

I took the gun out and put it, ready to use, on the table in front of me.

'You don't know who I am, I see,' he said. He was smiling, but when I looked at his eyes, I was pleased to have the gun there.

'No,' I said, 'I know very well who you are. Please sit down. I am free for five minutes if you have anything to say.'

'I do have something to say. But you already know what that is.'

'Then perhaps you already know my answer.'

'You are taking a dangerous road,' said Moriarty. 'Won't you turn back?'

'No,' I replied. 'What are you going to do about it?'

'You must drop this case against me, Mr Holmes,' he said, and his head moved slowly again from side to side when he looked at me. 'You really must, you know.'

'I'll drop it after Monday,' I said.

'No, no,' he replied. 'You're a clever man, and you know that there is only one way out. You must drop it now. I have greatly enjoyed working against you, Mr Holmes, and I'll be very sorry if I have to destroy you. You smile, sir, but I truly will be sorry.'

'There is always danger in my work,' I replied.

'This is not just danger,' he said. 'It is immediate death.'

I stood up. 'This has been a pleasant conversation, but

I have important business, I'm afraid.'

Moriarty also stood up, and looked at me.

'Well, well,' he said at last, 'I'm sorry for you. I've done what I could. I know what you're planning. But the police will never arrest me, and you will never win against me. If you try to destroy me, Mr Holmes, I'll destroy you first. You can be sure of that.'

'I will die happily at your hands, Mr Moriarty, if I can free the people of this country from you.'

'Only one of those things is going to happen!' he said angrily. 'You will never destroy *me*!' And he turned his back on me and left the room.



*'You will never destroy me!'*