

There was something like a gay little chuckle in her throat.

"O vain Diana!" she repeated.

Rawley entered the door of the hut on the hill without ceremony. There was no need for courtesy, and the work he had come to do could be easier done without it.

Old Busby was crouched over a table, his mouth lapping milk from a full bowl on the table. He scarcely raised his head when Rawley entered—through the open door he had seen his visitor coming. He sipped on, his straggling beard dripping. There was silence for a time.

"What do you want?" growled at last.

"Finish your swill, and then we can talk," said Rawley carelessly. He took a chair near the door, lighted a cheroot and smoked, watching the old man, as he tipped the great bowl towards his face, as though it were some wild animal feeding. The clothes were patched and worn, the coat-front was spattered with stains of all kinds, the hair and beard were unkempt and long, giving him what would have been the look of a mangy lion, but that the face had the expression of some beast less honourable. The eyes, however, were malignantly intelligent, the hands, ill-cared for, were long, well-shaped and capable, but of a hateful yellow colour like the face. And through all was a sense of power, dark and almost mediæval. Secret, evilly wise and inhuman, he looked a being apart, whom men might seek for help in dark purposes.

"What do you want—medicine?" he muttered at last, wiping his beard and mouth with the palm of his hand, and the palm on his knees.