

He crouched suddenly behind a certain flat stone grim with age and history ; for it had been undoubtedly the altar upon the highest point where the morning sacrifice to the sun had once been offered, before the hammer of Thor gave way to the cross ; hiding himself as though the man approaching had been a Pagan Barnabas until, ashamed at being discovered in such a cowardly attitude, he stood up ; and the first thing he saw was a great gold watch-chain.

"That's mine ! " he shouted. "How dare you come near me wearing my uncle's chain ! "

"My young friend, Ernest ; my nephew ! He talks of me stealing," said Bardon wearily.

"Give me that watch and chain ! You shan't wear anything that belonged to him," cried Ernest. He snatched them away, while Bardon made no resistance. Then he cooled, as his mind began to work. "Who told you I was here ? Why have you come ? "

"I did know, but have quite forgotten. There was some talk about a meeting on a hill, and this looked a likely one."

"Miss Wesley told you."

"What a fool he is, what a weak, credulous fool ! Anybody could deceive him," said Bardon, speaking in a dazed fashion, but with hatred close to the surface. "A crazed fool taken in by everyone," he repeated. "He couldn't even guess Miss Wesley is my sister. Aralia had an easy job."

"So you are the brother in the detective service ! "

"Am I ? " said Bardon stupidly. "It was her plot. Money was scarce after you turned up. Upon my soul I don't know why I'm here. I never wanted to see you. I'm glad of the chance to call you a fool," he added more brightly.

"Where is Gilda ? "

"Gilda," muttered Bardon in a startled voice, as if he was surprised to find that Ernest knew her. "Ah, yes, I remember ! I came here to tell you about Gilda. It's perfectly clear. What a fool you are ! You were to meet little dancing Gilda Dewstone upon the top of a hill. What a lie ! Aralia can tell 'em. And when she didn't come, Aralia was to screw a few more pounds out of you. My word, it's wonderful how we throw away our souls just to buy a bit of bread and cheese. It would have