

"Mr. Mathews, I make a point of never answering impertinent questions. Good evening."

His exit was followed by a volley of oaths from the ruffian.

"Well, go your way for a proud fool. If Billy Mathews does not soon pull you down from your high horse, may his limbs rot in a jail." And calling to an ugly black cur, which was prowling round the garden, and whose physiognomy greatly resembled his own, the poacher strode off.

"Anthony," said Fred Wildegrave, as his cousin in no very gentle mood entered the house, "I fear I interrupted your tête à tête; but unexpected business calls me for some weeks into a distant county. You must make yourself as comfortable as you can, during my absence. Clary will do the honors of the house. By the bye, I have just received four hundred pounds, for the sale of the marsh; I shall not have time to deposit the money in the bank; but will you see to it some time during the week. There is the key of my bureau; you will find it and the banker's book in my second drawer. And now, Clary, give me a kiss, and wish me luck."

"I don't know that you will have any," said Clary. "My heart fills with gloom, at the thought of your going away."

"I shall come back as soon as I possibly can. What, in tears—silly child!"

"Don't go, dear Fred."

"Nonsense, business must be attended to."

"Something tells me that this journey is not for good."

"Dear Clary, I could quarrel with you for these superstitious fears. Farewell, and joy be with you." Kissing her pale cheek, and shaking Anthony warmly by the hand, the young master of the mansion was gone, and Anthony and Clary were left to amuse themselves in the best manner they could.

"You must not forget, Anthony, that Fred has left you his banker," said Clary. "He is so generous that the money will be safer in your hands than his own, provided you do not break in his absence."

Anthony laughed, and put the key of the bureau into his pocket. What to him was the four hundred pounds—had it been four thousand or forty thousand, he would not, in all probability, have given it a second thought.

The next day Clary was seriously indisposed, and Anthony took his breakfast alone. After making many anxious enquiries after his little cousin, and being assured by old Ruth that she only required rest to be quite well again, he retired to Frederick's study, and, taking up a favorite volume, was soon interested in its contents. A loud altercation in the passage, between the servant and some person who insisted upon seeing Mr. Hurdlestone, broke in upon his retirement. "Will you please to send up your name, sir?" was asked by the former. "No; I told

you before, that I will announce it myself." Anthony recognized the voice, but before he could lay aside the book, the door was suddenly opened, and Godfrey Hurdlestone stood before him.

How changed—how dreadfully changed he was, since they last met. The dreadful wickedness of a few months had stamped and furrowed his brow with the lines of years. His dress was mean and faded. He looked dirty and slovenly, and his face was soiled with dust and hard riding. Little of his former manly beauty, and the elegance of his form, remained. So utterly degraded was his appearance, that a cry of surprise broke involuntarily from his cousin's lips.

"I suppose you know me, Anthony Hurdlestone? I can't be so changed as all that."

"You are greatly altered."

"For the worse? Hey! Yes, poverty soon brings a man down, who was never used to work. It has brought me down—down to the very dust."

"I am sorry to hear you say so, Godfrey. I thought you were comfortably settled with the Whitmores?"

"Oh! that's a long time ago. So you have not heard that news—I thought such things travelled apace. You must know that, as ill luck would have it, Juliet learned from Mary all the particulars of that business; and I, of course, had to decamp then. Tony, the world has gone all wrong with me. The truth of the matter is that I now stand before you a lost and ruined man; and if you refuse to assist me, I must go to the devil headlong."

In spite of all his affected affrontery it was evident that the speaker was dreadfully agitated. His eyes were wild and bloodshot; his fine features swollen and distorted, and his cheek as pale as ashes.

Anthony continued to gaze upon him, with a face yet paler than his own. Was it his uncle's son that stood before him? That son whom he had sworn to Algernon, to love and cherish as a brother, and to help to the uttermost in time of need—for his sake. The solemn vow he had taken when a boy came up in his mind, and, turning to Godfrey, he said: "If I can help you I will do so to the best of my power. Like you, however, I am a poor man, and my power is limited. But what can have happened to agitate you thus? What have you done which can warrant such dreadful words! Sit down, cousin—you look faint. Good heavens—how you tremble. What can occasion this frightful agitation?"

"I shall be better presently. Give me a glass of brandy to make me speak steadily. I don't know what's come over me. I never felt nervous before."

His teeth chattered in his head, and prevented him from speaking farther. Anthony gave him the stimulant he desired. It seemed to possess some miraculous power. Godfrey rose from his chair, and coming quite close up to his cousin he said with