

wasn't Juliar. She'd got no ink." This man was clever enough to outwit Scotland Y'rd, with an offer of fifty pounds for his capture, but fell easily to the cunning of a woman, roused by jealousy. It wasn't Julia, clearly? "Who had hold of the letter, between you and her?" said he, quite off the right scent.

"Only young Micky Ragstroar. . . ."

"There we've got it!" The man pounced. "Only that young offender and the Police. That was good for half a sov. for him. . . . Don't see what I mean? I'll tell you. *He* delivered your letter all right, after they'd run their eyes over it. I'll remember *him*, one day!" A word in this is not the one Daverill used, and his adjective is twice omitted. Aunt M'riar's puzzled face produced a more temperate explanation, to the effect that Micky had carried the letter to a "tec," or detective, who had "got at him," and that the letter had been tampered with at the police-station.

"I wouldn't believe it of Micky, and I don't," said Aunt M'riar. "The boy's a good boy at heart, and no tale-bearer." She ventured, as an indirect appeal on Micky's behalf, to add:—"I'm shielding you, Daverill, and a many wouldn't."

He affected to recognise his indebtedness, but only grudgingly. "You're what they call a good wife, Polly Daverill. Partner of a cove's joys and sorrows! Got your marriage lines to show! That's your style. You stick to that!"

Something in his tone made M'riar say:—"Why do you speak like that? You know that I havo." Her speech did not seem to arise from his words. She had detected a sneer in them.

"You've got 'em to show. . . . Ah! But I shouldn't show 'em, if I were you."

"Am I likely?"

"That's not what I was driving at."

"What do you mean?"

"Shall I tell you, Polly, my angel? Shall I tell you, respectable married woman?"

"Don't werrit me, Daverill. I don't deserve it of you!"

"Right you are, old Polly! And told you shall be! . . . Sure you want to know? . . . There, there—easy does it! I'm a-telling of you." He suddenly changed his manner, and spoke quickly, collectedly, drily. "The name on your stificate ain't the correct name. I saw to that. Only you needn't fret your kidneys about it, that I see. You're an immoral woman, you are! Poor Polly! Feel any different?"

Anyone who knows the superstitious reverence for the