

ashamed to own that I cowered under the bedclothes to escape the sight of the awful "thing," whatever it might be, about to enter. Another thud, and the door flew open. Even in that supreme moment I could not help wondering how it was that I heard the Ghost's footsteps about the room. Chains we know, Spooks *do* rattle, but it is contrary to the natural history (if I may use this term of the supernatural) I say of ghosts, that their steps should be audible. Strange to say, this discrepancy so piqued my curiosity that it gave me courage to peep over the clothes. There happened to be a

crime. His next move convinced me that conscience had given it up as a bad job, for he climbed on to my bed. This time he gave a sigh of satisfaction as he rolled on to me. Oh, the weight and heat of that soft, furry monstrous body! He seemed to have no hostile intent, but merely wanted to be comfortable, but that was no consolation to me as I felt myself being slowly pressed and sweltered to death. Again I tried to call out, but had no breath left. I put all my remaining strength into a mighty shove, but he only sighed, and again subsided upon me. If only I could run a pin into him! But I



I RECOGNISED MY MIDNIGHT VISITOR AS THE BEAR.

full moon, the light of which filtering through the blind, revealed a huge mass slowly moving about. Then it flashed upon me that there was real danger to be feared, as I recognised my midnight visitor as the bear. While he was sniffing and turning over my clothes, which I had hastily deposited on a chair, I recalled all the gruesome bear stories that I had ever read, and wondered whether the grim Count would hug me to death, or scalp me with one fell stroke of his awful claws. At last he came up to the bed, sniffed me, and sighed. I sighed, too, with relief. Perhaps even then his better nature was urging him to refrain from his meditated

had no pin, and besides, he might have resented it as an insult. These foreign nobles are so very particular.

I do not know how long I lay in this plight. Chronologically, I believe that it was only a few minutes, but mentally it seemed an age. At last I again heard footsteps on the stairs, and this time it was Jiff who rushed into the room, revolver in hand.

"I heard a noise," he explained, "and have been all over the house with the dogs hunting for burglars. Oh, it's *you*, is it? Come out of that!" Saying which, he dragged the Count off the bed.