

but one; amongst them was one exception. This was the face of a hideous, blear-eyed crone, who was almost bent double, and, with hands pressed against her stomach, peered up at us, showing her red eyelids, with an expression of cringing wickedness. Never in my life had I seen a face at once so miserable and so evil. 'And what,' I asked, 'has she done?' I anticipated the answer. It was the old story, 'Murder.' But there was more to follow. This old woman, I learnt, had caused the death, not of her victim only, but of two other men besides. She had hired three to assist her in her deliberate deed, and two of them had been hanged, whilst the sentence of the third had been commuted. The old woman's sentence had been commuted also—perhaps in consideration of her great age and feebleness—but if justice in this case demanded the extreme penalty the debt had been paid practically not once, but many times. At the beginning of her imprisonment the old woman had a fever; and in her delirious sleep she was continually waking up, clutching her wizened throat, and imagining that the rope was round it. Turning away from her, I saw amongst the medley of criminal faces, a little creature looking at us with soft coal-black eyes. This was a baby that had been lately born in the prison. It lay in its mother's arms, surrounded by squalor, and by calamity; but already its small nails had been made pink with henna, and a rude care had darkened it under its eyes with kohol. Were all the seeds of