

Henry Northcote (IA henrynorthcote00snairich).pdf/68



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- charged by an unaccustomed accession of heat.
Already

it had seemed to be waxing too high.

"Here is your liqueur," said Mr. Whitcomb, with a slight perturbation, "and here's a cigar I've chosen for you. And here's a nice black coffee that may steady you a bit."

"Thanks, thanks," muttered Northcote, nodding his head in a mechanical manner.

The solicitor gulped his liqueur, and cut off the end of his cigar.

"Well, old boy," he said, letting a somewhat whimsical gaze fall upon the man who sat opposite, "do you feel like giving us a bit of a run for our money at the hour of ten-thirty at the Central Criminal Court on Friday morning next, or would you prefer that the chance should be offered to Harris?"

The advocate swallowed his coffee.

"You will have a run for your money all right," said he, "on Friday morning next. Upon my soul, I believe you have given me a start with the most fascinating case in the world."

The solicitor pursed up his lips in an expression of genial contradiction.

"If you find fascination in a thing like that," he said, "you must look very deep. The whole business is sordid, atrocious, bestial. The crime is brutal and perfectly commonplace."

"Is it not a mere question," said the advocate, "of the fashion in which one uses one's eyes, of the plane over which one permits them to stray?"

"There is only one plane, my friend," said the solicitor, "over which an attorney permits *his* eyes to stray. That is the obvious diurnal one of matter-of-fact common sense."

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