

pression, which was wistful and gentle almost to diffidence, he might have been a fair-haired savage of some northern tribe. His beard was unkempt and tangled, his clothing filthy and tattered beyond recognition. Yet Powys had a dim irritating feeling of remembrance. He felt that he must have known this man when he had been younger—gaunt and hollow-eyed and mad—and had hated him and been angrily, passionately grateful.

The stranger went on talking. Powys could not make out to whom. Sometimes his voice sounded gay, half shy, half swaggering, and then again anxious and apologetic. Sometimes it seemed that he was explaining, excusing himself and then again that he was telling a story almost beyond his powers of telling. Powys who could make nothing of it, cursed him weakly but he did not hear.

"Why, of course I'm proud," he said light-heartedly. "I jolly well ought to be. Haven't I been thinking of it ever since I can remember? You silly old dad! Why, when I was a kid I used to sit on the big biscuit tin and think about the time when I'd be able to 'elp myself without getting a whacking for it. And now here I am. Why, of course I wouldn't. Not really. It's a joke, mother. It wouldn't pay much, eh? Besides I'm not as keen on biscuits as I was—though they're the very best—the very best, I assure you, Ma'am. Huntly & Palmers. Two shillings a pound. And a pound of sugar. Send it? Certainly, Ma'am. The first delivery. Well, there it is at last, anyhow. Thomas Brodie *and* Son. Looks fine. All that gold lettering. A real splash——"

"Ah, shut it—!" Powys muttered.

But the other bent forward with his face between his hands. Suddenly he had become a boy telling a tale of marvellous adventure. His eyes shone in the light. His