me. The world