

SIR HOWARD (faintly amused). You are superstitious, Captain. Most sailors are, I notice. However, I have complete confidence in your escort.

BRASSBOUND (almost threateningly). Take care. The avenger may be one of the escort.

SIR HOWARD. I have already met the only member of your escort who might have borne a grudge against me, Captain; and he was acquitted.

BRASSBOUND. You are fated to come, then?

SIR HOWARD (smiling). It seems so.

BRASSBOUND. On your head be it! (To Lady Cicely, accepting her hand at last) Goodnight.

He goes. It is by this time starry night.

ACT II

Midday. A room in a Moorish castle. A divan seat runs round the dilapidated adobe walls, which are partly painted, partly faced with white tiles patterned in green and yellow. The ceiling is made up of little squares, painted in bright colors, with gilded edges, and ornamented with gilt knobs. On the cement floor are mattings, sheepskins, and leathern cushions with geometrical patterns on them. There is a tiny Moorish table in the middle; and at it a huge saddle, with saddle cloths of various colors, showing that the room is used by foreigners accustomed to chairs. Anyone sitting at the table in this seat would have the chief entrance, a large horseshoe arch, on his left, and another saddle seat between him and the arch; whilst, if susceptible to draughts, he would probably catch cold from a little Moorish door in the wall behind him to his right.

Two or three of Brassbound's men, overcome by the midday heat, sprawl supine on the floor, with their reefer coats under their heads, their knees uplifted, and their calves laid comfortably on the divan. Those who wear shirts have them open at the throat for greater coolness. Some have jerseys. All wear boots and belts, and have guns ready to their hands. One of them, lying with his head against the second saddle seat, wears what was once a fashionable white English yachting suit. He is evidently a pleasantly worthless young English gentleman gone to the bad, but retaining sufficient self-respect to shave carefully and brush his hair, which is wearing thin, and does not seem to have been luxuriant even in its best days.

The silence is broken only by the snores of the young gentleman, whose mouth has fallen open, until a few distant shots half waken him. He shuts his mouth convulsively, and opens his eyes sleepily. A door is violently kicked outside; and the voice of Drinkwater is heard raising urgent alarm.

DRINKWATER. Wot ow! Wike ap there, will yr. Wike ap. (He rushes in through the horseshoe arch, hot and excited, and runs round, kicking the sleepers) Nah then. Git ap. Git ap, will yr, Kiddy Redbrook. (He gives the young gentleman a rude shove.)

REDBOOK (sitting up). Stow that, will you. What's amiss?

DRINKWATER (disgusted). Wot's amiss! Didn't eah naow fawrin, I spowse.

REDBROOK. No.

DRINKWATER (sneering). Naow. Thort it sifer nort, didn't yr?

REDBROOK (with crisp intelligence). What! You're running away, are you? (He springs up, crying) Look alive, Johnnies: there's danger. Brandyfaced Jack's on the run. (They spring up hastily, grasping their guns.)

DRINKWATER. Dineger! Yuss: should think there wors dineger. It's howver, thow, as it mowstly his baw the tawm YOU'RE awike. (They relapse into lassitude.) Waw wasn't you on the look-aht to give us a end? Bin hattecked baw the Benny Seeras (Beni Siras), we ev, an ed to rawd for it pretty strite, too, aw teoll yr. Mawtzow is it: the bullet glawnst all rahnd is bloomin brisket. Brarsbahnd e dropt the Shike's oss at six unnern fifty yawds. (Bustling them about) Nah then: git the plice ready for the British herristoracy, Lawd Ellam and Lidy Wineflete.

REDBOOK. Lady faint, eh?

DRINKWATER. Fynt! Not lawkly. Wornted to gow an talk, to the Benny Seeras: blaow me if she didn't! huz wot we was frahtnd of. Tyin up Mawtzow's wound, she is, like a bloomin orspittle nass. (Sir Howard, with a copious pagri on his white hat, enters through the horseshoe arch, followed by a couple of men supporting the wounded Marzo, who, weeping and terrorstricken by the prospect of death and of subsequent torments for which he is conscious of having eminently qualified himself, has his coat off and a bandage round his chest. One of his supporters is a blackbearded, thickset, slow, middle-aged man with an air of damaged respectability, named--as it afterwards appears--Johnson. Lady Cicely walks beside Marzo. Redbrook, a little shamefaced, crosses the room to the opposite wall as far away as possible from the visitors. Drinkwater turns and receives them with jocular ceremony.) Weolcome to Brarsbahnd Cawstl, Sr Ahrd an lidy. This eah is the corfee and commercial room.

Sir Howard goes to the table and sits on the saddle, rather exhausted. Lady Cicely comes to Drinkwater.

LADY CICELY. Where is Marzo's bed?

DRINKWATER. Is bed, lidy? Weoll: e ynt petickler, lidy. E ez is chawce of henny flegstown agin that wall.

They deposit Marzo on the flags against the wall close to the little door. He groans. Johnson phlegmatically leaves him and joins Redbrook.

LADY CICELY. But you can't leave him there in that state.

DRINKWATER. Ow: e's hall rawt. (Strolling up callously to Marzo) You're hall rawt, ynt yer, Mawtzow? (Marzo whimpers.) Corse y'aw.

LADY CICELY (to Sir Howard). Did you ever see such a helpless lot of poor creatures? (She makes for the little door.)

DRINKWATER. Eah! (He runs to the door and places himself before it.) Where mawt yr lidyship be gowin?

LADY CICELY. I'm going through every room in this castle to find a proper place to put that man. And now I'll tell you where YOU'RE going. You're going to get some water for Marzo, who is very thirsty. And then, when I've chosen a room for him, you're going to make a bed for him there.

DRINKWATER (sarcastically). Ow! Henny ather little suvvice? Mike yrseolf at owm, y' knaow, lidy.

LADY CICELY (considerately). Don't go if you'd rather not, Mr. Drinkwater. Perhaps you're too tired. (Turning to the archway) I'll ask Captain Brassbound: he won't mind.

DRINKWATER (terrified, running after her and getting between her and the arch). Naow, naow! Naow, lidy:

doesn't you goes disturbin the Kepn. Awll see to it.

LADY CICELY (gravely). I was sure you would, Mr. Drinkwater. You have such a kind face. (She turns back and goes out through the small door.)

DRINKWATER (looking after her). Garn!

SIR HOWARD (to Drinkwater). Will you ask one of your friends to show me to my room whilst you are getting the water?

DRINKWATER (insolently). Yr room! Ow: this ynt good enaf fr yr, ynt it? (Ferociously) Oo a you orderin abaht, ih?

SIR HOWARD (rising quietly, and taking refuge between Redbrook and Johnson, whom he addresses). Can you find me a more private room than this?

JOHNSON (shaking his head). I've no orders. You must wait til the capn comes, sir.

DRINKWATER (following Sir Howard). Yuss; an whawl you're witin, yll tike your horders from me: see?

JOHNSON (with slow severity, to Drinkwater). Look here: do you see three genlmen talkin to one another here, civil and private, eh?

DRINKWATER (chapfallen). No offence, Miste Jorns--

JOHNSON (ominously). Ay; but there is offence. Where's your manners, you guttersnipe? (Turning to Sir Howard) That's the curse o this kind o life, sir: you got to associate with all sorts. My father, sir, was Capn Johnson o Hull--owned his own schooner, sir. We're mostly gentlemen here, sir, as you'll find, except the poor ignorant foreigner and that there scum of the submerged tenth. (Contemptuously looking at Drinkwater) HE ain't nobody's son: he's only a offspring o coster folk or such.

DRINKWATER (bursting into tears). Clawss feelin! thet's wot it is: clawss feelin! Wot are yer, arter all, bat a bloomin gang o west cowst cazhls (casual ward paupers)? (Johnson is scandalized; and there is a general thrill of indignation.) Better ev naow fembly, an rawse aht of it, lawk me, than ev a specble one and disgrice it, lawk you.

JOHNSON. Brandyfaced Jack: I name you for conduct and language unbecoming to a gentleman. Those who agree will signify the same in the usual manner.

ALL (vehemently). Aye.

DRINKWATER (wildly). Naow.

JOHNSON. Felix Drinkwater: are you goin out, or are you goin to wait til you're chucked out? You can cry in the passage. If you give any trouble, you'll have something to cry for.

They make a threatenng movement towards Drinkwater.

DRINKWATER (whimpering). You lee me alown: awm gowin. There's n'maw true demmecrettick feelin eah than there is in the owl bloomin M division of Noontn Corzwy coppers (Newington Causeway policemen).

As he slinks away in tears towards the arch, Brassbound enters. Drinkwater promptly shelters himself on the

captain's left hand, the others retreating to the opposite side as Brassbound advances to the middle of the room. Sir Howard retires behind them and seats himself on the divan, much fatigued.

BRASSBOUND (to Drinkwater). What are you snivelling at?

DRINKWATER. You awsk the wust cowst herristorcracy. They fawnds maw cornduck hanbecammin to a genlmn.

Brassbound is about to ask Johnson for an explanation, when Lady Cicely returns through the little door, and comes between Brassbound and Drinkwater.

LADY CICELY (to Drinkwater). Have you fetched the water?

DRINKWATER. Yuss: nah YOU begin orn me. (He weeps afresh.)

LADY CICELY (surprised). Oh! This won't do, Mr. Drinkwater. If you cry, I can't let you nurse your friend.

DRINKWATER (frantic). Thet'll brike maw awt, wown't it nah? (With a lamentable sob, he throws himself down on the divan, raging like an angry child.)

LADY CICELY (after contemplating him in astonishment for a moment). Captain Brassbound: are there any charwomen in the Atlas Mountains?

BRASSBOUND. There are people here who will work if you pay them, as there are elsewhere.

LADY CICELY. This castle is very romantic, Captain; but it hasn't had a spring cleaning since the Prophet lived in it. There's only one room I can put that wounded man into. It's the only one that has a bed in it: the second room on the right out of that passage.

BRASSBOUND (haughtily). That is my room, madam.

LADY CICELY (relieved). Oh, that's all right. It would have been so awkward if I had had to ask one of your men to turn out. You won't mind, I know. (All the men stare at her. Even Drinkwater forgets his sorrows in his stupefaction.)

BRASSBOUND. Pray, madam, have you made any arrangements for my accommodation?

LADY CICELY (reassuringly). Yes: you can have my room instead wherever it may be: I'm sure you chose me a nice one. I must be near my patient; and I don't mind roughing it. Now I must have Marzo moved very carefully. Where is that truly gentlemanly Mr. Johnson?--oh, there you are, Mr. Johnson. (She runs to Johnson, past Brassbound, who has to step back hastily out of her way with every expression frozen out of his face except one of extreme and indignant dumbfoundedness). Will you ask your strong friend to help you with Marzo: strong people are always so gentle.

JOHNSON. Let me introdooce Mr. Redbrook. Your ladyship may know his father, the very Rev. Dean Redbrook. (He goes to Marzo.)

REDBROOK. Happy to oblige you, Lady Cicely.

LADY CICELY (shaking hands). Howdyedo? Of course I knew your father--Dunham, wasn't it? Were you ever called--

REDBROOK. The kid? Yes.

LADY CICELY. But why--

REDBROOK (anticipating the rest of the question). Cards and drink, Lady Sis. (He follows Johnson to the patient. Lady Cicely goes too.) Now, Count Marzo. (Marzo groans as Johnson and Redbrook raise him.)

LADY CICELY. Now they're NOT hurting you, Marzo. They couldn't be more gentle.

MARZO. Drink.

LADY CICELY. I'll get you some water myself. Your friend Mr. Drinkwater was too overcome--take care of the corner--that's it-- the second door on the right. (She goes out with Marzo and his bearers through the little door.)

BRASSBOUND (still staring). Well, I AM damned!--

DRINKWATER (getting up). Weoll, blimey!

BRASSBOUND (turning irritably on him). What did you say?

DRINKWATER. Weoll, wot did yer sy yrseolf, kep'n? Fust tawm aw yever see y' afride of ennybody. (The others laugh.)

BRASSBOUND. Afraid!

DRINKWATER (maliciously). She's took y' bed from hander yr for a bloomin penny hawcemen. If y' ynt afride, let's eah yer speak ap to er wen she cams bawck agin.

BRASSBOUND (to Sir Howard). I wish you to understand, Sir Howard, that in this castle, it is I who give orders, and no one else. Will you be good enough to let Lady Cicely Waynflete know that.

SIR HOWARD (sitting up on the divan and pulling himself together). You will have ample opportunity for speaking to Lady Cicely yourself when she returns. (Drinkwater chuckles: and the rest grin.)

BRASSBOUND. My manners are rough, Sir Howard. I have no wish to frighten the lady.

SIR HOWARD. Captain Brassbound: if you can frighten Lady Cicely, you will confer a great obligation on her family. If she had any sense of danger, perhaps she would keep out of it.

BRASSBOUND. Well, sir, if she were ten Lady Cicelys, she must consult me while she is here.

DRINKWATER. Thet's rawt, kep'n. Let's eah you steblish yr hawthority. (Brassbound turns impatiently on him: He retreats remonstrating) Nah, nah, nah!

SIR HOWARD. If you feel at all nervous, Captain Brassbound, I will mention the matter with pleasure.

BRASSBOUND. Nervous, sir! no. Nervousness is not in my line. You will find me perfectly capable of saying what I want to say--with considerable emphasis, if necessary. (Sir Howard assents with a polite but incredulous nod.)

DRINKWATER. Eah, eah!

Lady Cicely returns with Johnson and Redbrook. She carries a jar.

LADY CICELY (stopping between the door and the arch). Now for the water. Where is it?

REDBROOK. There's a well in the courtyard. I'll come and work the bucket.

LADY CICELY. So good of you, Mr. Redbrook. (She makes for the horseshoe arch, followed by Redbrook.)

DRINKWATER. Nah, Kepn Brassbound: you got sathink to sy to the lidy, ynt yr?

LADY CICELY (stopping). I'll come back to hear it presently, Captain. And oh, while I remember it (coming forward between Brassbound and Drinkwater), do please tell me Captain, if I interfere with your arrangements in any way. If I disturb you the least bit in the world, stop me at once. You have all the responsibility; and your comfort and your authority must be the first thing. You'll tell me, won't you?

BRASSBOUND (awkwardly, quite beaten). Pray do as you please, madam.

LADY CICELY. Thank you. That's so like you, Captain. Thank you. Now, Mr. Redbrook! Show me the way to the well. (She follows Redbrook out through the arch.)

DRINKWATER. Yah! Yah! Shime! Beat baw a woman!

JOHNSON (coming forward on Brassbound's right). What's wrong now?

DRINKWATER (with an air of disappointment and disillusion). Down't awsk me, Miste Jorns. The kep'n's naow clawss arter all.

BRASSBOUND (a little shamefacedly). What has she been fixing up in there, Johnson?

JOHNSON. Well: Marzo's in your bed. Lady wants to make a kitchen of the Sheikh's audience chamber, and to put me and the Kid handy in his bedroom in case Marzo gets erysipelas and breaks out violent. From what I can make out, she means to make herself matron of this institution. I spose it's all right, isn't it?

DRINKWATER. Yuss, an horder huz abaht as if we was keb tahts! An the kep'n afride to talk bawck at er!

Lady Cicely returns with Redbrook. She carries the jar full of water.

LADY CICELY (putting down the jar, and coming between Brassbound and Drinkwater as before). And now, Captain, before I go to poor Marzo, what have you to say to me?

BRASSBOUND. I! Nothing.

DRINKWATER. Down't fank it, gavner. Be a men!

LADY CICELY (looking at Drinkwater, puzzled). Mr. Drinkwater said you had.

BRASSBOUND (recovering himself). It was only this. That fellow there (pointing to Drinkwater) is subject to fits of insolence. If he is impertinent to your ladyship, or disobedient, you have my authority to order him as many kicks as you think good for him; and I will see that he gets them.

DRINKWATER (lifting up his voice in protest). Nah, nah--

LADY CICELY. Oh, I couldn't think of such a thing, Captain Brassbound. I am sure it would hurt Mr. Drinkwater.

DRINKWATER (lachrymosely). Lidy's hinkyp'ble o sich bawbrous usage.

LADY CICELY. But there's one thing I SHOULD like, if Mr. Drinkwater won't mind my mentioning it. It's so important if he's to attend on Marzo.

BRASSBOUND. What is that?

LADY CICELY. Well--you WON'T mind, Mr. Drinkwater, will you?

DRINKWATER (suspiciously). Wot is it?

LADY CICELY. There would be so much less danger of erysipelas if you would be so good as to take a bath.

DRINKWATER (aghast). A bawth!

BRASSBOUND (in tones of command). Stand by, all hands. (They stand by.) Take that man and wash him. (With a roar of laughter they seize him.)

DRINKWATER (in an agony of protest). Naow, naow. Look eah--

BRASSBOUND (ruthlessly). In COLD water.

DRINKWATER (shrieking). Na-a-a-a-ow. Aw eawn't, aw toel yer. Naow. Aw sy, look eah. Naow, naow, naow, naow, naow, NAOW!!!

He is dragged away through the arch in a whirlwind of laughter, protests and tears.

LADY CICELY. I'm afraid he isn't used to it, poor fellow; but REALLY it will do him good, Captain Brassbound. Now I must be off to my patient. (She takes up her jar and goes out by the little door, leaving Brassbound and Sir Howard alone together.)

SIR HOWARD (rising). And now, Captain Brass--

BRASSBOUND (cutting him short with a fierce contempt that astonishes him). I will attend to you presently. (Calling) Johnson. Send me Johnson there. And Osman. (He pulls off his coat and throws it on the table, standing at his ease in his blue jersey.)

SIR HOWARD (after a momentary flush of anger, with a controlled force that compels Brassbound's attention in spite of himself). You seem to be in a strong position with reference to these men of yours.

BRASSBOUND. I am in a strong position with reference to everyone in this castle.

SIR HOWARD (politely but threateningly). I have just been noticing that you think so. I do not agree with you. Her Majesty's Government, Captain Brassbound, has a strong arm and a long arm. If anything disagreeable happens to me or to my sister-in-law, that arm will be stretched out. If that happens you will not be in a strong position. Excuse my reminding you of it.

BRASSBOUND (grimly). Much good may it do you! (Johnson comes in through the arch.) Where is Osman, the Sheikh's messenger? I want him too.

JOHNSON. Coming, Captain. He had a prayer to finish.

Osman, a tall, skinny, whiteclad, elderly Moor, appears in the archway.

BRASSBOUND. Osman Ali (Osman comes forward between Brassbound and Johnson): you have seen this unbeliever (indicating Sir Howard) come in with us?

OSMAN. Yea, and the shameless one with the naked face, who flattered my countenance and offered me her hand.

JOHNSON. Yes; and you took it too, Johnny, didn't you?

BRASSBOUND. Take horse, then; and ride fast to your master the Sheikh Sidi el Assif

OSMAN (proudly). Kinsman to the Prophet.

BRASSBOUND. Tell him what you have seen here. That is all. Johnson: give him a dollar; and note the hour of his going, that his master may know how fast he rides.

OSMAN. The believer's word shall prevail with Allah and his servant Sidi el Assif.

BRASSBOUND. Off with you.

OSMAN. Make good thy master's word ere I go out from his presence, O Johnson el Hull.

JOHNSON. He wants the dollar.

Brassbound gives Osman a coin.

OSMAN (bowing). Allah will make hell easy for the friend of Sidi el Assif and his servant. (He goes out through the arch.)

BRASSBOUND (to Johnson). Keep the men out of this until the Sheikh comes. I have business to talk over. When he does come, we must keep together all: Sidi el Assif's natural instinct will be to cut every Christian throat here.

JOHNSON. We look to you, Captain, to square him, since you invited him over.

BRASSBOUND. You can depend on me; and you know it, I think.

JOHNSON (phlegmatically). Yes: we know it. (He is going out when Sir Howard speaks.)

SIR HOWARD. You know also, Mr. Johnson, I hope, that you can depend on ME.

JOHNSON (turning). On YOU, sir?

SIR HOWARD. Yes: on me. If my throat is cut, the Sultan of Morocco may send Sidi's head with a hundred thousand dollars blood-money to the Colonial Office; but it will not be enough to save his kingdom--any more than it would save your life, if your Captain here did the same thing.

JOHNSON (struck). Is that so, Captain?

BRASSBOUND. I know the gentleman's value--better perhaps than he knows it himself. I shall not lose sight of it.

Johnson nods gravely, and is going out when Lady Cicely returns softly by the little door and calls to him in a whisper. She has taken off her travelling things and put on an apron. At her chatelaine is a case of sewing materials.

LADY CICELY. Mr. Johnson. (He turns.) I've got Marzo to sleep. Would you mind asking the gentlemen not to make a noise under his window in the courtyard.

JOHNSON. Right, maam. (He goes out.)

Lady Cicely sits down at the tiny table, and begins stitching at a sling bandage for Marzo's arm. Brassbound walks up and down on her right, muttering to himself so ominously that Sir Howard quietly gets out of his way by crossing to the other side and sitting down on the second saddle seat.

SIR HOWARD. Are you yet able to attend to me for a moment, Captain Brassbound?

BRASSBOUND (still walking about). What do you want?

SIR HOWARD. Well, I am afraid I want a little privacy, and, if you will allow me to say so, a little civility. I am greatly obliged to you for bringing us safely off to-day when we were attacked. So far, you have carried out your contract. But since we have been your guests here, your tone and that of the worst of your men has changed--intentionally changed, I think.

BRASSBOUND (stopping abruptly and flinging the announcement at him). You are not my guest: you are my prisoner.

SIR HOWARD. Prisoner!

Lady Cicely, after a single glance up, continues stitching, apparently quite unconcerned.

BRASSBOUND. I warned you. You should have taken my warning.

SIR HOWARD (immediately taking the tone of cold disgust for moral delinquency). Am I to understand, then, that you are a brigand? Is this a matter of ransom?

BRASSBOUND (with unaccountable intensity). All the wealth of England shall not ransom you.

SIR HOWARD. Then what do you expect to gain by this?

BRASSBOUND. Justice on a thief and a murderer.

Lady Cicely lays down her work and looks up anxiously.

SIR HOWARD (deeply outraged, rising with venerable dignity). Sir: do you apply those terms to me?

BRASSBOUND. I do. (He turns to Lady Cicely, and adds, pointing contemptuously to Sir Howard) Look at him. You would not take this virtuously indignant gentleman for the uncle of a brigand, would you?

Sir Howard starts. The shock is too much for him: he sits down again, looking very old; and his hands tremble; but his eyes and mouth are intrepid, resolute, and angry.

LADY CICELY. Uncle! What do you mean?

BRASSBOUND. Has he never told you about my mother? this fellow who puts on ermine and scarlet and calls himself Justice.

SIR HOWARD (almost voiceless). You are the son of that woman!

BRASSBOUND (fiercely). "That woman!" (He makes a movement as if to rush at Sir Howard.)

LADY CICELY (rising quickly and putting her hand on his arm). Take care. You mustn't strike an old man.

BRASSBOUND (raging). He did not spare my mother--"that woman," he calls her--because of her sex. I will not spare him because of his age. (Lowering his tone to one of sullen vindictiveness) But I am not going to strike him. (Lady Cicely releases him, and sits down, much perplexed. Brassbound continues, with an evil glance at Sir Howard) I shall do no more than justice.

SIR HOWARD (recovering his voice and vigor). Justice! I think you mean vengeance, disguised as justice by your passions.

BRASSBOUND. To many and many a poor wretch in the dock YOU have brought vengeance in that disguise--the vengeance of society, disguised as justice by ITS passions. Now the justice you have outraged meets you disguised as vengeance. How do you like it?

SIR HOWARD. I shall meet it, I trust, as becomes an innocent man and an upright judge. What do you charge against me?

BRASSBOUND. I charge you with the death of my mother and the theft of my inheritance.

SIR HOWARD. As to your inheritance, sir, it was yours whenever you came forward to claim it. Three minutes ago I did not know of your existence. I affirm that most solemnly. I never knew--never dreamt--that my brother Miles left a son. As to your mother, her case was a hard one--perhaps the hardest that has come within even my experience. I mentioned it, as such, to Mr. Rankin, the missionary, the evening we met you. As to her death, you know-- you MUST know--that she died in her native country, years after our last meeting. Perhaps you were too young to know that she could hardly have expected to live long.

BRASSBOUND. You mean that she drank.

SIR HOWARD. I did not say so. I do not think she was always accountable for what she did.

BRASSBOUND. Yes: she was mad too; and whether drink drove her to madness or madness drove her to drink matters little. The question is, who drove her to both?

SIR HOWARD. I presume the dishonest agent who seized her estate did. I repeat, it was a hard case--a frightful injustice. But it could not be remedied.

BRASSBOUND. You told her so. When she would not take that false answer you drove her from your doors. When she exposed you in the street and threatened to take with her own hands the redress the law denied her, you had her imprisoned, and forced her to write you an apology and leave the country to regain her liberty and save herself from a lunatic asylum. And when she was gone, and dead, and forgotten, you found for yourself the remedy you could not find for her. You recovered the estate easily enough then, robber and rascal that you are. Did he tell the missionary that, Lady Cicely, eh?

LADY CICELY (sympathetically). Poor woman! (To Sir Howard) Couldn't you have helped her, Howard?

SIR HOWARD. No. This man may be ignorant enough to suppose that when I was a struggling barrister I could do everything I did when I was Attorney General. You know better. There is some excuse for his mother. She was an uneducated Brazilian, knowing nothing of English society, and driven mad by injustice.

BRASSBOUND. Your defence--

SIR HOWARD (interrupting him determinedly). I do not defend myself. I call on you to obey the law.

BRASSBOUND. I intend to do so. The law of the Atlas Mountains is administered by the Sheikh Sidi el Assif. He will be here within an hour. He is a judge like yourself. You can talk law to him. He will give you both the law and the prophets.

SIR HOWARD. Does he know what the power of England is?

BRASSBOUND. He knows that the Mahdi killed my master Gordon, and that the Mahdi died in his bed and went to paradise.

SIR HOWARD. Then he knows also that England's vengeance was on the Mahdi's track.

BRASSBOUND. Ay, on the track of the railway from the Cape to Cairo. Who are you, that a nation should go to war for you? If you are missing, what will your newspapers say? A foolhardy tourist. What will your learned friends at the bar say? That it was time for you to make room for younger and better men. YOU a national hero! You had better find a goldfield in the Atlas Mountains. Then all the governments of Europe will rush to your rescue. Until then, take care of yourself; for you are going to see at last the hypocrisy in the sanctimonious speech of the judge who is sentencing you, instead of the despair in the white face of the wretch you are recommending to the mercy of your God.

SIR HOWARD (deeply and personally offended by this slight to his profession, and for the first time throwing away his assumed dignity and rising to approach Brassbound with his fists clenched; so that Lady Cicely lifts one eye from her work to assure herself that the table is between them). I have no more to say to you, sir. I am not afraid of you, nor of any bandit with whom you may be in league. As to your property, it is ready for you as soon as you come to your senses and claim it as your father's heir. Commit a crime, and you will become an outlaw, and not only lose the property, but shut the doors of civilization against yourself for ever.

BRASSBOUND. I will not sell my mother's revenge for ten properties.

LADY CICELY (placidly). Besides, really, Howard, as the property now costs 150 pounds a year to keep up instead of bringing in anything, I am afraid it would not be of much use to him. (Brassbound stands amazed at this revelation.)

SIR HOWARD (taken aback). I must say, Cicely, I think you might have chosen a more suitable moment to mention that fact.

BRASSBOUND (with disgust). Agh! Trickster! Lawyer! Even the price you offer for your life is to be paid in false coin. (Calling) Hallo there! Johnson! Redbrook! Some of you there! (To Sir Howard) You ask for a little privacy: you shall have it. I will not endure the company of such a fellow--

SIR HOWARD (very angry, and full of the crustiest pluck). You insult me, sir. You are a rascal. You are a rascal.

Johnson, Redbrook, and a few others come in through the arch.

BRASSBOUND. Take this man away.

JOHNSON. Where are we to put him?

BRASSBOUND. Put him where you please so long as you can find him when he is wanted.

SIR HOWARD. You will be laid by the heels yet, my friend.

REDBROOK (with cheerful tact). Tut tut, Sir Howard: what's the use of talking back? Come along: we'll make you comfortable.

Sir Howard goes out through the arch between Johnson and Redbrook, muttering wrathfully. The rest, except Brassbound and Lady Cicely, follow.

Brassbound walks up and down the room, nursing his indignation. In doing so he unconsciously enters upon an unequal contest with Lady Cicely, who sits quietly stitching. It soon becomes clear that a tranquil woman can go on sewing longer than an angry man can go on fuming. Further, it begins to dawn on Brassbound's wrath-blurred perception that Lady Cicely has at some unnoticed stage in the proceedings finished Marzo's bandage, and is now stitching a coat. He stops; glances at his shirtsleeves; finally realizes the situation.

BRASSBOUND. What are you doing there, madam?

LADY CICELY. Mending your coat, Captain Brassbound.

BRASSBOUND. I have no recollection of asking you to take that trouble.

LADY CICELY. No: I don't suppose you even knew it was torn. Some men are BORN untidy. You cannot very well receive Sidi el--what's his name?--with your sleeve half out.

BRASSBOUND (disconcerted). I--I don't know how it got torn.

LADY CICELY. You should not get virtuously indignant with people. It bursts clothes more than anything else, Mr. Hallam.

BRASSBOUND (flushing, quickly). I beg you will not call me Mr. Hallam. I hate the name.

LADY CICELY. Black Paquito is your pet name, isn't it?

BRASSBOUND (huffily). I am not usually called so to my face.

LADY CICELY (turning the coat a little). I'm so sorry. (She takes another piece of thread and puts it into her needle, looking placidly and reflectively upward meanwhile.) Do you know, You are wonderfully like your uncle.

BRASSBOUND. Damnation!

LADY CICELY. Eh?

BRASSBOUND. If I thought my veins contained a drop of his black blood, I would drain them empty with my knife. I have no relations. I had a mother: that was all.

LADY CICELY (unconvinced) I daresay you have your mother's complexion. But didn't you notice Sir Howard's temper, his doggedness, his high spirit: above all, his belief in ruling people by force, as you rule your men; and in revenge and punishment, just as you want to revenge your mother? Didn't you recognize yourself in that?

BRASSBOUND (startled). Myself!--in that!

LADY CECILY (returning to the tailoring question as if her last remark were of no consequence whatever). Did this sleeve catch you at all under the arm? Perhaps I had better make it a little easier for you.

BRASSBOUND (irritably). Let my coat alone. It will do very well as it is. Put it down.

LADY CICELEY. Oh, don't ask me to sit doing nothing. It bores me so.

BRASSBOUND. In Heaven's name then, do what you like! Only don't worry me with it.

LADY CICELY. I'm so sorry. All the Hallams are irritable.

BRASSBOUND (penning up his fury with difficulty). As I have already said, that remark has no application to me.

LADY CICELY (resuming her stitching). That's so funny! They all hate to be told that they are like one another.

BRASSBOUND (with the beginnings of despair in his voice). Why did you come here? My trap was laid for him, not for you. Do you know the danger you are in?

LADY CICELY. There's always a danger of something or other. Do you think it's worth bothering about?

BRASSBOUND (scolding her). Do I THINK! Do you think my coat's worth mending?

LADY CICELY (prosaically). Oh yes: it's not so far gone as that.

BRASSBOUND. Have you any feeling? Or are you a fool?

LADY CICELY. I'm afraid I'm a dreadful fool. But I can't help it. I was made so, I suppose.

BRASSBOUND. Perhaps you don't realize that your friend my good uncle will be pretty fortunate if he is allowed to live out his life as a slave with a set of chains on him?

LADY CICELY. Oh, I don't know about that, Mr. H--I mean Captain Brassbound. Men are always thinking that they are going to do something grandly wicked to their enemies; but when it comes to the point, really bad men are just as rare as really good ones.

BRASSBOUND. You forget that I am like my uncle, according to you. Have you any doubt as to the reality of HIS badness?

LADY CICELY. Bless me! your uncle Howard is one of the most harmless of men--much nicer than most professional people. Of course he does dreadful things as a judge; but then if you take a man and pay him 5,000 pounds a year to be wicked, and praise him for it, and have policemen and courts and laws and juries to drive him into it so that he can't help doing it, what can you expect? Sir Howard's all right when he's left to himself. We caught a burglar one night at Waynflete when he was staying with us; and I insisted on his

locking the poor man up until the police came, in a room with a window opening on the lawn. The man came back next day and said he must return to a life of crime unless I gave him a job in the garden; and I did. It was much more sensible than giving him ten years penal servitude: Howard admitted it. So you see he's not a bit bad really.

BRASSBOUND. He had a fellow feeling for a thief, knowing he was a thief himself. Do you forget that he sent my mother to prison?

LADY CICELY (softly). Were you very fond of your poor mother, and always very good to her?

BRASSBOUND (rather taken aback). I was not worse than other sons, I suppose.

LADY CICELY (opening her eyes very widely). Oh! Was THAT all?

BRASSBOUND (exculpating himself, full of gloomy remembrances). You don't understand. It was not always possible to be very tender with my mother. She had unfortunately a very violent temper; and she--she--

LADY CICELY. Yes: so you told Howard. (With genuine pity for him) You must have had a very unhappy childhood.

BRASSBOUND (grimly). Hell. That was what my childhood was. Hell.

LADY CICELY. Do you think she would really have killed Howard, as she threatened, if he hadn't sent her to prison?

BRASSBOUND (breaking out again, with a growing sense of being morally trapped). What if she did? Why did he rob her? Why did he not help her to get the estate, as he got it for himself afterwards?

LADY CICELY. He says he couldn't, you know. But perhaps the real reason was that he didn't like her. You know, don't you, that if you don't like people you think of all the reasons for not helping them, and if you like them you think of all the opposite reasons.

BRASSBOUND. But his duty as a brother!

LADY CICELY. Are you going to do your duty as a nephew?

BRASSBOUND. Don't quibble with me. I am going to do my duty as a son; and you know it.

LADY CICELY. But I should have thought that the time for that was in your mother's lifetime, when you could have been kind and forbearing with her. Hurting your uncle won't do her any good, you know.

BRASSBOUND. It will teach other scoundrels to respect widows and orphans. Do you forget that there is such a thing as justice?

LADY CICELY (gaily shaking out the finished coat). Oh, if you are going to dress yourself in ermine and call yourself Justice, I give you up. You are just your uncle over again; only he gets $\text{œ}5,000$ a year for it, and you do it for nothing.

(She holds the coat up to see whether any further repairs are needed.)

BRASSBOUND (sulkily). You twist my words very cleverly. But no man or woman has ever changed me.

LADY CICELY. Dear me! That must be very nice for the people you deal with, because they can always depend on you; but isn't it rather inconvenient for yourself when you change your mind?

BRASSBOUND. I never change my mind.

LADY CICELY (rising with the coat in her hands). Oh! Oh!! Nothing will ever persuade me that you are as pigheaded as that.

BRASSBOUND (offended). Pigheaded!

LADY CICELY (with quick, caressing apology). No, no, no. I didn't mean that. Firm! Unalterable! Resolute! Ironwilled! Stonewall Jackson! That's the idea, isn't it?

BRASSBOUND (hopelessly). You are laughing at me.

LADY CICELY. No: trembling, I assure you. Now will you try this on for me: I'm SO afraid I have made it too tight under the arm. (She holds it behind him.)

BRASSBOUND (obeying mechanically). You take me for a fool I think. (He misses the sleeve.)

LADY CICELY. No: all men look foolish when they are feeling for their sleeves.

BRASSBOUND. Agh! (He turns and snatches the coat from her; then puts it on himself and buttons the lowest button.)

LADY CICELY (horrified). Stop. No. You must NEVER pull a coat at the skirts, Captain Brassbound: it spoils the sit of it. Allow me. (She pulls the lappels of his coat vigorously forward) Put back your shoulders. (He frowns, but obeys.) That's better. (She buttons the top button.) Now button the rest from the top down. DOES it catch you at all under the arm?

BRASSBOUND (miserably--all resistance beaten out of him). No.

LADY CICELY. That's right. Now before I go back to poor Marzo, say thank you to me for mending your jacket, like a nice polite sailor.

BRASSBOUND (sitting down at the table in great agitation). Damn you! you have belittled my whole life to me. (He bows his head on his hands, convulsed.)

LADY CICELY (quite understanding, and putting her hand kindly on his shoulder). Oh no. I am sure you have done lots of kind things and brave things, if you could only recollect them. With Gordon for instance? Nobody can belittle that.

He looks up at her for a moment; then kisses her hand. She presses his and turns away with her eyes so wet that she sees Drinkwater, coming in through the arch just then, with a prismatic halo round him. Even when she sees him clearly, she hardly recognizes him; for he is ludicrously clean and smoothly brushed; and his hair, formerly mud color, is now a lively red.

DRINKWATER. Look eah, kepn. (Brassbound springs up and recovers himself quickly.) Eahs the bloomin Shike jest appeahd on the orawzn wiv abaht fifty men. Thy'll be eah insawd o ten minnits, they will.

LADY CICELY. The Sheikh!

BRASSBOUND. Sidi el Assif and fifty men! (To Lady Cicely) You were too late: I gave you up my vengeance when it was no longer in my hand. (To Drinkwater) Call all hands to stand by and shut the gates. Then all here to me for orders; and bring the prisoner.

DRINKWATER. Rawt, kepñ. (He runs out.)

LADY CICELY. Is there really any danger for Howard?

BRASSBOUND. Yes. Danger for all of us unless I keep to my bargain with this fanatic.

LADY CICELY. What bargain?

BRASSBOUND. I pay him so much a head for every party I escort through to the interior. In return he protects me and lets my caravans alone. But I have sworn an oath to him to take only Jews and true believers--no Christians, you understand.

LADY CICELY. Then why did you take us?

BRASSBOUND. I took my uncle on purpose--and sent word to Sidi that he was here.

LADY CICELY. Well, that's a pretty kettle of fish, isn't it?

BRASSBOUND. I will do what I can to save him--and you. But I fear my repentance has come too late, as repentance usually does.

LADY CICELY (cheerfully). Well, I must go and look after Marzo, at all events. (She goes out through the little door. Johnson, Redbrook and the rest come in through the arch, with Sir Howard, still very crusty and determined. He keeps close to Johnson, who comes to Brassbound's right, Redbrook taking the other side.)

BRASSBOUND. Where's Drinkwater?

JOHNSON. On the lookout. Look here, Capñ: we don't half like this job. The gentleman has been talking to us a bit; and we think that he IS a gentleman, and talks straight sense.

REDBROOK. Righto, Brother Johnson. (To Brassbound) Won't do, governor. Not good enough.

BRASSBOUND (fiercely). Mutiny, eh?

REDBROOK. Not at all, governor. Don't talk Tommy rot with Brother Sidi only five minutes gallop off. Can't hand over an Englishman to a nigger to have his throat cut

BRASSBOUND (unexpectedly acquiescing). Very good. You know, I suppose, that if you break my bargain with Sidi, you'll have to defend this place and fight for your lives in five minutes. That can't be done without discipline: you know that too. I'll take my part with the rest under whatever leader you are willing to obey. So choose your captain and look sharp about it. (Murmurs of surprise and discontent.)

VOICES. No, no. Brassbound must command.

BRASSBOUND. You're wasting your five minutes. Try Johnson.

JOHNSON. No. I haven't the head for it.

BRASSBOUND. Well, Redbrook.

REDBROOK. Not this Johnny, thank you. Haven't character enough.

BRASSBOUND. Well, there's Sir Howard Hallam for You! HE has character enough.

A VOICE. He's too old.

ALL. No, no. Brassbound, Brassbound.

JOHNSON. There's nobody but you, Captain.

REDRROOK. The mutiny's over, governor. You win, hands down.

BRASSBOUND (turning on them). Now listen, you, all of you. If I am to command here, I am going to do what I like, not what you like. I'll give this gentleman here to Sidi or to the devil if I choose. I'll not be intimidated or talked back to. Is that understood?

REDBROOK (diplomatically). He's offered a present of five hundred quid if he gets safe back to Mogador, governor. Excuse my mentioning it.

SIR HOWARD. Myself AND Lady Cicely.

BRASSBOUND. What! A judge compound a felony! You greenhorns, he is more likely to send you all to penal servitude if you are fools enough to give him the chance.

VOICES. So he would. Whew! (Murmurs of conviction.)

REDBROOK. Righto, governor. That's the ace of trumps.

BRASSBOUND (to Sir Howard). Now, have you any other card to play? Any other bribe? Any other threat? Quick. Time presses.

SIR HOWARD. My life is in the hands of Providence. Do your worst.

BRASSBOUND. Or my best. I still have that choice.

DRINKWATER (running in). Look eah, kepn. Eah's anather lot cammin from the sahtth heast. Hunnerds of em, this tawm. The owl dezzit is lawk a bloomin Awd Pawk demonstition. Aw blieve it's the Kidy from Kintorfy. (General alarm. All look to Brassbound.)

BRASSBOUND (eagerly). The Cadi! How far off?

DRINKWATER. Matter o two mawl.

BRASSBOUND. We're saved. Open the gates to the Sheikh.

DRINKWATER (appalled, almost in tears). Naow, naow. Lissn, kepn (Pointing to Sir Howard): e'll give huz favv unnerd red uns. (To the others) Ynt yer spowk to im, Miste Jornsn--Miste Redbrook--

BRASSBOUND (cutting him short). Now then, do you understand plain English? Johnson and Redbrook: take what men you want and open the gates to the Sheikh. Let him come straight to me. Look alive, will you.

JOHNSON. Ay ay, sir.

REDBROOK. Righto, governor.

They hurry out, with a few others. Drinkwater stares after them, dumbfounded by their obedience.

BRASSBOUND (taking out a pistol). You wanted to sell me to my prisoner, did you, you dog.

DRINKWATER (falling on his knees with a yell). Naow! (Brassbound turns on him as if to kick him. He scrambles away and takes refuge behind Sir Howard.)

BRASSBOUND. Sir Howard Hallam: you have one chance left. The Cadi of Kintafi stands superior to the Sheikh as the responsible governor of the whole province. It is the Cadi who will be sacrificed by the Sultan if England demands satisfaction for any injury to you. If we can hold the Sheikh in parley until the Cadi arrives, you may frighten the Cadi into forcing the Sheikh to release you. The Cadi's coming is a lucky chance for YOU.

SIR HOWARD. If it were a real chance, you would not tell me of it. Don't try to play cat and mouse with me, man.

DRINKWATER (aside to Sir Howard, as Brassbound turns contemptuously away to the other side of the room). It ynt mach of a chawnst, Sr Ahrd. But if there was a ganbowt in Mogador Awbr, awd put a bit on it, aw would.

Johnson, Redbrook, and the others return, rather mistrustfully ushering in Sidi el Assif, attended by Osman and a troop of Arabs. Brassbound's men keep together on the archway side, backing their captain. Sidi's followers cross the room behind the table and assemble near Sir Howard, who stands his ground. Drinkwater runs across to Brassbound and stands at his elbow as he turns to face Sidi.

Sidi el Aasif, clad in spotless white, is a nobly handsome Arab, hardly thirty, with fine eyes, bronzed complexion, and instinctively dignified carriage. He places himself between the two groups, with Osman in attendance at his right hand.

OSMAN (pointing out Sir Howard). This is the infidel Cadi. (Sir Howard bows to Sidi, but, being an infidel, receives only the haughtiest stare in acknowledgement.) This (pointing to Brassbound) is Brassbound the Frangestani captain, the servant of Sidi.

DRINKWATER (not to be outdone, points out the Sheikh and Osman to Brassbound). This eah is the Commawnder of the Fythful an is Vizzateer Rosman.

SIDI. Where is the woman?

OSMAN. The shameless one is not here.

BRASSBOUND. Sidi el Assif, kinsman of the Prophet: you are welcome.

REDBROOK (with much aplomb). There is no majesty and no might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!

DRINKWATER. Eah, eah!

OSMAN (to Sidi). The servant of the captain makes his profession of faith as a true believer.

SIDI. It is well.

BRASSBOUND (aside to Redbrook). Where did you pick that up?

REDRROOK (aside to Brassbound). Captain Burton's Arabian Nights-- copy in the library of the National Liberal Club.

LADY CICELY (calling without). Mr. Drinkwater. Come and help me with Marzo. (The Sheikh pricks up his ears. His nostrils and eyes expand.)

OSMAN. The shameless one!

BRASSBOUND (to Drinkwater, seizing him by the collar and slinging him towards the door). Off with you.

Drinkwater goes out through the little door.

OSMAN. Shall we hide her face before she enters?

SIDI. NO.

Lady Cicely, who has resumed her travelling equipment, and has her hat slung across her arm, comes through the little door supporting Marzo, who is very white, but able to get about. Drinkwater has his other arm. Redbrook hastens to relieve Lady Cicely of Marzo, taking him into the group behind Brassbound. Lady Cicely comes forward between Brassbound and the Sheikh, to whom she turns affably.

LADY CICELY (proffering her hand). Sidi el Assif, isn't it? How dye do? (He recoils, blushing somewhat.)

OSMAN (scandalized). Woman; touch not the kinsman of the Prophet.

LADY CICELY. Oh, I see. I'm being presented at court. Very good. (She makes a presentation curtsy.)

REDBROOK. Sidi el Assif: this is one of the mighty women Sheikhs of Franguestan. She goes unveiled among Kings; and only princes may touch her hand.

LADY CICELY. Allah upon thee, Sidi el Assif! Be a good little Sheikh, and shake hands.

SIDI (timidly touching her hand). Now this is a wonderful thing, and worthy to be chronicled with the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Is it not so, Osman Ali?

OSMAN. Allah upon thee, master! it is so.

SIDI. Brassbound Ali: the oath of a just man fulfils itself without many words. The infidel Cadi, thy captive, falls to my share.

BRASSBOUND (firmly). It cannot be, Sidi el Assif. (Sidi's brows contract gravely.) The price of his blood will be required of our lord the Sultan. I will take him to Morocco and deliver him up there.

SIDI (impressively). Brassbound: I am in mine own house and amid mine own people. I am the Sultan here. Consider what you say; for when my word goes forth for life or death, it may not be recalled.

BRASSBOUND. Sidi el Assif: I will buy the man from you at what price you choose to name; and if I do not pay faithfully, you shall take my head for his.

SIDI. It is well. You shall keep the man, and give me the woman in payment.

SIR HOWARD AND BRASSBOUND (with the same impulse). No, no.

LADY CICELY (eagerly). Yes, yes. Certainly, Mr. Sidi. Certainly.

Sidi smiles gravely.

SIR HOWARD. Impossible.

BRASSBOUND. You don't know what you're doing.

LADY CICELY. Oh, don't I? I've not crossed Africa and stayed with six cannibal chiefs for nothing. (To the Sheikh) It's all right, Mr. Sidi: I shall be delighted.

SIR HOWARD. You are mad. Do you suppose this man will treat you as a European gentleman would?

LADY CICELY. No: he'll treat me like one of Nature's gentlemen: look at his perfectly splendid face! (Addressing Osman as if he were her oldest and most attached retainer.) Osman: be sure you choose me a good horse; and get a nice strong camel for my luggage.

Osman, after a moment of stupefaction, hurries out. Lady Cicely puts on her hat and pins it to her hair, the Sheikh gazing at her during the process with timid admiration.

DRINKWATER (chuckling). She'll mawch em all to church next Sunder lawk a bloomin lot o' cherrity kids: you see if she doesn't.

LADY CICELY (busily). Goodbye, Howard: don't be anxious about me; and above all, don't bring a parcel of men with guns to rescue me. I shall be all right now that I am getting away from the escort. Captain Brassbound: I rely on you to see that Sir Howard gets safe to Mogador. (Whispering) Take your hand off that pistol. (He takes his hand out of his pocket, reluctantly.) Goodbye.

A tumult without. They all turn apprehensively to the arch. Osman rushes in.

OSMAN. The Cadi, the Cadi. He is in anger. His men are upon us. Defend--

The Cadi, a vigorous, fatfeatured, choleric, whitehaired and bearded elder, rushes in, cudgel in hand, with an overwhelming retinue, and silences Osman with a sounding thwack. In a moment the back of the room is crowded with his followers. The Sheikh retreats a little towards his men; and the Cadi comes impetuously forward between him and Lady Cicely.

THE CADI. Now woe upon thee, Sidi el Assif, thou child of mischief!

SIDI (sternly). Am I a dog, Muley Othman, that thou speakest thus to me?

THE CADI. Wilt thou destroy thy country, and give us all into the hands of them that set the sea on fire but yesterday with their ships of war? Where are the Franguestani captives?

LADY CICELY. Here we are, Cadi. How dye do?

THE CADI. Allah upon thee, thou moon at the full! Where is thy kinsman, the Cadi of Franguestan? I am his friend, his servant. I come on behalf of my master the Sultan to do him honor, and to cast down his enemies.

SIR HOWARD. You are very good, I am sure.

SIDI (graver than ever). Muley Othman--

TAE CADI (fumbling in his breast). Peace, peace, thou inconsiderate one. (He takes out a letter.)

BRASSBOUND. Cadi--

THE CADI. Oh thou dog, thou, thou accursed Brassbound, son of a wanton: it is thou hast led Sidi el Assif into this wrongdoing. Read this writing that thou hast brought upon me from the commander of the warship.

BRASSBOUND. Warship! (He takes the letter and opens it, his men whispering to one another very low-spiritedly meanwhile.)

REDBROOK. Warship! Whew!

JOHNSON. Gunboat, praps.

DRINKWATER. Lawk bloomin Worterleoo buses, they are, on this cowst.

Brassbound folds up the letter, looking glum.

SIR HOWARD (sharply). Well, sir, are we not to have the benefit of that letter? Your men are waiting to hear it, I think.

BRASSBOUND. It is not a British ship. (Sir Howard's face falls.)

LADY CICELY. What is it, then?

RASSBOUND. An American cruiser. The Santiago.

THE CADI (tearing his beard). Woe! alas! it is where they set the sea on fire.

SIDI. Peace, Muley Othman: Allah is still above us.

JOHNSON. Would you mind readin it to us, capn?

BRASSBOUND (grimly). Oh, I'll read it to you. "Mogador Harbor. 26 Sept. 1899. Captain Hamlin Kearney, of the cruiser Santiago, presents the compliments of the United States to the Cadi Muley Othman el Kintafi, and announces that he is coming to look for the two British travellers Sir Howard Hallam and Lady Cicely Waynfilete, in the Cadi's jurisdiction. As the search will be conducted with machine guns, the prompt return of the travellers to Mogador Harbor will save much trouble to all parties."

THE CADI. As I live, O Cadi, and thou, moon of loveliness, ye shall be led back to Mogador with honor. And thou, accursed Brassbound, shall go thither a prisoner in chains, thou and thy people. (Brassbound and his men make a movement to defend themselves.) Seize them.

LADY CICELY. Oh, please don't fight. (Brassbound, seeing that his men are hopelessly outnumbered, makes no resistance. They are made prisoners by the Cadi's followers.)

SIDI (attempting to draw his scimitar). The woman is mine: I will not forego her. (He is seized and overpowered after a Homeric struggle.)

SIR HOWARD (drily). I told you you were not in a strong position, Captain Brassbound. (Looking implacably at him.) You are laid by the heels, my friend, as I said you would be.

LADY CICELY. But I assure you--

BRASSBOUND (interrupting her). What have you to assure him of? You persuaded me to spare him. Look at his face. Will you be able to persuade him to spare me?

ACT III

Torrid forenoon filtered through small Moorish windows high up in the adobe walls of the largest room in Leslie Rankin's house. A clean cool room, with the table (a Christian article) set in the middle, a presidentially elbowed chair behind it, and an inkstand and paper ready for the sitter. A couple of cheap American chairs right and left of the table, facing the same way as the presidential chair, give a judicial aspect to the arrangement. Rankin is placing a little tray with a jug and some glasses near the inkstand when Lady Cicely's voice is heard at the door, which is behind him in the corner to his right.

LADY CICELY. Good morning. May I come in?

RANKIN. Certainly. (She comes in, to the nearest end of the table. She has discarded all travelling equipment, and is dressed exactly as she might be in Surrey on a very hot day.) Sit ye doon, Leddy Ceecily.

LADY CICELY (sitting down). How nice you've made the room for the inquiry!

RANKIN (doubtfully). I could wish there were more chairs. Yon American captain will preside in this; and that leaves but one for Sir Howrrd and one for your leddyship. I could almost be tempted to call it a maircy that your friend that owns the yacht has sprained his ankle and cannot come. I misdoubt me it will not look judeecial to have Captain Kearney's officers squatting on the floor.

LADY CICELY. Oh, they won't mind. What about the prisoners?

RANKIN. They are to be broat here from the town gaol presently.

LADY CICELY. And where is that silly old Cadi, and my handsome Sheikh Sidi? I must see them before the inquiry, or they'll give Captain Kearney quite a false impression of what happened.

RANKIN. But ye cannot see them. They decamped last night, back to their castles in the Atlas.

LADY CICELY (delighted). No!

RANKIN. Indeed and they did. The poor Cadi is so terrified by all he has haird of the destruction of the Spanish fleet, that he daren't trust himself in the captain's hands. (Looking reproachfully at her) On your journey back here, ye seem to have frightened the poor man yourself, Leddy Ceecily, by talking to him about the fanatical Chreestianity of the Americans. Ye have largely yourself to thank if he's gone.

LADY CICELY. Allah be praised! WHAT a weight off our minds, Mr. Rankin!

RANKIN (puzzled). And why? Do ye not understand how necessary their evidence is?

LADY CICELY. THEIR evidence! It would spoil everything. They would perjure themselves out of pure spite against poor Captain Brassbound.