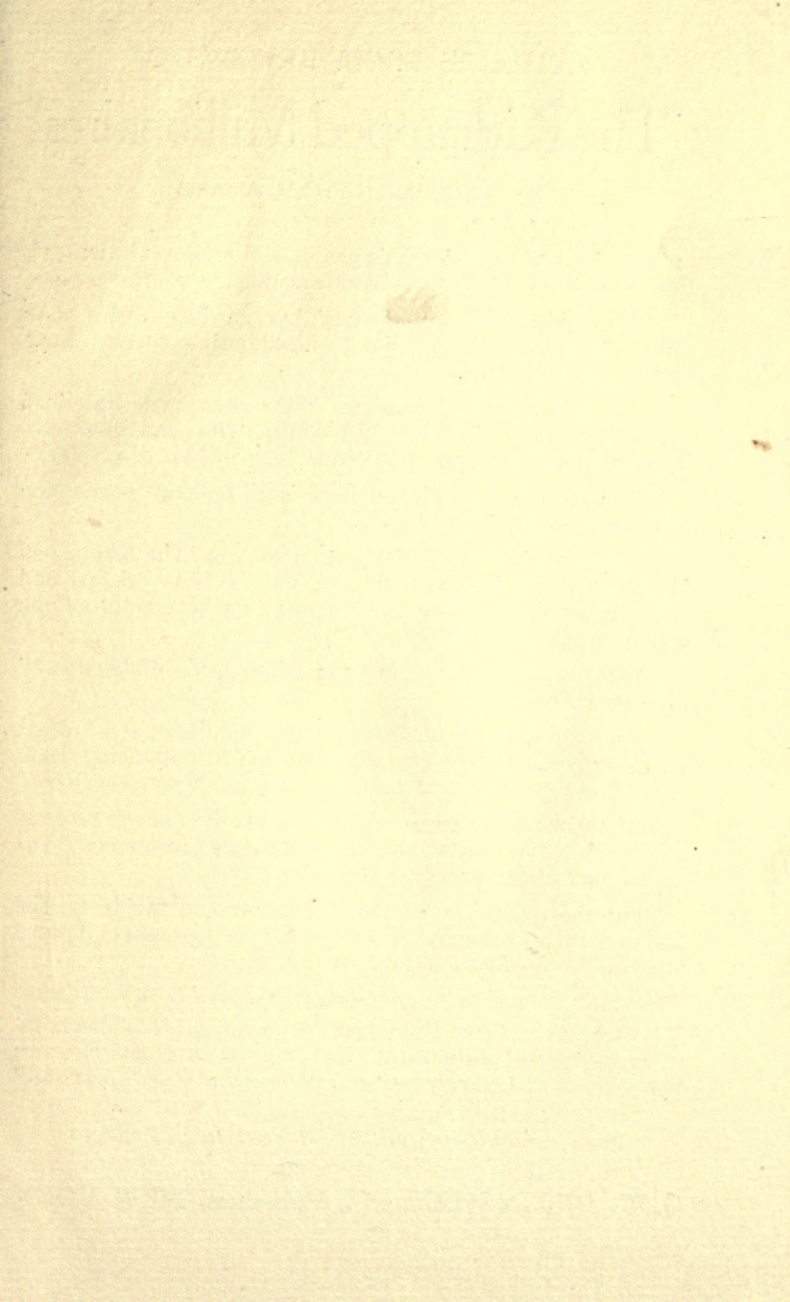


# THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL



FREDERICK UPHAM ADAMS





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G. W. DILLINGHAM CO., Publishers, NEW YORK







"I know something of your history, young man."

*Frontispiece.*

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# THE Bottom of the Well

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BY  
FREDERICK UPHAM ADAMS

AUTHOR OF "JOHN BURT," "THE KIDNAPPED MILLIONAIRES,"  
"JOHN HENRY SMITH," ETC.



Illustrations by  
ALEX. O. LEVY

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OF THE WELL



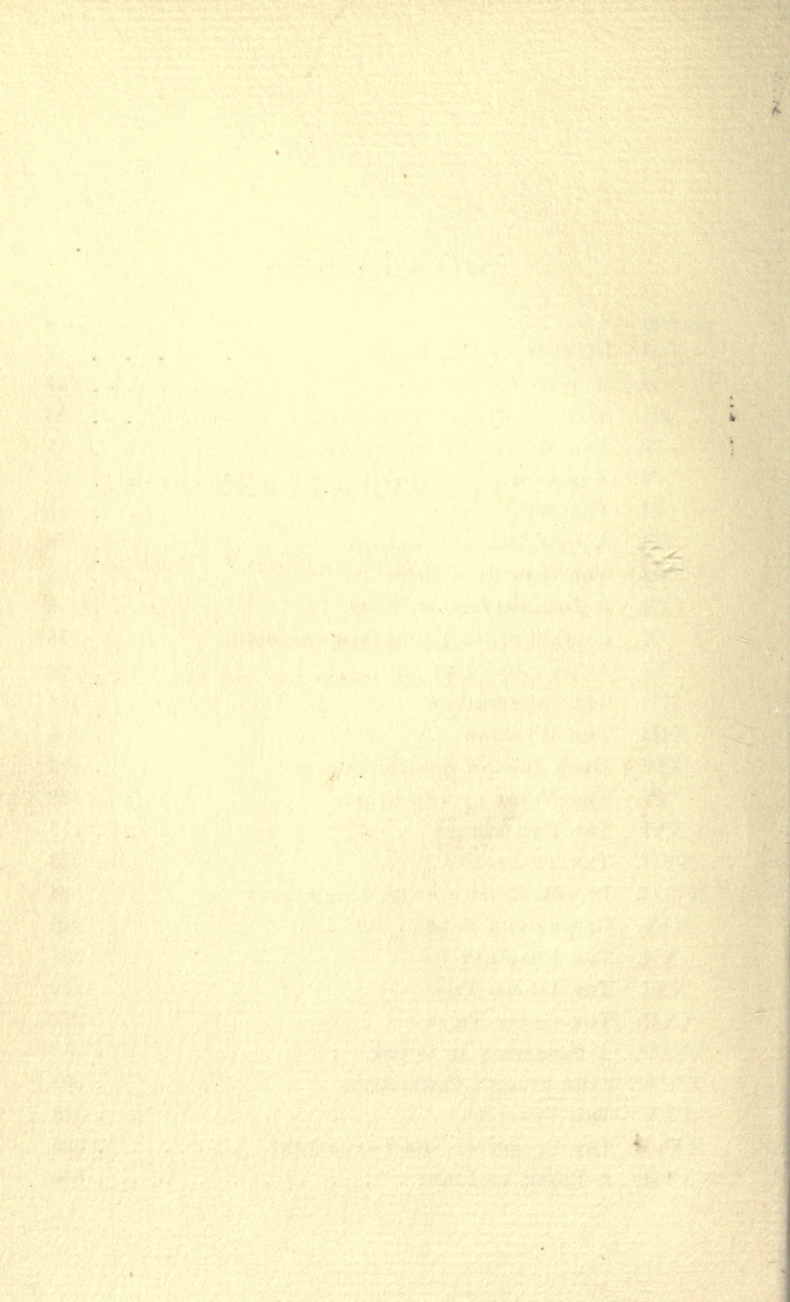
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# The Bottom of the Well

## CHAPTER I

### CAPTURE OF THE FROLIC

As the boom of the sunset gun rolled across the bay, the English revenue cutter *Alexander* dragged the flukes of her anchor clear of the water, drifted with the sluggish tide for a moment and then pointed west into the Caribbean from the harbor of Savanna-la-Mar. Before midnight she had rounded the westerly point of the island of Jamaica. So calm was the night that the smoke hung in a long and undulating pennant trailing above the phosphorescence which gleamed in the wake. The course was well off shore, and only a sailor familiar with the coast would have detected the faint line which marked the crest of the hills.

Captain Benson came on deck at two o'clock and listened to the report made by Lieutenant Rawlins. The ship was then standing in near shore and making half speed. She displayed no lights, and the silence of the bay, now entered, was unbroken save for the subdued thrust of the screw and the drone of a leadsman. At a signal from Captain Benson the engines stopped.

"Bring the Cuban on deck," he ordered, and a minute later a petty officer came forward with a man clad in the ordinary garb of a fisherman. He was dark of complexion and short and stocky of build. The Cuban removed his cap and saluted awkwardly.

"They call you 'Hungry Joe,' do they not?" asked Captain Benson, addressing the man in Spanish.

"That is not my name," was the sullen response. "My name is Joseph——"

"Never mind what your name is," interrupted the commander of the *Alexander*. "If you lead us to the smuggler you will get your reward. Is this the place? Look sharp and make no mistake."

"This is the place," returned the Cuban without hesitation. "I know every reef and sand-bar between Black River and Montego Bay."

"Where is the smuggler?"

"In the lagoon beyond, straight in line with that palm," was the reply as he pointed to the east. "It is not more than two miles as the crow flies, but it means a five-mile row. You must make no more noise than a seal; that swine of a captain of the *Frolic* has the eyes and ears of a dog."

Captain Benson called his lieutenant aside.

"Take the Cuban in your boat and keep an eye on him," he directed. "He has a grudge against the captain of this smuggler and would knife him if he had a chance. Do not shoot unless absolutely necessary, but be sure and get Jake Stark. He has caused us more



trouble than any smuggler in the Caribbean, but if he is in that lagoon, you should get him this time."

Two boats, manned by armed marines, glided past the bow of the revenue cutter and were swallowed in the shadows which blended the sea with the enclosing hills. The Cuban held the tiller of the leading boat and confidently steered a course past submerged rocks and through narrow inlets. At last they entered a sea lake by a passage so cramped that only smaller craft could enter it even under skilled pilotage. The men pulled silently at their oars until they neared a cape.

"She's anchored around that point," the Cuban said to Lieutenant Rawlins, a harsh note in his voice.

The officer took the tiller, the men fell to their oars, and as they circled the wooded spit of sand there came into view the spars and hull of a small schooner anchored not a hundred yards from shore. Against the star-studded sky her rigging seemed drawn in sharp black lines, and not a gleam of light relieved the dark contour of her hull. No sentinel paced her deck, and she lay like a black ghost on the dark and motionless bosom of the lagoon. Though she seemed deserted, there was an indefinable something which told that she sheltered a crew.

The attacking boats made for the opposite sides of the smuggler schooner, cutting swiftly and silently through the water. Not until Lieutenant Rawlins' yawl rasped against her hull was an alarm sounded from the deck.

A slumbering watchman awoke to see the gleam of rifle barrels in the hands of blue-jackets who swarmed over the sides of the craft. He rubbed his eyes to make sure that the stern figures advancing toward him were not figments of his drowsy fancy, and then vented his fright in a yell which awoke the night birds. It ceased only when two marines clutched him by the throat and bore him to the deck.

The door of the cabin swung back and a fantastic figure bounded out. On its head was an old-fashioned night-cap partially covering a mass of coal black hair. A white gown unbuttoned at the throat served to accentuate the blackness of a shaggy beard and a hairy chest. In each hand was flourished a pistol, but his garb and general air of dismayed surprise produced an effect which tempted laughter rather than fear.

"That's him! That's Jake Stark!" shrieked the Cuban, dancing up and down behind the marines whose guns were levelled at the white-robed figure. "Shoot him! Shoot him! Shoot ze damn dog!"

There was slight trace of fear on the face of the man thus indicated. His blue eyes lost their twinkle of surprise and were clouded with disgust as he looked beyond the quarter circle of his captors to the crouching figure of the Cuban. He slowly lowered the pistols and then stood stock-still as if posing for a photograph.

"Cum back, did ye, Hungry Joe?" he drawled with a twang which told unmistakably of New England ancestry. "Cum back an' brought all these fine blue boys

erlong with ye, didn't ye? Wal, I ain't er bit glad ter see none on ye, an' I don't mind sayin' so! Lieutenant, just tell them thar men of yours ter point them guns tother way, because I shorly knows too much ter start trouble under these distressin' car-cumstances. What dew ye want me ter dew, Lieutenant?"

"Lay down those pistols and step forward," ordered Rawlins. "You and your crew are under arrest charged with smuggling."

"I sorter suspected as much," grinned Stark, placing the pistols on the deck, laying one each side of him. As he did so he glanced suspiciously at the Cuban.

A boy of perhaps twelve years had stolen from the cabin and stood back of Stark during these brief happenings. He was clad in a blue undergarment, and brown curls fell to his shoulders. With wide-opened eyes he had listened, gazing first at Rawlins and then at the crouching form of the Cuban. He saw that the latter had a knife in his hands, and an instant later Jake Stark made the same discovery.

"Don't let that ornary Hungry Joe come pesterin' round me with that thar knife, or I'll——"

The threat was not finished. Crazy with rage and longing for a safe revenge, the Cuban had pushed through the line of marines and with an oath rushed at Stark, who hesitated a moment and then stepped back, almost stumbling over the boy. Like a flash the youngster leaped for the nearest pistol.

"Don't run, dad; I'll fix Hungry Joe!" he ex-

claimed, cocking the weapon and firing without apparent aim.

With a moan like that of a woman, the Cuban sprawled to the deck, a long knife slipping from his hand. The marines had lowered their muskets, but at the shot several of them, without waiting for a command, covered the little figure in blue. Stark made a dash for the lad, grabbed him in his arms and turned his back to the levelled guns.

"Don't shoot!" he cried in a voice vibrant with fear and anguish. He extended the palm of his left hand as if to ward off the threatened shower of bullets. "Don't shoot, men! He's only a boy—an' he didn't know what he was doin'!"

As if by instinct he dropped to the deck, bearing the boy beneath him, so as more fully to offer his body as a shield for the one he loved. This intended sacrifice doubtless saved their lives, the shots flying over their heads. Lieutenant Rawlins ordered his men to cease firing, and dashed in front of the prostrate figures.

"I'll shoot the next man who fires without orders!" he shouted.

The captain of the smuggler struggled to his feet, still holding fast to the boy. His homely face lighted when a glance showed that the lad was uninjured. He ran his rough hands lovingly through the curly locks, and patted the boy on the back. Then he glanced quickly at the Cuban, noted that he had regained consciousness, and drew a long breath of relief.



"You shouldn't er done it, Mascot, but you're all right just ther same," he said, taking the pistol from the boy and handing it to Rawlins. "This is not exactly your sort of a game, Mascot, an' you keep out of it, but you didn't make no mistake when you plugged that no-account Hungry Joe. Don't reckon ye killed him, though. It shorly war ordained that he'll live tew be hanged."

"Order your men on deck, Stark," commanded Lieutenant Rawlins. "Those who show fight or hold back will take the consequences. Baldwin, take charge of this lad."

"On deck, Long Bill, and the rest on ye in there!" roared Stark, turning to the doorway of the cabin. "The game's up! Come out, Rat Trap, an' the whole boodle of ye! Drop yer guns an' come er running, an' no monkey business erbout it! We're pinched, an' that's all there is tew it! All hands on deck! All hands on deck!"

The first to respond to this command was an elongated and angular seaman whose broad shoulders were stooped as if from years spent in passing through doors of insufficient height and in sleeping in bunks ill-adapted to his long trunk and longer legs. His nose was long and pointed, the chin aggressive but well-formed, the light blue eyes deep-set beneath heavy eyebrows, and his hair was of a reddish tinge. The suggestion of cruelty in the thin lips vanished when Long Bill smiled and

displayed a perfect set of white and even teeth, but it was seldom that the melancholy features thus relaxed.

Long Bill saluted Lieutenant Rawlins and then turned to Jake Stark.

"Anybody hurt, Captain?" he asked.

"Nobody but Hungry Joe, an' he don't count," said Stark. "Better keep quiet, Bill," he added, with a meaning glance at his first mate. "Of course we're innocent, this bein' all er mistake, as ye well know, but at the same time the least said the soonest mended, as old King Solomon onct said."

Ten men followed Long Bill. Some of them chattered with fear, others laughed to keep up their courage, and yet others were stolid and sullen. They were a mixed lot physically and racially, but there was nothing to indicate that they were more desperate than the crew of the average trading schooner.

In the meantime the surgeon had attended to the wounded Cuban. Mascot's pistol shot had ploughed a furrow along his scalp, but save for shock and loss of blood the informer was as good as ever, and even more vindictive.

"A good line shot, Mascot," Stark remarked, when the light of a lantern revealed the course of the bullet. "A good line shot, but a smitch too high. Them light guns always kick up a little, but it's just as well, an' perhaps a leetle better."

"Call off your men, Stark," ordered Rawlins, when the crew of the Frolic had been lined up in front of

the marines. "Is this all of them? You know how many you have and who they are. Call them off."

Stark ran his eye along the line, calling each man by name and counting them several times. He looked narrowly at Long Bill as if for advice, but that person's face was expressionless.

"I reckon that's all of them, Lieutenant," he said finally. "This here is mostly a new crew, but, if I rightly remembers, all on 'em is in front of ye, an' if they'll take my advice they'll dew anything you says."

"Where's Rat Trap? Where's Rat Trap?" feebly demanded the Cuban through the bandages in which his head was swathed. He was propped up against the port bulwarks, and his blood-stained face looked ghastly in the flickering light of the lanterns.

"Right ye are for onct, Hungry Joe," admitted Stark with much apparent frankness, after again looking along the straggling line of his crew. "These events has come so thick an' fast, Lieutenant, that I'd plumb lost track of Rat Trap, but blamed if I know whar he is, unless he's asleep down below. Rat Trap certainly is the most patient and hard-working sleeper ever I knowed. Nothing much disturbs him but his own snorin'. You'll likely find him in his bunk, for'ard."

But the searching party which ransacked every section of the schooner found no trace of "Rat Trap," the abbreviated title of a New York wharf thief who claimed the name of Ratcliffe Trappe, and who had been on the Frolic for years. His disappearance was as much of

a mystery to Stark as to Lieutenant Rawlins, but the former argued it a good omen that one of his crew had escaped. Day was breaking when the search for the missing smuggler was abandoned.



## CHAPTER II

### A WAIF OF THE SEA

THE captives were granted permission to collect and take with them their personal belongings. During the stirring events following the wounding of Hungry Joe, the lad had said no word, but had kept his eyes fixed on the grotesque figure of Jake Stark. When the order was given to make ready to quit the schooner, the boy darted from the side of the marine in charge of him and ran to his father.

"Are they going to shoot us, dad?" he asked calmly, as if the matter were of no vast moment.

"Don't you worry about that, Mascot," smiled the smuggler captain, resting his hand on the boy's shoulder. "They're goin' tew take us tew their ship, Mascot, the finest ship you ever saw in your life. Keep a stiff upper lip, and everything will come out all right. Trust yer dad fer that."

"Is this what you call an important occasion, dad?" he asked. Jake Stark was puzzled.

"I reckon it is," he said after a moment's pause. "I reckon it's a mighty important occasion for some on us; but why do ye ask, Mascot?"

"Because you said I might wear those new clothes you brought back the last time you went to Santiago, whenever we had an important occasion," eagerly explained the boy.

"So I did, so I did," admitted Stark, a tender smile lighting his rugged features. "Put 'em on, Mascot; I want tew see how ye look in them."

Marine Baldwin interrupted the conversation at this point, and Mascot led the way to his room, a most wonderful room, the only home he could remember or conjure in his fancy. For all he knew he had been born within those narrow walls, and now he was leaving them, perhaps forever. Mascot dimly realised this at the time, and whatever of sorrow he felt was tempered by the anticipation of new sights and faces. He was not to be shot; his father had said so, and that settled it. He was to go on board a real warship, one commanded by real officers who wore brilliant uniforms, and manned by men who marched and drilled.

Mascot had seen several war vessels from afar. Safely hidden in landlocked lagoons he had watched these beautiful ships, had watched the dense clouds of smoke billowing from their stacks, had caught the glimpse of polished brass, and imagined the gleam of buttons or of epaulets. He knew that warships were something to be dreaded, as the man-eating sharks were to be feared, but, like the sharks, they represented grace and power. Now that he had met the handsome Lieutenant Rawlins face to face and still lived, now that he had

observed that Marine Baldwin was good-natured and anxious to be friendly, Mascot lost his fear.

It was a strange room, this home of the sea waif. The walls were covered with models and pictures of boats and ships, while on shelves there were a dozen or more toy schooners carved and rigged by Jake Stark, Long Bill and other members of the crew of the Frolic.

In contrast with these marine playthings was a collection of toys, highly prized by Mascot because they represented things of which he had only a vague conception. There were windmills, tops, bows and arrows and other things dear to the heart of the normal boy, but Mascot was little skilled in their use. These and the toy ships he must leave behind, but he would not abandon the small automatic locomotive, the latest gift from Jake Stark. This he detached from the red baggage car, wrapped it carefully in a red handkerchief and placed it in his satchel.

The boy carefully examined his wardrobe. He had several suits, some of which were new and fine in quality. Baldwin helped him to pack these in the satchel, Mascot in the meantime proceeding to array himself in the one which his father had reserved for "an important occasion." It was made in imitation of the full dress uniform of the captain of an American man-of-war, having trousers and jacket resplendent in gold braid and brass buttons, and a band on the cap on which were the gold letters of the word "CAPTAIN."

The sun had crawled above the palm-trees and was burning away the banks of fog before the heavily laden boats cast away from the Frolic. Mascot sat by the side of Jake Stark in Lieutenant Rawlins' boat.

"Take a good look at the Frolic, my boy," said the captain of the trim smuggler craft. "No better boat ever rode out a hurricane, an' I kinder hates ter leave her, Mascot, I do, that's er fact."

His voice betrayed his feelings, but a moment later he assumed a careless, light-hearted air which put the boy at his ease.

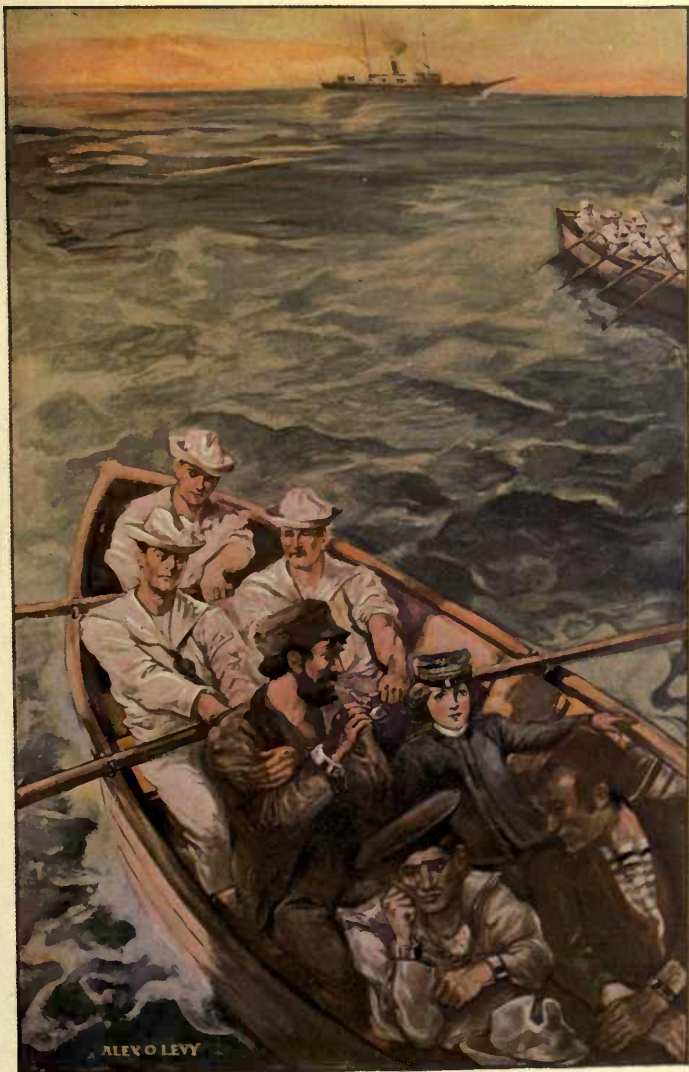
"I tell you what, Captain!" he exclaimed, addressing Mascot and making as profound a salute as his manacled hands and legs would permit, "I tell you what, Captain, but you're lookin' right swell this mornin'. We're headed nor'-nor'-west, Captain. Any orders?"

"Keep her off a point!" solemnly ordered the boy, after taking a swift glance ahead.

"Aye, aye, sir!" exclaimed Stark, making a turn of an imaginary wheel.

Lieutenant Rawlins studied the ill-assorted pair with interest. The captain of the smuggler was a man who had not yet reached the full prime of life, the officer estimating his age at thirty-five. His broad shoulders, massive chest and long arms told of great strength, and his coarse features had a unity which lent them a certain attractiveness. His small blue eyes held a shrewd twinkle, the nose was broad and slightly tilted, the mouth large and full-lipped with irregular teeth stained





"Take a good look at the Frolic, my boy."

Page 20.



with tobacco juice. The dark hair and darker beard were crisp and curly from years of exposure to a tropical sun, and close scrutiny showed that the upper part of the left ear was missing. His soiled and faded suit of blue bore no mark to indicate that he held higher rank than his associates, but a nod of his head was law to every man who served under him on the decks of the *Frolic*.

"Reach in my pocket, Mascot, an' get my pipe an' fill it for me like a good lad," he said, after making several ineffectual efforts with his manacled arms. "These here bracelets are more ornamental than useful, as old King Solomon onct said, but it's all in a lifetime. The tobaccy is in my port stern pocket. There we have it! Don't pack it in too tight, Mascot."

The boy struck a match. Stark puffed vigorously and lounged back in his seat with an air which might have implied that an arrest for smuggling and the confiscation of his vessel were events of which to make a gala day.

"There's the craft what's goin' tew take us tew Kingston," he observed as they emerged from the lagoon and came in full view of the *Alexander*. "She's trim as a yacht, an' handsome as a woman with a new white gown an' roses in her hair."

The boy sprang to his feet and gazed intently at the clean-lined revenue cutter. She lay broad on, her white hull and mahogany cabins reflecting the glare of the morning sun, her metal work gleaming like lambent

flames and her striped awnings fluttering gently as the breeze wafted in from the Caribbean.

"Isn't she a dandy, dad?" exclaimed Mascot. "She just beats all the pictures of boats, don't she?"

"She's all right—in her place," grinned Stark. For a moment the two were silent, but as they listened to the regular rasp of the oars each was under the spell of far different thoughts. He drew the boy nearer to him.

"It may be some time before I'll see you again after we get on that ship," he whispered. "It's noways likely they'll lock you up with Long Bill an' me an' the rest of us when we get to Kingston, an' there's no tellin' how long it will take us ter get out of this here scrape. But they wont do nothin' ter you, Mascot, an' when we prove that we are innocent I'll come an' get you. Just keep a stiff upper lip, an' everything will come out all right in the washin', as old King Solomon onct said."

"I'm going where you and Long Bill go," declared the boy, taking his eyes from the Alexander and clutching at the manacles which clasped his father's wrists. "If they lock you up, dad, they'll have to lock me up with you."

"Wal, I don't just know erbout that, Mascot. You an' I ain't got so much tew say erbout what we're goin' ter dew as we had yesterday. If they lock me up it is more'n likely they'll let you come tew see me onct in a while, an' it won't be long before we're all back on the deck of the Frolic. Mistakes is bound to happen in



the best regulated families, an' this is a mistake sure as you're born."

But the boy was not deceived by the confident tone and easy air of his father. He noted that the faces of the other prisoners bore expressions of sullen hopelessness, their dejection increasing as each sweep of the oars brought them nearer the *Alexander*. Instinct told him that their plight was a desperate one, but boylike he forgot all else for the moment as they floated beneath the frowning sides of the warship.

Then he found himself on the polished deck of the *Alexander*, with Baldwin's hand lightly clasping his shoulder. He watched the prisoners as they were taken on board, saw them huddled in a group, formed in line and then marched down the companionway. His father's parting kiss was yet warm on his lips.

The captain of the *Frolic* was the last in line, and just before he came to the steps he looked over his shoulder, smiled and waved his manacled hands to Mascot in parting. Tears came, but the lad dashed the water from his eyes, threw his shoulders back and stood with head erect as Captain Benson approached with Lieutenant Rawlins. They stopped a few paces away.

"And this is the small chap who shot our Cuban?" remarked Captain Benson to his officer. "I say, Rawlins, he's a handsome youngster! Full uniform of a captain of an American man-of-war! He looks as if he had stepped out of a page of juvenile fiction. Come here, my lad."

The boy approached, removed his hat and gravely saluted.

"What is your name, my lad?" he asked pleasantly. "Do not be afraid; no one here will harm you."

"I'm not afraid," said the boy, but without a trace of bravado. "My name is Joseph Stark, but dad and all of them call me Mascot."

"The captain of the Frolic is your father, is he not?"

"Captain Stark is my father and I want to be locked up with him."

"We will see about that. Where is your mother?"

"She's dead."

"That's too bad," mused Captain Benson. "Where do you live, Master Stark?"

"On the Frolic."

"I mean when you are ashore."

"I never go ashore," Mascot said, and then added, "only on islands when we camp out, but dad says that islands don't count. I've always been on the Frolic."

"Indeed! Think of that for a life for a boy, Rawlins! And your mother, my lad? Did she live on the Frolic before she died?"

"I don't know, sir," was the reply. "I never saw my mother, and dad don't talk about her." His tone indicated that he considered the matter of small consequence.

"Poor little beggar!" exclaimed the captain, turning aside to his officer. "He has no idea what a mother is."

No wonder he was not afraid to shoot that Cuban." He asked Mascot if he could read or write.

"I'm through the third reader, and I can do fractions," he replied proudly. "Long Bill is a scholar, and he is teaching me. He knows more about books than most anybody."

"The sailor he calls 'Long Bill' is mate of the Frolic, explained Rawlins. "Quite an odd sort of a chap to be in such a profession."

"We are going to Kingston, my lad," Captain Benson said, after a pause, "and I am disposed to put you on parole until we reach there. Do you know what that means?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mascot. "It means that you promise not to skip out."

"Exactly," smiled the captain. "You may go anywhere on this deck, but you must not go below. And you shall eat at my table with Lieutenant Rawlins. Do you promise?"

"I'd rather be with dad," the boy said, "but he said we wouldn't have much to say about what we'd do, so I'll promise. Can I see him when we get to Kingston?"

"You may," Captain Benson said after reflection. He turned and gave orders to get under way, leaving Mascot free to explore the wonderful deck at his will.

It all seemed like a dream, but Mascot knew it was real because he was hungry, and because he could smell the appetizing aroma of coffee. And the agile and blue-

uniformed sailors were real. They grinned at him in a most natural and reassuring manner as they passed him while obeying the curt commands shouted by various officers. He heard the clanking of machinery and ran to where the steam hoist was tugging at the anchor chains. He leaned over the rail and watched the anchor as it came to the surface, its flukes black with mud and festooned with weeds.

He heard the tinkle of a bell, and an instant later felt for the first time in his life the throb of a marine engine. He experienced a thrill when he felt the thrust of the screw and the vibration of the ship as she swung in a quarter circle and pointed out to sea. A bugle sounded, the marines formed in line and went through a brief drill to the sharp orders of an officer. It was all so different from the lazy and unorganized life on the Frolic, and this was Mascot's introduction to the world of order.

As they passed the mouth of the inlet Mascot caught a glimpse of the Frolic tacking slowly across the lagoon. He knew that Jake Stark would not have attempted to take her out against a head wind at low tide. The location of every rock, reef and sand-bar was familiar to Mascot, and it seemed to him that the little schooner was in dangerous waters. A cliff shut off the view, and he was looking intently for another glint of her sails when Baldwin touched him on the arm and announced that breakfast was ready.

It was late in the afternoon when the Alexander



entered the outer harbor of Kingston. She took on a negro pilot who steered the ship through a labyrinth of shoals and rocks past the black-muzzled guns of the Apostles' Battery and the terraced heights of Fort Augusta, finally anchoring opposite Wherry wharf.

Mascot was locked in the captain's cabin when Jake Stark, Long Bill and the crew of the smuggler were brought from below and turned over to the local authorities. The boy did not ask for his father, relying on Captain Benson's promise that he should be permitted to see him.

He slept soundly that night and was on deck before the sun had broken over the giant shoulders of the Blue Mountains. He watched the black fishermen singing as they made out to sea; he saw the great ox teams as they trudged along the dusty roads; for the first time he gazed near at hand at the spectacle of a city, but nothing so much interested him as the ship on which he was a captive.

How was it, he wondered as he walked the deck, that men as wise as his father and Long Bill were content to be officers on the little Frolic when there existed so splendid a craft as the Alexander? It was a mystery past his solving.

Early in the forenoon an officer came from the fort and held an interview with Captain Benson. He was the disgusted bearer of unwelcome news. Jake Stark and Long Bill had escaped. A yawl was missing, and searching parties had discovered it several miles up the

beach. A negro had seen two men dressed as sailors walking swiftly along a jungle path just before day-break.

While this and other matters were under discussion a messenger arrived and delivered to Captain Benson an official despatch directing him to proceed at once to Trinidad. In the rush of events he had almost forgotten Mascot. As he came on deck he saw the boy gazing toward the fort, a wistful look on his handsome young face. He turned and raised his cap as the officer approached.

"You promised me that I should see my father," he said, "and you have sent him to that fort over there. I——"

"Did Baldwin tell you that?" demanded the captain, his face darkening with a frown.

"No, sir; a nigger boy rowed up here and I was talking with him not long ago, and he told me all about it. He saw them when the boat took them away. When I gave my parole you promised I should see him. I kept my word and you ought to keep yours," concluded the boy, replacing his cap and looking frankly into the face of the officer.

The latter pulled at his mustache and was silent for a period. His mind wandered back to England and to his own boy so like this manly little chap.

"I cannot take you to your father," he began, pausing to weigh his words. "I——"

"Have they killed him?" cried Mascot, his eyes bright with fear. "Have the soldiers killed him?"

"No, no, my lad," quickly responded Captain Benson. "Your father has escaped from the fort with the man you call Long Bill."

Mascot's face was radiant and he gave a cry of joy.

"You'll never catch dad and Long Bill again!" he declared with a laugh which was savage in its triumph. "Gee! I wish I was with them! I'll bet you'd never find us!"

"Do you suppose you could find them if I let you go?" asked Captain Benson, watching the boy narrowly. Mascot was on his guard in an instant.

"I don't know where they went, and if I did I wouldn't tell you," he said stoutly.

The commander of the *Alexander* gazed out over the bay and spent a few minutes of his valuable time on the small prisoner who was in his charge. There was something about the lad which impressed him strongly, and he could not evade the thought that a certain responsibility had been imposed on him. It was an easy matter to turn the waif over to the Kingston authorities, who doubtless would place him in a reformatory institution, with the chances a hundred to one that he would escape and join his father or fall into an even worse fate.

There were no naval rules covering such an emergency, and while Captain Benson knew that he would consult his own interests by turning the boy over to the

mercies of Jamaica charity, he swiftly decided on another course.

"We sail from here in a few hours," he finally said to Mascot, "and I have decided to take you with me. If your father is caught he will be kept in jail for years, and if he evades capture how are you to find him? When we return here I shall do the best I can for you, my lad."

"If I can't be with dad and Long Bill I would rather stay on this ship than do anything else," Mascot said slowly after an interval of silence.

With the next tide the *Alexander* steamed slowly out of Kingston harbor, and as the hills and mountains ranged themselves in view Mascot wondered what spot concealed Jake Stark and Long Bill. He stood for hours watching the rugged skyline of the island, until the deep blue faded into an indistinct purple which was blotted out in the twilight.

This eclipse of everything which identified him with his life seemed like a dream, and a great wave of longing and homesickness swept over him, blurring his eyes with tears and shaking him with sobs. He had never known the touch of a hand more tender than that of Jake Stark's, and Long Bill was his ideal of a scholar and a gentleman. As in an instant, he had been torn away from the only beings on earth for whom he felt respect and love. The end of his small world had come.

He thought of the Frolic, the dirty, unlovely



Frolic; he thought of the little room in which he had slept ever since he could remember; he thought of the rough kindness of his father, and to his mind there came a pathetic procession of a thousand little acts which had meant little to him until then. He curled up beside a coil of rope, cried himself to sleep, and there Baldwin found him and carried him to his room.

Grief is not lasting in the heart of a healthy boy. Not until ambition has fled does sorrow gnaw like a cancer at the soul. The sun shone on the *Alexander* as brightly as it did on the *Frolic*, each hour ushered in some novelty, new friends partly filled the void left by those who had vanished beneath the horizon, and an unknown and beautiful world unrolled itself before his eager eyes.

At the whim of the British admiralty, the *Alexander* ploughed thousands of miles of sea without again anchoring in Kingston harbor. She skirted the coast of South America, then pointed for St. Helena, where after a brief stay she made for Cape Town. In the weeks which followed he looked on the wonders of Madagascar, endured the heat of the Red Sea, rested in the cool bazaars of Cairo, loitered in the quaint towns and cities of the Mediterranean, and lay at anchor beneath the shadow of Gibraltar.

From the deck of the *Frolic* he had caught glimpses of towns and cities, and, in a vague way, had realized that there were activities with which he was not familiar, but he was now a part of this splendid,

pulsating world. In a delicious daze he walked the streets of great cities, and marvelled at the conflicting and converging streams of human traffic; he sat in theatres, his ears ravished by music, his eyes dazzled by the sights in those temples of beauty, fashion and luxury; he learned that the world was vast, that it was ruled by laws, that there were numberless ways in which one could fairly attain to wealth and honor; and with this discovery there came the suspicion that his father and Long Bill were far down in the scale of humanity.

He had learned what smuggling meant, and he came to understand why his father was one to be hunted as an outcast. In the long tropical afternoons he lay in the shade of an awning and thought of the uncouth man whose name he bore. There were times when his heart was bitter against the one who had bequeathed to him a legacy of disgrace, but in such moments there would come to him the vision of a gentle and kindly Jake Stark, his homely face softened by a loving smile.

The image of his father as he last saw him was ever vivid in his memory—the extended manacled hands waving a farewell as he disappeared from view, perhaps forever. Again he lived over the thrilling moment when his father had offered his body as a shield against a rain of bullets. But—but—and the thought struck him like a blow in the face—Jake Stark was a smuggler and an outlaw.

One afternoon he found himself wondering about his dead and unknown mother. He had learned that

mothers filled a large space in the hearts of boys and even of men. Captain Benson had showed him the picture of his mother. Perhaps Jake Stark had a mother living, and, if so, she would be his grandmother. He had never thought to ask his father this question.

"Surely dad must have a picture of my mother," mused Mascot, and then his fancy limned portraits of her, proud, stately and beautiful like Captain Benson's mother, younger, of course, with dark brown hair instead of gray. She must have been very beautiful, Mascot decided, but again his imagination faltered when he attempted to account for the marriage of such a lady to Jake Stark.

From captain to cabin-boy everybody on the ship called him "Mascot," and the sailors held that the uninterrupted run of good weather and good rations was due to his presence.

Each officer constituted himself a member of the faculty for the education of Mascot. He mastered the mechanism of the rapid-firing guns, and it was a happy moment when he was permitted to take an active part in target practice. The old Scotch engineer spent hours in explaining to him the mysteries of valves, condensers, pistons, plungers and the innumerable details of the pulsating harness of steam. Under the tutelage of the ship's surgeon, Mascot made more rapid progress in grammar and other studies than he had with the patient but unmethodical Long Bill.

The day came when the news arrived that they were

to sail. Captain Benson's manner at the breakfast table that autumn morning under the guns of Gibraltar convinced Mascot that he had received an important message.

"We start for Kingston to-night," he said, looking narrowly at the boy. "Are you glad, my lad?"

Mascot looked vacantly out the port-hole and saw the glint of the sun as it flamed from the polished steel and brass of his pet six-inch gun.

"I think I'm sorry, sir," he said.

Alternate hopes and fears came to him as the ship ploughed her way near and nearer to Kingston, but to his boyish mind there entered no premonition of the strange career which the future held in store for him.



## CHAPTER III

STANLEY DEANE—GENTLEMAN

ON her circuitous trip back to Jamaica the Alexander came to anchor in the picturesque harbor of Port of Spain, Trinidad. Several years before Mascot had looked out on this busy scene from the deck of the Frolic. For a brief period Jake Stark had found it profitable to employ the trim schooner in the carrying of cacao, coffee and fruits from this port to New Orleans, but the competition became so spirited that the Yankee skipper returned to the more devious, exciting and lucrative occupation of smuggling tobacco to the great republic to the north of them.

This was Mascot's first sight of familiar shores for nearly six months, and something warned him that his life on the Alexander was nearing its end. He felt a little guilty that his longing for the old life on the Frolic had gone. He still loved his father, but the chances were small that he would see him again for years—perhaps never again. The emotions of a boy of twelve are plastic, and had Captain Benson moved with deliberate intent he could not have planned a more effective method of weaning Mascot from associations which,

in a few more years, would have made a permanent impress on his character.

On the day following their arrival in Port of Spain, Captain Benson gave a dinner to the Governor, his executive staff and other distinguished guests. Mascot had participated in several of these functions, and Captain Benson took pride in giving his *protégé* a seat at the banquet board, and in introducing him as a "gallant young American who had been impressed into Her Majesty's service."

The good captain steadfastly refused to reveal to the guests who thus met Mascot the secret of his identity, neither would he tell a shred of his story. He had a plan in view, and he desired to give the lad a start in life without the handicap of a history, which in later years might arise to embarrass and harass him.

Among those who sat at the captain's table that afternoon was a gentleman of distinguished appearance, in full naval uniform. This was Rear-Admiral Stanley Deane, a retired officer of the British navy. He had married late in life, and had settled his wife and son on a large and well-appointed plantation not far from the capital of Trinidad. He had surrendered his commission several years before on account of the precarious condition of his wife's health. Her death had been followed by that of his only son and heir, and he had accepted a civic position for the sake of relieving the tedium of a lonely life on the desolated plantation.

Captain Benson had written to the Admiral of

Mascot, telling the boy's story so far as he knew it, and had suggested the possibility of the adoption of this bright and handsome lad. The two officers were old friends. Admiral Deane had written in return thanking him for his interest, and expressing a wish to see the little sea waif.

Without knowing it, Mascot was under inspection during the elaborate dinner that afternoon. He often caught the kindly looking gentleman looking at him intently, but little did he dream of the reason. He comported himself with a dignity and an ease which impressed all who met him that day, and the Admiral was at once attached to him.

Mascot was called into Captain Benson's room later in the evening and found Admiral Deane with his patron.

"My lad," Captain Benson said, placing his hand on Mascot's shoulder, "Admiral Deane once had a boy who would be about your age had he lived. We have been talking about you, Mascot. I have told the Admiral that you are a good boy, and that I should like to keep you with me always, but that a ship is no place for you until you have been schooled and trained as a man should be. The Admiral likes you, and he is willing to give you a home, send you to school and fit you to take a proper place in the world. I wish you to accept his offer, Mascot. Are you willing to do so?"

"Yes, sir," the boy said, saluting. His voice was clear, but tears brimmed in his eyes.

"Spoken like a man, my lad!" exclaimed the Admiral, holding his hands out to Mascot.

"I would like to stay on the *Alexander*, but I know that I can't," said Mascot, "and I'll do what Captain Benson says. I shall try to like you, sir."

"I'm sure that we'll get along famously," declared the Admiral. "Captain, we should have a glass of wine to bind this bargain and celebrate the occasion."

The three drank some of Captain Benson's best Madeira in honor of Mascot's prospects, and the next day the *Alexander* sailed away without him.

For three happy years the boy lived on the great plantation and attended a preparatory school in Port of Spain. Before that time had elapsed Admiral Deane had come to love him as his son, and when Mascot was fourteen years old he was legally adopted and given the name of Stanley Deane—the name of the dead boy whose place he had worthily taken.

Captain Benson had advised Mascot not to talk to his guardian of his past life and associates, and to try as best he could to consider himself a Deane. This may have been at the Admiral's suggestion; certain it is that never—save on an occasion which will be mentioned—did either make the remotest reference to the years before the time that Mascot stepped on board the *Alexander*. From the day the Admiral and the boy left the ship together, the name of "Mascot" was replaced by that of "Stanley."

Amid these new surroundings the memory of the old



wild days on the Frolic faded as the months rolled into years, but the pictures of Jake Stark and Long Bill did not grow dim. He loved his foster father and was loyal to him, but deep down in his heart was that devotion which can exist only between a son and his sire.

Stanley was fond of strolling along the quays, and he came to know many of the sailors and petty officers of the boats which made this harbor. The Admiral was aware of this habit, but made no effort to restrain him. If he could not hold the lad by ties of affection he preferred to let him go his own free way.

One day shortly before the papers were signed making him the lawfully adopted son of Admiral Deane, he was watching the unloading of a three-masted schooner which he had never before seen in the harbor. A sailor came from below, and the boy recognized him instantly.

"Jim! Jim!" he cried, rushing to him as he stepped on the gangplank. "Don't you know me, Jim?"

"Know ye? Blast me eyes if it isn't little Mascot!" exclaimed one of the former prisoners from the Frolic. "You're so dressed up an' have grown so tall that I hardly knew ye! What are ye doin' here, Mascot?"

"I'm living here," the boy said, his voice quivering with excitement. "Tell me, Jim, do you know what became of my—of Captain Stark?"

The sailor looked at him with a puzzled air.

"Lord bless ye, boy, don't ye know what become of him?" He hesitated a moment and scratched his

tangled mass of hair. "Come to think on it, how would ye know, seein' that ye live here? I hate to tell ye, Mascot, but yer dad's dead!"

"Dead?" echoed the boy.

"Killed in a scrap with revenue officers, so I'm told, about three months ago."

The boy gazed blankly at him, and then without a word turned and walked rapidly away.

Late that night one of the servants heard him sobbing in his room, and at once called Admiral Deane who hastened to him. After repeated questions the boy told what he had learned. For an hour the old Admiral talked tenderly to him, soothed and comforted him and watched him drop into a restful sleep. From that night the past was dead, Mascot was dead, and Stanley Deane lived.

A year after his adoption as the son of Admiral Deane, that gentleman decided to sell his Trinidad interests and move to England. They made the trip on the *Alexander*, and never did Stanley Deane forget those glorious days as the brave ship set her prow toward his future home.

In addition to inherited property, Admiral Deane's investments and plantations had yielded him large returns. His brother, Sir Whitaker Deane, owned Cragmere, the historic Deane estate in southern England, a house in London and a large interest in one of its leading banks. The Admiral purchased a fine piece of property adjoining Sir Whitaker's country estate and

settled down to enjoy the quiet and comfort of an English gentleman.

The wealthy and eccentric Sir Whitaker Deane was a bachelor, the elder and only brother to the Admiral. The latter was natural heir to Sir Whitaker, and that gentleman had raised objections to the adoption of Stanley, but he dismissed them the first day he met the handsome lad who had a right to call him uncle. During the years which followed, Sir Whitaker was so lavish with his gifts and entertainments that the Admiral feared Stanley would be spoiled, but the young man stood the test of prosperity with an aplomb which delighted both brothers.

"I don't care who his father was or what he did," Sir Whitaker was wont to declare over his brandy, "he must have had a gentleman's blood in him. He is a lad to be proud of. I'm going to change my will so as to entail all my property to him after your death."

"It is not necessary, Sir Whitaker," the Admiral would smile, having heard this declaration scores of times before. "Stanley has been my heir since the day I gave him my name, and he will never do anything to cause me to change my mind."

Stanley studied under tutors and was admitted to Oxford. He distinguished himself in his classes and was a popular leader in athletics. He completed his course with credit to himself and to his sponsors, and in honor of that event Sir Whitaker Deane gave a series of

entertainments, concluding with a house party in his fine old country mansion.

The former sea waif was then in his twenty-first year, and a more finely proportioned youth never threw leg over polo pony or gazed frankly into the eyes of beauty. Dark brown hair inclined to curl at the ends spoke of manly strength and virility. Shadowing lashes gave his eyes a dreamy, introspective cast when at rest, but when quickened by interest or emotion they kindled with quick and magnetic intellect. His clear skin had the slightest tinge of olive, the lingering kiss of tropical sun and breeze. The boy had become a man; a manly man with plenty of the animal in him, but held firmly in leash by will and brain.

Sir Whitaker did nothing by halves, and when he had decided on the house party at Cragmere he gave the huge mansion over to an army of renovaters, decorators and experts who cater to the wishes of those who know how to entertain and can afford to do so. The great ballroom was turned into a theatre, a dancing pavilion reared itself as by magic on the lawn, the regular servants were dismayed and distracted by the pother, but at last all was finished and the guests began pouring in.

Sir Whitaker Deane was financially connected with the New York bank of which David Farnsworth was president. Mr. Farnsworth, his wife, daughter and Alice Buckingham, his niece, were in London at the time, and they accepted Sir Whitaker's invitation to



spend several days as his guests at the party in Stanley Deane's honor.

"It is the fashion these days to marry American girls, so I am told, Stanley," Sir Whitaker said to the young man the day before the arrival of the Farnsworth party. "I'm not an authority on marriage—never could find a woman willing to take a chance on me—but if I had my life to live over again I should make desperate love to Miss Buckingham. I met her in Paris with her father, and she is very pretty."

"Who is she?" carelessly asked Stanley.

"Daughter of one of those preposterously rich American manufacturers," went on the old gallant, who knew by heart the rating of every man of conspicuous wealth in New York City. "He married a famous French beauty, but she died a few years after this daughter was born. Miss Buckingham has dark hair, glorious dark eyes, a saucy and lovable mouth, teeth which are perfect and a figure which an artist would rave over. Her cousin, Miss Farnsworth, is also pretty, but she does not compare with this peerless heiress."

When Stanley was presented to the cousins the next afternoon he did not hesitate to admit that his uncle had paid none too generous a tribute to the charms of Alice Buckingham. She was very young—not more than fifteen, he judged—and had all the dignity which comes from wearing the first long gown.

There were present many fair English maids, but the Admiral and Sir Whitaker noticed that their heir gave

more than a full share of his time and attention to the fair Miss Buckingham. They led the cotillon, sang duets at the volunteer concerts, took long drives, and in other ways managed to enjoy each other's company.

Stanley's chum in Oxford was a strapping young American named Tom Harkness, and he found the society of the fair Dolly Farnsworth so congenial that her other admirers surrendered to him after the first day. On the morning set for the departure of the Farnsworth party, Stanley and Tom proposed to the cousins a gallop across the estate to the ruins of a quaint old castle some miles away.

It was a glorious day and a glorious ride. They explored the ruins to their heart's content, and then by one of those happenings so common when young couples are together they drifted apart.

It was the first time Stanley and Miss Buckingham had been alone. The sea broke on the rocks a hundred feet below, the gulls circled over their heads, the sails of ships were dim on the horizon, Nature unrolled her beauties with a lavish hand, yet it may be doubted if they fully appreciated the splendors of that vista of ocean and sky.

They talked of many things of no consequence whatever, and Stanley became conscious of a keen sense of sorrow that the hour of parting was near. Would he ever see her again? Would the time ever come when he would have the right to ask some woman to share his

fate? As these thoughts came to him he was silent and abstracted.

"You were born in this lovely place, were you not?" she asked. What possessed her, he wondered, to ask that question?

"I was not born in England," he said, after a pause. "Look at those gulls, Miss Buckingham!"

"I knew you were not!" she cried triumphantly, ignoring the gulls. "Dolly and I talked about it last night, and we agreed that you were not English born."

"But I am," he said desperately. "I was born in Trinidad, and that's a part of the British Empire."

"Isn't that odd!" she exclaimed. "I was born in France and am an American, and you were born in America and are an Englishman."

For some moments they pondered over this statement, Stanley reflecting bitterly that he did not know where he was born, and wondering what she would think of him if she knew that he had been a sea waif.

"I am awful sorry you are going away from Cragmere to-day," he said, looking longingly at her as she deftly adjusted her riding cap.

"It's jolly nice of you to say so," she frankly said. "I've had a perfectly splendid time."

"I'm going to visit New York before many years, and when I do, I hope I may be allowed to call on you."

"But I'm not going to be in New York for a long time," she said. "Dolly and I live in my father's place near Paris, and we shall continue to study music and

painting until we are wofully wise and stupid. You must call on us in Paris."

"May I?" eagerly asked Stanley, and her assurance that he would be welcome made him very happy.

The two cousins and the elder Farnsworths left that night, and somehow the remaining guests seemed stupid to Stanley. But something happened which brought the party to a sudden and a tragic end, and drove all other thoughts from his mind.

While proposing a toast to Her Majesty, the Queen, and with a smile on his fine old face, Sir Whitaker Deane turned pale, tottered and fell back dead in his chair. He was in his seventy-second year, and his sudden exit from an eventful and successful career was the one he had hoped for and predicted.

His will left all his vast property to Admiral Deane, entailing it to Stanley. The former had been in delicate health for years, and it had been thought that he would be the first to go. This excellent officer and gentleman never fully rallied from the shock of his brother's sudden death. An old wound reasserted itself, blood poisoning supervened, and in his weakened condition he was unable to fight against it. In less than three months from the day of Sir Whitaker's death, Admiral Deane was laid by his side in the massive family vault.

Thus it was that shortly after having attained his majority, Stanley Deane, a bit of human wreckage cast up from the Caribbean, came into possession of the



name, honors and estates of a respected branch of a proud English family.

Without unseemly haste he put his affairs in shape and prepared to transfer his allegiance from England to America. He wished to establish the legitimacy of his birth, though he had no desire to take the name of Stark. Legally he was a Deane—that was enough for the world to know, but it did not satisfy him. Jake Stark was dead, but what of his mother. Was she living or dead? Had she been wife to Jake Stark? That was the question which haunted and terrified him.

Deane was earnestly American in sympathy, and was a close student of its history and its present. Only in a sense was he a stranger to New York City. During his years in Oxford, and also in a social way, he had met many Americans of standing. So many wealthy residents of that city had chosen to expatriate themselves that those who remained felt a certain pride when it became known that a titled young Englishman preferred the attractions of their metropolis to his own.

Deane promptly declared his intention of becoming a citizen, fitted up quarters in keeping with his wealth and station, was admitted to membership in the proper clubs, and found relaxation in polo, golf, yachting and other rational amusements at the command of young gentlemen endowed with money and muscle.

Society knew all this and approved of it, but society would have been puzzled had it known Deane's connection with the following advertisement which appeared

at irregular intervals in papers in various sections of the country:

PERSONAL.—Liberal rewards for information concerning the present whereabouts of the widow of the late Jacob Stark, or Jake Stark, once captain of the schooner "Frolic," employed in various capacities about ten years ago in Caribbean waters and in the Gulf of Mexico. Also liberal rewards for information concerning the relatives of the said Jacob Stark.

No answers came in response to this, and the detectives employed failed to find the slightest trace to the clues sought by Deane. He commissioned a steam yacht and spent several weeks in the waters and ports which once knew the fleet Frolic and Jake Stark, her Yankee skipper.

One tropical evening Deane rowed into the little landlocked bay where the Frolic was captured, and there on a reef found the rotting hull of the first home he had ever known. Some fierce storm had tossed it well out of water, and he had little difficulty in crawling into the little room which once had been his own. The thought almost overpowered him when he pondered on the miracle which had been wrought in his behalf! Ten years before he was the young savage who had not hesitated to shoot the informer, "Hungry Joe." Now he had a right to call himself "Sir Stanley Deane"!

The slimy and twisted wreck of the once handsome Frolic told no secrets, and after an unavailing search of the records of Kingston and other cities he returned to New York.

Deane had studied law in Oxford, and he soon resumed the reading of it in the office of Judge Sawyer, the New York legal representative of the late Sir Whitaker Deane. Some surprise was evinced when it became known that he had passed an examination admitting him to practice, and the mystery deepened when it was sensationally announced by the papers that the young aristocrat had opened a law office on the East Side, also that his first case had been the successful defence of strikers arrested for disobeying an injunction.

One publication asserted that he was a pronounced radical "with socialistic leanings."

Society smiled at this rumor. If a man has money and can trace his ancestry back a few generations without disastrous results, he will find New York languidly tolerant of anything he chooses to think, so long as he does not persist in attempting to make it think. If one can afford the luxury, it is quite the thing to ride a reform hobby, but it is an unforgivable sin to force matters to a point where 'existing conditions' are threatened. They are the one sacred idol which must not be disturbed.

Since it was unlikely that Deane would be guilty of such sacrilege, and since he was rich, handsome and agreeable, society was only politely concerned if that cultured young gentleman were a socialist or a Buddhist. Both cults had distinguished and harmless exemplars.

Tom Harkness was Deane's most intimate friend, and though Harkness was abroad much of the time he

often spoke or wrote of having met Miss Alice Buckingham in Paris or Berlin. When that fortunate young gentleman was in New York he received frequent letters from Dolly Farnsworth, and there was much to substantiate the rumor that they were engaged, and that the wedding would be celebrated shortly after she had completed her art and musical studies. More than five years had passed since it had been Stanley's privilege to help entertain the charming cousins, and often in idle moments his mind wandered back to those happy hours.

Mrs. Stack-Haven was the leader of the social set to which Harkness, the Farnsworths and Deane belonged, and that good woman took a special interest in the young lawyer and reformer. To make a successful match for him would be her crowning triumph, but all her diplomacy had been in vain. Harkness told her of the meeting between Deane and Miss Buckingham, and from his story she shrewdly suspected that success would lie in that direction. What an alliance it would make! Youth, beauty, wealth, position—it could be; it must be!

After each annual return from her season abroad, Mrs. Stack-Haven sounded in his ears the praises of Alice Buckingham, and it may be presumed that she presented his claims with equal finesse when talking with the fair Alice, and though both smiled at her enthusiasm and declared that they hardly knew each other, Mrs. Stack-Haven had faith in her weapons and confidently awaited her triumph.



"I have great news for you," she exclaimed one night as she greeted him in her reception-room. "Miss Buckingham will return to New York in June, only three months from now!"

"Indeed! I'm delighted to hear it. She must be quite a young lady?"

"Quite a young lady! You dear old stupid! Alice will be twenty-one her next birthday. Stanley Deane, unless you fall down and worship her I shall abandon you to old-bachelorhood. I shall, I declare it! You must be getting awfully old?"

"I don't know," he laughed. "I am just old enough to vote; cast my first ballot the other day."

"A man should not fib about his age. You are more than twenty-one."

"Certainly, but I had to wait five years owing to your impolite laws. I confess to twenty-six."

"You should be ashamed to remain single that long, but you'll be properly penitent when you look into Miss Buckingham's eyes," declared Mrs. Stack-Haven. "Listen, you vain boy. They are coming here to live in the Buckingham mansion. I suppose you know that the old gentleman is dead?"

"Her father dead?" he exclaimed.

"No, her grandfather, and with his death Amos Buckingham, her father, comes into the enormous Buckingham fortune," explained the lady. "Amos Buckingham never did a stroke of work in his life, but the old man lavished everything on him. He is an eccentric

character, cares nothing for society, and I don't even know him nor wish to. Alice will entertain with the Farnsworths and with me, and if you neglect your opportunities you are more stupid than I think you are, and——”

“And that is saying a good deal,” laughed Deane. “I fear that I shall sink to yet lower depths in your esteem, but I'll promise to do the best I can, but I warn you that's not much.”

Deane plunged with renewed vigor into his work, and had almost forgotten his conversation with Mrs. Stack-Haven, when he received a letter from her bidding him to attend a reception in honor of Miss Buckingham.

He recognized her the instant he glanced over the drawing-room. Alice was surrounded by a bevy of admirers, but she turned as he drew near and raised her eyes to his.

“Dolly said I wouldn't know you, Mr. Deane,” she said, frankly offering her hand. “I cannot see that you have changed a bit since we met you in dear old Cragmere.”

“I have improved,” he ventured, his nerves tingling at the soft pressure of her hand. “I am now an American.”

“What do you think of my importations, Deane?” asked Tom Harkness, glancing proudly at the two cousins, his eyes lingering on Dolly. “I smuggled them in yesterday.”

“Rather than pay the fair duty, I presume?” he retorted.

“Deane is less clumsy with his compliments than he was five years ago, don’t you think?” Tom asked, with a meaning look at Dolly. “Do you remember what he said to——”

“Tom Harkness!” exclaimed Dolly, putting her fingers to his lips. “Is that the way you keep secrets?”

The four had drawn away from the others, and for a time they laughed and chatted as young couples do who are thrown together after a lapse of years. An onlooker would have imagined that Deane was absorbed in the topics which arose in a bewildering succession. His comments were sparkling, his humor droll, his manner earnest and animated, and though he made no apparent effort he easily dominated the group. But this brilliancy of epigram and repartee was entirely subconscious. Later he could not recall a thing that he said, but his mind retained every word spoken by Alice Buckingham, every pose of her pretty head, every gesture, every flash of quick sympathy from her dark and glorious eyes. In after hours and days the subtle spell of her presence still held him its willing victim.

He knew that he loved her from the moment he looked into her eyes and felt the touch of her hand. He had met a thousand women as beautiful as Alice Buckingham, yet he had laughingly withstood the pleasing fire of their charms. She had pleased and entertained him in the days they were together during the fête in old

England, but he then looked on her as a girl masquerading as a woman. That was the immature April of the rose; this the early dawning of a June when its petals turn blushing to the warm advances of the sun.

He loved her! All his resolutions, all his carefully reared defences, all his stern precepts and fine discriminations tottered, crumbled and vanished before the soft light which lurked in her eyes and the smiles which hovered on her lips. It was as useless to urge that as a former sea waif he had no right to love her, as it was to decree that the sun should remain behind a summer cloud.

Could he keep from her the secret of his love? That was his duty, and he did not shirk it. It should be his penance for a crime of which he was guiltless.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE MASTER OF THE MILLS

THERE were many in the American metropolis who remembered when old John Buckingham built a modest shop near First Avenue and thus laid the foundation of the Buckingham fortune. He was skilled at his craft and toiled like a slave, seeking neither rest nor amusement, and surprise was expressed when he erected a mansion. His wife was dead, and his only child, Amos, was abroad.

To a few close friends the old man admitted that he had reared his mansion in the hope that it would so please the luxurious tastes of his son that he would be content to live in it and become his partner. He located this residence in a respectable section of the city not far from the mills, and took much pride in providing every accessory for "my son Amos, who has been reared as a gentleman, which I was not," as he explained to those who shared his confidence.

Before the mansion was completed he received word that his son had married a French woman who possessed a competency in her own right. Old John Buckingham was delighted. His son should live in the new

mansion, and children should comfort his declining years. But this was not to be.

Amos Buckingham brought his bride to the city of his birth. For a month he accepted the attentions a fond father lavished on him, but he would not consent to live in an environment of toil. Paris suited his artistic temperament, and he said that he was pursuing a scientific research which could be carried to success only in that gay capital.

With tears in his eyes the father accepted and possibly believed these selfish excuses. He stood on a pier one dismal November day and watched the young couple until they faded from his sight, and he never saw them again. Twenty years passed, but his son did not spare the time to pay him a visit.

The old man read with joy of the birth of a daughter, and a few years later he wept when word came that the wife was dead. He took pleasure in sending money to his son so that "he could live like a gentleman." His shoulders grew more bent, his step more feeble, and there came a time when he could no longer go to the great mills. The last words which hovered on his lips framed a pitiful inquiry for his son and for the granddaughter his old eyes had never seen. Not until it was too late did Amos Buckingham heed the warning that he must sail at once if he wished to see his father alive.

This filial neglect caused no alteration to be made in the will which left the mills and all other property to his son. The old man had entered into negotiations for

the sale of the mills to a syndicate whose monopoly would be complete with its purchase. He did not so much fear the trust as he did the incapacity of his gentleman son to continue the battle he had made for more than half a century. Amos Buckingham's first step was to nullify the results of these negotiations. He was an intense individualist, and hated trusts with a bitterness only exceeded by his detestation for labor unions.

The new master of the Buckingham mills courted no friends, feared no enemies and relied absolutely on himself, neither asking nor giving quarter. He erected high stone walls about the mansion, pierced them with massive iron gates, and few there were who passed between them. The velvet lawns and flower-lined walks no longer regaled the eyes of those who passed, and the house itself took on a forbidding look.

Having determined to fight the trust he bent with savage energy to the solving of the details of the business, and fired the first gun by cutting the price of every article in stock. The trust met the cut and made one on its own account. The trade recognized it as a fight to the death, and picked the trust as the winner. At the end of six months of cutting and slashing the head bookkeeper informed Buckingham that the business showed a decided loss.

"Very well," he said calmly, but with contracted brows and a flash of his black eyes. "Tell Wilcox I wish to see him at once."

He rarely visited the mills, and conducted the business by interviews with a few subordinates in the library of his residence. Not all the foremen knew the tall, broad-shouldered man who occasionally strode through the departments, hardly deigning to listen to the explanations made by Wilcox, his general superintendent. Those who dared look up from their work assumed that the stranger was some distinguished visitor, possibly a titled Englishman. This was not the policy of the elder Buckingham, whose bent form and cheerful face was familiar to the thousand who worked for and loved him; the kindly old man who called them by their first names, who attended weddings, who sorrowed over their dead, and who by innumerable acts of charity and sympathy made them look on him more as a companion than as a master.

Superintendent Wilcox was admitted to the library and stood hat in hand until Buckingham looked up from his desk.

"I am paying more wages than I care to," he said. "Prepare a new schedule on the basis of an average reduction of fifteen per cent."

"But, Mr. Buckingham, I am——"

"There are no 'buts' or 'ifs' about it," he interrupted. "If you do not care to do as I tell you I will find some one who will."

"I worked in your father's factory forty years, Mr. Buckingham," returned the old superintendent, looking fearlessly into the eyes of his employer, "and my life



has been devoted to his interest and yours. I must say to you that it is not fair to cut the wages of your workers at this time. They are not getting as much as those who work in other mills. Rent and all other expenses have increased, and if you force them to strike they will be in the right. Another thing which——”

“That will do! You have outworked your usefulness in these forty years. You are discharged! Peters, show him the door.”

A man named Hunter was appointed in his place, Buckingham having learned that he was the most exacting and unpopular foreman in the mills. Hunter promptly made the new schedule and put it into effect without notice. The union met and appointed a committee to wait on Buckingham. He refused to see them, and his secretary informed them that he would hold no conferences with his men, union or non-union.

The Buckingham mills faced on a side street which crosses First Avenue. The smoke-begrimed walls of these workshops covered the larger part of one of the rectangular blocks which extend in dreary monotony for miles north and south.

On the day following the attempt of the committee from the union to confer with Amos Buckingham, that gentleman guided his motor car along First Avenue and stopped in front of the factory office. There was that in the bearing of the man who alighted, and who took one swift look at the coughing and snorting machine, which proclaimed him a person of distinction. His every

movement and gesture indicated one accustomed to command, one haughtily impatient of restraint.

He was broad of shoulder, tall, erect and with the figure of an athlete. Keen dark eyes were shaded by heavy eyebrows. The close-cropped beard did not conceal a chin so square and aggressive as to convey the impression of regulated savagery. The slightly aquiline nose and the low, broad forehead made for the harmony of a face which expressed dogged, relentless determination, tempered only by a respect for the conventions which men of birth and station observe.

He entered the building, and a moment later an office employé rushed out and stood guard over the car which already was surrounded by a crowd of noisy children. When he left the office a few minutes later another clerk chased the gamins away, and waited respectfully while the millionaire awoke the motor with an impatient twist of the starting lever, and then dashed from the curb with a plunge.

For half a mile Mr. Buckingham threaded his way along the conflicting currents of traffic. His eyes were shaded by goggles which gave his stern face an even more sinister appearance. As if by instinct he took advantage of every opening, his foot rarely touching the brake lever, skimming along the congested street at a speed which would have tested the nerve and skill of a professional chauffeur.

A lumber wagon drawn by four horses swung slowly in from a side street, but Buckingham instantly calcu-

lated that he could circle to the left and cross the leaders in time to pass in front of an approaching truck, thence around a pile of building material to the far side of the street where his course was unobstructed for several hundred yards.

All might have gone well had not the negro driver of the oncoming truck been half asleep. His horses, left to themselves, crowded so far to the right that Buckingham was compelled to throw on extra speed and make a much sharper turn than he had calculated on.

The pole of the truck missed the glistening sides of the tonneau by inches, the plodding horses rearing back and arousing the stupid driver. In a flash Buckingham was past the lumber pile, and swung the wheel for the reverse curve. The tires skidded on the floor of a mortar bed, he lurched in the padded seat, lowered his eyes the minutest part of a second and raised them to see a number of children playing in a sand pile at the edge of the curb directly in his path, not a rod away.

His estimate of speed, distance and leeway was right to a trivet, but fate or chance or something had introduced a factor not rightly a part of the problem—those ragged children playing in the sand.

There were three little ones in the group, and two of them had gleefully been burying the third in the soft, moist sand—as better-dressed and better-bred children are wont to do while disporting at the sea-shore. Two of the children scrambled to safety, but the one who was

partly buried in the sand was run over and instantly killed.

Those who were on the spot testified that he did not move after his little body had been crushed into the sand. Two wheels passed over him, the forward one clearing the curb by a safe margin, thus proving that the gentleman had plenty of room. Only a few yards farther on he brought the machine to a stop and sprang out, leaving the engine to shake the car as if convulsed with laughter over its work. Mr. Buckingham bent over the crushed form, lifted it from its living burial-place, but a glance told him that death had come.

As particles of steel flock to a magnet, so the ever-ready, morbid and excited crowd assembled. The procession of wagons came to a halt, a broad-chested police officer pushed his way through the awed and silent spectators and looked at the body which had been placed on a shawl offered by a sobbing woman.

"Call the ambulance, Ryan!" he shouted to another officer who appeared on the edge of the crowd.

"It's useless, the boy is dead," said Buckingham.

"Whose kid is it?" demanded the officer, addressing those who formed the inner circles.

The voice was gruff but there was a tremor in it. There was no answer to his question.

"Whose kid is this?" he repeated in a louder voice. "Ye've been starin' at him long enough to know. Who was playin' with him?"

"Please, sir, it's Jimmy Fischer!" faltered a piping



voice. "He was playin' wid Ikey Rosenburg an' me when de auto hit us."

"August Fischer's boy Jimmy!" wailed a woman who had vainly been attempting to crowd forward. "An' his mother about to have another one soon! A-a-h-h! A-a-h-h! It will kill the poor woman, an' she my neighbor in the next flat, an' his father will go crazy!"

A mutter rose from the brawny teamsters and others who composed the crowd. Several officers fought their way to the centre, amongst them a sergeant who took charge of affairs.

"Did you run over this boy?" he demanded. Buckingham's face darkened and his eyes flashed at the menacing of the gathering mob.

"Unfortunately, I did," was his calm reply.

"I must place you under arrest," said the officer. "What's your name?"

Buckingham handed him a card, the sergeant glanced at it and looked intently into the face of his prisoner.

"Amos Buckingham?" he reflected aloud. "Are you the son of old John Buckingham who built the mills and died not long ago?"

He slightly inclined his head and gazed fearlessly at the swaying crowd.

"August Fischer works in yer mills!" shouted a woman, raising her big red arms and shaking her finger at him. "It's the likes of youze that works men to

death an' murthers their chil-dhren wid them chug-chug ca-ars! If I was a man I'd——"

"Stand back there!" fiercely ordered the sergeant, drawing his club and swinging it over the heads of those who surged toward him. "Force 'em back, men! Move on there! Move on or I'll beat yer block off!"

There arose the sound of clanging metal. Those on the edge of the crowd had fallen on the automobile with bricks and other weapons at hand, but they scattered when the police charged them. An ambulance wagon dashed up the street, the officers clubbed those who surrounded the Buckingham car, the sergeant and two officers piled into it and stood with drawn revolvers while their prisoner threw on power and slowly mowed a path through the rioters and spectators.

Oaths and jeers followed them. A brick struck the rear of the car, but in a moment they were out of the danger zone. The sergeant replaced his gun and turned to one of his men.

"This August Fischer is the fellow who makes speeches to the men, isn't he?" he asked, mopping his brow.

"He's the one," was the reply. "I've seen him walkin' with the kid what was—was runned over; I've seen him often. He's an agitator."

"He's a soc'list or an anarchist or somethin' like that," volunteered the third policeman, "an' he's quite a talker."

"Do you know anything about him, Mr. Buckingham?" asked the sergeant.

"I do not know any of my men," was the curt reply. "Which way is the station? I wish to arrange for bail without delay."

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A small coffin rested on a table in the centre of a plainly furnished room. From an adjacent chamber came the muffled sound of sobbing. Once in a while the door of this chamber opened and a young woman with a tear-stained face looked appealingly at a man who paced swiftly up and down the room. There was in this ceaseless stride the supple grace and strength of a caged panther. His eyes were dry, his lips set, his arms folded and his head slightly bowed.

Again the door of the chamber opened, the girl gazed wildly at him for a moment and then with a cry threw her arms about him.

"Oh, father, father!" she moaned, clinging to him. "Speak to me; speak to mamma! Tell us that it is not true! Jimmy is not dead; he must not be dead!"

"Go to your mother, Annieta, and let me alone," August Fischer said, gently releasing her arms. "Be a good girl, my pet."

For an hour he kept up that dreadful pace, pausing now and then to look at the waxlike face of his dead. From the street came the strains of a hurdy-gurdy playing negro melodies and other popular airs. Death was

his guest, but drunken men shouted from the pavements as if life were eternal, and the blare of the concert hall never sounded louder.

The outer door slowly opened and a man in the garb of a workman stepped inside and softly closed it.

"Wallace Dare is out there and says he must see you," he whispered.

"Let him in," was the quiet response.

The young man who entered impulsively clasped the hands of the stricken father, tears streaming down his cheeks.

"I don't know what to say," he hesitated. "I don't know how to tell you of my sorrow and sympathy."

"I will tell you how you can sympathize with me," exclaimed Fischer, moving swiftly to the opposite side of the coffin. "This is how!" raising his clinched hand. "Swear with me eternal vengeance against all the Buckinghams, all the capitalists and exploiters, the ravishers of women, the murderers of little children; swear war and death against them and their system! Do you swear?"

"I swear!" reverently exclaimed Dare.

"Hail to the coming of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity!" cried Fischer with an impassioned gesture. "Long live Anarchy!"

"Long live Anarchy!" repeated Dare, his eyes flashing.

"Long live Anarchy!" echoed the workman who stood guard at the door.



## CHAPTER V

### THE RIOT

THE tragedy just described occurred a few days after Mrs. Stack-Haven's reception, in which Deane met Alice Buckingham.

He had never met Amos Buckingham, and until trouble was threatened in the mills knew little of him, except that he was the father of the charming girl he had entertained in Cragmere, as Mr. Buckingham had returned to the United States some months before 'Alice's visit at the Deanes'.

When a wage reduction was proposed, August Fischer called on Deane and asked him to use his influence to effect such a compromise as would prevent a strike. Deane made an investigation which convinced him that the men were in the right, and made several fruitless attempts to have an interview with Buckingham.

On the night following the death of August Fischer's boy, the union of the Buckingham mills employés met and voted to go on strike. The few timid ones who pleaded for delay were overwhelmed by the angry majority, and the motion to go out on the morrow was carried with a yell.

There were calls for Fischer, but a hush came over the excited throng when an aged workman arose and in simple language told of the death of his son. Many a toiler clinched his hands and silently cursed the master of the mills. It was voted to hold a mass meeting on the Friday evening following.

The committee engaged a large hall not far from the mills, and a crowd gathered and waited for the doors to open. It was early in June, and though it was nearly eight o'clock the twilight yet lingered. Noisy children played in the street, mere babies wheeled yet smaller ones in crude carts or carried them in their tiny arms, while bare-headed and swarthy women in short skirts and gaudy blouses elbowed their way past workmen who listened, pipes in mouths, to their more voluble companions.

The clock in an adjacent steeple tolled the hour, and a murmur arose as many eyes were directed at the unopened doors of the hall. Another quarter of an hour passed and the street was crowded with impatient men.

"What are we standing here for?" shouted one of them, mounting a beer barrel. "Why don't they open the doors? Where's the committee?"

No one seemed to know. A moment later one of the doors swung outward and a stoop-shouldered man stood in the opening. The crowd gave a yell and surged forward.

"Ye can't get in! There ain't no meetin' here to-night!" yelled the janitor, as he stepped back and slid

the bolt in place. Those in the front rank hurled themselves against the oak barrier, but policemen forced the crowd back.

"Fellow-workers and friends!" shouted a man who had scaled a pile of bricks on the opposite side of the street, and who waved his hand over the puzzled and excited crowd.

"Fischer! Fischer! Hurray for Gus Fischer!" were the greetings from the scores who recognized him.

A leader stood before them. As he removed his hat clusters of light brown hair fell over a smooth, high forehead. His features had a delicacy which would have suggested weakness were it not for the magnetic eyes, the straight nose, the deep chest and the supple muscles which his garments did not wholly conceal. His fingers were long, white and tapered. He was dressed in a well-fitting suit of blue, and his negligee shirt was so fashioned as to disclose a white but corded neck, below which a carelessly but tastefully adjusted red scarf flaunted.

As if by magic the crowd had trebled. Loiterers from side streets and the denizens of a hundred tenement houses were drawn to this centre. Saloons disgorged their patrons and hundreds of tawny Italians chattered, gesticulated and laughed at a spectacle which had no meaning to them. The daylight had faded so that the yellow gas jets cast faint shadows.

Again Fischer raised his hand and a spell of silence

crept in rapidly widening circles. It is given to few to exercise this magnetic influence.

"Fellow-workers and friends," he repeated in clear, ringing tones, "we are denied admission to this hall which your committee engaged and paid for. You know who did this. Our masters may prevent us from holding a meeting in a public hall, but they do not yet own the sky. There's a vacant lot not far away. Follow me!"

Cries of anger were mingled with cheers for the speaker, but a minute later the crowd surged down the street with Fischer and others of the committee in the lead. On a corner was a vacant lot, as if a tooth had been extracted from the ugly jaw of the street. For some months this space had served as a store ground for disabled trucks and wagons, and one of these was pressed into service as a speaker's stand. Torches were borrowed from pedler carts, and volunteers held them aloft on the improvised platform. A large American flag was produced and so draped as to form a background to the orators.

Several speeches were made detailing the history of the strike, pleading the justice of its cause and urging the men to stand firm. There were cheers when it was asserted that Buckingham had been unable to open his mills. There were loud calls for Fischer, who responded with an address which set the strikers wild. He made not the slightest reference to the death of his son.

"Who is this man Buckingham?" he demanded.



“He has not lifted a finger to earn one penny of the millions with which he seeks to oppress you. He reaps where he has not sown, and squanders that which has been withheld from you. Because you will not tamely submit to eat less meat so that he may pile up millions he cannot use; because you will not take bread from your children and milk from the mouths of your babies so that he may drink wines of a choicer vintage; because you will not abandon your union, bow your heads in the dust and renounce your manhood, this tyrant would starve you into submission. Men of the mills, a time will come when——”

There was a commotion on the left flank of the crowd. It started with scattered cries and swelled into a roar. The flickering torches on the platform made it difficult for Fischer to discern the cause of this interruption. He saw the dense mass part in waves like water before the impact of a ship, and then in the midst of upraised arms and angry faces he saw the gray helmets of a squad of police and the flash of menacing night sticks. A young man leaped from the crowd to the wagon and pushed him aside.

The newcomer on the platform was Wallace Dare, the friend who had taken the oath with Fischer over the coffin of his son.

Dare was a stranger to most of those who faced him, but he cared not for that. The light and love of battle gleamed in his eyes. He was of medium height and athletic build. A small moustache and closely trimmed

Van Dyke beard did little to offset the youthfulness of his face. He grasped a torch from the hands of one of the men and waved it frantically over the heads of his audience.

“Are there Americans here with blood in their veins instead of milk?” he shouted. “The police are attacking this orderly meeting. Strike back, men, if you be not dogs and cowards! The police are the law-breakers! Stand to your rights on your own ground! Now is the time to show whether your mother bred spaniels or tiger whelps! Are you whining women to cower before clubs in the hands of paid thugs? Come on, boys!”

His voice rose shrill above the tumult, and his appeal was answered by a sullen snarl as of an animal at bay. The police had nearly reached the wagon, when Dare severed the lamp of the torch with a blow, and with the stout handle as a weapon leaped at the head of the officer in command. Fischer had already mingled in the fray.

Courage is as contagious as fear, and hundreds who had faltered now stood firm. The rioters armed themselves with stakes and débris from an adjoining building which was being dismantled. The mob did not retreat before the police. Their sticks beat a tattoo on hard heads and brawny shoulders, but blow was answered with blow. Several patrolmen were knocked senseless with bricks, and half of them fought with blood streaming down their faces. Scores of prostrate strik-

ers showed that the officers had not struggled in vain, but the spirit of the mob was still unbroken.

Dare was in the thickest of the fight. Twice he was borne to the ground and kicked and beaten, but each time the mob rallied and swept over his body, carrying his assailants with them. Then he would spring to his feet and fight silently and doggedly, the fever of battle throbbing in every nerve and muscle.

There came to the ears of the writhing, bruised and crazed combatants the clanging of gongs and the hoof beats of horses. The almost exhausted police knew that reënforcements were at hand and fell on the strikers with renewed vigor. Forty reserves leaped from patrol wagons and dashed in, clubbing right and left without mercy.

Dare had raised his stick to dash into this fresh force when he felt his weapon grasped from his hand. With an inarticulate cry he turned to face this new enemy in the rear. A sinewy hand clutched him by the throat and he looked into the stern eyes of Deane.

"Enough of this, you fool!" he exclaimed, changing his grip so as to give his captive a chance to breathe. "Collect what senses you have left, and come with me. Come on; I'll stand no nonsense!"

Dare was too exhausted to resist and seemed under the spell of the man who had appeared at this opportune moment. Deane half dragged him to the street. The blood-stained face and dishevelled garments of his cap-

tive attracted the notice of an officer who halted them. He hesitated when he recognized Deane.

"It's all right, officer."

"It's all right if you say so, Mr. Deane," growled the officer, with another suspicious glance at Dare. "Innocent spectator, eh?" with a rather malicious grin at the leader of the rioters. "Them's the ducks that allers gets it in the neck. Back there! Keep back there or I'll——"

He turned to check the onrush of a new swarm of curiosity seekers, and a minute later the two were well out of the *mêlée*. They walked in silence until they came to the comparatively deserted section of a street enclosed by the walls of warehouses. The last sound of the riot had died away, and a calm, full moon rode well up in the eastern sky.

"You're a damn fool!" remarked Deane, halting abruptly within the light of a street lamp.

"Thanks, old chap," returned Dare. "Why say so obvious a thing in so serious a tone?"

"Are you hurt?" grasping him by the arm and turning his face to the light.

"I think not; at least not much," replied the other, shaking himself as if arousing from a trance. "Fact is I haven't had time to find out. Where the devil did you come from? I say, Deane, that was a bully scrap while it lasted! Were you in it?"

"To the extent of trying to save you from a broken head. Where does that blood come from?" He looked



intently at a matted lock of hair which fell from beneath Dare's battered cap.

"All I know is that I have a ripping headache," he wearily responded.

"You also have a three-inch scalp wound and a bruise as big as a goose-egg," Deane said, after examining the other's head.

"There are police heads with lumps larger than that," declared Dare with a defiant laugh. "They had no right to attack that meeting. This is not Russia! If I——"

"We'll not discuss that now. Find a surgeon, have that cut dressed and go home."

"That sounds reasonable," admitted Dare, after a moment's reflection. "I know a chap who can do this job as well as a surgeon, and he'll ask no questions. Come with me, will you?"

"Where is he?"

"At 'The Well.'"

"'The Well'?" repeated Deane. "What's that?"

"It's a great place, and you'll be interested in it. Come with me; it's not far."

Deane looked at his watch and consented. He had known Wallace Dare for years, meeting him first in London, at which time his father was a wealthy railroad president. There came a day of panic and ruin, and when it was ended the elder Dare was worse than a bankrupt. Across his proud name was drawn the smirch of unmerited disgrace. He turned his last dol-

lar over to his creditors, wrote a tear-stained letter to his son, and placed a pistol to his head.

The logic of this and other events transfused the dilettante radicalism of the young artist into that of a more virulent type.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WELL

DEANE followed his friend into a small hotel which differed in no essential particular from the prevailing type in that section of the East Side. It was reasonably clean, and the chairs surrounding the tables were large and comfortable. A number of men were engaged in a game of pinoche with an interest so great that they did not notice the new arrivals.

"Where's the boss?" Dare asked of the man in charge.

"Went out, but he'll be back soon," was the reply.

"Tell him I'm in The Well and wish to see him as soon as he comes in. This way, Deane," and they entered a narrow and unlighted passage, at the end of which was a door which he unlocked.

"This is The Well," announced Dare, lighting a gas jet.

They stood in a room—if it could be called a room—of most peculiar construction. It was rectangular in shape, with an area of eighteen by twenty-four feet, but its remarkable feature was its height. Sixty feet above him Deane made out the dim outlines of a skylight. The

floor was of clay, cool, smooth and hard. The four walls rose sheer without a window or visible opening of any kind save the small door through which they had entered. Swaying gently from a rope, which disappeared in the gloom above, was a huge bucket fashioned from an oil barrel and skilfully encrusted with imitation moss and lichens. Its bottom was high enough so that one could readily pass under it. There was no one in this place when they entered, and Deane looked curiously about him.

"If I had the naming of this compartment," he said, peering up the gloomy sides, "I should call it 'The Chimney' rather than The Well. Who was so insane as to construct it?"

"The tradition is that it was intended as an addition to this establishment," explained Dare. "It seems that these walls were up and the floors in when a fire broke out and gutted it from basement to roof. Then the owner abandoned his scheme in disgust, or went broke or something; anyhow this was about the way it was when Fischer and I ran across it. A number of us clubbed together and bricked up the windows, put in a skylight and cut ventilators along the base of the outer walls. This is the coolest place in town, and has the hottest discussions."

"I wish the boss would come," he continued. "My head is not feeling any better. Make yourself at home, and I'll see if I can find him."

He closed the door behind him and Deane proceeded



to inspect this singular place. Benches extended along two sides of The Well, and in one corner was a crude bookcase. On a table were magazines, pamphlets and papers, and a glance showed that they were a part of the propaganda of revolutionary societies. There were two smaller tables, a piano and a dozen chairs.

The brick walls were covered for a height of twelve feet or more with portraits, engravings, posters, cartoons and photographs, and most of them had revolutionary significance. The place of honor was reserved for a well-executed portrait of Karl Marx from the brush of Dare. He had also contributed one of Ferdinand LaSalle, the hero of the pioneer German radicals and the Murat of social unrest. Draped in black were photographs of Spies, Parsons, Engel, Fisher and Ling, the convicted and executed Chicago radicals who were involved in the Haymarket tragedy. Twined about these shrouded frames was a hangman's rope, ending in a noose with its conventional nine loops.

A long shelf contained an array of drinking mugs and *steins*. Some member had contributed a pair of fencing foils, and a section of the wall was reserved for a collection of antique muskets, blunderbusses, daggers and other weapons of a vanished age.

"Evidently the headquarters of a set of amateur anarchists," mused Deane. "It cannot be a secret society, else I would not be admitted. Dare will get himself into trouble."

He heard the click of a key, the door opened and a

small man entered and stepped forward, a welcoming smile on his face.

"I am with Mr. Dare, and am waiting for him to return," explained Deane.

The other placed his hands on his lips, made an inarticulate sound and a gesture which told that he was deaf and dumb. The mute drew a card from his pocket, wrote rapidly and handed it to the visitor. In an upper corner was printed, "I am deaf and dumb," and below was "Ivan Malakoff, Typewriter and Copyist." In pencil he had written, "I cannot entertain you, but you are welcome."

Deane wrote a brief explanation on a card, the mute read it, smiled and shook hands again, and at that moment Dare entered.

"I've found him," he announced, "and he's gone after some stuff from the drugstore. Hello, Dummy!" he saluted with a rapid movement of his fingers. "This is Dummy Malakoff, Deane. He doesn't say much, but he's one of the most active members of The Well."

Again a key was applied to the lock, and a man entered whose head barely passed beneath the opening. He walked directly to Dare, placed a chair so that he would have the full benefit of the light, and rather gruffly told his patient to be seated. It was "the boss," as Dare had designated him, and he placed a tray containing bottles, cotton and bandages on the table and bent his long frame over, and with clumsy tenderness examined the wound.

He looked little like a hotel-keeper and less like a surgeon. His face had the tan and his skin the texture which comes from years of exposure to sun and sea. He went silently at his task with the air of one who knows his business.

The mute stood close by and watched patient and surgeon intently. So keen was his sympathy that he shuddered and clasped his hands every time the saloon-keeper-surgeon touched the gaping slit in the scalp. Dare kept up a running fire of questions, exclamations and observations intended to show his contempt for the ordeal, but his pale face and the occasional twitching of his lips were indications of his lack of enjoyment of it. The saloon-keeper made no replies, but "Dummy" talked silently to himself with fingers, lips and eyes.

Had a stranger watched Deane during this operation he would have been puzzled to account for his actions. When the amateur surgeon entered the room Deane gazed at him long and searchingly. As he came into the full glare of the light, the young lawyer stepped nervously forward, his eyes still fixed on the dark features of the owner of *The Well*. The latter raised his eyes for an instant and looked into the face of the one who made him the object of such fixed scrutiny, whereupon Deane looked away and turned carelessly as if he had been deluded for a moment into mistaking the identity of the last arrival.

He strolled to a far part of the room, and from its shadows resumed his study of the man who had come to

the relief of Dare. Then, as if the victim of some subtle fascination, he slowly and silently approached and stood so that he could watch every movement. Once or twice Dare spoke to him, but he made no answer.

There was a noise in the hallway and a number of members of the club entered. They clustered about the patient and his surgeon and plied them with questions. Deane paid no attention to them but went to the far side of the room and gazed vacantly at a faded print of "The Fall of the Bastile." He was aroused by a voice and by the feel of a heavy hand laid on his shoulder.

"'The Fall of the Bastile' must have a remarkable fascination for you," the voice said, and he looked into the bearded face of Themistocles Saxon.

Saxon was a lawyer with a strange history and stranger views and habits, whom Deane had met many times, but had never thought to find in this peculiar environment. On subsequent reflection he decided that The Well was admirably adapted to one of Saxon's temperament and beliefs.

"It is a fine old print," said Deane, recovering from his abstraction and looking at the picture for the first time.

"I thought of that affair of the Bastile this evening while watching the police club Dare and his toiling friends," continued Saxon, his mustache lifting in an ironical smile. "You were there, so Dare tells me. Men who have nothing better to do than tamely listen to a recapitulation of their wrongs deserve to be clubbed,



and policemen give a *quid pro quo* for their salaries by no method more compensating. A clout on the head with a stout hickory club is interest accumulated on whimpering."

"The police had no legal right to attack and break up that meeting," declared Deane.

"They had no legal right, eh?" laughed Saxon. "That makes their action all the more praiseworthy. They had the might, and that was sufficient. People who mouth and whine about their rights and who consult a printed list alleged to contain them, simply advertise the fact that they have none which a man of force and courage is bound to respect. Did the Bastille fall on account of volleys of oratory addressed to unarmed and open-mouthed menials? Was it dismantled stone by stone because some anæmic reformer circulated a petition? Does that picture tell that sort of a story? It does not. Dare had the right idea to-night, but there were not men enough among those curs to help him out. Let's watch Bill sew his head up."

Whatever Deane thought of this tirade he made no reply to it, but joined those who were watching the final stage of the operation. Defying the pain, Dare looked up and laughed.

"Make yourself at home in the bottom of The Well, Deane," he said, gritting his teeth as the thread rasped through.

"Do your talking when I'm finished," ordered the

elongated surgeon. In a few minutes the job was ended, and Dare though pale sprang resolutely to his feet.

"You're all right as a surgeon, Bill," he declared. "I want you to meet an old chum of mine. Deane, this is Bill! He has another name, but we all call him just plain 'Bill.'"

"My name is William Parker," he said. "I am glad to meet you, Mr. Deane. Mr. Dare has spoken of you many times."

His manner was frank and gentlemanly, and the hand clasp firm with the strength of sinewy fingers. For a moment Deane was at loss for a reply, and then made some conventional response. Parker warned Dare to keep his head well bandaged, collected his bottles and instruments and left the room. Until the door closed behind him the young lawyer watched him as if fascinated. Then Dare claimed his attention.

The personnel of the dozen or more men who had assembled was in keeping with the studied oddity of their environment. At one table were three men, two in evening dress and the third in the rough garb of a workman. The restaurant was famous for certain specialties, and a dish had been ordered of which the workman partook with relish, the others sipping ale and making a polite pretence of eating. The man with the appetite was Peter Magoon, known in the club as "Braidwood Pete." His companions were Saxon and Pierre Daubeney, a prosperous shopkeeper on an adjacent avenue.

Daubeny was a French-Canadian, and was so great an admirer and quoter of Rabelais that Saxon had dubbed him with the name of that philosopher. He was short of stature, rotund, smooth and florid of face, and more patient as a talker than as a listener.

There were present several workmen belonging to crafts demanding skill with corresponding wages, the "business agent" of a powerful trade-union, an actor well known to foot-light fame, and others whom Dare laughingly presented as "capitalistic loafers." Only in a metropolis is it possible to draw to a centre so incongruous an assemblage.

Far above their heads the skylights became yet more indistinct in the tobacco smoke which banked against it in a cloud. The sounds of the louder laughter came back from the gloomy walls in mocking echoes.

There were cheers when it was announced that one of the "capitalists" had consented to lower "the old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket which hangs in the well." It was then Deane discovered that the huge cask was not wholly ornamental or symbolic, but that it had a festive utility.

The waiter took the leading part in the ceremony of lowering the bucket. He rolled a keg of beer into the room, loosened the rope which held the bucket well above the table, opened a small and ingeniously constructed door which formed a part of its circumference, placed the keg therein, tapped it, closed the door so that only the spigot projected, and finally placed filled steins within

convenient reach. All this was done so quickly as to warrant the conclusion that this was no uncommon duty.

A belated arrival brought the news that Fischer had been severely beaten and then arrested. This threw Dare into a fresh fever of rage and excitement, and he poured forth a flood of invective against Buckingham and the police.

"If we were men; men worthy of our fighting ancestors," he exclaimed in conclusion, "we would not sit idly here and tolerate this outrage! Ten men of courage and determination could arouse a mob and lead it to the rescue of Fischer—brave, generous and manly Fischer!"

"Zat is all ver' fine, friend Dare, but it is better zat we sit right here an' drink zis spleen-deed beer," advised Pierre Daubeny, leaning contentedly back in his chair and smiling pleasantly. "Oui, oui! What you say, friend Dare, sounds grand, magnifique—great, as you say in zis coun-tree, but it is wind, air-ree, tam nonsense; eh, what?"

"You're an ass, Rabelais!" angrily retorted Dare.

"Be calm, be sedate, friend Dare," smiled the unruffled Daubeny, lighting a fresh cigar and languidly adjusting his cuffs. "What did the wise Panurge say? He say, 'Vas Ulysses so mad as to go back into ze Cyclop's cave to recover his sword?' Did Ulysses do dat; tell me? Not on your life! You bet Ulysses vant no such tam fool! He knew zat zere were plenty swords, but only one Ulysses, and he wanted to go home to his



vife. Keep cool, friend Dare; our good Fischer vill get out in time. Now he is in ze hands of ze enemy—prison-aire of var; what you say—but he is in no danger. Our guest here, ze famous lawyer, Mr. Deane, can do more to-morrow with words zan you an' all ze mobs can in one t'ousand year."

"The trouble with Dare's revolutionists," sneered Saxon, "is that they are restrained from overthrowing society by the fear of arrest. If arrested they could not work, and that is the greatest calamity which can befall them. I should be delighted to go out and help arouse these patriots, but the trouble is that those who are not in jails or hospitals are asleep in their hall bedrooms, and it would be a shame to wake them."

"Rabelais is too much of a coward to fight," snapped Dare. "As for you, Saxon, if your sword were as sharp and ready as your tongue no foe could stand before you. If——"

"I am not a coward," mildly protested Daubeny. "With Panurge I exclaim: 'My name is William Dreadnaught; by the pavilion of Mars I fear nothing but danger!' And like ze good Pantagruel I console myself with ze thought zat 'not to fear when ze case is evidently dreadful is a sign of want or smallness of judgment.' Zis case is too dreadful for me."

"I am not a coward, neither am I a fool," broke in Saxon. "I'm sorry for Fischer and would bail him out if they would let me, but they won't and that settles it, so far as to-night is concerned. The workmen for whom

he got clubbed have neither the sense to understand him nor the guts to stand by him. Why should I fight their battles? They would sooner pay admission to see me hanged than raise a hand to prevent it."

"You would look vell on a scaffold, Saxon," observed the unfeeling Daubeny.

"I will never be a martyr to those cattle," angrily retorted Saxon. "A fine lot they are that a real man should die for them. I looked at them to-night. Their cheeks were shrunken, their jaws retreating, their teeth decayed, their breaths foul, their complexions sallow, their shoulders bent, their chests hollow and their legs as crooked as their brains. At the flash or the signal of authority they cower and run like dogs. Bah! they weary me. A militia company recruited from spindle-shanked and flabby-armed clerks can chase a streetful of them across Manhattan Island!"

During this philippic Deane called Dare aside and told him that he would appear in court for Fischer on the morrow. Dare urged him to remain and answer Themistocles Saxon, but Deane would not listen to it. He seemed distraught and nervous, and after promising to "drop into The Well" at some other time left the room.

## CHAPTER VII

### A FEW HIDDEN THREADS

DEANE stopped in the public room and looked about for the proprietor, but saw nothing of him. He hesitated a moment and then obeying an impulse pushed through the folding screens to the sidewalk.

The moon struggled through the ragged edge of a cloud. The spars and rigging of ships silhouetted against the murky glow from the Brooklyn shore, and the smoke from a passing tug hung low and motionless in the humid air.

To his right Deane saw the figure of the man for whom he was looking, took a step toward him, then checked himself and stood undecided. At that instant a woman sprang out of the darkness beyond the glare of the jets from the windows. Her head was bare and her face deathly pale. Deane assumed that she was one of the unfortunates who at night roam the streets of that section of the city. He was surprised when she came directly toward Parker, gave a faint cry, pressed her hand to her heart as if exhausted from running, and would have fallen had that tall man not reached out and sustained her.

The light from the saloon windows fell full on her face, and Deane was impressed with its sad and wistful beauty. Tears brimmed in her affrighted eyes, the tender lips quivered and she looked appealingly at Parker as if dreading an ordeal from which there was no escape. Her dress was of dark material and severely simple with crêpe at the throat. Deane felt ashamed of his first impression of her, ashamed before she had said a word.

"Is it true about—about him?" she cried. "Oh, tell me, Mr. Parker, tell me that it is not true!"

"Don't take on so, Miss Fischer," he said soothingly as his gruff voice would permit. "He'll be out all right to-morrow, so don't worry a bit about it."

"Out to-morrow? Out to-morrow?" she exclaimed, clasping his arm and looking eagerly into his face. "They told me he was dead! Are you sure he is alive; are you sure, Mr. Parker?"

"Of course I am," he declared, with a laugh meant to be reassuring. "I came from the jail just now. I saw him, talked with him and left him some cigars and a bite to eat. You father isn't hurt to amount to anything; not half so much as Mr. Dare."

"I can go home to mother now," she said, her voice musical with its thrill of happiness. "The death of little Jimmy almost killed her, and when I heard about the riot I was awfully scared. One of the men told me that papa had been arrested. I went to the station and asked a policeman where he was, and he said they had



'beaten his block off and taken him to the morgue.' I know how the police hate him, and I was so afraid it was true. But it isn't; is it, Mr. Parker?" she asked, like a child who never tires of listening to a tale which pleases.

"He's all right, you can depend on that," repeated that person. "But see here, little one, are you not afraid to go home alone? It's late, you know, and——"

"You must not go with me," she interrupted, looking doubtfully at him and drawing away. Then as if regretting this implied suspicion she smiled and frankly held out her hand. "I am not afraid," she declared. "You are very kind, sir, and I thank you ever so much."

"Don't mention it," stammered that awkward person, removing his hat. "Always glad to do anything I can. Tell your mother not to worry. Good-night, Miss Fischer!"

"Good-night!" she replied, and a moment later the darkness enveloped her. He gazed in the direction she had taken, whistled softly and then turned and saw Deane.

"Going so soon?" he asked.

"I should like to have a talk with you before I go," said Deane.

"Certainly," responded the owner of The Well. "Come in and sit down at one of the tables; no one will bother us."

"I should prefer some more private place. If——"

"Come up to my rooms," invited Parker, with a curious glance. "There is not a soul on the whole floor, and we can talk all we please."

Deane followed the tall man up the stairs and entered a large and tidily arranged room. In one corner was a case filled with books, and scattered about the room were mementoes dear to the heart of a sailor.

"Spin away," said his host, tucking a piece of tobacco under his tongue and leaning back in his chair. Deane hesitated and cleared his throat several times, but the other waited patiently.

"Have you any recollection of meeting me before?" he asked, leaning forward and awaiting the reply. His companion gazed intently at him for several seconds.

"No," he said, shaking his head. "Of course I've heard of you and have seen your picture in the papers, but I don't recall that I've seen you before, and my memory of faces is good."

"Your name is William Parker, is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you ever gone by any other name?"

"Look here, Mr. Deane!" exclaimed that person. "I deny your right to ask me that question! What is it to you? What business is it of yours?"

"Did you not go for years by the name of 'Long Bill'?"

The effect of this question was electrical. The tall man sprang to his feet, and in his eyes was a look of

mingled fear and defiance as he gazed scowlingly at the young lawyer.

"Suppose I said I had been known as 'Long Bill,' what would you do about it?" he demanded. "You needn't think you can bluff or scare me! I have broken none of the laws of this country. Damn it, man, what are you driving at?"

"There was a time when you were not so gruff as you are to-night, Long Bill," said Deane quietly. "Let me say to you that I come to you as a friend; an old friend, and I wish you nothing but good. You have seen me many times, and I have a special reason for wishing to know if you can identify me. Take your time and try as hard as you can. I knew you the minute I saw you. Look at me, Long Bill! Who am I?"

The former first mate of the Frolic placed his hands on Deane's shoulders and looked long and searchingly into his eyes. Then he stood off and measured him from head to foot.

"You've got me," he said finally. "For a minute I thought you were a young fellow I ran across in Havana, but he had blue eyes and a smaller chin. If I ever saw you before I have forgotten where."

"Are you sure, Long Bill, are you sure?" he eagerly insisted. "Does not my voice suggest some one to you?"

"Nobody," replied the other, after a pause. "Stow all this mystery and spin your yarn. Who are you;

that's the question? Dare said you were Mr. Deane; that's all I know about it."

"Did you ever sail on a schooner with Jake Stark—Captain Jake Stark?"

"Perhaps I did, and then again perhaps I didn't," was the evasive response, his keen blue eyes narrowly watching his questioner.

"Well, you did, and when I remind you of it you will recall that he had a son who went by the name of 'Mascot.' He was about twelve years old when you last saw him. Look at me, Long Bill! I was Mascot!"

"What are you saying, man, what are you saying?" exclaimed the sailor. "You, Mascot? You, Jake Stark's boy? Are you sure, man, are you sure? I believe you're right! Damn it, my boy, I believe you're right! Mascot, little Mascot of the Frolic! Well, well, well! I'm mighty glad to see you, my lad, mighty glad!" and the two men clasped hands and gazed at each other with eyes that brimmed with tears.

"I have many things to ask you, Long Bill," he said, breaking the long silence, "but first tell me how my father was killed and where he was buried?"

"Killed and buried?" exclaimed the sailor. "Who told you that?"

Deane told what he had heard from the former member of the crew of the Frolic.

"Captain Jake was supposed to be killed, but he wasn't by a long shot," declared Long Bill. "He was wounded by a revenue officer about that time, but he



pulled through all right. He's alive and well, or at least he was a month or so ago."

"Where is he?" cried Deane, his voice trembling and his face pale from excitement.

"Let me start from the beginning," suggested Long Bill. "It won't take long to spin the yarn of what happened to him and me since the marines from the Alexander took us off the Frolic."

"Tell me first if he is in the city?"

"He is not here now, but I'm expecting him any day," said the sailor. "I had a letter from him only a few days ago, and he planned to take the next boat in case he could arrange matters in—but you had better let me tell this story from the start or you'll get all mixed up."

"Go ahead," said the young lawyer eagerly. "The last I heard of you and my father you had escaped from the jail in Kingston. I learned that on the Alexander, and then I went away on her, but I'll tell you of that later."

"It don't seem so long ago to me as it probably does to you," mused Long Bill. "Let's see, that was fourteen years ago about this time of the year. You were twelve years old then, which makes you twenty-six now, and I'm nearly forty. I reckon I look now about as I did then, but Jake Stark would never recognize you, Mascot—Mr. Deane, I mean."

"Call me Mascot to-night," smiled the young man. "It sounds natural."

"When we got out of that jail—and it wasn't much of a trick—we headed into the interior of Jamaica. I suppose they tried to follow us, but we didn't worry much about that. Do you remember that hut in the woods back from the lake where the Frolic was captured? We took you there once."

"I remember it," replied Deane.

"We went there when we thought it safe, and there we found Rat Trap. He was the only one who escaped when the blue jackets boarded us. Do you remember that?"

"I remember more than I wish I did," was his answer. "Go on."

"There was where Jake Stark kept his extra money, and I had a little cached there too. We tried to raise the Frolic, but they had run her on a reef and stove a hole in her bottom, and it was no use. Then we headed up the coast, and one night we found a small sloop which we bought and pointed for Cuba. The second night we made Santiago, and there we sold the sloop and hung around the wharves for several days. Jake wanted to disguise himself and go back to Kingston and look for you. He wouldn't talk about anything else for days, but we finally persuaded him to send Rat Trap. No one in Kingston had ever seen Rat Trap, and as he was willing to go we sent him. It was two weeks before he got back with the news that you had been taken away on the Alexander, and no one knew whether she would ever come back or not. We talked

it over a hundred times and decided that you had been taken to England. Jake was for going over there and looking for you, but we persuaded him that there was no chance of finding you, and every chance that he would be nabbed. Jake thought an awful lot of you, Mascot."

He paused and looked closely at the former sea waif.

"I have no doubt of it," he said slowly, after a pause.

"He thought everything in the world of you, my lad.

don't hold him up as a man to take pattern after, but he intended to do well by you. He did some things that mebbe were not just right, but Jake loved you and was anxious that you should become a gentleman."

"The world thinks I am one," retorted Deane, with a bitter smile.

"He spent all the money he had in the world trying to find you, and many a time I have seen him take on terribly when he was thinking about you. But finally he gave you up, and we got hold of another schooner and I took a quarter interest in her. We decided to steer clear of the smuggling business. Not that either one of us thought that it was a crime," he declared, looking doubtfully at Deane. "I never thought so then, and I don't think so now. If it wasn't for foolish laws men wouldn't be tempted to go in for smuggling."

"I believe in free trade myself," smiled Deane, "but go on."

"Well, I sold my interest in the schooner to him," continued Long Bill, after lighting his pipe, "and

shipped as second mate on a tramp steamer. He thought there was big money in Brazil, and said he was going there, and then I lost track of him for years. Finally I met Rat Trap in Savannah, and he told me that Jake had quit the sea, had gone in for sheep raising down in the Argentine, that he was a respectable citizen and was doing well."

"You don't know how glad I am to hear that," said Deane, his face brightening.

Long Bill went to a desk and after a brief search returned with a letter.

"I received this about ten days ago," he said. "It's from Captain Jake, as you will see, and it tells you all I know about him at present. Rat Trap gave me his address. I wrote to him and this is his answer, and I'm mighty glad to know that he is on top where he belongs."

The letter was dated from Rosario, Argentine Republic, and was written in a scrawling but legible hand, and contained fewer grammatical errors than Deane had reason to anticipate. It opened with a rambling account of his business affairs and concluded with the statement that he had sold his sheep ranch "for a fairly good sum," and that he intended to sail for New York as soon as "he had closed up some deals in Buenos Ayres." Deane read the letter twice, and then handed it back.

"Where did you first meet my father, Bill?" he asked. "And when did you first see me?"



"You were a kid not more than three years old when I first ran across Jake Stark," replied the sailor after closing his eyes in thought. "That was at La Guaira. I don't suppose you remember as far back as that?"

"I cannot recall a time when I did not know you," he said. "Go on, Bill. What did my father ever tell you about me or about my mother? Who was she, and where was I born? If you knew, Bill, how many times I have asked myself these questions you would pity me."

His voice faltered and there was a look of entreaty in his eyes. Long Bill made a pretence of cleaning the bowl of his pipe, started to speak and then moved awkwardly in his chair.

"Say something, man!" exclaimed Stanley Deane. "Tell me that my mother was a good woman. She must have been a pure woman. You knew her, Bill; tell me that she was all that a mother should be!"

The young man paced nervously back and forth with his eyes fixed on the shambling figure of the once first mate of the smuggler yacht.

"I never saw your mother, Mascot," he slowly said. "I never saw her and to tell you the exact truth I do not know a thing about her, but I make no doubt that she was a good woman. Jake Stark was no hand to run after strange women. I know that as well as a man can know anything, and while I cannot swear to it I have no doubt that you was born in wedlock somewhere in New England. All that Jake ever said to me or any-

body else—and he told me more than he did anybody—was that your mother died when you were a baby. He had owned the Frolic only six months when I came aboard her, and none of the crew had sailed with him before, and I reckon that they knew nothing about you or him. Jake was not the man to blab about his affairs. Didn't he ever tell you anything about your mother, Mascot?"

Deane shook his head.

"I remember asking him about my mother several times," he said, "but he would laugh and say that he was my father and mother."

"He used to make your dresses when you were a little toddler," mused Long Bill. "I can see him now as plain as if it were yesterday, sitting under an awning on the deck of the Frolic stitching away on little skirts of most wonderful colors, and when you were older he made your pants and jackets, and now that I think of it he made them right well. Jake was a wonderful man, Mascot; in some respects the most wonderful man I ever knew."

"My life on the Frolic was in a womanless world," Deane remarked, with a faint smile as he listened to this description of Jake Stark, "and the fact that I had no mother made no impression on me. The Frolic was my universe, and since there were no mothers on it I accepted things as they were. But now——" and for some minutes he walked the floor in silence, Long Bill

smoking stolidly, too tactful to offer sympathy in a situation which was clearly beyond his grasp.

"Do you think that my father will recognize me?" he suddenly asked.

"Never in the world!" declared Long Bill.

"Let me make myself known to him, Long Bill. I would rather do that, and I have a reason for wishing to do so."

"I won't say a word until you tell me I can," promised the sailor. For some minutes the former sea waif paced slowly up and down the room with bowed head, Long Bill studying him intently.

"Did it ever occur to you that perhaps Jake Stark is not your father?" he abruptly asked.

"Why do you ask that?" exclaimed Deane. "Did he ever say anything to lead you to believe that he was not?"

"Not a word. We always took it for granted that you was, and of course there's no reason for thinking otherwise, but——"

"But what?"

"You don't look or act like Jake Stark's son," hesitated the sailor.

"That is natural enough," Deane replied. "I may favor my mother. Again, for the past fourteen years I have been trained to act as the son of a cultured gentleman. If I'm not the son of Jake Stark, why was I with him, and who am I?"

"I don't know," Long Bill admitted reluctantly. "I

only know that when you were a little lad you said and did things which made me wonder how Jake happened to be father to such a boy. That don't prove anything, of course, but you're not his style. Now tell me about yourself, my boy. Where have you been all these years?"

And then Deane told his wonderful story to the sailor.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GIFT OF A ROSE

It was daylight when this singular interview was ended. Long Bill urged Deane to lie down and rest for a few hours, but he declined, knowing full well that sleep would not come to him.

It was difficult to realize that the stirring events of the night were not fragments of dreams. The fierce scenes of the riot, the grim walls and grimmer characters met in *The Well*, the recognition of Long Bill and the proof that his father yet lived—all had been crowded into a few hours.

The morning air revived him, and as his brain became clear one thought stood out vivid before all others. His father lived—the past was linked with the present!

His boyhood days rose before him. Again he played on the deck of the *Frolic*, again he saw the little room filled with childish toys, again he lived that night of capture, again he looked into the stern faces of the marines and saw the spitting fire from the muzzles of their guns, and once again he saw his father manacled with a felon's chains. To his memory came the kindly words and cheerful smile of Jake Stark as he was led

below the decks of the *Alexander*. He recalled little acts of tenderness, incidents almost forgotten which thrilled him strangely.

And then he thought of his mother; not as he had thought of her thousands of times before; not as a shadow ever eluding his groping fancy, but as one who was drawing near to him either in flesh or in spirit. As yet she gave him no token of good or evil tidings, but as he walked the street that early morn his faith rose with the brightening of the dawn.

Not until he saw the green of Battery Park did he realize how deep had been his abstraction. He bought a morning paper and read as he strolled slowly back to the upper section of the city. The news did not interest him, but his mind ceased to dwell on the strange events through which he had passed. He smiled when he became conscious that he was thinking of Alice Buckingham.

Would the coming of Jake Stark make it possible for him to aspire to her love, or would he bring a message which should remove her forever beyond his wildest hopes? He soon would know.

Then he became aware that he was nearing her home, and he thought of what Tom Harkness had told him only the day before of its fair young mistress.

She was not happy there. Her mother had died when she was a child, leaving no male heir to the Buckingham fortune. One would have thought that the stricken father would have warmed toward his daughter, the

only one on earth bound to him by ties of flesh and blood, but this cold, silent and self-centred man did not. He was not unkind, but his care for her was that of a guardian rather than a father. When she came to years of understanding she knew that in his eyes her sex was an unforgivable fault.

He had placed her in charge of a governess, and her childhood was spent under the eyes of tutors. There were intervals when she was with him in his country places near Paris and Berlin, but he paid her little attention. When she grew older she scorned to counterfeited a love his coldness and neglect had stifled.

When Alice became mistress of the Buckingham mansion she came to know that there was connected with it a Blue Beard's apartment into which she was forbidden to enter.

It was a small, brick hut of peculiar construction which her father had erected as an ell to the garage and stables. It had no windows, save those of a skylight, and its only door opened into the garage.

Alice learned from the servants, and later from observation, that her father spent most of his time in this den. No one, not even the silent and discreet private secretary, Mr. Peters, was admitted to it, and the employé who made the mistake of lingering near its walls or who displayed the slightest open interest in its secrets was sure of dismissal. The servants called it the "laboratory," when they referred to it in whispers. No sounds penetrated its brick walls, and its only indica-

tion of internal activity was an occasional trace of smoke from an iron chimney which reached well above the roof of the mansion.

It was the general belief that Buckingham was engaged in electrical or chemical experiments in which secrecy was imperative. Few of the score or more of servants had ever passed a word with their employer. He seldom frequented the beautiful paths and gardens, and when he walked between the house and the laboratory his eyes were shaded by a guard such as jewellers use in their delicate tasks.

Deane was little interested in the gossip about the laboratory. It was nothing to him that the eccentric millionaire pursued some secret task within its walls, but it was beyond his comprehension how anyone, much less a father, could help loving Alice Buckingham. This shadow over her life drew him closer to her in sympathy. They had something in common, but like all who suffer he was sure that her sorrows were nothing compared with his.

When he neared the main entrance he noted that the gates were opened, and through them he caught a glimpse of flowering plants and a lawn wet with dew. It was the first time he had seen these gates thrown back, and he slackened his pace and gazed curiously in.

As he came squarely in front he saw the skirt of a woman's gown, and at the sound of his steps Alice Buckingham turned and looked squarely into his eyes.

She wore a gown, light gray, severely simple but mar-



vellously effective. Her dark hair was dressed low on her neck, and her arms were filled with roses. Her soft, brown eyes opened wide with surprise as she recognized Deane, and the red of the roses flamed for an instant on her cheeks.

"Good-morning, Mr. Deane!" she exclaimed, stepping forward and greeting him. "You are an early riser."

"I was about to say the same of you, Miss Buckingham," he returned, wondering if his eyes betrayed his loss of sleep. "What lovely roses!"

"Aren't they?" she replied, with an admiring look at their colors. "A little girl who said that she worked in a department store stopped and looked in, as you are doing now, and when I gave her a rose she thanked me and went away very happy."

"Give me one and I'll be happy, but I'll not promise to go away."

"The little girl did not ask for it," she retorted. "However, you shall have one. Make your own choice, sir."

"Thank you," he said, selecting a half-opened bud of perfect shape and color.

They were standing within the gates, and when Deane had fastened the rose in the lapel of his coat his eyes wandered to the flower gardens which radiated from a fountain to the right.

"What a beautiful place!" he exclaimed.

"For a New York residence, yes," Alice admitted.

"The average native of this city sees beauty only in stone, brick and mortar. This was my grandfather's idea, and the effect would be pretty were it not for those ugly factories and tenement houses in the background. I try to think that they are palaces, but my fancy halts. Will you walk through my little park?"

"I've been waiting for just that invitation," declared Deane.

"Try and imagine yourself back in Cragmere. I never saw a more lovely old place, and I don't see how you can stay so long away from it."

"It never was as attractive as this garden is now," Deane said, his face sober but a twinkle in his eye.

"I'm impervious to your compliments," she said, with a toss of her pretty head. "Mrs. Stack-Haven has warned me that you are a dreadful flatterer."

"And I had counted Mrs. Stack-Haven my friend," he protested. "When you come to know me you will learn that I'm as matter-of-fact as a statistician and as truthful as a calendar. That's an odd structure," he observed, indicating the laboratory. "What is it used for?"

"Papa works in it," she said, a cloud passing over her face. "Please don't ask me about it; really I know nothing of it."

"I beg your pardon!" he said, heartily ashamed of his attempt to question her on a subject which he knew must be distasteful to her.

For some minutes they strolled slowly through the

walks of this oasis in the city's squalor, and as he listened to the music of her voice and watched the play of emotions in her eyes, his thoughts were far away from those which had harassed him in the hours before.

"It is kind of you to admit an enemy within your walls," he said, as they came from the garden and stood once more by the huge iron gates.

"An enemy?" she asked, her questioning eyes looking into his. "An enemy? How so?"

"Have you not heard that your father's employés are on a strike?"

"Indeed I have," she declared, "and I have also heard that you are their champion. I am a non-combatant."

"I wish we could enroll you on our side."

"I have no doubt that the men are right," she said. "All that I know about the labor problem is that those who work do not get what they earn."

"There is little more to learn," responded Deane. "Miss Buckingham, I thank you for a most delightful half hour, also again for this rose."

"You are welcome to both," she smiled, and the young lawyer turned reluctantly away.

A brisk walk to his apartments and a cold plunge put him on edge for a hearty breakfast. In his morning's mail he found a letter which surprised and pleased him. It read:

"Mr. Buckingham will esteem it a favor if you will call at his residence at eight o'clock this evening. Please notify me by telephone if this will suit your convenience. Very truly yours,

"SAMUEL PETERS, Private Secretary."

Deane construed this a favorable omen for the strikers, and sincerely hoped it was an indication that the owner of the Buckingham mills was ready to negotiate for a settlement. He decided, however, to say nothing to Fischer and other of the union leaders, fearing to arouse false hopes.

He telephoned Mr. Peters that he would call on Buckingham that evening and then went to his office, attended to a few pressing matters, and hurried to the police court.

The rioting prisoners had not yet been brought in, but the sidewalk was crowded with their friends, and a dense throng packed the court room. The young lawyer was recognized as he forced his way through the mass, and a cheer went up for their distinguished champion. As he entered the hall a hand was laid lightly on his arm, and he turned to look into a face of remarkable beauty. The garb of the toiling class did not lessen the charm of her face nor mask the grace of her figure. The eyes were blue, soft and wistful, the mouth tender, the complexion so fair that the slightest blemish would have marred it as does a flaw a diamond, and beneath her modest cap were folds of hair with the subdued gleam of red gold.

"You are Mr. Deane, are you not?" she asked, the words trembling on her lips.

"Yes," he said, looking at her closely. "Miss Fischer, I believe?"

"I am August Fischer's daughter," she replied, her



eyes opening wide with surprise. "How did you know me, sir?"

"I saw you last evening when you were talking with—with Mr. Parker," he hesitated, Long Bill's name escaping him for a moment.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, looking down in confusion.

"Do not worry about your father," said Deane cheerfully. "He will be a free man in a few hours."

"Are you sure?" she cried, hope shining in her eyes. "Oh, sir; my mother is dreadfully sick this morning, and she worries so because father didn't come home last night."

Deane talked cheerfully to her as he led the way to the court room and succeeded in raising her spirits. A number of minor cases were disposed of, and then the rioters were brought in. There were ten of them, and as they entered there were scattered cheers which the bailiffs repressed.

Fischer came first, and there was an expression on his face which Deane never had seen before. He carried his head erect, and gazed defiantly at the judge and the cluster of police officials. It told of unsuppressed hatred and of a sullen lust for revenge. One eye was discolored, and the fingers of his right hand were bandaged. He had no look for the spectators until his daughter's voice attracted him.

"Papa! papa!" she cried in accents hardly audible above the confusion, but the father's ears caught it. He looked into her eager and tear-stained face as she reached

her arms out to him, and a smile softened the lines about his mouth.

"Annieta! My dear Annieta!" he answered, stepping out of the line and leaning toward her over the rail which separated them.

"Stand back there!" ordered a court attendant, grasping him by the arm.

With a cry like a wild animal Fischer sprang on him and bore him to the floor. Several officers dashed to the struggling men and tore them apart.

"Handcuff the prisoner!" ordered the judge, his face pale with anger. Fischer offered no further resistance as the manacles were bound to his wrists. His eyes searched for his daughter, and he smiled encouragement with lips swollen from a blow received in the mêlée.

Witnesses told of the meeting and of the riot which followed the coming of the police. Deane announced that he would call no witnesses.

"The prosecution has given sufficient testimony," he declared. "The man who strikes for living wages is not *per se* a criminal. He is not outside the pale of that clause of the Constitution of the United States which was intended forever to safeguard to the people their right peaceably to assemble. It has become the practice of the police of this and other large cities to treat with contempt this splendid heritage from liberty-loving forefathers. These men did not interfere with street traffic, they were conducting themselves in an orderly

manner, they were discussing their best interests, and they were entitled to that privilege. I ask that the prisoners be discharged and the police reprimanded."

"The prisoners are discharged," the judge said, after a dignified interval of silence. He arose and leaning forward directed his remarks to the captain of the police precinct.

"The wearing of a uniform," he said, "does not make a legislator of a policeman, neither does it give him license to break the law. If he attacks or disturbs a meeting of citizens called for a peaceable purpose and conducted without disorder, it is not only the right but also the duty of the citizens whose liberties are thus menaced to resist by force. This is the law, Captain, and you will do well to read it and heed it. The prisoners are discharged on this complaint. August Fischer, stand up."

Fischer arose and faced the judge.

"You are fined ten dollars for contempt of court, or in default of its payment ten days' imprisonment."

The prisoner smiled disdainfully and took his seat. An attendant pushed forward and whispered something to the judge. The latter listened quietly, and sat with bowed head for an interval, then looked intently at Fischer.

"Fischer," he said, and Deane sprang to his feet, alert to meet some new complication, "I have just learned something which induces me to overlook your

action in this court room. I will reprimand you and remit your fine. Go at once to your home."

Ignorant of the sad significance of these words, some of the spectators applauded. The color left Fischer's face, and he gazed dumbly at his daughter.

"Fischer's wife died an hour ago," Wallace Dare whispered in Deane's ear. "You break the news to him, will you? I don't dare to tell him! I will try to take care of Annieta. My God, that man fairly worshipped his wife! His only son in his grave, and his wife a corpse awaiting him!" and the sympathetic artist broke down and wept.

Before Deane could reach the side of the stricken husband others had told him of the sudden death of his wife. He said no word, and seemed oblivious to the presence of Annieta who fell fainting at his feet. He clutched at his throat as if a noose were tightening about it, pushed aside those who spoke rough words of comfort and rushed bare-headed from the court room and into the street.

## CHAPTER IX

### A DECLARATION OF WAR

THE watchman who guarded the gates to the Buckingham mansion looked carefully at Deane's card before admitting him. The liveried doorman was equally exacting, but conducted him to a small reception room and then vanished. After an irritating interval this flunkey reappeared and led the way down a gloomy hall, standing aside at the doorway of a dimly lighted room.

"Mr. Stanley Deane!" announced the servant.

"Come in, sir," called a voice from out the half darkness, and a powerfully built man arose from a desk chair. He motioned Deane to a chair at the edge of a Japanese screen and curtly asked him to be seated. He did not offer his hand or proffer any conventional greeting.

On the desk was a student's lamp so placed as to throw a fairly strong light on the face of the visitor, but the features of the master of the Buckingham mills were shrouded in shadows. It was evident that the millionaire had been writing, the desk being covered with letters and manuscript. Over his eyes was a shield which he did not remove during the interview that followed. A



grinning skull served for a paper weight and gleamed chalky white in the full radiance of the lamp.

Faint as was the light, it revealed the sturdy and muscular figure of a man in the full prime of life. There was no sign of gray in the black hair or in the closely trimmed beard which covered a massive chin. Deane could not see the eyes but felt their searching gaze. The fingers were long and sinewy, and he had a habit of running them through his hair in moments of anger or excitement.

Before a word had been spoken Deane knew that his mission was foredoomed to failure. The personality of the factory owner seemed to radiate implacable stubbornness. His attitude was a challenge and even his silence a threat. The young lawyer threw himself on guard, and returned the steady scrutiny of his antagonist.

"I am in receipt of a communication from the men who were formerly in my employ," Buckingham began, carefully measuring each word, "in which it is stated that you are authorized to represent them. In what capacity do you represent them?"

He leaned back in his chair and toyed with a steel paper-cutter.

"In a legal capacity," answered Deane, determined to keep his temper. "I am authorized to receive from you any proposition you may have to offer, but not to make terms without first submitting the clauses to them."

"Your responsibilities are not great," remarked Buckingham, with a hardly disguised sneer. "So that there may be no chance for a misunderstanding I will acquaint you with my terms: Those of my employés who return within forty-eight hours will be given work at the reduced scale of wages; those who fail to do so will never again be allowed within the walls of the Buckingham mills. Kindly convey this information to them in words as plain as these?"

"If this is your reason for asking an interview you might better have spared my time and your own," said Deane coldly.

"I had another reason in which you will be more keenly interested," continued the millionaire, looking closely at the young lawyer. "I am informed that you belong to the English family of Deanes."

"That is a matter of common knowledge," returned Deane.

"You mean that it is a matter of common report, do you not?" deliberately asked Amos Buckingham.

The young lawyer would have been more than human had he preserved his poise when this unexpected question was put to him. The inference of the words was plain enough, but the sneer with which they were delivered gave the weight of a blow. Was it possible that this man knew the story of his past? He had thought that only the old lawyer who drafted the papers giving him his name and legal rights possessed this secret.

"I do not understand you, sir," he hesitated, like a fighter sparring for a chance to recover his breath.

"You understand me only too well," bluntly responded Amos Buckingham. "You are no more the son of the late Rear-Admiral Deane, or the nephew of Sir Whitaker Deane, than you are my son. I know something of your history, young man, and right well you know now that I do. You were a foundling adopted by Admiral Deane. If it will relieve you to know, I will inform you that I am probably the only person in this country outside of yourself who is acquainted with the truth of this matter. You certainly have not advertised it."

"I shall leave that for you to do," replied Deane, hotly. His mind had worked with wonderful rapidity during the few moments while Buckingham had been making this startling disclosure. Instead of dismay he felt a certain sense of relief that the whole burden of this secret had fallen from him, but he was also shrewd enough to realize that the man before him had some end to serve in making the declaration. His next words proved the truth of this intuitive surmise.

"I do not propose to interfere in your personal affairs," Buckingham said in a less aggressive tone, "provided you do not interfere in mine."

"I think I understand you. You would have me withdraw my support from the men in your shops who have struck against an unwarranted reduction in wages?"

"I would advise you to attend strictly to your own affairs," he said sharply.

"If I persist in trying to help the men to get their rights, I presume you will——"

"I am making no threats, and I shall not discuss any future plan of action with you," interrupted Buckingham.

"Let me say to you," calmly responded Deane, "that in whatever I may do I shall not be swerved by a fear of any disclosures you may make concerning my past. I came rightfully by the name of Stanley Deane, and I am the lawful and unquestioned heir to the estates once owned by Rear-Admiral Deane and his brother, Sir Whitaker Deane. I have never laid claim to exalted birth. At the first opportunity I renounced the titles and honors which were within my reach, and I came to this country, one which boasts that the worth of its citizenship is not based on birth or wealth."

"That is all very fine," sneered the millionaire, "but what would that gallant officer, Admiral Stanley Deane, think if he knew that the one who bears his name can find a cause no more worthy than the leadership of a pack of ignorant and law-defying workmen?"

"He would think it a higher ambition than to grind a fortune out of their underpaid labor," responded Deane with warmth. "I am fully capable of acting in a manner that will honor the memory of that splendid gentleman, and I will ask you, Mr. Buckingham, to leave his name and all connected with it out of this in-

interview. He cannot defend me; I need not defend him."

Buckingham tapped savagely on his desk with the steel paper cutter, and for an interval looked steadily at the young man who dared defy him despite the secret which he held.

"If your father—whoever he was—bequeathed to you the average of common sense, you will think twice before you commit yourself to a plan of action," he said, raising his voice and leaning forward in his chair. "I own the Buckingham mills. That property is mine to do with as I please; tell your ragged clients that! Tell them that I can sell it, merge it into a trust, close it down, dismantle the buildings, give them away or let them crumble into ruins. Tell them that the law gives me that discretion. I can employ one man or a thousand, and offer one dollar a day in wages or ten."

"I presume you concede the same rights to all other employers of labor?"

"I do."

"It follows that if the employers choose to act in concert they can suspend the industry of the nation?"

"They can."

"In other words," continued Deane, "the worker lives only by the consent of those who have the power to grant him employment, and he must accept with humility that which is offered him?"

"Exactly so, and the sooner that idea is pounded into their heads the better it will be for all concerned,"



responded Amos Buckingham. "I don't hire men because I'm interested in their welfare; I hire them to make money on their labor. I pay them as little as I have to, and they work for me because they can do no better elsewhere. That's the beginning and the end of the so-called problem of capital and labor. Wages are fixed by the same law which determines the price of a bale of cotton."

"Except that bales of cotton don't think or strike or vote."

"Or threaten, plot or fight," added the factory lord in a burst of temper.

"If all employers were of your type the men would be forced to fight or die," retorted Deane. "But I am not in a mood to continue this hopeless wrangle. You have declared war against the men who have served you faithfully, and I shall do all I can to help them whip you. Call your servant and have him show me out."

"One word before you go," said the master of the mills, touching a bell. "I shall hold you primarily responsible for the acts of the men who have accepted your leadership. Men of your stripe are a menace to our vested interests. Keep on appealing to the prejudices and passions of these cattle, agitate your reform crusades and topple over society, for all I care, but if your tools and dupes damage one bit of my property or menace me or mine, I will hold you personally responsible! Do you understand me, sir?"

"It would be hard to misunderstand you," replied Deane. At this moment a servant appeared.

"Show the gentleman to his carriage," said Mr. Buckingham, and without further word the two parted.

As Deane walked down the long hall he felt that the eyes of the millionaire were on him. He heard the rustle of a woman's gown as he neared the main stairway, and then came face to face with Alice.

His cheeks were flushed with anger, and his heart was bitter against the father of the woman he loved. Yet not until that moment did the thought strike him that Amos Buckingham could and doubtless would impart his secret to Alice. Perhaps he had already done so? Stanley had longed for the time when he could tell her with his own lips, but he was being swept along by currents against which he was powerless.

It seemed an age since he had walked with her in the garden, and he instinctively raised his hand to his coat to see if the rose she had given him was still there. His fingers touched it, but the rose had wilted and taken on a deeper red.

"Good evening, Mr. Deane," she said, a peculiar smile on her lips.

"I have been making an official call," he said, with a bitter smile. "My first and my last. I presume you know why?"

"I think I do, but really, it does not concern me," she said coldly, her eyes looking down the hall.

Deane stepped back as if struck an unseen blow. It

was certain that the mystery of his past had been revealed to her. It was likely that Amos Buckingham had seen them walking in the garden, that he had branded him as a foundling, and pictured him in a worse light than the truth warranted. One dream was over.

"Good night, Miss Buckingham," he said, hardly lifting his eyes.

"Good night," she replied, in a voice so low that he scarcely heard it.

When the doors closed behind Deane, Amos Buckingham strode down the hall and confronted his daughter. He had removed the shade from his eyes, and looked sternly at her without speaking. Instead of shrinking beneath that cold stare her timidity vanished, and she drew herself up proudly.

"What is it, papa?"

"Do you know that man?" he demanded, running his long fingers through his hair.

"I would not stand here and talk with him if I did not know him."

"Where did you first meet him?"

"At Cragmere, the country estate of Sir Whitaker Deane, his uncle," Alice said, the toe of a dainty shoe tapping the rug nervously.

"His uncle!" sneered the millionaire, but the expression on his lips was lost on her.

"That was five years ago," she said, with rising temper, "and twice when I tried to tell you how we were

entertained there, you did not have the patience or the interest to listen to me."

"I did not know then what I do now," sternly said her father. "Do you know that he—that he——"

"Yes, I know that he is opposing you," she interrupted, "and I told him a moment ago that it does not concern me in the least."

"He is an agitator and a socialist," replied Buckingham hotly.

"And a gentleman," she added, her dark eyes flashing.

"Since when did you become his apologist?" he demanded. "Alice, I have never interfered with your pleasures, and have relied on your own good judgment, but I must insist that you strike this fellow from your list of acquaintances. I have reasons which I shall not tell you at the present time, but if you knew them you would thank me for this advice."

"I shall not permit you to name my friends or acquaintances!" she cried.

"You—you should not talk to your father like that," he said in a softer tone.

For a moment father and daughter stood face to face, but he read no sign of surrender in her pale and beautiful features. He hesitated a moment, attempted to speak, and then turned and walked with bowed head to his library.

Her lips quivered; she took a step towards him, then drew back and watched until he had disappeared in the

library. With a sob on her lips she ran up the stairs, entered her room and threw herself on her couch.

An hour passed, and another visitor was admitted through the Buckingham gates. This was Mr. Jacoby. He had been retained by Superintendent Hunter of the Buckingham mills to keep watch of the leaders of the union, and his work had been so satisfactory that it had attracted Buckingham's notice.

Mr. Jacoby had passed his forty-fifth year. The baldness of his scalp was offset by a mustache so black that it hinted at dyes, and no razor could entirely remove a beard which punctured his chin and cheeks like the points of a million minute and blue-black bayonets. His hands were hairy, his fingers constantly in motion. His eyes were smiling in a repellent way, and his lips wore a smirk which heightened this aspect of jovial cunning.

Jacoby took the seat occupied earlier in the evening by Deane, and waited patiently until his employer looked up from his desk. That gentleman suddenly dropped his pen and wheeled in his chair.

"Do you know anything about a man named Stanley Deane?" he demanded.

"He's a lawyer and a swell labor agitator," softly replied Jacoby.

"Do you know anything against him?"

"He's been mixed up in most of the big strikes, and the men do just what he tells them. He——"

"You know no more about him than I do, and not as much," declared the millionaire impatiently. "Why



don't you admit it. Listen to me, Jacoby. This man Deane is not what you think he is. He passes for an aristocrat, but I happen to know that he is of low birth. He has a large fortune which fell to him by the accident of luck, but his instincts are those which come to him from a depraved ancestry. Perhaps you can understand how it comes that a man thus placed should declare war against the established order of things. I consider him the most dangerous man in this country. He has money, education, shrewdness, address, some talent, but at heart he is a social rebel. I wish you to watch him closely."

"I'll do so, sir," asserted Jacoby.

"That's all I have to say to you."

"One word, Mr. Buckingham, if you please," ventured the detective, lowering his voice and looking about the room to make sure he would not be overheard. Some of your men are very bitter against you. There are anarchists among them. There's Fischer, for instance. He is——"

"Who is Fischer? I've heard of him."

"You—your automobile ran over his boy," explained Jacoby.

Buckingham frowned but said nothing.

"He is very sore against you, and it will be well to keep an eye on him," advised Jacoby. "The police clubbed him the night the strikers had a meeting, and his wife died the next day. If——"

"Do not bother me with matters which don't directly

concern me," broke in Buckingham. "You look after Deane. If violence is committed he will be found back of it."

"Very well, sir," and Mr. Jacoby backed smilingly out of the room.

## CHAPTER X

### CAPTAIN STARK DROPS INTO THE WELL

So rarely did a carriage stop in front of the establishment conducted by William Parker that the loungers beneath its awning were surprised when a well-appointed four-wheeler swung out from the procession of trucks and came to a halt at the edge of its curb. On the driver's seat was a huge iron-bound box, a leather trunk and an old-fashioned valise, and back of it were a number of packages which seemed in imminent danger of falling. The lone passenger occupied the space not filled by a formidable portmanteau and several satchels.

He thrust a bushy head out of the window and looked about with a searching but doubtful gaze.

"Do you reckon this here is the place, mister?" he asked, looking up at the driver.

"Surest thing ye know, boss," was the confident reply.

"It's better to be sartain than sure; as old King Solomon onct said," declared the passenger, opening the carriage door after several abortive efforts and struggling stiffly to the sidewalk. "We are carryin' too much freight to unload at the wrong port."

He looked the building over from door sills to roof

line, and seemed even more doubtful at the end of his scrutiny.

"See here, mates," he said, advancing to the group of men who smoked black pipes as they looked stolidly on, "dew you know if a chap named Long Bill runs this here place?"

"Never heard of no such man," growled one of them.

"What did I tell ye!" exclaimed the traveller, with more of disappointment than of indignation in his voice. "This sartainly is an ornary town tew find anybody in."

"This card says nothin' about any Long Bill," declared the driver, consulting a piece of paper. "It says 'Mr. William Parker,' plain as the nose on yer mug, an' dis is de place an' don't forgit I told ye so. Dis is de street, and there's de number over de door."

In startling corroboration of the accuracy of this statement the folding doors parted and Mr. William Parker appeared. His solemn face lighted with a smile when he saw the newcomer.

"Captain Jake, I'm glad to see you!" he exclaimed, extending his huge hand. "I thought I recognized your voice."

"The sight of you is good for sore eyes, Bill!" declared Captain Jake Stark, warmly greeting his former first mate. Then he looked suspiciously about and motioned Parker to one side.

"I meant to have written you erbout one thing, Bill," he whispered. "It won't dew for me to be Jake Stark here in New York; will it, Bill?"

"Why not?" smiled Long Bill.

"You'd orter know as well as anybody," protested the once owner of the Frolic.

"New York knows nothing about that, and never will unless you tell them," said the tall man. "This is a mighty funny place, captain, as you will find out. They don't remember anything more'n a week."

"Names is cheap," argued the other, "and it seemed tew me that it was just as well ter be on the safe side; as King Soloman onct said. Of course I'd like to hang onter the old name of Jake Stark, but it is the kind of er name that sticks out like a sore thumb in a fog, an' I was thinkin' as how perhaps some more stylish name might throw 'em off the course. I was thinkin'," and he dropped his voice so low that Long Bill had difficulty in hearing him, "I was thinkin' that 'Captain Montgomery' might be safer and softer than plain 'Jake Stark.' For a full name I had thought out 'Captain J. Percival Montgomery.' How do you like that, Bill?" and the old smuggler waited eagerly for the verdict.

"You'll be Captain Jake to me, and Captain Stark to the rest of them," was the decided answer, as a look of surprised disgust overspread his face. "'J. Percival Montgomery'! 'Captain J. Percival Montgomery!'" he repeated in fine scorn. "Captain Jake, I'm ashamed of you!"

"I read it in a book, onct," the abashed mariner explained, removing his broad-brimmed hat and wiping his brow with a silk handkerchief, "and it sounded



kinder New Yorkish tew me, so I thought I'd dress to fit the name, but if you kick I'll give it up. 'Nough said, Bill; we'll stick tew Captain Jake. Where can I stow my duds until I find a regular bunk?"

"I have a room ready for you," said Long Bill. "If you like it you can stay here as long as you please on easy terms."

"Can I?" exclaimed the delighted captain, and a few minutes later his baggage was scattered about the room adjoining that used by Long Bill, and the captain surveyed the place with unalloyed satisfaction.

"Anchored at last!" he grinned, after having settled with his driver for an amount which, as he protested, "stood for the profits on a sheep and a half." Ten eventful years had passed since he and Long Bill had met, and they talked of many things while he unpacked his belongings.

"How dew ye like these new clothes, Bill?" he had asked, holding himself erect. "I reckoned they'd fit well with some such name as J. Percival Montgomery. They cost a heap of money, but I've cleaned up a lot in the last five years. What dew ye think of 'em, Long Bill?"

"They'd do all right for J. Percival, but not for you, Captain Jake," declared that person. "Take them off and put on a white man's clothes."

A pained look came to Jake Stark's face as he surveyed his reflection in a mirror. A high collar showed white against his tanned neck. A neatly tied red scarf

was displayed against a mauve-colored shirt. Striped trousers, a white waistcoat with flowered pattern, a coat with an aggressive check, tanned shoes and silk stockings combined with a broad-brimmed white hat to produce a picturesque effect. The backs of both hands were elaborately tattooed, and Long Bill looked curiously at the right one.

The head of a snake ran down from the wrist, its opened mouth being formed by the juncture of the fore and second finger. The eye consisted of a diamond imbedded in the joint of the second finger.

This remarkable piece of tattooing had been executed when Stark was a young man. The diamond was fastened to a small gold pin, and the operator had screwed this pin into the bone of the second finger joint! For months the skin refused to heal around the diamond, and for a time blood poisoning was threatened, but nature finally reconciled itself to this irritant, and formed a wrinkled parchment which exactly counterfeited the eye of a serpent.

It is impossible to imagine anything more sinister than the glitter of this eye as Stark made the snake open its mouth and dart out its fangs. Once he was very proud of this work of art, but that time long since had passed. Once he would strip to the waist and reveal "Rattletail"—as he called the tattooed monster—coiled about his arm, around his neck, across his chest and back with the tip of the rattlers terminating at his navel.

“ ‘ Rattletail ’ doesn’t look well with white cuffs,” quietly observed Long Bill.

“ I reckon that’s right,” admitted the captain. “ I’d give a good deal if ‘ Rattletail ’ would crawl off of me.”

He held up his hand and manipulated his fingers so that the jaws of the snake snapped viciously, his eye glittering with uncanny wickedness.

“ Ugly this morning, ain’t ye ? ” he growled. “ Cost me lots of money and trouble, didn’t ye ? But we’ll stick together, Rattletail ; we’ll stick together as long as we live, won’t we ? ”

He lowered his arm, took another glance in the mirror and then turned to Long Bill.

“ So you don’t like these togs ? ” he asked.

“ They won’t do. It’s a sure thing that nature never intended you for a dude. Put on the old clothes and feel comfortable and respectable.”

“ Reckon I’d better, Bill,” he admitted, and only those who saw him arrive ever had a glimpse of those wonderful clothes.

His luggage contained the relics and débris of a generation of adventurous life. He was as delighted as a child as he unpacked box after box and fondled treasures he had not seen for years. Once in a while he would open a package and present the contents to Long Bill. He gave him pipes and boxes of rare old tobacco, a superb marine glass such as Long Bill had expressed a wish for in former years, and finally a pocket book,

which when opened was found to contain five bills of one hundred dollars each.

"You left something in here, Captain Jake," he said, handing him the bright new certificates.

"Left them for you, Bill," grinned the captain.

"I don't want them," declared the proprietor of The Well.

"Take 'em, Bill, I owe you that much and a lot more," insisted Jake Stark, pushing him away. "I cleaned up more'n a hundred thousand down in the Argentine, an' I've got land and mines that's worth twice as much more right now, an' the Lord only knows how much they's be worth in a few years. I tell you, Bill, I lost a heap of money by not starting in to be a business man instead of—instead of what we uster dew. There's no graft like honesty."

He left one long and irregular package until the others had been opened. He undid it carefully and took out a wonderful collection of curios which would have graced a museum. There were bows and arrows from all the native tribes of South America; a collection of rare shells and pebbles tossed up on tropical shores; quaint idols and relics from Indian temples, also scores of toys and trinkets from many parts of the world, and finally a beautiful model of a warship, perfect in detail and glistening in silver and nickel work.

Jake Stark arrayed all these on a large table and looked at them in silence for several minutes.

"Do you know who those are for, Long Bill?" he

asked. It is likely that person had a shrewd suspicion, but he shook his head.

"They're for Mascot—when I find him," he said simply. "Whenever I've seen anything I thought Mascot would like I've bought it; that is, of course, if I happened to have the money at the time. He always was fond of bows an' arrers, and here's some that any boy'd be tickled ter death tew own. I had this model made not long ago. It's a dandy, eh, Bill? I'd like tew give it tew him an' see how he'd look an' what he'd say. You know how fond he was of boats, Bill?"

Long Bill swallowed the words which trembled on his lips. Why should he dispel the illusion that Mascot was yet a boy? What good would it do? The years had flown, but the father's mind retained undimmed the picture of the lad in the uniform of the captain of an American man-of-war. Possibly the thought which came to him was conveyed to Jake Stark.

"Of course Mascot's older an' bigger now," he said, after Long Bill had made some non-committal remark, "but he'd appreciate these things just the same; don't you think so, Bill?"

"I'm sure he would," said his companion.

"Do you know," he exclaimed eagerly, "I'll find Mascot as sure as we're standin' here this minute! You remember Gulliver, don't ye—Gulliver who was our cook when the Frolic was took?"

"The dark chap with the scar on his lip?"

"That's the one," declared Jake Stark. "Let me



tell ye somethin'! I seen this cook in New Orleans not more'n a week ago, an' he told me somethin' that came mighty near makin' me start for London instead of New York. Gulliver was in jail in Kingston for three years, an' when they let him out he shipped for England and went to a town near London where he was born. One day he saw Mascot out ridin' in a carriage with an old gentleman! What dew ye think of that? He is plumb sure it was Mascot! Gulliver was with us three years an' he shorely orter know Mascot. You know I allers said Mascot was in England, an' as soon as I get rested up I'm going over there an' find him."

Long Bill did not attempt to dissuade him from this purpose, preferring to await the logic of events. The captain talked earnestly about his lost boy for an hour, after which they had luncheon followed by a walk along the water front. When they returned the captain "allowed he'd turn in an' take a nap," and it was dark when he awoke.

He entered the café and discovered Long Bill at a table listening to a young man who was talking excitedly. Captain Stark did not stand on ceremony and promptly intruded on this conference.

"I'm mighty hungry, Bill," he declared. "When does the supper bell ring?"

"Any time you wish to hear it, captain," he replied, and then turned to Wallace Dare who was glaring at the old sailor. Mr. Dare, this is Captain Jake Stark that I sailed under for ten years."

"Delighted to meet you, captain!" exclaimed the young artist, rising and extending his hand. "So Mr. Parker served under you, did he?"

"The best first mate I ever had," he said, placing one hand on Dare's shoulder and the other on Long Bill's. Dare looked into his rugged face, saw the twinkle in his blue eyes and caught the contagion of his laugh and liked Captain Jake from that moment.

"Captain, you are the real thing, and I'm glad to know you," he cried. "Didn't I hear you say something about being hungry?"

"Had nothin' since noon. Looks ter me as if Bill was tryin' ter starve me out."

"Not while I'm around," laughed Dare. "Dine with me, Captain Stark. Parker has had his dinner and will be busy for a while. I want to talk to you."

"Glad tew dew it," he heartily responded, and for an hour or more this strangely assorted pair talked and laughed and dined as if they had known each other for years.

Dare plied him with questions and induced him to tell tales of the sea. With a drawing pad half concealed the artist executed clever sketches of his guest and won his surprised and boisterous approval. Not until Fischer touched him on the arm and told him that his presence was wanted in The Well was Dare aware that it was past ten o'clock. He presented Fischer to Captain Stark, explained that he had been Parker's captain for years,

and insisted that he should be given the privileges of The Well during his stay in New York.

For an instant Fischer had a suspicion that this new friend of Dare's was a detective, but when he felt the grip of the calloused hands and studied the weather-beaten face he dismissed that thought.

"Any friend of Mr. Parker's is welcome to The Well," he said, and led the way through the narrow hall.

It was a lively night in the grim retreat, and though the hour was comparatively early most of the active members were present. Saxon had "lowered the old oaken bucket," and was engaged in a heated discussion with Pierre Daubeney, "Braidwood Pete" Magoon and others, who applauded agreeable sentiments with the bottom of their steins. In the far end of the room the musically inclined were massed about Steinbach and his zither. Dare introduced the captain to all present, explained the objects of the club, told its history and proudly displayed its relics.

By this time the discussion had waxed so furious as to discourage the musicians. Steinbach put his zither away and his followers joined with those who clustered around the centre-table above which hung the ever-popular bucket. Dare found a seat for Captain Stark, whose amazement at his environment was so complete as to render him speechless.

The strike at the Buckingham mills was the subject, and there was no lack of orators. Unable to take an oral

part in the debate, "Dummy" Malakoff fed its fires by keeping the steins replenished. Saxon was talking when Dare and Captain Stark joined the group, and since Saxon had "lowered the bucket" no one had a better right to attention.

It was at about this time that Deane entered the outer public room and asked for the proprietor. Long Bill was in The Well but he came out at once.

"He's here!" he whispered to Deane.

"My father?"

"Captain Jake got here this morning, and he's inside there now," said Long Bill, and hurriedly told of their conversation and what little he had learned. Deane listened silently, his face grave and pale.

"Until I have learned certain things I do not wish to make myself known," he finally said. "Are there many inside there to-night?"

"There's a big crowd, and Saxon is making one of his long-winded talks. Captain Jake won't know you."

"If I thought I could see him without speaking to him I'd go in a few minutes. I must see him, Long Bill!"

"Come on!" ordered the sailor, and with a beating heart the former sea waif followed him.

The first figure his eyes fell on was that of Jake Stark. Save that gray had crept into hair and beard, the face was the same which had smiled on him one morning fourteen years before when they parted on the deck of the *Alexander*. The picture was so vivid that he looked

to see if the hands were still manacled. The impulse to throw himself into the old man's arms was almost irresistible, but something held him back.

Captain Stark was gazing intently at Saxon, his lips parted and his shaggy head shrunk between his massive shoulders. Saxon was pouring out a flood of invective against the working classes, and indicting them for stupidity and cowardice.

"Hello, Deane!" shouted Dare, springing to his feet and interrupting Saxon. "Welcome to The Well again! You met all of us when you were here before, didn't you?" sweeping the group with his keen eyes until they rested on Jake Stark.

Deane attempted to retreat, but Dare held him fast.

"Here's one you haven't met!" he exclaimed. "Stand up, Captain Stark, and let me make you acquainted with Mr. Stanley Deane, one of the best fellows in the world. Stanley, this is the old sea dog that Bill was first mate under. Captain, give him a grip with the hand that has the snake with the diamond eye!"

This cordial introduction greatly pleased the captain. He looked Deane full in the face, smiled and extended the hand on the back of which glittered the hideous eye of "Rattletail."

"How dew ye dew, Mr. Deane—did ye say Deane, young man?" he hesitated, turning to Dare.

"Deane—Stanley Deane," repeated Dare.

"Glad to know ye, Mr. Deane," he said, with a hearty



clasp. "I've known a lot of Deanes in my time, an' all of 'em but one was first rate men. What my young friend says about my bein' captain tew Long Bill here—I never called him Parker in my life, an' I reckon I never will—but I was yer captain onct, wasn't I, Bill?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" saluted Long Bill.

"But he's my captain here in New York," roared Jake Stark with a laugh which was good to hear. "If I tried ter navigate these here waters without Long Bill I'd go on the reefs in no time at all. And that's right, Mr. Deane!"

"I have no doubt of it," hesitated Deane, in a voice which seemed faint and far away.

"You look pale, Stanley," said Dare. "You are working too hard."

"I'm all right," he declared. "Don't let me interrupt your discussion."

The debate broke out afresh, but Deane was deaf to it except when directly addressed. His eyes were fixed on Jake Stark, and his thoughts drifted back through the years. His father did not recognize him, and after the introduction paid no attention to him. The old smuggler was fascinated by the eloquence of Saxon and applauded him frequently.

## CHAPTER XI

### A STRANGE MEETING

"HERE'S to the men of the Buckingham mills!" exclaimed Dare, raising his glass. "Here's to their winning this strike!"

The labor union men present drank the toast with a cheer, but Saxon did not join them.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Dare, clanking his stein against Saxon's. "Why are you so sore against unions?"

"Because they are cowards," declared Saxon, with his exasperating drawl. "They strike with their mouths, with their stomachs. Strikers? Bah! They are not strikers—they are the stricken."

There was something particularly annoying in the emphasis Saxon put on the word "strikers," and in the laugh with which he repeated it.

"They do not strike, they balk like an overloaded mule," continued Saxon. "The dictionary says that 'balk' means 'to stop short and refuse to proceed.' Those who prefer to observe the niceties of the English language should use this word to describe the occasional fits of stubbornness on the part of these meek slaves."

"What would you have them do?" angrily demanded Magoon.

"Keep on working; that's all they're good for," scornfully replied Saxon. "The lamb was made to be eaten, and slaves were born to work. I would that one of our clean-limbed freebooting ancestors could watch a procession of horny-handed and humped-back 'Knights of Labor' coming from a mill! How he would laugh! It amuses me to watch these shuffling regiments of incapables clad in copper-riveted overalls as they dodge the wheels of automobiles thundering on with their masters. They are slaves and cowards!"

When Saxon uttered this sneer, Fischer leaned forward and muttered something in German. The veins of his neck were distended, and little Malakoff noticed that one of them throbbed angrily. His blazing eyes were fixed on the speaker, but they did not see him. Through the blue haze of tobacco smoke he saw outlined the face of his dead boy, crushed and livid from the imprint of the machine driven by Buckingham, and, near that figure, his wife as she lay in her coffin. He tried to speak but his hatred choked him.

"They are not cowards!" cried Dare, shaking his fist at the pessimist. "Give them a chance and you will see that——"

"We did some fighting in Pittsburgh in 1877!" shouted Magoon. "I got a bullet in the leg, but we chased a dude militia regiment across the State of Pennsylvania, and if it hadn't been for——"

"That was before the day of unions," interrupted Saxon. "A union is the greatest promoter of cowardly peace the world has ever known. My friend Deane knows that, but he will not admit it."

"You gave two hundred dollars to the Buckingham strike committee this morning," quietly observed Deane. "Why did you do that, Saxon?"

"And he paid the fines of the pickets in the cigar-makers' strike a few weeks ago," declared Dare.

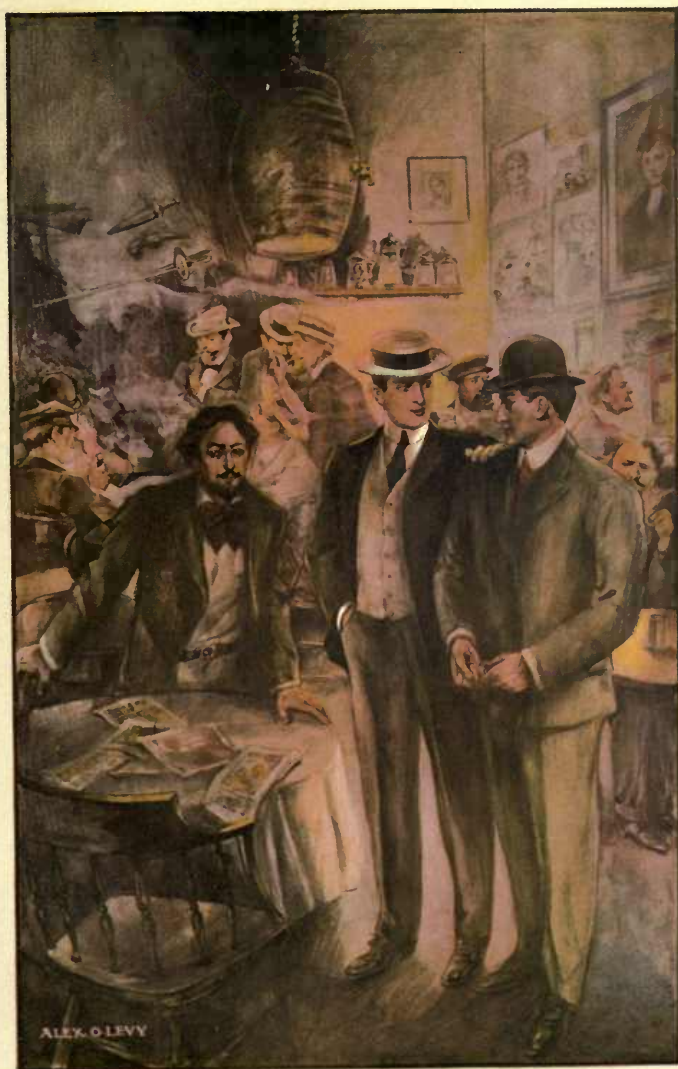
"I have a right to throw away my money, and I did in both cases," answered Saxon, the red mounting to his temples. "Captain Stark," he said, turning suddenly to the old sailor, "to listen to our young friend Deane, one would think him a day worker. As a matter of fact he's an aristocrat. You can tell it by looking at him."

"I don't know what he does," Captain Stark said slowly, after looking closely at Deane, "but between us, Mister Saxon, I reckon he could put up a right lively scrap if he had tew. Don't you, now?"

Saxon's reply was lost in the strains of Steinbach's zither, and the discussion came to a sudden and musical end. Deane held a brief conversation with Dare and Fischer in which he told them of his interview with Buckingham. "It means a fight to a finish," he said in conclusion.

"This is the time one cur and coward will fight to the death!" exclaimed Fischer, his features pale with passion.

A dark-complexioned stranger edged closer to the



“Let me help you out. How much do you need?”





trio. Deane had no doubt he was a member or a guest, but there was something in the covert glance of his eyes and the perpetual smile on his lips which jangled a discordant note. The unknown turned and seemed absorbed in the music, and an instant later Deane had dismissed him from his thoughts. It was not his right to challenge those who met in the bottom of The Well.

"Here's another cur who will fight to the death!" Dare had exclaimed.

"Do nothing foolish," cautioned Deane, ignoring Dare but looking keenly at Fischer. "Pay no attention to that balderdash of Saxon's. I happen to know that Buckingham is in a fight with the trust, and if the men have patience and exercise self-restraint they will find this small tyrant in a different frame of mind before many weeks. Do you need money, Fischer?"

"Money? Why—I—I——"

"Speak right out, man," insisted Deane, placing his hand on the other's shoulder. "Everything has piled on top of you. Let me help you out. How much do you need?"

There was something wholesome and unaffected in the voice and the touch of his hand, something which spanned the chasm between well-groomed affluence and common-place poverty. The stranger shifted his position so that he could watch the faces of these three men; watch them through eyes half closed as if under the spell of the zither.

The look of hatred faded from Fischer's features as

the meaning of this offer came to him. His voice faltered, a film was in his eyes and he stood silent and abashed before the man who would be his benefactor. And then the stranger witnessed a display of facial changes which puzzled him. Fischer's thin lips tightened and took on a stern expression, the eyes which had softened from hatred into gratitude blazed with passion for an instant, as if some recollection had flooded his being with a frenzy for revenge. This was succeeded by a look of alert and calculating cunning.

"Will you lend me two hundred and fifty dollars?" he asked suddenly, looking Deane full in the face. "I can give you fair security."

"Your word is sufficient," he replied, slightly puzzled at Fischer's manner. "I have not that amount with me, but I will make out a check and endorse it so that you will have no trouble in getting it cashed."

"I have no right to take it from you," he said, feverishly. "I have never borrowed money, and I——"

"Don't say a word," insisted Deane. He went to a table in the rear of the room and filled out the check.

"By God, Fischer!" exclaimed Dare, his eyes dancing with admiration for his friend. "There's a man for you. I'd rather be able to do a favor like that than to be the reincarnation of Michael Angelo. He's a brick! He has given five thousand dollars to the strike fund. Do you know what he did for me not long ago when I was down and out? I wouldn't dare tell you."

During this encomium Fischer had been looking intently at the stranger.

"Who is that fellow?" he whispered to Dare, with a suspicious glance at the unknown guest. The artist took a careless look at the man indicated.

"I don't know him," he said. "Some friend of Magoon's, I believe."

"We must be more careful whom we let in here," Fischer declared. "I want you to wait until the rest are gone, Dare, I have something important to tell you. Will you do it?"

"Certainly, old man."

At that moment Deane approached and slipped something into Fischer's hand.

"There you are," he said in a low tone, "and you can take your time in paying it. Not a word! You would do as much for me if you had a chance."

The draftsman's fingers trembled as he took the check. He looked at it, then at Deane, and then into the peering eyes of the stranger over the latter's shoulder. For a moment he hesitated, and then thrust the check into his pocket.

"You may be sure that I will make good use of this," was all he said as he clasped Deane's hand.

Long Bill entered the room and Deane called him aside to an unoccupied corner of The Well.

"I wish you to do something for me, Long Bill," he said, "and if possible do it to-night when my father goes to his room. I wish you to ask him about my

mother. Find from him, if you can, who she was, if she be living or dead, also where the marriage records can be found—if there are any. Will you do that for me, Bill?”

“I suppose I’ll have to,” Long Bill said, after a pause. “Sailors don’t talk much about such things, as a rule, and I don’t know how Captain Jake will take it, but I’ll do the best I can. If I was on ship board with him I wouldn’t do it even for you. It’s ticklish work, but I’ll put it to him, my boy, and if he talks, all right, and if he don’t I can’t help it.”

“I’m sure you can manage it in some way,” said Deane earnestly, and then his gaze wandered to where Jake Stark was sitting and watching the musician.

The bearded lips of the former smuggler were parted, his blue eyes twinkled with delight, and his huge frame shook as he beat time with his tattooed fist to the strains of a Hungarian dance which thrilled from the strings at the magic of the zither master.

The joy of the old sea dog was pleasing to witness. He asked Steinbach if he had “ever heered of er song called ‘Nancy Lee’?” and when the musician smilingly executed the refrain, he could no longer restrain himself.

“I’ll sing ye er song, boys!” he announced, raising his massive form and extending his arm with a gesture of authority. “I’ll sing the words, an’ ye can all come in on this chorus,” and in a voice which made the glass



rattle in the skylight sixty feet above the clay floor he roared:

“The sailor’s wife the sailor’s star shall be;  
Yo ho, my lads; across the sea:  
The sailor’s wife the sailor’s star shall be;  
The sailor’s wife his star shall be!”

The sailor’s wife! From those bearded lips those words meant Deane’s mother!

A hundred times before he had heard Jake Stark sing that chorus. Back through the years he recalled a night when that voice awoke the echoes in a lagoon to which they had fled for safety. He could see the stars shining through the palm trees as Jake Stark sang:

“See there she stands and waves her hands  
Upon the quay; and every day when I’m away,  
She waits for me.”

While the members of The Well cheered and insisted that the captain sing the whole song, Deane’s mind drifted back to one awful night when the mast of the Frolic went by the board, and when every wave swept her rails. Two men had been washed from the deck, Long Bill was senseless with a broken arm and three caved ribs, yet above the howl of the hurricane Jake Stark had cheered the remnant of his crew by singing:

“A long, long life to my sweet wife and lads at sea;  
And keep yer bones from Davy Jones where’er you be;  
And may ye find as sweet a mate as Nancy Lee;  
Yo ho, lads, ho; yo ho.”

It was with these words ringing in his ears, and the glitter of "Old Rattletail's" diamond eye burned on his vision, that Deane followed Long Bill out of The Well and rushed into the street without a parting word with that elongated person, who re-entered the club-room in time to hear Captain Stark respond to a demand for an encore with "The Bay of Biscay, O." The presence of his former first mate had a subduing effect on the old man, and he refused to sing again. He motioned Long Bill to a seat beside him.

"How am I doin', Bill?" he asked anxiously. "Am I actin' all right?"

"Of course you are. It's no great trick to act all right in here."

"Tell me honest, Bill," he whispered, when Daubeney had attracted the attention of the group, "Tell me honest, dew ye suppose any of these here swell gents would suspect what you an' I useter dew down in the Caribbean?"

"Meaning smuggling?"

Captain Jake nodded and waited eagerly.

"Some of them wouldn't believe it if you told them, and the others wouldn't care," he responded. "More things are smuggled into New York in a week than you ever handled in your life, Captain Jake. Smuggling is as respectable here as perjury, evading taxes or high finance."

"No-o-o?" said Jake Stark doubtfully.

"Fact."

"Wasted our time down there, didn't we?"

"That's what we did," replied Long Bill.

"Honesty is the best graft if you know how tew work it—as old King Soloman onet said—though that wasn't exactly the way he put it," reflected Jake Stark. "Tell me, Bill, who'se the richest chap here to-night? This here Mr. Saxon, I reckon?"

Long Bill hesitated.

"Mr. Deane is worth more than Saxon or any member of the club," Long Bill said. "He left here a few minutes ago. Do you remember meeting him?"

"The good-looking fellow with the swell clothes?" he asked. Long Bill nodded. "How much money has he got?" the captain asked.

"Several millions."

"Ye don't say so!" exclaimed the old smuggler with lively interest. "Wouldn't think it, now, would ye? Acts natural and modest like same as most folks, only more quiet. Did ye notice his eyes, Bill?"

"What about them?"

"Kinder reminded me of Mascot's, only Mascot would look ye in the face all day an' never blink," mused Jake Stark. "Speakin' of Mascot——"

"It's time you went to bed, Captain Jake," interrupted Long Bill. "They're all going now, and there are other nights coming." The captain admitted that he was tired. He shook hands with everybody and was conducted to his room. When Long Bill returned to The Well only Fischer and Dare remained.

"Dare and I have some club matters to look after," Fischer said. "We may stay here an hour or so. I'll lock up when we go."

Fischer waited until he heard Long Bill's heavy tread on the stairs leading to the floor above. Having satisfied himself that the place was deserted, he bolted the door and turned to Dare. All the lights had been extinguished save a shaded jet which cast a small circle of yellow on a writing table. The sky-light was invisible, the grim walls fading into nothingness like the sides of a well of unknown depth. Not a sound penetrated this tomb, and the silence was that of a chamber of an abandoned mine.

For some moments no word was spoken, Dare waiting for his companion to break the spell. He was so keenly sympathetic that he knew Fischer was controlled by some great emotion. He felt the beating of his heart and shuddered at the twitching of a nerve. Fischer arose and paced nervously back and forth.

"Do you know why I accepted that check from Mr. Deane?" he asked abruptly.

Dare looked inquiringly at him but said nothing. There was an expression on Fischer's face such as he had never seen before.

"Because it gives me a chance to do the only thing I care to do," he said, in a voice hardly above a whisper.

"What is that?"

"To kill Amos Buckingham!"

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CONSPIRATORS

FISCHER was a force anarchist. Of his early history little is known except that he was the son of wealthy parents who gave to him the advantages of education and training. Some claimed that he came to the United States because of the wrecking of the family fortunes, others asserted that he was disinherited because of his revolutionary doctrines. There were whispered rumors—probably without foundation—that Fischer had been implicated in the assassination of a king or a czar.

It was at a secret conference of "force anarchists" held in Geneva, Switzerland, that Dare met Fischer. The former was the son of a millionaire, the latter had made the trip from America as a steerage passenger and existed in actual want, willing to make any sacrifices for the sake of taking part in the deliberations and conspiracies then under way.

The then affluent Dare learned of this, and warmly proffered aid and friendship to his compatriot. For a time the half-starved Fischer proudly refused to accept either, but the whole-souled frankness of the wealthy young radical won him over, and it was thus that this strange and tragic friendship began.



It will not do to charge Dare's errors to that popular criminal, "a false system of society." Instead of taking advantage of marked natural gifts he sulked and idled when his father failed, and when fate withheld from him that which he had not earned.

Only for an instant was he dazed by Fischer's declaration. On the day before the two men had stood over the open grave into which the wife was lowered to her last resting-place, and late that night they had talked in the gloom of the desolated home. There was no need to renew the oath taken over the dead body of his son. It had a fresh meaning, a new and awful significance to them, and long before Fischer spoke, his companion read the thought which tormented his brain.

The picture of Fischer's wrongs was vivid to his mental vision. His sympathy kindled to a flame, his resentment to a rage; he weighed nothing, measured nothing and cared for nothing except that a friend called on him for revenge. He leaped to his feet.

"I'm with you!" he cried. "Death to Buckingham! To hell with that murderer of wives and children!"

The two men looked into each other's eyes—eyes which gleamed with frenzy in the half-darkness of this huge and gloomy cavern of a room. It was so deathly still that they could hear the beating of their hearts after Dare's wild declaration had echoed back from the skylight dim in the black pall over their heads.

"I knew you would help me," Fischer said. "Speak softly, I have much to say to you. In the first place

I do not wish you to take any risks in this matter. This is my affair, but you can help me in a way which will mean everything to me."

"Tell me how," eagerly said Dare. "There's nothing you can ask that I'll not gladly try to do."

"Listen to me," he began. "The money which Deane gave me to-night is for Annieta. I have a few dollars besides, but this makes it possible for me to go ahead with the knowledge that she will not be penniless if the worst happens to me. If I get killed I want you to promise that you will see that Annieta is taken care of. Will you do that, Wallace?"

"Gladly, and to the best of my ability," responded Dare. "But we are going about this in the wrong way. You know how I am. It is impossible for me to take care of myself—what kind of guardian would I be for Annieta? I shall never curse any woman by asking her to be my wife. Don't interrupt me. Let me kill Buckingham! I can do that, and it's all I'm good for. It makes no difference what happens to me. You are a natural leader of men. You have a daughter, and it's your duty to live for her. I have nothing to live for. What do I amount to? Nothing! I can't paint; I'm lazy, a drunkard and a social misfit. Let me do this; it will be the one thing worth while I've ever done."

Fischer would not listen to this. He claimed that it was his "right" to put out of the world the man who had robbed him of wife and son. There was much wild talk of this kind.

"Don't you think there's a way in which we can get rid of Buckingham without danger to either of us," Dare suddenly suggested. "You are worth a hundred of him, and it's not a fair exchange. If you shoot him or throw a bomb at him you're almost sure to be caught."

"There is a way," said Fischer, in a whisper. "There is a fairly safe way to kill him, and you could help me."

"What is it?" impatiently demanded Dare.

"Listen. Since the day he murdered my boy I have been shadowing him. Twice I could have killed him, but the thought of Annieta held me back. If she were provided for I would not waste time on figuring out a way. It happens that I know one of the men who work about the Buckingham place. I saw him coming from the back gate the other day. I got him to talking of Buckingham, and he told me a lot of things about his habits. It seems that he spends most of his time in a small brick building back of his house and near the rear wall. The servants call it the laboratory, but they are not allowed in it and they have no idea what he does in it."

"I've heard of that laboratory of his," interrupted Dare. "Some say that he's a great chemist, and that he's studying out some new process or invention."

"He spends most of his time in this laboratory, and here's an important thing: Just east of the stone wall which surrounds the place is a vacant brick building three stories high. Did you ever notice it?"

"I have," declared Dare, his eyes glistening as an

inkling of Fischer's plan dawned on him. "It's a tumble-down old place with the front boarded up. That would be just the place to——"

"Listen to me," insisted Fischer. "When old man Buckingham was alive there was a grocery store on the lower floor and a store room in the basement. Two families lived on the upper floors. When this aristocrat came to the old mansion one of the first things he did was to buy that building and evict the tenants. He didn't want them for neighbors, and the place has since been vacant. It is only fifty feet from the laboratory."

"You could throw a bomb from the roof into the laboratory, couldn't you?"

Fischer silently considered this suggestion for an interval.

"I'm afraid that wouldn't do," he said. "It would be difficult to throw a bomb heavy enough to do the business that distance."

"You could scale the wall and throw one through the skylight window," suggested Dare.

"The best bombs are uncertain," objected Fischer. "A mine is the thing, and I have a plan which seems to me practical. Will you go with me right now and look the place over?"

"I should say I would!" exclaimed Dare, springing to his feet. "I'm with you from start to finish, and there's nothing you can call for that I'll not try to do."

Fischer lighted a candle and after a search found a hatchet and an implement used in shaving ice. He

wrapped these tools in paper, turned out the lights and left the building by the front.

The night reeked of a fog which drifted in from the river, a fog like a bank of steam through which the shrouded street lamps glowed murkily. It was not more than a quarter of a mile to the Buckingham residence, and they were silent as they swiftly passed along the almost deserted street.

The house and grounds stood as an oasis in an encroaching desert of factories and squalid tenement houses; a fertile island against which the waves of poverty ever rolled. The few wealthy families who were so short-sighted as to follow the example of the elder Buckingham had long before abandoned the neighborhood, and the old mansion stood in solitary grandeur amidst its unkempt surroundings.

The west wall extended from street to street, and a stranger might have mistaken the place for a convent or some public institution. The walls ran east on both streets a distance of perhaps two hundred feet, and connected to form a rectangle with openings only to the west and north. The mansion was set back thirty feet or so from the northwest corner of the plot. To the east was the vacant house which Fischer and Dare now cautiously approached. It was separated from the wall by a narrow passage way, and its relative location to the laboratory and mansion will be better understood by a reference to this diagram taken from the police records:



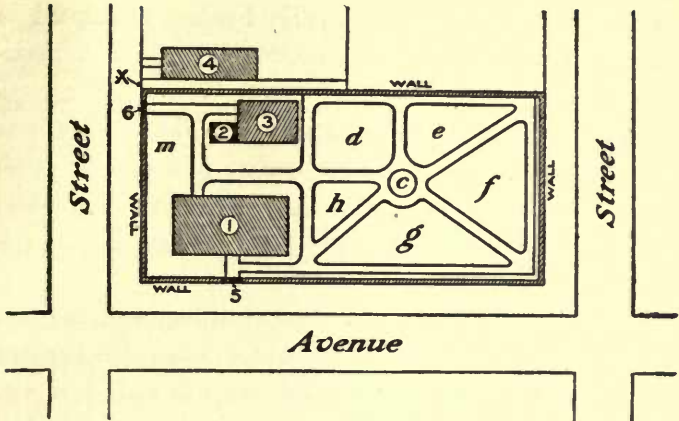


DIAGRAM OF BUCKINGHAM MANSION AND SURROUNDINGS.

- (1) Buckingham Mansion. (2) The mysterious "laboratory." (3) Garage and Stables. (4) The vacant house. (5) The front iron gate. (6) Rear or carriage gate. (c) Fountain. (d, e, f, g, h, k and m) Lawns and flower gardens. (X) The narrow passageway between the vacant house and the east wall of the Buckingham place.

The massive iron gates of the rear entrance were closed, and no watchman was on guard. Fischer had learned from observation that these gates were locked at an early hour except when Miss Buckingham used a carriage. The footman then carried the key. Fischer had satisfied himself that no night watchman was employed, and deemed this a fortunate circumstance in the desperate and fiendish plot he had formulated.

The two men walked slowly past the vacant building and nearly to the end of the block, Fischer whispering that it was well to make sure that no patrolman was near. It was then arranged that on their return to the deserted building Dare should stand guard near the en-

trance of the passageway while Fischer attempted to open a window which would admit them into the basement.

Fischer found this an easy task. The window was hinged, and it was a simple matter to force the catch which held it in place. At a signal Dare joined him and was the first to crawl through the window and lower himself to the floor of the basement.

The air was musty and foul smelling, and the two stood for a while near the opened window and listened intently. The only sound which came to their ears was the stamping of horses in the Buckingham stables less than twenty feet away.

"We must take the chance of striking a light," Fischer said, producing a candle from his pocket.

Its feeble flicker revealed a room extending from the rear walls half way to the front. Here a substantial partition marked the limits of a space once used as a Chinese laundry. No door opened into this front part of the basement, and Fischer's pale face lighted with a smile when he had completed a careful examination of this barrier.

"It couldn't be better," he whispered. "It couldn't be better if we had planned it ourselves."

"Why?" asked the puzzled Dare.

"Because that double partition will keep all sound and light from the street. We can cover these side windows with heavy cloth so as to keep them dark, and then open the rear windows or the cellar door to let in

fresh air. When we have done that we can go ahead and work as safe and sound as if we were building a church. And it's less than fifty feet from here to where *he* works. Isn't it fine? I tell you it's great, Wallace; it's great, great, great!"

His voice rose from a whisper and he laughed exultantly—not the careless laugh of an honest man, but rather the cachinnation of a demon who finds some evil deed within his easy reach.

"Be careful, Gus!" cautioned Wallace Dare. "Keep quiet, man, what are you thinking of?"

"Don't you worry, my boy," Fischer returned carelessly. "No one can hear us on the outside. Crawl out and I will shut the window and laugh. You stand a few feet away and let me know if you can hear me."

They made this experiment and it proved that Fischer was right. Not a sound came through the thick walls and the narrow windows.

"Nothing will stop us," Fischer declared when Dare had again joined him. "Let's get some fresh air into this den from the south windows, and then I'll tell you what I propose to do."

They opened two windows, and after some trouble succeeded in unlocking the cellar door, and the inrush of fresh air was most refreshing. Fischer predicted that an airing of a day or two would make it a fit place to work in, and an examination showed that the basement contained nothing more offensive than a few crates and barrels partly filled with decayed fruits and vegetables.

These were taken to the upper floor, the door of which was not even locked.

Fischer displayed more caution when on this floor. Though the front windows were boarded up he extinguished the candle after taking a swift look about the former grocery store. The counters and some of the fixtures still remained, and the floor was littered with papers and boxes and *débris* of all sorts. They soon learned that the doors were unlocked from basement to roof, and the two men stumbled up in the dark until Dare pushed back the scuttle and found himself in the open air overlooking the rear of the Buckingham yard.

Below was the dark line of the wall, its extreme end dim in the fog. Just beyond was the roof of the stables, and within the toss of a pebble was the squat shape of the "laboratory" with its tall iron stack and crusted top. A white smoke came from it and mingled with the mist. Through the windows which formed the roof came a diffused glow of light. One of these windows was raised slightly to admit air, and as they peered a dark figure moved across it and disappeared.

"Look!" exclaimed Fischer, fiercely clutching Dare by the arm. "Did you see it? There *he* is! The——!"

He babbled oaths in German, leaning far out over the low roof wall. A loose brick fell at his feet. He grasped it and would have hurled it had not Dare pinioned his arms.

"Are you crazy, man?" he cried, dragging the infuriated anarchist backward. "If you are going to act like this I'll quit right here! Don't act like a fool!"

"Forgive me, Wallace, I didn't know what I was doing! Let go of me; I'm all right now."

Dare released him and took the brick from his unresisting hand.

"If you intend to kill him with bricks you can count me out," the artist said bitterly. "I thought you had more sense."

"I was crazy for a minute, but it will not happen again," Fischer said weakly. "I never felt like that before, but it's all over now. You can depend on that, Wallace. Come, let me tell you my plan."

They returned to the edge of the roof, and though the dark figure frequently passed back and forth within range of their vision while they stood there, Fischer did not again betray the slightest evidence that he was aware of it. He talked calmly and rationally as if the subject were one of commonplace routine.

"That building," he said, pointing to the laboratory, "has no basement, and its cement floor is about even with the ground. I learned that from a man who saw it when it was building. A fifty-foot tunnel starting in the basement below will land us squarely in the centre of it. If we make a tunnel five feet high and eighteen inches wide that will mean the removal of—let me see?"

He made a rapid mental calculation.

"There would be fourteen cubic yards," he announced. "To be on the safe side we will call it four yards more, or eighteen cubic yards at the highest esti-



mate. We can easily handle two yards a day, which will place us beneath that cement floor in nine days. The basement is large enough to store three times that amount of material. All that we require is a few simple tools, muscle and—at the proper time—a certain amount of dynamite; the world's greatest equalizer. We can plant the mine, wait for some night when we know that he is in there; you can give the signal from the roof, I will touch it off and we can both retire by the rear. What do you think of it, my boy?"

"Not a thing the matter with it!" exclaimed Dare. He had already forgotten Fischer's wild outburst, and earnestly pledged his help and if necessary his life to the execution of this desperate undertaking. They returned to the basement, and after carefully looking over the ground left by the rear cellar door which they locked.

At Fischer's request Dare went home with him, and from that night on the artist slept in the little room once used by the boy who was killed, and Annieta prepared his meals. On this first occasion the frightened girl was awaiting her father's return, and he gently chided her for her fears.

"Mr. Dare will live with us for a while, my dear," he said, with a kiss and an embrace which chased the tears from her beautiful eyes. "We are doing some work which will keep us out nearly every night, and you must not worry even if we do not come home at all."

"But, papa, can't you do this work in the daytime?"

"I'm afraid not, my pet."

"Why not, papa?"

"Little girls must not ask questions," he smiled.

"I'm not a little girl," she declared, glancing at Dare and then lowering her eyes before his frankly admiring gaze. Annieta asked no more questions, and at her father's request prepared a supper of which the two men partook heartily, and then retired.

At ten o'clock of the night following these events, Fischer and Dare unlocked the rear door of the basement of the vacant house adjacent to the east wall of the Buckingham establishment. They carried with them picks, shovels, crowbars and other tools used in excavation work.

Their first step was to cover the windows with oil-cloth, using a quality light in shade but so heavy in texture that the rays of a lantern could not penetrate it. Having made sure that this work was well done, Fischer grasped a pick and raised it to his shoulder.

"Long live anarchy! Death to Buckingham and all other tyrants!" he cried, striking the first blow at the base of the stone wall.

Through the long hours of the night they toiled, and ere they ceased at daybreak Wallace Dare tapped with a shovel the concrete which formed the foundation of the stone wall guarding the mansion.

They were eight feet nearer their goal; eight feet nearer the laboratory in which the master of the Buckingham mills consumed the midnight hours on some mysterious and fascinating task.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE WARNING

ON the morning following the meeting of Jake Stark in The Well, Deane called on Long Bill. He was in a fever of impatience to learn of his mother, but had nerved himself for the worst. Captain Stark had eaten his breakfast and departed on a trip down town, intended to be "some sight seein' an' some business."

"Did you have a talk with him?" Deane asked, when they were alone.

"I nearly had a fight with him," gloomily replied Long Bill. "I led up to the thing as best I could, but when I asked him who your mother was, he turned on me and—well, it seemed like old times to hear him swear. I won't repeat what he said, but he convinced me that it was none of my business. You'll have to ask him yourself."

The eager look on Deane's face changed to misery and then to anger.

"Never!" he exclaimed. "Unless he married my mother I shall not acknowledge him as my father. He did not marry her! I know it now, Bill, and I wish never to see him again nor to hear his name spoken. I

cannot prevent you from telling him what I confided in you, but if——”

“You needn’t worry about that,” interrupted Long Bill. “I’ve learned my lesson. From this on I tend strictly to my own business. Captain Jake will never hear a word from me. But I will say one thing. The fact that he wouldn’t talk to me doesn’t prove that he never married. I found out one thing that you might like to know. It don’t amount to much, but it may help you.”

“What’s that?”

“When he was of an age to be your father he made his headquarters in Nantucket. He sailed on his first long cruise from there, and if he married it’s likely that he married from there.”

Deane grasped at this straw. He questioned Long Bill closely, but that was all he had learned from Jake Stark. He hurried to his office, put his affairs in shape and took a train for Nantucket. He spent three days there, but at the end of each of them his hopes sank lower. The books in the old court-house contained no record of the marriage of Jacob Stark, or of anyone of that family name. He found several old residents who remembered that such a sailor once lived there, but they were sure that he was not married.

Disheartened and disgusted with himself and all the world he returned to New York. He sent a message to Long Bill asking him to come to his apartments.

“I’m going to take a last chance, Long Bill,” he said.

"I wish you to tell my father that I, Stanley Deane, may know something about the lost Mascot. Say to him that I lived in England for years, that you have told me of Mascot, and that I think I know something of him. I will then be able to question him as a lawyer."

"Captain Jake has gone away."

"Abroad? Has he gone to England searching for me?"

"Hard a lee, my lad; you're several points off your course," smiled the sailor. "The day after Jake got here he studied a city directory for hours, and then sat and smoked and whistled softly. Then he spent a long time writing something. He showed it to me, and after I corrected it, it read like this:" and he handed Deane a clipping containing the following advertisement:

PERSONAL.—If Captain John C. Marsh, who once owned a plantation near Port Antonio, Jamaica, will place himself in communication with the undersigned, he will learn something to his advantage.

CAPTAIN JACOB STARK.

Deane read this several times and then looked inquiringly at the sailor.

"Captain Jake put this in New York papers, and sent it to papers in Boston, Providence and other places," explained Long Bill. "He chuckled and said there would be things doing when he got hold of this Captain John C. Marsh, but when I asked who he was, Jake closed his mouth and never batted an eye."



"Probably some sea captain with whom he had business relations," mused Deane.

"Let me tell you what happened. Jake went down town yesterday, and when he came back he was all excited. He had a letter saying that this Captain Marsh was in Boston, and then he was the happiest and busiest man you ever saw. He packed a grip and took the night boat for Boston, and I suppose he's there now. He said he wouldn't be gone more than a week."

"Let me know when you hear from him, and I'll drop into your place and see you," Deane said, wearily. "This trip of his has nothing to do with me."

"You never can tell."

Deane's absence on his trip to Nantucket puzzled Detective Jacoby. He feared that this mysterious disappearance had a sinister meaning, and not until Jacoby had exhausted every expedient did he admit that he had lost the trail. There was nothing to do but wait for the young reformer to reappear. He therefore devoted his time to other clients.

In the meantime Fischer and Dare were human moles burrowing far beneath the turf which separated the stone wall from the mysterious laboratory. Had their goal been a treasure of gold they would not have toiled harder.

Fischer's intimate knowledge of mechanical and engineering problems reduced this task to one of physical effort. Two common laborers would have thought noth-

ing of it, but the one was a draftsman and the other an artist, and it was not easy to crouch in a dark and stifling tunnel and handle a thirty-pound crowbar.

The first night was not so bad, but at the end of the second their backs were lame, their elbows and knees bruised, and every cord and muscle ached from the exertion demanded. Fischer was the more rugged of the two, but Dare held up his end by pure grit and will power. Not until Fischer perceived that the artist was becoming exhausted did he compel him to work at a slower pace.

They lacked means to force air into the bore, and the odor of the tallow candles added to the exhalations from their lungs made this a veritable chamber of horrors to the one who remained in it for any length of time. The harder task was the loosening of the soil and shovelling it into buckets, and the easier was the carrying of these buckets from the head of the tunnel to the basement.

The first two nights they began work at nine o'clock, but it occurred to Fischer that their absence from The Well would be commented on, and more than that, he had committee work and other duties connected with the strike which demanded his time up to later hours on certain nights of the week. They therefore decided to begin work at midnight, and to keep at it until five or six o'clock in the morning.

"We can take a month at it if necessary," urged Fischer, "but at the rate we are going we'll be under that hut in a week from the time we started, and he

will be there when we are ready for him. He works there every night as regular as if his living depended on it."

"The sooner we get this job finished the better," insisted Dare, cautious for once in his life. "You never can tell when an inspector or someone may stumble in on us. It would be hard to invent a good excuse for this enterprise. Let's whoop her up and be through with it."

Dare's face grew pale and drawn as the work progressed, but on the fifth night he set a pace which Fischer found it difficult to follow.

At three o'clock it became Dare's turn to "go to the front," as he laughingly had termed it, and it happened that after a few strokes of the pick he came to a friable and easily handled formation of soil. He went at it with much gusto. As a rule Fischer had been compelled to wait for the bucket to be filled, but now the situation was reversed. Dare chaffed him.

"Come a-running!" he exclaimed, tapping with his shovel the filled bucket. "Get a move on; what's the matter with you?"

"I'll keep you busy," retorted the other, and then began a contest to see who would falter.

At the end of an hour as Fischer wormed his way back into the tunnel he noted that it was dark. This was no uncommon thing, the falling gravel or some clumsy movement frequently tipping and extinguishing the candles. But Fischer heard no sound. He was horrified at the thought that the roof of the tunnel had caved and

buried Dare, at whose demand the precaution of putting the shoring in place had been neglected longer than usual.

"Wallace! Wallace!" he called, pausing an instant for a reply. The silence of the black hole was that of death.

With a choking fear at his heart Fischer struck a match and pressed forward. Ten feet further on he came to the prostrate figure of his friend. Without waiting to see if he were alive or dead he grasped him by the shoulders and dragged him through the tunnel to the basement. A look at his face as the light struck it, told him that Dare had only fainted, and he was about to throw water on him when the artist opened his eyes and gazed wildly around.

"What's the matter?" he gasped.

"You fainted away. Don't get excited, you'll be all right in a minute or two."

"I'm all right now!" he declared, springing to his feet and reeling until Fischer caught him and forced him to take a seat near the cellar door where he could drink in the fresh morning air.

"You'll do no more to-night nor to-morrow night," firmly ordered Fischer. "That goes, and no nonsense about it! I should have known better than to have let you work at such a pace."

"I'm ashamed of myself to have——"

"Not another word," insisted the other. "You sit right here while I shore up those few feet, and then

we'll go home and take a good sleep. We are within three yards of the laboratory, and from this on it will be easy work. To-morrow night we'll go to The Well and have a good time. We are entitled to one day's vacation."

Dare reluctantly consented, and when Fischer had put the tunnel in safe condition he locked up the place and hastened home with his friend. This was on Monday morning and they slept twelve hours, awaking much refreshed. Annieta was delighted when her father told her that they would be home at a comparatively early hour.

"How much longer are you going to work nights, papa?" she asked.

"Not long, my pet," he replied. "Only two or three more nights, and the strike will be won by that time, I hope."

"So do I, papa, dear!" she exclaimed, kissing him good-bye.

Had Jacoby been encouraged to follow the promptings of his judgment it is not likely that Fischer and Dare would have proceeded far with their desperate plot, but the strike had been conducted in such an orderly manner that he had no valid reason to suspect Fischer or any other of the former employés. He had been told to shadow Deane, and he picked up the trail the day that unsuspecting gentleman returned from his fruitless trip to Nantucket.



Jacoby waited outside while Long Bill was conferring with Deane, but he could think of no way of ascertaining the purport of this meeting. He watched his suspect all the next day, but he might as well have devoted his time to spying on the mayor of the city.

Late in the afternoon he received word that Mr. Buckingham wished to see him, and he called at the mansion that evening.

"What have you learned?" the millionaire asked abruptly.

"Deane is going to address the strikers next Thursday evening at——"

"I read the papers," interrupted Buckingham. "Is that where you get your information from?"

"Deane has given five thousand dollars to the strikers' relief committee," added the abashed detective, hoping that this not exclusive fact had failed to reach the ears of his employer. Evidently it had.

"That's not a crime on his part," frowned Buckingham. "It only proves that he is an ass with more money than sense. What else?"

"He also gave two hundred and fifty dollars to Fischer, the secretary of the union," confidently announced Jacoby, sure of his ownership of this bit of information.

"What of it?" The name annoyed him. "Why did he give it to him?"

"I have not learned yet."

The detective then told how he had slipped into The

Well one evening when guests were admitted, taking the chance that he would not be singled out. He described the place in detail, told of seeing Deane there, and gave a list of most of the members. Buckingham was much interested in this and cross-examined Jacoby for some time.

"Is Deane a member?" he asked.

"No, and he was never there until after the strike began," said Jacoby. "I don't understand why he goes there so much."

"We will learn sooner or later. Now we will take up another matter."

He opened the door to a massive safe which stood at the side of his desk. From the inner drawer he took out a small slip of paper, studied it with a sneer on his bearded lips, and handed it to Jacoby.

"Tell me what you think of that," he demanded. Here is a facsimile of what appeared on this slip of paper:

To AMOS BUCKINGHAM

You have been SENTENCED to

DEATH by

The COMMITTEE.

The words and letters had been cut from printed matter—evidently daily newspapers—and had been carefully pasted in the above form on a sheet of common

note paper which had no water-mark or other distinguishing feature. The letters and words were of different sizes or "fonts"—as printers designate them—conclusive proof that they had been clipped from more than one publication. The words "To," "You," "have," "been," "by" and "The" are so common that it was an easy matter to find them, but the others were made up of capital letters, evidently clipped from headlines or advertisements.

Buckingham also handed the detective the envelope which had contained this sheet of paper. It was a plain one, and on it were Mr. Buckingham's name and residence address in capital letters, which had been clipped and pasted with even more care than that used in preparing the letter.

The postmark was distinct, and read: "Wall Street Sta. N. Y. June 29, 9.30 A. M."

As Jacoby studied the paper and envelope his expression changed from bewilderment to admiration. Buckingham leaned back in his chair and watched him from beneath the shield which ever guarded his eyes. He said nothing and made no sign until the detective had completed his inspection.

"That is a clever piece of work and a new one on me, Mr. Buckingham," he said. "It is possible to identify and trace disguised hand-writing, and it's easy to discover where a job of printing has been done, but this isn't hand-writing or printing. As you can see it's been cut from papers. The 'To' looks as if it came from

the 'Herald,' and the 'You' is the type used on the 'Sun,' and I suppose I could study it out and tell just where the other words and letters came from, but what good would that do?"

Buckingham made no comment and the detective continued.

"There are tons of paper like that, and you can buy the envelope in any one of a thousand drug-stores. We know that the letter was mailed in the Wall Street district, but it may have been prepared up in Harlem. Some of these great detectives in fiction might be able to find the papers from which this stuff was cut, and then find out just who bought them, but I can't do it, and I might just as well tell you so right now so that you'll not be disappointed. If you ever find who did this job it will not be through this paper and envelope."

"You have more sense than I thought," dryly observed Buckingham, and the detective's mustache lifted at the corners as he smiled at the doubtful compliment. "Who would be likely to send me such a threat?"

"Some of the strikers," declared Jacoby. "I told you a week or more ago that they are very bitter against you. Some of them are anarchists; that man Fischer, for instance."

"Anarchists!" growled Mr. Buckingham. "Cur anarchists, perhaps, but none of them with the brains to do a thing like this. Do not think that this alarms me in the least. I am not in the slightest danger of being killed. This is a shrewd attempt to intimidate me into

making concessions to the strikers. It was the work of a man with brains in his head; a man who knows how to do a criminal act without the risk of being detected; a man who imagines he is doing these fool workers a favor by interceding in their behalf. I do not say that Deane did this thing, but I do say that it was done by someone of his stripe."

Buckingham had dropped his dictatorial manner and Jacoby knew that he was more alarmed and mystified than he was willing to admit. This emboldened the detective to take issue with him.

"The majority of your men are cowards and fools, I will admit," he said, "but you should understand, Mr. Buckingham, that at the present time all kinds of men work in factories. Some are college graduates, some were big men before they came to this country, and others are so desperate that they will do anything. The man who has been up in the world and who falls is a dangerous man, and some of that kind worked for you. This may be all a bluff, but there's one thing about it I don't like."

"What is that?" Buckingham asked, impatiently.

"Your real anarchist always gives warning before he strikes," replied Jacoby. "He is like a rattlesnake, but he gives only one warning. I don't know why they do this, only that it is a part of their code to tell the man they have marked. Perhaps they wish to give him some sort of a chance, and then again perhaps they think it will make him suffer more."



"Stuff and nonsense!" exclaimed the millionaire, jabbing the steel paper cutter into his desk. "That canaille make me suffer? Not for one minute of sleep! Listen to me, Jacoby. It is one thing to hunt the tiger; it is another thing to have the tiger hunt you. I am going to do some detective work on my own account. I propose to give these dogs the treatment they deserve. Go ahead with your part of the work in your own way, but do not come to this house until I send for you. After Monday I shall not be here for several days."

"Do you mean to say that you are going among these men yourself?" asked the astounded detective.

"I do. Why not?" demanded the millionaire. "Do you imagine that it takes superhuman genius to be a detective? None of these men know me by sight, and if you identify me the next time you see me I'll give you one hundred dollars."

Buckingham was in his usual place, back of the reflection of the student's lamp, his eyes covered by the shade he always wore when visitors were admitted to his presence. Jacoby had never had a full view of his face, had never looked into his eyes, yet he was confident that he could penetrate any disguise the millionaire might assume.

The detective was too tactful to attempt to dissuade his erratic employer from this purpose, and after receiving instructions from Mr. Buckingham to submit his reports in writing to Peters, took his leave.

Monday morning Amos Buckingham held a long con-

ference with his private secretary. He then sent for Alice and told her that he had been called away for a period. Since it often happened that she did not see her father for days at a time she was not distressed over this announcement.

## CHAPTER XIV

### HERR JOHANN SCHLIERMACKER

MR. JACOBY contracted a severe cold on the Sunday following his interview with Buckingham, and his physician ordered him to remain in his room for several days. This retired him from activity at a time when his work might have counted for much in averting an impending tragedy.

He doubted if the strangely prepared warning had more significance than other threats sent by cranks and cowards to men of wealth or position, and he was confident that Deane had nothing to do with it. He was amused that the master of the mills should attempt to play the part of a detective, but he was inured to the whims of New York millionaires. He had never worked on a more prosaic case, but the pay was satisfactory and he made no complaint.

Fischer and Dare arrived at Long Bill's place early Monday evening, and were about to enter The Well when the sailor called Fischer aside.

"There's a man over there," he said, indicating a table, "who has been waiting for you for an hour or more. He's a German with some such name as Shimmerman or Shimmaker, or something like that, and all

that I can get out of him is that he wants to see you and nobody else. I'll take you over to him."

"Wait a minute," cautioned Fischer. He stood where he could study the stranger, and looked at him for fully a minute while Dare and Long Bill discreetly walked to another part of the room. Having finished his scrutiny Fischer motioned to Long Bill.

"I don't know him," he said, "and I don't like his looks, but I'm not afraid to meet him."

"Why should you be?" asked Long Bill, leading the way to the unknown guest.

"This is Mr. Fischer," he said, when the two stood at the table. "I didn't get your name right, and I never was over-strong on German names, but here's the man you've been waiting for, and I reckon he can talk your language better than I can my own."

The stranger rose and bowed to Long Bill and to Fischer. He was fully as tall as the sailor, and that gentleman stood six feet and two inches. When he addressed the strike leader in German, Long Bill knew that he was no longer wanted and turned away.

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Fischer," he said, motioning him to a seat. "My name is Johann Schliermacker of Berlin, and if what little of fame I have has reached you, you will understand why I call on you in this informal way."

"Johann Schliermacker?" exclaimed Fischer, a flush of pride and pleasure on his clear-cut features. "Herr Johann Schliermacker, editor of the 'Freiheit'?"

"The same, my dear Mr. Fischer, and I am flattered that my humble literary and journalistic efforts have given me a place in your ken. I greet you, comrade!"

They clasped hands with a grip which meant to one of them more than the formality of meeting or of friendship. If Fischer had any lingering suspicion of the man who looked into his eyes, that suspicion vanished at the close of the following colloquy, in which Fischer asked the questions and Schliermacker made the responses:

"What do you say to me?"

*"All is not well!"*

"What do I say to you?"

*"All might be well!"*

"What do we say to humanity?"

**"ALL SHALL BE WELL!"**

Schliermacker explained to Fischer that his visit to the United States had no special object. He needed a rest, and he also wished to meet the leading anarchists and radical reformers in New York and other large centres.

"Who was so kind as to refer you to me?" asked Fischer. "My place in the movement is an obscure one."

"There is no rank in our movement, but you are far too modest, my dear Fischer," replied Schliermacker, with a patronizing smile. "I was asked to call on you by no less a personage than the Count Rakoczy. He met



you in the Geneva conference of five years ago, and spoke most highly of your ability and services."

"It was generous of him to say so!" exclaimed Fischer, his eyes gleaming with pleasure. "The Count Rakoczy is a wonderful man."

"He is indeed," agreed Schliermacker, "the most brilliant strategist in our cause. I should have been at that Geneva conference and have had the pleasure of meeting you, were it not that at that particular time I was in jail charged with the crime of lese-majesty. In fact, I have just finished another short term, and I hope that this visit to your country will give me new health and vigor."

Herr Schliermacker's hair was so short and bristly that it suggested the suspicion that he had recently been in prison, but in other respects he was a man of distinguished appearance. The smooth-shaven face was that of one whom nothing could daunt. The dark and steady eyes, the strong nose and massive jaw bespoke one who scorned to yield to authority or bow to conventions. His frame was powerful, his hands large but shapely, and his voice a gruff but not unmusical bass which compelled attention when he spoke.

The removal of his mustache and beard, the cropping of his rather long hair, the wearing of a pair of spectacles and the speaking of German with a smattering of English was the disguise assumed by Amos Buckingham. When he had completed it, Peters, his private secretary for years, did not know him. There are those

whose features are completely masked by a beard, and Buckingham was one of them. Moreover he was venturing among those who had had no opportunity to become familiar with his personal appearance and traits. He was almost as much of a stranger as the man he impersonated.

Thus the man who was marked for assassination and the anarchist who longed for his life, met and talked and lied; each blind as to the motive of the other.

"Possibly you can help me in a certain matter," Schliermacker said, after Fischer had told him something of the Buckingham strike, a matter in which the Berlin agitator seemed to take only a polite interest. "I do not wish to stay in one of your great hotels. We have plenty of them in our country. I am here to study your working people, those whom your masters call 'the lower classes.' Therefore I wish to live near them. How shall I go about it?"

"You are in such a district now," returned Fischer. "Why not take quarters in this building? I think the proprietor has some vacant rooms on the third floor. Shall I ask him?"

"By all means," insisted Schliermacker, with more interest than he had before evinced. "Nothing could suit me better."

Fischer called Long Bill, who said he had a small room which might suit Mr. Schliermacker. The latter took a look at it and declared that it was just what he wanted. He explained that he had left his luggage

temporarily in a down-town hotel, but Fischer took the checks, found an expressman, and an hour later the distinguished visitor from Berlin was comfortably located in the room directly above that occupied by the absent Captain Jake Stark.

Having thus happily disposed of these details, Fischer conducted his newly found comrade into The Well. The hour was yet early, and only Dare, Saxon and "Dummy Malakoff" were present. After presenting Schliermacker, his host pointed out the relics which adorned the walls, explained the uses of the "old oaken bucket," narrated the history of the club and answered numerous questions. The alleged German editor was delighted.

"What a place for a conclave of the comrades!" he exclaimed, tapping the walls with a huge cane which he carried. "No chance for a spy to listen through these ramparts. Are the men I have just met anarchists?"

"Not all of them," Fischer said in a low tone, and as he did the door opened and Deane entered.

Dare greeted Deane heartily, but the latter was looking for Long Bill, from whom he had received word that he had news from Jake Stark which might be of importance. The sailor was not in the room, and Deane was about to leave when Fischer spoke to him.

"Deane, let me introduce Herr Johann Schliermacker, editor of the 'Freiheit,' of Berlin," he said in German, knowing that Deane was master of that language. "Mr.

Deane is one of our famous reformers," he said, turning to Schliermacker.

During this introduction, Schliermacker had intently studied Deane. He had met the man he was looking for, and his lips lifted slightly in an ironical curve. He extended his hand.

"I am pleased to meet you, Mr. Deane," he said. "I have no doubt you are a good anarchist."

"I am not an anarchist of any kind, Herr Schliermacker," he declared curtly. "I have not the slightest sympathy with anarchy in any form, theoretical or practical. I am so little an anarchist that I am often accused of socialism."

"Indeed? And I presume you resent that?" Schliermacker questioned, thrusting his jaw out and watching him closely over the rim of his spectacles.

"I do not," responded Deane. "Every man who is not an anarchist is more or less of a socialist. He is a socialist just in proportion as he believes in the possibilities of democracy. Since I have faith in the wisdom of the majority, and in its ultimate triumph over selfish individualism or anarchy, it follows that I am theoretically a socialist. I believe that the individual must at times subordinate his interests to those of the State, also that all economic and industrial questions can be solved by the enactment and enforcement of wise laws. That is socialism."

"Ho, ho!" laughed Saxon, whose Heidelberg training and command of German enabled him to take part

in this debate. "At last our friend Deane declares himself. He gives a good definition of socialism. Fall on him, Herr Schliermacker!"

"It is a waste of time to argue with one who holds that laws can bring happiness, or that liberty can be won or held by votes," was Schliermacker's oracular declaration. "Government is tyranny, and history proves that tyrants and tyrannies fall only when force is directed against them."

"All the progressive revolutions in history have been for the downfall of despotic anarchy and for the substitution of better government along socialistic lines," responded Deane. "The American revolutionists sternly resisted that royal anarchy which denied them the right to govern themselves. The masses of Russia are moving to overthrow autocratic anarchy, and to substitute co-operative effort and popular rule—socialism—for the anarchic dictum of an individual tyrant backed by *his* army and *his* despotism."

"I am told that you of the United States also have czars, trust kings, financial potentates and other magnates and tyrants who tax and oppress you," pompously retorted Herr Schliermacker. "Their growth in power and arrogance leads me to believe that they will not be shaken from their thrones without the judicious use of force—preferably dynamite."

Fischer's eyes glittered as Schliermacker made this prediction, or, rather, proffered this advice, and Dare



understood enough of what was said to become wildly excited when the word "dynamite" was mentioned.

"That's the stuff!" he exclaimed, springing to his feet and clenching his hand. "What we need in this country is more dynamite and——"

"Enough of that talk, Dare!" Deane coldly said to the artist, checking his tirade at its start. "I understand that I am welcome to this club, but if an advocacy of the use of dynamite is one of the prerogatives of membership you may count me out."

"Dare didn't mean anything," declared Saxon, with an indifferent shrug of his shoulders. "He has blown up so many tyrants with his tongue that we have to read historical novels to keep in touch with thrones."

"You wait a——"

"Hold your tongue, you idiot!" exclaimed Fischer, grasping the artist by the arm and forcing him to a chair.

Dare's face paled, he looked defiantly into Deane's steady eyes for an instant and then subsided.

Had anyone cared to have watched the pretended visitor from Berlin he would have noted that a look of surprise tinged with disappointment came to his face when Deane made his emphatic protest against anarchy and dynamite. It was not the expression of one who regrets mildly that another does not subscribe to a pet theory, neither was it that of a man who is rebuffed in debate, but rather a frown of annoyance based on more personal considerations.

"The trouble with this country, Herr Schliermacker," Deane said, "is not that we have too little anarchy, but rather that we have too much of it. It is not the anarchy of crazed poverty, but the calculating anarchy of selfish and law-defying wealth. The tyrants you have in mind have risen to power because they have been a law unto themselves. They believe that their rights as individuals are greater than those of the government, and when we attempt to check or regulate them they turn to bribery, dishonesty, perjury, the debauchery of legislature and the courts, and as a last but not uncommon resort, open defiance of the law and its administrators. It is a fact beyond dispute that many great fortunes were made dishonestly and are being held illegally. That is the anarchy with which we have to contend."

"And you will overthrow these conquering money kings with votes, I presume?" sneered Schliermacker.

"If we cannot protect ourselves with votes, then democracy is a failure so far as we are concerned, and we are fit only for serfdom," earnestly declared the young lawyer. "Let me tell you, Herr Schliermacker, that unfair wealth stands more in fear of one man who has the ability to appeal to the voting intelligence of the nation, than it does of all those fanatics who openly or secretly advocate the bomb and other forms of violence. It prates of anarchy; what it fears is the peaceful but irresistible advance of scientific socialism. If it does not hire our few professional anarchists, it could well afford to."

For some time the discussion continued with a heat which at times bordered on bitterness, Deane holding his ground for orderly reform alone against the invective of Schliermacker, the sarcasm of Saxon and the silent and sullen opposition of Fischer, expressed in looks and gestures which left no doubt as to his attitude.

Schliermacker vainly tried to shake his position, but Deane stoutly contended that so long as the American citizen possessed the ballot he held a weapon sufficient to correct any abuse.

"What the average citizen needs is the intelligence to vote for his own interest," he said. "That will come to him. When it does, and when he demands his own by legal methods, then there may be an appeal to force, but it will come from the property class. They fear nothing so much as the law-making power in the hands of the masses, and that power will overtake them."

With this parting shot Deane looked at his watch, excused himself and abruptly left the room. Schliermacker arose and seemed about to follow him, but changed his mind. He remained until a late hour, met other members of the club, insisted on "filling the old oaken bucket," and seemed to take more pleasure in Steinbach's zither music than he did in the debates and gossip which followed.

He asked Fischer questions about the Buckingham strike, but the draftsman was not in a talkative mood, and he and Dare left before midnight.

For the first time since they plotted the death of Buck-

ingham the weight of that dastardly enterprise oppressed and awed them. Now that they turned towards the little apartment where Annieta was awaiting them, the dark and noisome tunnel which reached from the deserted house almost to the laboratory seemed monstrous and unreal. Each knew that the other was possessed by this thought, but Fischer was the first to shake it from him.

"Two more days, Wallace, and one task will be ended," he said, slipping his arm into that of the artist's. "You don't regret that we started it, do you?"

"No, but I wish it was over," Dare said, a weary note in his voice which was foreign to him. "I dream about it, dream about it every time I try to sleep. Yesterday I dreamed that when we fired the mine we found the dead body of Annieta in the ruins of the laboratory. I can see her just as she looked when we bent over her."

"Don't talk about anything like that," the father said, and Dare felt his hand close convulsively on his arm. "You should not have gone into this. It was my affair, and I should have kept it to myself. You are young, success and happiness will come to you; let me alone from this on and I will square my account with *him*."

"I'll do nothing of the kind!" cried Dare. "I'll stand by you till the finish, no matter what happens. Say no more about it, it will do no good. I had a streak of the blues for a while, but that's nothing, and I'm over them now."

Dare laughed in his light-hearted way, and when

Fischer remained silent, hummed the air of a song which had a current popularity. Knowing that it was useless to attempt to dissuade him, Fischer took another tack.

"Then you must do as I tell you," he insisted, "and from this time on you will take it easy. I have arranged to get the—the stuff——" he hesitated, lowering his voice to a whisper, "and if you care to go with me we will get it and take it home with us."

Dare understood, and they walked half a mile out of their way until they came to an open space where excavators had been at work blasting out rock for the sub-stories of some large structure. The street was half-blocked with brick, lumber and other building materials, in the midst of which was a small construction shanty.

Having warned Dare to keep on past this place, Fischer turned in toward the shanty and stopped and chatted a few minutes with a man who presumably acted as night watchman. What passed between Fischer and this man is not known, but when the former rejoined Dare, he had a package which he carried carefully under his right arm.

Annieta opened the door for them when she heard their steps on the stairs, and her woman's eyes naturally were attracted to the parcel.

"What have you been buying, papa?" she demanded, trying to untie the string in her eagerness to know. "I hope it's new table-cloths; we need some dreadfully."

"It's nothing for you, my pet," he said, pushing her away gently and moving toward the door of his room.



"It's papers and things belonging to the union, and I'm going to work on them when I'm not so busy nights. You shall have the new table-cloths to-morrow. Pick them out, Annieta, and buy something nice for yourself," and laying the parcel carefully on the table, he reached into his pocket and handed her a bank-note.

"You're a darling, papa!" she exclaimed, her soft arms about his neck. "But you forget that I have money in the bank; lots and lots of money!"

"Keep it, my pet," he said slowly, a haunted look in his eyes which she did not see. "Take good care of it, Annieta, you may need it some day."

"I'm stingy," she declared, "but I've prepared a nice warm supper for you and Mr. Dare, and I should have been awfully disappointed if you had not come home."

Fischer went to his room and placed the dynamite in the lower drawer of a desk in which he kept papers and records pertaining to trade union affairs. Never did he seem more care-free than over this midnight supper with his daughter and Wallace Dare.

The next night at an early hour Fischer and Dare resumed work on the tunnel. They were greatly refreshed after their rest, and with Fischer as sapper they made rapid progress. The soil was soft and easy to handle, and they had become inured to their task.

Greatly to Fischer's surprise his pick struck something hard after they had been delving for several hours. It was then about one o'clock in the morning, and an examination proved to him that he was squarely against

the stone foundation of the laboratory. He had made a miscalculation of at least five feet in the distance, and when Dare came forward Fischer held the candle so that its light fell on the face of a wall with clearly defined mortar spaces.

"We are there!" he whispered, gently tapping the black stones. In this uncanny place the flickering flame of the candle revealed the dirt-begrimed face of the arch-conspirator; a face distorted with a smile so ghastly and malignant that Dare recoiled for an instant as he gazed into it.

"Let's get out of here; out where we can talk—and think," he insisted, hanging to Fischer's sleeve. There was fear and awe in his voice, but the older man did not note it.

"All right, Wallace," he said, wiping the perspiration from his face and looking fondly at the wall which told of a task nearly ended. A minute later he straightened up in the basement, drew a long breath and drank deeply from a pail of water.

It had been their practice each night to make occasional observations from the upper floor, or from the roof, to determine if Buckingham was in the laboratory, and to ascertain as much as they could about his habits. Not a night had passed, until this one, without light showing through the roof windows of the mysterious brick structure, convincing proof that the master of the mills was at his unknown task.

As a rule this light appeared about nine o'clock and

burned steadily until long after midnight. On one occasion he was still at work at four o'clock in the morning, but on the night now described Dare had looked in vain for signs of activity.

"Do you suppose he's in there now?" asked Fischer, looking at his watch. "I'd like to know."

"Why?"

"If he isn't, I can knock a couple of feet of that foundation wall out, and thus save the work of going that much below it," replied Fischer. "Let's take a look."

They put on their coats and climbed to the roof of the building. There was no light in the laboratory, and only the dull gleam of a hall gas jet showed through the windows of the mansion.

It happened that Mr. Peters, the silent and discreet private secretary, did not sleep well that night. His room was an upper one in the rear of the building, and as the air was close and still, he arose and pulled aside the curtains so as to give entrance to any passing breeze.

As he adjusted the curtains and stood for a moment by the opened window, the chimney of a blast mill to the east belched forth its intermittent flame. It was as if a conflagration sprang instantly into being, and raged a few seconds with uncontrolled fury. Mr. Peters had seen this phenomenon a thousand times before, and was accustomed to lie in bed and watch the fitful yellow glow, but as he looked out of the window on this occasion he saw something which aroused his curiosity, and later his suspicions.

On the roof of the vacant building he saw two male figures sharply silhouetted against the quivering radiance of the flame which burned into the night. These figures were motionless. One was partly obscured by the branch of a tree, and as Peters moved to get a less obstructed view, the huge torch of the mill faltered, shuddered and disappeared. When it reappeared a minute later the figures had vanished.

It was an odd happening, but Mr. Peters was sleepy and it did not trouble his dreams. He thought of it during the next day, but did not attach any great importance to it. That evening he looked once or twice at the roof of the vacant house but saw no figures. He reflected that it was possible he was not fully awake when he imagined he saw these men on the edge of the roof. It was not worth bringing to the attention of Mr. Buckingham, though he reflected that possibly Jacoby should hear of it.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE NIGHT OF THE STORM

WHEN Deane left The Well after his first meeting with Schliermacker, he found Long Bill in the outer room.

"I had a telegram this afternoon from Captain Stark saying that he would be back from Boston Thursday evening," the latter announced. "Shall I send him up to your rooms?"

"I address a mass meeting of the Buckingham strikers that evening," Deane answered. "I will let you know later just when it will be best for him to call on me."

A torrid spell of weather set in with the opening of this week, and as the days dragged out their torturing hours the heat and humidity increased, until the city seethed and sweltered in a glaring sun by day and a merciless and sickening calm by night. Horses lay dead in the blistering streets, the list of the sunstruck lengthened with every issue of the papers, those of wealth fled the city, while poverty poured into the parks or slept with upturned faces on the roofs and fire escapes of tenement houses.



Alice Buckingham and Dolly Farnsworth were preparing to leave the city for the seashore. No premonition of the coming storm came to the fair daughter of the master of the mills, but life was dreary in the old mansion. She found herself wondering at times if Deane would visit the resort at which she proposed to stay during the long summer months.

If the young reformer had known of her thoughts in those idle moments the burden which was about to fall on him would have been lighter. Little did she dream that a remark inspired by the coldness of her father had made him the most miserable of men. Less than three weeks had passed since they had met at Mrs. Stack-Haven's reception; it seemed only yesterday to her—it seemed an age to him. For her, life flowed smoothly—he was tossed and bruised in the rapids.

Herr Johann Schliermacker spent most of his time in and about The Well. He asked repeatedly for "that smart young socialist, Mr. Deane." Long Bill explained that Deane was probably preparing his address for the mass meeting, whereupon Schliermacker declared that he would attend and listen to the speech.

Schliermacker enjoyed the attacks made by Magoon and others on Amos Buckingham, and took pains to draw out the labor men on that subject. He expressed a great desire to see "Buckingham," and was free with his advice as to the best way to wreak revenge on him. He could find no evidence, however, that the animosity against the mill-owner extended to anything more than

words. Fischer and Dare could not be induced to discuss the personality of that unpopular character, but their looks were eloquent whenever his name was mentioned.

Schliermacker understood this, and he felt a certain pity for Fischer. The latter talked freely on other subjects, and the distinguished guest was surprised at the extent of his information and the keenness of his grasp of social questions. Fischer told him something of his past, and this cold man actually warmed toward the leader of his striking workmen. They were together each night, but it never occurred to him to suspect Fischer, much less to follow him out of *The Well*.

There was a comradeship in this quaint resort which had a fascination for him. It was a new world, inhabited by strange but agreeable people. Their view of things was the antithesis of his view, yet, odd as it may seem, they did not offend him. Forced to act a part, he was astounded at the ease with which he argued against tenets which he had deemed unassailable. He thoroughly enjoyed this experience.

He was almost ready to recant his charges against Deane, but he wished to see and hear more of him. As for the others, he was convinced that they were not vicious. They were dreamers, perhaps, impractical beyond a doubt, but for the first time in his life he was able to understand the reason for their attitude. *The Well* was an economic kindergarten for the master of the Buckingham mills.

Late on Wednesday night Fischer and Dare finished their work on the tunnel. It penetrated to the centre of the laboratory—as near as Fischer could estimate it—and there was no doubt in his mind that the explosion of twenty-five pounds of gelatin dynamite would instantly kill any person within the limited space of the walls.

Again the two men took frequent observations from the upper floor of the building, but the laboratory remained dark. Had their intended victim been warned in some mysterious way? Dare whispered this fear as they took their last look at the little brick hut an hour before daybreak on Thursday morning, but Fischer's scornful laugh reassured him.

"He's out of the city or busy on some other work," he declared. "I heard yesterday that the trust is grinding the life out of him, and perhaps he is in Philadelphia negotiating with them. Be patient, my boy; he'll come back like a lover to his sweetheart. Mark my word; there'll be a light in that laboratory to-night, and by that time we'll be ready for him."

"I hope so," said Dare. "This strain is telling on me more than I thought it would."

"It will soon be over, Wallace."

They went home and slept until one o'clock Thursday afternoon. After breakfast Fischer parted with his daughter with more than usual tenderness, and there was something in his manner which puzzled and frightened her. She could not tell exactly what it was, but when the door closed behind them she was thrilled by a

presentiment that some dread calamity was impending.

This fear so haunted her that she could not restrain her nervousness. Her neighbor, the kind-hearted Mrs. Janssen, called and found Annieta in tears. She laughed away the spell which had tormented the beautiful young girl, and when Mrs. Janssen left an hour later the little housekeeper was in her usual good spirits.

Annieta had bravely taken up the task which had fallen from the hands of her mother. It was lonesome in the little flat, and she could hardly realize that the dear face of her mother never again would greet her, and she could not bring herself to believe that the merry laughter of her brother would never again echo through the cheerless rooms. Fate had been cruel to this gentle daughter of the anarchist, but she had yet to drink the lees of a more bitter cup.

Only a few days before, her father had taken her to the bank, and had deposited to her credit four hundred dollars. Four hundred dollars! It was an enormous sum, and she could not imagine where he had obtained it, but she had implicit faith that it was honestly his.

The bank book lay on her dresser, and she opened it and looked proudly at the figures on the clean white page. She blushed as she wondered how it would seem to be a young housewife, entrusted by a loving husband with so vast an amount of money. She sighed as she carefully placed it away. Annieta was in love.

She was in love, and not a soul in all the wide world had the faintest suspicion of the secret locked in that

gentle heart. Annieta's love was the love of a violet whose petals turn shyly to a mountain casting his huge shadow across a lake which separates him from her forever. Annieta's love was voiceless, and she knew beyond the faintest doubt that it was hopeless, yet strange as it may seem, she was happy in it.

From a hiding-place she took another book; a scrap-book whose leather cover was illuminated with silver letters. It was a Christmas gift for which she had found no use until a few days before. She opened it and gazed with wistful eyes and parted lips at the first page. On it was pasted a picture of Stanley Deane!

He was her god, and this daughter of an atheist could conceive of no higher divinity. This beautiful pagan was content to worship him from afar; content to know that her whispered prayers would never reach his ears; serene in the knowledge that he once had deigned to befriend her through her father, and yearningly hoping for the chance that she would be permitted to return to him a tithe of this favor.

There was nothing selfish in this love of Annieta for Deane. It was the love of the human for the ideal, and it was merely an accident that this ideal had an actual existence. He was as utterly beyond her reach as is the sculptured creation of an artist to those who worship its cold beauty.

She had loved him from the moment he spoke to her that terrible day after the riot; from the moment he talked kindly to her when her father was dragged from



a cell to the court room. His voice had thrilled her as he addressed the judge in behalf of her father. To her Stanley Deane was the personification of manliness, bravery, honor and courtesy. He had looked at her with a smile which told her not to fear, and from that instant she did not doubt that her father would be free.

While putting the house in order she came across a collection of clippings made by her father. These were extracts from newspapers and trade journals treating of union matters, and amongst them were several pictures of Deane with such captions as "The Titled Reformer," "The Aristocratic Labor Leader," "A Millionaire Socialist," "A Gentleman Walking Delegate," and others more or less misleading and sensational. There were also reports of his speeches and a few paragraphs about court cases. She wondered that her father had taken the pains to preserve them, but she knew that he admired Deane greatly.

In the society columns of a Sunday paper she had found a description of Mrs. Stack-Haven's reception, also a picture of the débutante, Miss Alice Buckingham. In the report of this affair the name of Deane had been coupled with that of Miss Buckingham by the indiscreet writer, who broadly intimated that there was a pretty romance back of this meeting between "the beautiful daughter and heiress of a wealthy manufacturer and the handsome young aristocrat and social reformer."

What more fitting, so Annieta reflected, than that he should fall in love with Miss Buckingham. She was

very beautiful—her picture told that, and the press raved over her graces of mind and face—and it was certain that he would some day marry. Why should he not choose this gracious and lovely girl?

Yet behold a miracle!—a miracle capable of fruition only in the heart of a woman—from that moment Annieta was jealous of Alice Buckingham.

This jealousy was as unreal and as impersonal as the love which inspired it. It was not the active and aggressive heart-burning of a rival, but rather the mute and helpless protest of one condemned to look on from afar. It was childish, of course, but it seemed quite real to Annieta. She loved her ideal very much, and she hated the innocent Alice as bitterly as she could hate anything, but in the end her love was stronger than her hate, and in this she proved her womanhood.

While putting her room in order this Thursday afternoon she picked up the scrap-book and looked long and earnestly at the picture of Deane. She was to see him that night.

Not as other girls see the ones they love; far from it. She did not expect to speak to him, she hardly dared hope that he would look at her, but she was happy in the thought that she would see and hear him. He was to address the strikers in a large hall near by, and the wives and daughters were invited. Annieta had planned to go early so as to get a seat near the platform.

As she turned over the pages of the scrap-book and read for the hundredth time the clippings descriptive of

her hero and his work, it suddenly occurred to her that her father had brought home a package containing papers and data relating to trade-union matters. Possibly it contained more articles about Deane? It would be an easy matter to unwrap the package, look over the contents and retie it.

The drawer in which Fischer had placed the parcel was locked, but she knew of a key which would open it, and while her conscience did not trouble her, she was strangely excited when the drawer slid back and disclosed what she was looking for.

The coarse wrapping paper was stained with mud, as if it had been dropped in the street. It was wonderfully heavy, and Annieta tugged with all her strength to lift it from the drawer to the bed. She did not grasp it securely, she was hurried and nervous, and in some manner the clumsy package slipped from her hands to the floor.

The force of its fall shook the room, but it was decreed that nothing else should happen! The stored force in the package so carelessly handled by a delicate girl was destined to do a certain work, and the fates did not permit her white hands to interfere.

Annieta laughed as she picked it from the floor and placed it on the bed. Within the paper wrapping was another of dirty, oily cloth, securely tied with hempen cord. She almost repented of her task, but kept at it. At last Annieta laid back the folds of cloth.

Within were a score or more cylinders of a grayish

color. They were about eight inches long and an inch and a half thick, and they looked to the startled girl like enormous cartridges. For a brief moment they reminded her of the phonograph cylinders used by the Levy children on the floor above, and then like a blow came a suspicion.

They were dynamite cartridges! She sank back almost in a faint when the truth dazed her. There was hardly a doubt of the character of those innocent-looking cylinders. A year before, Annieta and other girls had coaxed the watchman of a little red shanty to let them hold in their hands some of the dreaded explosive, and the good-natured Irishman had risked his position and possibly his life to humor the pretty misses who tempted him. And Annieta had not forgotten her impressions of that moment when she tightly clutched a dynamite cartridge.

She had heard that her father was an anarchist, and while she knew little of anarchy she agreed with others in associating it with dynamite. She knew that her father was crazed with grief, and she had overheard words between him and Dare which hinted at revenge. And then the thought of their strange night work came to her.

As she stared at the dynamite, many little happenings which had vaguely puzzled her took on a sinister meaning. Her father's shoes had been covered with mud and clay, and so had those belonging to Dare, and she had cleaned them each day before they went away. Their

fingers had been blistered and their hands cut and bruised.

Wild with fear, the poor child did not know which way to turn. She was afraid that one of the neighbors would come in and find her looking at those frightful cylinders. She imagined that every footfall on the stairs was that of an officer in search of her father.

With trembling fingers she rewrapped the package, hesitated a minute and then put it back in the drawer.

It was six o'clock in the evening, but the sun still levelled his burning rays on the afflicted metropolis. But Annieta thought nothing of the heat. She must find her father and plead with him to abandon the wild scheme suggested by her discovery. Where should she find him? She knew of several places which he frequented. She must find him, she would find him!

She would first go to the office of the strikers. It was the hour of day when the streets are crowded with home-going work folk, and several packed cars passed her before she stopped one. It seemed as if she would never reach the cross street on which the head-quarters were located.

He was not there. One of the strikers said he was expected to arrive any minute, and Annieta waited in an agony of dread. Five minutes passed, a quarter of an hour, half an hour, and the little clock struck seven. Then one of the men suggested that she would surely find him at the mass meeting an hour or so later.

“Is there anything I can do for you, Miss Fischer?”



asked this young man, who had long been an admirer of the daughter of his leader.

"No, no!" she exclaimed. "You can do nothing. No one can do anything but me!" and with a catch of her breath and an appealing look she rushed from the room.

Half an hour later she pushed through the folding screens of Long Bill's place and boldly entered. With a reassuring smile and an awkward bow he came toward her and escorted her to a quiet corner. She was so excited and exhausted that at the moment she could not speak.

"What is the trouble, Miss Fischer?" he asked.

"Is my father here? Oh, tell me that he is here!" she cried.

"He was here not long ago, he and Mr. Dare. What has happened? Tell me; perhaps I can help you."

"I cannot tell you," she moaned, rising unsteadily to her feet. "I must find him; I must find him! Oh, Mr. Parker!" she faltered, laying her hand on his arm and lifting her tear-stained eyes to his face, "I must say something! Tell papa, if you see him, that I was here and that I *know all about it*. Tell him that I know *what he is going to do*, and tell him that I beg him not to do it! I am so frightened! If he comes in here don't let him go away."

She sank back into the chair and covered her face with her hands. It was a new situation for the sailor, and he was distressed and puzzled.

"But what has he done?" he ventured. "Don't be afraid to tell me."

"I can't, I dare not!" she declared, arousing herself and rising to her feet. "Tell him not to do it; tell him it will kill me! If he comes here don't let him go away. Watch him and bring him home to me!"

"I'll do that, miss, and you can depend on me," asserted Long Bill. "I'll take him home the minute he comes here."

"Thank you, thank you, Mr. Parker!" and with a grateful look she turned and hastened to the street.

As she pushed through the screen doors she brushed against Captain Jake Stark, who was just arriving from his eastern journey. The captain dropped his gripsack on the walk and watched Annieta as she hurried down the street. He mopped his face with a huge red handkerchief and whistled softly.

"That's a mighty purty gal," he said to himself, his eyes on the graceful figure until it vanished around the corner.

There were two other resorts near by of which Annieta had heard her father speak, and she visited them, but her mission was in vain. It was nearly eight o'clock, and she hastened to the hall where the meeting was to be held, and followed the crowd into the half-filled auditorium. He was not there, and one of the committee men told her that he understood that her father was not expected until late in the evening, but she waited by the door and eagerly scanned every face.

It was only a short distance to her home, and when the meeting had started she decided to go there. The sky was aflame with lightning, but not a breath of air was stirring.

The tension was relaxed, and as she walked less hurriedly homeward she reflected that possibly her fears and suspicions were groundless. What reason had she to assume that those cylinders contained dynamite? True, it looked like dynamite, but even so, her father was an inventor, an experimenter, and for all she knew he might have some legitimate use for a powerful explosive.

It was dark when she neared the entrance to their flat, and as she approached the grocery store next to it, Dare came from the building and walked rapidly away from her. Under his arm was the parcel!

Her first impulse was to speak to him; then she decided to follow him. It was likely that he would lead her to her father, and once with him she would have no fears. Annieta had no difficulty in following the artist. He walked slowly, picking his way carefully along the crowded street, and exercising much caution in crossing intersections.

He turned into a side street and walked more rapidly. She took little note of where they were going, but kept her eyes on him at a safe distance in the rear. They had gone half a mile or more when Dare slackened his pace and finally came to a stop within the shadow of the Buckingham wall. To avoid passing him Annieta

crossed the street. When she came opposite the point where he had halted, she looked for him, but he had vanished.

At that instant a flash of lightning flamed out of the darkness, and in its glare Annieta caught a glimpse of Dare at the far end of the cul-de-sac between the east wall of the Buckingham place and the vacant house. The gathering storm was about to break and the lightning was vivid and almost incessant, but its next flash showed no figure in the narrow slit between the wall and the house.

With trembling limbs she crossed the street and hesitated at the opening of this dark and forbidding space. Why should he have gone in there? A glance at the building showed that it was vacant, and though she had seen the Buckingham mansion before, she was so confused that she did not recognize it at that moment.

Fear held her back, but an awful dread and suspicion urged her on. Already was heard the rumble of the artillery of the storm, and the space into which Dare had disappeared blazed intermittently with the lightning's glare and then was thick with the blackness of the grave. Into that grave she entered, picking her way when the skies were aflame, and halting in terror when the darkness encompassed her.

Finally Annieta came to the end of the cul-de-sac. To her left she found a gate which was unlatched, and when she opened it she found herself in a small yard, dimly

lighted from the rear windows of tenement-houses to the south of her. She noted that the door opening into the first floor of the vacant house was boarded up, but that the inclined cellar doors were thrown back. A glance proved that the stairs leading to the basement had been recently used.

Women are keener observers of many things than are men, and Annieta knew in a moment that Dare had entered the basement of that vacant house. She picked her way down the stairs and carefully tried the knob of the door. It was locked. She pressed against it with all her frail strength, but it did not give. Then she noted that one of the panels was cracked, and through it she caught a faint gleam of light.

A frenzy born of fear and a madness inspired by a love for her father came over her. She beat on the door until her knuckles were raw and bleeding, and kicked at it with all her strength. The advance blast of the storm came with a roar of wind and a swirl of rain, and her wild cries to her father to open the door mingled in the first fury of the tempest.

Despite the storm, Dare doubtless would have heard the pounding on the door and the shrill accent of her voice had he been in the basement at that time, but before she had reached the door of their hiding-place Dare had crawled into the tunnel.

She stood out in the wild storm beating at the door with her white and delicate hands, crying and moaning



in an agony of terror, her gentle heart torn with fear for the fate of her father and throbbing with her pure love for him—while Fischer and Dare crouched in the tunnel beneath the Buckingham laboratory; crouched there and counted dynamite cartridges and fondled them as a miser fingers gold.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE DYNAMITERS

THE storm was at its height when Annieta staggered from the door. The rain stung her, the hurricane dashed her to earth, but she struggled to her feet, pushed through the gate and ran blindly down the narrow alley until she gained the storm-swept and deserted street.

Distracted and beaten by the fury of the elements, she did not know where she was, though from childhood she had been familiar with that section of the city. She struggled to the corner and took a swift look around. Instantly she recognized the high stone wall and beyond it the old Buckingham mansion, seen dimly through the slanting swirl of rain—and in that moment a glimmer of the truth came to her.

Her father and Wallace Dare were to kill Buckingham! How, she did not know, but that was the meaning of the dynamite, this was the task on which they had labored so many nights, this the key to the mystery and forebodings which had oppressed her!

Beneath the shelter of an awning across the street Annieta paused to regain her strength and to collect her thoughts, and as she became calmer there swept over her a moral and mental reaction.

From the moment she discovered the dynamite she had vaguely associated Buckingham with it, and she had bent all her strength and will to thwarting the crime it suggested; but now that the death of the master of the mills seemed a certainty, she contemplated his fate with a composure which had something of savagery in it.

Why should he not die? Why should he live when her brother and mother were in graves of his making? Why should she put her father in peril for the sake of prolonging the years of this selfish tyrant?

And Alice Buckingham also would be killed! There was a moment when this crazed girl actually revelled in the thought that the fair creature who had won the love of Deane would be blotted from his existence. All that was elemental in her nature came to the surface. Her love for Deane was no longer the shadow of a dream; hope piled fuel on the mounting flames of her passion, and the raucous voice of jealousy shrilled out the tender pleadings of her better self—but only for an instant.

Like one in a trance she felt the clutch of demons at the throat and heart, but she had the power to exorcise them. Her duty stood clear before her mental vision, and she shuddered to think of the wickedness which had possessed her. She must save her father from himself; she must save Alice Buckingham because—because Deane loved her.

As she stood breathless in these irresolute moments, the draperies of a window on the second floor of the mansion were pushed gently aside, and Alice Bucking-

ham gazed out at the wild night. Only the width of a street and a gray stone wall separated them; the one in a bower of light, elegance and luxury—the other clinging to a door to withstand the fury of the tempest, her garments drenched, her hands lacerated, her limbs bruised, her brain numbed with terror and her heart torn by emotions.

With a cry so shrill that it sounded above the roar of the storm, Annieta ran to the middle of the street and raised her arms to the window, but as she did so the draperies closed and the figure of the young mistress of the mansion disappeared.

“She did not see me!” moaned Annieta. “What shall I do; oh! what shall I do?”

She ran to the front of the mansion and looked helplessly at the huge iron gates. She knew that they were locked, but she tugged at them with all her strength. Then she saw the button for the electric bell and she pressed it again and again. Just as she was about to abandon this effort, the door of the mansion opened and a pompous servant peered out.

“Oh, sir, let me in just for a minute!” pleaded Annieta. “You are in danger, sir; in awful danger! Hurry, oh, please hurry——”

“Go away or I’ll call the police!” angrily called the man, and with a threatening gesture he closed the door.

He had not heard her words, and if he had, it is unlikely that he would have paid attention to them. All that he saw and heard was a wretched, bedrabbled



woman of the street, drunk or crazed, clinging at the gates and uttering incoherent pleadings.

A bolt of lightning struck a tree in the Buckingham garden, and the shock stupified her for a moment, but she had long since lost her terror for the storm. Annieta rang the bell until she knew that the door would not again open, and then she hastened along the side street, through the alley and to the basement door. Again she beat on it, again she saw the faint gleam of light through the cracked panel, but no answer was given to her.

Captain Stark entered Long Bill's place and met his former first mate after an absence of nearly a week.

"I'm right glad tew see ye, Bill!" he declared. "I've only lived in this hotel four or five days, but blamed if it don't seem like getting home."

"Glad you feel that way about it, Captain Jake," replied Long Bill. "Never mind those things of yours; I'll have them sent up-stairs. Did you—did you have a successful trip?"

"Wal, rather," he grinned, and then, lowering his voice, "I've had good luck, Bill, ever since I begun doin' things on the square. Honesty's the proper caper, as old King Solomon onct said, and you can bet that from now on I'm going tew be as straight as a string."

"Did you find the man you went to see—Captain Simon Marsh, wasn't it?"

"I found him!" he joyously proclaimed. "He was the man I've been lookin' for a good long while. Say, Bill, I've got a story to tell you that will make your



eyes stick out, but I ain't goin' tew say a word about it down here. After I get somethin' tew eat, an' a quart or so of 'alf-an'-'alf, we'll go up to my room and I'll spin the yarn, an' if you don't say it's the primest thing you ever heered I'll buy anything ye say."

Captain Stark thereupon ordered dinner. While he was waiting for it Schliermacker entered the room, and Long Bill duly presented the German editor to the old sailor, mentioning incidentally that the new guest was occupying the room directly above his.

For some reason he had taken a fancy to Captain Stark, and made a special effort to be agreeable. They talked of the sea, Schliermacker listening with keen interest to the Captain's quaint yarns, asking many questions and narrating several of his own experiences.

The quiver of lightning and a mutter of thunder led Herr Schliermacker to look at his watch. It was eight o'clock.

"It will storm, and I must go," he said, rising and looking through the opened windows. "Young Mister Deane will speak to-night, and I go to hear him. Smart young man, that Deane, eh?"

"Never met him but once, Mr. Slammaker," said the Captain, a piece of steak suspended before his mouth, "but there's something about him that I like."

"I will bring him here after the meeting," volunteered Schliermacker. "Good-night!"

The hall was two blocks away, and he declined to take an umbrella. Captain Stark leisurely finished his

dinner, Long Bill deserting him to attend to customers who had been driven into his place by the storm. Not until the rain had ceased did he find time to rejoin the captain, who was reading an evening paper.

"Let's go up to my room," Long Bill suggested, handing him a cigar. "The rain has cooled the air, and we'll be comfortable there. I'd like to hear what you did in Boston."

"All right, Bill, I'll tell you all erbout it, and mighty glad tew do it."

The entrance to the upper rooms was from the street, and the two men paused a minute to enjoy the cool of the air after the heavy rainfall. Long Bill was watching the flicker of lightning to the east, where the storm was moving out to sea, but he was thinking of "Mascot," and of the uncouth man who stood by his side.

He felt the touch of a hand on his arm, and turned to look into the frightened face of Annieta Fischer. Her eyes were so wild, her beautiful face so haggard with fear and agony, and her garments so dishevelled that he did not at once recognize her. She was breathless from running, and though she tried to speak she could only look appealingly into his face, her hand convulsively clutching his sleeve.

"Why, it's Miss Fischer!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter? Calm yourself and tell us."

"Where is Mr. Deane?" she gasped.

"He is speaking over at the mass meeting."

"Yes, yes; I had forgotten," she whispered, wring-

ing her hands. "I must go to him; I must speak to him!"

With a startled look about, as if not sure of the direction, she turned to go, but Long Bill caught her by the arm and detained her.

"Tell me what's the matter," he said, firmly but kindly. "Something's up, and you needn't be afraid to tell Captain Stark and me what it is. We'll do anything we can to help you. This is Fischer's daughter, Captain."

"Bill an' I have had lots of experience with trouble, Miss," Jake Stark said. "Let us know who's botherin' ye, an' we'll make mighty short work of him, eh, Bill?"

There was something in the voice and in the honest eyes of the old sea captain that gave her confidence.

"Listen!" she said, controlling herself by a brave effort. "Papa and Mr. Dare are going to kill Mr. Buckingham! They are going to blow him up with dynamite! Oh, dear! oh, dear! please do something to stop them—please do something as quick as you can!"

"You are dreaming, child!" declared Long Bill.

"No, no!" she cried. "They're there now! They may have done it already. Oh, hurry, hurry!"

"Where are they? Keep cool a minute and tell us."

"They're in the basement of the house just east of the wall around where Mr. Buckingham lives," she said, summoning all her will power. "I saw Mr. Dare go in there with dynamite, and I know papa is in there, but

they won't let me in. There is a back door, but I couldn't break it in."

"Where is the Buckingham house?" he asked, no longer doubting the horrible truth of her story. Annieta told him, and without a word he rushed to his rooms for weapons, but when he returned she had gone.

"She's ran to the hall after Deane," explained Jake Stark. "I couldn't do anything with her after you'd gone."

"Come on," ordered Long Bill, thrusting a revolver into Stark's pocket. "I'm not dead sure about which way to go, but we can find it. I knew Fischer was crazy, and Dare too!"

"This dynamite game's a new one on me, Bill," declared the Captain. "It's not a gentleman's weapon, nohow, but I'm not afraid tew tackle it. I'm beginning to think since I've been in this town that smugglin's quite genteel."

"Do your talking after this job's over," was Long Bill's command as he set out at a pace the captain found difficult to follow.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE TRAGEDY

THE hall was not filled when Herr Schliermacker entered and secured a seat near the front. Ten minutes later when an officer of the union rapped for order the place was crowded. There were calls for August Fischer. The chairman informed them that Fischer was not in the building, but was expected later.

Then followed a short musical programme, with songs by a singing society organized from the Buckingham mill workers, also selections by their orchestras. This really excellent body of musicians had been founded by the beneficence of the elder Buckingham, and Herr Schliermacker was surprised when he listened to them.

When Deane appeared and stood beside the chairman there was a demonstration which brought a flush of pleasure to his earnest and handsome face. The workmen arose, cheered and threw their hats into the air; the wives and pretty shop-girls waved kerchiefs and added their voices to the hearty welcome. Minutes passed and still the cheering continued, and then the leader of the musicians swung his baton and there was heard the crashing melody of "Hail to the Chief."



He looked out over the cheering multitude, and with his pleasure was mingled a sense of pain. He doubted if he would be with them again. He had come to know them, to sympathize with them, and he believed that he had a right to feel that he had done something to help them, something to make them happier, something to make them better men and citizens.

He noticed a commotion in the rear of the hall. Those who had been unable to obtain seats were banked up several rows deep, and there was a swaying movement as if someone were trying to force a way to the front. Possibly Fischer had arrived? Deane had wondered what emergency could keep the draftsman from so important a meeting.

And then through the crush came the figure of a girl; a girl with wet, clinging and bedraggled garments, her face deathly pale, her eyes unnaturally bright and her body swaying as she almost ran down the aisle. Then he recognized Annieta Fischer.

The wet gown of the girl brushed Schliermacker's hand as she swept past him, and he noted the look of amazement on the face of the young reformer. She walked directly to the space below the centre of the platform, and he watched and tried to listen while Deane bent down as she spoke into his ear.

The applause increased in volume in consequence of this incident, many of the workers knowing Annieta, and assuming that she brought word that her father would be with them shortly.

Her face was calmer when she turned from Deane and retraced her steps to the rear of the hall, but its paleness had been transferred to his. He spoke to the orchestra leader and the music instantly ceased. Out over the excited audience went a telepathic signal that something serious and mysterious had happened. The cheers died on their lips, the flutter of kerchiefs ceased, and even before Deane raised his hand for silence a hush had crept over the throng as they waited with baited breath for the words he would speak.

"My friends," he said in clear and firm accent, "something has happened which calls me away. I am sorry, but I must go at once. I hope that I shall not be detained long, and that it may be my privilege to return and address you."

There was scattered applause followed by a rising murmur of surprise and disappointment. Deane left by the stage door, and he had no sooner vanished than Schliermacker hurriedly arose and pushed his tall form through the crowd and down the stairs.

He reached the street in time to see the girl handed into Deane's carriage. The coachman gave the horses a cut with the whip and they dashed down the street.

\* \* \* \* \*

The tunnel was completed, and the two conspirators only awaited the signal of a light from the laboratory windows to make an end of their murderous work. Fischer had some trouble in securing possession of the proper firing materials, but he obtained them late Thurs-

day afternoon, and it was decided to put the dynamite in place that night.

Dare went to the flat for the package of cartridges and was followed by Annieta, as has been narrated. When he reached the basement of the vacant house Fischer was there, as by agreement, and they took the dynamite, the fuses and other materials and crawled carefully to the far end of the tunnel. They did not complete their work until after Annieta had made her second futile visit to the basement door.

Fischer suggested that they attend the mass meeting and return when it was over.

"Something tells me that *he* will be in that laboratory to-night," he said, "but we have learned that he works late. The later the hour the safer it will be for us. More than that, our absence from the meeting will be an ugly thing against us if we do anything to-night."

"That's right," agreed Dare. "We must make no mistakes at this stage of the game. Tell you what let's do. You go over this place carefully and see that we leave no incriminating evidence behind, and I'll make a trip to the roof and see if a light is burning in the laboratory. If he is there he will be likely to stay there, as you say, until we get back from the meeting."

Fischer assented to this arrangement, but cautioned Dare to be careful, and not to remain long.

The storm had ceased, and the damp, cool air was refreshing to Dare when he gained the roof. He took a cautious glance around and then advanced to the edge.

The skylights of the laboratory were dark. A tree shut off his view to the right, but he thought he heard a noise on the gravelled walk. It was likely one of the stablemen, but he listened intently. It sounded as if some heavy object were being dragged toward the laboratory, and once Dare imagined that he saw the indistinct figure of a man.

The noise ceased, and the watcher was about to return to the basement, when, with a flash, the skylight glowed with the translucent radiance from a cluster of electric lamps!

Dare could hardly restrain an exclamation of joy as he gazed on this sure evidence that their victim stood at last above the mine. As he watched, one of the windows was raised slightly, and he caught a glimpse of a human figure. Dare waited no longer, but hastened back to the basement.

"He is there!" he exclaimed, waving his arms with a gesture of joy.

"Don't talk so loud," whispered Fischer, a grim smile at the thought of coming revenge on his pale features. "I told you he'd be there to-night!"

"Let's do it now!" cried the artist. "Tell you what we'll do! You leave here at once and go direct to the meeting. You're expected there, and I'm not. No one will miss me. You can be there in ten minutes. Look at your watch when you get there, and go to the platform where everyone can see you. I will wait half an hour, or better still, an hour or more. That makes a perfect

alibi for you, and no one will ever suspect me—and it wouldn't make any difference if they did. That's the scheme! Strip off your overalls and blouse; I'll take care of them. Depend on me, old fellow; I never was more calm in my life."

Dare saw that his plan met with some favor in the eyes of his companion.

"I wanted to light that fuse myself," Fischer said, after a pause. "It's due to me to do it, but really I don't suppose it makes any difference. I——"

"Of course it doesn't make any difference," eagerly interrupted Dare. "This is no time for sentiment of that kind. You owe it to Annieta to take every possible care of yourself. Haven't I stood by you from the start? Let me have my way in this one thing. It means only waiting an hour, and the striking of a match. You will be safe, and I'll be three blocks away before that fuse burns to its end. Say yes, old man!"

"I hate to do it, but perhaps it's the best way," he said, and Dare embraced him and danced with delight.

The draftsman removed his overalls and blouse, washed his hands, cleaned his shoes, and made himself as presentable as possible. Dare reminded him that on a muddy night soiled shoes would not be noticed, and when Fischer had completed his toilet his friend asserted that he would pass muster anywhere.

They had removed most of the tools the night before, and were making a final careful inspection of the prem-



ises, when Fischer stopped, laid his hand on Dare's shoulder and placed his finger to his lips.

The rear gate slammed and the next instant there was a thundering rap on the basement door!

The two anarchists looked one at the other with terror-stricken eyes and ashen faces. The noise redoubled, and with it were hoarse and angry cries and the straining of the door as strong men threw their weights against it.

"The police! The police!" gasped Fischer. "My God, Wallace, what shall we do?"

They stood like men frozen in a trance, gazing into each other's eyes. The creaking told them that the heavy door was giving way before the terrific assault made on it.

Fischer was the one to come to his senses.

"This way, this way!" he cried, grasping Dare by the shoulder and starting for the stairs leading to the upper floor. "To the roof! To the roof, man, and over the buildings is our only chance!"

He had dragged the seemingly dazed artist to the foot of the stairs when he broke fiercely away.

"No! no! By God, no!" Dare yelled. "Police or no police, I'll see this thing through! Let go of me, — — —!" and with an oath he pushed Fischer from him with the strength of a maniac.

Hurled back by this unexpected attack, Fischer fell over a flooring joist and lay for a moment stunned by the force of his fall. Dare did not even look at him, but grabbed a candle and plunged into the tunnel.

It is likely that Dare reached the foundation of the laboratory before Fischer regained his feet.

Jake Stark had kicked in one of the narrow basement windows and was laboriously crawling in when he saw Fischer dash to the mouth of the tunnel and disappear in its depths. A moment later the door gave way with a crash and Long Bill and Annieta were in the dark recesses of the basement.

Fischer had taken the only remaining candle, and hardly a ray of light came from the shattered window and the basement doorway.

Those who lived through the horror of the few minutes which followed have not been able to give a coherent account of what happened. That their statements under oath in the great trial of weeks later were conflicting is not to be wondered.

They groped and stumbled in that awful pit, its dank air fetid as if death already had breathed of it; they clutched blindly at the unseen, conscious that some great tragedy was impending, yet powerless to prevent it. The cries and moans of Annieta as she called to her father, the curses and conflicting orders of the men as they staggered in the encompassing gloom, the ghastly look on their faces when seen by the light of a match struck by Long Bill, the black silence of the mouth of the tunnel—these and other horrors came to them in that frightful interval.

A circle of light showed at the basement door, and a patrolman flashed the welcome glow of his night lantern

on the huddled group. Three other officers followed him, and with stern commands they covered Long Bill and Jake Stark with revolvers and ordered them to throw up their hands.

There were expostulations, attempted explanations and a scene which would have been humorous had it not been the prelude to a grim tragedy. Of those near the mouth of the tunnel, none knew but vaguely what had happened, or what was threatened.

"I tell you he went in there!" shouted Jake Stark to the puzzled but determined officer who faced him.

"Who went in where?" demanded the patrolman who now assumed the leadership.

"Fischer," declared the irate captain. "I saw him crawl into that hole, but blamed it if I'm goin' after him!"

The officer directed the rays of his lantern to the mouth of the tunnel, and as the light fell on it Annieta gave a wild cry and darted into it.

"There's papa!" she cried, her voice thrilled with fear and love as she shaded her eyes and peered into the cavern. "He is carrying Mr. Dare! Come to me, papa dear! Oh, won't someone help him? He has fallen. Papa! Papa!"

"Look out, Miss, I'll help him!" growled Jake Stark, turning his back to the armed officer and pushing past her. "What in hell are you tryin' tew do, Fischer? Come out of there an' be damned quick erbout——!"

There was a heave and a shudder as if the earth at

their feet had been struck by a mighty hammer. With the muffled roar came an ear-splitting crash, a stream of white flame like that at the mouth of a cannon, a rush of air carrying with it splinters and broken timbers, a rocking, paralyzing concussion—and then silence.

Deane was at the top of the basement steps when the dynamite exploded. The upsweep of air hurled him back for an instant, but he did not hesitate. The wrecked shoring at the mouth of the tunnel was ablaze, and by its light he saw several figures motionless on the floor of the basement.

The flames had just ignited the skirt of Annieta Fischer, who lay with her head and shoulders on the outer bank of the tunnel. Deane smothered the blaze with his hand and dragged her limp form a few feet away. Just beyond where the poor girl had been hurled, he saw the massive form of Jake Stark, and with a sickening fear in his heart he bent over him.

As Deane caught the body under the arms and started to drag it beyond the reach of the crackling and spreading flames, the old smuggler groaned and opened his eyes.

“Father! Father!” cried Deane, “are you badly hurt?”

The old man struggled bravely to get to his feet, and with Deane’s desperate aid crawled and staggered well away from the mouth of the tunnel. He looked at his rescuer but did not know him.

“What’s the matter, Bill?” he asked weakly, grop-

ing wildly with his hands. "Say, Bill, what's happened?"

His legs trembled, his head dropped and he fell back unconscious into Deane's arms, who laid him gently on the floor, not knowing if he were dead or alive. He plunged again into the tunnel.

But others had come to his aid. Long Bill and one of the officers had recovered, and were tugging at two lifeless figures. The clothes of these dread and shapeless objects were ablaze, their faces and hands were black where the white flame had blistered them, and lacerated where the flying gravel had riddled them. Upon them had been belched the full horizontal force of the explosive.

August Fischer and Wallace Dare had paid the penalty.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### IN THE RUINS OF THE LABORATORY

SHORTLY before the thunder-storm one of the hostlers insisted on seeing Secretary Peters.

"I don't want to bother you, sor," began this honest man, "but there's somethin' wrong goin' on in the house just beyant the stables—the wan on the other side of the wall."

"What have you seen, Michael?"

"I don't exactly know, sor," hesitated that employé. "Perhaps it isn't nothin', but I don't like the look of it. Two or three times lately I've seen strange-lookin' men sneakin' 'round the back way, an' that's the last I could see of them, sor, on account of the fence to the backyard. I thought ye ought to know, sor."

"Thank you, Michael, I'll look into it," said Peters.

This recalled vividly to his mind the two figures he had seen on the roof of this same building early on Tuesday morning two days before. Peters was an excellent secretary, but he was a timid man, and little inclined to act on his own initiative. He felt a sense of helplessness in the absence of his domineering employer. He was tempted to call on Detective Jacoby, but it was a

greater responsibility than he had ever assumed before.

After thinking it over, his fears prevailed, and he decided to take the risk of offending Mr. Buckingham. He therefore called Jacoby on the telephone.

That gentleman responded that he was still indisposed, but that he would come if it was absolutely necessary. Peters assured him of the urgency of the case, and the detective agreed to come at once. The cause of this alarm was not discussed over the wire.

The storm delayed Jacoby nearly an hour, but he was admitted to the mansion shortly after Annieta Fischer had rang the bell and vainly pleaded for admission.

Peters nervously told of seeing the figures on the roof of the vacant building, also of what the hostler had informed him.

"Something is going on," he said, "and I should have told Mr. Buckingham before he went away. Not fifteen minutes ago a woman rang the bell and hung screaming at the gates. It seems uncanny, and I thought it my duty to let you know about it."

"You acted wisely," returned Jacoby. "Have you any idea where Mr. Buckingham is?" He wished to make sure that he alone shared that secret.

"Not the slightest. He often goes away like this, but I usually go with him when he makes long trips. He may come home to-night, and he may stay away a week. He is a very peculiar man, Mr. Jacoby, as you may have noticed. But he is a remarkable man, a very remarkable man!"

"He is, indeed," admitted Jacoby. "Now take me up to the room where you saw those men that morning you told about," he ordered, feeling free in the mansion for the first time.

"This way, Mr. Jacoby," said Peters, and he led him up two flights of stairs to his room in the rear of the building. He softly raised a window and threw back the curtains, and as he looked out he uttered an involuntary exclamation of surprise and delight.

"Look! Look!" he whispered, pointing to the laboratory.

"What's the matter?"

"Mr. Buckingham is there now!" he exclaimed.

"How do you know?"

"Because there are lights in the laboratory," he softly explained. "No one else has a key to it, and no one would dare try to enter it. I'm glad he's back. Hadn't you better go, Mr. Jacoby?"

"Not yet. Now tell me just where you saw those men."

"Do you see that tree?" asked Peters. "They stood to the left of it on this edge of the roof, and I saw them just as plain as——"

Through the halls there sounded the insistent ring of a bell.

"It's that woman again!" Peters whispered, every nerve tingling.

"Perhaps it's Mr. Buckingham," suggested Jacoby, who saw nothing strange that a bell should ring.

‘No, no! Mr. Buckingham carries keys to both gates. Come with me, please.’

They hastened down the stairs in time to find the butler standing undecided by the door.

“Let me attend to this,” said Jacoby. “Come with me and see if this is the same one that rang before.”

The servant opened the door, and the three men walked down the steps and to the gate, Peters bringing up the rear. Jacoby instantly recognized the one who stood there.

“Is Mr. Buckingham in?” demanded Deane.

“Give me your card and I will see, sir,” said the discreet detective.

“I do not wish to see him,” quickly responded Deane, gazing with some amazement at the three men who confronted him. “Tell him that he is in danger! Tell him to remain within doors to-night, and not to venture out under any circumstances. Tell him——”

“What is the reason for——?”

“I have no time to explain! He may be killed if he ventures out!”

Deane had turned and started away before he finished these words, and the three who listened to them were too dumfounded to call after him. For a moment they stood looking into one another’s faces. The private secretary was in an agony of terror.

“Come to the back of the house and call Mr. Buckingham,” ordered Jacoby, the first to recover his self-possession.

"No, no!" whined Peters. "I will go in and speak to him on the telephone."

"Go ahead," said the disgusted detective. "I'm going around the back way."

Jacoby cautiously started along the winding path which circled the mansion to the right. The message delivered by Deane was a most astounding one, but there was no cowardly streak in Jacoby, no matter what else might be alleged against him.

His mind was active during the thirty seconds it took him to pass to the rear of the mansion. There could be no doubt that there was a plot on foot to kill Buckingham. How did it happen that Deane knew of it? What was his connection with it? Why his mad haste to get away?

Jacoby was certain that Deane did not know him, and it was unlikely that he had met Peters. Had Deane taken part in the conspiracy and repented of it at the last moment?

It suddenly occurred to him that the prowlers about the vacant building were lying in wait for Mr. Buckingham. Had the millionaire learned of this? Was this why he had turned detective? Why had they not killed him a few minutes before when he entered the yard to pass into the laboratory? Probably his disguise had saved him. It looked as if there was desperate work ahead, and Jacoby cursed the illness which had forced him to idleness.

He turned the corner and came in sight of the labo-



ratory. From this point he could not see if lights were still burning in the little brick hut. For a moment he stood undecided gazing at that mysterious structure, and then——

From its glass roof tore forth a blast of flame; a roaring, thundering, quivering blast which lifted him and hurled him back into a bed of flowers. He was dazed and gasping for breath, but he did not lose consciousness for a moment. The mansion rocked in the concussion, and he heard the plate glass shiver and fall in showers to the ground. A piece of masonry fell near him, he heard the whistle of other missiles, and then the cries and steps of men running to and from the scene of the explosion.

Jacoby struggled to his feet. The wrecked laboratory was a furnace of roaring flames, and the garden in which he stood was light as day. The corner of the laboratory to the north of him had been torn away, but most of the walls stood erect—a shell within which was a crackling, raging torch of fire reaching far up into the air.

Already the garage and the stables were aflame, but that did not concern the detective. He ran toward the building, but when fifty feet away the intense heat drove him back. Several men ran from the rear door of the stable, amongst them the hostler who had warned Secretary Peters earlier in the evening.

“Was Mr. Buckingham in there?” demanded Jacoby, pointing to the furnace with one hand and shading his eyes with the other.

"I think he was, sor," gasped the man, who had been hurled the full length of the garage. "I saw the lights go up not fifteen minutes ago."

"Any of your men killed?" indicating the stables, from which the horses were being dragged.

"I think not, sor," said the dazed hostler.

"Open those gates!" commanded Jacoby. "Wake up, man! I'll send in an alarm!"

Thus aroused, Michael dashed past the burning laboratory and opened the rear gates. When Jacoby gained admittance to the mansion he learned that Peters had already sent in the alarm. The first engine was clanging down the street when Jacoby regained the yard, and the advance line of idlers and spectators had already poured through the opened gates.

To Jacoby's great relief a detachment of police arrived from the adjacent station, who drove the mob from the yard and gave the firemen every opportunity. The released and frightened horses trampled down the gardens, one automobile had been rolled into a crocus bed, and another jammed into a flowering hedge, while the distracted servants looked helplessly on or were busy taking their personal effects from the threatened mansion.

Dolly had called on Alice in the afternoon, and the two cousins dined together. Alice had induced Dolly to spend the evening with her, and during and after the storm these fair girls chatted over the details of their coming visit to the sea-shore, unconscious of the grim

happenings in those hours, and with no premonition of the impending tragedy! "Oh! I cannot say it!" Dolly was describing the glories of her new gown when the explosion occurred. At first they thought the house had been struck by lightning. Dolly was thrown to the floor and showed signs of fainting, but Alice, though much frightened, attempted to reassure her.

After the first shock they hastened to the main hall of the mansion. Screaming maids were running to and fro; the marble floors were strewn with shattered glass; and the scene was one to strike terror into hearts stouter than theirs. Not one seemed to know what had happened.

Secretary Peters came running through the hall from the rear of the mansion. His eager face was ashen in its horror and misery. He was waving his hands and talking incoherently to himself, when he almost ran into Alice and Dolly. "Oh, what has happened, Peters, what has happened?" cried Alice.

The unfortunate man looked into her face and burst into tears.

"I dare not tell you!" he moaned, wringing his hands. "I dare not tell you! It is too awful, too awful!" "I am not afraid to hear it," she said, but her voice and her blanched face belied her brave words. In that moment, her suspicion of the truth came to her.

"Your father was in the laboratory!" he faltered,

looking for an instant into her eyes and then averting them. "Oh! I cannot say it!"

"Speak!" she cried, grasping him by the arm. "Tell me what has happened, Peters!"

"He has been blown to pieces, Miss——!" and without a cry he sank limp to the floor.

The wall between the laboratory and the garage had been blown in by the force of the explosion, and before the first stream of water had been thrown on these two buildings they were a mass of fire. It was apparent from the first that the ferocity of the flames in the laboratory was due to the presence in it of chemicals or highly inflammable oils, and not until they were consumed did the water thrown on it have the slightest effect.

It was soon ascertained that the four men who slept above the stables were comparatively uninjured. These brave men rallied from the shock and at the risk of their lives led out the horses, and after the early confusion tethered them in the southeast corner of the gardens.

Fire also broke out in the vacant building to the east of the wall, but that was soon under control.

A detective on the regular force hurriedly acquainted Jacoby with the facts then ascertained. He told him of the tunnel, of the discovery of the dead bodies of Fischer and Dare, also of the arrest of Long Bill and the escape of a heavily bearded man who had been injured, but who



had been taken away by a young man who had been identified as Deane. These two would undoubtedly be arrested later. A young woman, supposed to be the daughter of Fischer, had been badly hurt in the explosion, but would probably live.

The whole of the conspiracy stood revealed to Jacoby, but he could not join in the search for the guilty ones until the glowing laboratory yielded up its ghastly secret. Was it the pyre of the body of Buckingham? Was his charred corpse within the retort formed by those white hot walls?

Those were the questions which held him fascinated on the near edge of the heat zone.

But he must wait until the plunging streams of water had done their work, and in that interval he told the detective the salient facts of the conspiracy as he understood it. He told of Buckingham's suspicions against Deane, of his heated interview with him, of the death of Fischer's son and wife, of Deane's advance of money to Fischer, and then he described The Well where all of these characters met and doubtless conspired.

He was talking with Stirner, one of the best men on the official force, and they had helped one another on several occasions, and he gave him all of the essential facts in his possession except one. Jacoby did not tell Stirner that Buckingham had been doing some detective work on his own account. In the first place he had no right to tell this. His employer had confided it to him



none even excluding Peters from the secret—and moreover it had no particular bearing on the case. If Buckingham's dead body lay in the ruins of the laboratory it would prove only that the assassins had done their work regardless of his disguise, and if he were not in it at the time of the explosion he was alive and safe. In the latter event he would not excuse Jacoby for breaking his word, so that cautious detective said nothing of this unimportant feature of the mystery. Worn Stirner hurried to his captain with the clues he had obtained, and Jacoby edged near and nearer to the now steaming walls of the laboratory. In half an hour the fire in the garage and stables was under control, and torrents of water were directed on the smaller structure. Stirner had returned by the time it was possible to begin the work of investigation, and the two took charge of the gruesome task as Buckingham's servants stood by. Even before they had ventured into the space within the tottering brick walls the firemen knew the secret. Their nostrils told them that death was there, and Jacoby overheard their remarks, noted the shaking of their heads, and guessed the truth, but he hoped against hope that they might be mistaken and they had not the official force. If they had not been in this inferno three minutes when they found it lost. None but a fireman or one accustomed to the tragedies of the flames would have recognized the charred and shapeless mass as something which once had enveloped the soul of a human being.

One conclusion was inevitable—it was the corpse of Amos Buckingham! Though cold in death, August Fischer and Wallace Dare had not been cheated of their revenge!

## CHAPTER XIX

### BEHIND THE BARS

In the wild ride from the mass meeting to the Buckingham mansion, Annietta attempted to tell Deane what she had learned. The poor girl was sadly confused, moreover she was positive of nothing except that Dare had taken a package supposed to contain dynamite into the basement of a vacant building near the Buckingham mansion.

From her hurriedly told story, Deane was convinced that Fischer and Dare were plotting the death of Buckingham, but he arrived at an utterly erroneous diagnosis of their method. It must be considered that he knew little or nothing of Buckingham's habits, or of the proximity of the laboratory, and the thought that Fischer and Dare had dug a tunnel to it, naturally did not occur to him.

But there was no doubt in his mind that they planned to kill Buckingham. Dynamite suggested bombs, and he quickly decided that they were using the vacant house as a place of observation and a base of operations. It was not probable—so he logically reasoned—that they had yet constructed the bombs, and he soothed Annietta

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by assuring her that it would be an easy task to save her father from himself.

Before the swiftly moving carriage had neared the Buckingham mansion, he had mastered the situation to his own satisfaction. He felt sure that the millionaire manufacturer was in no serious danger, and his first sensations of alarm and horror changed to bitterness against Fischer and Dare, against himself and all the world.

Why did Fate thus pursue and harass him? What had he done that this final ignomy should be put on him?

How strange his mission that night! He had left a cheering multitude—for what purpose? To warn the father of the woman he loved, that men whom he had befriended were plotting his assassination! It was not enough that he had surrendered his hope for Alice's love; it was not enough that a past for which he was not to blame had arisen to blight his career—he must be smirched with the unutterable disgrace of association with dynamiters; he must be classed and reviled as a patron of anarchy! Would this satiate his Nemesis?

He heard the sobbing of the innocent girl who sat by his side, felt the throbbing of her body as the lurching of the carriage brought them in contact, and all the pity in his heart went out to her. His misery was great, but what was it compared with the burden which had fallen on her frail shoulders? He took her hand in his and pressed it gently.



"Be brave, little girl; be brave and pray for the best," he said, and at the touch of his hand and the sound of his voice she looked up and smiled through her tears.

When several blocks from the mansion he saw two patrolmen standing on the corner. Ordering the driver to slacken his speed, Deane called out to them: "Follow this carriage to Mr. Buckingham's place," he shouted. "There may be trouble there."

The officers understood and started on a run after the galloping horses.

Annieta looked at him with startled eyes, and started to speak, but did not. Surely he knew what was best! A minute later the horses reared back and the carriage came to a sudden stop. They were in front of the Buckingham mansion. "I'll be back in a minute," he said, springing out and hastening to the gates.

His interview with Jacoby, Peters and the butler has already been narrated. When he returned to the carriage, Annieta was gone. The coachman pointed to where she had vanished, and ordering him to follow to the front of the vacant house, Deane ran to the opening of the narrow space between it and the Buckingham wall.

He had reached the cellar doorway when the explosion occurred, and the two officers were not far behind him.

When Deane had helped to drag the bodies of Fischer



and Dare from the mouth of the tunnel, and that light held possession of him.

He must take his father to a place where his injuries could be attended to. "He had no doubt that Anna was dead, but he owed a duty to me; only the man whose rugged form then lay at the edge of the pile of first-aid boxes, and the instant Deane hesitated to go out from the tunnel.

Deane forgot and forgave all the past in that supreme moment. He clutched Long Bill by the arm, and the officers were bending over the bodies of Fischer and Dare.

"Help me get him out of here, Long Bill!" he said, and without a word the sailor grasped his former captain by the shoulders. Deane took hold of the huge legs, and they moved swiftly up the stairs and down the cul-de-sac. The captain was no light load, but in this emergency these two strong men did not feel its weight.

They saw the torch of the flaming laboratory and felt its heat as they hastened to the street. Not three minutes had passed since the explosion, and those attracted by it were pouring through the iron gateway. The police had not yet arrived.

Deane's horses had halted at the explosion, but the coachman drove back with them just as he and Long Bill reached the sidewalk. It was difficult to lift Captain Stark into the carriage, but they finally did so.

"Drive to my apartment," ordered Deane. "Jump in, Bill!"

The sailor bent over the figure of the one he had

The tall sailor wiped the perspiration from his face but did not move.

"Come on!" cried Deane. "Come on, there's no time to lose. He may be dying!"

"I'm going back after her. I love her," Long Bill said simply.

For an instant Deane hesitated. In after-hours the eloquence of that declaration and that attitude came back to him, but at the moment he dimly appreciated it.

"I had forgotten," he said. "You're right, Long Bill. Carry her here; I'll wait for you!"

"You take care of Jake, and send back the first carriage you see," ordered the sailor, and before Deane could protest he had started on a run back to the basement.

A few blocks away Deane hailed a cab and sent it back to the vacant house, but Long Bill never used it. He had picked up the unconscious girl and had reached the foot of the stairs when the officers halted him. He earnestly protested that he had no connection with the crime, and that his only wish was to save the life of the injured girl—if life still remained. The gruff patrolmen were impressed with his sincerity, but told him it was their duty to hold him as a witness, if not as a principal.

Long Bill was forced to admit that they had no alternative, and it was at his suggestion that one of them went to call an ambulance.

The sailor bent over the figure of the one he had

loved from the hour he saw her. By no word or sigh had he betrayed to her or to anyone—until a moment before—the passion which had crept into his rough and honest heart.

Forty years had rolled past since he first saw the light of day on an Illinois farm, and he had witnessed many things and learned many things, but no schoolboy was more of a novice in the art of love-making.

He knew only that he loved Annieta Fischer. He had wondered a hundred times how he could make himself worthy of her love, how he should make it known to her, but the path was one in which he groped blindly. The day had come when she was alone in the world. Her father lay dead on the cold clay just beyond the hem of her skirt.

There was not a mark on the pale beautiful face upturned to his sad gaze, but the tender hands were bleeding where she had pounded on the door. The sailor was not unskilled in medicine, and he learned that the spark of life lingered. He was rubbing her wrists with his calloused hands when other officers arrived with the ambulance and professional surgeons.

And thus they parted after his first declaration of love to a woman—the lover unseen, his vows voiceless—he to a cell in a jail, she to a cot in a hospital.

In the meantime Deane had driven to his apartments with the senseless body of Jake Stark in the seat beside him. Once or twice the captain muttered and attempted

to arouse himself, but each time he fell back in Deane's arms.

The servant helped carry him in. The house physician was called, and other medical attendance summoned. The examination showed that several ribs on his left side had been fractured, probably by a flying timber, also that he was suffering from shock and from the inhalation of gases. Deane called the elder of the surgeons aside.

"Has he a chance to live, doctor?" he asked. "Tell me the truth!"

"It is impossible to tell until he revives from the shock," the surgeon said, after a pause. "He seems a man of rugged physique, and his external injuries while painful are not necessarily dangerous. What I fear more than anything else is that he has inhaled flames. We shall know in a few hours."

The door opened and a servant entered, followed by two men in uniform.

"Which of you is Stanley Deane?" asked one of the officers.

"I am Stanley Deane."

"You are under arrest!" said the spokesman of the two. Then his eyes fell on the bushy hair and bearded face of the patient.

"That's Captain Stark, I suppose?" he said.

Deane bowed but said no word.

"He must come with us too," declared the officer.



"He cannot be moved at present," quietly said the surgeon in charge. "Who is your captain?"

"Captain Hogan," replied the man in uniform, visibly impressed by the dignity and authority of the surgeon.

"Telephone to Captain Hogan that Doctor Cosgrave has charge of this case, and that he cannot permit the patient to be removed at present," he ordered, and then the mention of his name the officer saluted and did as he was told.

Under the eye of the remaining policeman, Deane held a brief conference with Dr. Cosgrave. He asked him to notify Tom Harkness and Mr. Earnsworth of his arrest at once, and to have them a strange form filled, if it would be accepted. At this time he knew nothing of the death of Buckingham, but he was too familiar with criminal practices to protest against the action of the police authorities. Dr. Cosgrave agreed to look closely after his interests, and the two men turned to listen to the officer.

"Captain Hogan accepts your word for it, Dr. Cosgrave," he said, "and the other man may stay here as long as you say, but we must have a policeman here to keep watch on him."

"That is customary, and there is no objection," said Dr. Cosgrave.

The officers waited while Deane packed a satchel with personal effects. He had no doubt but that he would speedily be released on bail, but he was prepared for



the worst. He took a long last look at Jake Stark. Tears stood in his eyes as he gazed into that homely and kindly face.

One arm lay across the white coverlet, and on it showed the tattooed scales of "Old Rattletail" coiled about the brawny muscles which were exposed half-way to the elbow.

The sinister diamond eye in the snake's head gleamed evil-eyed from the knuckle-joint of the middle finger, and seemed crouched and ready to spring at the one who dared approach the stricken giant to whom he had clung for many long and eventful years.

The old man moved slightly and groaned in his sleep. The arm raised slightly from the spread.

"Take a reef in her, Long Bill!" he muttered, his eyelids fluttering. "Take a reef in her! It's blowing like hell, an' she's makin' bad weather of it!"

Deane placed his hand on the fevered brow, stooped over and kissed the bearded lips, and then turned and faced Dr. Cosgrave.

"I leave him in your care, doctor," he said. "Do for him everything your skill can suggest. I am ready, officer."

## CHAPTER XX

### THE DRAG-NET

TOM HARKNESS, Mr. Farnsworth and others hurried to the Buckingham mansion. Alice's grief was pitiful. They tenderly conducted her from the gloomy place, and during the weeks which followed she saw it no more.

The Farnsworths lavished on her all that sympathy can offer, but deeper than the grief over the fate of her father was a remorse which no loving words could assuage.

A thousand times she lived over again the stormy interview with her father, a quarrel precipitated by her greeting to Deane. It was her first open rebellion, and every word which passed between them was seared on her brain. Since that evening, their discourse had been that of enemies forced to remain under one roof and to tolerate each other's society.

From the moment she defied him, his attitude changed. All his sternness disappeared, and in place of it was an air of sorrow over the wilfulness of a child. She had not yielded in the slightest to this softened demeanor; on the contrary, it had fortified her pride and encouraged her stubborn will. He should make the

advances for a reconciliation; he should learn that his daughter had inherited some of his unbending traits.

This feeling was foreign to the true Alice Buckingham. She had the proper spirit of a young woman, but her pride was tempered by a winning tenderness bequeathed by her mother. In the days immediately after the scene with her father she had been able to justify her every word and action; but things look different when death strikes down those with whom we quarrel. And he was dead! Dead without having heard the words of reconciliation for which he must have longed! This was her punishment, and she did not shrink from it. But life is stronger than death—the first is eternal, the second an episode—and when the days had passed, the fair young girl turned her thoughts from the vault to which the shapeless body found in the laboratory had been taken. Dolly and others had kept the papers from her, and no hint of the startling developments had reached her ears. She knew only that anarchists had killed her father. One morning she told Dolly that she wished to know what had occurred. The latter pleaded with her, urging that the sensational reports would throw her into fresh and wholesome excitement, also asserting that the papers were full of horrid lies. "Lies about what, Dolly?" she asked, with even livelier interest. "Hush! don't tell me anything about it," declared

Dolly, who was eager to relate all she knew. "The doctor said I shouldn't."

"Doctors are very wise," admitted Alice, with a wan smile, "but you have aroused my curiosity, and you may as well satisfy it."

"I don't dare to," persisted Dolly.

"Then I will find out for myself," quietly declared her cousin, the color mounting to her cheeks for the first time since her affliction. "Don't treat me like a child."

"If I must, I must, I suppose," eagerly responded the other, "but you mustn't believe a word I tell you. I don't mean that," she hesitated, "but you mustn't believe anything wrong against Stanley Deane, because he isn't guilty. I know he isn't guilty. Tom is sure he will come out all right, and Tom is right about everything. You see——"

"What are you talking about?" cried Alice, rising from the couch, her dark eyes large with wonder. "Stanley Deane guilty? Guilty of what?"

"He isn't guilty of anything," breathlessly declared Dolly, "and that's what I'm trying to tell you. But—but—but they have arrested him and they won't let him out of jail. Tom tried the best he could, but they——"

"Mr. Deane arrested?" she exclaimed. "Are you jesting, Dolly? Why was he arrested? Tell me, tell me!"

Dolly hesitated a moment, bit her red lips and wrinkled her pretty brow.

"I'm making an awful mess of this," she stammered,

"but please, please don't get excited! The mean old papers say that Stanley was in the conspiracy to—to kill your father!"

The startled look which came to Alice's eyes with this tactless announcement flamed in an instant into one of indignation and anger. She sprang to her feet.

"It's a lie!" she cried, catching Dolly by the shoulders and shaking her. "How dare you tell me such a thing! It's an awful, an infamous lie!"

"Of course it is," she sobbed. "I told you it was! It's not my fault! Don't, Alice, you're hurting me!"

"Forgive me, Dolly, I did not know what I was doing," she said, and threw her arms about her cousin. After this April shower of tears both felt better, and Alice listened calmly to the disjointed and fragmentary story told by the disobedient Dolly.

Later in the day Harkness called, and the substance of his account combined with that narrated by Dolly may be condensed as follows:

When Deane arrived at the police station he was informed that he was charged with complicity in the murder of Buckingham, and that therefore no offer of bail could be entertained. He submitted to search and was placed in a cell. Harkness called half an hour later, but was not permitted to see the prisoner. While he was protesting against this, Farnsworth arrived, and the influence of this powerful financier prevailed over that of the younger and less-known Harkness.

The two were conducted to the cell occupied by the



young reformer. He greeted them calmly, and quietly and frankly told what little he knew about the murder. He did not seem the least disturbed over the outcome, so far as he was concerned, but was strangely agitated over the injuries sustained by Captain Stark. Deane offered no explanation of why he had taken this stranger to his rooms, but pleaded with Harkness to see that everything possible, medically and legally, be done in his behalf.

He also requested that Judge Sawyer be retained to represent him. He had studied law under the old judge, and between the two there existed the love and respect of father and son. While this conference was in progress, Saxon was admitted to the jail, and at once volunteered his services on Deane's behalf. While the young lawyer was not in sympathy with many of the views entertained by the gifted pessimist, he recognized his marked legal ability and counted him a friend. He accepted his offer and warmly thanked him for it.

Few of the twenty odd members of The Well escaped arrest. Saxon and Pierre Daubeney were the more conspicuous exceptions. "Braidwood Pete Magoon," "Dummy Malakoff," Steinbach and several others were captured when the police descended on them less than an hour after the explosion. Others were taken from their homes, charged with a part in the conspiracy and held without bail.

In addition to these denizens of The Well, there were caught in the drag-net a dozen or more of the officers

and active members of the trade-union. Within twenty-four hours the jails contained two score of prisoners, and as many more were suspected and kept under surveillance.

The metropolis was in a furor of rage and excitement. Nothing is so repugnant to the American sense of fairness and ethics as an exhibition of dynamite anarchy, and here was a case so diabolical that it aroused the public to a frenzy of crimination.

The wildest stories circulated and found credence. It was rumored that Buckingham was the first victim of a score who had been marked for assassination; that an international plot against employers of labor had been originated, and that force and revenge were to supplant conservative trade-union efforts. The sensational papers were in their element, but they refrained from making direct charges against Deane.

It was intimated that the police had a very strong circumstantial case against the young reformer, but his wealth and aristocratic antecedents protected him against loose charges and invective. The detectives refused to discuss his connection with the death of Buckingham, but their efforts were untiring. The public was informed that Deane was well acquainted with Fischer and Dare, that he had suddenly been summoned from the mass meeting by the daughter of the dead anarchist, that he was in or near the basement at the time of the explosion, and that he had aided one of the more desperate of the anarchists to escape.

These facts were beyond dispute, and it looked black for Deane. The millions who followed the published reports of developments were willing and eager to believe that yet more startling evidence against the young millionaire and aristocrat was in possession of the police.

The fate of the other prisoners attracted little notice. Captain Jake Stark received some attention by reason of the fact that Deane had attempted to rescue him. There was no question of the guilt of Long Bill, and it was understood that he had confessed.

Annieta Fischer was described as "the beautiful Queen of Anarchy," and there was lively interest when it was declared that she probably would live. Her name was linked in various ways with that of Deane, thus giving a certain romantic glamour to the grim facts and grotesque reports.

The public prosecutor announced that all records would be broken in bringing the guilty to justice. A special grand jury was called. Certain of the testimony was submitted, after which true indictments were made against Deane, William Parker, Jacob Stark, Peter Magoon, Ignace Malakoff, Henreich Steinbach and thirty-one others, most of whom were members of The Well or identified with the striking employés of the Buckingham mills.

The metropolis thereupon waited impatiently for the day set for the opening of the trial.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE LIFTED VEIL

"THERE'S a lady in the consultation room who wishes to see you."

Deane looked up from a book to see one of the jail guards standing before his cell and tapping on the iron bars with a huge brass key. It was the end of his second week in the Tombs, and he had fully won the modest meed of popularity with those who held him prisoner. Possibly the names of Farnsworth and Judge Sawyer had weight; certain it is that the young reformer had all the privileges accorded one charged with murder.

"A lady to see me? Who is she, Harris?" he asked, dropping the book and stepping to the front of the cell. Harris already had the key in the lock.

"I don't know," he replied, swinging the heavy door noiselessly back on its hinges. "She came in a carriage, sir, and she's in deep mourning with a black veil over her face, but I can tell from her voice that she's pretty. You'd better see her, sir."

Deane looked blankly at him for a moment, then turned and walked back and forth in the narrow confines of his cell.



"It cannot be possible!" he muttered, then aloud to Harris: "Did she positively refuse to give her name?"

"She wouldn't give her name, sir, but she did say that she was sure you would see her."

"Take me to her, Harris!"

Side by side with the guard, he hurried past the long tier of cells, down a narrow flight of stairs, through massive steel doors which were unlocked at a nod from Harris, until at last they stood before one of the consultation rooms beyond the noisome atmosphere of the prison proper. An attendant opened the door, and with a wildly throbbing heart Deane entered the plainly furnished room.

He was no stranger to this oasis in the great prison. At least once a day he had entered it to confer with Judge Sawyer or Saxon, and on rare but more delightful occasions he had been privileged to meet Harkness and other friends who stood stanchly by him in this crisis, but never did hope mount so high as when he looked eagerly about the room for his mysterious caller.

She was seated at the far side of a centre table which was littered with books and papers. In an instant he recognized her!

In that instant he stopped, poised between emotions of unutterable hope and of the blackest despair. In that moment he was oblivious to the past and reckless of the future—he was conscious only that he faced a present—a present thrilled with the verdict of his happiness or woe.



Only a few feet separated them. Beyond the draped outline of her head and shoulders the sunlight streamed into a window, its iron bars casting parallel shadows across the table on which her little hands rested.

For that moment both were motionless. Then she stood erect, tossed aside the crêpe which covered her pale and beautiful face, took a step forward and extended her hands.

"Mr. Deane," Alice Buckingham faltered, tears brimming in her dark and glorious eyes, "Mr. Deane, I have come to tell you I know that you are innocent!"

And in that moment he knew. Had they exchanged ten thousand whispered vows he would not have been surer that her love was his. The message was not conveyed to him in the words she uttered. Neither was it in the way in which she spoke—her manner was modest, almost frightened; but there was something back of those tear-brimmed eyes which told, without wishing to tell, the sweetest story a man can listen to.

The grim jail no longer existed. The mean room became an enchanted chamber, but his eyes held only the timid little black-draped figure, with its out-stretched hands, parted lips and lashes wet with tell-tale tears.

Hope never dies in the heart of one who loves. His life had grown dark as the midnight gloom of his cell, yet he had dared hope for a moment like this. His past had arisen to haunt him, he had imagined that she had turned coldly against him, unmerited obloquy had tarnished his name, he faced the dread charge of taking the



"I have come to tell you I know that you are innocent."

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life of a human being by means most despicable, but the hope for her love did not die.

He had made his plans and dreamed over them. The trial should result in his triumphant acquittal; a triumph so sweeping that she should acknowledge his innocence. Then he would do some great thing. When fame was his, then he would woo her, and she should wait for him. There would come a day when he could tell her of his unknown past, confident that her love for him would close her eyes to it. It was a long and dangerous path, but he could scale the heights to which it led.

Only an hour before he had reviewed this plan step by step, and had found it good. He would be patient, he would be cautious. It might take a year, it might take five—he could wait; she must wait.

He had vainly thought to harness Love; to put a bit between his smiling lips, blinders over his laughing eyes, to check him when he ran, to goad him when he faltered. As well try to harness the avalanche when the warm kisses of the sun impel it to leap to the embrace of the smiling valley below.

He who calculates with Love is lost. Stanley Deane tossed his plans to the winds of his passion. She was his, and he clutched what the gods had given him.

“Alice! Alice, my darling! I love you, I love you!” he cried, and he caught the little black-draped figure in his arms and pressed it to his heart.

He saw the startled look which leaped into her eyes;



heard the little gasp of surprise as his arms closed about her; the perfume of her hair was in his nostrils and the warmth of her breath on his cheeks; he felt the trembling of her sweet body as he held it fast—but none of these said him nay. She was folded unresisting in his arms—this was their betrothal!

No need in such a moment for words. Had there come to his tongue the divine frenzy for which poets yearn, it would not have added to the eloquence of that voiceless moment when she raised her face to his in loving surrender.

In the radiant minutes which followed they did as millions of lovers have done before, and as millions will do again so long as this old globe of ours pulsates with force and life. What they said was feverish and incoherent. Love is stately only when it is thwarted or bowed in sorrow—when unimpeded it babbles like an artless brook; and this is as it should be.

Then they found themselves sitting sedately at the table—not too sedately—her hands in his, their faces not far apart, her veil sadly disarranged, her cheeks flushed and his glorified—both of them supremely and selfishly happy. What else in life is worth fighting and living for?

Deane's plans had been shattered—triumphantly shattered—but there still remained a task which he could not shirk. It was in the nature of an anti-climax, but in that hour he felt that he had the strength which could remove mountains.



"Sweetheart," he began, "I have something to tell you—something very important."

"You have been telling me something very important, haven't you, Stanley?" she asked, laughing into his sober face.

"The most important thing in the world, dearest, but what I am to tell you now should have come first," he replied. "But it was your fault, Alice. When you held out your hands and made me the happiest man living, I forgot all else. Now I must come back to earth, and I hate to do it. Alice, darling, would you be willing to marry an impostor?"

This strange question did not startle her as he had expected it would. She looked up at him quickly, a peculiar smile on her face.

"No impostor has yet asked me to marry him," she replied, her eyes dancing and her cheeks deliciously crimson. "I know of an impostor who took me by surprise and made me listen to many declarations, but I knew all about them weeks and weeks ago."

"And I know one who listened to those declarations and who made some in return," he said, drawing nearer to her. "But this is very serious, Alice, sweetheart, and really I am not-jesting. You have known me as the son of Admiral Stanley Deane, whose name I bear and am legally entitled to, but you do not know that I am not connected with that family by any ties of blood. I—I am——"

"You are the dearest and best impostor that ever lived, and I love you!" she interrupted.

"But you don't know! You——"

"I do know!" she declared, with a confidence which for the moment puzzled him. "You are the adopted son of Admiral Deane, and he and Sir Whitaker Deane were so proud of you that they made you their heir. Do I not know, Sir Stanley Deane?"

"I had forgotten; your father told you!" exclaimed Deane. "Sweetheart, if you only knew how miserable you made me that night. I have thought of it a thousand times since, and there have been moments when I felt that I had lost you forever."

"I'm sure I don't know what you mean," she said, her eyes opening wide. "I made you miserable? How?"

"The night I called on your father to confer with him about the strike," he hurriedly explained. "We had a quarrel, and during it he told me that he knew that I was not the son of Admiral Deane, and that in all probability no one else in the city had learned that fact abroad. After parting with him in anger I met you in the hall way, and you were so cold and formal that I felt sure he had told you the story, and that you despised me for it. But you did not, did you, sweetheart? Tell me that you did not!"

A look of pain came to her eyes and her lips trembled.

"I was not thinking of you," she faltered. "Oh, Stanley, I wish I could wipe that night out of my life!

I have been very unhappy, but have tried not to show it. My mother died when I was two years old, and since then papa has been so engrossed in his own affairs that it has seemed to me that he did not care for my love. He took little interest in what I did, and I came to resent it. While we were talking that evening, papa stood at the far end of the hall, gazing at me with a look which made me very angry. I assumed that you had not agreed. Your looks showed that, and when I found that papa was glaring at me, I was so furious that I presume I acted impolitely toward you."

"Not that," he declared, "but you were so distant that I could put only one construction on it. Do you recall our walk in the garden in the morning?"

"Yes," she said softly.

"And the rose you gave me? I have it yet. Your conduct changed so that I was sure Mr. Buckingham had seen us in the garden and warned you against me."

"I knew nothing then of your secret," Alice said, "and until you had left that night papa never mentioned your name, neither did he afterwards. He told me that—that he did not want me to—to associate with you, and we had a dreadful quarrel. I said things to him which I should not have said, and after that time we hardly spoke. And now—and now he is dead!" and the distressed girl sobbed in his arms.

"I'm a selfish brute to have thought of such a thing," Deane declared, when he had soothed her and brought a smile back to her lips. "I loved you, and wished a

chance to tell you of a mystery which hangs over my life, but I feared your father had told you things which would make you think me a cad for assuming a place which was not mine in a certain sense. I had no chance to tell you, but—sweetheart, do you know that we have met only four or five times since we first saw one another in old Cragmere?”

“I know,” she replied, smiling through her tears.

“And now you are mine!”

“You are a very presumptuous impostor.”

“And a very fortunate one,” he added, tenderly pressing her hand. “Who told you of me, sweetheart?”

“Only yesterday Mr. Peters brought me a package of papa’s private papers, and amongst them was a memorandum stating that you were the adopted son of Admiral Deane,” she said. “It looked to me like a conversation between himself and Sir Whitaker Deane, jotted down as he remembered it. Papa was very methodical in such matters, and I presume he intended to file it away for future reference.”

“Did it say who I was?” asked Deane eagerly.

“Only that you were an American boy, and that the Admiral adopted you in Trinidad when you were about twelve years old,” replied Alice. “Tell me all about it. Has your life been as sad as mine? Just think, Stanley, I never saw my mother to remember her. Did you ever see yours?”

“No,” Stanley said, looking down. “I never——”

The room echoed to a warning rap on the door which

signified that the time allowed to the interview had expired.

"It is a long and a sad story," he said, as they arose at this signal. "No matter what you may think of me, you shall some day hear all that I know of it, and then——"

"And then I shall think of you just as I do now," she frankly declared. "Does that satisfy you, you foolish boy?"

"It makes me very, very happy!" he exclaimed, drawing her to him. "There are shadows over my early life, but when you know the truth—as you shall when I am released from here—you shall judge, sweetheart, if I have done anything which will make me unworthy to be your husband."

The sound of a key grated in the lock, the door opened and an impassive guard stood waiting with averted eyes.

"I believe in you," she said simply.

For a moment they stood with clasped hands, silent under the spell which enthralled them. Then he gently released her and watched until the gloom at the far end of the corridor engulfed her.

Harris touched him on the arm. Deane smiled as he looked into the face of the attendant, and a minute later the door of his cell swung into its place.



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE GREAT TRIAL

THE splendid physique of Captain Stark stood him in good stead, and he rallied slowly but steadily from the injuries sustained in the dynamite explosion. The day before the opening of the trial, his condition was such that Doctor Cosgrave permitted the police to transfer the captain from Deane's apartment to a cell in the jail. Saxon called on him a few minutes before he was taken to prison.

"Keep a stiff upper lip, Captain Stark," the brusque lawyer said. "We'll pull you out of this affair all right."

"I'm not worryin' much about that," the old sailor said, "but it's a rum go when a man sixty odd years old gets blowed up in a cellar tryin' tew save a lot of dummed fools that he hardly knows, an' then gets arrested for bein' an arna-kist—or whatever in thunder you call 'em. Now tell me, Mister Saxon, dew I look like an arna-kist?"

Saxon was tempted to tell the old fellow that he looked the ideal "red," but for once he restrained his sarcastic tongue and assured the captain to the contrary.

"I wish you'd tell this Mister Deane that I'm awfully obleeged tew him for bringing me here," said Jake Stark earnestly. "They tell me he's arrested too, an' I only hopes that he hasn't got into any trouble on my account. That's the best bed I ever slept in, an' when I get out of this scrape I'm goin' tew have one like it if I have tew sell another sheep farm down in the Argentine tew pay fer it. This is the first swell rest I've had since I was seven years old, an' I kinder hates tew leave here," and he glanced disconsolately about the beautifully furnished rooms. "Officer, I reckon them beds in the jail don't quite cum up tew that one, now dew they?"

"I'm afraid not," grinned the policeman.

"Well, it's all in a lifetime—as old King Soloman onct said."

He took one last lingering look at his luxurious surroundings, shook hands with Saxon, nodded to the officers and was taken to jail.

Annieta's physical injuries were found to be slight by the hospital surgeons, but for a week it was feared that her mind was wrecked. The successive deaths of her brother and mother, followed by the terrible fate of her father, plunged her into a delirium, and for days her life and reason trembled in the balance. But she was young and strong, and by direction of Deane, a famous specialist gave his personal attention to her case, and after a struggle with death she safely passed the crisis and emerged weak but on the sure way to recovery.

The prosecution considered her one of its best witnesses, and she was held in the hospital until such time as her testimony should be needed.

After an examination of the evidence, the prosecution consented to the quashing of indictments against twenty-five of those originally arrested, leaving fourteen to stand trial for conspiracy to murder Buckingham. It was the consensus of legal opinion that the case against most of these fourteen was weak, though little doubt was expressed of the conviction of Deane, "Long Bill" Parker and Captain Jake Stark.

The names of the remaining eleven were hardly mentioned, and the public had little interest in their fate.

Deane was the shining target for the gaze of that large class which finds its highest intellectual enjoyment in the following of murder mysteries. Never had a choicer subject been offered to them. The lines were sharply drawn; with one faction he was a hero, a young reformer who had been enmeshed in a web of circumstantial evidence from which he would break triumphant; with another faction he was a perverted aristocrat, a young man of wealth and undoubted talents who had dared use these weapons in an attack on all that property holds dear.

As the day for the trial approached, the interest and excitement rose to feverish heights. The climax was reached when it was positively announced that Alice Buckingham had visited Deane in jail, that she had remained in the consultation room with him for a long

while, and that she had warmly clasped hands with him in parting. It was impossible to obtain confirmation of this, but it was not denied by either, and the published report was generally credited.

Here was a delicious morsel! The daughter of the murdered Buckingham had called on the man accused of fostering the dynamite conspiracy! This was the finishing touch, and in consequence of it the lives of the court officials were made miserable by the thousands who demanded tickets of admission to the trial.

An eager, fighting mob of men and women invaded the corridors of the court building on the morning set for the opening of the great anarchist trial. When the fourteen prisoners were led into the court room a murmur arose from the hundreds of favored spectators, and all eyes were directed to Stanley Deane.

The young reformer seemed unconscious of this concentrated scrutiny. He wore a suit of dark blue which showed his tall and splendidly muscular figure to advantage. No need to point him out amongst his unfortunate companions. The days spent in a cell had not touched the clear olive of his perfectly chiselled face; his dark eyes flashed with confidence and courage, and the thin lips of his expressive mouth were touched at times with amused scorn as he returned the gaze of the morbid mob.

He warmly greeted his lawyers, held a brief conference with Saxon and Judge Sawyer, and then took his

seat to watch a procedure in which he had taken a far different part on many occasions.

After the usual motions aimed to dismiss the case had been made and denied, the work of selecting a jury began. It was not until the afternoon of the second day that the twelve jurymen were chosen, and the leader of the prosecution began his opening address to judge and jury, paying due declamatory deference to the great public in whose behalf he appeared.

Detective Jacoby entered the room just before the representative of the prosecuting attorney's office began his address, and took a seat where he could watch the speaker and also keep an eye on the prisoners. Mr. Jacoby was in excellent spirits, or at least seemed to be. He was neatly dressed, his bald head gleamed buff in the light from a west window, his dyed mustache was twisted into aggressive points which lifted when his dark face was wreathed in frequent smiles, he rubbed his hands complacently and beamed satisfaction and approval on judge, jury, prisoners and audience. To have watched Jacoby in these moments, a casual spectator would have imagined that the trial was his personally conducted affair, and that its initial success had exceeded his fondest expectations.

One of the prisoners had a special fascination for Jacoby. The public knew little of the charges against this particular suspect, but it was evident that Jacoby attached much importance to his connection with the



tragedy. Again and again the detective's eyes sought him out.

The prisoner thus favored with Mr. Jacoby's attention was a large and vicious-appearing man, and he shrank back and crouched in his chair as if conscious that his personality would count against him. His tall and shambling frame was covered with gray and ill-fitting garments; his forbidding face bristled with the stubble of a two weeks' beard, which did not wholly conceal an ugly scar from his right ear to the point of his heavy chin; another scar from a freshly healed wound ran from his left temple into his closely cropped hair, and his whole attitude and appearance was that of a desperate ruffian overhauled by justice—one whose sullen hate and defiance of law and society was tinged by a fear that his day of punishment was at hand.

The indictment gave to this self-evident criminal the name of Rudolph Heinemann, and the newspaper artists were busy sketching him as the purest type of the anarchist in the entire array of prisoners. When Heinemann noticed this, his lips mantled in an ugly smile which made him more savage than ever.

To the right of Heinemann sat little Malakoff, the deaf and dumb typewriter who was the first to greet Deane on the night when Dare conducted him to The Well. The diminutive Malakoff was the personification of alertness and unsatisfied curiosity. He bobbed back and forth in his chair, devouring with his eyes that which could not come to his ears, and he talked to him-

self with fingers, mouth and elbows, to the evident annoyance of the huge Heinemann who sat beside him.

To the left of Heinemann was Captain Stark, and next to him sat Long Bill. The jovial face of the captain was clouded the first day, but after that he took a keen interest in all that happened. There was something about his homely face and occasional smile which radiated innocence, and the eyes of the jurymen often wandered to him and in no unkindly way. Once the captain leaned over and loudly whispered something to the solemn-faced Long Bill, and for this indiscretion was sternly rebuked by the judge. Jake Stark was much distressed.

"Don't count it ag'in me, judge," he said, rising and making an awkward bow. "This is a new job fer me, an' I don't know the rules, but it won't happen ag'in, judge; an' ye can rely on that!"

The judge motioned him to his seat, and a few minutes later the prosecution fired the opening gun.

Anarchy is a word to conjure with when directed against one charged with participation in its odious propaganda of force, and the brilliant prosecutor did not fail to take full advantage of it. On the tongue of an orator the word "AN-ARCH-Y" has the explosive, shattering sound which suggests dynamite, and woe betide the suspect who hears that harsh expletive hurled against him.

The gifted speaker told of the damning record of anarchistic outrages abroad and at home, and then in

scathing terms execrated those who appealed to dynamite in a country which gave to each citizen the full and free right of participation in the affairs of government. He tactfully admitted that abuses existed in politics and industry, but urged that it was the duty of the law to sternly punish those who "appealed to the most cowardly weapon ever grasped by crazed fanatics of a damnable heresy."

He then drew a vivid picture of the murder of Amos Buckingham.

"He was the talented son of a man who founded one of the great manufacturing enterprises of the metropolis," declared the prosecutor, "and that father bequeathed to him the ownership and management of the mills which for years have given employment to thousands of men and women. Of his differences with his employés we have no direct concern. These disagreements between employer and employed constantly arise. The workers had a right to ask more pay; Mr. Buckingham had a right to refuse them; they had a right to strike, and they did so, and had affairs taken their natural course one side would have won a peaceful victory in this contest—this fair and openly waged contest. But it was not to be.

"Buckingham was more than a manufacturer, more than a mere seeker for the profits from his mills. He was a scientist, an experimenter, a delver after the secrets on which are founded all of our mechanical and industrial progress. For the purpose of conducting

these researches, he erected a laboratory near his residence, and in this he toiled until late at night with the untiring zeal of the true scientist, heedless of the money losses sustained in the strike, heedless of everything except adding some new fact to the sum of human knowledge—and while thus unselfishly engaged, fiends in human shape plotted for his life, wormed their way like moles until they were beneath the place sanctified by his labors, and waiting their chance they fired a mine and blew him into eternity.”

A hush fell over the vast throng as the speaker dramatically paused, and a thousand eyes wandered from him to the prisoners. Stanley Deane would have been more than human had he not been affected by this ordeal. The color left his face, but his calm eyes were fixed on the orator, and by no other sign did he betray his emotion.

Captain Stark moved uneasily in his seat, quailed before the battery of angry eyes and looked down to his huge feet. Little Malakoff looked eagerly about in helpless wonder, but Long Bill did not move an eyelash. Heinemann leaned slightly forward in his chair, a defiant sneer on his lips. Detective Jacoby half arose in his excitement, his smile fading into a scared expression, and then fell back into his chair and drummed lightly with his fingers on its arm.

“It does not in the slightest degree appease the ends of justice that two of the plotters met their death in the blast which killed Buckingham,” continued the speaker.

“That was the instant retribution of Providence! On you, gentlemen of the jury, rests the responsibility of satisfying the inexorable demands of the law which society has framed that the ends of justice may be served. Greater than the crime of August Fischer and of Wallace Dare was that of the men whose brains planned this conspiracy, and whose money and advice made its success possible. The former were the dupes, and they have gone to render their account to a Judge from whose decision there is no appeal, but it is for you, gentlemen of the jury, to decide the earthly fate of those against whom we shall adduce as strong a chain of direct and circumstantial evidence as ever cried out for justice and relentless punishment.

“Not all of these prisoners share equally in the guilt of this colossal crime, but we shall prove that each of them participated in it. We shall prove that three of them were on the spot when the crime was committed, and that the others were cognizant of and aided in abetting and executing this murder.”

The prosecutor looked steadily at Deane for a moment, and all eyes followed his significant gaze. He then continued:

“Gentlemen of the jury, we shall prove to you that one of the prisoners had a stronger personal reason than had August Fischer for wishing the death of Amos Buckingham. This prisoner is a man of wealth, of reputed aristocratic lineage, a man of unquestioned ability, but inoculated, as we shall prove, with an enmity



against the traditions and institutions of his adopted country; but more than all that, he has stood in fear of certain revelations which it was in the power of Amos Buckingham to make. These disclosures would have denied to him the high place in society which he unworthily held; they would have effaced the slightest chance for a matrimonial alliance to which he impudently aspired; they would have forever checked the career as a social reformer and politician on which he had fixed his heart and to which he had bent every resource at his command.

“The testimony will show that this prisoner must have been cognizant of this conspiracy from its inception. It was upon his advice that the Buckingham employés went on strike. In the riot which followed that strike he took a part, and in it he rescued Wallace Dare from a deserved beating at the hands of the police who finally quelled that unlawful outbreak. He went with Dare to a resort called The Well, within the dark and mysterious walls of which was plotted the death of Buckingham, and probably of others who have dared to assert their right to conduct their affairs without interference from outside dictation.

“In this conspiracy at the bottom of The Well, the prisoner I have in mind took the leading part. He held protracted conferences with the proprietor, the character known to the public as ‘Long Bill’ Parker. What subject did he discuss, gentlemen of the jury? Is there significance in the fact that he and Long Bill were in the

basement of that vacant house when the dynamite was exploded? In this Well he also met Jake Stark, and Jake Stark was injured in the premature firing of the mine which killed Amos Buckingham. He was the intimate friend and associate of August Fischer and Wallace Dare. He defended the former in court, and, gentlemen of the jury, he advanced to him *the money which made possible the construction of the death tunnel, and with which the dynamite was purchased!* ”

The silence which followed this dramatic declaration was broken by a murmur which swelled with rising horror and detestation. The bailiffs rapped for order, the judge frowned, and angry eyes were turned from Deane to the triumphant prosecutor.

“ Nor is this all that we shall prove against this prisoner, your honor, and gentlemen of the jury,” continued the orator, laying aside his notes and throwing his shoulders back. “ Stanley Deane has posed before the world as the son of Admiral Deane, a brave officer in the navy of our mother country, a worthy descendant of one of her best families. He has asked praise from those of small minds because he renounced the title to which he held claim. We shall establish beyond the peradventure of a doubt that Amos Buckingham was aware of the falsity of this claim.

“ Just before work was started on the tunnel, Stanley Deane had an interview with Amos Buckingham, during which interview the latter rashly told Deane that he—Buckingham—alone knew the secret of his past; that

he was not the son of Admiral Deane, but that he was a foundling of ignoble or unknown birth. In the stormy scene which followed, Deane dared Mr. Buckingham to make use of this knowledge, *and immediately afterwards his dupes, August Fischer and Wallace Dare, began their subterranean crawl toward the laboratory in which Amos Buckingham met death at their hands!*

“Something happened to disarrange their plans. Mr. Buckingham unexpectedly left the city, and these monsters patiently awaited his return. It is evident that Deane wished to be near the spot so that he might enjoy the fruition of his plans. He was addressing a mass meeting of the strikers, doubtless for the purpose of urging them to more desperate resistance against their employer, when the daughter of Fischer entered the hall, whispered something to him, whereupon he immediately ceased his address and went with her. For what purpose, gentlemen of the jury? *He had been told that Mr. Buckingham had returned! He had been told that the hour was at hand when the mine should be fired!*

“I must confess to surprise at the audacity of this step, and at the one which immediately followed it. Prior to this night he had worked under cover, and had taken care to conceal his movements, but now that the hour was come when his revenge should be satisfied he threw caution to the winds. Fearing lest Mr. Buckingham should move from the trap set for him, Deane boldly rang the bell, summoned the servants and told them to warn Mr. Buckingham *to remain indoors at peril of his*

*life!* Probably he assumed that on that dark and stormy night he would not be recognized by the servants, but it happened that a reliable witness was there who positively identified him. *Less than two minutes later the dynamite was exploded!*”

Another demonstration followed this startling utterance. An excited spectator sprang to his feet, shook his fist at Deane and broke into a torrent of invective. The presiding judge ordered him removed from the building, and threatened to clear the court room if the manifestation was repeated.

Deane had entirely recovered his composure. He calmly took notes as the prosecutor proceeded, and returned the anxious glance of Judge Sawyer with a smile, confident and unaffected. The brutal-looking Heine-mann attracted and enraged the spectators by a defiant and audible laugh. A glance at the stern faces of the jurors evidently caused him to regret this indiscretion, and he slouched back into his chair and glared morosely at the prosecutor who continued as follows:

“The fact that August Fischer and Wallace Dare were killed, and that Jacob Stark and Annieta Fischer were severely injured, proves conclusively that the explosion was premature. Just how this happened is not relevant to this case. The two who could enlighten you on this point are cold in death. Possibly Deane could tell of it, but we shall not expect him to incriminate himself. It is sufficient for us to know that he went immediately from the front gates of the Buckingham resi-



dence to the basement of the vacant house, and only one conjecture is worthy of consideration, viz. : he went there to supervise the final act in this tragedy. Beyond doubt the five principals intended that the fuse should be ignited, after which they would withdraw to a safe place, later on to join the spectators who would be attracted by the explosion. Inscrutable fate decreed otherwise.

“ We make no charge of cowardice against Deane and his associates—they stand indicted for murder. When his comrades fell before that withering blast of death, Stanley Deane did not desert them, but that exhibition of brute courage will avail him nothing. He may have imagined that he was safe from detection, and that in the confusion he would not be noticed ; certain it is that he dragged the injured Jacob Stark from out that hell hole, and took him to his rooms. *And there, with blood on his hands and on his clothes, the officers of the law found him and arrested him!*

“ Gentlemen of the jury, there is nothing circumstantial in that damning array of evidence. It is as direct as the word of truth from the mouth of an honest man.”

The prosecutor then turned his attention to a résumé of the evidence which would be adduced against the other prisoners.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### A SENSATION IN COURT

THE great trial consumed more than a week, and only a few of its events have a bearing on this record of strange events.

Eminent medical experts testified that such portions of the body as had been found in the wrecked laboratory corresponded to the known measurements of Amos Buckingham, and after listening to several of these learned gentlemen the defence sprang a surprise by admitting that a murder had been committed, and that the charred corpse was that of the millionaire manufacturer.

Private Secretary Peters and Detective Jacoby were the leading witnesses for the prosecution, but their testimony was reënforced by a host of others. Mr. Peters told of overhearing the interview between Deane and Mr. Buckingham, in which the latter informed Deane that he was possessed of the secret of his adoption. There were witnesses who swore that Deane had consented to the strike, others who alleged that he had strongly advised it.

The rescue of Dare by Deane on the night of the riot was fully brought out, also his visit to The Well. Jacoby

testified that Deane had held several prolonged interviews with Long Bill, but admitted that he was unaware of what was discussed. He had also seen Deane in conversation with Captain Jake Stark.

The prosecution scored heavily when it produced a check for two hundred and fifty dollars signed by Deane and made out to Fischer on a date just preceding the probable time that work was started on the tunnel. There were also checks for smaller amounts which he had given to Dare on various dates, the total amounting to nearly five hundred dollars.

Numerous witnesses told of the arrival of Annieta at the mass meeting, of the interrupted address, and of Deane's abrupt departure. The coachman told of the wild ride to the Buckingham mansion, of the explosion which followed his master's disappearance in the narrow alley, and also of driving to Deane's apartments with the unconscious body of Jake Stark. Peters, Jacoby and the hall servant told of Deane's call at the iron gates, and of his admonition that Mr. Buckingham should not leave the premises.

A shadow of her former self, Annieta took the stand and timidly and brokenly told the facts already familiar to the reader. The faces of the juryman showed that like the spectators they preferred to believe only such testimony as tended to prove the guilt of Deane, Long Bill and Jake Stark, and the prosecution made no mistake in using this innocent girl as a witness.

Her eyes often wandered to those of Deane, and his

encouraging smile gave her strength and courage to stand the long ordeal. She did not dream that her truthful story blackened the case against the man who was her idol.

From the moment she took the stand until she was led from the room, Long Bill's eyes were on her. The cloud lifted from his sober face, and a tender look stole into it as he leaned forward and hung breathless on her every word.

Saxon opened for the defence, and the brusque lawyer and pessimist made an effective address outlining the testimony which would be presented to prove the innocence of the prisoners. While he appeared specially for Deane, he held that none of them was guilty, and he sounded the keynote of the defence when he asserted that it would be proved that the crime was conceived and executed solely by August Fischer and Wallace Dare.

"I shall prove that Stanley Deane had no knowledge of this conspiracy until a few minutes before the dynamite was exploded," Saxon declared, drawing his massive form to its full height, "and I shall prove that in attempting to thwart the crime he came near sacrificing his own life. It is true that he lent money to Wallace Dare. I shall prove that everybody who ~~knew~~ Dare, and who had money, lent it to Dare. Otherwise Dare would have starved or committed suicide. If lending money to Dare was a crime, I am the most guilty man in New York.

"Deane gave two hundred and fifty dollars to August

Fischer. Why? Because in the kindness of his heart he thought Fischer needed it. At the proper time I shall tell why Mr. Deane held conferences with Mr. Parker, and shall prove that their meetings had nothing to do with this case. It is immaterial whether or not this defendant is the son of the late Admiral Deane of the British navy. The question is, did he have anything to do in a guilty way with the death of Amos Buckingham? I shall prove that he had every motive in the world for wishing the good-will of that unfortunate gentleman, rather than a conspiracy for his death."

On the fifth day of the trial Captain Jake Stark took the stand in his own defence, and a part of his cross-examination was as follows:

"When did you first meet Stanley Deane?"

"Never saw him in my life until I met him in that place they call The Well, an' I only saw him there onct."

"You are sure of this, are you, Captain Stark?"

"Never surer of anything in my life. Man alive! I hadn't been in New York before for twenty odd years; how could I have seen him?"

"Confine yourself to the questions, sir! On the evening of the twelfth of August of this year you left this city for Boston, and did not return until the night of the eighteenth—the night of the death of Amos Buckingham. What did you do in Boston during that period?"

Jake Stark looked blankly at the lawyer, then at the

judge and jury, and then at a dignified and prosperous-appearing gentleman to his left. The latter had attended every session of the trial, and had anyone cared to watch him, it would have been noticed that his eyes were frequently on the old sailor, who as often returned the look. The captain now regarded him with a puzzled and questioning gaze, his bearded lips parted and his manner indicating doubt and hesitation. He was sharply aroused by the lawyer.

“Answer my question, sir!”

“I don’t see what my goin’ tew Boston has got to dew with this here scrape,” doggedly replied the captain.

“That is not for you to judge. Give a direct answer to my question.”

“I went tew see Captain Morse of Boston—that gentleman right there,” Jake Stark said, pointing with his finger to the man with the gold glasses and the iron-gray mustache, to whom he had mutely appealed a moment before.

“What was your business with him?”

The captain’s eyes flashed and his teeth came together with a snap.

“What my business was with him don’t consarn you nor anybody but him an’ me!” he exclaimed, “an’ if you think that you can bullirag me inter tellin’ ye, why, you make a mistake, that’s all!”

“Are you aware that your refusal to answer this question may tend to incriminate you?”

“I’ll take chances on that,” said Captain Stark



stoutly. "You can't criminate a man that hasn't done anything but try to save a lot of dum-gasted fools from doin' somethin' that he has no use for!"

"Are you an anarchist?"

"Arna-kist?" exclaimed the captain in fine scorn. "Arna-kist? I should say not! I'm a Massachusetts democrat; and if you know anything erbout it, you know that a Massachusetts democrat starts votin' that way and keeps at it until he dies."

With the exception of this episode, the examination of Captain Stark and Long Bill, who followed him, brought out no essential facts with which the reader is not conversant.

Then came the moment for which the spectators had eagerly waited for nearly five days. Deane took the witness stand in his own behalf.

An involuntary murmur ran through the crowded court room as his name was called. He was dressed with scrupulous care, and never did he show to better advantage than that afternoon when he raised his hand and took an oath to tell the truth. Even those who had convicted him in advance felt at that moment that he was either a consummate actor or a wrongfully accused man.

On the platform near the judge was a group of distinguished visitors from abroad who were privileged to witness this climax in a case which had attracted international notice. Spectators of minor influence had been forced to make way for city officials, famous lawyers, professors, students of sociology, and others whose pres-

tige gave to them the coveted tickets to this thrilling drama.

Writers of national reputation had been retained by the newspapers to regale their readers with their impressions of Deane; artists transferred his changing expressions and poses to their pads; the click of invisible cameras, smuggled in despite the vigilance of the doorkeepers, was frequently heard; while through the closed doors came the murmur of hundreds of disappointed and indignant persons who vainly clamored for admission.

The languor of the jurymen became alert attention. They gazed at Deane as if to read in his eyes, lips and involuntary gestures the truth which might halt on his tongue.

The placid, grizzled and experienced Judge Sawyer took personal charge of the defence of his former disciple, and at his elbow was the Argus-eyed and aggressive Saxon, his normal sarcasm suppressed lest an unguarded word might imperil the fate of his friend. A few feet away stood Lawyer Williams, the famed leader of the prosecution; pleased with the triumphant progress of the case—smiling, confident and at ease—but alert as a cat whose sheathed claws are ready to clutch the mouse which is within his reach.

Within the court room there was not a sound when Judge Sawyer adjusted his glasses, toyed with his watch chain and looked first at the jury and then at Deane.

“What is your name?” he quietly asked.

"The name to which I am legally entitled is Stanley Deane," replied the witness, in a clear, calm tone which penetrated every part of the room.

"How came you by that name?"

"It was given to me by Rear-Admiral Deane, late of the British navy. I am his adopted son, and the acknowledged heir to his property."

"Do you know the name of your father?"

"I have every reason to believe that I do," Stanley said, in a lower voice.

"Is that father dead or living?"

"I believe him living."

"What is his name?"

"His name is Jacob Stark, and he is one of the defendants in this case!"

Seconds before he pronounced these words there was something in the air which held every listener tense with expectancy. Even before his name came from the lips of Stanley Deane, Captain Jake Stark had half arisen from his chair, his homely face lighted with wonder, as if he listened to the echoes of a voice which had sounded in his ears in almost forgotten days.

"By God, it's Mascot!" he cried, springing over the rail and brushing lawyers and attendants aside in his frantic rush to the side of the once sea waif.

But he was not the first to reach the witness chair! The tall, handsome and middle-aged man with the iron-gray mustache and gold glasses—the spectator pointed out as "Captain Morse of Boston" by Jake Stark only

a short time before—this stranger to the trial and to the reader of this narrative, pushed forward, his face glorified with a joy beyond the power of words to express!

There was a rush of court officers to the centre of this remarkable demonstration, but the presiding judge knew that something unusual had developed, and arose and motioned them back.

“My boy! My boy!” cried Captain Morse, dragging the astounded Deane from the chair and throwing his arms about him. Then he held him by the shoulders, and gazed with wet eyes into his face.

“Thank God for this moment!” he reverently exclaimed. “My boy, I am your father! Thank God for His mercy and goodness!”

“That’s right, Mascot!” roared Jake Stark, slapping Deane on the back and grasping one hand from the clasp of Captain Morse. “That’s right, Mascot! This is your real dad, the one you haven’t seen since you was knee high tew a grasshopper! Say, captain, we’ve found him! Let’s go have somethin’, and then we can tell him all erbout it!” and for that moment the delighted Jake Stark was no longer on trial for his life. The sharp rapping of the judge’s gavel awoke him unpleasantly from his dream.

“Order in the court room!” he said.

Captain Morse turned to the judge with a deferential bow.

“Your honor,” he began, in an agitated voice, “this is my son who was lost to me twenty-three years

ago. I beg the pardon of the court, but may I speak to him for a moment?"

"I congratulate you on your happiness," the judge said, with some feeling, "and without prejudice to the result of this trial, regret that you have found your son amidst such an environment. It would be unfair to the witness to ask him to proceed under these circumstances, and as the hour for the closing of the day's session is drawing near, I will entertain a motion for an adjournment until to-morrow morning."

The motion was made and granted, but the dazed and excited throng clung to their seats until driven from the room by the court attendants.

For an hour or more Deane, Captain Morse and Jake Stark were permitted to talk in the presence of guards and of representatives of the prosecution, but the strange story then revealed was told more succinctly on the stand the following morning, and will be narrated in that sequence.

When Tom Harkness called at the Farnsworth residence that night he was ushered into the presence of two very excited and very happy young women. For days their conduct had mystified him. Alice's gloom over the death of her father had been succeeded by an attitude intended to indicate resignation, but even Harkness's unpractised eyes detected the joy which lurked beneath her studiously demure air. Dolly's happiness was positively scandalous, but whatever Tom may have thought he said nothing.



They had already learned something of what had happened in the court room, but Tom had been a witness, and they deluged him with questions.

"How I should have liked to be there!" exclaimed Dolly. "It must have been awfully dramatic!"

"Dramatic!" repeated this fortunate bearer of news. "Dramatic! That's not the word for it! It was tragic, great, immense! Talk about your scenes on the stage where the lost parent suddenly shows up! Why, they are tame compared with this! Just think, Dolly! Here's the Stanley Deane that we have known for years—and a bully good fellow he is. He goes on the stand as the son of Admiral Stanley Deane. Of course there had been hints made that he was an adopted son, but none of us fellows believed a word of it. The——"

"We did; didn't we, Alice?" interrupted Dolly, so full of great secrets that her pretty lips positively bubbled over with them.

"Dolly! Dolly!" warned Alice, her face furiously red.

"I'm not going to tell a thing!" declared the cousin, looking guiltily to another part of the room and suppressing a giggle by a supreme effort.

"Going to tell a thing about what?" demanded Tom Harkness.

"Not a thing about anything," firmly said the dainty Dolly, slipping her little hand into his. "Go on with your story, Tom; that's a good fellow!"

"What's the matter with you two?" he asked. "Tell me what's up; I can keep a secret."

"Nothing! Nothing!" they asserted in chorus, and finding them relentless he continued with his story.

"He goes on the stand as Stanley Deane, the scion of the aristocratic English Deanes. The next minute he says as calmly as you please that an old chap who looks like one of the pirates in a picture-book is his father! Says he is the son of Jake Stark, the most desperate looking prisoner outside of that anarchist Heinemann! Can you beat that? I nearly fell off my chair. Say, I felt awfully sorry for Stanley that minute!"

"But it isn't true; the papers say it isn't true!" interrupted Dolly.

"Of course it isn't true," continued Harkness. "Up rushes a handsome looking man who doesn't look more than forty-five, or fifty, at the most, and says that he is Stanley's father. And, by Jove, he was!"

"They say he's awfully rich," said Dolly, clapping her hands.

"And of a fine old American family," added Alite Buckingham, her face unnaturally sedate but her eyes radiant. "His name is Captain Morse, is it not?"

"That's his name," eagerly affirmed Tom, "and I've found out all about him. "He's the head of the big New England firm of Morse & Norcross. He owns a steamship line, a chain of lumber-mills in Maine, cotton-mills in Lowell, two or three banks and lots of other

things. Bradstreet speaks very kindly about him. He has more money than anybody."

"That's nice," gasped Dolly, with a sly glance at Alice, "but how about his family?"

"You should see the blue book about his branch of the Morses," said the enthusiastic Harkness. "The original Morse came over in a private yacht ahead of the Mayflower, and they have been running things ever since. Instead of being an orphan, Stanley now finds himself with a father, a mother, a married sister, and a younger one who is one of the belles of Boston."

This announcement so dazed the two girls that they were speechless for seconds, and Dolly was the first to recover.

"Perhaps it isn't true," she said solemnly. "How could a great big man like Stanley get lost all these years?"

"He was only three years old when he was lost," smiled Tom. "My governor remembers something about it, but it is so long ago that he has forgotten just what happened. Stanley's father spent thousands of dollars trying to find him, but all trace of him disappeared until this afternoon. I tried to get in to see him, but they wouldn't let me. It will all come out to-morrow."

"Then his name isn't Stanley Deane at all!" exclaimed Dolly, on the verge of a great discovery which yet further complicated matters. "His name is Stanley Morse! I don't like that half as well as the other name, but I suppose it will sound better when we get used to it."

Do you like it, Alice?" she concluded, looking archly at her cousin.

"Why should his name be Stanley?" Alice asked, ignoring the meaning smile on Dolly's lips.

"Why, indeed?" echoed Tom.

"Of course!" admitted the startled Dolly. "How stupid of me! What do you suppose his first name really is? I hope it is Reginald. I think that Reginald is a perfectly lovely name for a man."

"Well, you can bet that it isn't Reginald," bluntly asserted Tom Harkness. "If it isn't some plain Yankee name I'll buy both of you all the candy you can eat in a year. His father's name is John, and I'll take odds that Stanley's name is Jack."

They spent hours discussing this and other features of the great trial. Alice was very quiet, but the smile which ever hovered near her lips and the light which lurked in her eyes were eloquent of the happiness which possessed her.

The thought that *he* might be convicted never entered her pretty head.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER XXIV

### JAKE STARK'S CONFESSION

BEFORE Deane was called to the stand on the following morning, Prosecutor Williams, addressing the court, said:

"In the interests of exact justice it is well that the jury shall be instructed to ignore the dramatic climax so skilfully arranged and acted by the defence at the close of yesterday's session. It matters little whether the prisoner who was on the stand at that time be the son of the man whose name he has borne, if he be the son of Jacob Stark, or, as it will be claimed, the son of the eminent and reputable Captain John C. Morse of Boston. The only question is, did he criminally participate in the conspiracy to murder Amos Buckingham?"

"The court concurs in the statement made by the prosecution," ruled the presiding judge, "and the jury will be so guided in their deliberations and in their findings. Call your witness, Judge Sawyer."

Under the questioning of Judge Sawyer, Deane told the story which is familiar to us. He admitted having advised the men to strike, after having satisfied himself



of the justice of their demands. He admitted having had a heated interview with Amos Buckingham prior to the probable time that work was started on the tunnel, but asserted that he had no personal animus against the master of the mills.

Saxon and Judge Sawyer had strongly urged Deane to permit them to ask him questions which, in a delicate way, would establish the fact that he had met Alice years before, that he respected her highly, and that his feelings toward her were such as to preclude the possibility of his conspiring against her father. Deane indignantly refused to permit the use of her name in any way, and declared that if examined on that point he would decline to answer.

Weeks before, Saxon had called on Miss Buckingham, and she had eagerly volunteered to be a witness, but Saxon did not dare tell Deane of what he had done. Neither Saxon nor Judge Sawyer shared Deane's absolute confidence of acquittal, and urged him to use every point available in his favor, but on this issue their client was immovable.

It was easy to see that the jury did not believe his version of the reasons for his sudden departure from the mass meeting, his message at the Buckingham gates or his mission in the basement of the vacant house. The undisputed fact that *he was there*, and that he had aided the wounded Jake Stark to escape, loomed more strongly against him after his testimony than before.

Under a merciless cross-examination his uncorrobo-

rated story appeared in an even worse light, and the lines on Judge Sawyer's face deepened as he interposed objections and fought for every inch of ground. Saxon glared furiously at the opposing lawyers, and noted with growing apprehension the look on the faces of the jurors; a look which, to his trained eye, boded no good to his client and friend.

When Deane stepped from the stand, Saxon called him aside.

"Unless you do as I tell you, this case will go against you," he said earnestly.

"Nonsense!" smiled the young reformer.

"There's no nonsense about it," soberly declared the big lawyer. "You take my word for it, those twelve men believe right now that you were at the head of the conspiracy to kill Buckingham, and unless you let us call Miss Buckingham to the stand they will convict you. Her simple word that she is your friend, and the inference that she believes you innocent will save you. Nothing else will."

"Let them convict me then!" replied Deane angrily. "With my consent she shall not step foot in this room to be the target for the eyes of this mawkish mob! Let them convict me; juries have convicted more innocent men."

He turned on his heel and took his seat with the other prisoners. He did not in the least share Saxon's fears, but if he had it would not have altered his decision.

Judge Sawyer called Jake Stark to the stand, and his

questions brought forth the following remarkable story, the defence interposing no objection to its narration:

“Thirty-odd years ago I made up my mind that there was nothin’ in workin’ on a Massachusetts farm that run mostly tew stones an’ cider apples, an’ so I headed for Nantucket and looked erbout for a chance tew become a sailor, an’ until the last five or six years I’ve been one more or less ever since.

“I had been at sailin’ seven years or so when I got a lazy streak on. I had a little money, an’ I felt like loafin’ ’round, like. It so happened after I had been takin’ it easy for a month or so, that I run across a chap name Crapo, a Spaniard or a Cuban, I don’t know which—they hung him later at Manzanillo—an’ he took a shine tew me—I was a pretty husky fellow those days—an’ he said he wanted a cook. If there was anything I thought I could do in them days it was tew cook, an’ when he offered me ten dollars a month more’n I was gettin’ for reefin’ sails an’ spinnin’ a wheel, why, I just jumped at it, judge, an’ gentlemen of the jury.

“This Crapo had a likely schooner, fast as a teal duck, an’ a tough-lookin’ crew of twenty men. I soon learned that Crapo wasn’t tryin’ tew get rich by the ordinary slow methods, an’ that his game was smugglin’—an’ worse. I don’t mind tellin’ ye, judge, that I hadn’t no religious scruples agin’ smugglin’ in them days—but I wouldn’t dew it now; there’s nothin’ in it, an’ the new-fangled kinds of graft has it beat a mile—but this Crapo didn’t stop at smugglin’, an’ if I’d stuck tew

him I'd been hung long ago, instead of bein' here in New York mixed up with arna-kists that I don't hardly know. But as old King Soloman says, that's neither here ner there.

"This Crapo's specialty was sneakin' in close tew some place where a man had a plantation, pretendin' that he was fishin' or makin' repairs, an' then goin' ashore at night, or any time he had a good chance, with a yawl load of men, scarin' away the nigger servants and holdin' up the owner for whatever he had in the way of money or things worth carryin' back tew the schooner. He was a kinder land pirate on a sneakin', picayunish scale, but he would put up a fight when he had to, an' later on he murdered a man an' they nailed him fer it, an' I saw him hangin' on a gallows, where the buzzards had picked his bones clean, an' the sun had did the rest.

"Crapo never did but one job of that kind when I was with him, an' that's the one I'm leadin' up tew."

The testimony given later by Captain Morse properly belongs here, and its essence is as follows:

"When John C. Morse—afterwards Captain Morse—was twenty-five years old, his father died and left to him, with other property, a fleet of sailing vessels and a plantation several miles from Port Antonio, on the east coast of the island of Jamaica. The birth of his first child, a son, left his wife in poor health, and the physicians recommended a stay of a few years in a southern latitude. They followed this advice, and took possession of the plantation. Its situation was beautiful but iso-



lated, and from the start Mrs. Morse improved in health.

“ They took with them a nurse and a man-servant, and retained the services of a number of native laborers who had worked for the former tenant.

“ Mr. Morse spent all the time possible on the plantation, but business compelled him to make occasional trips to Kingston, Boston and other cities where he had large interests. He was on his way to New Orleans when Crapo’s gang made an attack on his plantation. His wife had gone to Port Antonio to make certain purchases, leaving the boy in charge of his nurse, and entertaining no fears for his safety.”

We will let Jake Stark continue his testimony, which he was permitted to do in his own peculiar way:

“ We anchored one night offshore erbout six miles or so from Port Antonio. We had a lot of stuff aboard that wasn’t aimin’ tew pay no duty, an’ I wondered why we was loafin’ ’round there. It was evening when we dropped anchor, an’ when it got dark, Crapo an’ one of his men rowed ashore. There was a plantation house in from us, but I paid no attention to that, but I knew afterwards that Crapo was scoutin’ around tryin’ tew find how the land lay.

“ The next mornin’ erbout ten o’clock they lowered one of the big yawls, and I stood an’ watched ten of ’em go ashore. I kinder thought somethin’ was up, but what could I do? The schooner lay not more’n a mile away, and with a glass I saw most everything that happened.



They made a rush for the house, an' I saw smoke cum from a window, an' then I heard the crack of a gun. Crapo dropped with a slug in his shoulder, but he jumps up agin, and there was a lot of shootin' after that.

"I could see niggers runnin' in every direction, but of course I couldn't tell what was goin' on in the house, but I had a mighty close idee. Later on I saw Crapo's men luggin' stuff down tew the beach an' loadin' it intew the yawl, an' just before they pulled off from shore I saw smoke an' flame burst through the roof of that there house.

"When they cum 'longside, I saw that they had a lot of plunder, but what caught my eye more'n anything else was a little chap erbout three years old, I should say. He wasn't cryin' but he looked scared like, an' ye could hardly blame him. Crapo was covered with blood, an' swearin' in three languages. They passed the little fellow up tew me, an' I called him 'Maseot' right then an' there. That's him there," pointing to Stanley Deane, "an' he's the son of Captain Morse, who owned the plantation, an' who—as I found out years after—wasn't there at the time.

"One of the men told me later that they killed the owner, the only white man who was erbout the place, but it was the overseer, an' Captain Morse tells me that two of the niggers was afterwards found dead in the woods. Crapo didn't lose no time in pullin' up anchor and lightin' out, but he didn't make no money on that job.

"One of the niggers didn't stop runnin' till he got to Port Antonio, an' as soon as he got his breath he told what had happened. There was a little revenue boat in the harbor, an' she lit out after us. We had quite a start, but the wind died down, an' when Crapo saw that she would overhaul us he got as white as he could under his yellow skin. He had calculated tew kidnap the little chap for a big ransom, but when he saw that we was goin' tew be caught, he was fer killin' him an' chuekin' him overboard. I shoved a gun in his nose an' told him he'd better begin on me, an' then he changed his mind.

"It cum on dark when the revenue boat was a mile or so away, an' Crapo headed in for the beach an' got the boats ready tew lower. A solid shot caught us in the stern, carried away the rudder, an' ripped a hole in her like stickin' a hot poker in a toy balloon. There was quite a swell on, an' it was every man fer himself. I kept my eye on Mascot. Another chap an' I was lowerin' a boat, when Crapo threw a chest an' some grub an' other stuff intew it, an' told us to wait until he cum back. We didn't wait, judge an' gentlemen of the jury. As we poked out intew the blackness of that night I saw Crapo standin' on the deck, an' I wouldn't dare tell you what he said.

"He got intew another boat, an' managed tew get ashore an' save his miserable hide fer the time bein', but, as I've said, they got him later and hung him out tew bleach in the old jail yard of Manzanillo.

"We headed up the coast, rowin' like blazes fer hours,

an' 'long towards midnight we struck intew a lagoon, and our yawl hadn't grinded on the beach a minute before the chap who was with me started out overland, leaving Mascot an' me alone. We found a good place tew hide, an' we stayed there a week, livin' on whatever we had or we could pick up.

"I pried open the chest that Crapo had tossed intew the boat just before we parted from him, an' in it was erbout six thousand dollars in money an' a lot of jewelry, some of which, I reckon, belongs tew Captain Morse. I've got it yet, an' when I get out of this here scrape, I'm goin' tew give it back tew him.

"Mascot an' I got along fine together, an' after a few days he didn't seem to miss his father an' mother much. He was only a child, ye know, and not old enough tew remember things very long. There was a small spar an' a lugger sail in the yawl, an' one night when the wind was blowin' steady from the west we headed out to sea an' pointed for Cuba. It was a run of a hundred and twenty miles or so, and if the wind had held true we would have made it in a day, but as it was we were out two nights, landin' early the second morning a few miles from Santiago. I knew the town all right, an' went to a place kept by a friend of mine, an' there we stayed under cover fer a month or more.

"I supposed that Mascot's father had been killed, an' most likely his mother. If I gave him up it would get me intew trouble, besides I had come to like the little chap as if he had been my own son. I had done nothin'

wrong; more'n that I had a sorter claim on him, seein' that I had saved his life from that Crapo. Of course I could have cut loose from Mascot, an' took chances that some of his relatives would find him, but I couldn't think of doin' a thing like that, so Mascot an' me had to stick together fer better or worse. He seemed satisfied, an' so was I.

"With the money I found in Crapo's chest I bought a little schooner called the Frolic. Crapo didn't know me by my right name, an' besides I wasn't worryin' much about him, but I let my beard grow so as tew give me more dignity as captain of one of the best little boats that ever carried a bone in her teeth. Then Mascot an' me went intew business, an' after we had been at it a year or so we hired Long Bill Parker fer first mate.

"I always had it in mind to find out about Mascot's parents, an' tew tell him what I knew about who he really was—when he got old enough tew take care of himself—but the bigger he got the more I liked him, an' I kept puttin' it off an' puttin' it off until it was tew late. When we was in ports I kept him below decks except at night times, but he thought that just as natural as everything else, an' we got along fine.

"When Mascot was erbout twelve years old I had a row with a no-account Dago named 'Hungry Joe,' an' tew get even with me he told the authorities that I was smugglin'; and one fine night the Frolic an' all of us but one was captured by the British gunboat, the Alexander. They took us tew Kingston, an' that's the



last I ever saw of Mascot, an' you know the story of what happened tew him. Long Bill an' me an' the rest of us was put in a new jail, but knowin' the prejudice of the Britishers against us Yankees we thought it better to head off a trial, so we broke out the first night, an' you ain't interested in my adventures for most of the years that followed.

"I could get no trace of Mascot, an' finally drifted down to the Argentine where I went in fer sheep raisin', and made more money in six years that I could in sailin' in a hundred. When I had made my pile an' got more respectable than I ever thought possible, my conscience began tew trouble me erbout Mascot and his parents. So I put my affairs in shape an' started north. The first place I headed fer was Port Antonio, an' I hired a rig an' drove out tew the plantation that Crapo had sacked twenty-three years before.

"I pretended that I wanted tew buy it, an' you can bet your life, judge, that I looked like a man who could buy all the plantations from Port Antonio tew St. Ann's Bay. I didn't look like no cook, but I wasn't proud, an' I was a bit scared even then. I found that the man who owned it had bought it only a few years before, an' after askin' a lot of questions I learned that a man named Morse had owned it the last time I saw it. From the records in Port Antonio I learned that his full name was John C. Morse, but nobody knew where he was, or whether he was dead or alive. It wouldn't do tew ask



tew many questions, so I decided tew wait until I struck New York.

“The first thing I did after finding Long Bill an’ them arna-kists who are dead, was to advertise for this Captain Morse, an’ I got a letter from him sayin’ that he was in Boston an’ would be glad tew see me. I went there, told him the truth, just as I have told you, an’ I also told him that I had good reasons tew believe that Mascot was in England. We arranged that I was tew come back to New York, that he should come on from Boston, an’ that we should sail from here to London an’ start on a hunt for his lost son.

“When Captain Morse got here I had been blown up by dynamite. I’d heered lots about that stuff, but that’s the first time I ever saw it in action, an’ I want tew say right now that it ain’t a weapon that Mascot, nor me nor no other gentleman would use.

“That’s my story, judge an’ gentlemen of the jury. If you want tew try me fer being a dummed fool, or fer playin’ in hard luck, why, I plead guilty; but as fer bein’ an’ arna-kist, I want tew say right now that you’ve got the wrong man, an’ ye can bet all you’ve got on it.”

Captain Stark’s narrative made an evident impression on the audience and the jury, but so far as the latter was concerned the effect was dissipated by the argument made by the leader of the prosecution in his masterly closing address. In it Mr. Williams said:

“The romantic episodes in the early life of the prisoner Stanley Deane—or John S. Morse, as is now

claimed is his rightful name—have not the slightest bearing on the establishing of the innocence of that person. The prosecution is not disposed seriously to challenge the truth of the interesting story told by Jacob Stark, neither does it question the proofs proffered by Captain Morse intended to establish the fact that the prisoner is the son who was stolen from him twenty-three years ago.

“The question is, did Stanley Deane conspire to kill Amos Buckingham? We have proved beyond a reasonable doubt that he did. The jury must sternly disregard the glamour which has been cast over this prisoner. His personality is not a dual one, but, if I may use the term, a quadruple one. He has lived four lives, and his acts have been inspired by the impressions and the training received in each and all of them.

“From his estimable father and gentle mother—from whom we cannot withhold our sincere pity—he inherited admirable mental and physical traits; traits which under most circumstances would have served him in good stead. But it was his fate in childhood to fall into the hands of a rough, ignorant and immoral man—a kindly and well-intentioned man to the best of his lights—but one ill-fitted to rear a boy of high spirit. What was the consequence? During the formative period in the life of this prisoner he was in a vicious environment. From him was withheld the gentle and restraining influence of a mother. He became accustomed to scenes of violence, to vulgar and profane language, and to the

semi-savage life on board a vessel which was little else than a smuggler.

“ Thus it was that his young blood became poisoned with this taint of lawlessness, this virus of anarchy. By a miraculous chance he came under the care of an English gentleman of means and culture, and all that schooling and training could do for him was lavished on him by the man who gave him a name, the love of a father and a fortune.

“ But beneath the veneer of erudition and culture was the savage who had been nurtured on the decks of the lawless Frolic. So long as his foster-father lived, Deane observed the conservative conventions of society, but even as he sat within the hallowed halls of Oxford, his mind rebelled against the codes and ethics of our modern civilization. He began the study of law and of political economy. For what purpose? Did he bend his mind to these studies so as to fit himself to become the defender of property rights against those who wage ceaseless war on the conservative bulwarks of our civilization? He did not.

“ Even before the demise of his foster-father, Deane had determined to use the wealth which would come to him with that death, as a weapon with which to wage relentless war against society. The frank savagery of the boy Mascot had been transfused into the suave savagery of the man who termed himself a ‘social reformer,’ but who, like most others of that cult, aimed to be a social demolisher.

"In New York he gravitated naturally to an alliance with and the leadership of the radical element. He held a place in society only because it gave him a better leverage to accomplish its final overthrow. In Fischer and Dare he found congenial companions, and in the dark depths of The Well he found the atmosphere for which he had longed. This was the fourth stage of his career, and if this jury does its duty, it will be his last.

"It is idle to inquire what would have been his destiny had not fate decreed that the formative years of his life should be spent with such characters as Jake Stark, the smuggler, and 'Long Bill,' his assistant. Beyond doubt he would have become an honored member of society, a defender of its traditions and institutions; but fate ordained otherwise, and it is the duty of this jury to punish him for what he has done, and not to speculate on what might have been his career had the cards of his fortune fallen differently.

"The charred body of Amos Buckingham cries out, not for revenge, but for justice! We ask for a death sentence on Stanley Deane and his associates, not that the score may be evened, but that the fate of these prisoners may serve as a warning for all time against those who stir up class hatred, and who, when thwarted, turn instinctively to violence, rebellion, sedition, treason and the dynamite bomb!"

All save two of the fourteen prisoners cowered before the merciless lashing of the prosecuting attorney, even Long Bill shrinking back into his chair as if menaced



by a doom from which there was no escape, but Deane listened with the calm attentiveness of a law student, anxious to take lessons in the science of sophistry, without which monetary success in that profession is difficult of attainment.

No less attentive was Rudolph Heinemann, but his was a different attitude—one of amused and defiant scorn. As the trial neared its close, the sneer habitual to his face became more mocking, and his insolent contempt for the proceedings did much to prejudice jury and audience against all the alleged conspirators.

The testimony against Heinemann was direct and damaging. Unloaded dynamite bombs of novel construction had been found in his room, and on his person were letters and documents indicating beyond reasonable doubt his alliance with force anarchy. He refused to retain a lawyer, and the court assigned one to him. He also refused to take the stand in his own defence, and the only sounds which escaped his lips were occasional gruff laughs and other manifestations indicative of open scorn and recklessness. The public did not question his fate.

The time arrived when the closing arguments were finished, and when the judge arose and read his instructions to the jury. Disinterested experts asserted that his charge was decidedly favorable to Stanley Deane; certain it is that Saxon and Judge Sawyer listened with satisfaction, and at the close warmly congratulated their young and confident client.



"Unless that jury consists of twelve idiots, it will never convict you, after that charge," whispered Saxon.

"I have not worried for a moment," smiled Deane. "You made a grand speech, Saxon; a wonderful speech, old man, and I don't know how to thank you."

"I could have made a better one in *The Well*," growled Saxon.

"It looks very favorable, my boy," softly said Judge Sawyer, as the jury filed out of the room. "Williams overreached when he called you a 'savage.' But he made a very effective address. It would be the making of him to win this case; he has set his heart on it."

"Perhaps I should be glad of this chance to immolate myself on the altar of his ambitions," Deane said lightly.

"I cannot consent to it, my boy," the old lawyer replied. "We will let Williams climb to fame some other way."

"I shall be free in less than two hours," Deane said, as the officers motioned the prisoners to return to their cells pending the finding of the verdict. "I insist that my attorneys be my dinner guests to-night."

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE VERDICT!

STRANGE as it may seem, the happiest hours Stanley Deane had known were those spent in his cell and during the trial for his life.

In that brief time there had come to him the knowledge that the woman he loved believed in him and returned that love. More than that, the shadows which had shrouded his life were lifted. His father lived, honored and respected. His mother lived, and he had two sisters who had been born after he was stolen from the Jamaica plantation.

These three were abroad on a pleasure jaunt, and Captain Morse dreaded lest news of the discovery of his lost son should reach them prior to his acquittal of the awful charge which had been made against him. Already they had penned the joyous message which should be sent to them, and planned the trip which should be made to them at the earliest opportunity.

His father had sent to Boston for photographs of Deane's mother and of his two charming sisters, and as he looked at them for the hundredth time it seemed that the happiness which was his was too great to be true.

The fact that his life trembled in the balance did not weigh an atom in the scales against Alice's love, his birthright of an honored name, and his glorious heritage of a real mother and two real sisters, and a father, whose younger image he was.

Such were his thoughts as he waited in his cell for the word which should summon him to the court room to hear the verdict which should make him free to taste the splendid pleasures of his new life. He looked at his watch. An hour had passed.

He feared for Long Bill. The conviction of the unknown Heinemann was almost certain. Doubtless he was some associate of the crazed Fischer, and he feared that his guilt might imperil Long Bill and possibly Jake Stark. Very likely the jury was wrangling over the degree of their complicity in the conspiracy, and though Deane knew of their absolute innocence, he was aware that there was a chain of circumstantial evidence against them and him. The case against the other ten prisoners had fallen to the ground, and the prosecution had admitted as much.

Another half hour passed, and then two hours dragged by. He had impatiently lighted a fresh cigar when the guard appeared at his cell door, opened it and led the way to the court room.

The jury was in its place. The vast throng of spectators gazed silently at the twelve men, striving to read in their faces the mystery of death or freedom which was locked in their breasts but trembling on their lips.

Deane glanced at them and then at Judge Sawyer and Saxon. His attorneys were absorbed in their study of the jury, and on the expressive face of Saxon was a look of foreboding which sent a chill to Deane's heart. He looked about for his father.

Like a man condemned to death, Captain Marsh stared at the twelve men. His face was ashen and drawn, and his hand trembled as he raised it to his bloodless lips. He turned his eyes to his son, and in them was a horror which was accentuated by his ghastly attempt to smile encouragement.

The presiding judge tapped lightly with his gavel, but no such signal was necessary. Like runners poised for a race, the representatives of a score of papers were ready to speed the verdict to their respective headquarters. Thousands of people were massed in the streets below, and their murmur came through the opened windows, mingled with strident cries—the raucous note of the mob, its jaded appetite for sensations stimulated at the prospect of blood.

Something caused Deane to look to the far corner of the silent room, and there he saw Alice.

Her eyes were on him, and as he gazed into them they lighted with a flame which filled him with rapture. No doubt of his innocence sullied their clear depths, but there was something in her smile, and in the expression of her lips which he could not understand. It was as if she was trying to convey to him some voiceless message,

but all that it told him was of her love and confidence, and that was enough.

Next to Alice was Dolly, her blue eyes large with an excitement which made her look more than ever like a radiantly beautiful wax doll, and near her were her father and mother. Why were they there? Were they so sure of his acquittal that they wished to share in his triumph? He marvelled that Alice should care to witness the closing scene in the trial of the man accused of the murder of her father, and then he thought it strange that——

“Has the jury agreed on a verdict?” slowly asked the judge.

“We have, your honor!” replied the tall foreman of the twelve.

“Do you find the defendants innocent or guilty?”

“The jury finds Stanley Deane and Rudolph Heine-mann guilty of murder in the first degree, Jacob Stark and William Parker guilty of murder in the second degree, and affirms the innocence of the ten others charged with a part in this conspiracy to kill Amos Buckingham. The jury begs leave to offer a plea for mercy in the case of Jacob Stark.”

Of the tempestuous demonstration which followed Deane saw or heard little. His eyes were fixed on a little figure in black in the far corner of the room. Her eyes flashed anger at the cheering and swaying mob, but when she looked at him and caught his glance, she waved her hands recklessly at him, her features flushed and



triumphant, as if he were her champion—a champion who had been acclaimed a victor on a hard-fought field; not a felon about to be sentenced to an ignoble death for a fiendish crime!

Alice started to go toward him, and had gained the aisle, pushing burly men aside in her eagerness to reach the side of the man she loved, when David Farnsworth detained her, and after some persuasion led her back.

And Deane was happy! She loved him even then! In all that crowded room there was no one else that he knew who was not bowed down with despair. It was enough for him that her faith and her devotion held true in this dread crisis.

“We lose the first trick, my boy, but the game is young,” he heard Themistocles Saxon say, and felt the firm pressure of his hand.

“The case is full of errors, and we shall have no trouble in getting a new trial and an acquittal,” Judge Sawyer soothingly declared, placing his hand on Deane’s shoulder.

“Don’t lose courage, my son,” his father said, the light of battle in his eyes. He had recovered from the shock, and his form was erect and his voice resolute.

“I’m disappointed, but not in the least disheartened,” Deane replied, and his manner proved the truth of his words.

Of the incidents which crowded into the following minutes he has only a vague recollection. If his heart sank within him for an instant he had only to look at a

loved face in the far corner of the room, and in her brave eyes and proud lips he read something which thrilled him with a strange but unwavering hope.

The jury was polled, the usual motion for a new trial made, and then calling the four convicted prisoners by name, the judge told them to rise. With measured deliberation he thus addressed them:

“After a trial in which you have had the benefit of the services of able counsel, and in which the defence has been allowed the widest possible latitude in the introduction of testimony, a jury has adjudged you guilty of participation in a conspiracy which resulted in the death of Amos Buckingham. Have you now anything to say why the sentence of the court should not be pronounced against you?”

All eyes were directed to Stanley Deane, Jake Stark, Long Bill and Rudolph Heinemann.

“I have, your honor!”

The speaker was Rudolph Heinemann, and his deep and resonant voice filled the court room before the echoes of the judge's last word had died away.

Those who had followed the trial looked at the almost unknown prisoner with amazement. For a week occasional glances had been directed at this detested character. He had slouched in his chair, a stoop-shouldered, unkempt, defiant figure, garbed in an ill-fitting suit of gray. His sneers and growled comments had led one writer to characterize him as “a trapped hyena,” and

not a throb of pity was felt when the jury decreed him guilty.

Was this the same man? Was this the execrated foreign anarchist whose wordless jibes had mocked the court?

Until that moment Deane had monopolized the attention of the morbid throng; now Rudolph Heinemann held the centre of the stage—and he held it majestically!

His tall and massively proportioned figure was garbed in a suit of black, perfectly fitting, and of the finest material. His broad shoulders were thrown back, and on the hand of his extended arm gleamed a ring of exquisite design and setting. His pose was commanding, almost domineering in its dignity. His cold eyes were ablaze with a power which yet held something in reserve. The beard of ten days' growth had disappeared, and the thin lips were compressed above a firm-set chin in an expression which revealed implacable and relentless determination.

"I have, your honor!" he repeated, as the judge hesitated.

"You were given a chance to testify in your own behalf, and you refused to avail yourself of that privilege," the judge slowly said. "For what purpose do you now address the court?"

"I make no plea for myself," the prisoner declared, a shade of sarcasm in his voice and face. "I entertain no fears for my fate, but if you sentence these three men, and more especially the one who has been tried

under the name of Stanley Deane, you will do them a grievous injustice, and bring ridicule on yourself as a judge."

"The jury has brought in its verdict, and I have no alternative," the judge said, a touch of impatience in his voice, but there was something in the manner of the prisoner that held his gavel suspended.

"Set aside that asinine verdict!" thundered the convicted Heinemann. "Set it aside!—*Amos Buckingham was not murdered! Amos Buckingham is alive!*"

His powerful voice rang through the building, and in it was a note of triumphant certainty which brought the spectators to their feet and held them spellbound.

Even the judge arose and took a step forward, but his voice held its wonted calm when he said:

"The defence admitted the *corpus delicti*. What reason have you to deny that the body found in the laboratory was not that of Amos Buckingham?"

"The most convincing of all reasons! *I am Amos Buckingham!*"

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE SECRET OF THE LABORATORY

“By all that’s holy!” cried Saxon, in the confusion which followed the startling dénouement. “They have tried and convicted a man for his own murder!”

Seldom has such a scene been witnessed in a court of justice as that which ensued when the dead Buckingham stood reincarnated and proclaimed the fact in a voice of thunder. The dreary tomes of law contained no precedent for such a climax, and all discipline was swept aside before the conflicting gusts of emotion.

Dazed and speechless, the presiding judge stood and watched a demonstration in which human instincts and passions trampled under foot the petty conventions of court procedure. The French are not more fickle and emotional than the sensation-craving dwellers of the American metropolis, and those who an instant before waited eagerly to hear the words which should condemn Deane to the death chair, now cheered and dashed the officers aside in a mad attempt to testify to their joy over his triumphant vindication.

Captain Morse was the first to reach him. No words came from his lips, but the look on his face spoke all



that is in a parent's heart. Then Stanley felt Jake Stark's huge arms about him, and looked into his bearded, homely and smiling face.

"It was a mighty hard gale, Mascot; one of the worst I ever seen!" he declared, crushing Deane's fingers; "but we rode her out, Mascot; we rode her out an' never lost an inch of canvas! God bless you, Mascot, God bless you!"

"Thank you, captain!" was all that Deane could say, and then he saw one whose near presence blotted all else from his senses.

Alice was trying to get through the crazed and cheering mob which had invaded the space reserved for the lawyers and others who had rights there. Dolly, Tom and others were with her, and when Deane started toward them the crowd generously made way, but redoubled its clamor.

A moment later he held her hands and looked into her moist eyes and smiling face.

"I tried to tell you, Stanley!" she exclaimed. "I knew it several days ago, but papa made me promise not to say a word. Papa had no idea that they would convict you, and when that awful jury said you were guilty, it was all that I could do to keep from crying out and telling you that it was a mistake. I tried to go to you, but Mr. Farnsworth wouldn't let me. How you must have suffered in those moments!"

"When I saw the look in your eyes, sweetheart, I was very happy!" he said softly, bending down until her

hair brushed her cheek. "I'm the most fortunate man in the world; I was tried for my life and won yours!"

The tactless Harkness broke in on this little scene, and shouted his congratulations. The officers had awakened from their stupor, and the hammering of the judge's gavel sounded above the confusion.

"Look at your anarchist father, Alice!" Tom said, and she and Deane turned and looked at Mr. Buckingham, who had remained standing and unmoved during this wild demonstration. "I declare, he is grinning at you and Stanley!"

What he said was true. The dark features of the millionaire had lost their sternness in a smile which had stolen into his face as he watched his daughter and Deane.

"Did he give his consent, little one?" asked the privileged Tom of Alice, as he escorted the cousins to their seats.

"Ask Dolly!" she retorted, the color leaping to her neck and cheeks. "Ask Dolly! she promised faithfully not to tell."

"Then I shall know in a few minutes," laughed Tom. "Telling me doesn't count; I'm almost one of the family."

When order had been restored the judge arose and said:

"In view of the remarkable character of the statement made by the prisoner who has been tried and convicted under the name of Rudolph Heinemann—a state-

ment thus far unsubstantiated by any word other than his own—the court will overlook the demonstration made by the audience, and condone the inefficiency of the officers of the court, but if any further manifestation is made during the inquiry which will now be made, the court will order the room cleared and conduct the proceedings behind closed doors.”

He then turned to the prisoners.

“If the statement made be true,” he said, “and if the prisoner who has been known to this court as Rudolph Heinemann is in reality Amos Buckingham, the case of the prosecution falls. Arise, sir!” indicating “Rudolph Heinemann.”

He stood erect, bowed respectfully to the judge, and looked calmly over the silent throng.

“Are there witnesses present who can prove beyond doubt that you are Amos Buckingham?” the judge asked. “I shall require at least two witnesses who are personally known to me.”

“Such witnesses are in the room,” was the reply.

“Name them, please.”

“David Farnsworth and his wife,” he began. “The latter is my sister, and both inform me that they have met you socially and are known to you. I also refer you to my daughter, Alice, whom they will identify. Also to Thomas Harkness; Mr. Peters, my private secretary; Mr. Jacoby, well and favorably known as a detective; Mr. Hunter, the general superintendent of my mills; and if these will not suffice, I will give you the names of

others, including the mayor of the city, who can be called here without a long delay."

The judge turned to Mrs. Farnsworth with a courtly bow.

"Pardon this legal formality, my dear madame," he said. "Is the gentleman to whom you have just listened your brother?"

"He is, your honor!" timidly replied Mrs. Farnsworth. Her husband, the famous banker, nodded his head in needless confirmation.

"I require no further proof," promptly ruled the judge. "In view of this development, it is my duty to set aside the verdict of guilty found by the jury against Stanley Deane, Jacob Stark and William Parker, and I do this without reflecting in the least on the zeal and intelligence of the members of the jury, who were guided solely by the evidence submitted to them. The prisoners named are discharged."

The excited murmur which arose was checked by the officers before it swelled into a second demonstration, and after a minute of silence the judge again turned to Buckingham.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Buckingham," he began, "that there did not befall you the fate which the court deplored, and which it strove to punish. At the same time it is my duty to say to you that, from what knowledge I now possess, it appears that you have been guilty of evasions which have subjected innocent men to ignominy and suffering, mental and physical; that you have

entailed on the State a litigation which has been protracted and expensive, and that you have caused this and other courts to lose in prestige and dignity by making of a most solemn proceeding a mockery and a travesty. I do not say that such has been your intent, but I do say that such has been the result. It is due to the court; to these prisoners who have unjustly been held under suspicion and suspense; to the prosecution which has done its duty under law; to the public which looks to the courts for the proper administration of justice; and finally to yourself, that you reveal frankly and fully the circumstances and the reasons which have been responsible for this astounding development. The court awaits your reply, Mr. Buckingham."

"I shall be glad to offer such explanation and such a defence as is at my command," replied Buckingham, "but it must be an informal one, since many of the facts which I shall relate, while easy of complete substantiation, are not of my personal knowledge. May I be permitted to tell the story of what has occurred in my own way, without unnecessary reference to the sources of my information, and so far as is possible without interruption?"

"You may."

In an easy, conversational tone, as if addressing a few friends, Buckingham told this remarkable story of how he was suspected, arrested, imprisoned, indicted, tried and convicted for his own murder:

"When I was a young man my father was anxious



that I should have such an education as would fit me to fill his place as the owner of the Buckingham mills, but I had little taste for mechanics. I went abroad, and there I became interested in medical science, and determined to study such courses as would enable me to take a degree. From the study of physics I naturally drifted into an investigation of the mysteries of anatomy, and as I delved more deeply into that subject I became fascinated with it.

“After my marriage in Paris and the birth of my daughter, I devoted most of my time to anatomical researches, and I attained such proficiency as to admit me to the companionship of the most famous anatomists of Paris, Berlin, Vienna, London and other centres of advanced knowledge.

“My private means were such—owing to the generosity of a father who never refused any request ever made to him—that I was in a position to gratify every whim. While competent to perform the most delicate and dangerous operations, I refused to make myself known to the public as a surgeon, and never took a fee in my life. Surgery and dissection were my passions, and all that I asked was the acclaim of my few distinguished associates, and the satiating of my craving for new discoveries in the construction and functions of the human body.

“My pride suffers when I reflect that my fame is so small that no American surgeons thought to carry it to the ears of Judge Sawyer and Themistocles Saxon, the distinguished lawyers who have borne the burden of the

defence in this case. I cannot refrain from saying that I have done enough to give me an humble place amongst those who have tried to probe the secrets of the frame which encloses our souls. Had they learned of this; had they known of my penchant for dissection, they would not have been so ready to admit that the charred body found in the laboratory was mine!

“On the death of my father I was compelled to abandon the associations which most keenly interested me in life, and to come to this city. It was my purpose to sell the property which had been bequeathed to me, but I found that the Buckingham mills were menaced by a monopolistic combine of manufacturers on the one hand, and a monopolistic combine of employés on the other. I am an individualist; an intense egoist, possibly—and when I found that my money interests were threatened by both capital and labor, I determined to wage a war to the finish against them.

“But I could not entirely abandon my anatomical researches. It was my ambition to discover some positive clue which would lead myself or others to ascertain certain unknown functions of the spleen. In Paris and in Berlin I had the advantage of private dissecting rooms connected with my residences, and my first step on taking possession of the mansion erected by my father was to build a wall about the place, and to erect the small structure which has been known in this case as the ‘laboratory.’ I will continue so to term it.

“I arranged with a man, whose name I shall not disclose, to furnish me with subjects for dissection, and

when I had finished my examination of them I consumed the remains in a specially constructed furnace which was sent to me from my study room in Berlin. As a rule these subjects were delivered to me late at night, and the nature of my work was such as to make secrecy imperative.

“When the strike occurred I was making satisfactory progress, and it annoyed me that my attention should be diverted to outside matters. I deeply resented the interference of Mr. Deane. From Sir Whitaker Deane, brother to his foster-father, I had learned that he was an adopted son. I had known Sir Whitaker for years, and he confided to me that secret in a moment of conviviality. I thought nothing of it at the time, but when I learned that he was in this country, and that he was espousing the cause of my employés, I sent for him, and we held the heated interview, of which testimony has been given.

“I so far misjudged this young man as to suspect him of complicity in framing the warning which was sent to me, asserting that I had been condemned to death. I thought much of this matter, and then decided on a step which doubtless saved my life, but which also resulted in the remarkable complication you have witnessed.

“Ten years ago, while in Switzerland, I met a cultured and wealthy man who, through a combination of happenings and circumstances—which I shall not disclose—became one of the international leaders of force anarchy. The world knew him as a financier, an aris-

ocrat of proud lineage—the monarchies of Europe knew him as the power behind the plottings of which they ever stood in fear, but such was his shrewdness and his influence that they did not and dare not arrest him.

“I admired the personality of this man, and since most of his efforts were directed against the Russian autocracy, I found myself in sympathy with much of his propaganda. The secret brotherhood to which he belongs has never lifted a finger against the government of any republic, nor against the liberal monarchy of Great Britain, and their followers in such countries hold, as a rule, no enmity against the home administrations.

“This titled leader of international anarchy became financially embarrassed on one occasion, and it was my privilege to render him assistance at a critical time. That put him under obligations to me, but I did not think that an emergency would arise when he could repay me.

“A few days after receiving the notice condemning me to death, I learned that this man was in New York City. I sent for him and he came to my residence at once. He was indignant when I told him what had happened. I informed him that it would amuse me to mingle with these renegade anarchists who might be plotting my life, and stated to him that I was especially anxious to watch Stanley Deane. He was certain that Mr. Deane was not an anarchist, but I still had my suspicions.

“He laughingly agreed to post me on anarchy so that



it would be possible for me to win the confidence of Fischer, Dare and others. For three days I took lessons from him. Prior to this time he had induced me to read the standard anarchistic literature, and I was no novice in its arguments and fantastic sophistries. It was decided that I should assume the character of 'Johann Schliermacker, editor of the Berlin Freiheit,' and he assured me that with my beard removed I would look not unlike that literary radical.

"My anarchistic friend also fitted me out with an assortment of pamphlets, secret work and other documents, and finally with models of new designs of bombs and infernal machines, which had recently been invented by some associate of his unknown to me. No anarchist ever started out with better credentials. It only remained for me to look the part, and the newspaper artists and the lawyers for the prosecution have paid me the high compliment of asserting that I am the most ferocious and forbidding type of anarchist they ever sketched or studied.

"It was the simplest possible matter to perfect my disguise. There are a dozen men in this room whose children would not know them were they to remove their beards and put on a slouchy suit of clothes. For twenty years I have worn a heavy beard which entirely masks my features. I trust that I am handsomer with a beard; certain it is that I have shaved for the last time.

"Mr. Peters has been my private secretary for ten years, has been constantly in my company, and knows me better than does my daughter, yet on the day after



I had assumed my disguise I met him on the street in broad daylight and talked with him several minutes. He did not know me, and from that moment I had no fears of detection.

“I have lived in this city less than six months, and during that time I have avoided making acquaintances. Not five men in the city had access to my house. I kept away from the mills, Peters looked after my finances, Superintendent Hunter after my manufacturing interests, and I spent most of my time at my anatomical studies. Mr. Deane never saw me but once. That was at night in my library, and I sat in the shadow with my eyes shaded. None of these prisoners knew me, and I doubt if either August Fischer or Wallace Dare had seen me.”

The reader will recall that Fischer once saw Mr. Buckingham in his automobile, but his eyes were goggled, and it is certain that he did not in the least resemble the Berlin editor met later in *The Well*.

“I confided my plan only to Mr. Jacoby,” continued Amos Buckingham, the vast crowd following him with breathless attention. “Before removing my beard I informed my daughter and Mr. Peters that I should be away for a few days, and that night I introduced myself to *The Well*. My experiences there have been fully and truthfully told by the men who have been my fellow prisoners, and I will only say that I became speedily convinced that Stanley Deane was not an anarchist, but that he was an earnest, unselfish and intelligent advocate of principles which he has a right to hold. I wish pub-

licly to apologize to Mr. Deane at this time, and to express to him my regret that I entertained an unworthy suspicion against him. I hope he will accept these amends."

Deane arose, his handsome face aglow, and offered a hand which Buckingham grasped, and as the two men stood there the audience cheered and waved kerchiefs. The judge forgot to carry out his threat, and after quiet was restored, Mr. Buckingham continued:

"I enjoyed myself in the society of these men, and for the first time heard the side of the workers frankly discussed. I found most of them fair and conservative in their claims and ambitions. The most radical member of The Well was Mr. Themistocles Saxon, and I cannot understand how he managed to escape arrest. I had no suspicions against Fischer and Dare, and I proposed to terminate my adventure after listening to Mr. Deane's address to my striking employés.

"I went to the hall, saw Miss Fischer when she rushed in and whispered to Mr. Deane as he was about to begin his address, was suspicious that something was wrong, and decided to follow them. I reached the sidewalk in time to see Deane and Miss Fischer drive rapidly away in his carriage.

"Jumping into a cab, I ordered the man to follow them. He did so until we reached the cross street which leads to my residence, and there we were blocked for thirty seconds, perhaps, but something told me that they were headed for my place.

"When we reached the rear gate, I saw Miss Fischer

turn into the alley, and by the time I was out of the cab I saw two men take the same course. It has since been shown that these were Jacob Stark and 'Long Bill' Parker. Miss Fischer had notified them before she did Deane, but being unfamiliar with the way they missed it, and it thus happened that the four of us arrived at the front of the vacant house at about the same time. There was no coincidence about it—it was the perfectly natural result of the frantic efforts of Annieta Fischer to prevent her father from committing an awful crime.

"At that moment Deane was at my gates, giving his warning to Jacoby, Peters and my hall servant. He did the proper and logical thing, yet had I been killed it would have convicted him. I shall have something to say about circumstantial evidence later on.

"I followed Stark and Parker into that black basement, having not the slightest idea of what was their mission. I had no suspicion of the nature of the conspiracy, and I was so stupid that I did not understand even when the officers summoned by Deane flashed a light at the mouth of the tunnel. I saw Annieta Fischer jump into the excavation and heard her call for her father; I saw a bearded man—Jake Stark, it seems—jump in after; I crowded forward to see what it all meant—and then I felt a hot blast on my face, a roaring sound in my ears, felt myself hurled through the air—and then I knew no more."

Mr. Buckingham called for a glass of water, and then continued his strange but natural narrative.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### A FLASH OF LIGHT

NEVER did actor carry an audience with him toward a great climax with more skill than did Buckingham. The shrewd ones knew that the body found in the laboratory was that of a subject for dissection, but what of the lights seen by Jacoby and Peters? What became of the false Schliermacker? The speaker deftly untangled the knotted threads of these mysteries.

“My first impression when I came to a semi-consciousness,” he continued, “was that of a terrific buzzing in my ears, and then I was aware that I was in a cramped enclosure and moving rapidly over an uneven surface. I was in a police ambulance.

“It must have been thirty minutes after the explosion when I was discovered. Miss Fischer, Parker and Stark had been removed before I was found in a dark corner of the basement. It was at first thought that I was dead, but the surgeon found otherwise, and after a time I was carried to the ambulance and started for the hospital.

“When I recovered, I raised myself on my elbow and looked into the face of a young man in uniform. He pushed me back on the pillow.



“ ‘Lie down and keep quiet,’ he ordered, and then turned to an older man who sat on a camp chair at the foot of the stretcher. ‘I told you, doctor, that there was nothing the matter with him but shock. There’s not a bone broken, and his pulse is as regular as mine. Let’s not take him to the hospital. This is a case for Captain Hogan.’

“ ‘You’ll not take me to a hospital!’ I declared. ‘Take me to my residence at once! My name is Amos Buckingham, and I live at——’

“ ‘Lie down and keep your mouth shut!’ ordered the larger and elder of the two. ‘He’s dazed yet, but it’s safe to take him to the station,’ he said to the other, and I decided to let them have their own way.

“ My strength returned rapidly, and I felt all right when I was taken from the ambulance and permitted to walk into the police station. I was more angry than hurt, but I had no idea of my desperate appearance. I have since learned that my clothes were torn, smeared with dirt and encrusted with mud. I had no hat, and my close-cropped hair had been burned away over my left temple. The exposed scalp was raw where the flying gravel had pitted it. There were splotches of coagulated blood on my cheeks, my nose was scratched and my upper lip swollen.

“ In this condition I was taken into Captain Hogan’s private office. He was furious that such a crime had been committed in his district. More than an hour had passed since the explosion, and news had come to him of



the finding of the charred body supposed to be mine. On his desk were photographs of me, but I did not see them. I had no conception of what had happened, and was only anxious to be released at once, and I presume I was more or less haughty and impatient.

“ ‘Here’s another of them blankty-blank anarchists, Captain!’ announced the officer who held me by the arm. ‘We found him half buried in a corner of that basement. He got a dose of his own medicine!’

“ ‘Stand him up against the wall and search him!’ ordered Captain Hogan, motioning to other officers who were in the room.

“ ‘Hold on, Captain!’ I exclaimed, pushing aside the man who gripped me by the arm. ‘This is all a mistake. I am Amos Buckingham, and I——’

“ ‘You’re a fine-looking Amos Buckingham!’ angrily roared Captain Hogan. ‘You helped kill Amos Buckingham, you crazy, blankty-blank anarchist! Search him, men; have I got to tell you twice? Are you afraid of him? Jamb him against that wall and see if he has any bombs left!’

“ Four of them made a rush for me. I suppose I was insane with anger. My temper is none of the best, and my experience that night was enough to have upset a much meeker man. I confess to no great love for our police system and its personnel, and when a man who hadn’t been on these shores long enough to vote grabbed me by the throat, I reached out and landed on him with

all my strength, and without boasting, I will say that I am not a weakling in a physical encounter.

“Captain Hogan leaped at me, and I floored him. Witnesses declare that for fully two minutes I fought single-handed against six men. I was gradually weakened by terrific blows on the head and back with night sticks and the butt ends of revolvers, but it was not until reënforcements arrived that I went down and out. I do not know who struck the blow, where it landed, and I do not care. I am told that they continued to beat me after I had fallen. I hardly believe this.

“I am informed that it is customary to put suspected criminals through a form of physical torture and brutality known as ‘the third degree,’ a gentle survival of barbarism permitted in no other civilized country at the present time. Since I was condemned in advance as guilty of an atrocious crime, and as my appearance was against me, I presume that I should be glad that I escaped with my life twice in one night—first from dynamite anarchists, and second from police anarchists.

“It was ten days later when I recovered consciousness, and the next day Detective Jacoby found me in the hospital to which I had been taken.

“It is now necessary to retrace our steps, and to relate what really happened in and around the laboratory.

“The day before I assumed the disguise which caused all this trouble, the man who supplied me with subjects for dissection called and informed me that in all probability he would be able to obtain an especially promising

one within the following few days. This man conferred only with me. Secretary Peters knew nothing of my researches, and no one had ever been admitted to the laboratory.

“It was my fancy to work on cadavers as near as possible of my height and build—possibly another evidence of an over-developed ego, of which I have been accused—and my agent informed me that he had one in mind which met every requirement. I did not wish to postpone my detective excursion, neither did I wish to lose this subject for dissection, so after warning him to come at night, I gave him the keys to the rear gate and the laboratory, also a note which he could use in case one of my servants questioned him.

“There is every evidence that Fischer and Dare awaited only the sign of a light from the laboratory windows to fire the mine. What happened is simple enough. My agent arrived at the rear gate with an assistant and the body. He unlocked the gate, the two of them carried in the rough box containing the body, and they entered the laboratory and turned on the lights a few minutes before the arrival of Miss Fischer, Stark, Parker, Deane and myself.

“These two men were not in the laboratory more than three or four minutes, but the lights told the intended assassins, also Jacoby and Peters, that I had returned. The mine was fired, and when the naphtha, alcohol and other inflammable fluids had done their work, there

remained the charred remains of what was unhesitatingly assumed to be my corpse.

"One man refused to accept this theory. Mr. Jacoby began a thorough and critical examination of such facts as were in his possession. He was the only one who knew that I had assumed a disguise. He found that I had spent several days in The Well. He traced me to the mass meeting, and found the cabman who had driven 'Schliermacker' to my residence. When he ascertained that I had left the hall after Deane and Miss Fischer, he at once detected the flaw.

"Jacoby had stood in Peters' room, and had seen the lights flash from the laboratory windows *at a time when I was either in the hall where the mass meeting was held or else on the way to my residence!* Therefore some one else must have turned on the lights. True, there was time for me to enter the laboratory before the explosion, but Jacoby proceeded on another theory.

"By patient and intelligent work he learned that an unknown man had been found injured and senseless in the basement of the vacant building. He traced me from there to the police station, but Captain Hogan and others were dumb. I presume they were afraid I would die from my beating. Jacoby convinced himself that I was not in jail, and then he turned his attention to the hospitals. As I have told you, he found me the day after I recovered consciousness.

"When it was learned that I would live, I was promptly indicted under the name of Rudolph Heine-



mann. In the meantime I had decided on a course for which I may be censured by the court and by public opinion, but for which I make no apologies.

“I knew that I could trust Mr. Jacoby. I instructed him to go at once to my daughter, Mr. David Farnsworth and his wife and daughter, and to tell them that I was alive and in no danger, and to enjoin them to absolute secrecy. He did so, and not until I was removed from the hospital to a cell in the Tombs did I see my brave daughter and my sister.

“Your honor, I had three motives in wishing to permit this case to take its natural—or rather, its unnatural course. I wished to revenge myself on the police who mistreated and nearly killed me. I wished to advertise in the widest possible manner the ignorance, inefficiency and brutality of a police system which is a disgrace to the second largest city of the world. In a city where the police tolerate and even encourage every form of vice and robbery which will yield them revenue, I was assaulted and inhumanly treated before my name had been registered, or any charge made against me.

“Had I been a penniless citizen instead of a man of wealth, they would continue to laugh at this crime against the most sacred right of American citizenship. The criminal police of this and other American cities incite more lawlessness than they suppress. They are the foundation of the stupendous edifice of corruption which is rearing itself in this nation. Many of them—it is not unfair to say the majority of them—pay money



for positions and promotions, sure that blackmail and toleration of crime will yield them tribute. Thieves, murderers, blacklegs, gamblers, prostitutes, and business interests willing and eager to break the law—these are their customers.

“No such hideous mockery of a police system is possible in Great Britain or any Continental city. If what I have endured will bring the faintest blush of shame to our people, I am content. If they will take such measures as will prevent police captains in crime centres from retiring with fortunes of from a hundred thousand to a million dollars, I shall have done something for the country of my birth.

“My second motive was to hammer one more nail into the coffin of circumstantial evidence. Had I died from the injuries inflicted by Captain Hogan and his uniformed brutes, my body would now be in the Potter’s Field, and the ashes of some pauper would have remained for ages in the vaults of the Buckingham family. Stanley Deane would have gone to the death chair, as innocent a man as ever foolishly tried to better the condition of the working classes. Captain Stark would have spent years in jail, and that would have been the fate of my friend and former host, ‘Long Bill’ Parker.

“My third motive was to bring into ridicule a jury system and a method of prosecution which should have been discarded years ago. Other countries long since ascertained its worthlessness and its dangers—we still cling to it for the reason that in certain matters of

prejudice and tradition we are the most stupid and unprogressive people on the face of the earth. There was a time when a jury was a protection against injustice and tyranny, but we have succeeded in perpetuating only its abuses.

"A juror should have intelligence; he should be a man of reading and one abreast of his times. We disqualify him for these very traits. We make jury service a hardship to worthy men, and a perquisite to dullards and incapables. A jury of one's peers! Stanley Deane learns more in one week than the average jury acquires in a lifetime! We drag the ignorance of an emotional and unintelligent community for the twelve men who know the least of what men should know, and then commission them to pass on the question of life and death!

"If a guilty woman with a pretty face smiles at them and rustles her silk skirts in their ears, no testimony is damning enough to convict her. To be accepted as a juror in a metropolitan murder trial is a disgrace from which an intelligent and self-respecting man can never recover.

"What does the prosecution do? Does it institute a disinterested inquiry which may establish the guilt or innocence of the accused? Not at all. It assumes that those charged are guilty. While pretending to proceed on the theory that a man is innocent until he is proved guilty, we actually turn against him a huge and often unscrupulous legal machine, one supplied by the State with unlimited resources in money, and influence, and

compel this possibly innocent man to fight for his life against this terrific handicap. If he has money he has a chance, and he may save his neck at the expense of his private fortune; if he has no money he may as well resign himself to his fate, especially if the case is of so sensational a nature that a prosecuting attorney or some underling may climb to fame and private practice over a verdict against him.

“In this case, as in hundreds of others, the prosecution has advanced arguments, suppressed facts, introduced testimony, and taken numberless technical advantages calculated unfairly to influence the jury against the defendants. That is the system to which the prosecution has been educated. Your honor was familiar with their technical plottings, with their sophistries, tricks and evasions, and had the decision rested with you, instead of a jury whom it was easy to hoodwink when anarchy was the cry, no such verdict would have been handed down.

“It was for the purpose of dealing a blow at these vicious institutions that I led the police and the prosecution on this mad chase over a false trail. So as to further befog them, I denied that my name was Schliermacker, and let them assume, from certain papers found in my possession, that my real name was Rudolph Heinemann.

“I beg to assure your honor that I have the highest respect for him and for his rulings, and to thank him for the privilege of making these remarks. I am guilty, not

of contempt of his court, but of contempt for a system of courts which denies the people the benefits of judicial knowledge and acumen, and makes of justice a marketplace for the employment of incompetents and the enriching of pettifoggers.”

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A year later Captain Jacob Stark stood on a dock and with professional interest watched a great ocean liner warp into her berth. Near him was William Parker, and on his arm a pretty young woman whose bright eyes looked into his, and then glanced along the cabin decks of the huge ship which was slowly drawing nearer to them.

“There they are!” cried Annieta Fischer, pointing to a group of seven that had just emerged from the main saloon. “There’s Mr. Deane—I mean Mr. Morse—and there’s his wife! Doesn’t she look pretty? There’s Mr. Harkness and his wife! I think she is the cutest little thing that ever lived! There’s Captain Morse, and I’m sure that nice-looking lady must be his wife. They see us! They see us!”

“Ahoy, Mascot!” roared Captain Stark, waving his slouch hat, and before the gangplank was shoved ashore he had leaped aboard with the agility of a youngster, and made his way to the upper deck two steps at a time.

“Bless my eyes!” he exclaimed to Alice, when he had been presented to the “Mascot’s” mother and



sisters. "Bless my eyes, but you're prettier than ever! Has Mascot been good tew ye? I'll bet he has! Say that he hasn't, little one, an' overboard he goes! Well, well, well! You're both lookin' finer'n silk! Married life must just suit ye! Dew ye see Long Bill down there?"

"Isn't that Miss Fischer with him?" asked Alice.

"That's what it is!" declared Captain Stark. "I've got great news, great news!"

"Are they married?" asked John Morse, and his wife echoed the question.

"No, but they're goin' tew be next week," the captain grinned, nudging Tom Harkness and winking at Dolly.

"How did he muster up courage to ask her?"

"He didn't!" chuckled Captain Stark.

"You don't mean to say that she asked him?" demanded Alice.

"No, no!" explained the captain. "I asked her! That's a fact, and I'll leave it to them! Why, say, if that pretty little girl had waited until Long Bill got his nerve up to a point where he dared ask a woman tew marry him, why, say, she'd 'a' caught up tew him an' been older than he is. So knowin' that was the way things stood, I invites them to take dinner with me one night, and we sits in the corner of a big restaurant where nobody will bother us. When we are all feelin' just right, I up and asks Annieta if she will marry Long Bill!"



"Why, captain! How did you dare do such a thing?" laughed Alice Morse.

"Between us, I wouldn't dared done it for myself," admitted Captain Stark, "but somebody had tew dew it fer Bill, an' I think a lot of him, so I jumped right in an' said it. And it was all right at that. She didn't say 'yes' right then, but what I said sorter broke the ice."

"I should think it would," laughed John Morse.

"They're goin' tew be married next week," announced Captain Jake. "Bill has sold The Well, an' I have gone in with him an' bought a finer hotel. They are goin' tew run it, an' I have the best room in the house. You must come up an' see us."

"Of course we shall," declared both of them.

"There's papa!" cried Alice. "I declare, he looks ten years younger. John, dear," pressing her husband's arm, "isn't it a shame that wedding journeys cannot last forever?"

THE END





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