



TONGUES *of* FLAME

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



AHLEET Dropped Beside the Couch and Took Henry's Hand

TONGUES OF FLAME

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LAHLEET DROPPED BESIDE THE COUCH AND TOOK HENRY'S HAND	<i>Frontispiece</i>
"YOURS IS A RECKLESS NATURE," BILLIE WARNED HENRY	<i>Facing page</i> 104
LAHLEET STOOD AS IF HENRY'S SOUL HUNG IN THE BALANCE	172
THE PITY OF IT WAS THAT BILLIE STILL LOVED HENRY	282

330008

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CHAPTER I

THE conversation was taking place in Henry Harrington's law office—a not particularly prosperous-looking law office, with the usual sheepskin volumes rather meager upon the shelves. The room boasted one window. Against the side of this window Harrington leaned, a tall half-indolent figure in a gray serge suit which fitted loosely yet revealed the army training of the frame beneath.

The Harrington features were regularly chiseled and inclined to leanness, with a streak of humor showing in the mouth and a play of it in the keen gray eyes that looked out under bushy brows which beetled slightly; while the nose and chin both indicated force enough when the nature behind them was roused. Just now it was quite unroused. Not one of the brown hairs in the Harrington head was out of place; the long white line of the part upon the left stood neat and perfectly ordered, thus completing the contrast between a rather immaculate personal appearance and the general untidiness of desk and office.

“It's quite a show, Henry,” urged Charlie Clayton. Harrington's lip curled, half-humorously, half-cynically, and a far-away look got into his eye while his gesture seemed to dismiss the whole world and even

life itself from consideration. "There never was but one big show, Charlie, in the history of the whole world," he said, "and I was in that, thank God!"

"And it's ruined you, Henry!" accused Clayton. "Here you are, a young fellow with all sorts of stuff in you, mooning around, going stale on life because you think you've seen all of life there is—all the emotions, all the thrills—and that everything is now anticlimax. You make me sick, Henry; you do for a fact. Your men, they tell me, used to call you 'Hellfire' Harrington; but you're tame as a pussycat now, feeding yourself up on this all-in-the-past stuff. I tell you, old man, these three towns are full of good fights right now if you'd only wake up and hop into a few of them. Why, you could win in a walk from this assembly district, and with me from the other and Madden in the senate, we could form a little triumvirate that would take care of the three towns like an old maid taking care of her cat. Besides, it's a big show, I tell you—this state legislature; out of it come the governors, the congressmen and senators—jobs that lead to the biggest show."

"You're right, old-timer, no doubt," admitted Harrington wearily, "but I can't seem to help it. My emotions have been pumped out so they don't come back. God! it's an awful feeling to realize that at thirty everything's behind you."

Clayton laughed satirically and tried another bait.

"Well, if you won't consider the legislature, let's abandon practical things and consider esthetic ones. Let's consider woman—and the fairest of her kind!"

"I'm off of 'em!" Harrington declared.

"Billie Boland is coming home today—prettiest girl west of the Rockies!" tantalized Clayton.

Billie Boland? Daughter of John Boland, of course. Harrington turned his glance out the window and the name of Boland smote him everywhere. His eyes were peering into the busiest street of a harbor town on the west coast of the United States. The street was wide. Upon its left-hand side as Harrington gazed, were two- and three-floor store and office buildings, while upon the other was a line of wharves and docks with long warehouses squat upon them and here and there smokestacks and masts sticking up above, with the gleam of a tidal stream behind.

Across this stream was a line of sawmills with vast acres of log booms, broken into at intervals by areas of wharfing upon which piles of lumber or shingles gleamed yellow or glowed dull red in the sunshine.

This was the town of Edgewater that Henry Harrington looked out upon—Edgewater which called itself a city, for was it not hustling and bustling with the energies of twenty thousand souls and pregnant with the harnessed industries of a group of great corporations—the John Boland corporations?

There was the Boland Mill and Lumber Company which operated the lumber mills; there was the Boland Cedar Company, which made the shingles; there was the Boland Logging Company which operated railroads that went nosing up into the hills and snaked out the raw material of both the lumber and the shingles.

There was the Boland Fisheries Corporation that gathered salmon from the nearby waters and cod from far-off Alaska and smoked or packed them on the wharves; there was the Boland Navigation Company that carried Boland products to the distant corners of

the globe and operated as well the busy ferryboats upon the tidal stream; there were also the interurban trolley line and other minor tributaries and feeders to the larger corporations. There was finally the huge parent corporation called Boland General.

And last of all, dominating all, creating and energizing all, was John Boland himself, a man in the later fifties with a brow like Napoleon and recessed peering eyes, whose boast it was that where one of his corporations went in, two blades of grass began at once to grow where one had grown before. He boasted this so many times that his intimates began to speak of him humorously at first and afterwards affectionately, as "Old Two Blades."

And the people of the three towns, Edgewater, Soca-tullo and Wahpeetah—his towns that he had created—were proud of him also. Was he not their patron saint? Was he not first in every good work in the community—the public libraries, the hospitals, the community centers, with gymnasium and playground and athletic field attachments, all to keep the people, young and old, amused and entertained and contented and out of mischief—were they not all in a large sense monuments to his generosity and foresight? They were.

Why, not even a butcher's boy in any of the three towns could display talent in business but the Boland corporations sought him out, attached him to their enterprises and hung glittering baits before him—gave him a chance, an incentive to rise. And they were hanging glittering baits before Henry Harrington this morning. Some argus eye of Boland General had noted Henry and coveted him.

But Charlie Clayton, handy messenger of the Boland interests, had failed entirely to excite the cupidity of his friend. Chagrined, he sought revenge by tantalizing him with a gust of his own enthusiasm for Billie Boland, of whom Harrington, but two years resident of the community, could be presumed to know nothing.

"Billie's smart, you know," he was blurbing, "got sense—common sense, I mean—business sense. She'll inherit the old man's millions and she'll know how to handle 'em too. She handles everybody, Billie does. Grew up in Edgewater—a typical darling of the town. Off in Europe since the war closed. Democratic to the heels, Billie is. She used to be a good deal of a tomboy and if she's anything like the old Billie, with all the tricks she's learned abroad and probably with two or three counts and dukes trailing at her heels, she'll give this town the thrill of its young life from the moment she strikes it. There's a reception for her at the Country Club this afternoon. You better horn in. Everybody's welcome."

This speech drew Henry away from the window but the expression on his face was one of mild annoyance. "For one thing I especially dislike *managing* women," he frowned; "and for another"—he waved his hand with that same gesture of dismissal which he had employed before—"I've seen 'em all."

"Not till you've seen Billie Boland, you haven't," challenged Clayton as he rose to his feet.

Henry's answer was a shrug. "Your idea is to marry her, I suppose," he commented, casually, filling his pipe.

Clayton became suddenly serious. "I'd jump at the chance. All those good looks—all those millions!"

"I wish you luck, Charlie, old man," smiled Henry, offering a hearty hand.

"Thanks, Henry, you good old stiff," said Clayton, and then, laying a hand affectionately upon Harrington's shoulder as his glance swept the room, presumed to give some serious advice. "Let me tell you something, Henry, pal of mine. You ought to be more thrifty. Youth is slipping along. You're not making money enough. You're wasting pretty decent talent on a lot of rag-tag and bob-tailed cases."

"Oh, I don't know." Harrington's expression was thoughtful again. "I make enough for my wants," he defended, slipping down in his chair. "I'm lazy, you know, along with the rest. I've made the supreme physical effort of my life along with the emotional. I shall never get over being tired. I don't want to work hard. I don't want to get on. I only want to get by, Charlie, and I take only the kind of cases that—well, I couldn't tell you why I take a single darned one of them." He confessed this, looking quite surprised with himself. "I couldn't really."

Clayton, pushing and practical, gazed a moment perplexed, and then his features broke up in hearty laughter. "You win, Henry," he cried. "You're just the most truthful darned soul in the world and the most modest. That's why people like you so and they see through your modesty; they know you're a lot bigger and better man than you think you are."

Henry looked puzzled by this speech and embarrassed. "You don't mean, Charlie——" he began to inquire, and then stopped as if perceiving that vanity was about to trick him into reprehensible loquacity. "How about a little game of draw tonight?" he asked.

"Fine," ejaculated Clayton, his face lighting with instant acquiescence.

"About eight-thirty?"

"You're on. Shows that even if you won't go to the legislature with me, at least you'll play poker with me."

"And thereby sadly deplete your campaign fund," smiled Henry.

Clayton laughed also and passed out through the anteroom where a man with a silver button in his lapel, with one trouser-leg pinned up and a crutch at his side, sat before a typewriter. Several persons were waiting in this anteroom; two were young men, one of these a cripple, the other tubercular; each wore the Loyal Legion button; each eyed wistfully the door Clayton had closed behind him. But besides these two there was a meek, worried-looking man of Scandinavian type with an expression of mild wonder in his blue eyes.

"Not a fifty-dollar fee in the lot," Charles was commenting, and then his roving eye halted, wavered and retreated before the innocent, appraising glance of a young woman.

"What a pippin!" he blurted, once outside. "Gosh! If a dream like her needs legal advice why didn't somebody hand her my card?"

Harrington, crowding more tobacco into the bowl of his pipe and refraining from touching the button that would tell Sergeant Thorpe he was ready to receive clients, was meditating what Charlie had said to him. It was true that life was running along, true that he was unthrifty; that his luck—or his disposition—did not run to making money. He did not get that kind of case somehow.

The poor, the outclassed, the financially unimportant

TONGUES OF FLAME

it was who had the habit of dragging their causes like foundlings to his door; and he had a habit of taking them when something about the prospective client moved his pity, or something in the issue outraged his sense of justice, rather than because of any prospect of gain.

CHAPTER II

HARRINGTON reached out and touched the button and began to get through with his callers. Quickly but considerately, although with that slightly bored air which characterized his manner, he dealt with each.

A certain accumulated atmosphere of misery and gloom, these clients left behind them; then all at once sweetness and light came in, dispelling the gloom as the morning sun dispels a fog. The young woman had entered. She presented quite as much beauty to Henry's gaze as she had to Charlie Clayton's, only Harrington was not so much impressed by beauty.

The young lady was not over five feet and an inch. She wore a belted suit of some tan shade, with brown silk stockings and oxfords that matched. She was unmistakably Caucasian and yet there was something about her just as unmistakably not Caucasian.

"Kanaka strain—Kanaka away up here where the Japan Current comes down," thought Henry to himself as he noted the spun jet gloss of her hair.

"Mr. Harrington?" the girl inquired in a voice that was low and rich and carried the slightest possible trace of accent.

"I am Henry Harrington," said the young lawyer, rising politely, while noticing that his visitor's expression beneath its mask of modest beauty was wistful and concerned. "Will you be seated?"

The young lady advanced but instead of sitting down immediately, stood with a certain something of the wild in the intentness of her scrutiny. "I am Miss Marceau," she vouchsafed; "teacher of the Indian School at Shell Point."

"Yes?" encouraged Henry. "Won't you please be seated?"

Miss Marceau decided that she would, and the big velvety black eyes rested upon the lawyer's face concernedly while she announced surprisingly: "I have come to you because you are the one man in this community who is not afraid of John Boland."

This was a compliment in an absurdity—for who that was honest would be afraid of John Boland?

"How did you guess it?" the lawyer bantered, frankly amused.

But the young woman was not amused at all. "Because I know that you are not afraid of anything," she returned with simple seriousness. "Some of the Indians who were in your company in the war are in my school now—Adam John and others, grown men struggling among the youngsters for more of the white man's knowledge—and they call you *Hellfire* Harrington."

Henry laughed blushing.

"You do not look like *Hellfire* now," observed the young lady almost disappointedly.

"I guess I'm not, any more," chuckled Harrington. "I guess I never was," he deprecated. "Besides, let me assure you that it requires no special brand of courage not to be afraid of Mr. Boland."

The pretty little woman in the chair looked stubbornly doubtful. "Oh, I don't know," she almost

shivered, as if under the spell of some intuitional awe; "Mr. Boland has very great power and he mistakes his will for God's sometimes, don't you think?"

This conceit was so quaint that Henry had to smile again. This woman-girl or girl-woman—she looked eighteen but must have been twenty-four—was an odd piece certainly. She proved it now: "Someone will have to stand up against John Boland some day," she prophesied gravely, "and that someone will have to be very strong. It has seemed to me that that someone might be you."

"But why ever, Miss Marceau, should you think it might be necessary for anyone to stand up against Mr. Boland?"

"But if it ever *should* be necessary," his caller persisted, "as a matter of truth and justice—for someone to stand up against him . . ."

There was a charm so irresistible about the young woman's exhibition of concern, that Harrington felt compelled to humor her by entertaining this preposterous conception. "Why, it would be *some* fight," he smiled. "Some fight!" His lids lowered and his glance became far-away as his imagination kindled with a fighting man's love of conflict. Unconsciously he turned from Miss Marceau and gazed into the street and along the line of wharves and warehouses. Everywhere he looked he saw, as before, the name of Boland—Boland this and Boland that. It was written over all the town.

And the spirit of Boland went even where the name did not. It stalked along the pavements; it reigned in the lives of the people around. If any man ever did stand up to oppose John Boland in this community—one lone little man against the massed might

of Boland General, well, the little man would know he had been in a fight, all right.

The vernacular of Harrington's thought portrayed exactly that kind of hopeless odds which alone could have challenged the imagination of one who thought that all his great fights were behind him; and it fascinated him whimsically until his mind was side-tracked by something unusual that his eyes fell upon.

The ferryboat *Salmon Queen* was just discharging a load of passengers, apparently amid considerable excitement. The center of this excitement was a very shiny open automobile in a very extreme design. As this car rolled off on to the dock a crowd pressed round waving hats and handkerchiefs and hands. If Harrington had been sufficiently interested to raise the window he would have heard cries of "Billie!" "Billie!" "Hello, Billie!" "Welcome home, Billie!" with notes of affection in these greetings.

But he was not sufficiently interested. He only took account of what he saw—a John Boland automobile and in the rear seat the tall chesty figure of Mr. Boland himself with his full-fed wife beside him; and a standing, gesticulating, girlish figure in the front seat at whom everybody was waving and shouting.

The girl had a spirited bearing, he conceded at once. There was an audacious poise to her head, which was crowned by a small hat with a long rakish plume that swept down over a black circular cape of military cut, thrown back over the left shoulder to reveal a bright blue facing, thus imparting a swaggerish, blue-devil effect. As the car rolled slowly forward she steadied herself with one hand upon the wind-shield while the other waved to the enthusiastic group of welcomers.

"You must be seeing something very interesting," commented a demure voice from the chair beside the desk.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" exclaimed the lawyer, conscience-stricken, instantly recalling his mind and his eye. "No; a train of thought—rather," he dissembled. "I was just thinking how odd it would seem to be fighting John Boland, and why on earth anybody should think of doing such a thing."

"The Shell Point Indians believe he is planning to rob them of their land," announced the teacher of the Government School.

"Rob them?" inquired Henry with a certain indignation. "Why, that, Miss Marceau, is absurd. Mr. Boland is the soul of business honor."

"My Indians—I call them that—have an unexplained fear of John Boland, almost traditional, it seems," expounded Miss Marceau. "They mutter vague hints that Indian rights have suffered before when John Boland wanted land. They offer no details, no specifications. They have a superstition that keeps them silent about their past wrongs—a superstition or a pride—and I have come to respect this reticence. But I have also come to respect their intuitions. They fear John Boland. They say that someone some day must stand up against him for them.

"The oldest of these tribesmen are children in many respects and they are all so pathetic in their fear," the girl ranged on, naively appealing. "They are so reduced that they depend on me for advice. Yet they still hope. Disappointed so often by the white man's word and the white man's law, they find their faith once more centering in a man of that race. That man

is you. Your name, your character is almost worshiped for what it became to the half-dozen Indian boys from Shell Point who fought under you, and some of whom—did not come back.

“Mr. Harrington,” she concluded, lifting sincere eyes to his, for somehow they were standing and fronting each other, “those helpless, fear-stricken children of the woods and water have asked me to tell you of their fears and to appeal to you to consent to be their champion if the need arises; provided, of course, that you have not been retained by the other side,” she concluded anxiously.

Harrington straightened proudly, “I will *never* be retained by the other side,” he declared with emphasis. “I’ll help your Indians, of course, any time they need me.”

“Oh, thank you!” breathed the ambassador of the Shell Pointers, and gazed at him with such gratitude as made the young man feel that in the appealing faith of these dark eyes there was being conferred on him something a little finer than the decoration which a three-star general had once pinned upon his breast.

He was, moreover, surprised to discover, from its impulsive pressure, that there was a warm little hand in his, almost flaming hot. He got a thrill of pleasure in the contact, and, rather astonishingly, he continued to hold this warm little hand and it continued to grasp his.

“Mr. Harrington, at the first sign of what we fear, I shall come to you,” Miss Marceau was saying earnestly. “In the meantime, you will be carefully guarded. Your life has, by your promise, become of the greatest importance to a now humble, ignored peo-

ple who are capable of rare faithfulness and devotion. From this hour forward some one of its members will be always near you. You will not often be conscious of this watchful eye or guarding hand, but it will be near if danger threatens."

With difficulty Henry kept his lips straight. "Why, thank you!" he said courteously. "But"—he permitted himself an amused frown—"look here, now, Miss Marceau," he warned, "I don't want anybody bothering round like that about me. Just tell 'em I can take care of myself and that I'll be glad to advise 'em if anything comes up."

Miss Marceau was verbally noncommittal, yet looked demurely submissive and at the same time extremely well satisfied. "I will tell them what you say, Mr. Harrington, and it will encourage them immensely. Thank you ever and ever so much! Good-by, Mr. Harrington." And the black eyes presumed to flash him both a grateful and an understanding look.

Harrington had smoked half a cigarette upon the subject of Miss Marceau, leaving her Shell Point Indians out of consideration altogether, when he was interrupted first by Sergeant Thorpe announcing another caller, and then by the caller himself.

CHAPTER III

GUH morning, Henry," announced a huge windy person with largeness and looseness written all over him—wide flabby face, wide paunchy figure, large soft hands, large mushy legs, large hairless head, everything physical about him large except his eyes. They were small and hard, roving shiftily, peering cunningly.

"Good morning, Hornblower!" responded the young attorney, but with brusqueness and reserve. "What is it?"

"Big stuff today, Henry; big stuff!" breezed the large man, who seated himself uninvited and began to beam as if hoping thereby to warm his chilly welcome.

Julius Hornblower was an attorney well-known—too well-known—in the three towns. He was brilliant, slightly eccentric and considered crooked; yet made a great parade of honesty.

"Henry," began Hornblower, moistening his lip and assuming the attitude and the tone of spread-eagle oratory, though he remained sitting; "Henry! The cause of Justice, the cause of a grossly betrayed people sends me to you. Such a cause as has ever appealed to the chivalric instincts of my nature, as well you know. A great wrong has been perpetrated—*is being* perpetrated. It is a cause in which the contestants will endure scorn and ridicule and persecution; but in which ultimately justice will triumph and punish-

ment will be meted out if—if we can get a man of your standing in the community, rather than of mine, to lead the fight. You know, Henry”—the large and pseudo-benevolent features of Hornblower passed for a moment under shadow—“you know folks don’t quite appreciate me here, Henry, simply because they don’t understand me.”

But for some time Harrington’s face had been a study in self-control. “Hornblower,” he frowned, “I have a fairly vivid imagination but I am unable to conceive of any legal cause in which I could be associated with you. Suppose you get down out of the clouds with your proposition so that I can tell you to take it to the devil as quickly as possible. I’m rather busy this morning.”

Hornblower looked surprised—and deflected, but neither humiliated nor offended. He smiled a gentle reproach and inquired in a voice meant to be craftily suggestive: “Henry, what would you say if I should tell you that the title to this Edgewater townsite is faulty—that it belongs every foot of it to clients of mine who entrusted the title to me by a power of attorney? That for all practical purposes it is mine? Every damn foot of the city of Edgewater, mine!” he exulted. “What would you say if I should tell you that, Henry?”

“I should say you were a liar,” answered Harrington bluntly.

But Hornblower’s lip only curled and he went on to loose his big sensation—for he always had a big sensation: “And if I told you that I was going to put a plat of the townsite upon that billboard across the corner from the bank there and climb up on that lumber pile

on the curb in front of it and offer it for sale lot by lot, block by block, to the highest bidder this very afternoon, what would you say to that?"

"I should say that you were a fool besides," snapped Henry.

Hornblower's face was suddenly immobile, save that the small eyes blinked once. "Henry, don't laugh at me," he protested. "I'm serious."

"And hang it, man, can't you see that I am?" blazed Henry, patience quite departed. "Hornblower! The man who deliberately unsettles land titles is the most conscienceless of scoundrels!"

Hornblower's flat face became flatter for a moment before the blast of Harrington's indignation; yet in a second he was countering blandly with: "Correct, Henry, correct; but the real scoundrel is the man who made 'em uncertain in the first place."

"What do you mean by that now, that utterly Hornblower-like insinuation?" demanded Harrington with tightening lips.

"It isn't *what* I mean, but *who* I mean," responded Julius with nasty emphasis.

Harrington's eyes flashed and his cheeks mantled: "Hornblower, leave my office," he commanded in the low tones of controlled anger. "Never come into it. *Never* speak to me again."

This was enough to prick even Hornblower's thick skin. He rose huffily and retorted: "You needn't get so blamed cocky! When did you begin to work for John Boland? Everybody else does in the community, but I thought you were one man, by God, that called his soul his own."

Harrington's hand clenched at the insult, but he

could not be a common brawler. Controlling himself and his voice with an effort that was obvious he urged: "Hornblower, will you please go?" And himself opened a door leading directly into the hall.

Hornblower, huge human squid, went out.

"The skunk!" remarked Harrington, quite inelegantly, and threw open the window.

Henry lunched that day with the *gang* at Ben's Beanery. The Beanery was a more elegant place to lunch than the name suggested and the *gang* was a coterie that styled itself "The Live Wire League." The talk today was all of Billie Boland, and Harrington, after listening with a bored air, thought he was leaving the whole subject behind him when he sauntered out; but to his astonishment found a sort of blurred Miss Billie Boland had come with him and seemed intent upon spending the afternoon there in his office. That was odd. It was even annoying!

At length, when a face, indistinct but beautiful, stared up at him from a page of the Pacific Reporter, Henry closed the volume upon it with an impatient bang, put on his hat and dropped casually down the stairs, meaning to smoke a cigar and take the air for half an hour. But as he gained the street, his attention was attracted by a voice and a crowd on the corner of that dock which was visited every thirty minutes by the Salmon Queen. This was the corner across from the bank, the corner upon which were the billboard and the lumber pile which Hornblower had pointed out. To Harrington's amused scorn the shyster was actually there now upon the lumber pile, a mountainous, gesticulating, vociferating figure. With a lath in his hand he pointed from time to time to the billboard on which

some sign-painter had been employed to sketch neatly and largely the plat of the town site of Edgewater.

Of course, the crowd had gathered.

“Come on up and buy a lottery ticket,” the fellow was bawling. “Take a chance and win a fortune! The site of the First National Bank now—how much am I offered for the site of the First National Bank?”

The very audacity of the proposal was breath-taking. The crowd laughed as it caught the idea.

“Offer! Offer! Make me a bid! How much am I offered for the site of the First National Bank?” chanted the auctioneer and was vastly enjoying his sensation when James H. Gaylord, president of this said First National Bank, appeared, and stared in wrathful astonishment as if unable to believe his ears.

Salzberg, president of the Socialist Local, smiled craftily. He stood for one thing in the community; Gaylord epitomized quite another.

“Five dollars!” he shouted to Hornblower, with a grin and a wink.

Hornblower snapped it up. “Five dollars! Five dollars I am offered, five dollars for the site of the First National Bank of Edgewater,” he chanted.

There was a fresh burst of laughter. Even some of the property owners joined in this laugh.

Eventually the bank site was knocked down to Salzberg for twenty-four dollars, with Hornblower beaming, coat off, collar loosened, happy as Mephistopheles; and Gaylord redder and more wrathful still; while Salzberg, grinning widely, clambered up to a table which was also atop the lumber pile and before which sat a clerk and notary prepared to execute and witness “Agreements to Sell” which lay in blank before them.

And the show continued. Hornblower sold the site of Schuler's Department Store for nineteen dollars with Schuler looking on; he sold the site of the City Hall for forty-two dollars with His Honor, Mayor Foster, staring indignantly; and he capped this audacity by selling the ground from under the fire-engine house at the very moment when the Mayor was threatening to have the hose turned on him. Besides these he sold lots here and there throughout the town, always for absurdly low prices, because the purchasers never assented to more than a lottery-ticket scale of value and because to create as many widely scattered contestants as possible seemed both to gratify Hornblower's cheerful malevolence and to fall in with his plans.

And there would be contestants! Oh, yes, and bitter ones, for human nature is a strange thing. Usually, when a spectator began to bid it was a monstrous jest, but the minute that first bid was spoken he began to take the matter seriously. Resentment by the legitimate owners against these pseudo-purchasers was natural and inevitable; accusations, altercations, personal encounters resulted.

But it took full two hours to work the farce up to tragedy. Nobody save Harrington had yet discerned that it might develop into tragedy, and to him now it seemed so completely a farce that the mere shouting of his name made him forget it. Glancing across the way he recognized Griff Morrison, Louis Spaulding and two or three irresponsible familiars of the Live Wire League. They sat in an open car which they had pulled up at the curb to look on for a time at Hornblower's show.

"Pile in, Hen," they shouted; "we're just heading out for the Country Club."

“There as well as anywhere,” thought Henry. “I’m no good in the office,” and responding in kind to the quips and jests with which his entry was greeted, he allowed himself to be hilariously hauled into the car and borne away with all its occupants save himself chattering of the home-town heiress. The silent one experienced a feeling of decided superiority; yet inevitably a certain expectancy began to get up in his own breast.

This was magnified when, on entering the club grounds, he saw the whole place animated, for the club house had overflowed its broad piazza and the air was strident with the blare of jazz.

CHAPTER IV

HENRY, deciding to look Miss Boland over before involving himself in introductions, adroitly separated from his companions and maneuvered into the loitering fringes about the dance floor. Just as an unexpected easing of the press precipitated him into the front line, the music stopped, leaving dancers in shoals upon the floor, and Charlie Clayton from the center of these spied him and made a dive in his direction.

“Come on over, old-timer; I want to introduce you,” he bubbled. “Billie, allow me to present Mr. Henry Harrington, a late-comer to our town—a war-cynic, war-jaded, thousand year old man, who has scaled all the heights, sounded all the depths and has henceforth nothing left to live for.”

“*Nothing!*” A crisp, musical voice had pounced instantly upon Charlie’s phrase, and Harrington found himself gazing at very close range into the light-filled eyes and experiencing the delightful proximity of a very charming young woman. He was smiling of course. He always smiled when he met a lady; and this lady—well, he found her presence immediately stimulating and felt a natural impulse to appear at his very best, wherefore he was instantly provoked at Clayton.

“Oh, I hope, Miss Boland,” he said quickly, “you will feel that friend Charlie has misrepresented me.”

Miss Boland contemplated with frankly estimating glance the lithe figure and the now alert countenance of Mr. Henry Harrington, and then allowed her blue eyes to kindle and her long red lips to assume curves of humor. "He certainly has slandered you, else my eyes deceive me," she assured, her clear orbs looking at the moment as if they could never have deceived her in all her life. "I see no sign of decrepit age at all. Don't mind; Charlie always was a dumbbell."

Somehow it did Henry a ridiculous amount of good to hear Charlie called a dumbbell by this beautiful creature—yes, she was beautiful; he conceded that—and himself by inference an alert and intelligent person. Her fingers had clasped his in a perfectly cordial American handshake and he was taking in the details of the picture, noting especially a certain exquisite taste which manifested itself in the perfect harmony of her sport rig.

Very chic, she was, all in white, from the dashing brim of the silk sport hat to the sheen of sculptured ankles and the dainty toes of spotless kid. A peaches-and-cream complexion contrasted rather joyously with masses of wavy dark hair exhibiting a faint bronze tinge.

The next observation Harrington recorded was the perfection of detail within this ensemble; not a glossy hair awry, that fetching hat not one degree aslant from its most insouciant angle; not a hint of disharmony anywhere in that immaculate exterior which Miss Billie Boland presented to him—so completely gratifying to his every sense of the esthetic that the skeptical young man was rather knocked out over having encountered it so unexpectedly.

Yet, humorously, the real knock-out was that Miss Boland's appearance did not actually present that exquisite perfection which Henry Harrington's surprised eyes thought they saw. Men are always seeing in women's faces things that are not there. Henry Harrington had begun to see such things in his second glance at Billie Boland.

"I may have been war-jaded, a cynic even—all those things Clayton called me," he was moved to flatter boldly, "when I talked to him this morning, but most certainly I am not *now*."

Miss Boland's smile brightened further and she began to view the young man with signs of more than passing interest.

"Henry is by way of being a struggling lawyer," bantered Charlie; but the gracious Miss Boland frowned at the banter. She seemed by now instinctively to have sensed in the lined face and deeply illumined eyes of Harrington that here was no twin of Charlie Clayton's to talk nothings to, but a man to be serious with and to whom it was worth revealing that she could be serious also.

"It is nice to struggle," she declared, gravely tactful, the violet blue eyes steady in their approving—approving, then searching. "You are ambitious, Mr. Harrington—or,"— she lifted her brows and smiled intimately—"you do not need to be?"

"Need to be! Yes, indeed, Miss Boland; if you imply an inquiry as to whether I am possessed of boundless wealth," Henry confessed honestly, strangely anxious to follow her exact mood. "But I am neither ambitious nor industrious, and I have not felt any great need to be since——"

Like the extinguishing of a light, the approval faded out of the blue searching eyes, and the perfectly arched brows were knitted slightly. "Oh, I think everyone ought to be both of those things," Miss Billie interrupted earnestly. "Especially when there is so much need for them just now. I have no patience with a peace-time slacker, any more than the war-time kind. I have come home from a world half-paralyzed, and——"

For a moment a shadow, as of an unpleasant memory, seemed to invade and darken her eyes, and Harrington was interested to note that the girl had not been where and doing what she had been in Europe without acquiring some serious notions herself. Clayton, he saw, had misrepresented Billie to a certain extent. She was not all frivolous, not by any means, and being John Boland's daughter, why, of course, she saw things in the large, and probably could talk of them that way. The concluding part of her observation, swiftly and spontaneously uttered, confirmed this: "And Europe," she went on, "is starving in soul because it is hungry in body! It's hungry in body because it has half lost the will to work. The need of the world today, as I see it, is for men that can put it to work—create work for it to do, I mean—revive commerce, industry—that sort of thing."

Henry was almost awed; but Charlie chaffed: "There spoke her father, Henry, Old Two Blades; no drones in his hive."

The girl mocked a frown and was just menacing Charlie with her fan when the violin emitted a preliminary squeak and Joe Morley, claiming his dance, swept the vivacious and expertly articulate Miss Boland from

before Harrington's face with only time for ejaculated partings; but it seemed to Harrington that her eyes said something about hoping to see him soon again.

"Fast worker, Billie, but don't mind that," consoled Charlie blindly. "It's her way. She's got you card-indexed right now as a dud."

"For which I could murder you," growled Harrington; yet wondered if she really did have him indexed as a dud.

Clayton laughed at the mischief he thought he had made. "She'll not rest till you confess ambitions and go to work at them," he prophesied gleefully. "She'll make you run for the legislature. She'll ride you whip and spur; but she's charming about it. You can't get mad at her."

"Get mad at her!" Henry ejaculated incomprehensibly, and felt an immediate need for privacy and re-analysis.

Worming out of the club house, he made for a lonely bit of sward high upon Pigeon Point.

"The girl isn't like what I thought she'd be," he had been explaining to himself as he strode along. "That's why she's so stimulating to think about."

When he had gained the Point and flung himself breast down upon the grass, he found the solitude conducive to meditation.

He was in rather a dotty mood for him. "Her eyes were blue, weren't they?" he asked the greensward. It did not answer. "Her hair was brown and wavy, I'm sure of that," he whispered to a dandelion. "Her complexion, as I remember, was kind of pink and white, lots of pink sometimes and lots of creamy white at others." His enthusiasm grew by the bits that memory

fed it. "Every feature perfect—— Exquisite, by George! Exquisite!" was his completed judgment.

Not a criticism occurred to him.

"If I could ever be interested in a woman again, it would be some woman like Miss Boland," he conceded, as being loftily fair with himself; and then, from remembering how she looked, he passed on to remembering things she had said.

"'Peace-time slacker!' There's a phrase for you. Ouch!" Henry sat up abruptly. "She plugged me dead center with that. Or—did she?" He paused to ponder, but presently was on the move in a sort of brown study, down over the hill, across the golf links by the most direct route and headed for the parking grounds where any number of opportunities to ride downtown would present themselves.

"There he goes now," said a voice upon the clubhouse veranda; and John Boland—Old Two Blades himself—fastidiously dressed as always, but with rugged strength in every line of him, lifted his large head with its domed forehead, its triangle face with recessed eyes, long sharp nose, clamped lips and spiked and knobbed chin and gazed, at least mildly interested, where Henry Harrington, with that free, marching stride which would be his through life, spurned the gravel under his heels.

"He's a clean-looking young man," conceded Old Two Blades. "I've always noticed that about him. Any bad habits?"

"Probably," said Judge Allen drily, "but he's got a great way with a jury or a witness!"

"Good at handling people, heh?" roused J. B., with no effort now to conceal a sudden access of interest;

for "handling people" was the secret of all his achievements. He was a great manipulator of the plastic souls of men. Drivers, he could hire in job lots: but *leaders!* . . . why, if this Henry Harrington now were a genius at kneading and molding the human will? . . . Old Two Blades gaped and stared.

"The best I ever saw at handling a jury," affirmed Judge Allen with conviction. "He has dished Scanlon a couple of times."

Scanlon was the head of the legal department for Boland General.

"Um! Yes," remembered Old Two Blades; "I think Scanlon has mentioned him to me—thought we had better find something for him to do maybe." The caverned eyes began to be set covetously upon the receding figure of this young man.

"Why," ejaculated Mr. Boland suddenly, "if he has all this peculiar kind of ability, and since he's not identified very much with anything in particular, why, he might be the very man to——" The eager utterance suspended itself as abruptly as if Old Two Blades had bitten his tongue.

"Yes—yes?" Judge Allen bent his impressive snow-white head low to receive the confidence; but he never got it. The Boland lips had tightened and the Boland mind went off into executive session with itself on a project so important that he had never yet discussed it with a single soul—one of the largest projects his mind, accustomed to great visions, had ever contemplated.

Within a few minutes he turned from Judge Allen and beckoned Scanlon to him—Scanlon, huge, fat and competent, who like the rest of the cabinet of Boland

General was in evidence around the country club this afternoon. In brief whispered words to his Chief Counsel, Mr. Boland set inquiry on foot with regard to the character and characteristics of Henry Harrington, inquiries the answers to which must be made known to the chief executive this very night, so urgent was his interest.

Thus rapidly were things coming on for Henry Harrington; but Henry did not know this at all. He rode downtown in the Doulton automobile and barely conscious enough of his surroundings to note with relief as he stepped out of the car that Hornblower was gone from his lumber pile and that his audience had dispersed, all except a little knot which clustered curiously about the plat on the billboard, and other scattered groups on street corners round.

Lightly Harrington bounded up the steps to his office, but once within it halted with an expression like surprise. The place looked all at once small and mean. Dust and even fly specks abounded. Little dumps of cigarette ashes appeared among the litter of legal documents upon his desk. He must have noticed these things before; but they had not offended him then. Now all at once they did.

"Little stuff," he blurted, glancing at the documentary miscellany, and began to tell himself things. "Have to get some real business in. . . . Have to make money. . . . Got to have a car. . . . Got to have a nice-looking office. . . . Got to have—oh, a lot of things!" And Henry's hands swept out in a widely inclusive gesture.

This was the first time that he had said to himself that he had to have rich clients; yet not that he began

to think at the same time of his humbler ones with any sort of disdain. "No, thank God!" And he seized and thumbed those documents. Beloved cases! They represented, each one of them, a cause in which his instinctive passion for justice had been enlisted.

"Justice!" he breathed reverently and was in rather an exalted state. Yielding to this exaltation he turned to the Code and to the oath which he had taken upon his admission to the bar.

"That's it," he exclaimed, and thumped the page in his enthusiasm. "That's my job. I've been lazy; that's what's been the matter with me. I took the little cases and as few as I could. I'm going after the big ones now and as many as I can get. Not that I'll turn my back on the little fellows either. But—hooray!" He stood up and stretched himself. It was great to feel he was getting into the fight again—the really worthwhile fight to make the biggest and most useful man of himself that he could.

Clayton had prophesied to him that some day he would wake up with a bump, and, lo, he had done it in that selfsame day, and the feeling was wonderful! Glorious! No peace-time slacker he, from this on! If only—if only this waking up were real and as worthy as it seemed . . . for he was still unaware that he had been subtly changed, that one single touch of the personality of Miss Billie Boland had wrought a mysterious alchemy in him. He thought it was something she had said, not something that she *was*, which had so stimulated him.

If it had been suggested to him that he was already in love with Billie Boland, or that he would ever be, he would have jeered at the idea and at himself. Since

there was no one there to suggest it, he merely stood a moment rubbing his eyes, as if to make sure that these new and glowing aspirations of his were not the fantastic colorings of a dream, when there came to his ear a shuffle of quick steps in the hall outside followed by importunate pounding upon the door.

To Henry's surprise it was Hornblower again; but an utterly different Hornblower; the bombastic egotism, the sullen resentment of the morning were both gone. The man's face was ashy, his cheeks fallen, his lips trembling and slobbering, as he staggered through the door with a look of terrible fright in his small piggish eyes.

"Henry, for God's sake!" he groaned, almost falling as he clutched at the arm of Harrington. "Those damned fools are going to croak me! Gaylord and his bunch! For God's sake, don't let 'em do it, Henry; don't!"

CHAPTER V

HARRINGTON gazed at this agitated mass of human being, his expression one of supreme disgust.

“I warned you,” he shrugged irritably. “Why do you come back to me?”

“Because you are the only man that don’t fly off the handle,” urged the shivering hulk. “You can stop ’em. Nobody else can. They’re coming—*they’re coming after me now!*” he howled, fear-stricken eyes rolling wildly as a thunder of feet began on the stairs.

“You’re not worth saving, Hornblower,” Harrington denounced sharply; “but come on! I won’t let them hurt you.”

The huge cowering shyster held back but Henry seized him contemptuously by a fat wrist and dragged his protesting bulk behind him through the door and out to the head of the stairs as the mob came storming up. It was headed by Gaylord, by Schuler and by George Hughes, president of the State Bank, two blocks down. The faces of all three were angry and determined, like the mass of features framed in behind them on the stair.

A mob! A murderous mob, headed by first citizens, in broad daylight, hot and unashamed!

“We’re going to hang the ——!” announced the banker.

“He deserves it,” agreed Henry fiercely. “Clear the stair! I’ll bring him down.”

The fluid mind of the mob welcomed an addition to its leadership, shouting with raucous joy to those outside:

“Henry’s bringing him down! Henry Harrington’s bringing him!”

Once upon the curb, Henry appeared to note the convenient juxtaposition of that lumber pile and the cross-arm of the electric light pole.

“Henry! Henry! Are you throwing me down?” bleated Hornblower, hanging back.

“Shut up,” said Harrington, and twisting the arm he held, he shoved the bulk of the man ahead of him toward the lumber pile. The crowd jeered and hooted.

Hornblower, losing faith in Harrington’s ability to save him if he still planned to, flung himself on the attorney’s shoulders. “There’s something I got to tell you, Henry—if they’re going to bump me off like this!” he panted. “Something important—it’ll make you rich, Henry; it’ll make a lot of things right that don’t seem that way now. Stall, Henry, stall! I got to have time to think!”

But Harrington’s features wore the solemn mask of one upon a determined business bent. “Get up there!” he commanded, impelling Hornblower at the lumber pile.

“Time! I got to have time to think, Henry!” Hornblower wailed as Henry stepped up beside him. “Don’t let ’em croak me like this—not before I tell you what this town has got a right to know.”

But Harrington dared not take his mind off the mob. Its passion was too hot. One slip and he would lose his slight ascendancy. Already Gaylord, Schuler, Hughes and others had clambered on the lumber pile. They were engaged in throwing the yellow line of the sisal

rope over the arm of the telegraph pole and a minute later a score of men were fighting for a hold upon the end as it fell into the crowd. Henry, one hand protectingly upon Hornblower's shoulder, lifted the other in an appeal for silence.

"Men!" His trained voice rang out high and sharp as it had upon parade grounds and marches.

The crowd ceased its mouthing for an instant and would have listened to him at least briefly but that Schuler, who was too impatient, struck off Henry's protecting hand from Hornblower's shoulder; at the same moment Gaylord flung the noose about the mountebank's neck.

At this interference Henry's face went white. His steel-gray eyes became two gleams of wrath and his left hand straightened with a snap that brought his clenched fist in violent contact with the point of Gaylord's jaw. The president of the First National dropped as if he had been shot, while Harrington snatched the noose from the neck of Hornblower and in impulsive defiance flung it over his own head.

"Now," he challenged hotly, "you fools! If you want to hang anybody hang *me!* There are fifty hands on that rope out there," he dared, "if you've got as much nerve as you think you have, *swing me up!*"

But the crowd did not want to hang Henry Harrington. The swaying bight of the rope slackened rather than tightened.

But the leaders on the lumber pile were not to be balked.

"Damn you, Harrington!" muttered the astounded Schuler, and was reaching to snatch off the noose when over the heads of all there rasped a new voice of

command—a voice that all the three towns were accustomed to obey.

Unnoticed the open automobile of John Boland, moving slowly down the street, had become imbedded like an island amid the eddies of humanity, with its occupants perforce amazed spectators of what was taking place. The magnate was standing up now beside his driver indignantly erect.

“What are you about, my friends and neighbors, fellow townsmen!” he shouted, words fair enough but with a timbre of rebuke in them before which the maddest paused. “Do you want to smirch the reputation of the whole country?” Mr. Boland’s reproach was keen. “Do you want to dignify this scalawag’s hypocritical claims?”

“If he has unsettled any titles in his wicked and foolish talk this afternoon, hanging him wouldn’t quiet them. Only the courts can do that—and they *will do it*, my friends, never fear. Have faith in the law! Let us show our right to the protection of law by showing our respect for the law.”

Harrington had checked them; but Mr. Boland shamed them. By long habit, his townspeople saw as he wished them to see.

For five minutes his reproofs and reproaches flowed on, until the heads of the leaders were bowed like naughty children.

Henry, caught with the rope about his neck, felt suddenly the biggest fool of all. He flung the noose from him quickly and turned upon Hornblower. “Go, you muck!” he said sternly. “And go fast!”

But some dregs of manliness had been stirred up from the bottom of Hornblower’s nature.

"You saved me," he gulped hoarsely. "Boland didn't. He's as big a faker as I am and bigger, only there's a nut streak in me that keeps me from getting away with it the way he does. Look at him now—bluff you all—bluff you to a standstill. But some day I'll get the truth out. I would have told it to you this morning if you'd gone partners with me. I would have screamed it to 'em all before I'd let 'em—let 'em croak me," and his eyes rolled fearsomely toward the noose still hanging empty from the cross-arm. "But now," he gloated craftily, "now the brainstorm is over and I don't have to tell anybody till I get good and ready."

Henry was freshly indignant. "Go, you miserable faker," he rasped, "before I lose my self-control and kick you."

"Hard words, Henry," complained Hornblower, "when a man's trying to be grateful to you for saving his life. Just for that you'll be the last man I'll tell, Henry, the very last; and the time'll come when you'd rather have something on John Boland than on any man in the world. See if it don't! Then you'll think of it and ask me on your bended knees and damned if I know whether I'll tell you even then—unless it's to save your neck, the way you saved mine today."

"The buzzard!" summed up Henry, as he watched the man clamber down and waddle off, then was flushed with confusion to see that Mr. Boland was beckoning to him. When he discovered that Miss Billie Boland and her mother were upon the back seat of the car and must also have been witnesses of what had occurred, he blushed the deeper.

Yet once he arrived at the side of the automobile, nothing in their reception of him tended to increase the

young man's sense of shame. On the contrary, the ladies, white-faced, rather devoured him with their eyes at the same time that they murmured inarticulate expressions of admiration.

"I am sincerely grateful to you for a very heroic act, Harrington," announced Mr. Boland, his voice still ringing with something of the excitement which had been in it when he made his speech. "You saved our people from a terrible thing—terrible!"

"I only did what it occurred to me to do at the moment," stammered Harrington, perceiving that this first speech which John Boland had ever addressed to him personally was exactly in keeping with his conception of the man—big, frank, self-contained, honorable and far-seeing. "I am afraid I must have appeared very ridiculous."

"Ridiculous? I should say not!" gasped Mrs. Boland, whose full bosom was still billowing like a sea.

"You were wonderful!" glowed Billie, color coming again into her cheeks, and she gave Henry a full-orbed glance.

"I was right," he said to himself; "her eyes are blue!" All the world had blurred save only this vision directly in front of him.

"You did what only a brave and resourceful man would have dared to do," insisted Mr. Boland. "Furthermore, you appear to have been the one person who saw this preposterous scalawag in a true perspective of absolute unimportance. That shows a cool mind and a penetrating one, Mr. Harrington. You make me feel that Boland General has been overlooking something." For the first time his thin lips relaxed into a tolerable approach to a dry and benevolent smile.

Henry, hearing only vaguely, heard enough to know he should contrive a modest smile himself and essayed to do so.

"Guess we could make a place for Mr. Harrington at our little family dinner party tonight, mother, couldn't we?" the magnate inquired over his shoulder. "You met Mr. Harrington at the club, Billie? I have been hearing some pretty fine things about Mr. Harrington this afternoon from Judge Allen, and what we have just seen makes me feel that we've been kind of behindhand in getting acquainted."

"Why, of course," intervened Billie, her lips taking on a wilful expression; "Mr. Harrington must come to the dinner and stay for my party—if he will forgive the tardiness and informality of our invitation." The expression of appeal with which the beautiful eyes lighted, under those so perfectly arched brows, made Harrington feel that he would forgive anything from them.

"I—I should be delighted, of course," beamed Henry, seeing no one but Billie.

"We dine at seven," announced Mrs. Boland, from somewhere off on the distant edge of the world.

CHAPTER VI

BUT why—why did they invite me?" Harrington kept asking himself as he went up the hill. "Probably just tact. Saw I was all fussed up and wanted to make me feel right about it. Decent, I'll say," and Henry experienced a very grateful feeling. "And lucky for me!" he gulped.

But the curiosity in his mind which swallowed all others had to do with Billie, and he was glad he had had the courage to get into evening dress himself when she burst on his vision, wearing some shimmering white stuff with an overtone of pink in its coloring; thus imparting an iridescence to the garment which fell away from her gleaming shoulders in classic but form-revealing folds to a train that curved about her dainty silver-shod feet.

Upon the shoes were buckles of green jade, and in the young lady's hand was a bizarre fan of feathers, long, narrow and oddly curled, dyed as green as the jade, while an arc of green stones flashed where they nestled in the loose masses of hair. The green of the stones wrought a faint harmony with the green of the fan; at the same time it brought out that bronze tinge in her silky coils, and thus seemed to lengthen this fascinating effect of iridescence.

Even the light-filled eyes were iridescent; and when they welcomed Henry with an unfeigned cordiality they kindled a glow in his soul that was iridescent also.

But just then Mr. Boland, behind a tombstone-like expanse of white shirt-front, loomed tall, immaculate, benign, and assumed a host's possession of his guest.

"Know 'em all, don't you?" he inquired, contemplating the roomful with a sort of paternal pride. Henry bestowed a general bow and smiled. In part, this was an inner smile due to the discovery that when Old Two Blades said "family dinner-party" he meant his business family—the heads of his subsidiary corporations and their wives—for these appeared to make up the guest-list.

Yes; Harrington knew them all. There, for instance, was Scanlon, heavy-shouldered, heavy-jawed and tenacious—a coarse, ill-schooled man, out of whom Henry had taken a fall or two in court. There was Quackenbaugh, head of the manufacturing end, who, thin and wiry, gave an impression of astuteness and also of tenacity. And there were the others, Pierce and Manning and Rudolph, and so on.

After such casual presentation the first mark of distinct favor came when Old Two Blades wilfully winnowed Henry out of the crush and showed him over the house—Humboldt House, Henry had understood that it was called—which was rather pretentious, of course; but then, the house was pretentious. During the ten minutes thus consumed his host was revealed to him as an amiable soul, utterly without swank, who asked Henry homely questions—where he was born, who his parents were and what; and kept up this flow of kindly but keenly penetrative interrogation until dinner was announced.

Harrington, observing that Clayton was not present at this intimate family dinner, felt an absurd glow

of triumph in the fact. Not one of that group who had made their boast this day was here, while he was—sitting at Miss Billie's right hand, and able to look forward with vivid anticipation to a real acquaintance-making chat with her sometime after dinner. But a little to his discomfiture, flocks of young people began to arrive for dancing before the dessert was off the table. Here they came—Clayton, Spaulding, Underwood, every eligible and half-eligible in the community, piling in, bubbling with hilarity, breaking up that certain sense of privacy which even the large dinner-party had allowed, and snatching Billie out of his reach.

When the music started Henry experienced a lonely feeling. He had been flung into a serious mood, while these dancing dervishes of young people were frivolous; they were even frivolous about the affair of the afternoon; referring to it as Gaylord's necktie party and frankly congratulating Henry upon his part in it, whereas in the dinner table conversation it had been a subject noticeably taboo.

He stood smoking and looking on, in the party and not of it. He saw the older and heavier women lapse back into corners and members of Boland General drift out probably for a smoke or a chat upon the wide verandas; he saw Mr. Boland go off with Scanlon and after a bit Scanlon come and beckon Quackenbaugh; and he sensed vaguely that amidst all this blare of music and scrape of syncopated feet, with excited laughter and buzz of talk, the business, the great never-sleeping business of Boland General was moving steadily on.

But he had no patience with business just now—not much with anything but one. He marked where a slim

and shimmering radiance moved with Louis Spaulding through the eccentricities of a fox-trot and bided his time—his time for finding out what this sudden turmoil within him was all about anyhow.

He was still biding, and impatiently, when Mr. Boland reappeared. His manner had undergone a distinct change since before dinner. His approval was no longer guarded. He beamed upon Henry this time and slipping an arm through his with familiar friendliness, piloted him off, acutely wondering, to a room he called his den, although it was larger than Henry's office. Upon entry Quackenbaugh and Scanlon were discovered with a blueprint map between them, upon a massive table of Flemish oak.

"There is simply no other place for the mill," affirmed Quackenbaugh, and thumped a particular section of the map with his long bony finger.

"It's just like you fellows," grumbled Scanlon, "to go and pick out the only piece of land on the whole west shore of the Basin that we haven't got title to, and then say it's the one spot in the world for your darned old shingle mill."

"It's a simple matter enough to buy the island," insisted Quackenbaugh, rebukingly.

"By thunder, it may not be," averred Scanlon with emphasis. "This Siwash has got a U. S. patent issued to him not six months ago for war service, and some of these Indians are darned stubborn about their land. They get a superstition about it. I tell you we might have a devil of a time trying to get that fellow to give up."

Thus far the conversation had got while Mr. Boland paused before his desk, opened a solid gold cigar box

and extended it to Henry with a grave ceremonial air. Henry accepted a perfecto in the same spirit and as his host struck a match, reflected that this was the first time a multimillionaire had ever furnished him with a light. He was, moreover, too human not to experience a few other quick and pleasant reflections.

As Mr. Boland, after two satisfactory puffs of his own weed, whiffed out the match, his eyes shot one arresting glance to where Quackenbaugh and Scanlon were talking. Their voices were instantly hushed. Instantly, too, Henry knew, without turning to see, that they were rolling up their map and going elsewhere to continue their debate.

"Be seated, Harrington," said Mr. Boland graciously, and Henry found himself sinking into the arms of an upholstered leather chair that clasped his figure about and held his body in suspense with a luxury of comfort of which he had never before conceived. At the same time the young man saw how the unctuous glow of a soul, which knew within itself that it meant exceedingly well to all the world, had softened and hallowed all those traces of a hard-bitten life, which had been etched, as if with acid, into the face of Old Two Blades.

"I hope you're sentimental, Harrington."

"Reasonably so, I trust," smiled Henry.

"Then we can start right off," announced Mr. Boland comfortably, and became at once intimate and confidential. "I want to talk to you about a tribe of Indians—or what's left of one—and Indians are rather a sentiment with me."

Indians? Henry was instantly disappointed. He had been hoping Mr. Boland was going to offer him

some legal business—Mr. Boland, the biggest client of them all!

“You look at a Siwash,” Old Two Blades was going on, with the unconscious directness of his kind, “and he isn’t much to gaze on; but they owned all this country once. And I tell you I’ve got a sentimental feeling for ’em. They ought to be protected. Right now there’s a bunch of them up on Shell Point that are in danger of being robbed.”

Henry started slightly, recalling that this was exactly what Miss Marceau had been saying.

“They’re hard up,” explained Old Two Blades. “Their land is valuable, but not to them. Some day when the tribe is hungry and discouraged a white man is going to come along and skin them out of it—buy it for a song—land that might be immensely valuable some time.”

“But,” Henry’s legal mind observed, “there could be no danger of their being inveigled into a bad sale unless the Indian agent could be corrupted.”

Old Two Blades shook his head. “Not corrupted; oh, not likely,” he averred gravely. “But—*swayed in his judgment*, let us say. Take that miscreant, Hornblower, now,” he instanced, “where that fellow is not too well-known his line of talk is very persuasive. He might convince an Indian agent of most anything; or, let us say, a commissioner of Indian affairs, as far away as Washington, for while that scalawag lives the man is potentially dangerous.”

Old Two Blades said this almost as if he regretted the necessity of having saved the wretch’s life, and it struck Henry that Mr. Boland was vaguely, distantly apprehensive about Hornblower, which seemed too bad,

for he was liking the great business genius more and more.

“However”—with a lift in his voice the magnate switched back his thought—“I’ve been thinking up a scheme to protect those Indians.”

“Yes?” inquired Henry, leaning forward eagerly, thinking with amusement of Miss Marceau’s absurd fears, yet discovering that her appeal had somehow laid in his mind a foundation of very genuine interest in the welfare of these Indians.

“Of course, I’ll manage to make the project pay somehow,” Mr. Boland hastened to qualify, “—make it contribute its quota to the prosperity of us all at the same time we’re doing the poor devils good.”

Harrington found himself nodding instant acquiescence. He was a trifle suspicious of pure philanthropies.

“*My idea is to buy the land myself*—before somebody else does.” Old Two Blades plumped this sentence out, his whole expression one of the modest consciousness of superior virtue, then elaborated: “My plan, in order to keep ’em from squandering their principal, is to pay for the land in Liberty bonds to be held in trust by the Government. There’s a lot of the land and comparatively few of the Siwashes and just the interest would, according to my figures, allow seventy-five dollars a month per Indian, big or little, and with the Government re-investing for him, it would protect him and his children’s children as long as they lived.”

“Why, that would be fabulous luxury for most of those Siwashes,” glowed Henry, enthusiasm kindling in part because of Miss Marceau, in part because of Billie Boland, and in part because of growing admiration for her father.

"Of course, it's a big project, you understand," cautioned Mr. Boland gravely. "It's a big project. Several millions involved!"

Henry was properly impressed. "The real difficulty, Mr. Boland, if you permit me to suggest," he said, "will be in gaining the confidence of the Indians themselves. They're a suspicious lot, as far as my observation goes; if they get stubborn it would be all off."

"Which is exactly where you come in, Harrington," announced Mr. Boland with a sudden and significant lowering of his voice. "Judge Allen tells me you've been active for some of those young fellows, getting citizenship papers and allotments for them. Had some of them in your platoon overseas, I believe? Come to understand the Indian character pretty well, I suppose?"

"Why, yes; I think I may say, Mr. Boland, I understand their psychology tolerably well," responded the young man somewhat guardedly.

"Undoubtedly you do and that's why I am going to put this whole matter in your hands," was announced by Mr. Boland, with quick, conclusive emphasis.

"The—the whole matter?" murmured Henry, a little breathless.

The manner of J. B. had been confidential and intimate from the first; now it became almost affectionate. He laid a hand upon the young man's arm. "People have a way of trusting you, Henry. That's what Judge Allen was telling me this afternoon. How fully I find myself trusting you, after a few brief contacts, I am revealing. I've no doubt you can get these Siwashes to trust you."

With those deep but kindly eyes beaming on him so

encouragingly, Henry had to admit frankly: "Yes; I believe I could, Mr. Boland. I am so completely sold to the project," he smiled, "that I think I could make a cigar-store Indian see it, let alone a real one. It's noble. It commands all my enthusiasm."

The tight features of Old Two Blades relaxed into another of his most approving smiles; but immediately his mind was scouting ahead once more. "The instant we get the Indians committed, the Agent and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs will have to be brought round. If you are as successful as I anticipate, I rather think I'll leave that up to you also.

"It's a long route—probably," Old Two Blades meditated over his Havana. "It might take us the best part of five or six years; but the project is worth the time." The long lips had clamped decisively.

Henry's eyes widened dizzily. Why, this was no brief relationship that was being proposed. It might call for years of his attention. It would stretch out into life. It might flow on and on. Subsidiary issues must develop and tie him up with other of the Boland projects; that is, if he were successful—if *he could make good!*

This which opened to him here and now in the seclusion of John Boland's den with dance music ringing in his ears, was probably the most momentous opportunity that life would ever bring to him. His soul rose at the prospect.

"Will you undertake this for me, Harrington?" Old Two Blades asked incisively.

"Mr. Boland, I will!"

Both men had risen.

"It's a bargain," said the older, offering his hand.

Henry took it and felt it clasp him like a hook of steel.

Obviously the conversation was near its end, yet nothing had been said about compensation; and Henry was keenly interested in that, for all at once he was becoming thrifty. Touched tonight by the glamor of riches he was beginning to want riches for himself.

"Scanlon will drop in upon you tomorrow and make whatever arrangements will be satisfactory to you," Mr. Boland suggested expansively, somewhat as if he read Henry's thoughts and recognized them as natural and commendable even.

"I hope he won't find me too—too mercenary," Henry smiled.

"Oh, we must all make money out of the transaction," laughed Mr. Boland, a low chuckling laugh that was characteristic of him, when he laughed at all; "Indians and all of us. It's to be a paying proposition for everybody."

Just at this satisfying moment Henry heard, thrillingly, the voice of Miss Boland calling him and turned to find her framed in the library door, still a vision of shimmering, iridescent beauty. She beckoned to him with her fan and then couched its green plumes diagonally across her breast, allowing the curled tips to touch her soft throat caressingly.

"I was just coming to rescue you from father," she beamed.

"It would be rescue to be snatched by you from the arms of an angel," Henry declared gallantly; "but your father and I seemed to get on amazingly well."

"Isn't that fine?" Miss Billie effervesced. "Father is such a good friend to a young man when he is a friend."

"Everybody seems kind in this house," responded

Henry with significance designed to be highly obvious. "Permit me," he said, and took the fan, feeling a most absurd impulse to caress her white chin with its curled velvety ends quite as she had been doing unconsciously when he came up. His nerves were all bounding; he was filled with a primitive exuberance. The dance was still on, the party was at its gayest but she had left them all to seek him. He felt boyish and irrepressible, likely to do any absurd thing. But he restrained that impulse about the fan.

"May I have the next dance?" he asked eagerly.

"And it's the very last," Miss Billie nodded, smiling benignly as a queen confers a favor. "Mother is sending the orchestra home early to protect my delicate constitution. I've been saving it for you because I felt father was taking an unfair advantage."

This sounded all so very delightful that Henry wasn't quite sure it wasn't a dream; yet knew that it was not for he was experiencing very real sensations as he took Miss Boland in his arms for the dance, real but rather unusual—feelings of reverence, feelings that he took hold of something immensely precious but immensely fragile. This sense of fragileness passed with the first contact of her supple body. She was not only a thing alive; she was strong; she stepped through the measures, the eccentric starts and stops, the gaits and gallops, of the modern dance with an elastic lightness which told its own story of perfect health and athletic vigor.

She was warmly radiant, disingenuously friendly and spontaneously happy. She was wonderful, she was glorious; but she was also mysterious. And he held all this mystery in his arms, close to him, rhythmic and

pulsing against him, and still it was insoluble. The beautiful face, animate under the spell of the music, seemed more beautiful still. When a single wisp of that bronze-brown hair fell down across a cheek, he wanted to kiss it away. He wanted to. Yet this want assured him definitely of nothing. He had seen many a cheek before that he had desired to kiss. He had never pretended to himself that he was past wanting to kiss a pretty girl.

"Do you golf?" she asked, when the dance was done and the party breaking up—face lighting like the child of the open air she was.

"A duffer's game," confessed Henry, breathing a little quickly, perhaps at the dance, perhaps at wondering if God was about to promise another contact with this fascinating young woman.

"Shall we find out what you mean by that, say, at ten tomorrow?" Billie smiled archly.

Henry's face kindled, then fell as he remembered an appointment to be made with Thomas Scanlon for some time tomorrow morning. "You forget that I am a poor struggler," he bantered; "that only this afternoon I was counseled to struggle hard and that ten is an hour when I should be in my office waiting for clients."

"You win!" the girl conceded with quick laughter, then let her eyes rove the room, saying: "I must fasten upon some idler or spend a lonely morning." But swiftly her glance came back to him and centered upon his with most devastating appeal. "Don't you—don't you think it might be well to—worth your while to idle just one more morning?" she coaxed, glance and tone together shooting Henry all to pieces inside.

“I—yes, on second thought, Miss Boland, I think I ought,” he smiled.

“It’s a date,” confirmed Billie with a decisive nod, as accustomed always to have men defer their plans to hers. With a quick pressure of the hand she was gone from him and mingling among the departing guests.

CHAPTER VII

THE nightly poker game was on at the Grizzly Club. Henry Harrington, a wildly excited young man, and feeling as if he could never sleep, had been glad to recall it. He met Clayton upon the stairs and, three and one-half hours tardy, the two edged into the game. Harrington was lucky as usual and by two-thirty in the morning was some thirteen dollars ahead and gloating over Clayton, who was nearly as much behind, when into one of the absorbed silences of the play there echoed a distant reverberation. It boomed from somewhere outside, not very loudly, but very unmistakably—the detonation of high explosives.

“What was that?” asked Gallup, the grocery man, quick and nervous.

“Sounded like an explosion!” said Guy Getz, the butcher.

“Like blowing a safe to me!” imagined Charlie Clayton.

Gallup and Getz, who both had safes, sprang up; but Harrington was ahead of them at the window and, throwing it wide, stood peering down the empty silence of North Street to where that wide and solid-looking three-story brick structure which housed the administrative office of Boland General squatted in the darkness.

“It sounded down there to me,” he remarked.

“Cash in, fellows!” demanded Gallup, who had been

banking. "I'm going to see what happened." But Harrington was the first to push his stack of chips across the green board and therefore the first to dash down the stairs. He arrived at the administration building after a run of two blocks, with the rest of the poker game trailing after, to find the torch-light of a lone policeman flashing amid the wreckage of a vault in the ground floor office of O. T. Morgan, land commissioner of Boland General, where homed the Edgewater Townsite Company, the Wahpeetah Townsite Company and all the wide range of the tax and title interests of Old Two Blades.

"I was right on their heels," croaked Policeman Ryan excitedly; "but they blew the wrong vault anyway. Only papers in this one."

But Harrington thought the litter of document-containers, huge record-books and rolls of maps scattered over the floor might be that created by eager hands, pulling them out, searching them over and making hasty selections before an imperative departure.

"Maybe they were after papers!" he divined.

"Hornblower!" ejaculated Guy Getz, without a moment's hesitation.

"You bet your life! You'd ought to have let us croaked him, Henry!" declared Phil Gallup.

"It might be Hornblower, of course," conceded Henry, glumly, and stood meditative, surveying and re-surveying the confusion, while excitement grew with each new arrival. Two or three night watchmen came in, another policeman and then Scott, the Chief of Police. Somebody telephoned O. T. Morgan and Cosby, head of Boland General's private detective force. Nobody touched anything. It lay as it fell for the small-

town hawkshaws to arrange about finger-prints and search for clues.

When Cosby came in, and presently O. T. Morgan himself, half-dressed, Henry felt that any faint responsibility requiring his presence had ended. He was rather puzzled by it and wanted to get away by himself and think. There was such an awful lot of things for him to think about now anyway. So he made his way out of the group unnoticed and started for his hotel.

All told perhaps forty minutes had elapsed since the explosion. Thinking to save time, he started diagonally across the courthouse lawn, which was tree-studded and shrubbery-embroidered. "Hornblower? It would be like that devil—trying to throw a smoke-screen over the title issue by a theatrical stunt like this!" So he was speculating, none too conscious of immediate surroundings until he ran head on into an automobile, half-enveloped in the shrubbery. It was a touring car with the top up, lightless, but with its shape discernible in the faint glow of the stars, and the hood warm as if the engine had just been running.

"Funny place to park a car!" he had breathed in a startled undertone, when there came to his ears for the second time this night the sound of a low explosion.

"Another?" he ejaculated, nerves already tense, and as he did so the windows in the end of the courthouse nearest to him rattled mockingly.

"By George! That explosion was in there," he decided with sudden gravity, "and that's the Recorder's office on that end. Why, hell's bells! It must be Hornblower sure. Cute of his gang, I'll say—nervy, too—to come right over here and go to work in entire safety when they've got every policeman in the town hanging

round that pile of junk they made of Morgan's place."

Peering, he saw the hall of records entry door half open and from it there issued a sound as of someone coming out. "This car was for their getaway," he divined. "They'd have had a driver in it only they had to divide the gang and didn't want to trust too many people," he reasoned, and sank back into the gloom.

Yes, here they came—shuffling feet upon the stone steps and two dark forms blurred against the gray shadow of the building. Once the men were on the turf Henry lost the sound of footsteps and against the shrubbery background their figures were invisible until with startling suddenness their arrival at the car-side was announced by the tumbling of something heavy into the tonneau—heavy, like, for instance, a book of the deeds of Socatullo County.

It came to Henry like a flash that these men must be professional cracksmen and therefore tools only; that if this were a Hornblower enterprise, they and the other gang would report to him somewhere soon and it would be a gratifying piece of detective work to appear at the rendezvous and confront them all. He decided on the instant and twined his wiry form into the tire rack at the back, prepared to enjoy himself.

"Just one darned thing after another," he chuckled happily, as the car started with a jerk and a bump. "The night is still young."

The car was picking up fast and within a minute its springs were bounding wildly, with the tire rack flinging Henry recklessly hither and yon. Gravel was spit into his face, dust clouds enveloped him; he had all he could do to maintain his position, but he managed it and was able to do some thinking beside.

He knew that the driver had taken the Inlet Road, and that there were numerous branchings off to small docks and landings on the Basin, whose shore waters were dotted with small islands—ideal places for seclusion and trysting, whether of lovers or looters. When, therefore, after not more than a few miles run, the car slowed down and, succeeding the hollow rumble of a bridge, dipped suddenly off the road, Harrington was not surprised and thought he knew exactly where he was—at the mouth of Cub Creek; where, by an odd coincidence, was the landing from which canoes and small launches took off for that very island which Quackenbaugh and Scanlon had been arguing over to-night in Mr. Boland's den.

As the momentum ceased, Henry dropped flat upon the ground, and peering underneath saw ahead of him, in the light rays from the vehicle that had furnished his own transportation, the wheels of another car. "Just what I thought," he was breathing to himself with satisfaction, when the lights clicked off and in the same motion the engine also. A full minute must have passed, then another, but no sound was uttered.

Henry was aware, however, that movement was going on about him; quiet, persistent, methodical movement in which several persons were taking part. Something was afoot. What was it? He must not miss anything. He wriggled backward from under the car and as his eyes circled slowly in the darkness they came upon a tiny ray of light that went out almost as he glimpsed it. Then he understood. By means of brief, intermittent flashes some leader was calling confederates about him, and—hark! there were low muttered voices now; yes, men were talking—conferring together.

Henry decided upon a strategic detour to the left and then forward toward the voices; but just as his hands and knees told him that he had groped to the rough log landing, he sat up with a start. He had recognized one of the voices conferring not half a dozen feet away—a sort of master voice. It was—it was, so help him, the voice of Thomas Scanlon, Chief Counsel for Boland General. Harrington, unable to trust his own ears, listened longer to make sure.

Yes, there was not a doubt; it was the voice of Scanlon in tones that were unmistakable but words too low for him to catch.

Scanlon? Scanlon? Henry puzzled for a moment and then the whole thing came clear. Scanlon was a traitor; he was plotting against his own company—against the town, against Mr. Boland. Henry having scorned Hornblower's proffer, that brassy schemer had found a partner in Scanlon. They were working together now—that was the meaning of this latest development—this theft of the records of Boland General, to make some contemplated inside job look like an outside one.

Harrington had the natural antipathy of an honest man for a traitor—and a traitor to John Boland—to a whole people, seemed a rarely reprehensible brand of Judas.

He straightened up slowly to his full height. Fearless in his indignation he meant to confront the pair of them, for Hornblower was doubtless there also. He took two steps forward and then for the third time this night there burst upon his ears the sound of a low explosion. It appeared to take place just behind him. He heard it back there, right behind his ear, as it were

—right up against the back of his head; but he heard none of its reverberations. He heard nothing. Sound was blotted out for him. Sound and time—everything was blotted out.

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER a long while, he did not know how long, but ages and ages, he was listening once more for the echo of that explosion, and thinking all the while: "Scanlon, Scanlon—I've got to get that traitor, Scanlon."

But he wasn't standing up any more. Why, he—he was sopping wet—he was in water, afloat in it like a log and the water was cold. Almighty, but it was cold! He was not alone in the water though. Somebody was alongside—tugging at him—trying to get him out of the water—trying to get him on to a log—no, into some kind of boat. He tried to grip the arm that held him, a strong and muscled arm, and failed; he tried to help himself and could not. He was hurt; the back of his head was beginning to pain him terribly.

"Who . . . who beaned me?" he groaned and a voice, a voice that should have been familiar and yet was not, hissed into his ear a stern command to silence. Danger was still near evidently. And it was still dark. His mind swam away in this darkness off and off until he thought it would never come back at all. When it did come back the sun was shining brightly. That is, it was shining brightly outside but he was somewhere inside.

His first waking sensation was one of heat—heat. Lord! it was hot. This was an agreeable contrast, however, for his last waking sensation had been one of cold

—cold and wet. Yes; for he was clammy now on one side but hot, parching hot on the other. And no wonder! Some good Samaritan had been drying him out—by a fire.

Experimentally he straightened and began, of his own strength, to turn the dry front of him away from the embers, the damp back toward them. The sensation was delightful but the effort exhausting. His half-opened eyes closed again; his cheek was pillowed on something soft—something soft and hairy—on some kind of skin or fur. Again the sensation was delightful. Weak, warm, relaxed, he dozed off. But presently his eyes were open and staring curiously, taking further account of his surroundings. He was in a sort of bungalow, long and narrow, but crudely carpeted with skins.

Why, no—it wasn't a bungalow; it was a lodge—an Indian lodge, for there was a squaw—a little squaw—a pretty little squaw. She sat cross-legged on a stool regarding him absorbedly from the distance of two or three yards; she wore moccasins, leggings and a cougar skin for a skirt, a sleeved vest of deer-skin with the hair removed, fringed and slashed, and there was bead-work upon it. There were strings of tiny pink shells alternating with other strings of tiny white ones about her neck; some barely encircling it, some looping low upon her breast. Two braids of jet-black hair fell one in front of each shoulder.

The squaw had very black eyes but in complexion she was very light—white with brunette trimmings, as it were—yet unmistakably a squaw. The look she gave him was of the wild. It had the gravity of centuries in it, though the girl seemed about sixteen.

After his first start of surprise Henry stared and then managed a smile. Instantly the face of the little squaw brightened; red lips parted and white teeth gleamed at him most amiably, most encouragingly. He closed and opened his eyes quickly to make sure he had not been dreaming.

"I guess you are better," she said, in a perfect idiom with only the slightest trace of accent. The voice was refined—even cultured.

"I guess I am," said Harrington, struggling with a husk in his throat, but managing another smile.

"Perhaps you would like some more broth now."

"More broth?" murmured Henry confusedly.

"Yes," smiled the little squaw in a most self-satisfied way, and already she was up, passing round him with padding moccasined footsteps to the fireplace, where he heard the clang of a kettle cover; and a few seconds later she was back and holding a graniteware cup to his lips. Preceding the cup came a most delightful savor to his nostrils, a gamy, spicy fragrance that made him immensely hungry. The broth tasted as good as it smelled.

"It is delicious," he said, smacking his lips and feeling strangely content.

"Where am I?" it occurred to him to ask.

"On Lahleet's Island."

"And who is Lahleet?" Henry inquired. "Never heard of the lady, or her island."

"I am," the Indian girl answered demurely.

Henry started slightly and found himself contemplating the little woman with speculative interest. She was certainly a self-contained little piece.

"And how did I get to your island?"

"I brought you in my canoe." The Indian girl's face was still demure.

She was a part of his puzzle. Slowly Henry's mind attacked the problem of what had happened since he heard that last dull explosion. "Where did you bring me from?"

"From Adam John's island—Hurricane Island, that is."

Henry's mind associated quickly. Hurricane Island! That was the island Quackenbaugh and Scanlon were arguing about on that night a thousand years ago in Boland's den. Was that, then, Adam John's island? Henry was interested in Adam John and all that pertained to him for he had crawled out into No Man's Land one night and brought Adam John back with two bullet holes in him, and while Henry was doing this he acquired a bullet hole for himself. If you have saved a man's life you feel a proprietary interest in the man ever after.

The white man's slowly clearing consciousness centered in the girl again. She was the prettiest, the demurest, the most unaffected little thing! She had dropped down before him cross-legged, within reach of his hand, as if it were the most natural thing to do, and was answering his questions in a mood of entire neighborliness, contemplating him wonderingly the while as if he were some strange gift the gods had brought to her lodge. If the Shell Point Indians were like this—well, no wonder Mr. Boland could be sentimental over them!

"You paddle a canoe?" he asked, and found himself taking her right hand and feeling of it doubtingly. Yes; it was a calloused little hand and sinewy; yet the back

of it was soft, soft as velvet. He lifted it to where his eye could contemplate its form. It was a trifle thick and square for Caucasian standards of beauty; but none the less it was—charming.

“Who are you?” he asked abruptly, as sensing some mystery in her personality.

“I am a little Siwash,” the girl answered with delicious gravity. Henry, still toying with the fingers of that hand, made a startling discovery—first with the sense of touch and then by a quick glance. He held the tips of the fingers toward her.

“Manicured,” he accused.

But the Indian maid was undismayed. “I am a manicured Siwash,” she smiled complacently.

Henry regarded her doubtfully a long time; and then, as if the enigma of her personality was too complex for weakened nerves, his eyes wandered past the girl, past the stool on which she had been sitting, past the bunk of skins which was the only detail of the furnishings his eyes had yet made out—passed on and then halted, staring wide. The windows were few and small, the interior was rather shadowy, but he made out—a piano! And a phonograph! Window curtains, too, of cretonne.

Lifting his astonished self upon an elbow, Henry took in the whole ensemble—a strange mixture of the crudities of an Indian lodge with the refinements of civilization—a conglomeration that heightened instead of allayed curiosity. In the shock of it Harrington tried to sit up but a whirl of pain shrieked through the back of his head.

“Oh, my . . . oh, my heavens!” he groaned and an involuntary hand went up. It came in contact with a mountain of bandages and surgical dressings.

"Who—who fixed me up?" he demanded confusedly.

"I fixed you up," smiled the Indian girl, again immensely well satisfied with herself.

"That was awfully kind of you, I'll say," admired Henry. "But—it feels like a doctor's job."

"I have had a nurse's training," explained the girl, "besides other training—two years at the Mission School in Seattle and two years in Carlisle."

"Um," grunted Henry, vastly relieved. "That explains things." He had heard of these cases; Carlisle Indians reverting to the blanket. The girl was less a mystery to him now; more a pleasant incident.

"You are a good little Siwash!" he approved, and patted the soft hand some more. He even reached out and patted the soft cheek and passed an exploring hand over the forehead because of an impulse to know the touch of that glossy hair. The little maid suffered these familiarities without protest. Perhaps that was Indian stoicism. Perhaps she liked it—this compliment of the white man's attention. "You are a darned nice little girl, Lahleet!" Henry approved, when suddenly gazing at her face brought another to his mind. "What time is it?" he asked abruptly, and fumbled for his watch.

"Eight o'clock," answered the girl, glancing at a tiny ivory clock.

"Eight o'clock of when?" Henry was still confused as to how much time had flown.

"Of Wednesday morning."

"Then I can make it," he gulped eagerly, "if—if—— How long will it take me to get to town, Lahleet? I positively must be there at ten o'clock."

The girl was all sympathetic interest. "It is only

four miles to Edgewater," she assured him. "I can have you on the mainland in five minutes. Adam John is waiting there now with his flivver; he will put you in town in fifteen minutes more."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Henry. "I had an engagement to play golf with Miss Boland at ten. I wouldn't miss it for the world."

The slightest possible change in expression appeared upon the face of the Indian girl.

"If you can stand the trip so soon," she qualified.

"Oh, I could stand the trip all right," declared Henry, "if—if I only had some more of that broth."

"Why, of course," assured the girl, suddenly gracious again. "Let me think," she exclaimed, and squatted motionless again while some inscrutable complex formed behind the mask of her pretty face. "Yes," she declared with emphasis, while the dark eyes glittered with the force of a new purpose, "yes, I can add something that will help—something that will make the broth stronger."

"That will be fine." Henry smacked his lips in pleasant anticipation. "Lahleet, you certainly are the goods."

As if pleased with the compliment, the girl bounded up and the moccasined feet again went padding about the fireplace. Her every movement was grace.

"You are herb-wise?" asked Henry, as he saw her crumbling dried leaves into a saucepan with water, and putting it to simmer amid the embers.

"All Indians are that," the girl answered quietly. "When it boils it will be ready."

"I think I might get up out of your way," proposed Henry, looking up as she stood almost over his feet.

"If your clothes are dry," his nurse consented, and gave him a hand.

"Gosh!" groaned the man, for again there was a chariot race of pain in the back of his head. "I must have got an awful whack!"

Henry found her frame as strong as steel and sturdy as a column as she half-lifted him to his feet and steadied his steps toward the couch of skins. As he balanced experimentally upon his legs, he caught sight through one of the narrow windows of the snow cap of Mount Gregory far in the distance, floating on a haze of mist.

"You put your window where you could see that?" he beamed, pointing to the hoary mountain that to him was like a friend.

The girl nodded. "For a thousand years those snows have fed the streams where my people fished and hunted," she said. "For a thousand years that mountain has been God to them. For a thousand it shall be God to me."

There was something infinitely old in the maiden's face as she made this mystical affirmation; and Harrington stared at her wonderingly. Her manner was not only cryptic; there was in it an odd suggestion of the occult. Perhaps it was the perception of this which impelled Henry suddenly to unburden himself of that central knot of interrogations which jangled so painfully in his mind that he had shrunk from uttering them.

"Perhaps you know just what happened to me," he blurted. "How I got in the water . . . who it was that pulled me out—and—all the rest."

"You fell into the water, I think; or were knocked

in. It was Adam John who pulled you out and took you to his island; and Adam John who came for me and helped me bring you here."

"But Adam John? . . . How did Adam John happen to be there?"

A sizzling sound proceeded from among the embers. "Oh, my medicine is boiling over!" the girl cried.

"It tastes bitter—a little bitter," observed Harrington when she had drained off a clear liquor from the saucepan and stirred it carefully into the broth.

"That is the medicine." The girl's nod was reassuring.

"It's good though, all the same," affirmed Henry, like an appreciative patient, and drained the contents in deep draughts declaring after each that he felt better already; and between each of them his eyes slanted upward at his nurse. The picture she made continued to attract him; but the mystery of her puzzled him. His memory seemed trying to associate her with something past—but for some reason could not.

"You should doze off for a little now," his nurse suggested.

"I must doze off quick then for I've got to wake up quick. Sit down here, you little Siwash, and hold my hand; perhaps I will sleep quicker." Henry was in a weakly playful mood.

With a whimsical smile, as if she found white men delightfully absurd, Lahleet dropped upon her heels beside the couch, the top of which was only six or eight inches from the floor, and took hold of Henry's hand. He contemplated her placidly. He liked the touch of her hand. Presently he was wondering how it would feel upon his cheek. To make certain he laid it there.

"That feels good, Lahleet," he sighed, "wonderfully cool and soothing. Perhaps if you would stroke my face I would doze off quicker."

In sympathetic gravity, the Indian girl began compliance—a soft, cooling, almost caressing touch, again and again repeated—a ministry of service that brought her face close to his face, some wild scent into his nostrils. Harrington, amused and gratified, enjoyed noting again that, aside from an aboriginal flattening of cheek bones, the details of her features were good while their combination was altogether charming and attractive.

Through half-closed eyes he mused and then proposed abruptly: "Would you kiss me, Lahleet?"

It was purely sensuous and casual, this desire. It had struck him that it would be an agreeable sensation to test the softness of those berry-red lips.

And if the Indian girl felt either surprise or a thrill she did not betray it. On the contrary she studied the face of her patient gravely as considering whether from the clinical standpoint a kiss might be good for him. She appeared to decide that it would and with the most professional manner, bent over and laid a velvety pair of lips atop of his own for an instant of time, a touch that was more like the caress of a kitten than of a woman; and yet there was warmth and rousing in it.

Henry lay quiescent, gratified but—lips working as if they yearned for a fuller experience.

"You are getting all waked up instead of dozing," his nurse decided, disappointedly. "I think I had best sing to you." Henry felt that he had been reprovèd—very delicately; not for asking for the kiss but for that yearning, wistful quiver for another one.

Lahleet rose quickly and took a banjo-shaped instrument from the top of the piano. It yielded yeping bird-like notes in a very limited combination of tones but the girl played them over and over with an absorption in which her expression changed gradually from a kind of barbaric prettiness to something that was almost beauty.

"I cannot think that you are an Indian," Henry interrupted, "except for the scenery"—and he indicated the strings of shells and the fringes and slashes on the deer-skin vest.

The girl's eyes smoldered for an instant as in stubborn rebellion at the fate which had made of her a mixed-blood; then brightened quickly. "My father was a white man," she boasted. "My mother's father was a white man, but her mother was the daughter of Chief Keemah; that makes me a—— You do the arithmetic!" she broke off impulsively.

But Henry was becoming too drowsy for problems in arithmetic. He fell asleep instead.

CHAPTER IX

AFTER a few minutes, as it seemed to Harrington, he awoke, feeling much better—it was miraculous how much better. But not only had his sleep been invigorating; it had been entertaining; it had been accompanied by dreams. He had dreamed about playing golf with Billie Boland. Oddest of all, he had dreamed that he was in love with her and, while it was a dream, that state was blissful in the extreme; but now that he was awake, he chuckled at the idea. She was charming and he was charmed; she was intriguing and he was intrigued but—his love life was in the past. He thought that, and stretched his long limbs indolently, but a twinge of pain reminded him that there was still a sore spot at the back of his head.

Yet his mood was happy.

“Lahleet!” he called. “I’m awake. I feel fine. You’re a wiz. You’re big medicine all right—Lahleet!”

The girl did not answer. Mystified, Harrington eased himself experimentally to an upright position and felt only the slightest dizziness. Yes, he was better, much better; but the room was empty.

Impatient he peered out the window above the couch—peered and was astonished. No sun was blazing yonder over the shoulder of Mount Gregory. He turned to the opposite window, and lo, the folds of the cretonne over there were alive with a golden glow. Perplexed he took a hasty stride in that direction but

was brought up with a sudden bang in the head—a bang of warning that he would have to avoid abrupt movements for some little time yet. With slower, chastened steps he gained this window and held its curtains wide; then muttered in astonished wrath. The sun was there, on that side, and half-way down the heavens—more than half-way. The time was no longer morning—it was afternoon. He had slept all day—he had missed the appointment to play golf with Miss Boland.

“Lahleet!” he called sharply; and this time there came an answer, but not from the Indian girl. To his utter astonishment there stepped from between curtains beyond the piano Miss Marceau, the teacher of the Indian School at Shell Point who had come to his office yesterday morning. She was dressed as then; she looked as then, prim, pretty and dignified, only a little reproving as at the harshness of his tone.

“Miss Marceau!” Harrington stammered. “How do you come here? I was looking for the little Indian girl. I was a trifle provoked with her. She has been awful kind to me—a regular good Samaritan. But she let me oversleep!”

“Yes?” queried Miss Marceau, in a concerned voice, but faintly tinged with rebuke. “You were sleeping so soundly that she wouldn’t rouse you. Exhausted nature, no doubt; and, *as it was only a golf game!*”

“Hum! I see!” commented Henry, rather glumly. “Well, the damage is done now. Hum!” His eyes skirted the room. “Excuse me, Miss Marceau, if I sit!” he said, and sank down upon the stool to think it out. Yes—seven minutes past four by the ivory clock there upon the piano. The whole day gone! And—by

George, this was the day when Scanlon was coming to his office to—Scanlon! Scanlon! The thought of Scanlon was wildly inflaming. Scanlon, he had discovered, was a traitor—and a particularly base kind of traitor—planning a betrayal so gross and vile as to be almost unbelievable.

“I’ve got to get ashore, Miss Marceau,” he announced desperately; “and as quickly as possible. Just who is this girl, Miss Marceau? One of your Shell Pointers, I take it? One of your pupils, perhaps? But—is she some relation to Adam John?”

“You have guessed it,” smiled Miss Marceau; although in that shadow in which she kept her face a smile was but faintly distinguishable. “Adam John is Lahleet’s foster-brother.”

“Which reminds me, Miss Marceau,” exclaimed Henry with the challenging emphasis of a new thought. “Mr. Boland took up with me last night that matter of the Shell Point land. He wants to buy it.”

“Boland? What!” cried the school-teacher in a startled voice. “I told you so!” she blazed, and came darting forward, then halted suddenly, as somehow dismayed with herself. But she had halted this time in the spotlight of that filtering glory from the parted cretonne curtain.

Harrington gaped with sudden wonder and rose slowly, staring. “You!” he exclaimed in amazement. “You are Lahleet?” he breathed incredulously, peering closer into the face now framed so differently from the one he had been looking at before he slept. The beads were gone; the strings of shells and the braids were gone; the whole environment of feature was changed.

“Lahleet *Marceau*,” the little school-teacher mur-

mured in momentary confusion, for she had not meant to disclose herself so soon. Yet a mischievous twinkle came into her eyes at Harrington's bewilderment.

"Good Lord!" He reddened to the roots of his hair. "And I patted your hand. . . . I patted your cheek . . . I treated you like—like a child! I even asked you to kiss me."

Miss Marceau made no pretense of not enjoying his discomfiture.

"And you did kiss me!" he suddenly recalled.

"That was my aboriginal self which likes to be agreeable," Miss Marceau answered, mischievously demure as Lahleet had been.

"Well, I guess it was my aboriginal self that wanted you to on such short acquaintance," confessed Henry. "But then"—his countenance assumed a rueful expression—"I thought I had found such a nice little playmate."

"*And haven't you?*" Now the straight and dignified lips of Miss Marceau did not say this. It was exclaimed by the roguish black eyes of Lahleet; but Henry, a trifle put out with himself at having been hoaxed for five whole minutes, muffed that glance.

"You aren't the same in your tailor-mades," he declared. "Besides, what is the big idea? You and this conglomeration of savagery and civilization?"

"Just that there's the same conglomeration in me," exclaimed Miss Marceau, with a frank, almost apologetic spreading of both her hands in an odd little gesture which comprehended all of her small full-bosomed figure. "I've parts of two college educations. I've had a lot of the white man's civilization—and some of its thrills."

“But the call of my people was too strong for me. I came back to them—I had to come, bringing, as you see, some of civilization with me. But sometimes”—her black lashes were lowered for an instant—“sometimes the call of those coppery drops in my blood is too strong for me; and I have to answer that also. I have to become what you saw me this morning—what you called me—a little Siwash.”

Harrington found himself listening with both understanding and sympathy. “By George!” he said, “I don’t blame you. There are times when I have wanted to get away from the white man and from the white man’s civilization. I was wanting to . . . only”—and he passed a hand before his face—“only yesterday morning I was wanting to.”

“And don’t you want to—now?” The velvet eyes seemed to coax and challenge. Despite the tailor-mades, she was not the teacher now but the wild, impish creature he had seen this morning.

“You temptress!” he denounced, his tones big and robust. “No, I don’t want to—*now!*” And then as if her subtle thrust had opened a way for the full humor of the joke she had played to strike home, Henry broke into laughter.

“How you fooled me!” he laughed. “Ha, ha, ha!” laughing till his head hurt him, laughing till tears forced themselves into his eyes. “You little witch, come here; and don’t you ever dare to get dignified with me again!”

The pose of the teacher fell off from Miss Marceau like Cleopatra’s last veil before the eye of Caesar. She was the Indian girl again, and laughing as excitedly as he. She advanced to the plea of his outstretched hands

and met them with her own. Henry shook them heartily. It might have seemed that he was going to presume a basis of familiarity as already established and kiss her; but he did not. Her action had been too naïvely trustful to be presumed upon. He merely swung her round him playfully—or started to.

“Gosh! my head!” he cried, and stood with one hand raised to the bandages while, with half-rueful expression, he gazed at the girl and laughed again. “You played me a good one, didn’t you—didn’t you?” he demanded, and then something . . . some triumphant quirk of the berry-red lips, something meaningful in her dark glance, a half-mystical twinkle of exultation as over a successful ruse, made him halt and stare at her—stare at her and divine: “You—you doped my broth, you little devil!”

The smile went out of Lahleet’s face. She straightened proudly, a mild defiance in her glance as one who scorned to lie.

“You little aborigine! What did you do that for?” Harrington demanded, sternness not all simulated.

“To spite Miss Boland,” she confessed coolly. “I do not like her. I saw you looking at her out of the window yesterday. I do not like designing women.” A red spot enlarged in the center of each of Lahleet’s cheeks, enlarged and burned, and a lip curled scornfully with the gleam of a white tooth that looked as if it could bite. Yet the little woman was so naïvely earnest, so childishly, so deliciously frank in her jealousy, that Henry could not even be resentful. He laughed, vastly amused.

“Designing? Fiddlesticks! On whom has she designs?”

"You! You said you would help me against John Boland and you are falling for her."

Henry's eyes widened again, but he was being deliciously entertained. So obviously this was not Miss Marceau, but the little Siwash accusing.

"She spoke to you at the Country Club yesterday afternoon, and just for that you went off and lay down and pulled up handfuls of grass on Pigeon Point."

"Oh, look here now!" Henry seized the girl by the elbows almost angrily. "I'm not going to have you spying upon me."

"It was lucky for you that somebody was spying last night when that yeggman slugged you on the head." The black eyes were bold now—impudent even.

"Adam John!" Henry cried out, humbled and shamed. "So that's how Adam John was there! Come here, you child!" he commanded sternly.

The girl obeyed him meekly.

"Listen," he said in the voice of one no longer to be trifled with. "For me, Miss Marceau is gone—sunk without a trace. You are Lahleet, the little Siwash. Get down there where you were this morning, while I sit on the couch and lecture you."

Half-jesting, half-serious, but sinking before the frown and the sheer power of a pointed index finger, the small brunette in the tailored suit, the brown silk stockings and oxfords to match, dropped cross-legged, Lahleet-fashion, to the floor. But when Harrington continued to frown so fiercely, the playful twitch went away from the corners of her mouth. She betrayed a guilty flush and stared up sober and submissive, as to someone infinitely older, who had the right to castigate her verbally.

"Now, look here, you little cougar kitten!" the lawyer warned. "You cut out this movie stuff. I'm not going to have you spying round on me. I can take care of myself. Besides, it's not nice, Lahleet—spying on your friends that way. It was luck, of course, that Adam John was around last night—by George, it was! And I'm grateful as a dog to him and you. But that sort of thing won't happen again.

"You must think of me as your friend—a thousand times your friend for what you and Adam did for me last night; and—especially, first and forever, you *must* put out of your head these absurd suspicions about the Bolands."

But the soft black eyes hardened at the name, and Harrington noticed it.

"Now, listen," he commanded very gravely, shaking his finger till almost it smote her little nose. "Listen!"

The girl's manner became dutifully attentive while Harrington expounded to her very clearly and earnestly and glowingly, with necessary elaborations of detail, all that great project for the benefit of the Shell Point Indians which John Boland had committed to him. The little woman listened at first wonderingly, then doubtfully, battling each point, but finally contritely, with a shamed light in her eyes.

"I'll help you!" she exclaimed impulsively, thrusting a warm little hand into his. "I'll help you. We'll get the signature of every member of the tribe within two weeks."

"Within two weeks?" glowed Henry. "Mr. Boland thought that might take two or three years."

The girl smiled, her accustomed pose of self-assurance quite reestablished. "*We* can do it in two weeks,"

she affirmed with a delightful little emphasis upon the *we*. "But"—and the girl rose from her place at his feet—"you must be hungry."

"I am," confessed Henry, "hungry as a wolf; but I simply mustn't linger here another instant. You have done so much for me. Won't you please put me on the mainland at once?"

"Yes," assented the girl. "Come," and she led him outside.

"Do I understand you stay here alone at night?" Harrington asked, noting the wildness of the lodge's environment. "Aren't you afraid?"

"Afraid? The daughter of a chief afraid? Besides I do not go unarmed. I can shoot like a white man. I can throw a knife like an Indian. I—I can fight like the devil." Lahleet wrinkled her nose and grimaced at him delightfully.

"By Jove, I believe you would!" admired Henry.

"Just to prove that I'm not a marplot, that I kept you here because I thought your condition required it, Miss Boland will be waiting for you over at the landing," she announced over her shoulder as she led the way down the knoll through towering spruce and tamarack.

"Miss Boland! Oh, my Lord!" Henry was thinking of the figure he would make in his water-soaked and fire-dried evening clothes and sheik-like headgear of bandages.

"Yes," assured Lahleet, quite pleased with herself. "Adam had a job for this afternoon and I told him to telephone Miss Boland."

"But she—but she," stammered Henry. "You see I don't know her that well."

"She'll be there at five," announced Lahleet, as drily settling that question. "It's ten minutes of, now."

"But——" Harrington's brow was puckered with a new perplexity. This Indian girl had rather—rather come it over him in some ways, and he didn't want to make himself appear ridiculous in Billie Boland's eyes. "By the way, Lahleet, how much did Adam John tell Miss Boland, I wonder? I have reasons for being vague about some things that happened last night—at least for the present."

If Lahleet's face had been toward him he would have seen a dark smile, almost feline, illuminate her features; but she was again leading down the trail. "You can be as vague as you like," she answered in an uninflected voice. "Be sure Adam John told her no more than that you would be expecting her at Hurricane Island landing at five."

"The nerve of that!" reflected Henry, yet was considerably relieved, until he realized that with Billie waiting at the landing and Lahleet paddling him over, vagueness might not be feasible.

But when they emerged from a belt of fern to stand upon the basin's edge, lo, there was Charlie Bigwind waiting in a launch to take him across. Had the girl divined? No telling. Her face was quite inscrutable and with one last touch of her hand he stepped into the launch.

"Good-by!" her fluted tone carried out to him across the widening stretch of water. He waved his hand and watched that magnetic little figure with a strange, speculative interest until the rounding of a point of greenery cut her from his view. The last glimpse was of the little brown hat snatched off and waved at him.

“Bless her heart!” reflected Harrington. “Doggone her mischievous little hide!”

With these conflicting observations he dismissed Lahleet Marceau from his mind and, as the rounding of another point of greenery brought the Cub Creek landing into view, his eyes sought eagerly for the shining coupé of Miss Billie Boland. It was not there.

“The gall of me—expecting it!” mumbled Henry to himself, but was disappointed for all that.

CHAPTER X

CHARLIE BIGWIND deposited Harrington on shore.

"How do I make town, I wonder?" he speculated, then paused to glance curiously about at the signs of recent automobile tracks carving the lush grasses, as if like hieroglyphics they concealed while they wrote down the things he wished to know of last night's fracas and its participants.

But when he had climbed by a short cut to the level of the main road, tunneling through perennial verdure, a coupé was there, with its open window framing a face in a picture hat.

"*Why, Mr. Harrington!* You have had an accident!" cried a startled voice, beautiful in its concern. "I—I wasn't quite sure where I was to meet you. Besides, that telephone message was so—so laconic that it awed me."

Harrington knew in a blurred way that the door of the coupé opened and that Miss Billie Boland was advancing to him along the highway.

"Are you much hurt?" she called to him across the twenty yards that intervened.

"Not much, thank you," he called back, gazing through a rainbow-mist to where, against a background of ferns, there advanced to him a swaying grace, clad in garments as exotic as the petals of an orchid.

"But what happened?" called Miss Billie again, in

a puzzled tone, as she took in the details of his rather grotesque appearance.

Harrington, unconscious now of the figure he cut, was slow in answering. He was seeing her more clearly with every step, dwelling on each new perception. Her frock was a pink foam that clung as if it loved the curves which molded it and, but for that hat, she might have been some garden nymph whose costume was a flower. Contrasts with another type of beauty were inevitable; but—here was his kind. He witnessed this to himself by quickening his stride.

“Just that I got a bang on the bean and a tumble in the water,” he explained as they met. “A Siwash—man from my old platoon—pulled me out and a—another—*another* Siwash did me up.”

“And of course those Indians learned their first-aid lessons like the others,” Billie inferred, observing his bandages with professional approval.

“Hum—yes,” mumbled Henry, guiltily aware that he had been vague by some kind of instinct rather than remembering to be designedly so.

But all other sensations were momentarily blotted out by Billie’s young arm essaying to support him along the highway when he needed no support at all. And her whole manner was delicious. She wasn’t upstage for a minute. She had come out here on this telephone call to taxi him into town just like a regular good fellow. He noted all this with deep inward trickles of delight; also that the girl’s face was flushed with pleasurable excitement.

“And now,” she asked as the car was straightened out on the homeward road, “just what did happen? Something about the vault robbers, wasn’t it?”

“Just a foolish break of mine, Miss Boland,” apologized Henry, feeling somehow that many things were foolish—including himself—when he sat so close to this exciting presence; then he narrated, with certain studied omissions, something of what had happened.

The girl had listened gravely, much impressed. “That was big of you, Mr. Harrington,” she said, “but it was rash.” The blue eyes shifted to the roadway, but in the expression of her pliant lips remained the ghost of her disapproval. The mold of that disapproval made the expression altogether lovely to contemplate.

As they sped a pleasant fragrance of the forest came in from without; but there was another fragrance; subtle, elusive, delightful. It came from within—from her. It was infinitely delicate and delicately stirring. Yes—she was his kind.

“I—I am sorry that I missed the golf game,” it occurred to him to say, “but—but I was overcome with drowsiness while that—that Siwash was working on me.” He felt mean that having been vague at first, vagueness was required once more.

“After that terrible blow?” The blue eyes were round and lifted sympathetically to the mountainous bandages. “You poor man! I should think you would be. Don’t mention it—now that I know why. But you had other appointments for the day, I believe.”

“No; no other appointments,” ruminated Henry; “at least nothing important.”

The girl threw him a scrutinizing glance, saw that he was serious and then laughed merrily. “You didn’t count Scanlon important then? How that will take him down!”

Henry started at the mention of the traitor, then experienced elation at perceiving that Miss Billie must have been quizzing her father about him last night after he left.

“You’re not as impractical as that, are you,” she harpooned into his mind amusedly—“to neglect a formal contract and the matter of emolument?”

“No; oh, no,” Harrington disclaimed with a perplexed smile; and then, suddenly frank as a schoolboy, blurted: “In fact, I think I’m a good deal less impractical since you gave me that shot yesterday about peace-time slackers.”

So unassuming, so uncomplaining, so grotesque in his wrinkled evening clothes and sheik-like headgear, and so gravely unaware was he, Billie had been quite unable to keep from laughing at this naive young man; but at this remark she was instantly all serious. “You mean that just from my chance word you’ve decided to get busy—at least to get *busier*?” She asked the question admiringly, making plain that she had exactly the same passion as her father to see everybody up and doing—to make two volts of energy crackle with human effort where only one had sizzled before.

Henry flushed up—he who was so unaccustomed to flushing—and felt an embarrassed desire to evade those questioning violet rays, but they pinned him helplessly. “Why, yes. It seems absurd—it sounds like bunk to be telling you this, Miss Boland; and perhaps it’s only a coincidence, but, right after seeing you, I decided to be less impractical. I went down to my office and registered a whole lot of new resolutions.”

Charming curiosity and sly pleasure were both figured on Miss Boland’s face, but the latter was too

furtive for Henry to discern it. "What sort of resolutions?" she inquired interestedly.

But Harrington was flustered and evasive, wondering why on earth he had said this to her at all. "Oh, just the usual kind," he hedged.

"Oh, not to smoke or drink or play poker, I suppose."

"Oh, no, believe me," pleaded Henry, and smiled wretchedly, seeing now that he would have to muddle through. "Just the usual thing for a caseless lawyer who sort of wakes up. Resolved to make more money for one thing, but resolved to hold fast to the—the spiritual element in my profession at the same time."

Miss Boland honored these avowals with an appreciative glance; yet chose to reflect upon his stammering distress in silence.

Harrington, too, was silent. Why was he making such an ass of himself about what had seemed such a perfectly rational and normal thing to do? Why did this girl so thrill him and at the same time throw him off his stride? He was angry with himself and desperate. He didn't propose to remain thus ill at ease with anybody.

"Miss Boland," he demanded, as if she might hold the key, "what makes me so foolish, babbling this stuff to you?"

"Foolish?" The blue eyes threw him a glance of the gentlest reproof, utterly demolishing. "It seems very fine to me—as far as I understand it."

The young man gazed quite rapt. Hers was an angel face, an angel voice; he was beside himself, out of himself!

"Miss Boland?" he inquired in a startled tone, his

hand involuntarily upon her arm, his expression one that mingled honest doubt with glorified joy. "Could it be that I am in love with you? . . . *Could it?*"

The look Billie gave him was complex. If she laughed, he was done for.

"You should know, Mr. Harrington," she suggested.

"But I don't," confessed the man helplessly.

Then she did laugh, but not derisively; her manner lightly mischievous. "Are you—are you more than usually susceptible where womankind is concerned?"

"By Jove, I thought I wasn't," declared Henry, then smiling weakly; "but I must have been mistaken. Strange things have been done to me. The world was gray yesterday morning; before evening it was all lit up. Life was—just—just wiggling along; but within an hour it had become exciting, a thing to be rushed at.

"That's why I did that fool thing about the rope. That's why I stepped into this movie stuff with the vault robbers. That's why I made all those exalted resolutions. Life seemed all at once so big and vital that I wanted to rush right at it, to tackle anywhere, high or low, and throw it and sit on top. It must—it must be you, don't you think?" He smiled, this time, with engaging frankness; then went on:

"Just now as I've been sitting here, you seemed to me all at once—no, not all at once! You've been growing on me—off and on—through all these twenty-six hours I've known you, until you seem just the biggest, grandest adventure that ever was. I want to fling myself right at you."

The man was so serious that Miss Boland had to be.

"Do you think it could be that—that I am in love with you?" he persisted, gray eyes big and honest.

The corners of Miss Boland's mouth twitched, but she made them behave. It seemed to be a case wherein she was expected to assist. "It may be only infatuation," she speculated demurely.

"I—I can't believe it," said Henry, so desperate that he had quite lost his sense of humor.

"Or it might be that blow on the head."

"No!" he insisted. "When I look at you, Miss Boland, I know that if I have been able to fall in love with you my mind must be at its sanest."

"Your tongue is certainly at its glibbest," she rallied him; but all at once he was struck with a new compunction.

"But could love be worth anything," he demurred, ridiculously grave, "love that broke out in, say, less than twenty-six hours?"

"I believe that even measles require a longer period of incubation," teased Miss Boland; "which reminds me that I am on the way to a hospital with a wounded man."

"No, no," protested Henry quickly. "Just drop me at the hotel, please. I'll have Doc Austin come there and replace this turban effect with a piece of court-plaster the size of a postage stamp."

"As you will," said Billie, and with a flashy turn, drew up at the curb in front of the Hotel Gregory. Henry had scarcely noticed where they were and had a dismayed feeling that the drive had ended too soon. There was something not—not yet settled.

"Thank you for bringing me in," his lips were saying.

"It was a perfectly exciting pleasure," she sparkled. "If your hurt proves as slight as you think, perhaps you can make good on that golf game tomorrow."

Tomorrow! She had said tomorrow. "Even though I totter and fall down after every drive," affirmed Henry, seizing her hand rather violently.

"That will be very sporting of you," declared Billie.

"Good afternoon, Miss Boland!" said a voice right over Henry's shoulder.

Scanlon! Harrington's pose instantly stiffened; he controlled himself with an effort; for it was the voice of the traitor—those same throaty, powerful tones that he had heard last in the darkness of this early morning yonder by the decayed boat landing—the identical tones!

But when he turned, the speaker was not Scanlon at all. He was a man as large, but younger—not more than thirty-five. Burly of head and shoulders, with close-clipped yellow mustaches and a V-shaped patch of the hirsute upon his chin; with eyes abnormally bright and areas immediately beneath them abnormally dark and faintly seamed, a foreign-looking type or at least a cosmopolitan one.

Harrington's mind was groping. It was the very voice—yes; and the fellow, with all his silk hat and frock coat and spats, looked the villain underneath; looked the master mind of almost any sort of plot that was nefarious and evil and profit-promising. He looked a smarter, keener, more merciless and unscrupulous Hornblower! Yet he had addressed Miss Boland as if he were upon terms of familiar acquaintance with her. He was a stranger to Edgewater; how should he know Miss Boland then?

"Ah, Count Eckstrom!" Billie exclaimed in the tones of pleasant surprise. "Count Eckstrom—my friend Mr. Henry Harrington."

And Count Eckstrom bore himself like a thoroughbred, proffering a hand with such deference as he would have shown at meeting a cabinet minister, whereas Henry Harrington looked like a bandaged and bearded hang-over from some all-night debauch. Noblesse oblige. Henry must take it. He found it soft, albeit with sinews of steel.

"Pleased, I'm sure!" Harrington declared, and he really was—pleased as the trailing hound when for an instant he sights the fox.

"Most happy!" professed the nobleman with a bend from the hips and a smile that was wide and toothful, yet, to Henry's eye, expressionless as the grin of an opossum.

"And have you known Count Eckstrom long, Miss Boland?" he inquired, as with suave courtesy.

"Oh, ages and ages!" sparkled Billie, with a light of favor in the glance she bent upon the Count, which made Harrington hate him the more. "I met him three months ago in Paris, and two months ago in London and one month ago in New York; and to my surprise ran across him in Seattle last week where he had entrenched at the New Washington after traipsing up and down through our Northwest, looking at mountains and waterfalls, whipping out salmon waters and trying, I believe, even a cougar hunt. Four meetings—in four worlds—that makes us old acquaintances, doesn't it?"

The Count bowed a flattered assent, lifting his silk topper gravely.

"She doesn't know a darned thing about him," perceived Henry, thinking lightning-fast. "He's a crook—maybe one of these international and cosmopolitan

crooks that you read about. . . . Cougars, eh! He's a big-game hunter, that fellow!"

"Promise to telephone me the moment Doctor Austin has concluded his examination," Billie adjured with one of her most fascinating looks of concern; and then reversed its English by adding: "Father will want to know."

Henry, wild with jealousy and bitter in his wrath, watched Count Eckstrom ride away in the seat he had vacated.

"With apologies to Tom Scanlon!" he said almost aloud and, turning, bumped into Scanlon himself.

CHAPTER XI

BY THE old Horny!" greeted Scanlon, a very worried expression making sudden departure from his face. "Henry, old man! I sure am glad to see you alive and back among us. I thought that bunch had croaked you. It was easy to guess you'd butted in."

Henry was staggered once more and must have given Scanlon a queer look, for the tones of his voice were again the very tones he had heard in the dark of early morning. They were exactly like the tones of Count Eckstrom. True, the speech of the two men was totally different. Count Eckstrom's choice of words was precise; he articulated them with distinction. Tom Scanlon's choice was apt to be vulgar, his accent slovenly and provincial. But yonder in the dark Henry heard only tones—a voice. Whose voice? . . . Which voice? . . . The puzzle banged his sore head like a blow.

"Where you been? What happened? Are you much hurt? Got any clues to who they were or where they went?" Scanlon spouted these queries excitedly, eagerly, as a man would who was vitally interested and spotlessly innocent. The manner of them should have allayed every doubt. But the voice . . . the voice! Henry swallowed hard. So help him, this of Scanlon's was the same voice. Helplessly Harrington's eyes shifted to where Billie's coupé was gathering speed with Count Eckstrom in it. That too was the same voice.

"No clues, Scanlon; no," he mumbled rather absently.

“Nothing but a bust on the bean. What did they take?”

“Book One of Deeds from the Recorder’s office. From our office the old man’s original patents, the original map of the Wilkinson survey made in 1890, and a certified copy of the treaty with the Salisheuttes in 1855 fixing reservation limits. A-course, it’s just some melodrama of that nut, Hornblower’s. Bunk to lend color to his threats. You’d ought to ‘a’ let them hang that fellow, Henry. You and J. B. ought. But J. B. is such a generous old sport that he’d keep a knife ready to lend to any fellow that was trying to cut his throat.

“However, that’s neither here nor there now, Henry. What’s eating me is, I’ve got some business with you for the Old Man.” Scanlon had lowered his voice, for a crowd was gathering.

But Henry was inattentive. The perplexity of the dual voices had entangled him again. Every tone of Scanlon’s revived his first suspicion; yet every word of the man and his manner tended to allay that suspicion. Henry was ninety-nine percent convinced that he had done Scanlon a grave injustice. But there remained that stubborn one percent.

“How soon can we talk?” urged Scanlon, nudging in close, for the group on the sidewalk was gaping and exclamatory, threatening momentarily to edge up and ask questions. “The Old Man’s a nut for getting these things down in black and white and locked up in the safe. He was worried about you personally all day, but the minute he hears you’re back and half-way all right, he won’t give a darn for anything till I’ve got you signed up.”

Henry straightened. "I was satisfied with Mr. Boland's simple assurance. Is he not satisfied with mine?"

"Of course he's satisfied with it, Henry," assured Scanlon, who assumed a fatherly manner. "That's just the habit of his mind. The letter—the letter—the letter of the contract—the letter of the law. That's Old Two Blades—to the last hair in his pernicky disposition. Remember that and it will help you a lot in dealing with him."

"Pernicky?" Henry stuck at the word. "I thought he was most reasonable."

"Reasonable, yes. But he wants what he wants the way he wants it. Give him that and he's reasonable. Most men are." Scanlon laughed; but it was a laugh of admiration, of devotion as of one who knew and loved the very weaknesses of his chief. "How soon can I talk to you, Henry, on this?"

"Oh, soon as I can get a bath and a beefsteak," consented Harrington.

"All right, come to my office at eight o'clock," proposed Scanlon.

"*Your* office?" demurred Henry. "It's you after me, isn't it?"

Scanlon hunched his shoulder as if someone had popped an awl into it. "Oh, all right," he smiled amiably, admiringly even; after a moment—"Your office it is." He gripped Henry's hand heartily; in turning from him he encountered that steadily augmenting group about the hotel door. "Say, you fellows!" he announced in friendly tones. "Henry's back; bunged up a little but not hurt. He nipped into 'em just as we figured; but they shook him off. He didn't

get a clue and doesn't know a darned thing any more than we do. What he needs is a tub and a shave. Now, let him get it."

At the desk a headline in the evening paper caught the young attorney's eye—"MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF HENRY HARRINGTON!" He gazed at it with a smile and a vain feeling.

"That's the first time anybody ever cared whether I disappeared, or not," he chuckled to the clerk as the latter handed him his key, and made for the stairway.

But Titmarsh was too quick for him. Titmarsh was editor and leading descriptive writer on the Edgewater Blade. He buttonholed unerringly; but Henry's cunning set forth the details most sketchily against a background of calculating voids. Titmarsh, however, was a very modern reporter. He saw the "story" first and the facts second. He perceived dramatic values even in the voids and legged it for his office, organizing a column as he ran.

"Bad contusion. . . . Temporary shock. . . . No fracture. . . . By Jupiter! But you're tough, Henry. They must have hit you with a railroad tie!" This was Dr. Austin's verdict, as he clipped away blood-matted hair and took stitches.

Bathed and shaved and fed, Harrington met Scanlon, and was tendered a retainer of five thousand dollars and a contract which provided a salary of five hundred dollars per month, with generous per diem for *appearances*. Henry had a feeling that he was being enormously overpaid, but, understanding that he was to represent Mr. Boland in other than the Shell Point interests, did not demur for a moment. These were shrewd men; and they must not be permitted to infer

that he was cheap. Besides, there was his new principle of thrift. He signed the contract in duplicate at that same desk across which he had boasted to Miss Marceau, "I shall *never* be retained by the other side"; and sat fingering the check for the retainer.

"You could make an awful hit with the old man, Henry, by investing that five thousand in the new cedar company," smiled Scanlon.

"I'm going to buy an auto—an auto built for two," answered Henry seriously, as if it was something he had thought over quite carefully.

Scanlon's yellow eyes lighted and his shoulders were shaken by a perceiving chuckle. "Oh, all right," he beamed, still in entire good-fellowship. "Spend it your own way. Our business is that you earn it."

Earn it! That was really a tactful expression which contributed to Henry's sense of comfort and good feeling; while now, as recognizing a new associate, he freshly considered Scanlon in the mass and on the hoof—Scanlon with that voice yonder in the dark, so identical with that voice which had ridden away in the coupé with Billie.

Just what was back of Scanlon, Henry wondered. He was a likable old buffalo—the Chief Counsel—but how thoroughly did Mr. Boland know him? Very thoroughly, no doubt, yet a study of Scanlon's broad, shrewd face did not tell Henry the story of their relations.

The story was that the two men had been associated almost from the beginning of things in Socatullo County. They had drifted into the timber together, a lawyer without clients and a king without a kingdom. Boland was ambitious and constructive; he employed

talents where he found them; he was no haggler, no heckler; he asked only for results. There were times when he did not even ask questions and his reward was sure. He rewarded Scanlon; for Scanlon's results were obvious.

There were men in Boland's law department whose learning and whose legal acumen far exceeded Scanlon's. But besides these regulars at the law, he maintained a small force of irregulars, and he himself was the crafty strategist. He knew when the men of learning should exert their wits in framing contracts or battling in the courts; he knew when they should lay off and let the "irregulars" take the field. It would have been a shock to Henry Harrington to know that he had just been signed up as an irregular.

CHAPTER XII

AND now, Henry, here's the first piece of business," beamed Scanlon, exceedingly well pleased with himself; "a little job of diplomacy that Mr. Boland snatched right out of my hand. 'Don't muss that up at all. Give it to Harrington first thing,' he said to me, and here it is." From one of his after pockets the Chief Counsel drew forth a roughly folded blueprint. Henry recognized it as that map of a portion of the shores of Harper's Basin which Quackenbaugh and Scanlon had been arguing over in the den last night.

"It's this way, Henry," Scanlon expounded suavely. "Quack's got to have this island and it belongs to a buck Siwash named Adam John. Now some of these Indians are stubborn about their land, but the dope shows this Adam John was in your platoon overseas, and it was the Old Man's idea that if you'd go out there and offer him a fair price for his land he'd take it from you, smooth and easy—which would settle Quack's trouble quick, and let a whole lot of things go forward that are standing still now."

Henry's face had lighted at the name. "What'll you give Adam John for his island?" he demanded shrewdly, just as if he might not have been retained by the other side after all.

"It's worth probably three thousand dollars for the timber that's on it; it's not worth a damn for anything else," argued Scanlon.

"Let me give him five thousand dollars for it," proposed Henry impulsively. "I like to be generous."

"With other people's money? There are a lot like you." Scanlon's tone was dry. "All right, five thousand. Ten thousand if he holds us up. We've got to have it, you know."

"I don't believe in hold-ups," declared Henry, with a clamping of his lips. "I wouldn't encourage even one of my vets in 'em. Two thousand is premium enough. I'll see him tomorrow afternoon. The next day you can have your deed."

"That will be making it snappy," declared Scanlon with approving emphasis; then as Henry clamped the blueprint down with a paper weight, the Chief Counsel hitched his chair closer. His manner became mysterious and intimate; his voice was lowered significantly.

"As a matter of fact, just what did happen last night, Henry?"

Harrington told him; quite in detail, up to about two minutes before the blow—after that with voids, watching his expression narrowly.

Scanlon listened avidly, yet his only question, penetratingly put, was: "And when you got back to the place there wasn't a clue? . . . Not the sign of a clue?"

"Not one that I could mention," declared Henry. "Unless—by the way, who is this Count Eckstrom that turned up here yesterday and begins running around with Miss Boland right away? Have him looked up for me, will you? Have him looked up for a criminal record through your intelligence department."

Scanlon's mouth fell open. "Criminal record! An importation of Billie's with a criminal record?"

"Keep it dark but look him up," adjured Henry.

"I'll do it. I'll get his 'dosshiy,'" volunteered Scanlon heartily. "Good night."

Henry stood with a puzzled air contemplating the door which had closed upon his departing visitor. Was Scanlon just the most honest soul in the world, or was he a most convincing actor? Pending an answer, he reached for the telephone, for there were now things so much more pleasant to think of.

"Doctor's been and gone," he reported blithely, if tardily, to Miss Billie Boland; "I'm feeling perfectly chipper, you may tell your father."

"As to your head?"

"Yes, Miss Boland."

"And as to your heart?" He heard the silvery peal of her laughter.

"I didn't consult the doctor about it."

Again that silvery peal. He was both chagrined and stirred. That she could twit him about his stupid confession argued no depth of responsive feeling on her side, yet it argued also the establishment of most amicable relations. It argued—hope.

"I—I'll be on hand for the golf game," he stammered. "Goo—good night, Miss Boland."

"See you are! Good night." The clear voice cadenced and he knew she was still laughing at him, but he didn't care. "Am I in right?" he crowed, and hugged himself boyishly. "Well, I guess yes!"

Then his mind went absurdly off to the fracas on the island. "I wonder . . . I wonder who beaned me," he frowned. Nothing in the silence seemed to answer him and he subsided slowly into a nebulous state of mind. In the nebula a radiant figure glowed, a star, a goddess! at the recognition of whom he stared.

"Yes—I love her," he breathed, a slow smile lighting his face; "I love her." No longer did he reproach himself for having surrendered so soon. "I know a good thing when I see it," he boasted.

No longer did he feel chagrin at having half-confessed himself that afternoon. Rather, he was proud that the strings of his heart had been able to respond so quickly with the tune of a sublime passion when the soft breath of a gracious and beautiful woman had stirred them. And it *was* a sublime passion—else why was he sublimated by it?

He felt a new zest for all the works of life; and next morning the sun did not merely come up over the white shoulders of Mount Gregory; it burst up like a streaming glory and spread its sheen of light over all the territory of the three towns.

Yes—life had kindled for Henry Harrington. The Edgewater Blade proved this, for he was the hero of the two most sensational stories it had ever printed. "That's piling the blurb on thick," he smiled over his coffee, and felt a genuine confusion; "but I guess it won't hurt me any with the girl on the hill—what!"

As to the news value in these stories: well, for one thing, it appeared that the Blade had taken legal advice concerning the land titles and could assure its readers they were as sound as Gibraltar—as sound as the Government upon whose patents they were based. For another—as to the documents stolen: they were not irreplaceable.

The two affairs, the auction and the vault robberies, represented a typical Hornblower's mare's nest; that was the Blade's deduction. And Henry Harrington had emerged from both with luster—Titmarsh's stories

made clear—wherefore, after breakfast, the young attorney's progress along North Street to the office was almost triumphal. Everybody had to greet him, shake hands with him, slap him on the back, congratulate him on his daring.

But Henry shook his congratulators off long enough to stop in at Charlie Culp's place and leave an order for an automobile. "The finest little chase—about that five thousand dollars will buy." That was his specification, whereat Culp grinned, because the demand for nifty little cars designed exclusively for two had been looking up the last day or so in Edgewater.

Yet it was not apropos of this order for a car that Henry, as he rode out to the Country Club, assured himself stoutly: "But I won't tell her today. I'll show her I can contain myself a little while at least."

However, the very first glimpse of Billie in her golf togs was shattering to resolution of any sort. Her color scheme this morning was the greenest of green with the whitest of white—while the color contrasts in her face were never more vivid—those pinks, those reds, the eyes blue as the water of the inlet—the picture was devastating and her greeting was cordiality itself.

"And so everybody is talking about you today," she hailed; and the light of congratulation dancing in her eyes shook Harrington all loose inside.

"Absurd—what they're saying," he blushed; "let's go to it," and he motioned toward the links. His eyes fell before hers—he was in a strange state of confusion. "Lord, I've got to hold on to myself or I'll blurt it out right now," he confessed to himself. "Lord, I wish she'd stop looking at me that way." But he didn't wish it.

His only chance seemed to be to concentrate fiercely on his game; he beat her—most ungallantly.

She was a little vexed; but after the first blush of chagrin, secretly amused. "Do you go about everything with such deadly earnestness?" she taunted, still breathing quickly from the vigor of the play.

He bit his lips, confused again. "Was I—was I so deadly?"

"Yes; you were." She was almost pouty.

"It's you that have made me deadly," he accused, tentatively.

"I?" She eyed him mischievously from under long lashes. "Before *me* they had learned to call you 'Hell-fire.'"

Harrington flushed at the old sobriquet, that seemed never so inapt as now, and was suddenly angry—with himself—with her. "You have made me deadly—deadly as a cobra," he charged, advancing on her. "I'm in love with you!" He said it savagely. "No doubt about it; I'm in love with you. In just forty hours you've made me want everything just because I want you."

Billie, leaning on her putter, dared to laugh at him—mockingly; but his earnestness would not be mocked. "You were in doubt yesterday," she reminded him.

"I have decided—it is love." He stood frowning.

"And is it much of a calamity to find that you are in love with me?" she twitted.

"The calamity is that it has come so quickly that you won't believe in it at all."

"You are speedy," she admitted, mirthful, yet admiring.

"*Speedy! I'm a plunger,*" Harrington avowed hoarsely.

The blue eyes regarded him siftingly. "You may have *fallen* but you are not *plunging!*" she dared him slyly.

He took the dare—fiercely—with one of his fighting smiles. "Miss Boland—Billie, I want you!" he exclaimed, seizing her hand.

"Oh, now you are 'Hellfire'!" she laughed mischievously.

"As the steel wants the magnet so everything in me cries out for you," he clamored so fiercely that she became suddenly serious. "I'm not a mollycoddle. I don't pretend I haven't wanted other women. I wanted a woman once with all my soul; but that was in France."

Into Miss Billie's blue eyes there came a startled look.

"My want was very intense, because life itself was to be short and I had to be intense or get cheated," Harrington was assuring her. "But the want that makes me do this abrupt thing, speak these abrupt words to you this morning is far bigger. I wanted Jeanne so that I could have her and die. I want you so that I can have you and *live*. There is more in me than there was five years ago; more in me than there was twenty-four hours ago. You have made me something that I was not and that something, all of it, turns back to you, its creator. . . . I—I love you, Billie!" His impetuous utterance softened infinitely.

He sought to draw her toward him; but her hand struggled for its release and was permitted to obtain it. Her face had whitened, as did his. Her figure had straightened and she pushed him from her with a look of resentment, the reason for which he understood.



"Yours Is a Reckless Nature," Billie Warned Henry

"I *had* to tell you——" he urged huskily.

She laid a quick hand on his sleeve, perhaps partly to reassure him, perhaps partly because she found herself swaying dizzily.

"I know, I know," she whispered, with white lips, "But—but—of course, Mr. Harrington, you couldn't expect me to love you in forty hours. Know whether I love you?"

"Yes," he demanded. "Yes. You're quick. You know now. If something in you hadn't been drawn to me I couldn't have been drawn so headlong to you. Yes, I expect you to put your hands in mine this minute and say, 'I love you, Henry!'" He offered his hands to her and waited.

He did not have to wait long. She swayed toward him, lifting her bright face to his; and she did put her hands in his—but not with yielding in their pressure.

"You are very clever, aren't you?" she conceded with a sober smile. "And I do admire you very much. I am drawn to you, but I do not know yet that I am drawn in the same way that you are."

"Oh, but it must be the same!" Harrington urged.

"Yours is a reckless nature," she warned, with a slow sidewise shake of her pretty head that to Henry was utterly destroying; "mine is not. You plunge; I reflect. You *feel* that you want me to make *your* life complete. I *consider* if I could make *my* life complete through you."

"Your—*your* life complete?" stammered Henry, his emphasis revealing just the old, benighted male notion; yet she was patient.

"But I have a life to live," she reminded him. "My position, my opportunities——" And then all at once

Henry understood that she was thinking of stocks and bonds and mills, all the wide inheritance that would some day be hers. "These confer on me an obligation. It's a trusteeship I was born to—not just to be a gay, careless spender and joy-chaser."

Henry's face lighted frankly. "I knew it," he beamed. "I knew you couldn't be just—just a bunch of chiffon. Of course, I'd—I'd expect to help you bear your responsibilities—if there was anything a fellow like me could do, but I don't pretend to anything much along that line. Love, I guess, is selfish. Love just wants what it wants. But I'd—I'd try not to hinder," he smiled, half playfully.

"Hinder?" The eloquent eyes threw him a look as conceding that a young man of just his qualities could be very helpful indeed—*could* be. "My love can't be *just* selfish," she explained to him; "it must remember those responsibilities. You see, father, being what he is, created them for me, and when I inherit that's part of it. Do you know what the world is demanding today, Mr. Harrington?" She was suddenly very much in earnest, and the more earnest the more beautiful she seemed to him. "It's that simple little word—*enough!* Enough of food, enough of clothes, enough of warmth, enough of house and home and light. *Enough!*"

It seemed to Harrington wonderful that a girl in Billie Boland's position should have thoughts like this—at a moment like this; for wasn't she encouraging him? Wasn't she taking the precaution to tell him what it would be like if he married her? Anyway, it deepened all his feeling for her.

"You're right, of course," he could agree avidly. "It's fierce—little shavers wanting just one grape, just

one taste of an orange, just one glass of milk for their breakfast, and they don't get it and they don't know why they don't get it; and it isn't their fault or a thing that they can help while they're little. By George, we ought all to be trying to do something to help them get it."

"It's a problem of production," the girl affirmed; "you have to heap it before you can scatter it. What the world needs is production—men like my father who make the traditional two blades grow."

"But it's a problem of distribution, also. Besides enough of food and clothes, the world wants the intangible things, love and faith and hope and . . . justice!" Henry reminded. "That's where we lawyers come in. We are battlers for the square deal. The courts are the agencies to see that the little shavers, the weak and helpless, are not trampled under the contending feet of these big producers you are talking about and pulling for."

The blue eyes looked puzzled. Billie appeared to view Harrington's enthusiasm with approval but his sentiments with doubt. "True, perhaps," she decided swiftly, "but abstract—rather vague, too vague, don't you think, for practical people to work at?"

Henry was slightly disappointed until her face brightened with: "But you are helping father to produce when you help solve his technical difficulties for him. When you help get the Shell Point reservation so that homes for a million people can be made out of trees that shelter the game a hundred Indians live on! When you get an Indian to give up his unproductive island for a shingle mill that will cover the roofs of ten thousand homes!"

It was Henry's turn to be puzzled. The Shell Point project was a dead secret—yet she knew it. She knew even about Adam John and his island—which was a small matter.

But the blue shafts of her eyes were holding him hard to the point: "That is so," he admitted with the emphasis of new discovery. "Yet it's really as a sort of special agent of justice that I come into these affairs—justice for your father—justice for the Indians—justice for all those people needing homes, needing roofs." He stopped, confused. This *was* vague. It sounded almost silly.

Billie noted his confusion and sweetly abolished it by a queen's decree. "I see you as a *co*-producer with father," she ruled, blissfully autocratic! And he went down the hill very, very happy—gravely, deeply happy. His existence had found its bright particular star and he was on terms of adoration with it. His devotion was to be permitted. He asked no more—now.

CHAPTER XIII

THE next pressing business of Henry Harrington, taken up immediately after luncheon, was to pay his friend Adam John five thousand dollars for an island worth fifteen hundred. This was a pleasant task. All his life now, it seemed, was to be made up of pleasant tasks. A word from Quackenbaugh provided a motor launch and Henry was soon chugging eastward on the channel called South Inlet, but really the middle inlet, which was here a quarter of a mile in width.

Where this inlet entered Harper's Basin lay a flat island with a stand of rather poor timber upon it. This was Hurricane Island; less than two hundred yards separated it from the mainland on the south and it was less than six miles from North Street, so that within thirty minutes, say about two-twenty of the afternoon, Henry was stepping off upon a beach of wave-packed sand.

Another small motorboat was moored upon this beach, but it was old and temporarily disabled, with the engine opened up and parts of it scattered about in the bottom of the craft. Evidently, Adam John's trouble with his motor had overtaken him while fishing, for there was tackle lying about and a smell of smoking salmon in the air. Indeed smoke appeared drifting lazily from an almost flat roof barely visible one hundred yards away above the bushes. Adam John no doubt was there curing his fish.

Henry, in the bright sunlight of the June afternoon, loitered, drinking in the details of the scene. There were actual signs of an intent to chop out the forest and make the beginnings of a farm. Amid stumps some struggling stalks of corn were tasseling. Beside them appeared a small patch of thrifty-looking potatoes. A cow browsed near, tethered safely from the corn, and a runty horse whinnied from a yard of poles behind a little log stable. Signs of humble thrift, signs of domestic aspiration these, springing from the soul of a red man.

But then two things had happened to make Adam John superior: the Mission School—now taught by Miss Marceau—and the army.

Harrington raised a shout. A swart, sturdy figure emerged from the lodge and stood peering, then gave an answering shout, and Adam John walked straight down to Henry. He was wearing overalls and boots, with an ex-army shirt and a nondescript hat! A man below the medium height whose features had a half-emerged look; yet the sloe-black eyes were expressive of keenness and tenacity as his manner was of dignity.

“How!” greeted Henry, and outstretched a hand.

“How!” smiled the Indian with a kind of solemn joy. “You come see my place?” Plainly he was as proud of his island as a monarch of his throne. “You t’ink I make farm here—mebbe so?” he queried, indicating fondly his struggling corn and potatoes.

But Harrington shook his head. “You’re a skookum Indian, all right, Adam; but it’s too much of a job,” he announced, surveying the timber. “Besides, I’ve got a better prospect for you than that. Mr. Boland wants your island for a shingle mill. Oh, but he will give

you a fine price for it," Henry smiled reassuringly—when Adam's face became sealed and uninviting. "That's my job—to buy it from you. I'll give you five thousand dollars for it."

This should have made the Indian brighten, but: "Me no like sell," he replied, surprisingly.

"But Mr. Boland wants it for a shingle mill," expatiated Henry.

"Me want for farm," announced Adam simply, quite as if what he wanted was as important as what the great man wanted.

"But you can take five thousand dollars and buy a much better farm, cleared and with buildings on it—all the hard work done," Henry expounded.

Adam John contemplated the face of his former commander soberly, anxiously, almost as appealing to him to understand the longings, the yearnings, the aspirations of a new-made citizen of a great country in whose behalf he had freely shed some tricklings of his mongrel blood.

"But I like do all hard work myself," he urged with a weak attempt at a deprecatory smile. "My father born this island; he die here. 'Sides, Great Father at Washington give me island for fight the Boche. She mine." He added gravely: "Look—flag! Look!"

Harrington followed Adam John's pointing finger to where upon the end of the smoking lodge was raised a small American flag. Henry smiled at the odd conceit, both touched and gratified. "Yes, yes; it's yours all right, old fellow," he assured; "but—but you see, Mr. Boland wants it!"

"And is Mr. Boland God?" demanded a pert voice from somewhere behind and above.

Henry turned, startled and amazed, yet a trifle thrilled—for he had recognized the voice. It was Lahleet, playing Indian again. Fifteen feet behind him she sat half-cradled in the limbs of a freshly felled madrone tree, smiling mockingly, one graceful arm clutching a branch above her head, one moccasined foot swinging idly and unsupported, while with the other she teetered gently like a child at play.

“Eavesdropper!” Harrington reproved, yet welcomed her as an ally; for in their last meeting she had covenanted to help him in a far more important project of Mr. Boland. “Look here, Lahleet,” he began at once as losing no instant of time. “If you’ve been here long you can see that I’ve rather a job on my hands. I’m here on a very important mission—important to Mr. Boland because his engineers have recommended this island as the best, in fact the only feasible site for the new shingle mill; important to me, because it’s the first commission of this kind Mr. Boland has ever entrusted to me, and I want to make good on it; important to Adam John because it’s a chance to get five thousand dollars for his island. Won’t you—won’t you make him see reason?”

But as her tone had indicated, the girl was seeing Adam John’s side of it. “What do you mean—reason, Mr. Harrington? Adam John has accepted the white man’s ideals—some of them. It seems to him a fine feat, a proof that he is redeemed from savagery, if by painful labor he can turn this wilderness of his fathers into a white man’s farm.”

Adam John threw his foster-sister a grateful look. Her glib tongue was saying the things his slow lips could never have managed.

“But Mr. Boland will pay him such a generous figure that he cannot afford to indulge a—we must not encourage him to indulge a mere whim like——”

The black eyes of Lahleet were grave with the gravity of the centuries, as she interrupted with: “To us poor aborigines, there are some values that cannot be expressed in figures. The satisfaction of making a farm here out of this tree-covered, root-tunneled soil is a profit to Adam John that cannot be expressed in dollars.”

“But, Lahleet!” Henry expostulated. “It just isn’t common sense for——”

“That is what ownership means, isn’t it?” the girl inquired coolly, holding him at arm’s length, as it were. “Freedom to do what one pleases with one’s own, to sell it or keep it, lease it or refuse to, improve it or neglect it? That’s all in the ownership idea, isn’t it?”

“Certainly,” admitted Harrington, baffled by the girl’s perverseness.

“Then I repeat: Is Mr. Boland God?”

“Lahleet,” rebuked the exasperated lawyer, “of course not. You know as well as I that Mr. Boland is a great big constructive genius who——”

“Oh, I shall help you with Adam John,” interrupted the girl coolly; “but let me understand one thing. Adam John the little and John Boland the great—they are both the same size before the law?”

Harrington nodded, smiling at the girl’s odd conceit.

“And if John Boland wants to buy this island he can want to and offer a million dollars for it; but if Adam John wants to keep it, he can refuse the million?”

“Why certainly—if he wants to; but we must not let Adam John be so foolish.”

“No, I think not,” agreed Lahleet; “and since you admit the principle, I will talk to Adam John; but it is his island—not mine. I will try to persuade him to yield his *whim* of a private purpose to the general good as contained in a shingle mill; but that is a hard proposition for a savage to grasp. I fancy if conditions were reversed it would even be a hard proposition for Mr. Boland to grasp. But Adam John is more hopeful soil for the development of a social conscience.”

Harrington, having gained her consent to help him, could afford to be merely amused at the girl’s acid subtleties, and turned seriously to Adam John.

“Old fellow,” he said, “you’re getting off wrong on this. I want you to think it over tonight—talk it over with Lahleet.”

“Aw ri’, me t’ink !” replied Adam John, but his lower lip was thrust out stubbornly. However, Harrington laughed hopefully, as he bade the two good-by. Even though Lahleet failed, he meant to get round the half-breed somehow—for Adam John’s good, of course, as well as his own; and was rather full of this determination when he met Billie Boland just getting into her coupé in front of her father’s office, whither he was bound to report to Quackenbaugh.

CHAPTER XIV

JUST back from your first successful mission?" Billie inquired radiantly; thus revealing unreservedly that she was keeping fairly close tab on the young man's movements. Besides it was ecstasy to have her gaze at him so interestedly; ecstasy to stand so close to the car window that he could feel the warmth of her breath upon his cheek; ecstasy to be frank with her even to the extent of disappointing her. "Not successful—no," he confessed; "not yet." And while the beautiful eyes continued their alert interested gaze, he told her something—not too much—but something of the ground of Adam John's refusal. Rather to his surprise, after the high-sounding last talk he had heard from Billie's lips, she manifested no perception even of Adam John's point of view.

"The poor Siwash!" she scorned. "Does he imagine the Boland Cedar Company will change its plans for him?" Then abruptly the scorn passed out of her expression and every line of her face seemed given over to personal concern for this young Mr. Henry Harrington's progress in her father's favor.

"You—you mustn't admit failure," she warned. "What business demands is results, you know. Father sticks out for them. The men who are going to the top in Boland General aren't the men who come back with an alibi. They're the men who come back with the goods. Be one of those, Mr. Harrington. Good

luck," she beamed, and thrust out a cordial encouraging hand to him.

Henry watched her departure with tingling sensations of joy and pride. "I'll show her," he chuckled. "I'll show her!" But to Scanlon, "I didn't get the deed," he confessed with a glum smile, holding up empty hands.

"The hell!" ejaculated Scanlon, and by his expression revealed both what a calamity it would be for the Boland Cedar Company not to get the island and what a calamity it would be for Harrington to have failed in his first commission from J. B. "Darn stubborn lot, these Siwashes," he frowned, when Henry had completed his explanation. "What are you going to do now?"

"Let the Indian sleep on it. Then in the morning I'm going to Quackenbaugh for authority to pay more."

"That's the thing," said Scanlon, "we don't want to have just to kick him off. Finesse first is the Old Man's motto."

"And *always*, of course," appreciated Henry. "In this instance there's no way you could force him off. The man's got a U. S. patent." If at this moment the Chief Fixer looked upon his newest aide as a babe in his innocence, he veiled the fact; in part perhaps because such innocence made him more serviceable.

Next morning Harrington reported to Quackenbaugh, a most impatient person, ascetic in appearance, and more autocratic in manner than Old Two Blades himself.

"Offer him ten—offer him twenty thousand," directed Quackenbaugh with emphasis, "and close with him

quick. Take it out there—twenty one-thousand dollar bills. Shake it in his face! He can't resist the sight of money. No Indian can. No white man can for that matter. My God, Harrington!" Quackenbaugh's lean and leathery face was tense and stern; his long squirrel teeth bit out his nervous speech. "This is important! Get that Siwash closed up and out of the way before Hornblower or some other crook gets hold of him."

Henry was assenting but thoughtful. "Paper money never looks much to an Indian," he reflected; "if it was gold—if I could pile up the gold—glittering before his eyes, it might win him."

"Well, take gold, then," exclaimed Quackenbaugh with nervous eagerness; "that is, if there's twenty thousand gold in Gaylord's vaults since they don't circulate it any more. Most likely there is, though, if we want it. There's most anything in the town if we want it, eh, Henry?" And he reached for the telephone. This was the first time Mr. Quackenbaugh had called him Henry; and that young man might be pardoned for a sense of satisfaction in finding himself so cordially received and trusted by so eminent a member of that charmed circle of the Boland executives.

"Got twenty thousand dollars in gold twenties down there, Gaylord?"

"Just happen to have—owing to a whim of Mr. Boland's, yes." Gaylord was President of the First National but Mr. Boland was chairman of its board.

"I want it," said Quackenbaugh. "What's it weigh—that much coin?"

"About sixty-eight pounds," answered the banker after swift calculation.

"Henry Harrington will be in for it, also for twenty thousand currency. Get 'em both ready."

Just like that Quackenbaugh had ordered forty thousand dollars out of the First National vaults to be used as pawns in the playing of a little game.

Power, thought Henry. Power! It was astonishingly pleasant to sit so close to the reins of power; but reservations began to occur to him.

"We might bring the Indian in here and show it to him," he suggested.

"Wouldn't have one-tenth the pull," decided the relentlessly eager Quackenbaugh after one thoughtful moment. "Dump it in his lap out there, and he can't get away from it."

"He'd probably refuse to come in here anyway," reflected Henry. "However, I'm going to be uneasy with all that pile in a motorboat. She might turn turtle or the bottom drop out or something." He was unaccustomed to using huge sums of money to bait traps with.

Quackenbaugh was entirely accustomed to it. Yet he confessed quite frankly: "So am I. When it's the raw stuff we're handling, I never get over having the shivers; but the man that hasn't got the nerve to take a chance when the stake is big enough never gets on with J. B. In this instance, the game is worth the chance; but we'll reduce the hazard by reducing the length of the marine voyage. We'll put a man with a sawed-off shotgun in a car with you and have you driven to the mouth of Cub Creek. The motorboat will meet you there and it's only two hundred yards across the channel to the island."

Henry looked relieved for a moment, but then re-

called. "And yet, if I bring anybody with me Adam John is likely to resent it and develop a sullen streak."

"You've got to go across alone," foresaw Quackenbaugh. "Nobody along but your engineer. When you're landed; the boat will go back and pick up the man with the shotgun and just keep casually circling the island. If anybody tries to leave it before you he will suspect something is wrong and investigate."

"All right," smiled Henry with resolution; "if you want to risk your forty thousand I'm willing."

"You try him first with ten of those bills and then you keep trying another and another till you get up to twenty. Twenty is the absolute limit!" The squirrel teeth of Quackenbaugh closed like the click of a steel trap. "If it's a question of more than twenty we don't pay anything. We fight! But if he doesn't fall for twenty thousand in pretty pictures, then you turn the gold loose at him."

So simply did Quackenbaugh conceive the matter. He wrote quickly "\$20,000 currency \$20,000 gold," on a piece of paper worth a fraction of a cent with a pen worth less than a nickel, scrawled his initials beneath and handed it to Henry.

But there was a little matter to be adjusted between Henry Harrington and James H. Gaylord, the matter of a necessary poke to the banker's jaw from the lawyer's fist, delivered some three days ago. This adjustment took time and it was all of eighteen minutes after Henry entered Gaylord's private office before that lithe, muscled young man stepped across the sidewalk with his spine stiffened by the weight of sixty-eight pounds contained in a coin sack with the seal of the U. S. mint upon it. This sack reposed upon his shoul-

der and leaned almost affectionately against his neck.

Now as Harrington stepped out upon the pavement, who should come striding along but Count Eckstrom—in golfing cap and knickers—to the links, perhaps, to meet Miss Billie Boland, quite evidently pleasure-bound. Rather to Henry's surprise, the count recognized him, although when they met last Harrington had been a sartorial wreck with a pyramidal bandage upon his head.

"You are a burden bearer, this morning, Mr. Harrington, I perceive," observed the count facetiously, pausing to offer a lofty and elegant clasp of his soft hand.

To take that hand, Henry had to shift his hold upon the ear of the coin sack, but he managed this. "Yes; that's my station in life," he bandied. "You belong to what we in America call the idle rich, I take it."

"Idle, but not rich," discriminated the count with a smile, and lightly detaching his fingers from Harrington's grasp, as though they had been held a little too close, he moved on at that unhurried but also unloitering stride which is supposed to distinguish the carriage of a gentleman.

As the car spun out along the Basin road, the blue water of South Inlet lay like a band of turquoise between sheets of emerald and the fragrance of the forest tingled in Henry's nostrils as zest for his duty and his opportunity tingled in his veins.

Three satisfactions warmed his breast: first, that he was going to do this thing for the Boland interests who were trusting him so largely and compensating him so generously; second, that he was going to do something nice for old Adam John, even over Adam John's

silly objection; third, that he was going to prove thereby to Billie that he was a sure enough go-getter. After the first two or three minutes, it was the third of these reflections that occupied his mind most entirely and most happily.

As the car swung off the grade at the mouth of Cub Creek, the same motorboat which had conveyed him yesterday curved gracefully in from the channel. Thus precisely did the cogs in the machinery of a Boland General operation fit into each other.

Gently Harrington deposited his valuable burden in the exact center of the bottom of the launch and a few minutes later he stepped ashore upon the island. He swung the bag of coin to his shoulder as lightly as if it had been a present of corn for Adam John's horse, and made his way toward the lodge walking straight and blithely.

He wondered if Lahleet had softened Adam John any. Somehow he feared not; he feared that her instinct would have overmastered her reason; that she could not be counted on. He would even be relieved if she were not about this morning. Apparently she was not, for as he rounded the corner of the lodge he came upon Adam John alone.

"Hello, Adam!" hailed Henry cheerily. With an apologetic start the Indian rose to his feet and stood sheepishly.

"Good morning, Lieutenant Harrington," he responded with a jerky bow.

"Adam John," began Henry, instantly aggressive, "I can't let you make a mistake about this matter. Can we go inside? I've got something to show you."

The Indian's eyes fixed themselves on Harrington's

face in an expression of dog-like devotion, but besides that there was a plea in them, as of one who prayed, "O well-meaning friend, lead me not into temptation!"

If Henry saw this he hardened himself against it and turned impatiently to the lodge. Resignedly, Adam John led him within. The narrow plank-walled shack was reeking with the smell of smoke and drying fish. Through the narrow windows light filtered, battling successfully enough with the smoke to reveal a table and two crudely homemade chairs. Upon the table was spread an army blanket. To one of the chairs Adam John motioned his visitor with ceremonious gravity.

"Now, Adam," Harrington appealed at once, "you mustn't be foolish. This is the rarest opportunity that ever came to a young man like you. I've got them to enlarge their offer. Adam John, they are willing to give you *twenty* thousand dollars for the island!"

Harrington in his headlong rush to jar Adam out of his obstinacy had forgotten entirely Quackenbaugh's instruction to bargain, thousand-dollar note by thousand-dollar note; or else had nobly disregarded it. But Adam John's countenance was sealed and hard as if it were the face of some old idol.

"Me no want money. Want farm!" affirmed the Indian more stubbornly than ever.

Henry bit his lip and frowned. "Look here, Adam!" he reproved. "I don't think you realize how much money twenty thousand dollars is. Look, I've brought it so that you could see."

Harrington drew from his pocket a long envelope, opened it, fanned out in his hand like cards twenty dark green Federal Reserve notes, with the face of Alexander Hamilton on each, and then papered the old

army blanket with them. The Indian could not repress a start of surprise, but as if to make up for this, relapsed into a more profound stolidity.

“Twenty one-thousand-dollar bills!” Harrington expatiated, and swept them up and counted them down one by one before the Indian’s eyes, which, despite the taciturnity of his expression, never missed a movement of the money.

“Each of these is one thousand!” emphasized the lawyer. “There are three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. A single one of these bills is a dollar a day for almost three years; and there are twenty of them; a dollar a day for sixty years, and that’s longer than your father lived upon this island, Adam.”

This must have seemed to the Indian an odd conceit, for his flat face was ornamented with a grotesque smile and for the first time since the money had been displayed, he raised his eyes to those of his friend and benefactor. But the smile faded. The look slowly changed to one of infinite perplexity, yet mingled with an infinite patience; as if he thought it strange that his friend could not understand him—as if he were being tortured but by one he loved and whose acts, therefore, he could not protest.

With a movement that was so gentle as not to be offensive, Adam John pushed the money from him. Yet the eager lawyer, watching every expression, thought he caught a twitch of the stolid facial muscles when the Indian’s hand actually touched the money. He was weakening after all.

“Aha!” cried Harrington with a Mephistophelian laugh, as he restored the money to its envelope. “I almost got you that time, old scout. But if you waver

before pretty pictures, what will you do when I show you the real stuff? Money isn't money till you see it in the raw."

He reached craftily for the coin sack and presently a stream of gold twenties gushed out upon the blanket—beautiful, untarnished mintings, every one of them, each a dazzling sunburst—dozens, scores, hundreds, one thousand of them to be exact.

Some of the yellow discs had begun to roll and Adam John shrank as if they were fiery serpents hissing and darting at him, then started up, slapping them down upon the blanket and pushing them into the general heap.

CHAPTER XV

WHAT wonder the simple-minded Adam John found his eyes, his soul riveted by this gushing sack of gold! What wonder that when he had pushed those fugitive coins back into the heap he found it impossible to withdraw his fingers but stood crouched forward with hands half-buried in the yellow pile—clinging to the coins as something he could not let go—holding them down as if they were demons that might leap at and destroy him—eyes blinking in the beams refracted by the glittering pile that sparkled and quivered like something alive.

“There,” laughed Henry exultantly; for he saw that the gold had won. “There is your twenty thousand dollars, Adam, for your little old island.”

The Indian was still blinking at the glittering mass before him, his fingers clutching or quivering so that there came a slight agitation from the center of the pile that made the coins more scintillant still. The savage in him appeared to have succumbed completely to the lure of the gold.

But slowly as a man gathers his resources for a tremendous moral struggle there were signs of a gathering strength in the face of the Indian. His teeth bit into his lips; his brows were lowered; his eyes narrowed. Deliberately he began to straighten, deliberately to withdraw his hands. At length they were free—entirely free of the gold. Above the pile he rubbed the fingers

of one hand against the fingers of the other as if shaking off the last hateful particle which might have adhered. At length he sat erect once more. His hands were off the table entirely and folded across his chest, fingers clasping the muscles of the arms tightly as if he restrained a mighty impulse. And yet his eyes would not give up their fixity. They were glued to that shining cone of coin. The struggle in his half-savage breast was still on.

How fierce that conflict was Harrington realized when he saw Adam John's eyes suddenly shiny with tears. Tears may come once or twice in a lifetime to the eyes of an adult Indian. Adam John's eyes since infancy had not been wet save from enemy gas. Now, bright from their briny bath, they found the eyes of Henry Harrington, but not with a look of grateful surrender. It was a glance of loving reproach they gave, after which the stiff lips of Adam John labored his look into words: "You—you make temptation for me, Lieutenant!"

Temptation!

The combination of that glance, those simple words, the tone in which they were uttered, cut through Harrington like a knife. All at once he saw what he was doing—that he was seeking vulgarly to lure this young man away from an ideal which, if wrong, was one that he ought to be persuaded out of, reasoned, guided out of—but not sordidly bribed out of. It filled him with a sudden sense of shame. But still his speech lagged behind his thought.

"Why, I'm showing you how much money is being offered for your land," he argued.

"Is that all you do?" gasped Adam weakly, and

passed a calloused yellow hand over his perspiring brow. "Don't! I no want to know."

There was a silence for many seconds in the smelly, smoky lodge, and then Harrington said abruptly: "Here, hold the bag!"

While Adam, trembling, held the sack, Henry in handfuls scooped up the double eagles and flung them hatefully within it. In the midst of this operation he was startled by the sense of another presence in the doorway; but before he could lift his eyes even there came a prolonged "Oo-o-o!" It was a shivery, shuddery note of exclamation, and it was uttered of course by Lahleet, after which she fixed one glance on Harrington and then grew frostily silent.

"Adam is disappointingly stubborn," Harrington said. "Even after I have been to the pains of showing him just how much money twenty thousand dollars is, he still refuses it."

"And that," commented Lahleet with a straight lip and a hard eye, "that is a refusal which a white man can't understand."

"Oh, yes—I can understand it," frowned Henry, for he was feeling very disappointed, "but it's foolish all the same."

"Foolish to be loyal to an ideal?" persisted the girl, advancing upon him.

"If it's a foolish ideal!" retorted Henry.

Lahleet, indignant, flashed a swift word in Chinook to Adam John; and the Indian as if in obedience to command swung the bag of gold pieces to his shoulder. "It heavy. Me carry for you," he said.

The girl must have been impatient to see the money out of the lodge and off the island—for when Henry, a

little put out with her and a little miffed at himself, walked with a kind of stiff dignity behind Adam John to where he lowered the gold to a cedar stump beside the boat-landing, Lahlect followed at a distance, as overseeing the departure.

A survey of the channel revealed to Harrington no sign of his engineer and the man with the sawed-off shotgun. No doubt they were still circling the island, patrolling in a leisurely, unobtrusive fashion so as not to excite suspicion; and would heave into view presently. Nevertheless, this slight delay served to increase his annoyance. When he saw Adam John studying the height of the sun anxiously, as if time pressed with him also, Henry spoke up sharply: "My boat will be here presently. You need not wait."

"Have to go nets," Adam John explained laconically. "Lieutenant scuse!"

"Sure!" averred Henry, with emphasis, although he could have bitten his tongue out with chagrin. He had failed again. What should he do next, he wondered, gritting his teeth in rising anger—mostly with himself.

After a balk or two the engine started and Adam John was borne swiftly out into the channel and headed up the basin.

"Men like John Boland ought to be very careful what they do to the souls of men like Adam John," Lahlect remarked from behind.

"But Mr. Boland did not know a thing about it," Harrington defended quickly.

"It's the same thing," the girl averred, with the black eyes round and tender in their reproaches. "What you were doing to Adam John's soul is the same thing that Mr. Boland does to all souls. He crushes their ideals

under an avalanche of gold. He drowns them in a tide of eager hope for wealth and prosperity. He intoxicates them with an atmosphere of flattery and mutual admiration. Quackenbaugh, Manter, Scanlon and the rest, why, they are mere ambition-drunk satellites of Boland, doing the same thing to others that he by his wicked genius has done to them."

"Mere unjust prejudice, Lahleet, every bitter word of it," denounced Harrington; then demanded with sudden anxiety: "But you still believe in Mr. Boland? You are still going to help me with the Indians?"

The girl surveyed him very calmly.

"Yes; I am going to help you; because I believe that what Mr. Boland proposes for the Shell Point Indians will be an inestimable boon for them, and because I believe that he keeps his pledged word. Not because I believe in him or his methods."

"You are stubborn about Mr. Boland, Lahleet, as stubborn as Adam John about his island. But"—Henry tried the effect of a clearing smile—"we won't argue. We two understand and believe in each other, and that's enough—we are still friends and—partners."

"Yes. But the Indian is a man who will not be hurried. He suspects any attempt to hurry him. I have dropped the seed. Now leave the Shell Point families to ruminate upon the idea, to palaver over it around their fires at night, and while they catch and dry their salmon. They will hear about your offer to Adam John. They will laugh and say that Adam was a fool. Some day they will ask for you to come and explain the matter. That will be the day of your opportunity." The girl's face had brightened, her entire manner changed, once she got on to this Shell Point affair.

"And now, if you don't mind being left alone," Lahleet suggested, "I think I must go. My canoe is on the other side of the island and my little Injuns are giving an entertainment tonight at the schoolhouse, so time presses."

"Not at all," assured Henry politely, "I'd walk across with you but——" He indicated the sack of gold upon the stump. "Besides, my boat will be here at any minute."

"It's only a hop, skip and a jump for me," laughed the girl. "Good-by, Hen-ree!"

With no more premonition of tragedy than a butterfly when it flits across a field of poppies she danced away from him along the path, turned sharply to the right past where the cow was browsing, gave him one more glimpse of her bright face framed in green leaves and then disappeared in the timber.

"Where the devil is my boat?" speculated Henry, doing an imitation of Napoleon on St. Helena. "They must have stopped to fish. . . . Gee! I wonder if I've got to wait around here all day."

The man might have mused and chafed thus for two or three minutes in his loneliness when, listening for the faint chug of a motorboat, he heard instead a pistol shot and a scream from the forest at his back. The scream he recognized instantly—sharp, piercing, bloodcurdling—it was the voice of little Lahleet in some mortal terror or awful physical agony. That there were cougars on the island, that one had attacked her—this was his first formed theory, as he dashed into the forest.

It alarmed him further that the cry was not repeated.

"Lahleet! Lahleet!" he called loudly that she might

know help was coming. No answer came. He dashed on the more wildly, straight ahead at first, and then uncertainly, zigzagging a little this way, and a little that.

“Lahleet!” he called more loudly. “Lahleet!” then checked his pace to listen. The only sound that came to him was the violent pounding of his own heart; but as his eyes roved through the short vistas of the forest they stopped at a log-like thing in a crush of ferns, log-like but with certain marked resemblance to a human form. He rushed upon it.

It was the body of a man, face down in the green tangle, wearing a blue flannel shirt and corduroy trousers. The trousers were encircled at the waist by a black leather belt while their bottoms were thrust into high laced boots. The back of the neck showed a reddish skin, purpling into the roots of well-kept hair.

Harrington laid his hand on the back below the left shoulder blade where a heartbeat should have been felt. There was none. Seizing an arm he turned the body over and drew back with a start. It was the face of Eckstrom—Count Eckstrom, with his carefully trimmed Vandyke, with the lace-work of dissipation in the puffs beneath his eyes, and—with a dark spot growing on the breast of the blue flannel shirt. A machine-gun fire of questions leaped into Harrington’s mind. What was Count Eckstrom doing in, say, a timber cruiser’s garb? And how had he got into it so quickly from his golfing clothes? What was he doing on Hurricane Island? What was he doing with a bullet through his heart? And where was Lahleet?

The last question got its answer first. As, turning from the body, Harrington’s eyes swept around him

in the forest, the girl appeared, standing at a distance of a dozen paces, one hand raised to her pale and distressed face while the other grasped an automatic pistol. Her eyes were fixed upon the body of Eckstrom slowly crushing a new bed for itself in the ferns.

"Lahleet!" Harrington cried.

"The—the horrid brute!" she shuddered, and flung the pistol from her with the last atom of her strength, then fell fainting to the ground.

Harrington caught her almost as she fell.

"Lahleet!" he pleaded frantically, at the same time shaking her gently as if to rouse her. "Lahleet!" Slowly the dark eyes opened, slowly consciousness of her surroundings appeared to bear in upon her mind.

"Your gold!" she exclaimed with a start. "Your gold! Did you leave it alone? There are other men upon the island."

"Never mind the gold!" cried Harrington fiercely. "Are you injured?" His eyes searched her face solicitously, as tenderly he pressed her soft body against his own. How dear she was! What an exquisite little thing of her kind! But she would not be coddled and swung her feet to the ground, steadying herself by a clasp upon his shoulder.

"No, not injured!" she gasped, with a natural satisfaction, and her expression—it seemed to him—was not so much horror that she had taken human life as satisfaction that she had done a viper to his death.

"It's the Indian in her," Harrington thought.

"Your gold!" she insisted. "Your gold!"

Harrington had become suddenly anxious enough. The mere thought of the twenty thousand dollars alone and unguarded—for a time he had not thought of it

—was terrifying. As they emerged from the timber his eyes were straining for a glimpse of that cedar stump. It seemed an eternity before he made it out. Yes, there it was. But, God! It was naked! It was empty!

In an instant just what had happened became clear in Harrington's mind. Eckstrom, experienced crook that he was, had divined what he held in the bag upon his shoulder, had followed him with confederates to the island and spied upon him from a bush, awaiting opportunity. This came when Lahleet started upon her lonely walk. The attack upon her had been a fake, a ruse to draw him away from the gold. It had resulted disastrously for Eckstrom; but it had succeeded so far as the original object was concerned. The gold was gone!

Harrington wavered and leaned weakly against a tree. This was a perfectly staggering blow! It had fallen at the most inauspicious moment—threatening, obliterating his whole brilliant prospect. The humiliation of it was crushing. For a moment Henry Harrington was a very much dismayed, a very much embittered young man. Then he rallied. It was tough luck—fierce! Yet he could have done no differently. He had been the victim of cunning plotters. Wrath and resolution were quick within him. He plunged forward. He would survive the blow. He would trace and recover the gold. One scoundrel had got his due. The others should get theirs. Harrington ground his teeth, face aflame. He was "Hellfire" now.

But a new thought struck him like a bullet. There was another to be considered. Lahleet! more innocent victim than himself. It would be unfair to have her

bright young life clouded with an ugly story when she was a mere spotless pawn in a desperado's dirty game. This perception, coming to him as he rushed headlong to the beach, helped to steady him, to make his rage cool, calculating and self-controlled.

His first care was to look about for tracks in the damp sand. Yes; there was the mark of the prow of a boat and long plunging strides from it with toes pointing up the bank, and here on the other side they came back again, shorter strides with deeper imprints as of a man grown heavier by the addition of a burden.

Harrington scanned the blue surface of the channel. There was not a boat in sight. Nothing was in sight. Not even the car which should have been waiting for him at the mouth of Cub Creek was visible. For an instant this raised a flicker of hope. The man with the sawed-off shotgun! He might have returned, found the gold setting there unguarded and taken it in. But, no—he would have waited for him—Harrington—to appear. Failing that, he would have investigated.

As if to prove that this theory would not do, here came the boat, chugging belatedly round the point. When the craft forged fully into view, however, Henry saw that it was not the boat he had been expecting. It was freshly painted, dainty and fast—one of those spick-and-span speeders with which wealthy men at times amuse themselves and yet, since it was the only craft in sight and seemed making directly for him, Harrington continued to study it narrowly—the more so because there was something familiar about the thickset figure in the stern. This figure waved a hand presently and Henry saw to his surprise and gratification that it was Scanlon. It was fortunate to have

shrewd old Scanlon here to report to and counsel with. Yet, what had brought him?

"Carburetor!" erupted the Chief Counsel, as soon as they were in conversational distance. "I thought my chauffeur never would get the darn thing going again. He claims to have a chief engineer's license too."

In acknowledgment of this taunt, a flushed and grease-stained countenance grinned above the engine housing as the launch curved swiftly in. It was Quackenbaugh—to Henry's further surprise and gratification; for this brought the two men here whom he would have most wished at the moment to see. "Some things break right for me anyhow!" he muttered hollowly.

"I told you, Henry, I was always nervous when we had the raw stuff uncaged," the president of Boland Cedar began volubly to explain. "I couldn't stick in my office half an hour. I had to rout out Scanlon and bring my own boat down here. We sent the other fellows home and started in to do the patrolling ourselves, but the engine died on me."

The men seemed well pleased with themselves and equally well pleased with Henry. They looked upon their presence as something of a lark, their nervous fears as something of a joke upon themselves and by this light-hearted manner struck the knife deeper into Henry's heart because of what he had to tell them.

"How'd you come out with the Indian?" cried Quackenbaugh.

"I didn't come out with him. He turned me down," answered Henry miserably. "But that's not the worst of it. The gold's been stolen."

"Stolen!" barked both voices at once, one hoarsely, the other harshly incredulous. "My God!"

CHAPTER XVI

SAVAGELY Quackenbaugh drove the prow of his launch high upon the shore and both men leaped out to come rushing at Harrington almost as if they menaced him. It was a severe test of nerves that had already been tested severely; but Harrington straightened under it, eyes level, lips firm, voice steady.

“Yes, I was alone here with the gold resting on that stump, wondering why in thunder those fellows didn’t show up with the launch. The Indian had to go to his nets and left me.”

“We saw him from where we were dead, heading up the Basin,” explained Scanlon with nervous rapidity of utterance—a thing unusual with the Chief Counsel. “We hailed him for a tow but he couldn’t seem to hear us.”

“I guess not,” said Henry, “for I didn’t hear you, and believe me, I was listening, anxious till I could get that accursed coin on its way back to the vaults.”

At this juncture Lahleet came down the path into the picture just as she foresaw that she was about to come into Henry’s explanation.

Although pale and frightened, the girl in her dark tailor-mades managed somehow to appear dainty and impressive as usual and both Scanlon and Quackenbaugh greeted her appearance with looks of admiration and amazed curiosity as if she were a part of the mystery which encompassed them.

"This is Miss Marceau, teacher of the Indian school at Shell Point, who was kind enough to try to help me with Adam John," said Henry in introducing her.

Both men lifted their hats, each threw the girl one grateful glance as for her coöperation in a project of theirs, and again centered the fierceness of their gaze on Harrington. "Say!" Harrington interrupted himself. "Didn't you men see anybody skulking around the island in the last hour?"

"Couple of fellows in a skiff fishing," remembered Scanlon; "one was rowing, the other trolling."

"How long ago?"

"About half an hour ago they passed out of our sight, coasting the island. We never picked them up again because we went dead."

"Did you notice if either of them had a Vandyke beard?"

"One did," said Scanlon. "Fellow in a blue shirt."

"Then that's the explanation," said Henry. "The man with the Vandyke is dead out here in the timber a couple of hundred yards. The other fellow got away with the gold."

"Dead?" gasped the hoarse-voiced Scanlon, with a sudden increase of excitement—a very marked increase, Henry remembered long afterwards—his face was livid, spotted, ghastly for a moment. "Go on and tell us what happened. Confound it, Henry, you're mixin' me all up."

Quackenbaugh was more self-contained. White, intense, his keen black eyes boring into Harrington's as if he would pierce to the very marrow of his soul, he put together what he had heard and asked impatiently for more. "Yes, yes. Go on. Just how did it happen?"

"Miss Marceau had left me to take a path through the woods to a canoe she used in visiting the homes of some of her pupils whose parents live on these islands. I was still wondering why the devil the boat didn't turn up, when I heard her scream. Naturally, I rushed to the rescue."

"Naturally," agreed Scanlon, but his eyes were narrowing and he was regaining his self-control.

"Naturally!" snapped Quackenbaugh.

"This fellow with the Vandyke beard was after her," Henry was continuing.

"And you—you plugged him?" broke in Scanlon like a flash, yellow eyes lighting, but with something like relief. "And you—you plugged him?" demanded the Chief Counsel. "I thought I heard a pistol shot."

There came a quick new light to Henry Harrington's eyes. "Come and see," he said.

"But about the gold?" reminded Quackenbaugh.

"I was gone not more than seven or eight minutes," declared Henry. "When I came back it was gone. There was no one in sight—nothing but the mark of a prow in the sand as you see it there with the footsteps leading to and from it."

"You're right, it was the man in the skiff," decided Quackenbaugh in that abrupt manner of his. "Where the devil could the fellow have got to so quick? I'll jump in the launch and take a quick scout around; and if I don't see anything, get to the nearest telephone and start Cosby." Cosby was the Boland secret service chief. "You and Harrington hike back to the dead man and see what story he's got to tell. If we get that money back, we've got to get it quick. And we've got to get it back, you bet your life!"

The President of Boland Cedar, acting with his usual decision, gave his craft a push, leaped into it and was off. Harrington led the way down the forest path. Lahleet followed at a distance, as if reluctant to go but more reluctant to be left alone.

But when they reached that green bed among the ferns, it was mysteriously empty. Harrington ejaculated and stared.

"But you plunked him?" demanded Scanlon anxiously.

Harrington pointed to a crimson lacquer upon the ferns.

"There's more than one of them," he deduced. "This fellow was heavy. One man couldn't have carried him off."

"We'll get 'em, no matter how many there are," boasted Scanlon. "No bunch of crooks can get away with a thing like that on us. By the way, did you recognize the dead guy? Ever see him before?"

"It was Count Eckstrom!"

Scanlon's fat-imbedded eyes opened wide with amazement. "Eckstrom? The man you asked me about? One of this bunch of foreign nobility that's trailed Billie Boland home?"

"Fake nobility," corrected Harrington. "Lord, what a shock it will be to her to know!"

"Know?" queried the practical Scanlon, his hoarse, throaty voice throatier than ever as he lowered it to tones of cunning and mystery. "She don't never need to know. With the disappearance of the corpus delicti this killing's a myth. It never happened. Nothing's happened for that matter. You don't think we want it advertised that we sent twenty thousand dollars in

gold out here to buy off a fool Siwash and got ourselves shell-gamed out of it, do you?"

"No, I suppose not," perceived Harrington, mind rather groping.

"And this young lady here? I guess she'd just as soon be relieved of any embarrassment." Scanlon had lowered his voice still more so that Lahleet, unhearing, remained staring at the empty bed amid the ferns.

Henry's heart leaped with gratitude at the perception of so much chivalry in coarse, ruthless old Scanlon. "That's fine of you, Scanlon—thinking of Miss Marceau that way," he whispered earnestly, and laid an appreciative hand upon the heavy shoulder of the man. "But"—his voice hardened—"if you think I'm going to let myself be jobbed out of the first twenty thousand dollars Boland General ever trusted me with, by a confidence man turned bandit, you're mistaken. Scanlon"—Harrington's tone was tense—"I'll get that twenty thousand and I'll get the thugs that got it!"

"Bully boy!" approved Scanlon heartily. "I like your spirit, Harrington. Yep! We'll get it; but it will be a still hunt. We'll run 'em down quick and fast but we'll pussy-foot to beat the devil. Quackenbaugh has got Cosby routed out by this time, and you can bet your bottom dollar that old Quack isn't doing any advertising and that he's got Cosby wised-up good and proper."

"It's just one o'clock now," he announced after looking at his watch. "By two o'clock there'll be twenty men on the island. We'll beat up every foot of it before dark. We better get back to the landing and meet Quackenbaugh. Everything I've said goes for both of us. I and Quack have hunted together before."

Just as the trio reached the landing, Quackenbaugh ran the prow of his speed boat once more upon the sandy beach.

"Not a sign of anybody around," he exclaimed as he leaped out. "How about the dead man?"

"He's gone."

"Gone?" cried Quackenbaugh, incredulously. Then his features grew tense with the sense of new mystery as he searched first the face of Scanlon and then of Harrington. "The devil!"

Scanlon told him what they had found and of their conjecture; also his decision to keep the matter secret unless publicity should become desirable.

"Right, of course!" approved Quackenbaugh, quick to grasp the salient points. "They're on the island and all we've got to do is to keep them here till Cosby and his men come: to make sure of that I'll continue my patrolling. You three keep together till reënforcements arrive. Then see Miss Marceau safely on her way. Take no chances. We are dealing with desperate characters."

But Cosby and his men found nothing after four hours' search. "They must have had a speeder concealed in some cove and shot away with the body and the gold while Quackenbaugh was on the north side telephoning." That was Cosby's theory. "But my net will pick 'em up before they get very far."

"I must insist on keeping nothing from Mr. Boland," Harrington said to Scanlon and Quackenbaugh, as about sunset they rode back down the channel in the speedboat, three baffled, wrathful men.

"Our strategy just went wrong," snapped Quackenbaugh angrily.

“You men have been big with me, awfully big,” Henry gulped gratefully. “And about Miss Marceau too—poor girl.”

Each man contrived a look of almost painful modesty.

“You’re with a *big* crowd now, Henry.” For the first time in an hour Scanlon loosed a smile. “Wait till you see how *big* the Old Man will be.”

Such fine generosity and the assurance of more from Mr. Boland himself, quickened Henry’s eagerness to redeem himself—and he was eager enough already.

CHAPTER XVII

I WANT you to charge the twenty thousand to me, to my account. I'll get it back or pay it back," declared Henry, when Old Two Blades had received him in his den by appointment, at about eight-thirty that night, having already, no doubt, received the fullest account of what had transpired from both Quackenbaugh and Scanlon. It seemed to mean more to Mr. Boland to lose the twenty thousand than it did to Scanlon or Quackenbaugh. To them it was a black mark. To him it was like a pain. He winced as if it had been a pound of flesh taken off next his heart. And yet——

"Nothing of the sort," he insisted, "it couldn't be your fault. You were carrying out instructions." With this soothing interpretation, Mr. Boland seemed to shrug the money out of consideration, so far as Henry was concerned, and to fasten his mind upon the tragedy.

"You thought you recognized the dead man?" he recalled with a peculiar penetrative quality in his tone, a peculiar glitter in his deeply recessed eyes—"before he disappeared?"

Henry's face became grave. "Yes," he said, lowering his voice. "I recognized him. It was the man Miss Billie introduced to me day before yesterday as Count Eckstrom."

Mr. Boland started perceptibly; then for a moment

his sharp features were set as graven stone and Harrington felt that recessed gaze sifting him—sifting almost as if it doubted. “Hum! That is a coincidence,” he said eventually; then shifted the subject of his inquiries. “Quackenbaugh tells me that you . . . were unsuccessful with the Indian?”

Henry flushed but squared manfully to the admission. “Couldn’t budge him, Mr. Boland. The Indian is stubborn and simply stood on his rights. There is nothing more that can be done. You will have to build your shingle mill somewhere else.”

Mr. Boland’s caverned eyes blinked behind their glasses. “You think so!” was his dry comment. But immediately he smiled. “Unfortunate,” he ejaculated, “but don’t let that worry you. That’s a minor matter for Quackenbaugh and Scanlon to work out. The important question is”—Mr. Boland wet an eager lip—“have you made any progress on the Shell Point project? Any start yet?”

Henry’s face lighted. “More—much more than a start, Mr. Boland,” he assured with enthusiasm. “Miss Marceau, teacher of the Indian School, is committed to the project heart and soul. She has been sounding the Indians out already and feels certain they’re going to be favorable.”

Mr. Boland’s tight features relaxed in a beatific smile. “I suppose knowledge of the Hurricane Island affair will leak out among the Indians and it probably won’t do your influence any harm that you didn’t crowd this fellow Adam John?” said Old Two Blades.

“Miss Marceau says that it will help us,” responded Harrington eagerly, “that the Indians will think Adam John is a fool.”

"Hum! Miss Marceau seems rather a sensible person."

"She is," affirmed Henry with emphasis. "Mr. Boland, I believe that within six weeks we shall have that petition signed by every Indian whose signature is required."

Harrington was so satisfied with this and so pleased that he could give that kind of assurance, that the sting of the Hurricane Island defeat was almost forgotten. It was cured entirely when Mr. Boland arose, beaming in every welt and wrinkle of his toil-chiseled face, and taking both of Harrington's hands in his, shook them warmly and said with enthusiasm: "Henry, I believe you will!

"But I must tell you of one mistake you are making about the Hurricane Island affair," he said, halting just inside the door, "The dead man was not Count Eckstrom."

"Not Eckstrom!" Henry was vastly incredulous.

"Count Eckstrom is in the music room now with Billie. There—that must be the count at the piano. It isn't her touch."

"Mr. Boland," said Henry solemnly, "I will take my oath that the man whom I saw dead in the ferns is the man Miss Billie presented to me day before yesterday as Count Eckstrom. I'd like to have a look at the fleshly phantom, if you don't mind."

"Certainly," smiled Mr. Boland, "we'll add another chapter to your mystery."

Arm in arm they advanced into the music room and stood halted just beyond the threshold; and there sat Eckstrom at the piano, the tails of his evening coat floating down behind the bench, his shoulders squared,

hands banging the keys, his large head thrown back as if in a kind of rapture, his little yellow Vandyke pointed straight ahead of him. It was the very beard, the very face.

Billie was draped across a Viennese chair, with the green fan, of which she was so fond, beating lazy time to the count's music.

"I'm dazed," Henry whispered to Mr. Boland. Then added, "I'm not satisfied."

"Pardon the intrusion, Billie," apologized her father, "but as Count Eckstrom is leaving tomorrow I thought it would be a pity if he and Mr. Harrington did not have an opportunity to broaden their acquaintance beyond a mere introduction."

Billie started with surprise at this revelation of the other two presences within the room; and Henry started at this revelation that Count Eckstrom, big, alive and well, was abruptly cutting short his stay—but that was as nothing to the start over his presence here and now!

"That was thoughtful of you, father," Billie was responding, casually; but centering her gaze on Harrington. Yesterday she had found this somewhat self-assured young man in a mood of depression. She had lectured him and left him—both for his own good; she had warned him to expect her father's displeasure. Yet, here he stood, with that father's arm linked through his, and pushed forward by him to interrupt a rather interesting tête-à-tête with a rather interesting gentleman of whom her father knew that she thought exceedingly well. The young man must have succeeded then in his second mission to the island. He must have profited by her admonition. And her instinct

always was to hail success. She rejoiced in young men who profited by admonitions.

"Ah, the burden-bearer!" patronized the count, arising and advancing.

Harrington was a bit stary. He saw approaching him an opossum grin and the wide expanse of white shirt over a breast which he was willing to wager he had seen only nine hours before covered with blue flannel and oozing a red welter upon the green of a forest floor. But he tried to rise to the moment.

"I am quite disappointed, Count Eckstrom, to hear of your leaving us," he began well enough; but his instinctive dislike for the man plus his suspicions and irritating bewilderment, made him suddenly rude. "By the way, Miss Boland," he inquired coolly: "Had you noticed how very much Count Eckstrom's voice resembles Mr. Scanlon's?"

Billie was shocked. This was rather gauche, since Scanlon was such a coarse person; and there was nothing charming about his voice either; it was unpleasant. True, Count Eckstrom's tones were husky, but they were charming. Count Eckstrom was all charm.

"I have not had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Scanlon," said Count Eckstrom suavely, but the line of his brow straightened proudly. "Perhaps he got his husk in the same cloud of phosgene that I got mine—not far from Châlons-sur-Marne."

This was the retort caustic.

"I am afraid it was Three Star Hennessey that gassed Scanlon's voice," smiled Mr. Boland as believing the conversation should be lightened; but nobody laughed. Billie continued slightly vexed. Harrington seemed still to be blundering.

"Have you, by any chance, a twin brother?" he asked, surveying the count, detail by detail.

"I have not the pleasure," responded the count, smilingly opaque.

"Strange, Count Eckstrom," mused Henry, as frankly absorbed in some haunting memory. "I've seen a face exactly like yours—somewhere—exactly. Strange, too, that when Miss Billie introduced you the other day I thought I had heard your voice before."

The count laughed, but a bit nervously, perhaps. "As I have said—there are many gassed voices. As for my face: if I have a double, do not charge me with his sins, I pray you. I have enough to answer for."

"Perhaps, instead, he will have virtues that we can credit you with," tormented Harrington.

But Billie, who prided herself on her discernment, felt hopelessly fogged. "Whatever are you two men talking about?" she demanded.

"We are talking, Miss Boland, about someone who looks and sounds like me," smiled Count Eckstrom, with a gesture of suave condescension toward Harrington.

"More like you than you look and sound like yourself, Count Eckstrom," indicated Henry, without a trace of a smile. "Have you ever by any chance been in India?"

"And why India, in particular, Mr. Harrington?" Billie interposed as protecting her guest. "Count Eckstrom has been everywhere."

"Because, in India I have heard that magicians sometimes bring the dead to life."

"Hum! Ahem! Oh—oh, by the way!" Mr. Boland immediately became explosive and interjectory,

shouldering in between them with: "I wonder, Billie, if you and Count Eckstrom won't excuse Mr. Harrington after all—at least for a moment. I have just remembered an important instruction that I want to give him."

Count Eckstrom's reception of his host's interjectory mood was the essence of good breeding. If, to a gentleman of his traditions, it was a trifle bizarre the way these Americans did mix business and social life; and if Mr. Boland, under the veil of a thin humility, was autocratic and self-indulgent to a degree, he could overlook it, since everybody indulged Mr. Boland.

"Father, you are so ridiculous!" flushed Billie. "You bring Mr. Harrington to us and then you snatch him away, before I get a chance even to ask him what all this absurd word play with the Count is about. It was too swift for me."

In truth, she was glad enough to have Harrington snatched away. Of course, this wire-haired manner of his toward the count was due solely to jealousy; he was Hellfire Harrington, she remembered; and while it piqued it also amused her; so that when Count Eckstrom took up once more the task of enthralling her mind, he found it more difficult than before.

"I—I'm groggy," confessed Harrington to Mr. Boland as his host was rather dragging him away. "And yet I—I tell you there's something phony about him; didn't you think I shook him up some? Didn't you think he betrayed himself a little?"

"You jarred him like an earthquake," opined Boland, and indulged a long low chuckle. The caverned beams with which he contemplated Harrington were benignant and highly approving.

"But phony or not, I'm glad you did go after him, Henry, because I had thought you might be lying to me about that disappearing dead man of yours. Now I know that you were not."

Henry darted a charged glance at Old Two Blades. "I will never lie to you, Mr. Boland," he said simply and directly. "I am not going to boast that I'm a little George Washington; but lying is not my habit. It is seldom my refuge. I shall *never* lie to you."

The older man weighed the younger in his eye.

"You will though, Henry," he prophesied, faintly pessimistic. "Everybody lies to me. They think that's the way to get on with me. Perhaps it is—in part. I am weak and mortal. The truth is often ugly, unpleasant. Sometimes people tell me lies and I know they are lies; yet because they are pleasant lies, I like them for telling them to me. But when a young man—still so young that he knows the difference between the naked truth and a fawning falsehood—says to me what you have just said, I pause and consider what a golden thing truth is, and how impracticable at times."

Henry gasped. "Why, Mr. Boland, you amaze me. You want men to lie to you?"

"Expect them to, rather, let me say; and I must trust my own perspicacity to know when they are doing so. Upon that knowledge my control of them is built."

"But *you* do not lie, Mr. Boland?" Henry's glance was frank and inquiring.

Before Mr. Boland could answer, Billie had entered rather abruptly, a bright vision in pink chiffon, with a high-piled coiffure.

"Count Eckstrom would like a word with you, father, before he goes," she said quite innocently.

"Certainly—excuse me, Harrington!" Mr. Boland arose and went out.

Henry was groggy again—groggier than when Count Eckstrom confronted him alive in the music room. Did this mean that Eckstrom had proposed? That Billie had accepted him?

For a moment the girl's expression lent color to this theory—until with a bewitching toss of her wilful head it was made clear that she was only rebuking him for the presumption of his manner with the count.

"I—I'm sorry; but I had to go after that fellow," Harrington confessed with such sober honesty as must have mollified resentment.

For a moment Billie regarded Harrington steadily; then said with a far-away note in her voice: "Count Eckstrom is going away . . . forever." There was a look in her blue eyes as if she announced this for the young man's comfort.

"Miss Boland!" Henry exclaimed gratefully; but her manner held him off at the same moment that her features kindled with admiring interest in him and him alone.

"You are getting on well with father, aren't you?" she smiled with congratulation in her tone.

"I'd rather be sure I was getting on well with you," Henry countered daringly.

"And don't you feel that you are?"

"May I?" he challenged like a flash, but with voice lowered to a very tender significance as he advanced with outstretched hand.

But she held off again, this time with a laugh; yet there was admiration in it, cordial good feeling in it. Although her manner became elusive and bantering,

there was encouragement in it—all kinds of encouragement, Henry thought as a little later he went down the hill with long plunging strides, under the stars.

“I wonder if she canned him?” he speculated. “If he got scared and lit out? I wonder who beaned me? I wonder who got the twenty thousand? I wonder who the dead man was, and how the devil two men could look so much alike and not be the same? It would be a great thing for a con man to have a double though, wouldn’t it? Well, Lahleet spoiled that! Fierce for the girl, wasn’t it? And she stood it like the inscrutable stoic she can be!”

Thus did things sordid and unpleasant intrude themselves into the golden glory of Henry Harrington’s romance, quite as things sordid and unpleasant have a way of doing with romance in this scrambled world of ours. And the most of these speculations had to go unanswered while weeks and months of time sped by; yet they remained vividly alive in his mind, for there was so much to occupy him now that he was rather unconscious of the flight of time. All these things were but of yesterday; all their solutions must come at the latest by tomorrow; but today—ah, *today!* Henry was very, very busy today.

CHAPTER XVIII

MOREOVER, that love affair of Henry's required a great deal of attention. His passion for Billie Boland was fed by every meeting with her that he could contrive and he became exceedingly skilful at such contrivance. For one of these; that new five-thousand-dollar chase-about came, and Miss Boland had to teach him how to drive it. He proved a very dull pupil. He required an enormous amount of instruction each day. It seemed as if he never would learn to drive that car alone. Long before the mysteries of its control had been solved for him, he was calling Miss Boland Billie and she was calling him Henry.

Meanwhile Hornblower had come back to town. His presence gave timid souls the shudders. Despite the general belief that any structure built upon the signature of John Boland was impregnable, the fulminations of the shyster and the mystery of the vault robberies had raised a vague fear in many minds. But if Hornblower became a more and more sinister figure in the community, there was on the other hand the luminous character of Harrington growing taller and taller.

Hitherto a few crumple-winged souls had sensed that young man's fine capacity for sympathy and leadership and looked up to and trusted him. Now all at once everybody seemed to look up to and trust him.

It became the fashion to retain Henry in litigation. After the first disconcerting reverse on Hurricane

Island, of which only four persons knew—everything that his hand touched had prospered! Everything.

And his public spirit was recognized. Did a question affecting community interest arise? The people turned to Henry. Did a crisis threaten? They slanted an eye first at Harrington to learn if it were serious, before they lifted it higher to the throne where Old Two Blades reigned supreme.

Henry was tinglingly happy in all this popularity, in all this wide opportunity for public service. He had been transformed from a lackadaisical idler into a person of industry and potency. No career had ever boomed along as his boomed. It was pleasant to be trusted, as for instance, the Boland General Staff trusted him in everything; as the Shell Point Indians trusted him when one day they gave him their signed (or marked) and witnessed petition to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for permission to sell their joint inheritance to John Boland; as Gaylord trusted him when one day—Hornblower again!

For the shyster had become blatant and blustering once more. Egged on by him, represented by him, Adolph Salzberg of the Socialist Local had filed a suit in ejectment against the First National Bank, basing his allegation on that absurd title he had bought at auction for twenty-four dollars; and Gaylord proving either that he had forgiven that smack upon his jaw or that he had come to have the same deep-grounded faith in Henry Harrington that others had, selected him to defend the suit.

The trial was another Hornblower farce. Harrington did not permit it to become anything else. Hornblower based his entire contention upon the boundary

calls of the Salisheutte reservation as laid down by the treaty of 1855, which treaty reserved to those Indians, "all lands between Harper's Basin and the Pacific Ocean southward to and including the South Inlet to the said basin." Hornblower's points were:

First, that the survey of the said land boundaries was not made until thirty-five years after the date of the treaty.

Second, that the late John Wilkinson, in making this survey, erred in running it along the shore, not of the south inlet, but of the *middle* inlet, which had been ever since erroneously called South Inlet, while the real South Inlet had got down on the maps as Squaw River.

Third, that by this mistake—or fraud perhaps—there had been excluded from the just inheritance of the Salisheutte Indians and opened to United States patent—which Boland had secured—all that vast acreage of timber upon which his fortunes rested and upon a portion of the soil of which the town of Edgewater was built.

That was the case.

Henry coolly dynamited it by admitting that Squaw River was indeed the real south inlet to Harper's Basin, but proved by testimony that the Salisheutte Indians had actually never ranged south of the middle inlet and in their own nomenclature always referred to it as South Inlet; that, therefore, when the old treaty said "South Inlet" it meant *middle* inlet and the survey was properly run and the land patented to Boland was properly so patented.

This was so perfectly obvious, so much a matter of common knowledge, so highly palatable to the public, that it was easy to make a joke of Hornblower's con-

tention and a laughing-stock of him. The fat, pasty-faced, wily-eyed attorney, opposed and confronted by the man who had saved his life, fretted and fumed and blustered. He based the Salzberg title on a deed purporting to be signed by certain purported chiefs of the Salisheuttes as trustees, conveying all right, title and interest, etc., in the said described lands to Julius Hornblower. This deed Julius now ostentatiously offered in evidence, after having a few days previously offered it for record at the courthouse.

Henry held this deed up to ridicule. He read the names of its signers, Chief Left-Hand, Chief Charlie White, Chief Jim McDonald, Chief White Seal, calling each name loudly, demanding that these chiefs be subpoenaed and that the subpoenas be served; and when the sheriff could not find them Henry had the court bailiff page them loudly in the corridors. When these vociferous bawlings sounded from without, each empty echo a witness to the emptiness of Hornblower's case, the spectators tittered, the jury smiled and venerable Judge Allen with difficulty kept his mask of solemn dignity. The jury found for the defendant without leaving its box.

"We didn't have a chance—not a chance in this court," muttered Hornblower sullenly. "But we'll take it, by God, to where we do have a chance. We'll appeal!"

"Naturally," smiled Henry.

It was this victory in the court which raised the public clamor for Henry to represent the seventy-first assembly district in the legislature to a chorus which could hardly be denied. Yet Henry did deny it—until one morning Billie came into his office—came as

the accredited representative of the Women's Club of Socatullo County to ask him to seek the nomination.

Perfectly radiant, Billie was this morning, and never quite so beautiful, Henry thought. He instantly pressed his suit. "Aren't you willing to love me yet, dear?" he pleaded tenderly. "*Aren't you?*"

But again she put him off, although it was a very gentle putting off indeed.

"Almost ready," she breathed softly, and seemed to sway to him. "Almost—but not quite," and she swayed away from him again.

His comment was a sigh.

But her smile was more luminous, more full of promise than it had ever been. "You great big growing man," she flattered, "you're going to do something so tremendous some day that the last cool chamber of my heart will be warmed for you. I shall take fire and burn up with love for you—perhaps."

Perhaps. There was always that accursed reservation in her every promise. It maddened Henry now as it had maddened him before, and so he dared to think it accursed; but instantly he forgave, because he knew it was an expression of the girl's fundamental honesty. She had gone far—far this morning. His strategy was to be grateful for so much and he led the conversation back to its beginning with: "And so you think I ought to run for the legislature?"

"I am sure it is your duty," she declared thoughtfully, blue eyes appealing.

And so Henry Harrington ran for the legislature from the Seventy-first district. His sole opponent was Adolph Salzberg. Salzberg received 341 votes; Harrington got 4257.

Harrington made a good impression as a legislator at the State Capitol. Wise old heads marked the young man sagely and said that he would be governor one day. They liked him in Washington too—the bureau chiefs, the commissioner, the congressmen and senators with whom it was necessary to get and keep acquainted in connection with his Shell Point negotiations.

Only once in a while did doubts or misgivings arise about himself or the enterprises upon which he engaged himself. One of these came when he argued by brief before the State Supreme Court, Hornblower's appeal in the case of Adolph Salzberg vs. The First National Bank. Somehow as Henry went over this case the second time, he lost his feeling of lightness concerning it. There might be something in this old treaty and ancient map argument, after all, he reflected. But when he took these misgivings frankly to Mr. Boland, that gentleman laughed.

"Don't you be afraid, Henry," declared Old Two Blades stoutly. "There's nothing to it. You won once and you'll win again. The Supreme Court? Say! Who elects them? The people, don't they? Do you think they are going to upset the title to forty thousand people's homes just for some musty old map and a treaty that nobody understood when they wrote it? Good heavens, no!" And the State Supreme Court confirmed John Boland's faith in it.

"So that's over," Henry said with a sigh of relief to Scanlon. "You know I've thought lately there might be a point in that erroneous survey business."

"Did you, Henry? . . . Did you?" asked Scanlon, tones hoarsely tense, yellow eyes aglow.

"Yes," said Henry. "If it ever got up to the United

States Supreme Court. If they took the wrong view——”

“If they did—— God, what a crash!” groaned Scanlon. “Why, it would jerk the bottom out from under everything!” He stared at Henry reproachfully, as if he had been traitorous to suggest such a thing.

“Supposing the Court holds, from the record, that Hornblower *did* prove his case at the trial, but that local feeling was so strong the jury refused to see the facts,” persisted Henry, as if fascinated by such a melancholy prospect.

Scanlon shook himself as if cold. “Henry, you’re pessimistic this morning!” he accused.

“Maybe so,” sighed Henry; “but a gust of gloom Charlie Clayton was blowing at me has got my mind going on a lot of stuff. Funny Cosby never got any trace of that gold, isn’t it? Or the disappearing dead man? You know, Scanlon, those things are more than a year old, those two little matters; but I’ve never let up on ’em for a minute. Not for a minute.”

“Haven’t, eh?” grunted Scanlon, expressionlessly, and contemplated the young man as from behind a screen. There were people who thought that Scanlon was getting jealous of Henry. Henry did not suspect it.

“They’ll never carry that case to Washington,” Scanlon announced out of silence.

“Hope not,” said Henry, deep in thought—musing now upon the steady up-towering of the Boland fortune. For all this while that Henry was prospering, Boland General was also prospering. Axes resounded in the forest, trees crashed and donkey engines snaked out the logs to where trains and rivers bore them to the

mills. All was bustle and all was prosperity. The three towns hummed with it. The enterprises of John Boland budded, blossomed and fruited with seasonal regularity.

Only one thing lagged. That new shingle mill had not been built. But, all at once it turned out to have been a very lucky thing that the Hurricane Island site was not acquired; for, one morning while Mr. Boland was in the East, the Blade head-lined great news. The Edgewater and Eastern Railway was at last to be built. Sixty miles in length, it would make the three towns branch terminals of a transcontinental line.

It would skirt the southern shores of Harper's Basin, leap Squaw River on a bridge and come trundling north to turn finally west along the south shore of South Inlet. But where the road turned west, just after it crossed Cub Creek, was to be another bridge—a bridge that would span the channel to Hurricane Island, for Hurricane Island was to be the freight terminus of the road. Upon it, in that sheltered entrance to the Basin, deep water docks would be established. There the commerce of the ocean would meet the commerce of the continent.

“So that's what becomes of Adam John's island!” reflected Henry laying down the paper; for a railroad is not like a shingle mill. Private ownership is never permitted to block a railroad's progress. Adam John's island would be condemned, appraised and taken—all by due process of law. But—*taken!*

“Tough on the old fellow,” reflected the occupied Henry, and let the subject slide out of mind. Indeed the next time he thought of it was when Adam John stood before him, his wry face more twisted than usual,

his dark eyes filled with pain and wonder. In one hand he held the summons of the court in the condemnation proceedings; in the other his original patent, bearing its official seal. He glanced bewildered from one to the other. Harrington shook his head. "No use, old fellow," he explained and felt very sorry for Adam John. "This is where one law transcends another."

CHAPTER XIX

LATER Henry would have given everything if he had just taken more time with Adam John that morning; but this was a day upon the evening of which he must take the night steamer for Portland en route to Washington, for a consultation upon the Shell Point matter; for the time ripened and these were anxious days with Henry now, lest Hornblower, or some self-seeker of his character, get wind of what was in the air and block the beneficent project by persuading some drunken or unstable members of the Shell Point tribe into a malicious recalcitrancy.

But nothing untoward happened. The Indians kept faithfully the secret of the negotiations; so did the departmental representatives who came out to investigate. At last the thing was done. On this very trip to Washington, Henry got the nod. The ten years' task was finished. It had been accomplished in a few days less than twenty-four months. All was over but the preparation of the final documents for official signature and the affixing of those signatures themselves, following which the public announcement would be made. But the private announcement! Ah, that was a bit of news so precious that Henry would not use the telegraph, nor the long-distance telephone to communicate it to the man most in interest; not even to Lahleet, who had waited wistfully with unwavering faith; not even to Billie, who was now in that rapt state of admiration

which made him feel that the time was at hand when he might storm the citadel of her heart—not even to her would he flash a signal of success.

It was to get the most shock-value out of his success that Harrington refrained, even from telling Billie that he was starting for home. But Lahleet met him at the dock. He was not surprised simply because he had become accustomed to her intuitions and the sublime faith with which she obeyed them—rested all upon them.

“Lahleet!” he whispered into her ear, in a voice hoarse with happiness. “It’s done! It’s done—all but the clerk’s work—it’s done! A few documents to engross, some seals and wax and scrawling signatures that are a mere matter of form and *we have it.*”

“Oh!” exclaimed the girl in low joy-mad tones. “Oh! you great White Chief!” In an ecstasy of pleasure over his triumph—perhaps more for him than for her Indians—she seized his hands, pressed them and slipped away. It was a contact so brief that probably no eye in the jostling throng took note of it, any more than Harrington took note of that starved light of something tenderer than friendship in the dark, passionate eyes of the little habitant of the twilight land between aboriginal blood and the untainted strain of the white man.

Henry had come down on the night boat. It was but eight o’clock in the morning when he stepped upon the dock, yet he knew that he should find John Boland at his desk even at this hour, for Old Two Blades was an early riser; and the young man could not suppress a nervous tremor as he crossed familiar thresholds to stand at length before a door whose unmarked

surface gave no hint of what potentialities couched behind it.

He lifted his hand to knock and as he did so something knocked violently within his breast. This was consummation; this was achievement; this was empire-building—a step in the transformation of a stretch of savage wilderness into production for all the world. Yes; he, too, was a producer!

Once within that door the habitually restrained countenance of Old Two Blades glowed like an open hearth, and his usually clear voice crackled; although the spoken words were few.

“It’s a great thing you’ve done, boy,” he croaked happily. “A great thing! It will mean more than any single accomplishment of any one of us since old Tom Scanlon put in my hands the United States patents for our original holding. No one could have done it but you. Thank you, Henry. You shall not go scant of your reward.”

“I’ve been rewarded already,” assured Henry, eyes glistening as he vibrated to the fine and generous words of Mr. Boland, and to the memory of that ecstatic little gurgle of Lahleet’s.

“But you’ll get more,” said the older man significantly, while benignant rays streamed out from the caverned eyes and he managed a smile of affection that was as fatherly and tender as the thin firm-set lips could muster.

More? Henry smiled almost pityingly. Why, certainly he would get more. He was going up the hill at once to get that more—get his final and his supreme reward. He rushed to the hotel to make ready, and the instant he reached his room must first cry out to

Billie over the telephone the news of his presence and the hint of its glad meaning.

"*Henry!*" she exclaimed, startled, but her fluted tones vibrating immediately to the joy in his. "Oh, hurry . . . hurry!" she urged, as divining. "I shall be waiting . . . among the roses."

Among the roses! Most—most auspicious. That was Henry's favorite trysting place, his favorite place for saying: "I love you and I love you."

Henry found Billie looking like some wonderful rose herself. She sat upon a marble bench on the raised floor of a colonnade, roofed only by vying crimson ramblers. Vines crept about the column against which she leaned and seemed to twine about her figure as she sat, bowered in green, the dark masses of her hair backgrounding a face all pink and white but for the violet blue of the eyes—bluer under this turquoise sky than they had ever seemed before.

Harrington had run lightly the length of the sward in front of the colonnade before he came upon her. Her eyes were on a humming bird hovering amid the blossoms over her, and he halted unseen for one delicious moment to drink in the picture. In her lap lay one of those huge garden hats of which she was so fond and which she wore so gracefully. It was inverted and heaped high with roses. Chaste in her beauty as the flowers, but not cold—warm as the red blood of life itself, she was waiting—waiting for her lover! So he found her.

And it was his hour. Henry Harrington knew it as he knew the sun was in the heavens, as he knew that she was there. She was there for him to take.

"Billie!" he cried softly.

"Henry!" she cried, and sprang up to meet him. He might have taken her to his arms without a word. He knew it; she knew it; but he postponed the rapture. There was exquisite pain in self-restraint. They greeted each other with both hands extended.

"You have done it!" she exulted; a proud break in her voice.

With this single recognition of things material, a golden mist flooded in and shut out all mundane matter. By a subtle change in her expression, by a mere glance from limpid eyes Billie Boland, vital, practical, ambitious and imperious, who had commanded her lover when she could, cajoled him when she must, and in certain things found herself unable to do either, flew the signals of surrender, gave up freely the confession that she was conquered by a mighty passion, that her restless soul was trapped by love and eager to surrender to it.

Henry read the message like a headline. Read it and for a moment was humbled by the matchlessness of beauty that he had won; for a moment he was impelled to sink upon his knees before her. Instead, he continued to hold her hands, gazing at her fixedly, very tenderly and very fondly.

"*Billie! I love you and I love you,*" he breathed softly.

For an instant the silken fringes of her lids were lowered while a maidenly blush widened, mounting to the roots of her hair and creeping down over her neck, over the white of her sculptured bosom. She was his! And yet for a delicious instant still he tantalized his own passion with letting himself want her and want her but without taking her. He waited—watching, gloat-

ing, until she—until the long lashes quivered and the eyes lifted to him, wet and shiny with something that made their blue depths sparkle like jeweled springs.

“And *I love you!*” She almost sobbed the words, and let herself go to him.

“You—you darling!”

He had meant to give her that first kiss gently, oh, so gently, as one inhales the perfume of the most delicate flower; but there was a fragrance in the air that was not of roses. It was of her, and Billie Boland was not a flower. When cornered behind the last barriers of reserve, she was warm and vital as any woman. That drooping glance, that slow spreading blush, this palpitating warmth between his hands—each gave her lover assurance, each was fuel to his flame.

“Billie!” he cried, almost as if with pain. “I have you!” His wild young strength bound her to him. “Billie,” he panted, “I love you and I love you!”

But she too was strong—she too was suddenly unbridled. Of love she gave him draught for draught, thrill for thrill, strength for strength, until he felt himself suddenly weak before the magnificence, the opulence of her response.

June—June! It was June in the garden and it was June in two lives. Blind—they were both blind. Harrington did not know that he had closed his eyes in the very sublimity of his ecstasy. He thought merely that he had been drenched in a torrent that fired him while it swept him away. Shoaled at length as upon the brink of some new Niagara of emotion, he opened his eyes. They were still standing, still embowered by the vine-festooned colonnade. She lay, like a crushed and crumpled beauty in the hollow of his arm, her hair in dis-

array; but because it was crushed and crumpled, it was a sweeter, finer, more exciting beauty than before. The bouquet of it swirled his head like wine.

She was asleep—yes, her breast against his breast rose and fell rhythmically. No; the gates of her eyes were languidly ajar like one who slowly takes account of new environment. Suddenly their blue gaze was wide. The light in the eyes was of surprise and then a little bit of dismay and shock, almost of shame, and the face was somehow altered; the lips quivered and the exquisite cupid's bow line of them was broken a little.

Her lover breathed some soft ecstatic word to her. For that word she gave him back a pressure and buried her face for an instant. Thereafter their manner was of having discovered some delightful secret, each about the other, which a thousand delicacies forbade to mention, which their every move and glance and tone exulted in.

Henry led her back to her seat at the foot of the column and sank down beside her. Still breathing quickly as from the aftermath of a great emotion, he looked around him strangely.

It was the same world, the same rose garden, the same dancing blue inlet, the same far-flung panorama of greens with the white peak of Gregory pinning the sky in its place above.

But she—who had made this little local world so bright and real—she was changed. For this hour at least, the strong, the self-satisfied, the self-confident and managing Billie Boland was gone. In her place was a shy, impressed, clinging girl, who said little, who played with her lover's hands without ever looking at

his face; until all at once her twining, impulsive fingers reached upward, caught his neck, pulled him down to her and she was kissing him again—again with all the strength of her unleashed longing.

CHAPTER XX

HENRY'S was a big office now; it occupied all one corner of the third floor of the Boland Building. His staff had grown rapidly; there were stenographers, and there were clerks, with two or three gray-headed old diggers into the law to look up his points for him. On the morning after love's bright field-day, every face greeted him, it seemed, with knowing welcome as he passed through the outer offices to sit down in the big swivel chair before the wide and polished desk at which he began swiftly to dispose of those matters which Sergeant Thorpe had placed upon it.

In half an hour he was ready to receive callers. Poised, confident, smiling, he took up the first card which the office boy brought in and, as he read, the smile brightened for upon it was engraved in neat and proper script:

Miss Marceau

"Show her in!" Henry directed, thrilling with delightful anticipations.

But something was the matter with the girl. When barely within the room, she halted, white and tense, the black eyes big and burning as with some sort of accusation.

"Why—Lahleet!" protested Henry.

"Did you know that there was oil on the Shell Point

tract?” She fairly catapulted the question at him.

“Oil? . . . No!” Harrington’s voice sounded a trifle bewildered.

“Hundreds of millions of barrels!” the girl declaimed. “Underground lakes of it. . . . Rivers of it! . . . Enough to make the tract worth ten times what Boland offered to pay for it! Did you know it?” demanded the girl, searching with terrible earnestness the face of the man she had trusted so entirely with the interests of all her tribesmen.

“Of course, I didn’t know it,” Henry fended impatiently. “Did anybody?”

“Mr. Boland knew it,” the girl affirmed, bosom heaving. “Read this!”

From out of her red silk hand-bag she flung a crumpled document in pen-script upon the lawyer’s desk. There were three foolscap pages of it, and Harrington, separating them for scrutiny, saw that the first page was addressed, “Dear Mr. Boland,” and the last was signed, “Hiram Stanfield, M. E.” Hiram Stanfield was the greatest authority on oil fields and oil indications in America—perhaps in the world.

Harrington started as he read the first lines and his face had whitened before he turned the first page over, for he was reading in it that the great John Boland was but a low, common trickster. The man who had become his idol, the father of the beautiful girl whose heart he had just won, had connived at a colossal fraud, and used him for the instrument of it. As Henry’s eyes reached the end, the page shook with his trembling so that he could hardly see the lines. Last of all it occurred to him to look at the date.

“My God!” he groaned. The date of the document

was the date of that night when John Boland had made his first proposal to Henry regarding the Shell Point land. "In Stanfield's own handwriting, so that the secret was his and John Boland's alone," he murmured half-dazed; then suddenly and fiercely turned upon the girl. "Where did you get this, Lahleet?" But the girl would not tell him. She shook her head and smiled inscrutably; yet was instantly humble and appealing.

"Did I get it too late?" she whispered fearsomely, and stood with twisting hands, as if the soul of a man she loved were weighing itself in the balance before her eyes.

Harrington's shoulders heaved slowly with the upsurge of his indignation—slowly, till it seemed to the girl that he would never speak. "No!" he exploded thunderously at last. "So help me God, it is not too late!"

"You will block it?" Lahleet cried, her tones freighted with vindictive satisfaction. "You will take this paper back to Washington, and use it to denounce the cause you pleaded? . . . You will prove that John Boland is a despicable fraud? . . . You will tell him so here, and you will prove it to all the world there?"

"Yes—so help me God, I will!" declared Harrington hoarsely.

Out of the girl's breast leaped a low cry of gratitude and she darted upon him. "God bless you, Henry!" she breathed fervently—the first religious sentiment he had ever heard from her—and impulsively she caught his hand to her lips and kissed it. Then, with only a look, but such a look!—all the infinity of a woman's capacity to believe in a man wrapped up in it—she turned and darted out—one of her perfectly characteristic exits.



L'AHLEET Stood as if Henry's Soul Hung in the Balance

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Harrington was left staring curiously at the back of the hand which Lahleet had kissed, curiously, for there was a tiny globule upon it that sparkled and glistened. It was a tear—Lahleet's tear. A tear of a Shell Point Indian! The tear of the dull and slow-witted of all the world, crying to be protected somewhat from the too-shrewd and grasping. As Harrington caught the rainbow colors in that quivering globule, and sensed its significance, his soul hardened; he saw the path of duty clear and felt himself strong enough to walk in it.

He kissed the tear away, and for a time was thinking deeply of what it meant—this appalling discovery—and of what it might mean to him today, to his interests, his position, his love—to go stoutly in to John Boland and tell him what he had discovered. A good many possibilities, some of them highly disagreeable, passed in review through Henry Harrington's mind in that ten minutes which intervened before he arose and stepped across the hall into the immediate purlieus of executive power.

Obsequious clerks made way for him. An alert efficient secretary, after the briefest interval, led him to the unmarked door. How perfectly oiled! With what smooth precision did the machinery of Boland General operate! And he was now about to commit an act of sabotage upon it. He felt grim and resolute, yet somehow small and mean—also distressingly embarrassed, painfully embarrassed. The situation was excruciating.

The secretary opened the door. Mr. Boland swung around in his great chair and upon his fine strong features was a most benevolent radiance, as he cried:

"Henry, my boy! Henry, *our new Vice-President!*"

"Vice-President?" Harrington mumbled, struck rather dumb.

"Yes," glowed Mr. Boland, rubbing his hands benignly; "we shall organize the Shell Point Land Company today—and you will be its president, and become automatically thereby one of the vice-presidents of Boland General and so a member of our general staff. You have been unofficially one of us for some time; now you are *officially* there."

To be preferred so young for such a place, was honor, reward, unassailable position. It was a more subtle emolument than money. If it were aimed to make Harrington feel both the lure of what was ahead for him and the baseness of that ingratitude which would turn and bite the hand that was feeding him so generously, it had been designed most skilfully. Besides, there was this engaging, ingratiating personality of Old Two Blades, bathing the young man in its warmth.

"That is wonderful of you, Mr. Boland—wonderful!" Henry found himself murmuring, and then something jerked his head up straight. "But I don't think I can accept it. I don't think you'll want to give it to me." He stopped breathless, but so far triumphant. He had broken through. There was perspiration on his brow, but he had made an opening. "I saw the Stanfield report this morning," he blurted.

There ensued silence. For the slightest fraction of time not a muscle, not a nerve of John Boland appeared to move. "Stanfield report?" he queried in an even colorless tone.

"About the oil in the Shell Point Land," elucidated Henry desperately.

For yet another infinitesimal fraction of time a veil as of blank incomprehension was lowered, and then suddenly the face of John Boland was the face of a man who saw his way clear before him.

“Yes—oh, yes! It looks pretty nice, doesn’t it?” The magnate’s hands fondled each other, while his face was permitted to beam the natural enthusiasm of a trader who has just bought for three millions what promises to be worth thirty.

“It doesn’t look so nice to me,” Harrington confessed miserably. “It makes the whole transaction look rather . . . phony; rather . . . *suspicious*.”

“Suspicious?” inquired Mr. Boland, his features tight and edged, showing heat for the first time. “Why, what in the devil are you talking about?” His manner was finely indignant. It almost swept Harrington off his feet mentally. What in the devil was he talking about, really?

“I should have thought the Indians ought to have had more money for their land, in that case,” he tried to explain. “I should have thought so.”

“We gave them enough—far more than anybody else would have given,” affirmed Mr. Boland with decision. “We paid them for the timber and the land; why should we pay them for the oil? They didn’t put it there. Why, if the report had got out that there was oil in this Shell Point tract, do you think you would have got the Indian Commissioner to consent to the sale? Not on your life. He would have been afraid to. The department would have tied us up and hedged us around with restrictions till development was impossible, just like the coal in Alaska.”

“But the oil couldn’t run away—it would be there for

somebody to take out sometime," Henry struggled.

"*Somebody!* Sometime? . . ." Mr. Boland's mounting scorn blasted the whole idea from consideration; and then, as tapping the reservoirs of a very great patience, he began to pour out counsel. "But, don't you see, Henry, my boy, *we*—you and I—*are living today*. Your duty and mine is to our own time. Look out around us at these thriving, happy towns. Our policy has created them out of raw wilderness. I will build a city on Shell Point finer than Edgewater. Where now a few Indians fish and hunt, I'll show you in five years fifty thousand people earning a good living, some of them getting rich—the world paying them wages that they will buy food with and build homes with and educate their children with and enjoy life with—just because they are sending the Shell Point oil out to make ships go and drive automobiles and turn factory wheels and help do the world's work for it.

"That's the idea, Henry. These little matters of land laws and commissioners' rulings and congressional committees, all that—they are circumstances. They are the native obstacles that empire builders like me—and you, now you are one of us—have to cope with.

"We don't quit before things like that, do we? Any more than we quit when we find timber growing a long way from the water. We build a log chute, don't we? or a railroad, or we rig up a cable and snake it out. That's what we do with obstacles, Henry." Mr. Boland was standing up and slapping Harrington cheerfully on the shoulder. "We go around 'em if we can, and if we can't *we go through 'em*." The chest of Old Two Blades swelled proudly.

Henry was feeling as if he were off his feet and beginning to be swept downstream. "You think, then, it was perfectly ethical to keep from the Indians the knowledge that oil underlaid their land?" he asked.

"*Ethical?*" It was an uncommon word to Mr. Boland as applied to business. He chewed on it for a moment, and then swallowed it vigorously. "Why, certainly! It was *my* knowledge, *my* information that oil was there; and information, my son—business information—is property, just like land—just like oil itself, or any other commodity. Every big business is built on information—business secrets, trade secrets, manufacturing secrets—information.

"I always knew about the oil slicks on Shell Point streams. So did everybody. But it was me that got Stanfield here, that paid him ten thousand dollars for thirty days of his time and promised him a royalty of two percent on the gross of a ten-year output, if he kept his mouth shut on what he found until I was ready to make it public."

But Henry had got his feet on bottom again for one swirling instant. "It was very shrewd, Mr. Boland, no doubt; but was it—right?"

"Right? Of course it was right. Why, Henry! I'm surprised at you. I'll have to give you some lessons in the fundamental principles of business."

"I guess you will," confessed Harrington rather grimly.

"All right, here goes," began his self-appointed school-master resolutely, wetting an aggressive lip: "You were born in Missouri, didn't you tell me? Northwest Missouri? Well, I was born just over the line in Iowa. Let me ask you now, did you ever, in the

late summer, happen on a grove of wild plums down in the creek bottom, just as pink and ripe as your best girl's cheeks and just as sweet as sugar?"

"I found a rare patch of wild strawberries once," recalled the young man wonderingly.

"Well, what did you do?" demanded Mr. Boland quickly. "Rush out and tell the whole town about it? Or did you keep that secret rather carefully, and just sneak off down there every day or two yourself, and maybe take one trusted pal with you, and keep those strawberries to yourself all summer?"

Harrington flushed. "Well, I guess I kept it kind of dark," he smiled, "until the pal peached on me."

"Exactly," exulted Mr. Boland; "and then what did you do?"

"I licked him," admitted Henry.

"Well, was that ethical?"

"It was rather—rather human, I suppose," he confessed with a sickly smile.

"Exactly!" gloated Mr. Boland. "It was very human, and business, Henry, is very human. The ethics of business is the ethics of human nature. Business doesn't try to remake humanity—it caters to it. And the more successfully you cater, Henry, the bigger the business you build."

The young man was frankly stopped; he was beginning to surrender. He felt somehow that he had been out-maneuvered rather than out-argued, but here he was with nothing on his tongue.

"You mustn't let your sympathies run away with you, Henry," smiled Mr. Boland expansively. "You've done a big job for us; you found a nice little strawberry patch. Now don't go and tell all the boys in town

where it is. You remember what happened to that pal of yours, don't you?"

Mr. Boland made this observation jocularly, but if Henry had had time to think of it twice, he might have suspected a double meaning; but the generous head of B. G. was hurrying him a little.

"Your salary, Henry, as President of Shell Point will be twenty thousand a year, with the usual opportunities to acquire stock. And now—that's enough of business for this morning. Especially when there's something more important to talk about—and that's rare."

Mr. Boland's voice dropped significantly and his expression softened to a kind of domestic tenderness. "That was great news you and Billie had for us yesterday," he began in fond accents, eyes aglow. "I congratulate myself, Henry; for I love you almost as if you were my own boy. God did not give me a son. I have had to acquire one." The tone of this announcement was almost hallowed; the gratification it conveyed enormous.

Henry, recalling that mood of stern insurgence in which he had entered the office a few minutes ago and how grossly he had misjudged this acquisitive but gentle, kindly man, lowered his eyes in shame to the pattern of the rug.

"The dreams of my life are being realized, Henry," the older man went on mellowingly. "To see Billie pick up a fine run-of-the-mill young American like you, instead of one of these job-lot foreigners and team up with him to develop the business that I have created, you don't know how . . . how happy . . ."

There was a sudden halt in the mellow flow, and

Henry looked up quickly to find his intended father-in-law overcome with grateful emotion. Henry couldn't stand it. He reached out quickly and touched one of J. B.'s hands, meaning thereby a lot—everything.

A little later the President of the Shell Point Land Company and Vice-President of Boland General, with twenty thousand a year for that combination job alone, walked out rather dizzily.

“I must ring up Billie, right away,” he was thinking; but as he reached his desk remembered: “Holy smoke! I left that Stanfield report . . . well, I don't want it any more. It's his, anyway,” he murmured hollowly, and began to ruminate upon the wonder he had just beheld, the wonder of sublime patience and measureless generosity.

“Meandering Moses, but he must have been surprised—keen to know where I'd got it. . . . Must have been madder than a hornet at somebody's treachery . . . but he never turned a hair. Knew perfectly well what I'd come in there for, and just calmly, patiently showed me where I was wrong, then—smothered me with kindness, with affection. Wouldn't that jar you now?”

It did jar Henry a good deal and the more he pondered it the more it jarred him; yet eventually his mind turned from it to the scanning of a pile of opened letters which Thorpe had placed upon his desk. One of these jarred him also. It was dated New York; it was on the letterhead of Barrett & Wendell, those brilliant lawyers who had been specially retained by Mr. Boland to represent the respondent in the case of Adolph Salzberg vs. The First National Bank; for Hornblower had carried it up—up to the Supreme Court of the United States. It had been a relief to

Henry, with all he had on hand, to have the case taken out of his hands; and it never occurred to him that the real reason might have been because of that doubt he had confessed once to Mr. Boland and once again to Thomas Scanlon. If it had, he might have been mean enough to exult: for here were Barrett & Wendell confessing the same doubt.

CHAPTER XXI

DEAR MR. HARRINGTON," this disturbing letter began, and ran along through a half page of preliminaries to:

"The dynamite in this case for us lies, not so much in whether the southern boundary line of the reservation was correct or in error, as in whether, *if in error*, that error was accidental or deliberate, i. e. *fraud*. There is, as you know, testimony in the record tending to show that there was such fraud, and we must congratulate you upon having induced the trial jury and your appellate court to disregard this testimony. We are not altogether sanguine that Washington will be as complacent.

"The appellants, as you know, have strengthened their position dangerously by getting Senator Burnside to represent them. He is exceedingly able, half-fox and half-wolf, keen for the smell of scandal and although there is only one of him, he howls on the trail like an entire pack.

"We therefore urge that you fortify us with every scrap of information that may be of assistance to our Mr. Wendell in arguing the case; especially . . ."

And so the letter went on.

"So, they're getting scared too," murmured Henry, a little bit awed; and proceeded to empty his files and his mind of everything that could possibly be helpful to the eloquent Mr. Wendell in the circumstances.

Having done this and attended to certain other routine matters, Henry was thinking of Lahleet. She must know of his—his enlarged perception of the Shell

Point transaction; but he decided to postpone sending for the girl. She was impulsive and quick-tempered, suspicious where Mr. Boland was concerned. She would be difficult to reason with; she was a dear little thing and he did not want to hurt her. But just at this juncture, Lahleet's card was sent in to him again.

"The little minx," he commented. "She must have just been hanging around the corridors till she saw me come back." It was the first time in their acquaintance that he had not been spontaneously glad to see her; yet the first sight of the girl was reassuring.

"Henry!" she cried cheerily, and came bounding to him as if on moccasined feet upon her island. "Henry! You have told him? . . . You have blocked the Shell Point deal? . . . You have saved their millions of oil for them? What did he say? How did he take it?" But the stream of naively gloating interrogation was halted. The girl had read something in Harrington's face. "You . . . you didn't tell him!" she panted in dismay. "You have fallen down!" She uttered the words hollowly, unbelievably, as hoping to be assured that her deduction was false.

"Mr. Boland showed me that the deal was all right," answered Harrington with some dignity.

"*All right!*" . . . Lahleet breathed the speech slowly. "All right? . . ." she whispered whitely, and sank into a chair, staring at the lawyer with great bewildered eyes. "All right? . . ." she said a third time.

Henry found this white, staring iteration difficult. He wished she had flown into a tantrum, raged, sworn, denounced him, anything but this appalled manner, this stunned incredulity in which shattered faith and regret were mingled so poignantly.

"But, you see, the knowledge that the oil was there was *his* knowledge," Harrington undertook to explain patiently. "He had paid for it and it belonged to him. The Indians did not put the oil there."

"Neither did John Boland," Lahleet retorted with rising spirit.

"But his enterprise discovered that it was there."

"And like a cheap trickster in a horsetrade, he took advantage of this knowledge," accused the girl.

"As I see it now, that was legitimate business strategy," argued Henry, uncomfortably.

"Business strategy? . . . Then stealing, any kind of ordinary stealing, is legitimate business strategy," the girl scorned, gazing at him for an instant in sheer incredulity, then screamed: "You are a cheat! A damned cheat is what you are!"

Harrington's face went white. "You little spitfire!" he frowned.

For a moment the girl stood a trifle aghast at herself. "Boland has ruined you!" she accused, eyes suffusing. "You're bribed; you're bought—bribed with position—bribed with money, bribed with all this public favor. Do you know where that public favor comes from? It comes from John Boland. Your own acts did a little and he arranged the rest. It was a deliberate propaganda of popularity. It began when he discovered that you had talents which——"

"Miss Marceau!" thundered Harrington. "Enough of this!" But he was discovering how difficult it is for a gentleman to dam an angry woman's mouth.

The girl backed off unconquered. "Oh, you did not surrender easily," she taunted. "You came high. Boland has had to hold out glittering baits. It took

everything, his dearest possessions, or the promise of them, to get you where he has you now, but at last you are there—where a cruel, contemptible fraud seems to you a laudable business enterprise. No one else could have done this but John Boland. He is a cunning corrupter of the souls of men. In your old office you told me once that you could never be retained by ‘the other side.’ But today you are, Henry Harrington; you are.”

“That is all. Positively all!” declared the lawyer, patience tried to the limit.

Suddenly the girl was calm—with the calmness of a tornado that had blown itself out. “Yes,” she assented; “that is all.” Her bosom still heaved with the aftermath of her emotions, but she was manifesting an almost impertinent self-possession. “You left the Stanfield report with Mr. Boland, I suppose?” she questioned coldly.

“I returned it to its rightful owner,” Harrington responded with a bite in his tone.

“I had taken the precaution to have it photographed,” the girl observed dryly.

“*Photographed!*” Harrington had learned to be suspicious of this Indian blood when it became unexpectedly calm or unexplainably complacent. He darted a threatening glance and moved swiftly between his visitor and the door. “You . . . you wouldn’t take this thing up with Washington yourself? . . . You . . . You’d best not interfere!” he breathed angrily.

The girl’s manner changed like lightning, as if a carefully designed maneuver had succeeded; and she thrust out her face at him, white teeth gleaming in a smile of exultation, “No!” she cried. “I wouldn’t.

If anybody saves those Indians, it will be you, Henry Harrington. You protect or you victimize those helpless people yourself. I commit them entirely to your conscience."

With that she left him. . . . He was angry and insulted for a minute, then felt a great wave of sympathy for the girl.

"Now isn't that too bad?" he frowned, and stroked a troubled brow. "Too darned bad! . . . And she thinks I'm bribed!" He smiled. He could forgive such an absurdity from Lahleet—could forget it even, as he pressed the button and began to dictate articles of incorporation of the Shell Point Land Company; and thereafter plunged into the appetizing menu of his daily life which, in these days, was composed of unequal parts of business and of love, love getting the shade.

From his desk went frequent ecstatic telephone calls to the glowing beauty in the big house on the hill and there was astoundingly frequent necessity for leaving the desk and rushing up the hill to conference with Billie on all sorts of pretexts from some of her own minor legal business to certain of her major social enterprises; while, once office or court hours were over, no sort of pretty little deceit was needed.

It was just to be with her, whether strolling on the terraces, or dancing or golfing at the Country Club with Billie beating him most of the time on the links now, for he was off his game these days. Always together and alone when it could be managed—always together! Everybody saw and knew. The town talked about it and admired and approved, save some who envied.

And while Henry's love flourished, his business flourished also, for somehow each contact with Billie was an incentive to diligence, although he had not even yet realized that it was because he was falling into love that he reached that sudden resolve to push his practice, and in these days of rapture he was quite incapable of suspecting that it was because his love had been approved that his business prospered so amazingly. He had no conception how closely love interests and business interests were united within the Boland breasts.

Oh, yes, there was much for Henry to do now, and so many, many thrills in the doing of it. And while he was busy in Edgewater, knot by knot the red tape was being tied in Washington. From desk to desk certain documents moved forward to that day when official seals and signatures would be attached and the landed inheritance of a handful of Indians would become the property of a corporation of which Henry Harrington was president.

But in Edgewater also, some knots were being tied—knots in that procedure by which Adam John's island was to become the island of the Edgewater & Eastern Railway. Each was made fast with meticulous care and a scrupulous regard for that great document which faithfully assures that no citizen shall be deprived of his property "without due process of law." Never were the processes more strictly observed, for the promoters of the Edgewater & Eastern, like John Boland, manifested a most exemplary regard for law.

And so the court condemned, the appraiser appraised; and the seven thousand dollars most generously found to be the value of the said Hurricane Island was tendered; but, lo, the Siwash owner spurned the

tender—stubbornly, disrespectful of those solemnly moving processes. The island was his. Uncle Sam had given it to him. No railroad, no anybody should take it away from him. So he stolidly affirmed.

The duty of the patient court was clear. It appointed a special commissioner to sign a deed conveying Hurricane Island to the railway, and to receive the said seven thousand dollars to be held subject to the order of the said Adam John, an Indian, but also a citizen. This deed was duly executed; the money was duly paid and duly held. All that remained was for the sheriff to go out and take the island and turn it over to the Edgewater & Eastern.

But when, blithely enough, glad of a chance for a launch-run up the inlet, Sheriff James Hogan headed in toward that little cove where boats were accustomed to land upon Hurricane Island, behold, a rifle cracked and a bullet ricocheted across the officer's bow.

"The hell!" remarked Sheriff Jim. "That damn Indian is going to fight." And he turned and gazed where the bullet skipped three times upon the blue.

But the sheriff was a man who had respect for a bullet, so he turned back to Edgewater for reënforcements. Excitement was instantly rife in the little city. Law had been defied in the county of Socatullo; the due processes of its court had been scorned and an officer of that court and county murderously fired upon. Such lawlessness had not been known before; it must be dealt with.

What made the offense more heinous was that the rebel was an Indian—a half-white, half-educated Siwash upon whom the right of citizenship had been conferred but recently by a mawkishly sentimental

government simply because the Siwash had gone out and let himself be shot at in the World War. The wider the rumor spread, the more wrathful the citizens waxed. Mr. Boland was inexpressibly shocked at this news of insurrection in his realm.

Sheriff Hogan, turning out the arsenal of his office, was swearing loudly that he would fix that damn Siwash and while he swore, his office was stormed with citizens volunteering their services for a posse and bringing with them a great variety of armament. All of them, the sheriff accepted heartily; the more the merrier, the mightier the lesson to the Indian insurrecto.

"Better coöperate with Hogan," Mr. Boland had said to Edmunds. "Hogan is a very worthy official. The law must be upheld at all times, Edmunds; at all times." Edmunds was Boland's vice-president in charge of transportation, and as such, commodore of the Boland fleet, from largest steamship to smallest skiff; and he placed unlimited motorboats at the sheriff's disposal.

When Hogan's posse turned out for the march from the courthouse to the dock, its members held themselves with dignity. Their chests swelled; they felt like heroes going out to defend their homes and properties against an insolent and dangerous enemy.

They fell into step and this rhythmic tread of feet along the street, with the sight of a moving column of determined men, roused the onlookers to a fervor. This fervor reacted on the marching militants and stirred them to a mild hysteria of patriotism. Somebody had thought of flags and brought along an armful of yard-square ones, mounted on short staffs.

Seven motorboats were required to carry the posse, and in their patriotic ardor the men nailed a flag to

the prow of each boat. Your naval man raises his flag amidships, but these were landsmen. They were inordinately proud and satisfied with their small armada as it strung out in the inlet, headed for Hurricane Island. The hour was about four o'clock in the afternoon of a day in late July. A vivid beauty lay upon land and water. Life seemed playful and happy.

They shouted to each other from boat to boat; they protested loudly their contempt for Bolsheviks, home-born or foreign-born. They threatened this lone and obstinate insurgent Siwash with many bullets; nervously they worked the mechanism of their shotguns, or rifles or revolvers; yet sneeringly they assured themselves and each other, that an Indian would never think of resisting when he saw himself borne down upon by such numbers. Therefore, it was the strategy of Admiral Hogan to keep his armada massed, a demonstration in force. As the string of boats emerged from the channel and approached the island, by dint of much motioning and shouting, their commander got them into an abreast formation and at reduced speed they drew in toward the little landing.

There was no sign of life on the island. It was as still as if its defender had fled. And yet Sheriff Hogan, mindful of that ricocheting bullet, was awed and cautious. Intuitively, his posse fell into the same mood; voices were lowered, oaths muffled. The silence, the unmoving silence of that green-bushed island seemed somehow ominous. A hundred sharpshooters might lie concealed in any one of its leafy headlands. A realization that from a military point of view their position was highly exposed—they could be seen, but they could not see—made for subdued enthusiasm.

But there had been too much hot blood in their veins, too much stirring of elemental passions for the men to be long held in check by a mere state of mind. Somebody wantonly shouted a taunt at the silent greenery, and another hurled an obscene epithet. Sheriff Hogan, hesitant and uncertain, overcome by caution and wary of this taciturnity of leafy barricades took out of his pocket the process of the court.

"I'll read this to him, boys," he said, "and then we'll close in on him." He stood up, braced himself and began to read in hoarse, bellowing tones:

"In the Superior Court of the County of Socatullo and State of——" He had got that far, his huge voice echoing into the cove, and undoubtedly penetrating a considerable distance into the green lanes of Adam John's homestead, when Nate Hampton, nervously fingering his pump gun, twitched the trigger. The weapon roared.

"What in the devil!" everybody seemed to exclaim at once, and glared at Nate, who sat looking shamed and silly, when abruptly from the green barriers in front of them issued a vicious spat and s-s-splug went something on the broad front of Sheriff Hogan. He placed his hand upon his stomach and looked around him with an expression of fierce wonderment as demanding what joker had struck him thus, and as determining to visit resentment on the irreverent one. But an instant later he was swaying, a sick look on his face.

"Lord, boys! I'm shot," he cried in mystified surprise, and sat over backward in the bottom of the boat. The process of the court had fluttered from the sheriff's astonished hand and floated now upon the blue bosom of the channel, quite unregarded.

"Hell! He's shot Jim!"

Somebody remarked this curiously; then all at once everybody was firing—at whatever spot in the green seemed to the firer's fancy the one from which the bullet had sped. The shotguns roared; the rifles and the automatics cracked and spat and spat and cracked. But there came no answer from the island. Yet instead of advancing upon the cove the armada was retiring. Without orders, each engineer, perforce a noncombatant, had instinctively reversed his engine. Eventually the futility of further firing under these conditions made itself apparent.

"Perhaps we got him!" suggested one excited voice.

"Perhaps we didn't too," scorned another. "An Indian would know enough to duck behind a tree. He's probably laying there ready to pick off the next one of us he wants, if we shove in close again."

"Look, I can see a sort of a cabin. By Jinks! It's got a flag on it. What do you know about that! Defying the law with a flag!" Men stared at each other blankly.

"Probably this Indian is in the shack by now. It's log-built—a regular fort."

Everybody took a shot at the shack on the chance. There being no responding shot, by a sort of common consent, the armada gradually put about and followed the boat containing the wounded sheriff which was already heading back down the channel. The attack upon Hurricane Island had been repulsed.

As they were lifting him to the ambulance at the dock, Sheriff Hogan murmured: "Get that damned Siwash for this, boys." Then he gulped and died.

CHAPTER XXII

THE news of the tragedy ran like a flame through the streets of the town. Within five minutes the Blade had it bulletined; men were telephoning it home to their wives, and Sergeant Thorpe, a man of discernment and sympathy, was communicating it to his chief in his committee room at the State Capitol.

“Terrible!” groaned Henry. “Hogan had a wife and a whole raft of kids, didn’t he?”

“Six,” said Thorpe, “and the town is wild. They’re raising a regular army; they’ll get Adam John at daylight, but the worst of it is, he’s sure to get some more of them first.”

“Of course he is, the obstinate fool!” But Henry was suddenly conscience-stricken. “The poor devil!” he ejaculated, beginning to remember. Self-reproaches stabbed him. He was thinking: “I ought to have given Adam John more time, made sure that he understood about the law. I’m to blame for this, in a way. Really, I am.”

The voice of Sergeant Thorpe broke in: “If they take him alive, they’re going to lynch him in front of the courthouse for an example to the whole radical element, Salzberg and his crowd, Soderman and his Bolsheviks, and these stubborn Indians too that are always ducking the white man’s law.”

“But they mustn’t do that, Thorpe,” insisted Henry, autocratically, exactly as if he had the power to com-

mand. And he very nearly did, such was his standing in the community by this time. "See Scanlon at once; tell him I'm driving down, and, for God's sake, to hold things until I come."

"I'll tell him," said Thorpe, then volunteered: "But he and Edmunds are egging 'em on—if you ask me. You'll have to hurry, chief."

"Hurry? . . . I'll fly!" promised Harrington; and roaring up the hills and dipping into the valleys, swinging round perilous curves, and dashing madly over straightaways, he drove the seventy miles that lay between the State Capitol and Edgewater.

Harrington found the courthouse corridors packed with excited men, breathing vengeance, loud in denunciation, loud in demand to be led instantly to Hurricane Island—demanding, on his appearance, that he, Henry Harrington, become their leader; but he put them off and made his way to the inner office of the late sheriff. Under-Sheriff Jordan was there, ostensibly in command; but the real commanders were about him, Tom Scanlon, Dan Edmunds, Steve Quackenbaugh and Jim Gaylord, stout upholders of the law, all four of them. In a moment like this greetings were dispensed with.

"Ain't this the devil, Henry?" demanded Scanlon.

"It's awful," confessed Harrington, with a shake of his head. "I'm sure sorry for poor old Jim."

"'S what comes of coddling these lazy Indians anyway," declared Quackenbaugh, with venom; and, it was true that Adam John, take it all the way through, had caused Quackenbaugh a good deal of trouble.

"'S what comes of coddling law-breakers of any kind, white or Indian," amended Gaylord. "You take that

Socialist, Salzberg; he's still fighting the title case, and Soderman, Bolshevik to the core—no more respect for our institutions than anything. We've tried every way to pacify him about that power site, everything short of giving the property back to him."

Scanlon looked impatient. This was no time for academic discussion. "The point is this one Indian and what he did this afternoon," the Chief Counsel affirmed. "The whole county's up. I've been sort of holding them until you got here, Henry; but the boys are wild about Jim and rarin' to go."

"I'll make that unnecessary," said Harrington with quiet decision. "I'll go out and get the Indian myself. I saved his life once, he'll mind me like a dog. Pledge me your word that if I bring this man in, you will defend his life as you would your own." Henry thrust out his hand. Each man took it, reluctantly, perhaps, but each took it.

"We've got to keep our word to Henry," recognized Gaylord, first to speak after Harrington left.

"How the dickens can we?" inquired the under-sheriff. "The boys are all het up. They'll hang that Indian as soon as they get an eye on him."

"We've got to get the crowd dispersed somehow," perceived Edmunds.

"Strategy," suggested Tom Scanlon, skilled in subtleties. "Let 'em go after the Indian, but not yet. Pass the word along, Jordan, that you start in an hour. Edmunds has got a dozen boats waiting. You've got thirty cars volunteered. Start 'em in two coveys. They'll go out and thrash around all night; and by the time they find out that we tricked 'em a little, they'll be cooled off enough to be glad we did it."

Fifteen minutes after Under-Sheriff Jordan had notified his impatient cohorts of an hour's postponement in the advance upon Hurricane Island, Henry Harrington, in the pitchy black of a moonless and starless night, was standing at the mouth of Cub Creek. A brooding silence lay upon the channel and the shadowy bulk of the Edgewater & Eastern's island. This silence Henry awakened with a shout. No answer came; but when he had twice repeated the call: "Adam! Adam John-n-n!" an owl hooted on the island. At least he had attracted the attention of an owl, and the owl was of an inquiring mood.

"Who? . . . who? . . ." demanded the bird of the night.

"Harrington! Henry Harrington!" sharp and clear, slightly irritated, went the answer to the owl.

The bird hooted once more, but on a descending cadence, as if its thirst for information had been satisfied. A minute or so later, Harrington heard another sound—a bass drumlike note, echoing from low upon the water; it was the casual beat of a paddle upon the side of a dug-out canoe. But it was not Adam John who stepped lightly out when a keel grated upon the gravel at the mouth of the creek. It was Lahleet. This was their first encounter since that angry parting of two weeks ago in Henry's office. But there was no stiffness in her manner.

For one thing she was too overcome by anxiety, too grateful for his coming. Besides, in very truth, she had never lost faith in Harrington. Within an hour after her impetuous, wrathful little soul had emptied itself in vitriolic denunciation on his head, she had been ready to trust him fully once more, believing that she read

him more truly than he read himself. She thought, too, that by her maneuver of leaving the fate of the Shell Point Indians in his hands entirely, she saved him as well as them, by raising an issue so acute that it was bound to make clear to his conscience the wickedness of John Boland.

His appearance here and now she took as confirmation of her faith; she construed it at once as friendly, and after her naive fashion met him entirely without restraint or any sense of the necessity of apology or explanation.

"Is the sheriff dead?" she asked anxiously, laying hold upon Henry's arm.

"Yes," Harrington answered sorrowfully. "Take me to Adam John, will you?"

When Harrington found Adam John, he was in the lodge, standing beside the table on which lamplight struggled through a smoking chimney. A rifle lay where once the golden twenties had glittered. The Indian was at attention; but the expression of that absurdly twisted and pasty yellow face with its features only half emerged, was stolid, obstinate and a little defiant. "Adam—Adam John!" reproached Harrington, with a lump in his throat. "You have killed Sheriff Hogan."

The Indian swallowed, after which a sigh escaped him, as of relief at a suspense that had been ended. Then he sulked: "Sheriff shoot first."

"But that was an accident—a shot in the air. You made an awful mistake, Adam John. They're calling you a Bolshevik, an anarchist. They say you are a coward to shoot a man from ambush. I know that you are not a coward. I want you to prove it. The court-

house in Edgewater is surrounded by a mob clamoring for your blood. I want you, unarmed, to go back with me tonight, to walk right through that mob and surrender to Under-Sheriff Jordan. I have seen you dare death before and I want you to dare it tonight. Will you?"

The Indian's ferret eyes brightened at the challenge; but he hesitated, features working. "Me go," he announced presently.

"You must realize fully what you are doing, Adam," warned Harrington. "They call you a murderer. They say you were sore at the law and took your grudge out heartlessly on poor Jim Hogan—Jim, with a wife and six kids.

"If you come in, I want you to say to the officers that you are not a lawless person and that to prove it, you are willing to submit your cause to a jury—all the facts—just the way they appear to you. It is a very solemn thing that I ask of you, Adam, because if they decide that you are guilty, you will be sentenced to hang." *Hang!* How terribly the word echoed in in this little lodge where an adolescent citizen had dreamed his crude but happy dreams. "Are you up to that, old fellow—what I have proposed? Or is it too much?" Harrington's tone was affectionate and considerate.

Adam John was thoughtful; he took time to review his first acceptance. "If you say that right thing, me do it," he decided, drawing himself up proudly. Then his features began to work as if he struggled to bring to birth some inchoate, half-formed idea that motivated his actions. "Me fight once for that," he labored, pointing upward toward the peak of his lodge where

both men knew a fog-faded emblem floated in the night. "Mebbe so that flag fight for me now. . . . You think so, mebbe?"

Harrington was touched by this notion of the flag as a symbol of the guarantees of this nation to its citizens. That was not a bad idea at all; the badness only entered when Adam undertook to assist the flag by pumping a bullet into the stomach of the sheriff.

"Those man come with flag. They fakers, robbers. Flag no rob . . . you think so, Lieutenant?"

"You bet your life not, Adam," averred Henry, feeling more and more sorrow, more and more affection for stupid, mistrusting yet trustful Adam John. "The flag will give you a square deal—never doubt it."

As Adam John and Henry were driving into Edgewater, a most unusual succession of blinding lights of motorcars streamed by them; but the streets of the town were deserted and the courthouse was silent.

About eight o'clock next morning, however, the streets of the town began to be filled with some scores of wearied, disgusted and sheepish men who clamored and questioned and swore and tried to explain themselves in various ways. Two of their leaders, George Miller and Danny Simpson, thought to compare notes with Harrington himself.

"And so," concluded Miller, "we shot up the shack at daylight and then burned it."

"Burned it?" Harrington's tone was incisive. His brows were lifted and frowning.

"To the ground. Nothing left but ashes. Just burned it, to—to kind of relieve their feelings, the boys did."

This residence that Adam John had built by his own

hands and dreamed his dreams in, burned to ashes by sworn deputies. That was another operation of the law that a mere Siwash would find difficult to understand.

"But that was an act of lawlessness," frowned Henry. "What right had you to burn Adam John's house?"

"What right! The damned killer. Why didn't we have the right? It'll throw the fear of God into others of 'em too."

Harrington looked into the indignant faces thoughtfully and was silent, smothering something.

"Henry, you know, is a kind of a nut about this law-and-order stuff," elucidated Miller to Simpson as they went down the steps.

As soon as the banks were open, Henry sent Thorpe out for some currency. It was lying on his desk when Lahleet came in. He greeted her with a cordial smile but hers was a trifle wan. She was worn and anxious.

"You know what they did?" asked Henry.

"I saw the smoke—the savages!"

"Anyway, it helped them to vent their rage cheaply. There is no more talk of lynching; and our only consideration now is Adam John's defense. Here!" Henry shifted the paper-weight and took up and laid down before the girl's astonished eyes five one-hundred-dollar bills. "Take this down to Stacey Thompson and give it to him as a retainer. Don't tell him where it came from. I think it best for both of us that I should not appear in the matter, but I am going to see that Adam John has a fair trial. Promise him any fee he may demand. It will be forthcoming."

The girl's soul was in her eyes. She held her hand off from the money and then accepted it, timidly at

first, then fondling the bills. "Henry!" Her tone was tremulous with gratitude. "I will pay you back."

"You've done that already, Lahleet," answered Henry; "with your friendship—with your trust. Run along now and get Stacey Thompson hooked up. There isn't a jury in the world will convict Adam John of murder with Stacey defending."

In the course of the same morning, two leaders of the marine division of the sheriff's army drifted upstairs to talk with Harrington, perhaps to make sure he had been entirely innocent in turning their expedition into a wild-goose chase. Henry had satisfied them as easily as the others and listened to them casually.

"What do you know, Henry!" blurted Bingo Ellis. "Some of the gang found a grave on the island. Not exactly fresh, but not so old, neither."

"'Twas me saw it first," explained Ivan Olson. "'Somebody's been digging here, sometime; wonder what for,' I says, and begun scratching just with one of those entrenchment spades that some guy brought along out of his army kit. Well, we went down and there was a blue flannel shirt, and a fellow inside of it."

"Fellow with a lot of yellow whiskers."

Harrington was considerably excited by this information but concealed any unnatural interest admirably. "Yellow whiskers?" he observed as in wonderment, remembering the blond goatee of Count Eckstrom and his mysterious double.

"Nothing left but bones and whiskers, flannel and corduroys, just like a lumber jack, but silk underclothes. What do you know about that?"

"Did you examine the body for identifications of any kind?" asked Henry, yet managed to ask it casually.

“Nothing identifying, no,” answered Ivan. “Marks had been cut off the clothes, pockets empty, only thing was a broken rib and busted backbone, like a bullet had crashed through him from front to back.”

“Been dirt done on that island, all right—not so long ago either,” opined Bingo. “It must have been the Siwash. I expect there’s more graves there, if we’d take a look. Oh, that Indian’s a bad one. Probably he’s been killing people and burying them out there right along.”

“Not probably—no,” objected Henry. “Remember, I know Adam John. He’s not that kind of an Indian.”

It was late when Lahleet got back to Harrington’s office—four in the afternoon.

“Did you retain Thompson?” asked Henry, eagerly.

“Just. He has been at home asleep all day.”

“Well, I be darned! Thompson was in that bunch. Well, that won’t hurt,” decided Henry on reflection. “Makes him solid with the town, and when he fights for Adam John it will have all the more force. But, say, did you hear they found a grave out there on the island?”

“Yes,” said Lahleet—so quickly, so quietly, so resignedly, that Harrington felt himself instantly warned off the subject by every instinct of chivalry.

Consequently he did not tell her that already he had rushed out to the island to examine the grave and every shred of its contents for clues to the mystery of the stolen twenty thousand and had found none.

CHAPTER XXIII

POPULAR imagination connected Adam John irrevocably with that bullet-crushed rib and vertebra, and Harrington saw that in this state of the public mind a fair trial for the Indian was impossible. He was brooding at his desk, slightly embittered at the universal hardness of heart, when Lahleet rushed in, laboring under great excitement.

“Now, will you believe me?” she cried, eyes snapping; and, as once before, from the red silken hand-bag she plucked out a crumpled paper and flung it on his desk.

But Henry held off his hands this time. “What’s this? Another stolen document? *Lahleet!*” His voice was thick with reproach.

“‘Business strategy!’” sneered the girl. “I came by it at least as legitimately as Boland is coming by Hurricane Island.”

“Hurricane Island?” inquired Henry, and curiosity overcoming scruples, he took up the paper.

For a moment there was silence, as with some pretense of deliberation, he flattened out two typewritten pages—silence save for the crackling of the linen bond—and then sudden explosive utterance: “A lease of Hurricane Island from the Edgewater & Eastern Railway Company to the Boland Cedar Company! By heavens!” he cried in outraged tones. With leaping glances Harrington gutted the pages of their meaning and his eyes lighted with understanding. “The Edge-

water & Eastern is a fiction," he divined excitedly. "It was created to get the island away from Adam John. The minute this paper railroad got a legal title it leased it to Boland."

He noted the date. "They could hardly wait to execute the document; and then, when, that same afternoon, Adam John shot Hogan, they were afraid to put it on record. It would look too bald—too—oh, Lord! Lahleet, this is rotten, rotten! Wherever you got it, it's rotten. But—it saves the life of Adam John," he assured solemnly, shaking the document till it rattled. "If Tom Scanlon thinks he can put over a thing like this on me, on this community—upon Mr. Boland, I'll fool him!"

Anxiety took wing from the worried face of Lahleet Marceau. "Now, Henry," she beamed admiringly, "now you are your real self again."

Harrington frowned confidently. "My real self? Don't you doubt it. I've been my real self all the time. This is just a rotten scheme of Scanlon's and Quackenbaugh's, maybe. I'll bust it even if I have to drag them both before Mr. Boland and expose them. Lahleet, you're a wonder! All you have to do now is to go back to your school and wait; and you won't have to wait very long either. I'm going to walk sixteen steps around the corner right now and make somebody sick."

Sixteen steps around the corner was the office of Thomas Scanlon, Chief Counsel. "Read that!" exclaimed Henry, bursting in upon him.

Scanlon's sparse brows were elevated in surprise and his astonished features mirrored some very quick thinking. "I have read it," he exclaimed grumpily.

"In fact, I wrote it myself. Where the devil did you get it?"

"No matter!" Harrington's tone was stern and his gray eyes got a steely glint in them, as he accused. "Scanlon! You, not Adam John, murdered Sheriff Hogan!"

Scanlon twisted uneasily. "Not me," he scowled with a deep flush. "The old man hatched that scheme."

"You mean to tell me," cried the outraged young man, "that Mr. Boland not only knew about this crooked scheme to trick a poor Indian out of his land, but that he actually devised it himself?"

"That's the God's truth, Harrington," asserted the Chief Counsel solemnly.

Eyes blazing indignant disbelief, but without another word to Scanlon, Harrington turned on his heel and went across the hall, face white and determined. When he was finally permitted to enter the private office, Mr. Boland was just hanging up the telephone. He extended his hand and it was velvet-soft: he offered a cigar and his manner was graciously hospitable—deliberate, unhurried and unrestrained.

But Henry was not this time to be put off his course by mere purring placidities. He gave back a pressure less responsive than he had ever given back to the clinging fingers of John Boland; he declined his *perfecto* with something less of urbanity than it had been offered; and he flung down the once more crumpled pages of the lease upon the glass-topped table and demanded firmly: "Mr. Boland, do you approve of this?"

That gentleman, betraying not the slightest perception that Harrington's manner was unusual, took up the document with curiosity as if he had never

seen it before—which was perhaps the truth. He read it carefully from the first line to the last and then from under his beetling brows looked at Henry. “Seems sound,” he observed meditatively.

“Sound?” gasped that young man.

“It’ll hold, I judge,” declared Mr. Boland, as with satisfaction at a good piece of legal carpentry.

“Hold!” cried Henry, feelings unbottled. “Do you mean that you are satisfied with that document, Mr. Boland? Do you mean that it seems commendable to you? That you do not see the iniquity of it? Do not see that it is a mere trick—a subterfuge? That it may conform to the letter of the law, but that it is a gross perversion of the spirit of it? That it makes the law a mockery, a pretense, a sham? That it makes of Jim Hogan not an officer of the law but a highway robber? And that he wasn’t any more sacred because he was your highway robber?”

Mr. Boland sat suddenly rigid, his features hard as some glacier-chiseled face upon the Devonian rock. “*My* highway-robber?” he rebuked cuttingly. “You are not so happy in your choice of words today.”

“I’m not happy—I’m not happy about anything this morning, Mr. Boland,” Henry confessed, letting down a little. “I’m very much distressed. I’m all shot to pieces and that’s the truth. Why, Mr. Boland, you amaze me! You strike me silly when you stand for a thing like this. It looks to me wrong, all wrong, every bit of it wrong. Or—am I?” Harrington wiped his brow and sank into a chair to sit gazing with a bewildered air at Mr. Boland.

“You are!” assured Mr. Boland with emphasis, as he returned Harrington’s scrutiny calmly.

"But think, Mr. Boland," Henry pleaded desperately. "What an opportunity to emphasize respect for law in the abstract! What a dramatic contrast! John Boland against Adam John—a white empire builder with all his millions and his mighty dreams against one little half-breed Indian, with his little dreams and his beautiful faith in that piece of parchment which Uncle Sam had given him. And suppose you had bowed to the parchment—all your enterprise halted by that—scrap of paper? It would have been wonderful! It was your chance to be sublime!"

Mr. Boland condescended to smile at such naïve enthusiasm. "You are a sentimentalist, Henry," he allowed; then proceeded to differ. "It couldn't have been sublime because it wouldn't be moral to permit a great program like ours to be held up by the obstinacy of one ignorant little Indian. It is due to the crude inadequacy of the law that we have to resort to this, as you say, subterfuge."

"It was a murderous subterfuge," groaned Henry, sinking low in his chair, utterly depressed by the opacity of Mr. Boland's mind upon the subject.

"Most unfortunate, that affair," agreed Mr. Boland with fine regret. "But we have to be men of stout heart, Henry—stout heart, if we would accomplish big things."

The expression upon the Boland countenance was once more entirely benign. There remained but to dramatize the conviction that he had won another victory. He did that by taking up the lease from his glass-topped table. Methodically he smoothed its rumplings, asking no questions as to how they came there; deliberately, affectionately almost, he folded the

document and creased the folds; then casually handed it back to Henry—this indisputable evidence of a transaction that was fraud and a killing that was murder. This was his advertisement that he felt his project secure and believed that Henry Harrington had no menace in him. Henry accepted the document silently and lifted his eyes, marveling.

But there could be still another dramatic emphasis. Mr. Boland imparted it by rising and reaching for his hat, with Henry still sitting confounded. "You don't mind my leaving you?" suggested Old Two Blades. "Stay here as long as you like. It's as good a place to think it out as any."

"Not in the least," said Henry politely, and was left staring as, after an affectionate pressure upon his shoulder, Mr. Boland, still wearing his benignest smile, carrying his gloves and gold-headed cane, looking dapper as his slender, elegantly tailored figure looked always dapper, crossed the room and went out by his private exit to a private stairway that led downward to a covered court from which there was inconspicuous egress to the street.

Just why the architect should have been instructed to provide this private getaway for J. B. from his office, Harrington did not speculate; but slowly rose and addressed the door as if it were the man who had just gone through it.

"Mr. Boland," he began in a low firm voice, "I know that you are wrong, utterly and everlastingly wrong. Unjustly, cruelly and murderously wrong . . . underneath all your blandness. Why is it that I cannot tell you so as forcefully as I feel it?" The door did not answer. "But do not mistake my dumbness. As sol-

emply as I can assure you of anything, I tell you now that this project shall never go through." If Henry had ever meant anything in his life, he meant this. "Why is it," he mused, "that I can't talk to him? It must be because he is Billie's—Billie!" He interrupted himself. "Billie, I'll get Billie to help me. She'll make him see it!" But he interrupted himself again. "By the Almighty!" he breathed. "I can't go to Billie and point out with a diagram and an x-marks-the-spot that her father has connived at a low fraud and is accessory to a murder."

CHAPTER XXIV

HENRY turned back to Scanlon. "Say! Help me to get Mr. Boland to see the wrong of this thing, won't you?" he appealed earnestly.

"You haven't got me to see it yet, Henry," reminded Scanlon bluntly; "and you're not going to."

Quackenbaugh proved equally stubborn. "You couldn't expect us to sit quietly by and see our mill program held up by one stubborn little Siwash, could you?" he sniffed.

"Blind—blind as the rest of them," mourned Henry, as he went back sickly to his office.

The next morning there was an important item in the Blade. It began:

The Edgewater & Eastern Railway recorded yesterday a lease of sixty acres of Hurricane Island to the Boland Cedar Company.

Henry smiled grimly. "Smoked 'em out, anyway," he chuckled; but the chuckle died. The item was confession of fact, but it was also defiance—notice that the project was to be carried forward whether or no. Besides, it was clever strategy; it kept any contrary person from making a sensation out of this disclosure.

It is understood [expounded the item] that the Cedar Company will take advantage of the facilities offered by the railroad by immediate erection of the largest shingle

mill in the world. This mill will give employment to hundreds of persons and is but the first of many benefits which will accrue to Socatullo County through the new railroad.

“So that’s the game!” perceived Henry. “Bribing the whole community—blinding it with self-interest, as Scanlon and Quackenbaugh are blinded.”

Now to blind a community eye seemed to Henry to be planting dynamite under every interest of a man like John Boland, all of whose enterprises were ultimately so dependent upon the good will of the people. Conscientiously, therefore, he determined to see Mr. Boland again, and for once was satisfied with the force of his argument; but it was evident that Old Two Blades listened with more self-control than patience.

“Nonsense!” he answered. “Snap out of it! Wake up! I am beginning to be annoyed with you, Henry!” There was a glitter in the recessed eyes and the thin lips clamped with just the faintest suggestion of a twenty-three-ton vault door closing noiselessly, yet closing—till the tick of time should open it again.

Henry gained a feeling that an immense and relentless personal force had manifested itself to him. Yet he, Henry, did not feel bitter against Mr. Boland. “It’s Scanlon and Quackenbaugh,” he accused. “They’ve got him fooled completely. He told me once he was entirely surrounded by liars. I told him I’d tell him the truth—always. I’m trying to now, and . . . *he won’t let me.*”

Henry had become a very much harried young man. He was not sleeping well. He was not working well. Even his love for Billie that had been everything to him—well, it was inevitable that she should notice.

"You are troubled about something?" she divined one night when they sat indoors before an open fire, for an unseasonable rain was falling in a country where rain is supposed to be always seasonable. It was chill outside and raw, and it was a bit chill in Henry's heart, notwithstanding the cozy comfort of the library fire.

"Troubled? I should say I am troubled," he confessed huskily, and all at once it seemed possible to outline to her the inside story of Hurricane Island—shielding her father carefully, putting the burden of the iniquity entirely on Scanlon and Quackenbaugh.

But when he had finished, Billie viewed him with a clear and sifting gaze. "Aren't you presuming a good deal, Henry?" she asked. "Aren't you . . . reflecting on father's intelligence a little? He's smarter than Scanlon and Quackenbaugh. They couldn't fool him. And he wouldn't do anything that is wrong. Not anything. Father is a very conscientious man. Really, Henry!" Her brows were beautifully arched; her eyes were soft but wondering and accusative, almost as speculating whether all this success which had come to her lover so swiftly might not have turned his head. And there he was, stopped again.

"It's not that she's blind like the rest of them," he reasoned when at length he was out in the misting rain, and crossing to where his car was parked. "It's because I couldn't tell it to her exactly as it is—in all its hideousness—without hurting her." And Henry, standing with the rain in his uplifted face, then and there highly resolved that he would not hurt her. No! For he loved her. No act of his should ever paint the blush of shame upon that proud cheek nor shatter such beautiful faith in her father's rectitude.

But staring between the headlights as he drove down the hill there appeared to him the twisted, half-emerged face of the Indian, Adam John, with the sloe-black eyes set upon him in humblest, sublimest faith. And the noose, he knew, was hourly tightening about the neck of Adam John. Henry found himself struggling for breath as if it were his own neck. "I've got to stop them," he declared desperately, between clenched teeth. "I've got to stop them."

Next morning two things happened. Henry saw Billie off on the day boat for a week of visiting, shopping and theater-going in Portland; and John Boland refused him an audience. This was the first time that had ever happened. Henry received the announcement almost incredulously; and got hastily back to his own room. "If I can't talk to him, how can I make him see it?" he murmured huskily. "And if I can't make him see it, what do I do then?"

He was still pondering the last question when Lahleet entered, looking pale and anxious, and flapped five hundred dollars down upon his desk. "Thompson's retainer!" she exclaimed excitedly.

"Public opinion, eh?" scorned Henry, thinking withering thoughts of Stacey Thompson.

"No! He was very frank about it," explained Lahleet; "said he'd had intimations from somewhere in the Boland cabinet that if he made more than a perfunctory defense of Adam John it would be the worse for him."

"*What!*" Harrington was on his feet with a roar. "They won't even let the poor devil have his case fairly presented?" His sense of justice had never been quite so outraged. "Well, that settles it," he declared in vibrant tones. "*I will defend Adam John myself!*"

“Henry!” The word, a cry rather, was abrupt and ringing, full of vibrant joy, the sudden relief after long and painful suspense. With it the girl came over quickly and bent her face into his arm, weeping.

Harrington smiled wonderingly and, looking down, touched caressingly the glossy braids of her hair. As he felt pleurably the weight of her little body upon his arm, he was inspired with a new, quick compassion for the girl, realizing that she who had always been so strong and self-sufficient, teasing him, challenging him at times, was after all mere frail femininity.

“But—are you strong enough, do you think?” Lahleet asked, suddenly lifting her tearful face. “Strong enough for what they will do to you?”

“Do to me?” laughed Henry. “What *can* they do to me? Besides, I shall not attack Mr. Boland—not at all. I shall merely show that Boland General resorted to a mistaken piece of strategy on the ground of which Adam John is entitled to acquittal.”

But the little school-teacher’s face was full of apprehension. “He will fight you; it will cost you . . . *everything!*” she persisted.

Henry did not try to argue. Lahleet, with all that white blood and white education could do for her, was still simple, elemental; she scorned to fathom the complexities of highly organized natures like, for instance, his and Mr. Boland’s.

“At least I ought to tell Billie,” he saw quite clearly, when Lahleet had gone, after kissing his hand impulsively, as she had done once before; “for I—I’m going to have to hurt her a little—a very little at least,” he perceived, a sickish feeling in his breast.

But he told Scanlon first, because Scanlon was

nearer to him—told him firmly: "I'm going to defend Adam John. I'm going to read the Hurricane Island lease to the jury, explain what it means." Scanlon seemed greatly astonished and greatly distressed.

"Why, you wouldn't do that, would you, Henry?" he remonstrated feelingly. "We're all your friends," he urged. "You can't turn on *us*, you know." His reproach was so gentle that it made Harrington feel very mean.

"But I shall not be turning on you," the young man urged earnestly. "It's just this one matter that we differ on."

"Besides, you can't go back on the Old Man," reminded Scanlon as if horrified at the thought. "Why, he loves you, Henry. You wouldn't want to break old J. B.'s heart, would you?" he urged with astonishing tenderness, for so gross a man.

"Certainly not," averred Henry wretchedly, "but I guess I will have to hurt him a little to make him understand."

Scanlon must have seen that Harrington was absolutely determined. "Oh, Lord!" he groaned. "This is going to be awful." Tough old Scanlon! Why, it looked as if he were about to cry. "Wait here, Henry," he suddenly appealed, "wait. Promise me to wait." Harrington nodded and the Chief Fixer hurried out of the room.

"Got him going!" Henry smiled to himself. "He's gone to see Mr. Boland. Gone after him, perhaps."

But it was Quackenbaugh who came back with Scanlon, wild-eyed this time, hoarse with excitement. "Henry!" he cried, rushing upon him. "Henry!" and the reproach in his tone was greater than Scanlon had

been able to manage and harder to resist, for Quackenbaugh's was a perceptibly finer soul. "You're not going to turn on me, Henry, are you? Hurricane Island is my scheme, you know. You're not going to make it hard for me, are you, with J. B.?" There was almost a quaver in the voice; and there was that about the way in which Quackenbaugh's misty eyes bored into his that made Harrington feel small and ornery.

"Of course I'm not, Quack. It's just——"

"But you are, Henry," persisted the president of Boland Cedar, in teary tones; "you *are* turning against me if you attack that lease."

"I'm going to attack it," announced Harrington resolutely.

Quackenbaugh calmed himself, accepting the inevitable. "I'm hurt, Henry—that's all," he said solemnly, and exchanged a glance with Scanlon.

Harrington felt a knife turning in his own heart, appreciating freshly what a fine manly fellowship it was to which he had been admitted in this Cabinet of Boland General, and realizing how much he wanted to retain that fellowship.

"Promise you won't say anything about it, Henry; this nutty notion of yours—not yet—till I can get some of the other boys to talk to you, won't you?" Scanlon pleaded wistfully.

"Why, sure, old man; let 'em come," Harrington's heart made answer. It was no use, of course, but—it was fair. He wrung the hands of the two more sympathetically at parting than he had ever wrung them before.

"They're making more of it than I expected," he

ruminated, strolling toward his office. "Suppose I must seem like a regular Judas to them. Isn't it the devil that they can't see it? Good fellows, they are—darned good fellows. Lord, but they've been nice to me. It's going to be hard—harder than I thought." He braced himself in his swivel chair and waited for the appeals of the "other boys."

Edmunds, president of the transportation interest, was first of the cabinet to come, entering full of solicitude, as for a friend. He warned, coaxed, cajoled. He made it clear that Henry owed him several debts of gratitude and wanted to know if his idea of reciprocation was to betray them all over a worthless Siwash?

Then came others. Each pleader succeeded in making Henry feel that somehow he was under obligation to him; and not one of them was able to see that the attorney's proposal to defend Adam John was anything but a rash, reckless, inconsiderate sort of sabotage upon a sacred fabric of friendships.

"This is going to be fierce," the young man muttered to himself, "fierce." Every favor he had ever given or received, every nod or smile he had ever exchanged, seemed to be remembered against him now, made the ground of an appeal to bend him from a moral purpose. He saw himself bound with ropes of velvet, but none the less ropes; shackled with the chains of a golden association, but none the less chains. "It's a regular third degree," he groaned, sweating distress at every pore. "If they would only get mad!" he stewed. "But this damned buttonholing, teary-eyed stuff! It's fierce—that's what it is, *fierce!*"

Two days this sort of thing kept up; two nights reproachful faces were round him in his sleep and voices

muttered at him in his dreams; but by the third day rumor of what Henry intended seemed to have spread, and a procession of the townspeople began to visit his office—men like Gaylord and Schuler and Foster.

“I’m interested in seeing that nobody pitches a monkey wrench into the Boland machinery,” the Mayor explained. “Henry, you don’t want to do anything to injure the community,” mourned Schuler.

But this outside pressure made Henry angry. “Community, rot!” he blazed. “It’s mere selfishness that brings you fellows here. I’m getting fed up anyway—tired of having everybody try to make a goat out of me. Community, eh? Why, the community’s very existence depends on justice from the courts for small as for great. Community? By George, that’s the big point. It isn’t the scrawny little Indian; it’s the community I’m going to stand up for and defend.”

Thus did the issue widen in Harrington’s mind.

“I can’t make out Henry at all,” Mayor Foster told Gaylord and Schuler, going down the stairs, and the banker and the merchant confessed themselves mystified by this sudden clouding of one of the city’s brightest minds.

But it was not alone self-appointed meddlers who were discussing Henry now.

His rumored intention had traveled widely this third day. He was being talked about everywhere, in the lodges, in the women’s clubs; before the county medical association, by the ministerial association, on the corners of the streets, in the front rooms of soft drink parlors and in the back rooms of bootleg joints; and always with disfavor—because of a mere rumored intent of his, the first ever to invoke a criticism of any sort.

CHAPTER XXV

BILLIE, because she was in Portland, knew nothing of all this pother; and Henry was beginning to need her. He felt drained and weakened by the steadily dripping reproaches of three long days. He was a young man who had thrived upon the general good will and suddenly the general good will was taken from him. The girl was his great untapped reservoir of moral strength.

"I must see you, Billie," he confided over the long-distance wire, "I hate to have you breaking off your visit for me but I need you something awful."

"I'd break off anything for you," purred Billie's voice vibrant with the instinctive perceptions of love. "I'll take the morning boat and be in at three o'clock."

"Oh, you—you darling!" murmured Henry gratefully.

When the conversation was over he boasted to himself: "A brick house doesn't have to fall on that girl. It's going to hurt her when I tell her though. I—I must be very, very careful. But she'll be game. She'll wink the tears away and help."

Henry slept that night, and in the morning rose up strong, prepared to resist like adamant that wearing stream which would again be turned upon his resolution. But, to his surprise, there was no wearing stream. Callers came and went, but during the entire morning there was not one reference to the defense of Adam

John. Perhaps this was more clever psychology on Scanlon's part; for with the pressure lifted, Henry's resolution relaxed a bit. He was in one of his regretting moods when Charlie Clayton came in about the McKenzie's Tongue project.

Now McKenzie's Tongue was a strip of land some seventeen hundred acres in extent from which Boland General had stripped the timber, and there was a bill before the state legislature to acquire this land for sixty-two thousand dollars and locate the new state prison upon it. "The bill will be up for final passage in the house sometime next week," reminded Clayton. "It will go through all right of course; but since it's of special benefit to our end of the state, it will look better to have a full delegation voting from Socaltullo County. Better arrange to be there, Henry."

"Count on me," smiled Harrington; "but be sure and let me know when it's coming up. I've got a good deal on my mind right now."

Clayton looked as if he understood. "All right; so long."

It did Henry good to have Clayton come in like this and consult him quite in the old way. It showed that there was to be no permanent or wide-front break in his relations with the official family of Boland General. Yet he was not long permitted to enjoy entirely comfortable reflections. Senator Murphy was announced.

"What can she want?" speculated Henry.

There were several women in the state legislature this term, earnest, intelligent and, some of them, astonishingly astute. None took their duties any more seriously than Sarah Murphy. She was self-assertive to a degree. She was almost offensively honest, exceed-

ingly outspoken and a little of a nuisance; but Harrington had rather admired her aggressiveness and did not resent her activities as a good many legislators did. He was fingering her card with pleasurable anticipations when she entered, large and masterful but withal an attractive woman, a youthful forty in appearance, with dark eyes and a firm but dimpled chin.

"Henry, how do you stand upon that McKenzie's Tongue project?" she demanded promptly.

"Naturally, I'm for it," answered Henry.

Senator Murphy's handsome eyes narrowed and her tone became as grim as her expression. "You know it's a job, don't you? A low-down dirty steal! Hatched by George Madden to pay old Boland sixty-two thousand dollars for a lot of land that isn't worth a German mark or a Russian ruble."

"I guess it isn't any *job*," bridled Henry. "Mr. Boland makes mistakes but he doesn't deal in *jobs*. The old prison site is unhealthy; new buildings have to be erected anyway; the Tongue is breeze-swept and the soil is rich; the prisoners will clear the ground and make those 1700 acres produce food enough for themselves and half the other state institutions."

"Besides which," Senator Murphy chimed in sarcastically, "it will give John Boland something for nothing, not to mention nice fat pickings in supply bills for the merchants of Socatullo County. No, Henry; this argument of yours is the bunk Senator Madden and Boland's kept-press have been feeding out to the whole state. The old prison site is as healthy as your McKenzie's Tongue. It's the old building, inadequate and insanitary, that makes the hospital list so long. It will cost less to erect new buildings there with prison

labor than to erect them on McKenzie's Tongue; and you know it would take five years to get that Socatullo wilderness in shape to grow one mess of green corn. Henry, it's a job, a plain John Boland job. They railroaded it through the Senate before I was awake; but I'm going to beat that bill in the Assembly or my name's not Sarah Murphy. Henry, I want you to vote against it. I want you to speak against it."

Harrington was too polite to smile. "You'll have to show me!" he answered seriously.

Senator Murphy proceeded to show him. Opening up a Boston bag she produced documents, affidavits and reports, and volubly indicated their significance; then turned his attention to a roll of the House, opposite each name of which she had penciled an N or a Y.

Harrington's eye ran down the column. "Jerry Cunningham, there," he challenged. "If the deal's wrong, he'd nose it out and be against it."

"He would if he hadn't been *reached*," replied the lady, with a sarcastic wrinkling of her large nose. "Jerry had a mortgage due on his prune ranch the year that prunes went down with a crash; but the mortgage wasn't foreclosed. Some influence from Socatullo County came up and saved his neck with the money-lenders. Somebody scratched his back and now he's got to scratch theirs."

"Is that the way you interpret it?" smiled Henry.

"Same way with old man Hemmingford—only different," affirmed the lady with an emphatic nod. "He's been carrying a patch of fir timber down in his corner of the state till he couldn't carry it any longer. About the time Clayton was scurrying around for votes on this project, somebody bought a piece of Hemming-

ford's timber for so much that he can afford to carry the rest of it till the increase in values makes him rich. More back-scratching!"

Henry was amused, but Senator Murphy was only the more aroused. "That is the modern method of bribery, you know—back-scratching," she frowned savagely. "Men are not bought with gold in this legislature; and yet they're bought just the same. Usually they don't know they're bought. They think they're only playing square, showing appreciation for kindness—that sort of thing. 'We've scratched your back; now you scratch ours.' That's the system. It isn't alone in our legislature; it's in our courts and in our administrative offices, tax-assessors, prosecuting attorneys and all that."

"Naturally, I've heard of the practice," remarked Henry dryly, and wondered if the senator suspected how in the last four days his back had been curried till it was raw and he was getting mad.

"And it isn't only money," observed Senator Murphy acutely. "Here's George Lamont. Now nobody could give George a dishonest dollar, but his wife has social aspirations. Get her an invitation to a week-end at Boland's, and you could deliver old George Lamont on almost anything. Why, the Boland corporations are among the most skilful back-scratchers in the state."

"I've been finding that out," admitted Henry, grimly. "Only you're wrong to accuse Mr. Boland of it personally. He may have done all those favors you speak of. Probably did. He's a kindly man yet not above knowing that individual gratitudes might make it easier for legislatures to do their duty; but—the general good is attached to every project of his."

"You'll look pretty close, Henry, to find it attached to this," charged Senator Murphy, tapping significantly the little pile of papers.

"Leave them with me for a day or two," proposed Henry.

The senator left him thinking deeply, as so many of his callers had of late. He was still thinking when the realization came that Billie's boat was almost due, and he reached the apron just as it was docking.

"Henry!" Billie cried and sprang into his arms, kissed him and gave him one quick, ecstatic little hug, right before the small throng upon the dock. Henry guessed that demonstration would rather settle any wild rumors, wouldn't it? How proud he was of her! And of her frank loyalty!

"Oh, Henry!" she cried, and kissed him again.

Half an hour later they were in his car and headed for a nook beneath a giant cedar on the western slope of Pigeon Point, a nook that was only three miles away and yet so sequestered and beautiful—wildly beautiful—that it was a favorite trysting place of theirs.

She nestled close as he drove, giving his arm from time to time, more of those quick, ecstatic little hugs. Her talk was swift, ejaculatory phrases, but of nothing in particular. There seemed nothing to occupy her mind but love—and Henry. He too ejaculated, but nothing consequential. For each there was nothing in the world but the other. Every sight Billie saw upon the road seemed pleasing. Everything called for smiles. Every remark of his, every little gesture of his free hand; every squeeze and pinch of his toying, playful fingers seemed to her uproariously funny, breathlessly amusing.

"Oh, it's so—so good just to be with you—you!" she was crying spontaneously, as they turned in beneath the jagged arms of the storm-beaten old cedar, with the sun letting himself down into the western haze—the peering, knowing sun. Here, with the windows of the car wide, the drone of wind in boughs above, a murmur in that wide lip of sea-foam before them, with the invigorating bite of salt air and the freshening breeze in their nostrils, they saw and heard and inhaled and forgot. Love was having its hour.

Never had kisses been so tender, so clinging, so electrifying. Passion mounted to its peak and passed, but love flowed on in still deep water. Soft looks, languorous caresses, sighs, heart-throbs, little bursts of silly lovers' laughter; and then more striving to compass all sweet ecstasy in a single caress, a single long-drawn, slow-mounting embrace. Raptures! Transports!

Little nothings Billie whispered in Henry's ear. She played with his hair, she dwelt with velvet lips upon his gray, love-filled eyes. "Oh, how—how wonderful you are!" she sighed. Her hat had fallen off, her hair was disarranged, she hung upon his shoulder, re-observing fondly every detail of his lean, chiseled face.

Henry lay back upon the cushioned seat, eyes half-closed, dimly conscious of the world outside, but keenly conscious of the universe within the circle of his arms. He had yielded to a lassitude, but it was a delicious lassitude until there stole in upon it, like an assassin in the night, a thought.

And with the thought obtruded a sense of cruel separation, as of some strong jealous hand thrust into the car and prying their warm, attracted bodies apart.

Harrington knew what it was—what he must do. It was rude—the rudest possible awakening. It was the most poignant and shattering intrusion of a chaos upon a paradise. He must *tell* her. It was her right. Besides, he needed those reënforcements which slumbered in reserve in that palpitant beauty by his side. He must tell her and he did, not without flinching, but quite without mincing—that he would defend Adam John!

He had been holding her hand. It grew cold and limp in his. All at once it had fallen out of his grasp. He felt her body grow tense, and as if breaking from the spell of some nightmare whose horror had been slowly congealing her veins, she whispered in a hoarse chill of fear: “Henry . . . Henry! What have you been saying?”

She sat up and stared at him utterly incredulous, with an awed note in her voice. “Fight . . . *fight my father?*” Her face had grown very white, her lips were puckered until they showed no red at all. Her sweet mouth had become a wound that quivered as with an awful hurt. Henry’s heart was melted entirely. It was so much more suffering than he felt it would be necessary to bring to her. He wanted to take her again into his arms and to console and reassure.

“Not fight him—no!” he argued wretchedly. “Merely defend——”

But Billie’s own keen intelligence perceived both a falsity in this distinction and that he did not perceive it—which made her suddenly wild at his obtuseness for supposing that he could attack Boland General without attacking John Boland; or that he could reflect upon him without laying the lash upon the quivering flesh of his daughter! The tears of an uncontrollable

rage leaped into her eyes. She seized him by the lapels and shook him. "Stupid!" she cried, and was more deeply angered by the futility of the word. "*Stupid!*"

Henry was astounded at her frenzy, but still tender. "Billie!" he expostulated, grasping her hands. "Billie! Won't you understand?" His appeal was desperate. "I have to do it. It's a matter of conscience."

"Conscience!" she scorned. "It's for that stubborn little Indian!"

"No, no; not for any individual," he insisted. "For something infinitely bigger. Won't you see, dear?" he implored humbly. "Oh, why won't you let me make it clear to you so that you can make it clear to your father? And then all this will be un——"

"To my father!" the girl raged, and flung his hands from hers, contemptuous at his presuming still to reflect upon either her father's intelligence or his moral judgments. "You fool!" Her glance scorched. "You . . . you traitor!" She breathed that last denunciation slowly, with the utmost of feeling, and the slightest of vocalization, looked at him for an instant longer to burn the brand in, then stepped out of the car as from contamination.

Harrington was stunned rather than hurt—sick with dismay at the discovery that Billie was as blind as the others. Where, he marveled, was all that wonderful sympathy for the poor and downtrodden of earth which she had manifested in his earlier talks with her—words of hers that had quickened and inspired him into the very position in which he found himself today? Where was it? Nowhere, he perceived, when reflections on her father were involved. He, to her, was a god who would not err.

Henry sat completely baffled, with a choking sensation in his throat. Yet—yet it must be that the girl could be got to see a moral chasm wide as the Grand Canyon. He must make another effort; he left the car and confronted her.

Billie faced him defiantly. Offended majesty, injured pride, hurt love, unbelievable disappointment, thwarted self-will, childish petulance—she got them all into her air. “When men fight my father he breaks them like this!” she warned haughtily, and her quick hands made the gesture of snapping a twig and casting it disdainfully aside.

“But, Billie!” Henry protested feebly. “I—I thought you loved me.”

Her scorn was quick. “I—I thought I loved you too,” she astonished him by retorting; “but . . . can a woman love a fool?” Dramatically her glance circled upward to the sky as in mute protest that God could have played her such a trick as make her love a fool. It was the artifice that did it. Henry became angry.

“If I—if I am that,” he had begun hotly, when the sudden change in his manner made her see him with different eyes, take re-account of him—who he was. Her impatient rage had been more like an explosion than a conflagration anyway. Revulsion was swift but—amusingly, femininely uncompromising.

“Oh, why did I let myself love you?” she cried in a voice teary with utter exasperation, and the next moment had flung herself into his arms and was weeping on his shoulder.

“Henry!” she cried and hugged him to her. “Henry!” Her sobs beat against the drums of his ears; her kisses were warm and moist upon his neck. “I don’t want

you broken," she cried piteously, hugging him close, "Oh, I don't want you broken!"

"Broken?" Harrington smiled expansively at his unexpectedly quick victory. "Why, how little you understand your father!"

"Little you do!" she retorted in a voice muffled against his side, and he felt her body shuddering against his. "Besides, I promised them you wouldn't. Oh, you humiliate me so!"

Harrington started and held her off from him fiercely. "W-what!" he gasped, horrified. "You promised them? Who? Promised what?"

"Scanlon and father," wailed the muffled voice. "Promised that I wouldn't let you make a fool of yourself like this."

"Then you . . . you knew all about it before I told you?" breathed Henry, aghast. The girl lifted her head to face the accusation in his tone, and saw slow horror mounting in her lover's eyes. "You were only acting then—when you gave yourself up to me——" he charged, and his voice trembled as his mind reviewed the sacred emotions of the last hour.

"No, no," she protested frenziedly. "Don't look at me, Henry, like that. I meant—oh, your kisses meant everything to me. I—I was trying to forget that we had to—disagree so, so horribly!"

Something of the revulsion in him lessened. He could understand that. He too had tried to forget, but—*she had promised them* not to let him make a fool of himself. She, too, was a back-scratcher! Her glance fell before the indictment in his eyes, and, sobbing as if discovered in shame and overcome with humiliation, she turned to sit apart from him upon a fallen tree.

And this was his reservoir of moral strength that he had counted on so confidently! Harrington gazed down at the girl in a kind of sad wonder, properly sorry for her, but sorry also for himself. It seemed as if all the fates of the universe had conspired against him; had woven this net of circumstances about him with only one way out—rough-shod over her heart.

“I had been depending on you to help me, Billie,” he managed to stammer in a ragged voice. “I—I needed your proud strength.”

Her strength *was* proud. She showed it by her manner, an utter unresponsiveness to the pathos in this last trembling appeal of his. Her sobbings had ceased. She was investing herself with a kind of lofty reserve. She turned dry eyes to where the sun buried his brazen head in gorgeous clouds and glorified waters. The sense of a fundamental difference in moral perception drove itself between the two of them with the chill and the power of a glacial wedge.

CHAPTER XXVI

WHEN next morning Henry viewed his stubbled, haggard face in the glass he reviled himself at his own weakness. " 'Hellfire' Harrington!" he scoffed. "You look like it now, don't you? Crying like a baby, crumpling like a man of straw just because a girl goes back on you—quitting as if there was a streak of yellow in you wider than the inlet out there. Oh, yes, you're a hell of a Hellfire, you are!"

But after a little bit he had decided desperately: "I must see her again! I must see her immediately." He dressed for the occasion with that precise attention to detail of the gallant who expects this day to die with his boots on and is proudly concerned to make an immaculate corpse. Passing up between the statues of Lewis and Clark he came face to face with Mr. Boland—their first encounter in some days—the first since Mr. Boland had refused to see him.

"Good morning, Mr. Boland," said Henry, politely.

"Well, young man!" hailed the magnate sternly, harshly, as addressing a culprit, and Henry felt for the first time the bare impact of the man's displeasure. It was as if a blow, instead of a glance, had struck him. It conveyed an ominous, creeping feeling that he couldn't shake off when Mr. Boland had passed; for Old Two Blades did pass, stiff and uncompromising, without another word. This manner of his struck Henry as somehow sinister; and there was a sinister

coldness in the eye of the sun this morning; a sinister sharpness in the bite of the air, nothing of which was so very strange since it was to be a sinister day. Mr. Boland was even now on his way to meet Scanlon and issue staff orders—orders with a sinister significance so far as Henry Harrington was concerned.

Down at the state capital, too, things were moving. Senator Madden and Charlie Clayton were getting the McKenzie's Tongue bill jumped forward for action tonight. And away off at the capital of the nation things were happening also, which had a significance for Henry.

For one thing, the great seal of the United States was about to go down upon a document of vast importance that had been moving through the routine of the bureau for weeks, slipping from desk to desk, from hand to hand, from eye to eye.

For another, an associate justice of the Supreme Court was busy correcting the typewritten pages of a decision which he had just been dictating, meticulously concerned that his meanings should be clear and his references exact. To be sure of this latter, he occasionally turned to bound volumes of typewritten testimony and to the lines of two maps, one old and faded, the other new and distinct.

There had been conference and debate already between the justices, goings over of briefs and studyings of the record. Gradually the briefs had been discarded and those eminent, shrewd, tenacious, legal minds contemplated only the record. Now Justice Bradshaw had written their opinion—their unanimous opinion. Within a few days the Court in bank would hand it down.

But a third arm of the government at Washington

was also busy upon concerns that had to do with this far-off corner of the country. The Secret Service Bureau, tracing the movements and contemplating the mystery of the appearance and disappearance of a dangerous criminal, had focused its eye upon this great Northwest, because of certain facts which had this day come to its knowledge.

But Henry, unaware of some of these convergences and unmindful of others, took his way wretchedly up the wide walk to Humboldt House with the chill of John Boland's bitter glance in his marrow and the slight consolation of a very sickly hope within his breast.

As for Billie, that haughty reserve with which she had parted from her lover had presently given place to anguished misgivings and she had spent a restless night. In her morning room, with wide windows looking to the inlet and the sea, but with the bright sun letting no cheer into her heart, Henry found her. She was wearing a weeping-willow air and a frock in some shade so neutral that it declined entirely to announce itself, merely blending with the pathos of a disconsolate yet beautiful figure which drooped in a grass-woven chair, banked round with cretonne cushions. But at sight of her lover Billie sprang up with a cry of eagerness and suddenly inspired hope.

"Henry! Oh, Henry!" she rejoiced; then observing the lined gravity of his expression and the mournful, pleading light of his great gray eyes, hope died, and her own eyes filled with tears. She flung out her hands to him hoarsely and pleaded: "Henry . . . Henry . . . You must not do this mad thing. You must not!"

The lover, touched even as he had not been before,

and with all that sense of the sinister chilling him, could only shake his head more gravely still and plead in turn, voice freighted with all the tenderness of which he was capable: "Billie, you must not take it as you do—must not. You *must* see that I am right. You must."

He felt her mood change, her figure harden in his grasp. "But you're—you're *not right*," she stormed indignantly. "You're not right!" Her manner was instantly imperious; she could never be suppliant for long.

Meeting the blaze of those eyes, Harrington read in them the worst that he had feared; but he was firm this morning—he had to be as thoughts of the nearness of the noose to trustful Adam John came to him—but with all his firmness he had to be very, very gentle too. "Then you'll—you'll just have to wait, dear," he told her softly, whisperingly almost; "wait a little bit till you can see the thing more clearly."

"But you—you're ruining everything," she flung out at him petulantly.

"On the contrary, I'm saving everything," he told her quite calmly.

"Fool!" she cried angrily, and flung him from her. "Obstinate fool! Go away. You make me so—so ashamed!" And she pitched herself into the cushions again, face hidden, weeping inconsolably.

Harrington stood biting his lip, knees trembling, for it weakened him immeasurably to have finally and definitely lost her moral support. Moreover it dismayed him to realize that she was not and never had been quite what he had thought—to perceive that she whom he had idealized, the goddess whom he had worshiped,

who had inspired him to a deepening adherence to that very principle which dictated to him today, could not comprehend that principle herself, and for his holding to it she called him "fool" and "obstinate" and bade him go away.

Yet he knew in his heart that he still worshiped her, idealized her; that she still inspired him. Confessing this to himself, he regarded her wistfully, very greatly perplexed, a pained expression on his face, not knowing whether to approach or to hold himself off.

"Go!" she burst out at him with an impetuous head-to-foot gesture of her quivering body. "Go!" She was utterly and irrecoverably out of patience with him.

Yet Henry still gazed at her now unregarding figure, his face full of a growing compassion. He thought that he began to understand. Billie, so regal and so beautiful, so imperious and so appealingly broken just now, so unaccustomed to be thwarted, so utterly outraged with him, was not the hard-hearted, morally obtuse little despot that she seemed. She was merely spoiled, self-willed, self-deluded, blinded by a veil of materialism, dominated by the personality of her really great but somewhat misguided father, repeating his grandiloquent phrases after him with less understanding of their meaning than he had, which perhaps was little enough.

She thought that she was an independent thinker, self-sufficient, schooled, seasoned by her travel and observation, when in fact she had been screened and sheltered; she was soft and tenderly nurtured, a mere Persian kitten of a woman, who had yet to learn what it is to be actually and not theoretically sympathetic, who would have to acquire softness of heart and tough-

ness of fiber as other women acquired it, in the school of suffering. Well, so be it.

And today she was matriculating in that school, while he appeared to be in for some sort of post-graduate course himself. They would be separated and yet in a way they would be together—in suffering. There was a kind of sad satisfaction in that. Instead of despair, hope grew in his breast. Even her angry sobbings proved how much she loved him. But she had told him to go.

“Good-by, Billie,” he said huskily, hoping she would favor him with the glint of a tear-filled eye, summon him to her perhaps, for one last embrace—a touch of her hand at least. But she did not. Her face was still from him and she flirited a shoulder irritably. “Just . . . good-by,” he faltered, disappointed; then ventured to add with solemn hopefulness: “You and your father will see this thing right pretty soon, and then you’ll see me right. Until then—I can wait.”

“Fool!” she flung at him again, out of her tears. “Fool!” And he had to go without a touch, a look even, with that word ringing in his ears. Still he went in hope, unable to believe that he had lost her. He thought that he had made sure of her rather. Love—love like theirs might even be stabbed through the heart and yet it would pulse on and on, he told himself.

And it was true that the minute his presence had cleared the room, Billie was sitting bolt upright and frowning intently through her tears. “What’s got into him?” she asked herself. “Some influence . . . somebody . . . I wonder if it could be that. . . . But, no! He loves *me*,” she exulted; “he loves me! Love must save him. I must be firm with him—firm. O

God," she prayed, clasping her hands tightly and lifting tear-stained eyes, "help me to be firm."

When, considerably agitated, the young man got back to his desk, it was twenty minutes past ten by the ivory clock on the blotter—twenty-one minutes past, to be exact, and a few seconds. He sat taking stock of his position. Scanlon and all the other back-scratchers were against him. Billie was against him. Mr. Boland was aloof and accusatory. Certain hand-picked individuals in the community were reproaching him—but the people! The people generally trusted and believed in him. His great popularity in the community was secure, and this was the sole necessary asset in his battle for justice for Adam John.

That was exactly what he was thinking, when just then the people—that is, just then a long-distance call came in from the state capitol. It was Charlie Clayton, one of the people's representatives, speaking: "That McKenzie's Tongue matter has been set forward to tonight, Henry," said Charlie, and his voice sounded anxious, a bit overwrought. "We're going to need every vote we can dig up; and it's a good three hours run up here, you know."

"I'll be there," assured Henry; and it was a kind of relief to have his attention diverted to a duty that was easy to perform; but—"McKenzie's Tongue!" he suddenly remembered. "Why, Sarah Murphy was in here telling me that deal was crooked."

There before him was the pile of papers she had left to prove her assertion. For half an hour he was hunched over them; and that night in the Assembly Room he denounced the McKenzie's Tongue project as a job and voted against it, but was careful to deny

that any responsibility for it was Boland's. He proclaimed John Boland as a high-minded citizen of the best intent—mistaken sometimes, of course, as men will be—but a high-minded citizen who put always, as far as he could see, the welfare of all the people above the profit of his personal ventures.

But any such gratuitous apologetic for their master was lost upon the proponents of the bill. The point with them was that it failed of passage by just one vote—Henry's of course—and in the lobby Madden, deeply chagrined, breathed threatenings.

"You've been the golden-haired boy of Boland General for quite a spell now, Harrington," he sneered, "but the old man'll have your locks trimmed for this trick and trimmed short."

"And I suppose you think you're going to be one of the barbers, eh, Madden?" retorted Henry.

"Oh, the folks back in Edgewater will attend to you, all right," sneered Madden. "Oh, what they *will* do to you!"

"My constituents are not grafters," boasted Henry, "and if there is any question about it, I'll hire the Opera House in Edgewater tomorrow night and tell them just what a cheap steal the project is."

With a good conscience and rumbling defiance, Henry drove back through the night to his home. Occasionally his smoldering mind lit up with a brilliant flash. That was when he visioned his ultimate triumph—when illumination should come to Billie and he would feel her arms again ecstatically about his neck.

Next morning the Blade in a three-ply headline screamed out that Assemblyman Henry Harrington had betrayed Socatullo County. It carried also an edi-

torial written earlier, commenting on the "rumored defection of one of our most popular and influential attorneys from the sacred cause of law and order, as also from that equally sacred program of progress and prosperity which for years has been the ideal of the best people in the Three Towns."

"Titmarsh—the dirty dog!" exploded Henry. "I may have to hire the opera house after all." But he was entirely unsuspecting that the people of Edgewater and Wahpeetah and Socatullo had been for some days being skilfully prepared to believe much evil of him; and when there came from Oskison, private secretary to Old Two Blades, a suave summons to the imperial presence, Harrington actually scented victory.

"Now's my chance," he said to his deluded self, "and the McKenzie's Tongue project will be as good an opening as any to show that Scanlon simply can't be trusted." But the very first sight of that bland, unbending autocrat behind the unmarked door was shattering to any sanguine state of mind on Henry's part.

To begin with, Mr. Boland appeared as one who had quite lost his blandness and lost it permanently. Tight-lipped, he sat with recessed eyes a-glitter and tense hands that gripped like talons the claw-carved arms of his chair. He gazed upon Henry not as upon a being but a thing, and a thing which displeased him utterly. He dispensed with greeting and bit out acridly: "Well, young man, are you going to defend that Siwash?"

And Henry, although his hopes were instantly dashed and although he felt the force of his patron's displeasure, was yet in no mood to cower. Besides, he didn't think self-willed autocracy should be encouraged. "I am," he said quietly.

“And attack the lease?” The old eyes glared.

“Yes, sir,” responded Henry.

“With all that that implies?” Boland asked, and his tone was the calculated menace of a man of ruthless will and tremendous power.

Now Henry Harrington was young—not seasoned yet for such a stroke. A kind of awe—in spite of himself, a kind of fear—crept into him. Still he would not be cowed—not by a mere tone at any rate.

“Yes; yes, sir. I suppose so, sir,” he responded, his gaze straight into the face that awed him.

For a moment Old Two Blades was motionless and glaring. There ensued a stunned, nerve-pricking silence. Then came the acceptance of the inevitable; the admission that the combat was joined—mild words enough but of momentous meaning, with quick acidulated utterance. “Very well! . . . Very—*well!*” The autocratic voice was so crisp it fairly crackled. “Scanlon will arrange to take over whatever legal business you have on hand, and to receive your resignation as special counsel.”

These were brief words but they contained a good deal for the senses to drink in all at once. Henry could not quite believe his ears. His mouth fell open in spite of him. There it was! As simply as that. He was to be put out—actually *out!* The world grew black about him and began to whirl. His career, his prospects—his . . . everything. What Billie, what Clayton, what Madden had so clearly intimated had befallen him. And yet the thing was so unreasonable—so silly—so . . . “Mr. Boland,” he said, “I—I didn’t suppose that this honest difference over what seems to both of us a vital matter would necessarily——”

“Bah!” Old Two Blades barked. “You’ve got too much sense not to see that you can’t break with me in a thing as big as this Hurricane Island matter and not break in everything.” Mr. Boland looked quite incredulous, and Henry passed his hand blunderingly across his brow, as wondering how he could have made such a mistake himself; then all at once he understood and grasped at the explanation, for he did not like to appear a fool.

“With an ordinary man, Mr. Boland, yes,” Henry discriminated; “but I did not think you were an ordinary man.”

Mr. Boland acknowledged with an imperious nod that he was not an ordinary man, but started impatiently to say: “Because in this county alone twenty thousand families draw their living from my enterprises it doesn’t follow that——” When Henry broke out in exultant speech as if he suddenly accounted for his stupendous misconception.

“That’s it exactly, Mr. Boland, your genius for organization has given you a twenty thousand man-power mind, and I—I guess I figured it had given you a twenty thousand man-power heart—a twenty thousand man-power conscience, too.”

Harrington stopped abruptly, almost reverently, before what seemed to him a very large idea which he had stumbled upon; but Mr. Boland’s long lips were already curling in scorn at the fantastic absurdity, and his sneer made him utterly unlovely! “Why do you do this rash thing, Harrington? Oppose me like this?” he reproached, with the very slightest note of consideration mellowing the gall of his bitterness.

“Because I told you once, Mr. Boland, that I would

never lie to you," flashed Harrington like a rapier thrust. "You confessed to me that you knew you were surrounded by liars—that you liked to have men lie to you. That is why you are displeased with me to-day—because I am not lying to you."

The old man's rage flared up again. He crashed his talon hands down again impatiently upon the talon chair arms and roared: "You will resign everything—everything—not forgetting," he remembered to specify spitefully, "the presidency of the Shell Point Land Company."

"Shell Point?" recalled Harrington. "By heavens! Shell Point!" Then he hesitated. In these moments of astounding self-revelation on Mr. Boland's part, he had learned swiftly that he must mistrust everything the magnate had ever told him, every enterprise to which he had ever committed him; and now, at the mere thought of Shell Point, a flood of light broke in upon, and enraged him with himself as with this wily schemer who had duped him.

"Do you know, Mr. Boland," he observed cuttingly, "since I've been through this Hurricane Island transaction, I've been less and less satisfied with that fine-spun reasoning of yours about Shell Point. I believe this scheme was a damned fraud. I think I'll block it." He was intrepid now.

"The Shell Point patent was signed this morning," defied Mr. Boland.

Henry, startled, glanced at the calendar upon the desk and took account of the flight of days.

"I'll block it yet," he challenged. "I'll prove it's a fraud—just exactly as I'll prove that the Edgewater & Eastern Railway is a fraud."

John Boland straightened on his feet. Hurricane Island was a trifle but Shell Point was a matter of millions. His lips parted, his teeth gleamed like yellow fangs, his cold wrath became hot; his fierce brows beetled and crawled like excited caterpillars. He was no longer an offended majesty but a baffled beast of prey, halted above his kill.

"Young man!" he raged, and his voice was freighted with a sense of the inadequacy of words to convey his feelings, "I warn you!" He shook his lean forefinger. "If you, by so much as one word, breathe a hint against the integrity of that Shell Point transaction, I'll have you pilloried in this community. I'll have you *stripped!* . . . I'll have you put in *jail!!!!* That's what I'll do with you." The walls of the private office vibrated to the venomous crescendo.

Yet Henry found Mr. Boland less terrible as he became less subtle. Put him in jail? That sounded cheap and weak; as well as absurd. Put him in jail for being helplessly honest and decently truthful? Ridiculous!

"Do your worst, Mr. Boland," he invited, with a low vibrancy in his tone; "for me the zero hour has come."

"You traitor! . . . You ingrate!" raved Mr. Boland futilely.

This was a good deal to stand. Henry whitened, then reddened, then bit his lip, while his brow was elevated a trifle. "No; neither of them. But, by thunder, it looks to me as if I'm the only man near you who isn't both. I feel sorry for you, Mr. Boland."

Mr. Boland relieved himself of a gesture of irritated contempt; yet appeared to hold his final burst of resentment in a state of suspended utterance until youth's infatuated conceit might reach its climax.

“You’re treating me rather badly, Mr. Boland,” Henry remonstrated, “saying some pretty harsh things to me, and I know they seem justified; but they’re not. You’ll see they are not. You have ordained that I shall be fighting you for a time—for the sake of simple justice to some humble creatures all of whom have trusted me and some of whom have trusted you. The result of that fight will vindicate me, Mr. Boland; vindicate my judgment. I expect, when it is over, that you will invite me back to your friendship and your confidence, with a frank confession that you are entirely wrong. It is this—this faith in you——”

“Faith in me?” roared the insulted magnate, only to be rendered freshly speechless by another example of youth’s magnificent assurance.

“In you,” affirmed Henry with low emphasis. “I accept your present ultimatum because I know it will be withdrawn. I go under your displeasure, but I believe I shall return under your favor. I am sorry for what you have said to me, but have not resented it too greatly because you are today a man beside yourself, deceived by bad advisors, a man whose business counselors have become mere toadies and flatterers. We are about to part—you in anger, I in sorrow. You have been a friend and a father to me. I am grateful. Yet today you have called me ingrate and traitor. Mr. Boland, I believe I have never been so loyal to you as now—never done you so great a service as that which I am about to do.”

Mr. Boland’s expression during the latter part of this speech had been one of utter incapacity to believe what he was hearing. “You—you *n-n-nut!*” he exploded.

CHAPTER XXVII

I'D have said it couldn't happen," panted Henry, once more in his office, breathless and noting a slight disposition to fall to pieces. "Did they know him better than I did," he speculated, "—Scanlon, Madden and the bunch; or am I right about him after all? Anyway, it's a fight. That's clear."

And Henry Harrington was supremely at home in a fight. The first blow, he decided, should be delivered at Shell Point. He dictated a telegram to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, embodying forcefully his changed views on the matter, and took the precaution of having Miss Mayberry take that telegram to the main office instead of sending it out over the company wire; but did not know that the manager at the main office took also a precaution; he carried it first to Mr. Boland's back door. Now Mr. Boland's idea of autocracy did not extend to holding up interstate communications, but he took account of what this message said, and just as his strategy demanded that instant steps be taken to make that message futile, so his organization policy required immediate punishment for the traitor who had sent it. For days, as the treachery itself had begun to take head and rise, the form of that punishment had been preparing. The plan was ready and the Boland power was always mobilized. The short sharp order went forth to Scanlon. "Thumbs down," it said, "definitely and finally and smashingly down—

on that bright and audacious young gladiator, Henry Harrington."

This order was issued while Henry was delivering his second defiance by gleefully supervising Thorpe and the office boys as they piled waste baskets high with papers, pertaining to Boland litigation, and carted them into Scanlon's room. With a grateful sense of decks cleared for aggressive action in the next important matter, Harrington was just taking up from his desk that venire of one hundred citizens of Socatullo County from which tomorrow would be chosen the Adam John jury, when Thorpe reëntered apparently with something important on the tip of his tongue; but before he could get it off Scanlon himself had come charging in. He had got his orders.

The last time Henry had talked to the Chief Fixer, Scanlon had been mellow and mild, gently, incredulously reproachful. That day he had been one finger of the velvet glove, but now he was the boniest knuckle of the mailed fist. Disguises were off; dissimulations were dead; euphemisms were in the discard. He came to gloat; envy, jealousy, malevolence, hate, were all in his manner. "You young fool!" he exulted.

"Yes," admitted Harrington coolly; "I've been a fool."

"After all we've done for you! You ingrate! You—you traitor!"

Harrington straightened and paled, but did not strike, although his pose was the immobility of a coiled spring, and his voice was lowered dangerously. "I'm getting a little sensitive about those two compliments, Scanlon," he remarked acidly, "because they don't apply to me. There are ingrates and traitors, how-

ever, in Mr. Boland's organization; and I expect to make it clear to him who some of them are. As one step to that end, I shall be on my way in half-an-hour to the courthouse to have myself entered as attorney-of-record for Adam John."

Scanlon's yellow eyes gleamed.

"Take some bail along with you, then," he taunted, "because while you are in Charlie Hunt's office I'll be in Jeff Younger's, swearing out a warrant for your arrest for stealing twenty thousand dollars!"

"You cur!" Harrington's pose was momentarily shattered; he swayed forward and flexed his arms while his teeth ground in sudden rage; then he sneered: "So that would be your game, eh? You would like to smut me, wouldn't you? Well, go to it. . . . Charge me. . . . Try me. . . . Damned if I wouldn't like to know who got that twenty thousand dollars anyway. You know it has occurred to me, Scanlon, in the last few hours that maybe you and Quackenbaugh stepped on shore and gathered that coin in, while I was in the woods. You never did make such an awful lot of fuss about it, if you remember."

Scanlon started as if stung and his face purpled with rage; but, as if unwilling to trust himself to rejoinder on that subject, he jeered coarsely, "Why, say, Boland won't make two bites of you. Not two bites. Here goes for one of 'em right now," and with one final, blasting glance he heaved himself toward the door, banging it behind him viciously.

Harrington watched him go, laughing contemptuously. The room echoed and grew still. "So all they have is cheap threats," he grinned. "Movie stuff! Put me in jail. Highway robbery, eh? Ha, ha!" In

this community? With the people strong for him as they had grown in the last two years to be. Why, the fools! The idiots! They would get themselves laughed out of the court of public opinion in an hour.

But Thorpe was in again bursting with that information which Scanlon's coming had damned up in his throat. "Say, chief; there's an awful row up about that McKenzie's Tongue bill," he reported excitedly. "The very devil's broke loose. The merchants of all three towns are getting up on their hind legs about it, and the chamber of commerce has called a mass meeting for two o'clock in the opera house."

Harrington still smiled, but more grimly. "Beat me to the opera house, eh?"

"Yes; and Madden and Clayton are going to be there to tell them all about it."

"I'll make monkeys of 'em," boasted Harrington; with one of his fighting grins: "They'll be lucky if they don't get themselves tarred and feathered for putting Socatullo County in a disgraceful position like that before the State. Anything else, Thorpe?"

"No, no!" stammered the Sergeant, staring as if a little confused at his chief's enormous display of self-confidence. "Except that Mr. Moody just phoned that he would like an appointment with you at 12:15."

Henry glanced at the brass clock on the mantel. It was 12:05 now. "It will suit me better if Moody can come in right away," he told his chief clerk shortly.

Moody, Assistant Secretary of Boland General and a sort of financial factotum of Boland personally, was presently announced and came in, sleek, sandy, slightly bald, a man of medium height and medium weight, a medium man all over.

"Your stock accounts are in a pretty bad way, Henry. There's nothing really paid for, you know," began the assistant secretary, gently reproving as a man of accounts and contracts will be when time and terms have been violated. "You were always so keen to make new contracts for purchasing new blocks of stock that you never bothered to close up old contracts."

"But Mr. Boland always encouraged me to bite off more and more," defended Henry.

"Yes, I know, I know," assented Mr. Moody, slightly pained, "but you recall how those contracts all read. When payments are not made on the agreed dates the whole purchase price becomes immediately due—and——"

To cut it short—they stripped Henry that morning of every dollar of his holdings in the Boland corporations; and the twenty-three thousand odd he chanced to have in bank as the turn-over of a deal in timber they practically wiped out by attaching the account for twenty thousand dollars and two years interest.

Furthermore, that afternoon at the opera house the people of the three towns made a total wreck of their popular idol. Ingrate, traitor, Judas—were the mildest words they hurled at Henry Harrington. Even Billie was there accusing; and when the mad riot was over and Henry, dazed and battered in spirit, ventured on a personal appeal to her to at least understand him, it was evident that God had answered her prayer to make her firm.

"You went against your own town!" she said scornfully.

"But that's just what I didn't do," protested Har-

rington, almost crying in his desperation. "I'm the only person here that didn't go against his own town. Billie, believe me, I'm the only person that hasn't gone against your father in this other matter. I'm truer to him than any of the others, just as I'm truest to you when you think——"

It was her manner that interrupted him—the manner of utter incapacity to believe. "Perhaps when you see how much your madness is making us all suffer, you will decide to be sane again," she reproached bitterly, but with a tremulous note so prominent in her voice that at last it quavered almost pitifully as she concluded, "I wonder—oh, I wonder how much of this it will take to bring you to your senses?"

"You—you wonder?" Henry breathed in amazement, marveling in part that she could still be blindly partisan as the others, and in part that she did not see that he was suffering too. He was almost angry with her and backed away confounded, shaking his head like a man who struggles with the contradictions of a bad dream. Yet, after a moment, it was persistently, patiently a love-light in the distraught eyes which followed that haughty, tremulous slenderness into the dispersing crowd. "Isn't that hopeless—isn't that hopeless?" he murmured to himself. "She loves me and . . . isn't that hopeless?" He sank into a chair at the front of the emptying hall and meditated dismally. Billie! . . . She could have been of help to him. Instead she had added to his burden which was already fairly heavy. Well, dear girl! she had been very much put out with him. And—she couldn't understand—not yet. It was environment that blinded her, of course; but—well—something

might happen to the environment. This thought pounced into his mind almost as if he knew what ere so very long would be bulletined in the windows of the Telegraph office, what would be in the headlines of extras of the Blade, the Star and the Constitution which newsboys would be crying so excitedly about the streets.

"Dear girl! . . . Dear girl! . . ." His voice vibrated tenderly, and the echo of it died. He heard the banging of distant heavy doors. He seemed quite alone in the building. He might be locked in—if he did not stir himself and get out—if the janitor did not notice. Well, he did not mind—gloomy old hole—gloom in his soul—as well there as anywhere!

But—there came a touch upon his shoulder.

It was Lahleet.

"You were grand!" she whispered tumultuous in her emotion. "Sublime!" And as she wrung his hand strength came back to him, and he rose up, remembering his next duty—to enter himself as attorney of record in the defense of Adam John.

Lahleet, clinging to his arm for comfort, went with him, but at the courthouse door he was arrested for murder—Henry Harrington for the murder of an unknown person "a human being," on Hurricane Island.

"But you didn't!" the soul of the Indian girl raged in protest.

"Of course, I didn't, but hush!" Harrington commanded fiercely, as he feared she was about to blurt out confession. "The point is—I let them think I did. Now hush! Not one word! Besides, it's all a farce," he soothed. "They can't prove I killed him. They know they can't. It's only a temporary frame-up to

keep me from defending Adam John. I'll be out on bail in an hour."

Now bail was not obligatory in murder cases, but, perhaps as carrying out the game of baiting Henry Harrington to his doom, Judge Allen had fixed bail in advance; and the hasty telephoning which Henry began to do from the Sheriff's office did not disclose any one who was willing to risk fifty thousand cash or one hundred thousand bond to pledge the person and presence of the prisoner. There was one who might have, but that one was not appealed to.

While this telephoning was going on Lahleet was speculating wildly as to just who did kill that man.

She had heard a shot, had seen the man fall, found the smoking pistol in the path not half a dozen yards away, but of him who fired it and dropped it—by accident, no doubt—she saw and knew nothing. For two years, with that self-centered absorption of which her nature was capable, she had not cared.

Now she did care, now she set all her cunning to find out; but she hinted nothing of this to Harrington. For some reason which she did not quite fathom, he had fiercely frowned down her first impulse to aid him openly and this made her wilfully secretive as to her further intentions.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HENRY grew discouraged with his telephoning. "We'll try what Thorpe can do personally," he said in hollow tones; and Deputy Lunt "took him across"—across the bridge of sighs to the county jail. There Jailor White honored Henry by conducting him in person to a cell of the upper tier—a cell de luxe, with a window looking northward, but a cell nevertheless—just one cubicle of an iron-grated cage.

The footsteps of the jailor receded along the corridor, and Harrington sat down on the edge of the bed with face bowed into his hands. "I'll put you in jail!" Mr. Boland had gnashed at him. Well, he was in jail all right! They had stripped him and damned him and jailed him. He didn't believe it possible but they had.

Some movement of the man in the next cell attracted his attention and he glanced at him indifferently, a smallish, dark man with beady eyes that glittered as they gazed while an expression of slow, stupefied amazement was photographed on his oddly stamped features.

"Adam John!" cried Henry springing up. "Hello, Adam!" He offered his hand, but through the double grill of steel their fingers only could touch.

"How do?" inquired Adam politely.

"Rotten!" said Henry. "They've framed me—so I can't defend you tomorrow."

"You defend . . . you talk judge?" Adam John's

sparse eyebrows were lifted with astonishment; he was learning for the first time that this amazing good fortune had been in store for him. But the animated expression settled swiftly into disappointment since Henry Harrington was, like himself, a prisoner behind this grill of steel. Curiosity over that unbelievable contingency presently got the better of his natural taciturnity.

“How come?” he blurted, employing his army idiom.

“They charge me with murder,” explained Henry with a gesture of disgust, “with killing that unknown devil on your island—the man in the blue shirt who was annoying Lahleet. Adam, I owe you an apology for getting you into this mess. The town is crazy. There is no justice in it,” he avowed dejectedly. “They’ll send you up for life tomorrow.”

“Not send me up,” protested Adam with a shake of the head. “Me tell truth to jury.”

Henry gazed thoughtfully at that grave mask of faith and felt his heart bleed for this naive child-man. He had just had an experience of telling the truth to a Socatullo County jury—rather a large jury—and had failed to produce conviction in a single mind. “I wish you luck, Adam,” he said. “Things have got away from me all right.” And he drew up his hands in a gesture of helplessness. “Of course, I’m still hoping,” he confided presently from where he sat on the bed, elbows on knees, head in hand. But at eight o’clock Sergeant Thorpe came in and killed the hope.

“Not a thing doing, chief,” he confessed sorrowfully. “God! It’s fierce the way they are.”

“They?” challenged Henry.

“Everybody.”

"Suppose I may as well give up the idea for tonight," conceded Henry. "Get me the venire of the Adam John jury, and I'll see if we can't figure out somebody on it who might give the poor devil a ghost of a chance." He said this in a whisper that Adam John might not hear.

"Aw right, sir. Anything else?" The sergeant made this inquiry solicitously, with devoted eagerness, as if his own anxiety to be helpful might somehow compensate his chief for a world's cold injustice.

"Nope," said Henry indifferently. Everything on that desk seemed now so unimportant that he could have swept the whole mess into the waste basket. Yet there were interest-piquing documents upon it—new ones that had arrived since he departed from it.

Thorpe hurried out, greatly cast down. It was not his faith in the community which had been shattered. Thorpe was hard-boiled as to that. His confidence in community enthusiasms and loyalties had begun to languish the day he returned from the war and was long since stiff in death. It was his faith in his chief as a sort of superman that had been sickeningly jarred.

Harrington's head was in his hands again. The weight of the thing was beginning to tell. Everybody had failed him, except Lahleet. Everybody. Even—even . . . But his eyes brightened, his face lost its gray look. Not everybody. No! He wouldn't believe that Billie—— Suddenly he was exulting. The murder charge! Why, they'd done the very thing that would melt Billie up and bring her to him. Something swelled in his heart. Something mounted in his throat. The fools—they had defeated themselves. The

idiots—they had overplayed their hands. Let Billie but hear that he was in actual jeopardy, restrained of his liberty, in danger of being branded for life, and she would realize at last what black sinks of iniquity some of his traducers were. Imperiously she would command Scanlon, even her father to lay off, and she would fly to his rescue. Henry got quite a fine thrill out of contemplating her coming. He expected her at any moment.

“This’ll bring her; this’ll bring her,” he exulted, and his gesture comprehended the steel bars surrounding him. “That murder charge’ll get her.” He shook himself in a kind of ecstasy as if already he felt Billie’s arms about his neck. He closed his eyes in that anticipatory rapture; and they were still closed when slouching footsteps came methodically along the corridor and the shadow of a man loomed against the grill work of Harrington’s cell.

“Lady to see you, sir!” announced the guard.

“Lady?” Harrington gulped the word and a tide of tingling emotions boiled up in him.

“Thank God!” But when he had followed the trusty down to the visitors’ room it was not Billie but Lahleet. The girl saw his stunned look, his slackening lip, his swift endeavor to recompose his features, and understood perfectly; yet like that savage stoic she could be was only sadly imperturbable.

“There isn’t a chance in the world for bail,” she told him sadly, looking up out of large concerned eyes. “Not a chance. The story in the Star about the murder charge and the chamber of commerce meeting are both perfectly terrible.” The girl drew a rumped paper from under her arm, smoothing out the wrinkles which

her anger had crushed into it. It was the first extra of the Star that night.

Henry's eyes drank in the scare-head: "MURDER MYSTERY SOLVED—Henry Harrington accused—Astounding Revelation."

"They can convict you, Henry," breathed Lahleet awesomely as she saw his eye at the end of the column.

Harrington wavered like a tree in a blast. "I believe you," he whispered hoarsely, and sank slowly into a chair. "I believe you!" At last he too was frightened. Lahleet could barely repress a cry. It seemed so awful to see him frightened.

"Oh, Henry, you never can stand it. Nobody could. Your nerve will break—you'll go insane, you'll——" She was wringing her hands and crying.

Harrington was pretty white, pretty desperate, but he shook his head doggedly. "It looks bad though," he admitted, "for the time being."

Lahleet found consolation by slipping one hand timidly into his. Harrington, unaware, sat scowling at the wall.

"Thanks, Lahleet; awfully good of you to come," he remembered to say when it was time for her to go, "but there's only one hope now. Billie! She'll come—the first thing in the morning. Once let her know about this murder charge and let her have the night to think it over, and she'll show 'em! That's where Scanlon overplayed his hand all right. She'll show 'em. She'll come the first thing in the morning."

Again the mask of Lahleet's face was sadly imper-
turbable; but: "That china doll will never come near him," she was scorning as she went down the steps. "He's spoiled now for her. He—he isn't ornamental

any more," she sneered vindictively; and was thinking proudly: "What will save him is for me to find out who killed that man." But that was going to be a desperate quest—to find out in time. There were clues—that she knew of. Since parting with Henry in the sheriff's office she had started work on these, but now must wait. Yet it was oh, so hard to wait; so dangerous. These silly people—why, they might, they might do anything—they might even storm the jail.

Mourning over her love that was not only unrequited but unperceived—restless, wrathful, indomitable Lahleet drifted out of the jail, into the parked area surrounding the courthouse and sat down upon a bench. The hour was something after nine o'clock. A haze of fog shut out the stars, leaving the heavens unilluminated save where the line of stacks of Boland mills and waste-consumers glowed faintly, proclaiming how day and night, night and day, the orderly processes of Old Two Blades' money-making, civilization-building machinery went on and on, indifferent to all minor human concerns.

A sort of silence of exhaustion hung in the air, as if after a day of considerable excitement the town was at length composing itself for slumber. Into this stillness there broke abruptly a hoarse shouting, strident cries and bawlings, beginning at a common center and then spreading and singling out through the streets.

Hurrying across the lawn to the sidewalk Lahleet bought the second extra which the Edgewater Star had issued that evening; and under the glare of an arc light read the new headline: MCKENZIE TONGUE PROJECT NOT LOST! Eagerly her eyes ravished the column of its contents, and two minutes later she was breath-

lessly imploring the night jailer: "Please—oh, please! I have something so important for Mr. Harrington to see."

And even night jailers are human.

"Oh, Henry, look at this!" she cried before the cell door.

"Lemme look at it first—see you ain't got no saws or dope or somethin' in there," demanded the trusty, taking the newspaper from her hand, but after inspection, he accommodately held his own electric torch so that Harrington could read the Star's second big scoop of the day—read that all was not lost with the McKenzie's Tongue Project; that immediately after the chamber of commerce meeting, Senator Madden and Assemblyman Clayton had raced back by automobile to the state capital; that at 6:15 p. m. Assemblyman Vannice of Wilson County who had voted against the bill had moved to reconsider; that, most astoundingly, not to say suspiciously, this motion to reconsider had been carried by two votes; the votes of that same Jerry Cunningham and George Lamont who Senator Murphy had explained to Henry were under bonds of gratitude to the Boland interests.

Henry read this much and then something in him burst; in his brain something slipped. It had been a day of nerve-strains and bitter disappointments, succeeding three other days of nerve-strains and disappointment. He had borne all rather well but there is a limit to human self-control—especially to a man who has gone through what Henry Harrington had overseas where they had given him the sobriquet of Hell-fire.

"It was a job!" he shrieked wildly, livid with wrath,

his face contorting. "It was a job! They had the votes all the time. It was a trick to get me in bad at home so they could do this to me—this!" He stood for a moment shuddering at the awful nightmare of that afternoon meeting while his mental processes took account of that depth of devilishness by which he had been tricked into a position where the town—his town—that he loved and believed in—had turned against him.

"Ah-h-h-h!" he screamed like an insane man and raged from end to end of his cell. "The crooks! The damn, dirty, disgusting crooks! They double-crossed me! They double-crossed me! Let me out of here!" he bawled and, seizing the grill work of his door, shook it till it rattled and clanged discordantly. But the puniness of his strength made him rage again. He flung himself against the iron bars; he roared, he shouted vituperations; he bawled mad challenges and then began to plead. "Let me out, jailor! Let me out. They've jobbed me, I oughtn't to be here at all." His hands clutched at his throat as if he were strangling, as if he felt a rope about his neck. "The devils," he panted. "The devils! They'll get me in the funny house."

Protests had begun to rise in the cages. Cries of "Aw, shut your trap!" "Can it!" "Gag him!" "Slug him!" "Take the D. T. to the dungeon!" resounded from both tiers. The whole prison was in an uproar.

"Now, see what you done!" the trusty reproved Lahleet. He had marked Henry's outburst with no great perturbation but signs of severe disapproval. "You put him plumb off his nut."

"Oh, Henry! Henry!" implored the girl in tearful

tones. "You'll hurt yourself. See—your forehead's all bleeding."

But Harrington's frenzy had already passed, he sat again upon his bed, trembling and coughing, feeling weak and overcome, wondering what had happened to him.

"Hey? . . . Hey?" he asked, peering crazily. "What's happened? What's all the row about?"

"You're batty in the belfry—that's what's happened," reproved the trusty gruffly. "Better get onto yourself; or I'll begin to figure if somebody ain't been slippin' you some hootch."

"Me? . . . Oh!" Henry was staring at the blood on his hands where he had wiped them across his lacerated brow. Realization came to him. "Oh!"—in a very regretful voice. "I'm sorry."

"Henry!" The girl's tone was still tearful, freighted with love and an agony of concern.

"Lahleet!" he responded, bitter in his self-reproach, and coming forward thrust a penitent hand through to her. "Forgive me! I'm all right now but I . . . I guess I must have been out for a moment."

"Out is r-r-right!" muttered the guard sardonically.

"It's been an awful day, Lahleet! An awful three or four days, if you know what I mean."

"Yes, yes, I know," she whispered although barely able to make a sound; for as its real significance dawned upon her, the girl had grown dumb with grief and horror at the unbelievable thing which she had seen—"But, oh, Henry, you must hold onto yourself or——"

"——or I'll go off my head altogether," he finished the sentence for her. "Nope. I'm over it now—just kind of weak and ashamed of myself for blowing off

before you. Thank you for bringing me the paper though. That's one more thing I needed to know about this gang of crooks." He picked up the crumpled newspaper from the floor.

CHAPTER XXIX

I'VE got to get him out—I've got to get him out to-night," the little woman was half sobbing to herself as for the second time she went down the jail steps and retired once more to that park bench beneath the boughs of a friendly tamarack. For an hour she seethed and smoldered, agonizing before the humiliating perception that she who loved Henry Harrington with all her warm heart was powerless to open prison doors for him while that girl yonder on the hill with ice-water in her veins—she, choosing to do so, even at this time of night, could have secretaries and cashiers jumping, vault doors flying open, securities tumbling out. Why, she could have Henry out of jail in fifteen minutes.

"I'll make her!" Lahleet exclaimed, mad with sudden resolve. "I'll make her!" The black eyes must have sparkled, even in the darkness. She left the bench and began to walk rapidly. Eventually, panting slightly, she stood between the statues of Lewis and Clark and gazed at the Boland mansion.

As she halted near the heroic figure of Meriwether Lewis, an automobile of high power roared up the grade, snorted past her ear and darted confidently in the direction of the porte-cochère. It was Scanlon who leaped out of the car; the lights showed her that, and if she could have known, the man was in great distress. His past had threatened to overtake him, and

he was hurrying in great trepidation to his chief with the missive in his trembling hands which had shaken the tree of his life to its roots. It would have surprised Lahleet considerably to know that that sheet, of which she caught a fleeting glimpse, half open, clutched in the excited hand of the Chief Counsel, had been but twenty minutes before in the trembling fingers of Henry Harrington.

While Lahleet had been sitting on the bench in the park Sergeant Thorpe had returned to his chief with the Adam John venire and had presumed to bring along a day letter which had arrived after Harrington's departure for the chamber of commerce meeting.

Henry had started as he saw that it was from Wendell, of Barrett and Wendell, those eminent New York attorneys and experienced practitioners before the Supreme Court of the United States. Two or three weeks before Wendell had argued the case of Salzberger vs. The First National Bank and today he had got an inkling from Washington—an inkling which made him send Henry this rather frantic day letter of ugly warning and ominous premonition. Henry's heart was full of bitterness tonight; but as he read, it became almost sweet. Then he did an odd thing for him, whereat Thorpe gazed wonderingly. He lifted the missive to his lips and kissed it.

But though Henry might gloat he was still a man of honor. In his most imperative tone, he said to the faithful sergeant: "Have this telegram got right over to Scanlon. He's more or less of a nighthawk and liable to be in his office any time up to midnight—especially tonight."

This was how the message got to the Chief Fixer,

and here now, with Lahleet observing him, was Scanlon with its portent quaking in his heart. "Mr. Boland," he stammered huskily, "John . . . John, will you look at this?"

Now the number of occasions in recent years on which Thomas Scanlon had hailed his chief by his first name were few; that he did so now betokened his agitation. It was an outcrop of that earlier association between the two as fellow-gamblers in the future of a wilderness.

Mr. Boland appeared to gut the message of its contents with a glance; yet hardened instead of softening with its impact. "Well?" he challenged sharply, eyes a-glitter.

"Well!" echoed Scanlon, mopping perspiration.

"But they can't do it!" snarled Mr. Boland through sheer force of the despot's habit.

"The hell of it is, they can!" Scanlon collapsed into a chair. "Almighty God! . . . If they should happen to," he shuddered.

"They won't," snapped John Boland, irritated with weakness as always. His eyes were narrowed; his glance was hard. Old Two Blades was really looking his fifty-seven years tonight; but for all of them his lined face was tightly sealed, the spike-like jaw thrust out, the lower lip rising till it engulfed the upper and tightening till his mouth was only a seam. His masked countenance was a dare to every menace, a trumpeting that his was not a spirit to be blown out of its course by even the blackest cloud of a mere summer squall.

Billie, wearing a blue negligee, with points of lace and girdled at the waist by a rope of white silk, received Lahleet in her boudoir. With the light filtering softly

over her beautiful face, she appeared a proud, self-contained and superior-feeling young person. But Lahleet was in a mood to see through seemings—through the pose and the fabrics to a nerve-strung, feigning creature who rose languorously but was not languorous, who received her indulgently but felt no indulgence, a daughter of the reigning monarch patronizingly receiving the teacher of the Indian School—but, unable to hold the pose; unable to press the mask so tightly that another woman's prying eye could not see behind it the pallid cheeks of wonder and misgiving. Over this perception Lahleet gloated, merciless.

"Your man is in jail!" she assaulted bluntly.

Billie, in the present state of her nerves, was inclined to be upset. "I—I beg your pardon!" she half-stammered and half-rebuked; but there was an unsuppressible tremor in her voice, and Lahleet was surprised to find herself feeling a certain pity for this disturbed hot-house creature who had won the love of a great true man and didn't know how to value it—how to rise to its obligations.

"Forgive me," she begged impulsively, with one of her lightning changes of mood, "but Mr.—Harrington has been very terribly wronged. I think perhaps you do not understand quite how wronged."

This sudden altering of the manner of her visitor had a further shattering effect upon the pose Billie was trying to maintain; yet her face photographed a slight increase of hauteur, as questioning this girl's right to be concerned about Henry Harrington, as well as certain of the implications of her speech.

Lahleet noticed this and explained tactfully, if not altogether disingenuously: "Mr. Harrington has acted

sometimes for the Indians whose children are in my school. I have come to have a very great respect for him."

Miss Boland looked instantly relieved and began to let down. "Oh, and so you came to me, of course. Naturally!" Despite her capacity for icy hardness, Billie was after all a woman and her manner confessed longing for someone to talk to about her love besides those who condemned him as utterly as she did. "You have seen him in the—the jail?" Billie's tongue stuck at the word and then jerked it out. "Tell me how he is, Miss Marceau. Is he comfortable?" she demanded anxiously. The mask had fallen off altogether; for the minute Billie Boland was just a girl, asking another girl about her lover. But Lahleet's response to such inquiries, while her black eyes sifted the blue ones, was lacking in enthusiasm.

"He is comfortable—physically—if that is what you mean," she said, "but mentally—in spirit, that is—he is broken—very much broken. Oh, Miss Boland, he can't endure this long!"

Now this was the wrong speech. It encouraged Miss Billie in the resolution to be adamant till adversity brought Henry to his senses. Her concerned expression went away, replaced by a determined one. "Mr. Harrington can save himself at any time," she assured with cool emphasis. "He is merely wrong-headed, you know."

Lahleet stared, instantly resentful yet controlling herself marvelously. "But it's all a low conspiracy," she contended. "He couldn't surrender to that and be a man."

"But he has been so stupid," frowned Billie, in tones

that confessed her total exasperation. "He has humiliated me so. That chamber of commerce meeting was one long——"

"That meeting was a job," scowled Lahleet, letting herself go a little; "a nasty trick to turn people against him. Madden and Clayton had votes enough to pass the McKenzie's Tongue bill. They are passing it right now while we are sitting here."

"But that's what makes it all so stupid." Billie was almost weeping. "Nobody can fight father. He is always right and he will always do what he wants to do. Everything was going on so nicely—father just loved Henry and we were going to be married in October, and take a trip around the world, and everything—and now this horrid mess!"

"But you don't think Henry Harrington killed that man?" Lahleet's voice was full now of a sense of outrage.

"Father does." Billie wept now quite frankly, overcome by her griefs and perplexities yet not committing herself to the murder theory. "He says Mr. Harrington has always been a very terrible person when he was roused. They called him Hellfire in the army, you know. Besides he makes such a mystery of it," she complained. "If he would only tell frankly all the details! If he would write to me about it even!"

"She doesn't believe it herself," Lahleet discerned shrewdly; "not for a moment she doesn't; but she's jealous because he didn't tell sweetheart all about it."

And then Miss Marceau took up the cudgels for Henry, tactfully she hoped, with: "But Mr. Harrington is a man of such high honor that there must be some reason for his being secretive—some honorable reason."

Don't you believe in the man at all? Don't you trust him—at all?"

"Oh, I believe in him altogether," replied Billie, lofty again. "But all at once we find him wrong-headed and obstinate. Getting himself into this awful mess. Father could save him from the consequences of everything, if only——why,"—the girl's face became white and sober as if she recalled an appalling fact,—“he was threatening to fight father. He wants to stand up in open court and denounce him and intimate that he is accessory to a murder himself. My father! Why, father has loved Henry like a son.”

Lahleet was plunged in thought. For the first time she saw clearly into Billie's mind and could experience an intellectual sympathy for some of her reactions. "Yes," she admitted, but with malicious bluntness, "that would seem rather unfilial, wouldn't it—your lover standing up in court to defend that Indian by telling the jury that your father aimed the gun and pulled the trigger. It's—it's an awful position he's in."

"Oh, it's a perfectly preposterous position for all of us," wailed Billie. "Father is such a great man and Henry was going to be just like him. If father had lived a long time ago he would have been a—a—a—Cæsar or a Cræsus or something. His course is always so right and he is so determined—so absolutely relentless that there is no opposing him. Why, Henry's crazy to do what he's doing."

"But after all this father stuff," Lahleet broke in impatiently, "Henry Harrington is your man. You love him! These men are ruining him—breaking him—and you let them!"

"Oh, no," protested Billie, sadly, sweetly patient with

this groping misconception of the well-meaning little teacher of an Indian school. "They are not breaking him. Only he can break himself. I want to save him, and that's why I don't interfere. I've tried to get him to see, and I can't. Father's tried to get him to see, and he can't. What is there to do," she appealed, with a mournful cadence in her tone, "but let events teach him the lesson he won't learn otherwise?"

Lahleet was dazed. Such a point of view was not in her book. "But—he is suffering," she reminded.

Billie shivered. It was easy to see that it hurt her to think of Henry suffering, but she shook her head. "For what he has made us suffer he deserves to be punished—mentally, you know—the only way, of course, that he ever will be punished," she explained. "When he has been punished enough he will change, become the old Henry once more—and then father—well, father is very terrible in his hatreds—but he can be merciful. Whenever Henry gives up this stubborn determination of his, father will at once find a way, I have no doubt, to save him, for all his rashness. But until then——"

Lahleet was glimpsing mental processes she could not understand, that her elemental nature could not brook. She moved restlessly in her chair. She felt herself ready to fly to pieces; yet the idea came clear to her again that this absurdly reasoning, ridiculously self-pitying young woman had it in her power to save Henry and that he must be saved now. "Oh, Miss Boland," she implored, trying to melt her down, "Mr. Harrington is wretched, desperate, put upon. Let me assure you that matters for him have got beyond any question of right courses and wrong courses. The pressure must

be lifted from his heart. He loves you and he wants you to come to see him—to write to him—to send a flower even—he's in a perfectly terrible situation. Oh, go to him! He would go to the stake for you. Forget fine reasonings, Miss Boland. Tell him you love him. Tell him you understand him. Tell him anything that will relieve him. Lie to him if need be!"

"Lie to him?" Billie shook her head solemnly. "I couldn't do it. Henry's—why, Henry's very soul is at stake."

This was the word too much for Lahleet. It seemed an insult to the man in the jail who was there just because he was decent and square. All the hot scorn, all the tides of impatience bottling for ten minutes in her breast burst out in one volcanic eruption. "His soul?" she exploded. "If you even had a soul you'd know his wasn't in danger. You aren't worthy to mention his soul," she denounced. "You do not really love him. You only covet him—a mere possession, an ornament, to wear him like a sunburst, like a string of pearls. You have no heart. You have no discernment even—you have won the love of the finest man in the world, worth more than your millions, worth all you've got—everything! They've put him in jail, they're destroying him—his nerve, his sanity, his spirit—and of what use is Henry Harrington to any woman with his spirit broken? Everything he is, is being engulfed in this hellish plot to railroad him for crimes he is as innocent of as you are—more innocent, you—you selfish sybarite!" Lahleet paused for breath, rather proud of the word that had come last of all to her tongue.

Billie Boland stood white with anger, waiting for the moment when, without herself being cheap or com-

mon, she could dismiss this insufferable creature who, after winning and receiving her most sacred confidence, dared to fly into this insolent frenzy. Lahleet in that breathless moment saw a Boland chin thrust itself out, Boland lips clamp with their accustomed tenacity, and all at once was aghast at herself. What had she done? Made help impossible at the only source from which help could come. There came to her the picture of Harrington, beating his head against the bars and then sitting trembling upon his bed, inquiring with an odd demented expression what had happened. Her mood of denunciation gave way, on the instant, to terrible remorse.

"Oh," she cried abruptly, wringing her hands. "Oh!" And with a burst of weeping she was on her knees before the proud Miss Boland, fingers reaching up at her hands. "Don't be angry," she pleaded, "Forgive me. Don't mind me—I'm nothing—nobody! But save him. Oh, save him, won't you? Take your pearls, take your diamonds, your bonds, anything and rush to the courthouse and let him out before they've driven him mad, mad, mad! Do you understand? His reason is in danger, I tell you!" She had seized Billie's hands and shook them violently as she looked up from her knees.

Billie's expression of cold anger had given way to one of haughty perplexity; but all at once her face cleared. "And so you love him too?" she perceived triumphantly.

But Lahleet was in no mood to resent a tone. Disheveled, she looked up through frankly streaming eyes: "Oh, yes," she nodded humbly. "But he doesn't know it. He will never know it. He loves you with all his

great heart. He paces in his cell. He raves and shakes the bars. He cries out for you. He expects nothing but you. He wants to see nobody but you. I went to see him tonight and he thought it was you. The look on his face when he saw it was not—oh, it was pitiful! It was terrible—terrible for me, you can imagine.” And Lahleet’s utterance was again swallowed up in tearful emotion.

But, in a good many things Billie Boland went by contraries, and she went by one now. Her heart, unrelenting toward her lover, softened toward this innocent victim of his graces; and pride did not permit her to be jealous of this abject little woman, so far beneath her in the scale of opportunity. The girl’s own jealousy, of course, accounted for her vitriolic outburst and made it easier to forgive. Billie shook her head sympathetically, yet reprovably. Poor child! Unfortunate, most unfortunate that she, this teacher of an Indian school, should have let herself aspire to Henry Harrington. She should have known better—such a bright and shining figure of a man!

“I’m so sorry for you. Oh, I am really,” she assured, laying a sympathetic hand on the shoulder of the weeping girl, but to find it stiffen surprisingly under her fingers.

“Sorry for me! . . . But I don’t want you to be sorry for me,” Lahleet protested proudly. “Don’t think of me! Think of him, I beg of you. And save him!”

But Billie, studying the flaming, tear-splotched face, grew suddenly suspicious. “He sent you to me—to make his appeal for him?” she questioned sharply.

“No! . . . No! . . . No!” cried Lahleet, spring-

ing to her feet in the poignancy of her distress at such terrible misunderstanding. "He must never know that I have come. Never! . . . But, oh, do realize, Miss Boland, that you only can save him and that you must save him tonight or there won't be anything of Henry Harrington worth saving at all."

There was a pathos in this appeal that rang through Billie Boland's heart, but perversely, there was again hope in it. She saw she had to be adamant but a little longer, and her erring lover would be redeemed by his own suffering—and hers. "Miss Marceau," she began gravely, shaking her head, holding herself high, "for his own sake Mr. Harrington must see——"

But Lahleet could contain herself no longer—made no effort to. "He will never see!" she screamed exultantly. "It is you who must see! . . . Oh, you wicked-hearted woman! Henry Harrington will not bend with all the weight that your vicious old father and all his cruel plotters can put upon him." Wrathfully she flung out of the door.

Billie spent some time in composing her ruffled spirits. Was ever woman called upon to bear more? Yet she was rather satisfied with herself. She had been outraged and insulted; yet had been dignified and magnanimous; she had been appealed to but had remained unyielding; she had had her hope quickened and her judgment confirmed—and besides she had learned something—something that always gives one woman satisfaction when she has learned it about another. She braced herself to wait a little longer.

"Of course, such an undisciplined creature would be inclined to exaggerate," she soliloquized, as her maid let down her hair.

CHAPTER XXX

SPENDING his first night in a cell, "She'll come," Harrington whispered, turning restlessly on his narrow-mattressed shelf, the creaking springs of which protested with each shifting of his weight. "She'll come!" Actually the man lulled himself to sleep, murmuring, with a smile upon his lips: "She'll come . . . she'll come."

But when he came back to consciousness with daylight peering through that barred north window, ugly realities were all about him. He cowered before them for a few seconds, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes, staring at the unfamiliar network of bars, listening to the unfamiliar sounds, olfactories quivering to the unfamiliar smells; then thinking beyond all these sensations to what they meant.

"She'll come," he tried to assure himself stoutly; but instead of Billie it was Lahleet again who came, gazing at him hungrily, penetratingly, as if she would see in the very soul of him, how he did. Truth to tell, he did very badly at the moment and peered out at her hollow-eyed, forgetting to smile as she also forgot.

"The papers! Have you seen the morning papers?" he asked hoarsely, his anxiety admitting now what effect of good or ill to him could proceed from what these dastard little blanket sheets said and how.

"Lies—nothing but lies!" The black eyes snapped and, as though she did it to discharge a painful duty,

loathing while she touched them, Lahleet swept the papers from behind her and thrust them through the bars, then watched with concern and compassion while he read.

And to think that he did not love her but another—a woman not worth him—not like him—who would disappoint him now and always disappoint him.

And if she, Lahleet, saved him? Why, he might turn from the other woman and fix his eyes on her.

“But it wasn’t Count Ulric who was killed,” Harrington broke out, looking up from the pages of the *Blade*. “That beast dead, with his face turned up in the bushes, merely looked like Ulric. The complaint doesn’t say I killed Ulric. It says a ‘person unknown.’ I thought it was Ulric, all right, till I ran onto him that same night at Boland’s.”

“Oh!” gasped Lahleet, mind harking back to a fact she had learned in the last few hours. “And did he tell you that he had been out on the inlet in a motor-boat that afternoon?”

“No!” answered Harrington, surprised. “Was he? How did you know?”

But Lahleet only smiled inscrutably and shrugged her small shoulders as if it did not matter anyway. Henry after a second didn’t appear to think it mattered either. “I expect Miss Boland this morning,” he announced, as if her coming would settle all things.

“You have heard from her?” she asked quickly, though making a magnificent effort to be casual.

“No; not heard from her, no; not exactly,” explained Henry honestly. “But I expect her. These calumnies, if nothing else, will bring her,” he announced, crushing the papers in his hand.

"I should think they would, yes," she conceded; and then just to spare him the pain of others of these terrible disappointments, she suggested artfully: "Although, you know how a delicate, refined woman—if those cunning schemers had made her believe you guilty——"

But Henry smiled proudly. "She'll never believe me guilty," he proclaimed. "Not on your life! Not all the Scanlons and John Bolands in the world could make her believe that. No; she'll come; she'll probably come this morning."

And then in his foretaste of triumph, he remembered Adam John and beckoned her to the grating. "It's going to be tough, seeing Adam John go out to trial without me," he choked. "You'll stick close—sit beside him today," he whispered significantly.

"Of course," declared Lahleet.

"Courage, Adam, and good luck!" Henry called to him, when they took him away.

"How's it going, Adam, old fellow?" he asked when at five minutes past twelve a deputy brought him back.

"She go pretty bad, I t'ink so—mebbe so—I dunno!" Adam shook his head wearily.

"Have they got the jury?"

"Got jury fifteen minutes," blurted Adam John. "Ever dam man dis dam town want get on my jury . . . lie like hell!" The Indian sat down upon his bed and shrouded himself in taciturnity. Henry, having been able to visualize and even to auralize every procedure of the morning in court from these brief, jerky words of Adam's and unable to construe hope from them, relapsed also into silence.

In the late middle of the afternoon they brought

Adam John back again to the cell. Henry marked this with honest surprise. "What's the idea, Adam?" he inquired in a low voice, as soon as they were alone.

"Idea to hang me," guttured the Indian, with a sullen blaze in his eye.

Henry started violently. "Guilty—they found you guilty? So soon?"

"That what!" muttered Adam, wrathfully.

"Railroaded, so help me!" groaned Harrington; for though he had believed this was inevitable, yet absorption with his own one great concern—this waiting for the coming of Billie—gave the news of the actual event all the shock value of something unforeseen.

Adam John was struggling with his indignation. "Dam fools!" he exploded. "Dam fool lawyer—dam fool jury—dam fool judge! Me dam fool too!"

The Indian seemed quite out of sorts with himself. Henry confessed with deep chagrin: "You were a fool to trust me, all right!"

Adam John, already at the side of his cell, quickly thrust his fingers through until they could touch Henry's. "Me trust you all time," he assured gratefully. "Dat one time me never be dam fool!"

CHAPTER XXXI

THE sight of Adam John's bowed, despondent head held Henry's mind off his own greater anxiety for a time. "Poor devil!" he sympathized. "Something's got to be done for him. Time, time is the thing to fight for. Postponement, delay, any sort of maneuver to hold things off till the public heat cools a little and that stubborn old man can have, if not a change of heart, at least a humane reaction against staining his hand with judicial murder. And yet, I can't put up any sort of a fight for Adam till I get out of here myself. Billie! O God, send me Billie!"

He was actually praying, and Harrington was not much given to prayer. But the prayer was unanswered. Billie did not come. For that matter neither did Lahleet. Yet Henry thought he knew why. She was at home crying her eyes out over Adam John. But neither did she come next morning. Again he thought he knew why. She was at the Indian school, steeling herself against the vague, wondering glances of dark-eyed pupils who would have heard from the talk of fathers and mothers that yesterday the white man's law had done a gross injustice to one of their race.

But when three days went by without Lahleet calling—even to condole with her foster brother—Henry began to reproach her a little.

These Indians were so stoical—too stoical for him.

There, for instance, sat Adam John, waiting to be sentenced for murder, with not a chance in the world now to escape it, yet stolid, unmoving upon his bed, eyes fixed, lips clasped, scarce a shoulder-shrug for hours at a time—never once a sign, while he, Henry Harrington, with every chance—absurdly held in duress upon a ridiculous charge that must fall the moment it confronted the light of day in open court—he was restless, turning, twisting, tramping to and fro in his cell like a caged beast, grumbling, muttering, raging, threatening to tear his narrow prison to pieces with the puny grippings of his own hands. He—he was different. Lahleet shouldn't neglect him this way. It was inconsiderate of her, when she had been coming and going for him so readily, serving him so enormously, appearing intuitively in the moments when he needed her most—and now when he had got the habit of it, accepting her service almost as a matter of course; when he depended on her, leaned on her—why, all at once to cease to come was surely inconsiderate. And yet, he told himself, that was the faint strain of the Indian in her, which colored so many of her actions so tremendously.

As for Billie, he still believed that she would come. "What's keeping her?" he would ask himself, over and over. "What's keeping her? She . . . It can't be easy for her to stay away from me like this. I've got to get out of here! God, it must be awful for her. Poor, dear girl. I've got to get out of here as much to lift the pressure on her as on me."

And there was a great deal of pressure upon Billie—a great deal. Endless and distracting as the days were to Henry, they were longer and almost more dis-

tracting to her. "He will surely turn today—this morning—this afternoon," she kept saying to herself agonizingly. "He'll send some word that will let me fly to him—some message—something!"

When nothing came she would grow angry, with him—with Scanlon—with her father—with the world; and, after tears, pale and distressed or flushed and tempest-tossed, but beautiful in either state, she would sit down and write to him—impulsive, tumultuous, tear-splotched notes—haughty, accusatory, reproachful notes—burning-hot with love or anger; but not one was ever dispatched. She tore them all up—scores of them—they were inadequate, every one.

Eventually she resolved to trust nothing to notes, to rise and go to Henry; a daughter of John Boland to the cell of her lover in a common jail. She got as far as to order the coupé, to dress herself for the occasion; but paused to sweep haughtily into her father's den and defy him with the announcement of what she was about to do.

"Father," she told him, but with chin quivering, "I'm going to Henry. Mills and islands and juries and all—I'm going to Henry. He's mine and I love him. I love him that much, father," her voice trembled. Instead of a defiance her announcement had become a plea.

And Old Two Blades gazed up at his daughter compassionately, his proud, self-willed, tenderly beloved daughter. "Billie," he began sadly, "I must tell you what we would have spared you. Harrington was not alone when he came out of the woods after the killing."

"Not alone?" cried the girl in low tones of astonishment mingled with dismay.

"That little teacher of the Indian school was with him," enlarged her father gravely. "He is shielding her or she, him. There is something between those two."

Billie Boland swooned into her father's arms.

"Henry? I—I could never have believed that of him!" she shuddered as she came to; and that was all she did say then. She allowed herself to be led away quite humbly by her maid; but once alone: "And so that explains it," she sobbed, beating her pillow. "They are shielding each other, are they? There's something between them, is there? And she came to me to plead for him! The little two-faced hypocrite!"

But the pity of it was—the shame of it, she told herself, when her weepings were over—that she still loved him. Yet now she would never go to him—never; pride would see to that. She wept afresh because she had been robbed of the sweet privilege of flying to her lover in the hour when the situation of both had become extreme.

She was impelled to write him one hot and scathing line but did not. Her treatment of him continued to be—silence, the coldest, cruelest blow that love can strike at love—an icy dagger pointed at the heart. Hour by hour that dagger entered, chilling and killing. Excuse-inventing could not stand up against it. At last it seemed that it had done its work. But that was not until the fifth day; and on the fifth day Lahleet came, but even then not to see Henry—to stand before Adam John's cell, with the two gutturaling at each other in that strange jargon of theirs—she sympathetically at times, encouragingly cross-examining, apparently; he stolidly, despondently.



The Pity of it Was that Billie Still Loved Henry

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For this was the day when Adam John must appear for sentence.

But after a little she moved over to speak to Henry and was horrified to find herself gazing at a mere wreck, a ruin of a man. His face had grayed and shrunk; there were dark hollows under his eyes. His light brown hair, usually so carefully brushed, was disheveled and stuck up at angles. The accustomed clear white of his eyes was bloodshot. There was a looseness, a trembling of the lips. His was the face of a man upon whom despair had come, into whose mind utter disillusionment had crushed. The light in his pupils, as he stared out at her, was—eccentric. He did not greet her, confess that he had missed her, or ask her what she had been doing. He accepted her presence simply as something for which he was mutely grateful, and upon the surface of his mind there broke into speech the only thing that mattered: "She didn't come!" he whispered solemnly as if awed by the immensity of some spiritual catastrophe. "She didn't come!"

Lahleet pressed her beating heart.

She loved Henry Harrington—loved him. She had kept away from him these four days purely from pride. It was not her place to be chief comforter to him so long as he looked for his chief comfort to another—but when he turned to her! Oh, how she could devote herself to him then! She, with her headlong courage in her veins; she, reckless daredevil, passionate, capable of savage abandon! Once the other woman failed, she would find a way to clear her lover from this absurd entanglement—at no matter what cost to herself. He would be hers then—worth everything—

a man for whom to spare herself nothing—no longer a character to admire, a nobility to worship, but a sweetheart to live for, to die for! Her blood smoked in her veins—but her mind was cool.

“I’ve been a fool,” Harrington confessed weakly, as feeling that some speech were necessary.

“No! No!” the girl urged quickly, tactfully. “You have been a man of large faith.”

“I have been blind,” he reproached himself.

“No, no,” she objected again. “You have merely been looking at some things so intently that you did not see certain other things.”

Harrington blinked and stared wonderingly. He took account of the difference in two women. Before him was this little slip of a girl, teacher of an Indian school, who was herself a racial hybrid, but in friendship and loyalty a thoroughbred. Up yonder on the hill was a different type of woman; pure in blood, softly nurtured and richly circumstanced—his kind of woman! And she loved him; but . . . feebly, futilely.

Harrington was speaking no word, yet Lahleet felt the crisis in their relations and her hand was small enough to creep through the bars; she too was wordless. There were noises about them, of course; low buzzes of conversation, an occasional oath, the clang of steel doors, the voice of a trusty paging a prisoner in the huge cage below; yet these were mere externals. Harrington’s consciousness had relapsed into some vast cosmic silence. All was still within him as in the soundless spaces of the universe. An entire eon of time—of thinking, comparing, contrasting—seemed to elapse before he became conscious of some stir in the corridor, something happening. He knew what in-

stantly—they were taking Adam John away to sentence him to death. Lahleet withdrew her hand from his, stifled a sob with savage stoicism, and turned to follow.

And he was staying behind—to hear his love sentenced to death! So he thought, not perceiving that it might have been hope which died, not his love—that it was because his love lived on that his anguish was so great. However it was, he eased himself down upon that narrow shelf which in a jail is called a bed, and gave way to his emotions. He was so weak that his body did not shake with sobbings; his eyes merely streamed. This was the bitterest of all the bitter hours and it was a long hour—it lasted from five minutes to ten in the morning onward, onward . . . eternities onward; while he waited for Adam John to come back—and Adam John never came back!

For, while Harrington steeped his soul in the bitterness of black despair, a swirl of mighty events was getting up in Socaltullo County—world events, almost—of which he could know nothing, until the sound of them snarled, boomed, roared through the streets and found their excited echo in the jail as elsewhere in the community.

CHAPTER XXXII

YES; if Henry could have known, events were beginning already to take their revenge on Boland. At this moment Old Two Blades was walking to and fro in his private office, all but sweating blood. For these five nights he had hardly slept. He had aged and withered, yet the most that he suffered from was anxiety—fear. Nothing had happened; but something might; and all his life he had left little to the hazard. He had made sure of uneventuated things in a thousand ways—simple, little honorable ways, he would have said; ways quite natural with him—as he made sure of the loyalty of his associates by profiting them; as he made sure of the judgment of his fellow townsmen on election days and at chamber of commerce meetings; sure of courts and juries and legislature, by managing to make his causes in some sense and after some fashion their causes.

Put baldly, in its most ignoble light, as Senator Murphy had put it, this was mere back-scratching. John Boland had, in his generous, inoffensive, unobtrusive way, scratched the backs of jurors and legislators and even judges and they, respondent to one of the noblest impulses of human nature, had in turn scratched his back whenever they found it itching.

But now an appalling situation for John Boland had come to pass. All his fortune was in the balance, hinging upon the decision of nine men, of whose mental

processes he had never done anything to make sure. He had never entertained one of them in his home, never laughed himself nearly into suffocation at one of their pet and venerable jokes, never favored them with the genial flattery of his smile, never deserved the gratitude of one of them through the opportunity to make an unerringly safe and immensely profitable investment. His wife had never poured tea for one of their wives, never rolled her glittering limousine to her door and said: "Use it this afternoon as your own, my dear, I beg of you." She had never helped one with the glamor of her social prestige, for the wife of a Supreme Court Justice outshines the wife of an encrusted western millionaire as the sun outshines the moon.

No; the arm of Boland had never been long enough to scratch a back in the Supreme Court of the United States. With all his plannings to insure men's right performance, he had now to depend upon the scales of simple justice—scales that turn upon a hair. It was just one man's right against another man's right; just John Boland, a straddling biped, against any other straddling biped—against Julius Hornblower, against Adam John, against Adolph Salzberg, against Henry Soderman. That, to one who thought as John Boland had been accustomed to think, was unthinkable—undenurable. Therefore, he walked the floor.

All the accumulations of his life, forty years of scheming, toiling, planning; all the industrial empire he had built; all the civilization he had created—for so it seemed to Old Two Blades, that he was the creator of civilization—all turned upon the decision of men upon whose backs he never once had bestowed

a brotherly caress. Why, they might not even know that he was a brotherly fellow. They might deal with him just as abstractly as if he were a sordid, avaricious, selfish person instead of—what he was.

Yes—it seemed unthinkable; yet it was so. Today all the vast upreared mountain of his possessions trembled as if based upon a sea of jelly. One rude wrench and the mountain might careen and go upside down like an iceberg when the bottom melts off. Each thought of this brought a lump into Boland's hard old throat. That such a situation had been permitted to come to pass was bad management, bad strategy, he reflected bitterly. But then it was such an unforeseen development that ever this Supreme Court of the United States would perversely overlook the briefs before, and opinions of, the lower courts and go digging into the record itself where there was skilfully buried, deeply covered over—a crime. It was a crime in the interest of civilization, to be sure, but, if a court were inclined to be extremely technical, none the less a crime.

And judging by the frantic telegrams that had been passing between Wendell and Scanlon this Supreme Court, with its unscratched backs, was inclined to be very technical. For this reason Boland was tramping by day and tossing by night; for this reason he sweated in helplessness—because there was nothing that he could do. The issues of his life hung in the balance and not a breath could he blow upon those balances. Inactivity had never been so agonizing. He had dispatched letter-long telegrams, he had sent urgent and excited representatives to Washington. For twenty-four hours they had hurried hither and yon. They had found entrée to congressmen, to senators,

to cabinet secretaries; they had even found entrée to the White House, and there been listened to comprehendingly; but there was not one of all of these who could conduct the emissaries of Boland to a side entrance into the United States Supreme Court. There was, it appeared, no side entrance—a most appalling defect in architecture; quite as appalling as this error in the strategy of his life. How absurd, irritating, maddening—just to have to sit and do nothing, merely wait helplessly to see whether this heady-minded tribunal would happen upon the right point of view, instead of being able through trustworthy ambassadors and by well tried means, to make sure that it happened on it.

“It was a mistake ever to let it get up there,” gloomed Scanlon. “We could better ’a’ bought this fellow Hornblower off. I was always afraid of it.”

“But you never told me you were!” reproached Boland, surprised.

“Who the devil ever wanted the job of telling you anything unpleasant till they had to?” retorted Scanlon.

“You lied to me,” accused his chief.

“You like liars,” defied Scanlon. “You’re fond of ’em. There’s never been but one fellow that told you the truth all the time—and he told it to you once too often! Look where you put him!”

Boland straightened up in silent rage; then rasped at Scanlon: “It was your scheme in the first place. You showed me the ambiguity in the treaty calls and old Wilkinson’s mistake. You—you gave me your opinion that it was safe—safe to go ahead.”

“And, damn it, it did figure to be safe,” scowled

Scanlon. "Besides, it was in the interest of development anyhow. You didn't connive at the mistake." This sentiment was always instantly mollifying to the roused wrath of Old Two Blades. "The lands were already being thrown open to patent," Scanlon soothed skilfully. "You merely took advantage of that. It wasn't wrong. Why, John, it was destiny."

Mr. Boland's face expressed satisfaction at this tribute to the magnificent probity of all his purposes. "Yes, yes," he assured himself, "it wouldn't have been right to keep this magnificent tract of timber a wilderness just so a few drunken, loafing Siwashes could have a place to hunt and fish in."

"Well, perhaps the court'll see it that way," the Chief Fixer comforted, moving toward the door. "The bigger justice is all on our side."

"Of course it is," asseverated Mr. Boland, self-righteously. But after Scanlon went out, his chin fell upon his breast again and he resumed his pacing, quite as if he chafed in a cell like Henry Harrington.

Scanlon, remembering that Adam John was to be sentenced, sauntered over to Judge Allen's court to lend the favor of his countenance to this important pronouncement of law and order. Some of the preliminaries had been got over. Eric Lindbloom had made his motion for a new trial and it had been denied. Just as the Chief Fixer took a privileged seat near the rail, Adam John was asked if he had anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon him. The Siwash broke his taciturn calm to declare eagerly that he had! And yet it seemed to have been not so much to object to being hanged as it was to express resentment at having been called a traitor in the

prosecuting attorney's speech to the jury, that he rose to his feet.

Brokenly but earnestly, a sorry little figure of a man and yet dignified withal, Adam John insisted that it was not against the flag that he was fighting. He declared proudly that he had fought for the flag himself. He had been wounded and he pointed to the hideous scar upon his cheek; he had been gassed, and he coughed to remind the jury of the husk that would never leave his vocal chords. "But me no fight to make world safe for Boland take my island. I no shoot flag. Shoot rotten man carry the flag. I no traitor; him traitor." And Adam John pointed to Thomas Scanlon, yawning just inside the rail. "Him traitor." And Adam John pointed to the prosecuting attorney. "You traitor." And he indicated by a nod the white-headed Judge Allen, sitting so impassive upon the bench. "All mans traitor when they make law do wrong to poor Indian. That all." The Indian sat down.

It had been quite enough. Judge Allen's classic features frowned a lofty disapproval. The man had further convicted himself out of his own mouth.

"Adam John, stand up!" the Judge commanded solemnly, and when the Indian was standing defiantly straight, went on with: "You have been found guilty of the crime of first-degree murder; and it becomes my painful duty to sentence you to be hanged by the neck until you are dead, dead, dead!"

Adam John looked a proper gravity for the case in which he stood but fidgeted and his twisted mouth began to work. "Indian die," he jerked out presently. "But right not die. Long time go bad governor take

lands from Indians. Fifty years after, mebbe so, good President give back. Today bad judge take island from me, some day good judge gonna give back."

So Adam John voiced his faith in the ultimate triumph of justice, but all at once he seemed to realize that this could not be done with human life. "S'pose today you put rope round my neck; s'pose tomorrow you want to take off that cannot do—when I'm dead Indian. That rotten!" This with profound conviction. "You rotten judge! . . . You go to hell!"

Adam John, having pronounced his vituperative sentence upon the man who had just pronounced sentence upon him, sat down apparently quite satisfied with himself, while a blush mantled Judge Allen's marble cheek and he bristled at the indignity put upon him; yet before he could utter the burning reproof that rose to his lips, a shot rang out in the court room. Everybody started and then everybody was still but with eyes fixed on Henry Soderman. He was tall, with billowing, unkempt yellow hair, with gesticulating arms, one hand holding a pistol, from the muzzle of which a faint scarf of smoke made serpentine curves upon the air.

The most surprised-looking person in all the room, the most incensed and outraged, was Judge Allen. He stared for an instant with burning eyes, and yet already he was changed. In the center of his forehead a blue spot no bigger than the end of a lead pencil had appeared, and his marble pallor took on a faint yellowish shade. After that first burning glance, too, his figure stiffened, then began to wilt. From the blue spot in the center of the forehead issued a tiny rivulet of crimson. It trickled between his eyebrows, down

over the bridge of his splendidly chiseled nose and dropped crimson splatterings into the fleecy white of his beard, just as the massive head bent and sagged forward upon the desk.

"I have killed injustice!" shouted Soderman, still brandishing his weapon and avoiding those who sought to grasp him.

"I wish to God you had!" declared Eric Lindbloom; for Eric, as he defended Adam John, had himself gained an inkling of real knowledge as to conditions in Socaltullo County. "Instead you have only murdered a good man who didn't even know he was part of the machine."

"He give my homestead to Boland," raved Soderman. "Just because I'm captain of one of his ships I let dem use de water-power five, six, seven years for not'ing, den dey take it 'way from me by de statute of limitations. Dey make me take ten t'ousand tollars for my waterfall dat make power to run all de Boland mills. He did it. Dis old robber did it." And Soderman shook his fist at the crumpled, classic figure upon the bench.

"You fool! You crazy nut!" cried Lindbloom impatiently, and by this time enough deputy sheriffs and bailiffs had surrounded the murderer to subdue him completely while Eric and others hurried up to the side of Judge Allen. He was past all mortal aid. Still with that expression of outrage and resentment on his features, he was dead. Confusion reigned for several minutes and then, as Soderman was subdued and taken from the room, it occurred to the custodian of the prisoner at the bar, who had been very much occupied, to look about for Adam John; but the Indian was not to be found.

"The Siwash flew the coop," announced Deputy Lunt in amazement so frank that it was ludicrous; but so great were the distractions round that for some time he was unable to get anyone to listen to his excited clamorings.

Adam John was indeed gone. Having surrendered voluntarily and sought justice according to the law of his new citizenship, and having failed, in his judgment, to get it, he confessed no further obligations. In the general confusion, he had departed—unobtrusively.

It was Scanlon who brought the word of the shooting to his chief, whereupon Mr. Boland's startled features framed a slowly mounting horror; he half-rose, with white showing in his eyes, a manifestation seldom observed in those deeply caverned orbs. "Horace . . . assassinated? . . . Assassinated!" In the changed inflection with which he breathed and then repeated that bloody word, the stern practical nature of Old Two Blades registered first his sense of shock and second his acceptance of the cruel fact that a man very useful to him had been stricken in the line of duty. He settled slowly back into his chair, the network of his cares deepening upon his forehead. Solemnly, his head was shaken from side to side.

"This community—that I have created," he reproached, in horrified voice, "that for thir-r-ty years I have been setting an example to—becoming hysterical—excitable—inclined to violence. And now, they shoot a judge down on the bench!" His soul revolted at such bloody profanation of the very altar of justice; at the same time that his heart was shot through with

a pang like the stab of a rusty knife, for he had loved Horace Allen since boyhood. They had come west from the same little Iowa town.

But Old Two Blades would be the stern old Roman still. "See they keep the murderer safe, Scanlon," he directed, coming out of his abstraction, yet speaking in tones which showed that every word was anguish. "Respect for law must be maintained. A painful crisis like this is our opportunity. Judge Allen was very popular. The people are sure to be wild, but we mustn't let them get in a lynching mood, Scanlon."

"I'll tell Jordan to be very careful," replied the Chief Fixer.

"Yes—yes——" the magnate reflected, sadly. "The provocation is great and it is all the better opportunity to show that after all respect for law is fundamental in Socatullo County. It would be a burning reproach if anything like a lynching happened among us."

"Yes," agreed Scanlon, drily. "Us law-abiding people!" But as before, the minute Scanlon was gone, the harried magnate let himself go a little. His lips quivered; a moisture got into his eyes. "Poor Horace!" he groaned. "Poor Horace!" For if the judge was ever pliant to the magnate's purpose, it was without either ever realizing that it was pliancy at all. Horace Allen was to John Boland an upright man, an incorruptible jurist and a dear friend. He had fallen a martyr. He had been stricken on the bench by one murderer as he meted out justice to another—a bright and shining victim of that spirit of lawlessness against which he always set himself so sternly and which, of late, had manifested itself rather disquietingly to the sweet,

benignant natures of thoughtful and upright men like himself and Old Two Blades.

For a time Boland was still—wrestling with his grief, and with poignant speculations as to why Horace Allen of all men had had to become a sacrifice. It was Harrington's example of riotous duplicity, he decided, which must have infected the whole community—that Harrington who had once said to him quite coolly: "You can't have respect for the law except when law is respectable."

Bowing to his sorrow and perplexity, Mr. Boland laid down his head upon his desk, but presently raised it again—abruptly, and sat up very straight, listening acutely. A sixth sense had told him there was some sort of sensation afloat in his outer office. A moment later, Oskison, his secretary, a flaxen-haired, literal-minded person, came breathless through the door.

"There's a bulletin on the Star window, sir," he blurted, "that says the Supreme Court has announced its decision in the townsite case, Salzberg vs. The First National."

Mr. Boland's self-control was perfect. No subordinate had ever seen his guard down, his spirits wilted; nor should. "Yes, I suppose it's about due," he remarked in a crisp, dry tone; then looked at Oskison as in mild surprise that this should be deemed a thing to be excited over.

"But the decision's gone against us, sir," sputtered the secretary.

"Against us?" Again Mr. Boland's inflection was the most casual, as if nothing, in its final analysis, could go against him.

"Yes, sir!" panted Oskison. "It says your underlying deeds, although U. S. patents, couldn't hold; because they covered land that had already been ceded to Indians by treaty. Isn't that terrible, sir? Isn't that awful news for us?" groaned Oskison.

Mr. Boland's manner was still that of a sphinx, his self-control complete. He was wild to have this blundering young man rush on and tell him all that was on the bulletin board. But he must not do it. He must wait and lap up drop by drop such information as excited youth would spill. That was a humiliating circumstance—that he had to get his information from a clerk, and the clerk from the bulletin board of a newspaper. There must have been a telegram from Wendell and it had gone astray. Fate was playing him mean tricks today. But he must act the man, the superman even. Mr. Boland actually maneuvered a slight smile, or, at least, a grim parting of the thin lips that might have been construed as a smile.

"Oh, then—it's not as bad as I supposed," gasped Oskison, relieved momentarily. "I thought it meant the title to everything was gone—in fact that is what the bulletin said—the title to the townsite, the title to the timber, to the ground the mills stand on. Why—everything you have, sir—everything swept away; and that you'll have to pay back for everything you've taken off—with interest. That's what the bulletin says, Mr. Boland. It can't be right, can it?" The young man's agitation showed, however, that he feared it might be right.

"No, of course, it can't be right. Thank you, Oskison. That will do. Send Scanlon in when he is at leisure."

The secretary went out hurriedly. When the door had closed, John Boland straightened and glanced about him, as making sure of his surroundings and that he was alone; then slowly withered in his chair, an aged, shrunken bankrupt. He shivered once, and was still—very still, draining the dregs.

He had discounted the blow so many times in the last few days that its actual fall did not stun him—left him in possession of all his faculties. Realization was keen, vivid, splitting to the marrow.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ON THE streets of Edgewater shock had followed shock. The first swift-flying rumor that Judge Horace Allen, respected, venerated figure in the community, had been assassinated as he dealt out justice on the bench did not so much inflame as stagger. It was an assassination not of him but of every man. Why, why should this horror be—why have come to pass? So stunned minds demanded.

It is creditable to the people of Edgewater and the two adjoining towns to be able to record that this was their first reaction—a moment of profound self-examination. What was old Socatullo coming to, anyway? Only a week or two ago the assassination of their sheriff; only a day or two ago the moral collapse of that popular idol, Henry Harrington; next the discovery that he had been “collapsed” a long time ago, as indicated by the charge of embezzlement and murder; and now this Bolshevik, Soderman, shooting Judge Allen down upon the bench! These could not be mere sporadic, unrelated outbreaks of violence. There must be some underlying connection between them. They must be symptoms of some common disease.

The Blade got out an extra. The people read it and gazed dumbly from one to another. “What in the world!” they murmured, aghast; then girded up their souls.

But while the newsboys were crying the extra, a most astounding flash had come in over the Washington wire. Titmarsh read it and could hardly believe his eyes. Agitated, he let the flimsy flutter from his hand. He picked it up and read it again, slowly, chin trembling. A dispatch that the sun would cease to shine after today would hardly have startled him more. His impulse was to ring up Scanlon. "Look here, what in blazes is this darn thing?" he would have blundered hoarsely; but an instinct said, "No: wait a minute."

If the dispatch were correct, Scanlon was no man to consult. If it were true, John Boland was a colossus of hypocrisy, towering over the three towns, an arch-villain of his time. For twenty years the editor had looked to Boland for sustenance and profit. If Boland were a mere adventurer, building the fortunes of all of them upon a fraud—if Boland were ruined by this decision of the United States Supreme Court, why, he, Titmarsh, was ruined also. The ground his shop stood on was not his ground—the building that housed it was not his building—if everything that Boland had accumulated had been carried to pot by this one sweep of the gowned arm of justice, why, everything that he, Titmarsh, had accumulated, had been carried to pot also. So it seemed to his dizzy, reeling mind. To him there came no speculation of pity for the broken buccaneer—he thought only of the victims, and among these victims, he felt first, and naturally, for himself.

A cold rage of resentment at Boland, a mighty impulse to revenge that was bigger than any emotion that had ever stirred in Titmarsh's pigeon breast, began to get hold of him. Instead of appealing to

Scanlon, he hurried round the corner to Gaylord, President of the First National Bank—which was the actual respondent in the suit of Salzberg over a piece of land 60 x 120 the title to which, unsettled, unsettled everything and thus let loose the avalanche. Gaylord, Titmarsh judged, would have something direct, perhaps. But Gaylord did not—not yet. The great press service of the country had outsped all private sources of information.

The financial man stared, then read again and his face went white as paper. Titmarsh saw in its fleeting expression his own fears confirmed, saw the height and breadth and depth of a county-wide disaster paint its appalling significance upon the features of the banker—a man accustomed by profession to think of the concerns of others.

“The — — —!” exclaimed James Hobson Gaylord, and when, white of eyes conspicuous, he turned his blanched face to the editor’s, it revealed his own perception that John Boland was a mephistophelian cyclops. “Judas,” they had called Henry Harrington five or six days ago, for voting against the interests of the community in a little matter of a prison contract. What would they call John Boland? There was no word to characterize him. He had beggared himself—that was his affair; but he had beggared everyone else—that would be their affair. The whole community was landless—and on land everything is built. Everybody had been robbed of his or her title, which was to say, robbed of increment, robbed of homes, of business houses, robbed of thrift and frugality of thirty years, robbed of the things that had been bought with youth and toil and sacrifice—with

the very substance of life itself; robbed of comfort now, robbed of that prospect of comfort in declining years which begins to look so sweet to people in middle life, who are the sort of people bankers come most to know and have sympathy with.

While the two men faced each other, a subeditor—who had marked some of the meaning of that first “flash,” as well as noted his superior’s agitation and whither he had gone bearing the flimsy in his hand—came hastily in with the more amplified account of what the United States Supreme Court had decided. Gaylord snatched and read it. It confirmed every implication his keen mind had seen in the first.

“What’ll I do?” gulped Titmarsh, long trained to subserviency. Never had a piece of news affecting the welfare of Boland General come to him that he had not hurried with it to Scanlon for suggestion. He had printed or suppressed, garbled or construed, according to the effect of its publication upon the welfare of that great business operation of which every human being in the county was in some way or other a part. But Boland General was no more! It was no more than the remains of a bubble that had burst, which are not much. The two men exchanged glances; their eyes spoke before their lips could frame the words. They said: “John Boland is a dead one. The man whose personality has become a tradition, an institution—has fallen; that upreared, godlike figure has crashed to earth.”

“Do?” blazed Jim Gaylord, independence of action flaming out in his decision as it had not done before in years. “Bulletin it! By God, bulletin it! It’ll be every man for himself before night, and the devil take

John Boland, if he don't want the mob to take him . . . the crooked old coyote!" Gaylord smashed down his fist upon his desk.

Titmarsh hurried out. With his going, the banker lost something of his self-control. "My God!" he cried, raging to and fro in his glass-walled office. "My God! . . . That old devil lied to me. He's been lying to me all these years. Business man? He's a gambler. He must have known every minute what might happen—every minute for thirty years. Think of that, will you? And when Hornblower started this thing three years ago and we wanted to lynch him and Henry Harrington stopped it, the old hypocrite interfered on Harrington's side. My God, what a nerve! . . . Well, I suppose that was part of the game—he had to be like that to make suckers of us all, to dope us into the notion that he was God-a'mighty. What a gall!" Gaylord was still walking up and down, clapping the palms of his hands together excitedly. "What a gall!" he cried, almost admiringly. "That's why I couldn't be a great big crook myself; I just haven't got gall enough." Jim Gaylord sank, collar wilting, although it was not a warm day, into his chair, and began to swear, softly, fervently, almost unctuously.

Around the corner Titmarsh had stopped his press and was himself pounding feverishly upon a typewriter. He was preparing the bulletin. The rising venom in a small nature inflamed his mind, made him do the clearest, the most convincing piece of writing he had ever done in his life. Into one hundred words he got the succinct story of a colossal crime which, justly if tardily overtaking its perpetrator, had brought cataclysmic disaster upon innocent thousands.

Within five minutes a copy was pasted in the window and another was being transcribed by brush into huge sheets that could be read at fifty feet, while a third was being rapidly set in half-inch type—a size that would make the story all but fill the first page of the second extra of the Blade for that day.

Before the larger sheets could be pasted in the window, a group had gathered about the typewritten one; before its duplicate was past the typesetters, the sidewalk in front of the Blade office was blocked with people who had gathered to stare with straining eyes; and within ten minutes after the second extra was in the hands of newsboys hawking hoarsely, the street itself was blocked; not even police lines could have been established.

Messengers, automobiles, telephone wires hurried the news about. Housewives listened at the receiver sickly, or stared wide-eyed over back fences at the white faces of neighbor women who purveyed the story to them. These telephone conversations and over-the-back-fence group-discussions were alike exclamatory—fragmentary.

“Mr. Boland? Such a good man?” tone of utter incredulity.

“Well, if he’s that kind of a man——”

“I never could see why people were so crazy about that man——”

“Of course, he’ll have to pay it back.”

“Why, he was little better than a robber.”

“But can he pay it back?”

“He’s rich.”

“He’s got millions.”

“He’s a beggar.”

“But the decree says he has to pay back—make restitution for every log—every lath—every stick of timber—why, all he’s got has to go back to the Government——”

“Not to the Government—to the Salisheutte Indians. They’re only a small tribe now.”

And so the gossip went.

Men in offices and men in stores and men in shops and mills heard it and gazed at each other incredulously. “What’s it mean?” they asked, and wet dry lips and felt a strange quaking in their hearts which seemed to sense or understand before their minds did. What does it mean to have the land, the foundation of society, plucked out from under? It means chaos—paralysis—Russia!

Telephones jingled more persistently, wives calling up husbands, husbands calling up wives who with their consorts had scraped and saved through tedious years of instalment and interest-paying, in order to call their homes their own—and now to learn that they had paid their money to a man who did not own what he had sold them. Lawyers were being consulted and they with grave, steadied voices gave grave, unsteady opinions.

“If it’s taken away from us, Boland will pay it back—that old hypocrite—or I’ll dig his eyes out myself,” one wife shrieked madly.

An excited small store-keeper closed his doors and went rushing to join the milling mass before the newspaper office. The example was contagious; others closed their doors. It became epidemic. The larger stores had emptied themselves of patrons; soon the very salespeople had begun to trickle out. A sus-

pension of all business activities appeared to declare itself. By four o'clock Schuler's, the biggest store in town, had closed. Schuler was not there—he was closeted with Gaylord and Foster and other wiser heads—if there were any wiser—trying to make sure of understanding, trying to behave as rational beings instead of stripped savages. Their conference was in an upstairs room over the bank as affording greater privacy.

“There isn't a loan—there isn't a mortgage that I can foreclose,” Gaylord was saying, “because—well, because the title isn't there—four hundred thousand loaned by the Savings Branch on real estate and I can't collect a dollar of it.”

The banker turned to the window and gazed moodily out at the signs along the street, swinging so blandly unconscious that they irritated Gaylord. Didn't they know—the fools, Tuttle and Rogers, that that was not their drug store? Ryan, that that was not his plumbing shop? Ellison that—— “Oh, my Lord!” he groaned, and turned back to the group, as he recalled another phase. “The new improvement bonds! We'll never sell 'em now. And the Federal Reserve loans! Why, fellows, our credit is shot to pieces. It'll take years—years of litigation to——”

“Aw, let's cool off until tomorrow and then see how it looks,” urged Schuler.

“Tomorrow?” snorted Gaylord, angrily. “You fool! There ain't any tomorrow. Hark!” he interrupted himself and cocked a listening ear. “Hear that, will you?”

Up from the streets came the roar of the angry throng, massing, milling, menacing.

Yet even up to this time there had been those who took the news quite calmly, young clerks in stores who owned nothing, workmen on the docks and in the mills who owned no real property nor hoped to. The land was still there, wasn't it? The stores still stood—and the mills. Somebody owned them—somebody would pay wages. So at the first it was only the propertied classes who were greatly excited beyond curiosity. But the unpropertied began to see that their self-interest was affected also. With values unsettled, business would be unstable; there would be less money to buy with, fewer goods to be purchased and fewer clerks needed to sell them; less work, less prosperity, less . . . It took not more than two hours for everybody to understand that this was everybody's calamity; that from the top scum to the bottom slime nobody in Socatullo County was immune. No logs from the hills meant no wages for taking them out; no lumber from the mills meant no wages for turning logs into dimension-stuff that went into the holds and onto the decks of ships; and no wages meant—starvation! And that is property catastrophe reduced to its final and inevitable terms.

Starvation! The mass thought of hunger makes for panic. Nobody had given the order to close Schuler's; it just closed. So with the other business places. And the same thing was happening on the docks; longshoremen dropped their hooks and slings swung empty from the booms of ships. It was happening in the very mills themselves. Saws turned and there were none to feed them, endless chains rattled but bore no grist of logs nor of lumber; suction pipes wheezed no streams of sawdust to the incinerators.

The workingmen had sensed now the astounding significance of the news and the impulse to labor was paralyzed; they went out—to see about it.

The engineers heard this and turned off the power. They too went out. Silent, barn-like with only here and there the whirl of a wheel, the rhythmic exhaust of a jet of steam that itself seemed to pant discouraged: “What’s the use! What’s the use!” Those great hives of industry, for the first time unproducing, became huge cavernous solitudes.

But there was nothing of solitude about the streets of Edgewater. In front of the Blade office and about the corner by the First National they were a-jam and more or less a-rumble, the crowd more excited and excitable with every moment. Inflaming rumors flew about; nobody had all the information; some got fragments of it very vividly.

“What’s it mean, Andy?” shouted one man, hopelessly wedged in a thick growth of shoulders, to an acquaintance who, peering from the vantage of a barrel, was getting a close-up of the latest bulletin.

“It just means our titles are gone—plumb gone—that’s what!”

“Gone where?”—incredulously.

“Gone to thirty or forty dirty Indians. That’s who we’ve been working for, fellows—a bunch of mangy bucks and rheumatic old squaws, and the guy that put us to work for ’em, that made us do it, was old John Boland.”

The crowd was doubly, triply incensed: incensed because he whom they had venerated as a god had turned out a gigantic gambler; incensed because he had let the town grow and thrive in confidence when he

knew it rested upon a trap-door to an abyss like this; besides they were incensed by their own fears, their own meannesses and malices, which any crisis of emotions may stir up in any group of human beings.

"Lynch him!" "Lynch the old devil!" The cry was lifted and carried far. Almost immediately a spray of humanity jetted out from the throng like the stream of a hose and led a mad dash to that squat three-story block-long building in which were the offices of Boland General.

But already J. B. had heard about the mob. "The ingrates!" he had been barking. "The cattle! They never think of my losses—it's theirs they worry about. Can't they see—dod gast 'em—they'll be protected? It'll all iron out somehow for everybody but me. It's me that's broke . . . but I'll come back. I'll show 'em—I'll show the whole dod-gasted——"

A confused sound began to come to his windows from the street in front, and he was first of the little group of counselors to gather in his office—Scanlon, Quackenbaugh, Mead and others—to sense its meaning—a low mouthing that grew into a strident angry clamor and the shouting of a name.

"Go out to them! Make a speech to 'em!" rasped Mr. Boland excitedly at Scanlon. "Tell 'em it isn't clear yet; tell 'em we haven't had time to weigh all the implications; tell 'em I'll make good on everything. I always have and I always will. Anyway, pacify 'em, pacify 'em!"

"It's you they're paging," suggested the Chief Fixer drily.

"I'll go! Oh, I'll face them," fumed the ruined magnate, with another flare of his old imperiousness,

and rising as if he would throw his window up and shout down to the menacing masses: "Here I am—answerable!"

"Better not, Mr. Boland," warned Scanlon soberly. "Better not—they're not themselves exactly. They're a bunch of Indians and they're getting worse. Better use the private exit and get away for an hour or two."

Scanlon's words were uttered in just the tone to carry conviction to a tenacious man who nevertheless believes in discretion. Mr. Boland fidgeted for a while, hating to show yellow and hating to be rash too. Eventually he took the Chief Fixer's advice; and it was well that he did, for thirty minutes later a geyser-burst of mad humanity roared up the stairway and streamed along the corridor into his private office, through doors which Oskison opened obsequiously and hastily, knowing that they would be battered down, if he did not.

Missing Old Two Blades, the mob took small vengeance on his property; disarranging, overturning, smashing and destroying, then rushing back downward to the street, leaving the upper purlieus of Boland General looking as if a herd of wild cattle had trampled through.

CHAPTER XXXIV

AT SIX o'clock the mob forgot to go home to dinner; by seven o'clock when it was hungry as well as embittered, when that venom which had distilled itself first in the veins of Titmarsh had had time to duplicate itself in several thousand venous systems; when the men were mad and the women were madder, when leadership had been unable to assert itself; when the mob was a headless monster that flung its writhing coils around first one city block and then another; when it was an angry flood that sloshed through the streets from the courthouse on the south to the docks upon the north—then it was that this instinct to avenge itself upon the property of John Boland, when it could not reach his person, cropped out again.

It broke out first down by the waterfront, opposite Whitman Avenue, where loomed a huge warehouse with the name of John Boland—a wooden warehouse and highly inflammable, for nearly everything in Edgewater was wooden that could be wooden; and highly inflammable because the chief product of Boland General was lumber made from resinous timber.

“Burn it!” somebody shouted hoarsely. “Burn the damn thing!”

How was it done? And so quickly? Nobody knew quite. Somebody found a barrel of tar on the dockside; somebody's hands rolled it against the side of the building; somebody's axe broke it in; several some-

bodies flung pieces of splintered lumber at the oozing mass; then a particular somebody struck a match. That somebody was Adolph Salzberg.

For a moment the crowd had been still, as sensing that something pregnant and sensational was afoot.

The match flickered, the tar caught, smoked, smoldered and flared up. A cheer rose from the crowd. The blaze shot up at the corner of the warehouse like a swift-climbing vine of fire, like a spurt of flame, mounting to the eaves. The cheers grew wilder. The ivy of fire crept both ways along the eaves, its branches like elfin sprites of flickering yellow that balanced dancingly on the gutters and then of a sudden became huge birds with mighty sun-like wings that flapped every way at once. There was a smoke, wide sheets of smoke creeping and curling from between the shingles; then there was a crackling, volleys of cracklings, a vast barrage of cracklings and swiftly one huge explosion of fire. The whole warehouse was enveloped in fierce flame, sweeping upward into the night.

It and its contents went roaring up to the sky and the crowd cheered frantically, delighted with the spectacle, delighted with itself—so delighted that somebody rolled another barrel of tar against another warehouse. It burned as brilliantly as the other; and there was more cheering and more frantic delight. The mob spread out and grew busy—busier and busier. More warehouses were kindling; and then piles of lumber began to go—huge fields of lumber—acres and acres of lumber leaping into red flame. Wharves and docks began to blaze and ships at these docks to take fire. When hawsers burned in two the ships went adrift, gigantic torches reeling tipsily on the inlet.

The *Mary Boland*, especially, burned well, and the north-bound breeze wafted her across the channel, into a dock, into a lumber pile—and within half an hour the whole waterfront of Socatullo was burning brilliantly, as brilliantly as burned the waterfront of Edgewater. Other ships aflame drifted Wahpeetahway and docks there too were burning. Mills were burning—mills on both sides of the inlet. The *Boland* lath mill went. It was the largest, the most perfectly equipped lath mill in all the world. It burned beautifully.

Gaylord and Schuler had been trying to check this incendiary passion. “Don’t burn up the mills. You burn up your jobs, you damn fools!” they shouted, fighting their way through the crowds.

“Aw, let ’em burn! They’re *Boland*’s, ain’t they?” retorted men with torches of flaming waste, with buckets of kerosene or fish oil in their hands, and went on kindling new fires.

The match factory, the paper mill, the salmon cannery and the drying frames on which were stretched thousands of desiccating carcasses of Alaska cod, began to go—filling the air with a heavy odor of incinerating flesh.

The waterfront on the Edgewater side was now ablaze from end to end. Vast sheets of flame, clouds and billows of flame, torrential canopies of fire swept up into the night. They flaunted their blazing banners at the darkness overhead. *Boland General* was burning up.

Revenge! The mob was getting its revenge. It cheered itself hoarse—cheered and rushed about from one scene of conflagration to another.

But there was one who saw who neither cheered nor rushed about. Henry Harrington, through the barred windows of his cell, gazed at that mounting wall of flame half a mile away and was enough dismayed by the sight—yet his heart was too sick to be made sicker. He was rather numb tonight about a good many things. Copies of the *Star* extras had, of course, penetrated to the jail. He knew what had happened—to Adam John—to Judge Allen—to John Boland—knew why that wall of flame was rising. He knew it was insanity. It distressed him—yet only mildly, impersonally, as it were. He was a sort of burned-out ruin himself tonight and dumbly drank in the spectacle of the conflagration, conscious all the while of that dull pain at his heart which it seemed must never leave; for the next day after his love had died, he had been surprised to find it alive again. This was because he had subconsciously accepted Lahleet's hypothesis, so sympathetically and mendaciously planted in his mind, purely to anesthetize his suffering—the theory that Billie believed him guilty. Eventually he confessed it aloud to himself: "She thinks I'm guilty . . . They've made her believe it. . . . She's just so shocked she can't think what to do. . . . That makes her doubt me all along the line." From this moment forward, Henry thought he had originated this idea, so that when later Lahleet advanced a totally different hypothesis he saw no reason to doubt her single-mindedness.

So tonight as the flames burned up John Boland's fortune, while Henry languished, seemingly forgotten, in a cell, he could mutter doggedly, lyrically: "I love her! I love her!" But abruptly the languishing one

closed his eyes and opened them again, for something most unexpected had happened. While his gaze was focused on those distant cliffs of fire, the line of his vision had been broken by a something—a something on the hiproof of the jail, a few feet below his window—a human figure, silhouetted for the moment and then crouching flat. The appearance of a human figure there would have been startling enough—especially since Henry thought he recognized it—but his power to register vivid sensation was temporarily depleted by overuse. He watched this figure casually almost, creeping upward to his window, and flattening there, while hands worked at the sash with tools that presently enabled the man to remove and lay it on the sloping shingles beside him.

“Hello, Adam! What do you think you’re doing?” Henry demanded in a low tone. Adam’s answer was a grunt and the appearance of a tiny blue flame that appeared to jet almost out of his hand. Some furtive, some perverse instinct of Henry’s made him careful to hover close to those bars in such a way that the blue flame would be invisible to eyes peering out at the lurid sky from cells behind, quite as the flattened figure of Adam John was invisible. Along the bars, top and bottom this blue flame went licking, until, lo, at a touch Adam John had plucked out four of them.

“Can beat it now,” he whispered laconically in that forever gassy-hoarse voice of his.

Henry, who had been fascinated by the acetylene tongue at its work, seemed to rouse to full consciousness with a bang. “No, no, Adam!” he objected with decision. “Thanks, old man, but—when I go out of here, it’ll be through the front door. The

folks that put me in will have to come and take me out."

This was not bravado, exactly; it was not conscience entirely. It was the faint resurgence of an old hope. Henry still dreamed of being vindicated. He doted on it. Honor seemed all that was left. Some docks and mills burning up were nothing to this young man—at least nothing so much. A far greater conflagration had been going on in his own heart all day and thus far into the night and there was something there that refused to incinerate. Vindication, not liberty, was what he craved.

"No?" Adam John had grunted, nonplused, but submissive, as always, to Harrington's slightest whim, "No?"—as if he could not understand, and yet was reconciled.

"I don't blame you though for lighting out, Adam John!" Henry assured him. "You keep under cover now till I can go to the bat for you. You got a rotten deal when I promised you a square one. This whole thing's going to untangle, and untangle darn quick. I can see that much in the light of that burning mill over there."

Adam John grunted.

"Where's Lahleet?" Henry whispered.

"Mebbe so she go Salisheuttas—fishing up coast." Adam John speculated. "Salisheuttas own everything—own all dis now; own every darn t'ing."

"The Salisheuttas!" ejaculated Henry, visioning a few tepees and lodges of smelly fish Indians. "There's a turnover for your life. It seems as if God was giving these people the laugh!"

But Adam John did not linger to philosophize.

He had done what he came there to do. There was a sudden move on his part, a flattening against the shingles, then an alert lifting of his head.

"Goo'-by," he blurted and was gone before Henry could even say: "Thanks, you well-meaning old scout."

The conflagration raged on—raged wider and more fiercely. The people of Edgewater watched for hours with grim satisfaction while John Boland's possessions burned to ashes. Yet every tide that floods must also ebb. Eventually, bodies wearied and spirits commenced to sag, the dramatic gorgeousness of the scene somehow to pale.

By midnight the destroying mob had become a thin line stretched for two miles along the blazing waterfront, a line which showed a tendency to break and knot in haggard, worn-out groups, no longer potential, resolved by the lassitude of exhaustion and the subsidence of emotions into mere spectators. The spectacle, so long inspiring, began instead to seem awesome. Men gazed solemn-eyed at red clouds glowing where they had worked at desk or bench, some of them for all of their adult lives. There was some recurrence of hysteria—women weeping quietly who had wept violently some hours before. A hue of thought began to tinge the minds of gazers, misgivings to arise. The people of Edgewater were beginning to reflect—to regret even, to wonder if—if all had been as lost as it seemed before the mad impulse to destroy had come to them.

Even nature experienced a revulsion, for, while the citizens of Edgewater were thus doubting themselves, there came a change of the wind—an ominous change. The watchers on the roofs across the inlet noted it

first. Sparks no longer fell on them. The flames were going straight up. By one o'clock these roaring columns, pillaring the sky, were all leaning toward Edgewater. Yes, a breeze, an unmistakable breeze was bearing down from the northwest. Gentle enough at first, when it encountered all this vast whirl of heated air, the breeze quickened freakishly into a gale, a devastating blast that had breathed but once upon that blazing waterfront of Edgewater when from it there surged toward the town a mile-long billow of flame. Frightfully this rolled into the wide avenue and scorched the cheeks of spectators so that the line of them broke and gave up the cross-streets in hurrying groups. Proud, as vaunting itself on this victory, it leaped and flaunted after their heels.

Immediately, the sides of wooden buildings and the window casings of brick ones on the town side of Inlet Avenue, commenced to smoke and blister. Within a minute incipient blazes broke out along that barrier of buildings—a score of blazes, fifty of them! Stores, shops, flats and homes of Edgewater were breaking into flame.

Fire! Fire! The town was kindling as that first warehouse had kindled, with incredible rapidity. Fires by squads and fires by platoons were organizing themselves in one long regimental front of flame. Tardily the little fire department, totally disorganized by the mob, was endeavoring to function, rushing to and fro with a thousand volunteer aids—regulars on the roofs of stores with hose, volunteers on the roofs of houses with buckets and wet sacks. Their efforts were futile, comic. This wall of flame, advancing remorseless and irresistible from the waterfront, was dooming

the town of Edgewater to ashes as the people of Edgewater had doomed the works of John Boland to the same.

A new kind of panic seized upon the people, a panic in their souls. They stared inert, helpless. First the ground taken out from under them and now the roof burned down over their heads; it was as if God had struck them. Why lift a hand to avert this final blow, why stir a step to fly from that punishment which seemed prepared for them? "Vengeance is Mine." They had taken their own vengeance on Boland and the fires they kindled had flared back to take a fateful vengeance on the little all that was left them.

But this attitude passed. Everybody ran to save what he might—and then to escape. The doors of stores were flung open. Stocks, furniture, fittings were hurried into the streets, to be, within a few minutes, abandoned. The flames raced too rapidly.

In the residence district there was more time—there were more open spaces; for every home in Edgewater had its lawn in front, its garden in the rear. Householders began frantically carrying out their possessions into the streets. Automobiles were being employed; trucks, touring-cars with tops thrown off, and sedans and limousines with windows lowered and household furnishings thrust frantically through the frames, were all piled high or stuffed full and making trips into the park around the courthouse or to the vacant ground at the edges of the town.

Great prices were offered for means of transportation; great prices demanded by shameless profiteers. Horses were hurriedly hitched to wagons; wheelbarrows were trundled out of gardeners' houses and from

contractors' stores; articles of furniture with casters on them, a sofa that would roll, a davenport, a baby's bed—all such vehicles were piled high with most precious personal possessions, hastily and often absurdly selected, and trundled frantically along the pavement. The gas plant blew up with a mighty roar that knocked houses flat, people flat; but the people rose and stumbled on, their pathway lighted by the flames that burned a block or two away.

Mothers wept, babies cried, fathers scolded; boys shouted one to another, girls giggled hysterically; everybody was frantic, everybody was exhausted but everybody kept going, for the tongues of flame licked hungrily. The red monster had roared down the main streets; it leaped from house to house, from cottage to cottage. The smoke hung in the air, a huge black pall, a few hundred yards above the town, making a somber reflector for the flames, illuminations that revealed men and women as insects—crawling, puny, helpless entities, struggling against the ultimate.

It was one wide stage, but many dramas were going forward upon it at once—comedies some of them, tragedies some—as, for instance: Adolph Salzberg was moving his goods from out his rented cottage. In the presence of what was happening all Salzberg's philosophies fell away from him. He was a mere homeless insect as other human beings were.

From somewhere he had obtained possession of a bony horse and a rickety wagon. Into this, aided by his wife, he was madly hurrying the few little sticks of furniture that were his and the two children that God had given and for whom at times he had been none too grateful. Adolph was very excited, very human, very

tender tonight as he rushed in and out of the little cottage; Hulda, his wife, was more excited. She was large and her flesh was soft. She stumbled from the cottage to the wagon, lumbering, panting—turning a moment to look at the flames advancing and then with groans of fresh distress, heaving toward the cottage again.

But once as Hulda turned cottageward, she cried out sharply, "Oh, Adolph! Der pain! Der pain!" then thrust a hand to her side and sat down upon the curb. Adolph, as he wrestled with his loading, noted his wife sitting down, and that she appeared to be in distress. Before he could get to her, she was lying down on the strip of grass between the wooden walk and the wooden curb—both of which would presently take fire and burn.

"Mama!" he called. "Mama! Don't lay down dere. I get you a bed to lay on!" But when Salzberg knelt beside her and felt tenderly over that large, soft body, lo it was pulseless.

"Mama!" he called so loudly that she must hear. "Mama! I get you up from dere."

But he knew she did not hear him. Frantically he dumped the part of their household effects from the old wagon and made a superhuman effort to lift the body of his wife to the place he had prepared for it, talking to it sobbingly all the while. "I lift you up dere, mama. I haf you up dere in a jiff!" But he was not equal to the task. And everybody was busy—too busy with his own concerns, too busy with bird cages and green onyx clocks and family heirlooms, to consider the particular embarrassment of a broken-hearted man entirely undemonstrative in his grief. But there came a step

beside him, a low exclamation and a crisp voice that said heartily: "I'll help you, Adolph!"

Scarce looking up, though grateful, Adolph knew that hands less large but equally tender with his own lifted that dear treasure to its place and helped him compose it as for a comfortable sleep.

Salzberg murmured fervent thanks and looked up to ejaculate in amazement: "Py Gott! Henry Harrington!"

"The fire is coming fast," said Henry; "get along with you."

Salzberg put his children beside him on the seat, and clucked to the old horse and drove away—away from the cliffs of fire—away toward the open country—through the pungent bitter smoke, with its smell of burning codfish—Salzberg who had kindled that first warehouse down on the dock near seven hours before.

"Dam' dis man, Boland," he sobbed. "Dam' de Supreme Court. Dam' me! Dam' everyt'ing but my two modderless little kids!" Salzberg, clucking thickly to the old horse, stretched a sheltering arm around his children.

"Now, wouldn't that break your heart!" exclaimed Harrington, but stood gazing after for only a minute; for he had run head-on into this Salzberg tragedy while on most personal business bent, and was immediately under way once more, pointing his course to the edge of town and up the side-hill by a short cut through scrubby fir trees to the bluff on which Humboldt House had been reared so proudly. "Billie! My Lord, what an awful blow it's been to her! Why didn't I think of that side of it before," he was reproaching himself as he plunged upward. "She wasn't to blame.

She didn't know her father was an old cormorant. She'll need me now," he panted, forgetting everything but that the girl he loved would now be a crushed and broken flower, prideless, disillusioned, needing only him. "She'll want me . . . she'll want me something awful!" he perceived eagerly, with all a lover's reviving faith.

Occasionally as he climbed, he glanced backward at that lurid sea of flames, a vast, yellow world blazing in the middle of night, and shuddered each time he looked, for his capacity to feel emotions was coming back to him once more. Newly impelled by these and by tenderer ones which kindled momentarily, he resumed, after each pause, his upward climb, more breathless than before, naturally unaware that some ten minutes earlier, say about the time when he was lifting the the body of Hulda Salzberg, a coupé had rolled madly down the roadway from Humboldt House to the town.

Daring desperately the very edge of the advancing wall of flames, this car reached the courthouse square, dashed upon the curb, bounded recklessly across the lawn and brought up quivering at the very entrance to the jail. Jailor White heard a clanging of his bell and answered it in person. As he set his iron gate ajar, two female figures, cloaked from head to foot, crowded in upon him and the slenderer of them instantly and boldly turned back the cowl-like collar, revealing the pale, agitated features of Miss Billie Boland.

"Oh!" she moaned, and reached out excited hands to the jailor. "Your prisoners!" she clamored, then choked: "They'll burn—they'll burn like rats in a trap."

Jailor White, who had started and stared wonder-

ingly, was quick to recover his poise and replied with that courteous consideration he always paid a lady. "Nope," he reassured confidently. "We won't burn, Miss Boland. Too much open space around us; besides, we got the whole staff on the roof with wet sacks and buckets of water. Not a chance, Miss Billie!"

"Oh!" gasped the girl, breathing quickly: "Are you sure?"

"Absolutely, miss!"

"Oh, such a relief!" She stood hesitant.

Jailor White had, in his treatment of Henry Harrington, already shown that he was a man of sympathetic heart and now he displayed a discerning mind as well. "Want—want to see anybody?" he asked, obligingly.

But Miss Boland's face betrayed a fresh alarm. "No! Oh, no!" she insisted hastily. "And you—" her hand went out imploringly—"you wouldn't tell any . . . anybody that I came? . . . That won't be necessary, will it?" Her anxiety was very great and very appealing.

Again Jailor White showed discernment. He perceived that this last was very maidenly anxiety indeed and the chivalry of his rough heart was stirred by this spectacle of the yesterday proud daughter of the tonight ruined and harried John Boland rushing downward through a wall of fire, full of fear for her lover; and then, when reassured, as full of alarm lest he might know that she had come.

"Nope; not necessary 'tall, Miss Boland. I've forgot bigger things 'n this in my day to oblige a lady."

"Thank you; oh, thank you, Mr. ——" Billie stammered gratefully.

"White is my name, Miss Boland; just plain Larry White."

"Thank you, Mr. White," Billie murmured, and pressed the jailor's hand fervently, then fled out the door and down the steps faster than her maid could follow; and it was not fear of the flames that made her hasten.

Henry, panting at last to the top of the bluff, was really relieved to find Humboldt House still standing. The mob had not rushed up here then. But the house seemed dark; yet he knew it had a private electric plant and surmised the curtains were tightly drawn; however, the front he realized must be illumined by the conflagration. Under cover of a cedar hedge and furtively for strategic reasons rather than through remembering that his status was that of a prisoner illegally at large, he made his way round the house, there to be halted abruptly, for the wide veranda not twenty yards away was at least half as light as day and alive with people, thirty or forty perhaps, standing along the rustic rail in groups, staring gloomily and talking in low, dejected voices. These, of course, would be the families of Boland executives, who had been burned out down below.

Their presence, so close to him, gave Henry an odd sort of start. Scanlon was there, no doubt; and Quackenbaugh—the men who had conspired to ruin him. He found his teeth gritting, his wild rage at them heightening. He edged nearer, still keeping close under the shadow of the hedge, and was rewarded by making out Old Two Blades himself, a little apart, his privacy respected by the others, standing motion-

less like a pelican on a rock, gazing downward into the vast pit of flame; and beside him, sunk into a chair, sat the considerable bulk of his wife, swaying occasionally as with inconsolable grief.

"Napoleon watching the burning of Moscow!" muttered Henry, gloating in spite of himself.

But Billie! Where was she? He strained his eyes for a sight of her, his ears for a tone of her voice; but got neither. Satisfied that she was not upon the veranda, he moved around the corner of the house to get a view of that small balcony which looked out from her own suite in the northeast gable.

"Poor, poor girl! She's just too crushed to see anybody at all," he reasoned. "Nobody would know how to talk to her but me anyway. . . . I could do a Romeo and climb up to that balcony," he decided, contemplating the mass of creepers that grew past it to the roof.

Henry had not heard a car shoot under the portecochère because the whole length and bulk of the house lay between. It was the coupé coming back. Still breathless from her visit to the jail, Billie's instinct was to avoid those groups upon the piazza, to avoid her grimly brooding father and her steadily weeping mother, to avoid the very house itself. Plucking at her maid to follow, she turned out, past the fountain playing in the court, toward the pergola in the rose garden. From there she could stare at that fascinating holocaust below from which no one could take an eye and give herself up to that whirlpool muddle of bitter and bewildering reflections which seemed to constitute her entire mind tonight.

Harrington, concealed by a pillar of that same per-

gola, was gazing speculatively at the balcony, then wistfully at the windows which he knew were hers, when there was wafted into his nostrils a faint but delicious perfume, a distinctive, delicate, bewitching fragrance that was as much personality as it was the distilled scent of flowers. He inhaled it and stood enraptured. It was Billie! She was near—she was somewhere round him in the night. The faint breeze breathed of her. His heart leaped; his nerves tingled; he could barely repress a cry of delight. Billie! Suddenly he shrank. She was there—just on the other side of the tamarack pillar. She was passing—screened from him only by the rose vines; he made out her figure clearly in that lurid half light. He could have reached out and touched her; but—caution! He must not alarm her. And, gods of ill luck, there tagged her maid after her. Her heels clicked faintly on the vitrified bricks; his were noiseless on the cushion of the lawn, and he followed after her.

Billie trailed listlessly to the very end of the pergola and sat down upon a bench of split logs where he had dreamed with her a score of times. The maid came on and sat down upon the same bench, but at a little distance, on the end nearer the house; the end that was between him and her. He had to keep behind the two of them.

“If—if she were only alone,” he sighed, twisting his hands nervously, and speculating whether the maid could be trusted.

“You may go, Nana,” Billie announced unexpectedly, and while her voice thrilled him, it melted him by its inarticulate sadness.

The maid, after solicitously turning up the collar of

the cloak about her young mistress's neck, went obediently back to the house. Harrington advanced to the very end of the bench. He had but to lean forward to lay a hand upon her shoulder. He could hear her sigh. And he could see her perfectly now. Poor, dear, bewildered girl! She had been made to suffer so. What if she had left him succorless? She was entirely surrounded by lying sycophants who had persuaded her that white was black. It was so impossible to reproach her now. She looked frail to him and wasted—as frail as he had felt till freedom gave him strength once more.

But as he considered in what way he would best announce his presence and what he would best do first for her, the realization came to him abruptly that he was not free. He was not free—he was merely out—by the grace of Adam John's acetylene torch, out to attend to certain responsibilities which the catastrophe had forced upon him, and only one of which his presence here in the garden advanced.

He felt a great pity for her as she bowed there—a great yearning for her. He wanted to take her tenderly in his arms, offer his strong young strength to bulwark her in this hour of awful calamity; but what had he to offer—really? There was nothing in him to bulwark, to comfort her; the sight of him would only shame her—shock her with the perception that, besides the other things which she believed of him, he was also a coward who had broken from his jail.

The town was burning up—but not the complaint against him. He was still under charges, under a cloud, under the ban of the law, the ban of his townsmen, the ban of . . . her. Until circumstances lifted that ban, he could be of no use at all. He must wait—

as he had proudly boasted to her that he would wait. Now he dared not reveal himself; he could only stand a moment and yearn for her with more exquisite pain than ever, waft her a kiss that she must not see, lift above her bent head a prayer of which she could not know, and then slip away to set himself about that other important piece of business which had led him first to leave his cell and make a perilous way downward to the ground by the route which Adam John had taken.

For this next enterprise Henry needed high-powered transportation and the parking space behind Humboldt House was full of it. By a circuitous movement he was quickly among these cars. Selecting one with a full tank and ignition key in place, he felt justified in commandeering it. Forty miles away was a vast army encampment, a divisional headquarters, with warehouses full of supplies and barracks full of able-bodied men, and just before three o'clock of that fiery morning, Harrington, having driven as he had never driven before, drew up before the sentry at the main gate entrance. Something that he said to the sentry brought the officer of the guard quickly. Something that he said to the officer of the guard caused that functionary to hurry past another sentry to an orderly dozing outside the door of a man who wore two stars on his collar when not sound asleep in his pajamas, as he was at the present moment.

"Who? What!" roared the general, when his orderly, by the Pullman porter's expedient of plucking at the sheet, had twigged him into wakefulness. "Who? . . . Hellfire Harrington! Wants to see me? Well, why the devil don't you bring him in here? What do you keep him waiting for?"

"He's here, sir," the orderly had the presence of mind to observe.

"Hellfire!" ejaculated the roused general, but not profanely; tenderly rather; and there ensued the spectacle of a man in pajamas leaping up, an oldish man with gray hair sticking out of his head at forty angles, leaping up and flinging his arms around Harrington and shouting: "Hellfire! You young ——!" The rest of his greeting was unprintable.

Harrington, yielding to the embrace, although embarrassed, presently put the old general affectionately but firmly from him. "You haven't heard what they have been doing to me," he replied.

"Haven't I?" snapped the general, irascibly. "Just got round to read a week's papers last night before I went to bed. Been so damned disgusted I could hardly sleep. I was going to drive over there this morning and get you out of that jail if I had to take the whole division with me. Murder! Embezzlement! Betrayal of constituency! The fools! They ought to see you where I've seen you. Hellfire, you young first-class ——!" The general became censorable again. "But they came to their senses and let you out, eh? And you came rushin' right over here like a boy to his dad, to tell your old general about it. Doggone you, Hank Harrington, I could just about cry over you and kick you all over this damned camp. What do you want—besides a——Jackson, tumble out that Scotch!"

Henry explained to the general his misapprehensions and told him what he wanted, then leaped into his borrowed car and hurried away with still another notion in his head.

CHAPTER XXXV

MORNING—gray, dismal morning, came to find the green earth scarred with blackened ruin. The blue of the inlet was bordered on both sides with a wide band of mourning which told where Boland's mills and docks and packing houses and lumber piles had been. There remained intact only isolated public structures like the courthouse and jail, the city hall, the high school and the library. Of the business district what stood up among the crumbling walls most sturdily was a stout three-story affair, its exterior scorched and blackened, its interior gutted, its glassless windows like hollow sockets in a skull—and this was the most that remained of all John Boland's business structures.

It was at the edges of the town that the refugees, dumping their domestic wreckage around them, had stopped their panicky flight; and daylight made all their miseries plainer. Comfortless, breakfastless, they turned back, singly and in family parties, disconsolate yet curious, toward their ruins. Before glowing pits of ashes, with gaunt chimneys standing tombstone-like over the graves of homes, they stared dumb, wretched, self-convicted. Lawlessness had punished lawlessness. They had sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind. But that was past. The question was—what should they do now?

That was what Salzberg himself was thinking. Leav-

ing his children with the chance neighbors whom he had found beside him when morning came, he stumbled across the town, heart-heavy. Led by some strange fascination, his feet were guiding him to that fatal spot, the First National Bank site, the only piece of real estate to which he had ever laid the shadow of a claim. In defiance of his principles he had bought that alleged title, to annoy his economic enemy, the president of that bank. Out of sheer perversity he had been a tool of Hornblower to push that claim, pushing from court to court to—this.

His mind was as full of debris as the street through which he picked his way. He wasn't a Marxian any more—not for the present. He had no philosophy to cope with a situation like this; and his mind was still wabbling when he came to a stand before a stone building with marble casements; a gutted wreck that stood on a corner.

Behind this wreck was a seething basement, full of the junk of printing presses; in front of it, in the street, were the remains of rather lavish office fittings, highly polished desks and chairs of mahogany, lying as they had been dragged. Some articles had burned afterward; some had been badly blistered and scorched; others, unscathed of fire, had been broken by rough handling. It was just here that Salzberg's eyes, roving curiously, encountered that which gave him a start. Amid this street-wide, chaotic solitude of tangled wires, broken glass and wreckage of half-consumed furniture, with a dead horse adding its grisly note to the picture, there sat, uncannily, an impassive figure in a swivel chair—a stoutish man, well dressed, with shoulders bowed, and a green velour hat pulled low over his eyes.

The crown and brim of the hat were lightly sprinkled with ashes. Immobile, elbows on chair-arms, fingers laced across his chest, he might have been dead, but that the drooping eyelids were not quite closed and the thumbs twiddled occasionally.

The man was Gaylord. The chair he sat in was his chair—the president's chair. Some dream had brought him back as near as possible to the scene of his business activities, and held him there absorbed—thinking, thinking, thinking. Thinking what it had all come to—this thirty years of his living, his striving; thinking what an insane complex a mob is, anyway; how unnecessary it had been to burn Boland's building: how much more complicated it had made the situation and speculating whether there was any relief, any way out. There must be, of course.

Salzberg's eyes narrowed at the sight of his ancient enemy. He bristled and gloated to see the man so overwhelmed. It was good to find one representative of the capitalistic class stripped to the clothes he wore, to the chair he sat in.

"Vell, Gaylord," he rasped, in that high, unfeeling tone of his. "Vell, Gay—" But the memory of his so recent grief checked this gloating challenge.

The banker started up aggressively. "Hello! It's you, is it?" he recognized, features hardening. "You started all this trouble, you know."

"Trouble!" ejaculated the man, with an absurdly hurt expression. "Vell, I don' vant no more; I got trouble enough py my own self." Then his fraying voice broke. "You—you can keep your tam lot," he blurted; "I don't vant nottings but my Hulda." His voice gulped and his eyes spurted tears. "I lost my

Hul—da! She died on me last night already right py her sidevalk, ven ve vas moving out.”

Gaylord's eyes had widened with amazement; now they rounded with sympathy. “Hulda? . . . By Jehosaphat, that's tough!” he exclaimed in shocked sincerity, springing to his feet. Before he knew it, Gaylord had laid a sympathetic hand upon the shoulder of this man whom he had for years regarded as the most dangerous citizen in the community—although to be sure, he had, in the last twenty-four hours, changed his mind as to who was the most dangerous citizen.

And Salzberg's heart craved sympathy; it was the loneliest, emptiest thing in all creation just now. “Py Gott, Gaylord,” he cried brokenly, “I didn't know you vas human at all before. I didn't know dat any panker vas human.” The great hulking fellow toppled upon Gaylord's shoulder, weeping out his grief for Hulda, who had never looked upon the banker in her life without putting out her tongue at him.

Gaylord was surprised to find himself not minding this damp embrace a bit—not finding it embarrassing even—honored by it rather. He wept a little too, and flung an arm about that stout longshoreman's frame which quivered now like a tree in a blast. “It's all right, Adolph,” he comforted. “It's all right. Damned if I ever knew the president of a Socialist Local had any soft side to him either.”

“I guess ve all got a soft side to us,” apologized Salzberg, twisting his head to wipe an eye on Gaylord's shoulder, “ven somet'ing hits us hard enough already.”

“We are all hit that hard today,” suggested Gaylord, “we're all softened up a bit.”

Now this was tactful and it might be prophetic, but it was not exactly accurate. The community heart was not softened—yet. It was mad, bewildered, sore. Just now, in particular, the town was hungry. Breakfastless, besides physically exhausted, it was irritably unable to cope with the problem of immediate needs—yet feeling peevishly that somebody should cope with them.

Babies were crying for milk and in all that blackened area there was no milk; children clamored for bread and there was no bread; citizens looked about for some vestige of organization or leadership and there was no organization. Mayor Foster, the chief of police, the chamber of commerce—they had been accustomed so long to look for leadership to that golden circle, the cabinet of Boland General, that they looked there now. But the golden circle today was brass. Today the cabinet was not active—in leadership at least. Calls to nearby cities should have gone out for succor. Had they? Nobody knew. A statement of what the condition and the needs of the populace would be this morning should have been flashed out by wire or radio or messenger to the governor of the state while yet the flames were burning. Had it? Nobody knew. Everybody wondered; everybody felt lonely, desolate, abandoned. Everybody was realizing, of course, that by now a charitable and sympathetic world was reading of their calamity and that by afternoon supplies of every sort would be rushing to them. But now?

No food—no stoves to cook the food on—no water to cook it with or wash it down—hunger, faintness, misery! And the first pangs of hunger are the sharpest, the most desolating. Empty-stomached the refugees turned and twisted in aimless, forlorn procession

among their ruins—immensely cast down, immensely sore and irritable. Everything oppressed, the ashes, the debris, the ghostly marching columns of thick gray smoke from the smoldering embers. A certain stillness also oppressed.

This stillness was among the strange new things. The mills were accustomed to hum, the trolley cars to screech and clamor; but the mills were embers this morning and the trolley cars also, while the power lines were broken. So there spread a vast and mournful stillness over all. This reacted on the people. They spoke in hushed, funereal tones.

The very crying of the babies for milk had grown plaintive and hopeless and subdued; when in upon this general stillness there broke a rumbling sound. It was the trundle of heavy wheels and the roar of motor exhausts—a lot of wheels, a lot of motors, eight or ten of them at least—huge white-painted trucks, with a man in somewhat bedraggled business garments sitting beside the driver of the first, pointing here and there to pepperings of refugees amid the ashes, and then standing up and motioning with his arms to the convoy behind him—a truck down this street, a truck down that street and so on till the white trucks were scattering themselves through the chaos.

“Milk!” shouted somebody. “They’re bringing milk.”

“A quart to every family!” megaphoned drivers, through their hands. “Bring something to put it in—if you’ve got it.”

Yes—milk. Somebody had gone fifty miles to a highway leading toward a great city and cut off and commandeered by sheer power of personal persuasion

a portion of that city's morning milk supply; and not only commandeered it, but personally conducted it, to the spot where it was needed. Yet it was doubtful if one of the townspeople, so intent with hurrying this distribution of the milk, recognized that nondescript figure standing beside the driver's seat of the foremost of these trucks, while his eyes surveyed again the smoking field of destruction. He might have been a hobo who had bummed a ride, and now was staring in mere curiosity.

Actually, his survey was swift and business-like. It had a military significance, and as he concluded it there sputtered up an army side-car, with its bathtub empty. At the same moment there appeared winding out of the green of the channel road, another and a longer line of trucks, dun-painted things this time, with men in khaki at the wheel.

The bedraggled man leaped down and stepped into the side-car which, quite as if it had come there for him, turned and sputtered back to meet this other column of trucks. These big dun-colored carriers were pyramided high with what might have been bricks, or tiles—odd-looking round, high-domed tiles. The man in the side-car waved these trucks one by one, out toward the bordering area where incipient camps sprang up and into the smoldering residence districts where hungry refugees knotted and grouped.

"Bread! It's bread!" shouted excited voices. A cheer was raised: "Bread! Hurrah for bread!" In a minute or two these jolly khaki fellows atop the trucks were tossing spinning loaves to hundreds of eager hands upraised to catch. The air was full of bread; and then all at once everybody's hands were full of it. Women

clutched the dear loaves to their breasts and hurried to the little camps. Men bore it, all that their arms could hold of it, tossing off a loaf to whoever had none; boys broke the loaves open, dug the white centers out and crowded them into their mouths.

Behind this second detachment other motor traffic appeared, trundling more slowly over the highway—a seemingly endless procession of queer-looking things like stoves on wheels. Again the young man in the bedraggled business suit waved his arms.

There were more side-cars appearing now, carrying officers—men with captain's and lieutenant's bars upon their shoulders, and even one with a yellow maple leaf: and they all stopped where that bedraggled man was standing; they hailed him, some familiarly, all respectfully; they waited for his nod and then they gave their orders; for behind the field-kitchens were coming yet other huge trucks, caravan on caravan of them.

Presently there was a field kitchen in every block of the residence district and at intervals of one hundred yards around that circle of temporary camps and dumps of household goods; and from each stack there poured smoke and from each stove there floated tantalizing aromas. Huge caldrons of coffee and potatoes were boiling and huge caldrons of that noblest institution of army cookery, beef stew, were simmering and loosing their appetizing fragrances on the smoky air. And so it came to pass that before twelve o'clock every one of these refugees had had at least some portion of food, and some had had a gorge.

But long before that, too, lines of conical khaki tents were springing up; and by the time excited mayors of western cities could call together sympa-

thetic meetings and arrange for those carloads and trainloads of supplies which generous-hearted people are always so quick to hurry to neighbors in distress, Edgewater had had one meal and knew that it would not miss another—knew also where it would sleep that night—on army beds with army mattresses and under army blankets.

There sprang up an instant feeling of gratitude for all this splendid succor and a marveling that it should have come so soon. Now, that it could come at all was due to the tolerable proximity of a vast army camp with its warehouses comfortably filled with supplies and its many thousand men available for this happy service of relief, which soldiers would much rather render than fight. But the red tape? Whose sharp shears had cut it so quickly? That answer was easy—a major-general. But what had so moved the major-general? That answer would have been more difficult for the people of Edgewater to comprehend. It was the bedraggled, scarce-noticed figure in the citizen's clothes—he it was and something in the past of him of which his townsmen were but faintly cognizant.

Nevertheless these stricken people speculated upon the fact. Some person or persons had rendered a tremendous service. Who was it? Talk of it ran from tent to tent. One thing became clear. Whoever brought the army, the army had brought the relief, and by one o'clock in the afternoon, a self-appointed delegation of three citizens of Edgewater was making its way to a largish oblong tent at the corner of Whitman Avenue and Tenth Street, in the very heart of the burned residential district. Before this

tent stood a dun limousine, with two black stars painted on its side, and with sidecars parked about. Within the tent sat the general. Now there is something about a major-general in uniform standing up to greet visitors, which rather fills the picture. Foster, Gaylord and Titmarsh envisaged only the general.

“Don’t thank me,” protested that gallant officer, tersely. “Thank Harrington, there! Thank ‘Hell-fire’!” The general gestured to where at a table sat a man in the uniform of a colonel. He was the general’s chief-of-staff; and beside him, as he had been beside him all day long, making suggestions, approving plans, directing officers who came and went, was the man in the business suit—still looking somewhat bedraggled—Henry Harrington. “That’s the man you owe your thanks to for getting us here as promptly as we did.”

The committee stared. It had almost forgotten Henry Harrington. Titmarsh remembered having heard a rumor that this lesser Judas was out of jail and had been seen around; but this—this sight of him in relations of intimacy with the major-general; this revelation that it was to him the town was indebted for not missing even a single meal, for the lives of many of its babies, for so swift a reduction of its inevitable physical suffering—this was rather overwhelming to Titmarsh. To Foster and Gaylord it was rebuking. They stared stiffly—old memories rising.

“Well,” glared the general, “why don’t you thank him?”

Gaylord was a brusque man, but capable of some fineness of perception. He was considerably shaken; but Foster was angered, as well as totally confounded.

"This man," he said protestingly to the general, "has broken out of jail."

"And lucky for you people, believe me!" barked the general.

"He is awaiting trial for murder; besides which he is——" Foster began sullenly to argue.

"Don't talk that piffle to me!" roared the general, livid with wrath. "Don't have the effrontery to repeat one of those damn-fool charges against this man with which the papers have been full the last few days. I know they're lies if you don't. Henry Harrington couldn't do a dishonorable thing if he wanted to. That's probably why you've got him in jail. He offended this old hypocrite that you've all been saying your prayers to and he put him in jail. Get out of here before I become violent, please. I don't want your thanks and I'm damned sure Harrington doesn't."

When the community learned that Henry Harrington was out of jail; that he was being harbored in the general's tent; that he was advising and disposing and practically issuing orders; that, in fact, it was he who had got the army relief in here six or eight hours before the first of it could otherwise have arrived—to say nothing of having gone out and commandeered that truck-train of milk, which, everybody agreed, was a godsend, the pendulum began to swing—values to assume new proportions. The crime of Henry Harrington in betraying his constituents for a single day appeared insignificant compared with the crime of John Boland in betraying them all for a lifetime.

Indeed there was a kind of amnesty granted to Henry

that very afternoon—so far as his crime against the community was concerned. There arose a feeling that he had wiped it out.

And when they heard late in the afternoon that he, after an affectionate good-by from the general, had walked calmly back into the jail, they began to feel that Henry Harrington was really a superior person although a murderer.

That night fifteen or twenty gaunt men and half a dozen worn, anxious women, leaders in the leaderless mass of burned out townspeople, met in the courthouse to take counsel what to do. Mayor Foster presided, and Lawyer Moses Duffield had the last word.

“It stands to reason that there is a remedy,” he was summing up. “The Court has found what the law is; that’s all it can do. But Congress can grant relief. What we’ll need is somebody to represent us before Congress—somebody that we all believe in—that we know is honest and that they know is honest back there; somebody good at convincing individual congressmen and individual senators; somebody that we could appoint a sort of commissioner to represent us and lobby for us—using that word in its good sense. It all depends on Congress.”

Congress? They felt as helpless as before. Congress was such an august, inchoate, far-away body.

“Somebody we all believe in—and we all know is honest,” reflected Herman Schuyler and pursed his lips.

“But it isn’t only Congress,” perceived Mayor Foster. “It’s these dirty Siwashes we’ve got to deal with, isn’t it, Moses?”

“The Salisheuttas? Yes; they are our landlords tonight,” affirmed old Moses with simple conviction.

“It’s got to be somebody that can deal with the Siwashes.”

His auditors looked from one to another hopelessly. Where was there such a man—whom they all could trust because they all knew he was honest? Since yesterday they hardly trusted themselves.

The meeting didn’t exactly adjourn, it didn’t exactly break up, it just wasted away; here and there a bewildered man, here and there a couple of gloomy women got up and went out to stumble through an area of broken bricks, clinking glass and ashes, guided by the faint gleams of candles in tents, until they came to where they and theirs would sleep that night.

CHAPTER XXXVI

NOW it had also happened that while the committee of townspeople was meeting in the courthouse and looking for a man—a man whom everybody could trust because they all knew he was honest—the cabinet of Boland General, meeting in the library of Humboldt House, was doing almost the same thing. They were all haggard, anxious, depressed; yet old J. B., though looking thin and harrowed, was stout-hearted still—or affected to be.

“We’re not lost yet,” he proclaimed huskily. “Temporarily, though, we’ll have to ask for a receivership. It’s come to that.”

“He’ll have to be somebody familiar with the details of the business,” observed Quackenbaugh, perhaps as nominating himself.

“He’ll have to be somebody this town will believe in and trust like the sheep trust the shepherd,” cut in lean Jim Pierce, perhaps as dashing Quackenbaugh’s hopes.

“He must be a man who can deal with Indians too, for by this decision, the Siwashes are our masters.” Mr. Boland went on doggedly, facing the bitter fact. “They own us. We must deal with them. But—why——” the old eyes lighted and his face and voice began to glow with a new birth of enthusiasm. “Why, if we can get them to be reasonable; if we can get them to set a fair valuation on their holdings—agree to a

long period of amortization, why—why, Boland General can pay out every obligation and be as rich at the end as it was before the Supreme Court robbed us of all we've been working for."

"It all depends on—on getting the Indians to see reason. They have to do something with this timber; they have to continue the development of their property if it is to pay them a dividend. We're here; we're in position; they might as well arrange with us to go on manufacturing as to try to have someone else do it."

"But Mr. Boland," objected Quackenbaugh, "an Indian don't look at things like a white man. He isn't practical. Revenge—the satisfaction of kicking us all out—might mean more to them than dollars. They are queer, Indians are. Look at that yellow devil, Adam John."

So the discussion went forward in the Boland library, almost till the gray light of the second morning after—a morning which saw many things happen.

It saw the Red Cross come in. It saw Julius Hornblower come in. It saw the Salisheuttes! The Supreme Court had upset Hornblower's claim as it had upset Boland's title; yet it was his suit that had turned the eagle eye of that high court upon the matter, so that in a way he was the author of all this calamity; yet that abashed him nothing—pleased him perhaps. Anyway, vulture-like, bird of evil omen, he came flapping his way back into the debris, knowing it would be strange if he could not make some profit out of so much misery. It was indicative of the general mood that no one paid any attention to Hornblower at all.

But the first spectacular event of this second spectacular day was the return of an entire nation to its

ancient seat and heritage. It came up the inlet in two largish gasoline launches, moving slowly, because towing each a string of smaller fishercraft behind. Out of these boats there clambered to the shore this nation—family groups of dark-skinned beings; members of both sexes in their prime, bowed and wrinkled old women, gnarled and twisted old men, children of all ages from infancy to adolescence, with here and there papooses astride their mothers' hips. All beyond infancy were more or less grotesquely dressed in more or less of white man's clothing—oldish men with rusty frock coats above overalls; stout, squat women in calico aprons, yet wearing blankets; middle-aged men in moccasins but wearing reefers or sweaters or even celluloid collars.

Having debarked at the inlet's edge, this ancient, tiny patriarchal nation began a reconnaissance in full force. Still in family groups, carrying their children or leading them, patient with the aged tramping slowly, with bright-colored handkerchiefs about their brows, the expedition moved through the ruins and stared about with a curious look of new proprietorship in its glance. Pigeon-toed, knock-kneed, inarticulate, seeing much and saying little, the Indians ambled along the front and up Whitman Avenue to come at length to a stand before the courthouse; for their reconnaissance was by no means aimless, and they had been proceeding under escort.

This escort was a white man, tall and awkward-looking, wearing a suit of clerical blacks; a spare and bony man, with a dead white and not unhandsome face and small dark eyes that glowed with a fanatic ardor. He sheltered a shock of crisp black

hair under a black fedora hat worn without its accustomed crease in the crown; this making him look taller than he was, at the same time that it imparted an eccentric air. Close about him were grouped two bent and gnarled old Indians and four or five in the vigorous forties and fifties, all wearing dingy frock coats as denoting some official garb, which was entirely proper since these were the chiefs of the tribe. But they were also elders of a Presbyterian church. From time to time they looked up reverently into the face of their tall white leader as to a missionary Moses.

A cry was raised: "The Salisheuttes! . . . The Salisheuttes!"

People heard and turned and stood to gaze at this nondescript group of human mongrels—the remnant of a once considerable tribe, owners by the treaty of 1855 of all "that certain tract of land between the west shore of Harper's Basin and the South Inlet thereto and the said east shore of the Pacific Ocean."

The Salisheuttes! Seventy-one of them in all! The Supreme Court, by its decision, had made them rich. Yet they did not look so very opulent now. In their awkward garments, with their curious, awed manner, they looked contemptible.

A crowd gathered quickly. Acid phrases, unflattering comments, and outraged exclamations were tossed from mouth to mouth with bleacher-like indifference to the feelings of those of whom they spoke.

"Here, you Siwashes!" bawled a sergeant of M.P.'s. "Head in there!" He waved his hand and the Reverend Jedediah Collins meekly led his charges into an avenue formed by two short rows of unoccupied conical tents, a score of which now dotted the courthouse grounds.

"All same your tepees," encouraged the sergeant; and with a large gesture bade them take possession, then marked with satisfied eye while one of his sentries took up his march between them and the gaping crowd.

"Make yourselves comfortable, brethren," said the Reverend Jedediah to Chief Skookum Charlie, the ancient and time-withered chief of the Salisheuttes and the ruling elder of that congregation into which this missionary's spiritual labors had wrought these people. "I will go in and consult the young white chief."

He went into the courthouse and inquired his way to the jail. For there had been Salisheutte boys also in Henry Harrington's platoon, and this tribe had learned through them to trust Henry Harrington as they trusted no other white man save only Jedediah Collins; and it was a rock-rooted, storm-proof trust, entirely unaffected by such trifles as had turned the populace of Edgewater to frothing at the mouth against its former idol.

With their pastor departed, Chief Skookum Charlie squatted upon his heels on the lawn, with his six co-chiefs dropping to their haunches round him. Chief Charlie lighted his pipe, a stubby, unbeautiful affair with a huge bowl and a thick stem from which old Charlie sucked contentment at so short a range that the tips of his eyelashes must have been singed had not time already denuded his lids of such a valance. His colleagues produced pipes also; some modern as the corner cigar store purveys, some as native and aged as themselves.

Rumor of the arrival of the Salisheuttes came quickly to John Boland, brooding in his den upon the hill. He started at the news. The inevitable had come nearer

—and he had not found the man who he felt could be trusted with negotiations so important and delicate; yet they must be entered upon at once; and he was temperamentally unfitted for the task himself; accustomed to command, he would not be good at supplication. Yet there was no one else he trusted this morning so much as he trusted himself.

True if he appeared among them suddenly, the people of Edgewater might leap upon him and tear him to pieces; yet Old Two Blades was not a coward. He took the chance. He ordered his car and descended for the first time into the smoldering city, daring the temper of the crowds.

Entirely alone, as advertising either his courage or his faith in his fellow citizens, he stepped out of his car at the courthouse—standing tall and nearly as erect, nearly as immaculate as ever. His manner was a bit complex—properly restrained as acknowledging sympathy with these victims of his, slightly humbled acknowledging that he himself had encountered bitter disaster; yet somehow dauntless besides, as insistent that though battered he was not broken, that he staggered but stood up. This manner was meant to show that he confessed a fault but that his will was still indomitable—that people, if they would be lenient and trust him once more, might yet have cause to be grateful to him.

And strangely the gathered throng neither spat upon him, nor spoke to him. It reviled him with silence. It did not clamor for his arrest for the gigantic fraud he had practiced. The people thought that would take care of itself. Their chief concern was in their own distresses and distractions. They wanted to know

what they were going to do about everything—their homes—their losses, their bread and butter—their landlords, these squatting Siwashes here. Perhaps if any gave thought, they marveled at their own moderation; not realizing that as a community they had been purged by fire; that they were under a sort of moral conviction; that they had seen into their own hearts by the light of their own blazing homes; seen themselves as corrupted and debauched by this John Boland, with his cunning appeals to self-interest, until they had lost their sense of true values, till they had become petulant and self-willed as babies; until they had cried: “Away! Away with this assemblyman from the seventy-first! Release unto us Barabbas!”

But now Barabbas stepped out of his limousine and they felt only aversion for him. They let him pass—and the sergeant let him cross the open space to where the Salisheuttes were squatted.

“I am Mr. Boland,” he announced gravely to Skookum Charlie.

The wrinkled old chief never budged from where he squatted on his haunches. There was merely curiosity in his glance, as at a potentate of yesterday.

“You Boland? . . . Humph!” Skookum Charlie grimaced, and flexed his wrinkles. “Skinny man—ugh!” He grunted contemptuously and glanced around the circle at his co-chiefs as asking them to note how a man who must have been able to buy so much to eat had profited so little from his opportunities. To be treated so objectively was an unusual experience for Mr. Boland, but he was prepared to endure much to-day and he knew the value of directness and felt it was called for here—he began promptly:

“Chief Skookum Charlie! I have come to throw myself entirely on your mercy.”

But he had chosen words unfortunately; the old chief swelled like a turkey about to strut.

“Mercy?” he rumbled out of the age-broken depths of his voice, and his eyes narrowed shrewdly and glittered, opaque almost as ebony, save in the very center where was a tiny yellow pit out of which shot a beam that searched and seared. “Mercy!” rumbled the chief again, withering in his scorn. “Did the white man show mercy to my son, Adam John?” Not that Adam John was any son of Skookum Charlie’s or even of his tribe, but—he was an Indian.

“But, Adam John——” Mr. Boland was attempting to qualify, when the old chief interrupted imperiously.

“You big! Adam John little! You s-s-squash him like toad. Now me big! Chief Skookum Charlie heap big!” The old man smote his shrunken chest proudly and his bared yellow fangs dripped venom. “You little toad,” he exulted fiercely. “Me squash-h-h you—flat!”

And that was all! That was all. The Indian’s wrinkled face became a thing of stone. All its lines merged in resolution so implacable that Mr. Boland felt himself for once looking into the face of a man whose will was firmer than his could be, whose nature was more terrible in its tenacity. “An Indian is a poor thinker but he has got a long memory,” Scanlon had once warned him; he had not felt the force of this till now when his spirit recoiled before this sprayed venom of Chief Skookum Charlie.

Boland tried to give him look for look but couldn’t

do it. He quailed before the smoldering judgment in those remorseless black beads of eyes and turned away glad enough to be facing them no longer. He tried to retire with dignity and perhaps managed it, but as he walked down the M.P.'s cleared space it was like running a gauntlet. He smarted under the curious and, as he felt, exulting glances bent on him. When he reached the car, his forehead, under the hatband, was wet with a sweat of physical and spiritual weakness. John Boland was almost in.

But at the very door of his car, he halted and turned and looked back over the heads of people, over the tops of tepees to the county jail. There his eyes roved until they found one window high up from which the bars were conspicuously missing. On this window he fixed his gaze for a few seconds and the expression of the lined face changed—changed as if hope sprang up again in him, for Old Two Blades was a very tenacious man.

There was hope even in Skookum Charlie, if he had known that the gleam in the old eyes was one half of humor—if he had known that Skookum Charlie, besides being a fierce and vengeful chief of a wronged and defrauded people, was also a mild and gentle elder of a Christian church. Yet, for that matter, neither did Skookum Charlie know that Boland, besides being a mighty creator of civilization, as well as a criminal optimist, was also an elder of a church.

CHAPTER XXXVII

BUT John Boland was not the only person who this day had looked with longing at the barless window on the jail's mansard roof. The whole harried populace of Edgewater was gazing at it or thinking about it. In the fickle masses, with their usual directness of speech and tendency to directness of action—never bothering to be consistent, scorning to dissemble, frank, tidal, pertinent, a mine was laid.

Now the spark was struck. While the homeless were still at their food a large touring-car with men in it and one woman had roared into the town, picked its way amid the street debris that was beginning to clear up, and come to a halt before the courthouse. At first nobody paid particular attention. Lots of crowded automobiles were roaring into the town; yet this particular car rewarded special scrutiny. The woman in it was Lahleet much elated.

In the next jump-seat to Lahleet, sat a man whose expression was the very opposite. He looked intensely dissatisfied and wore a sullen scowl. He was tallish and well set-up with a Vandyke beard, and in placid moments might have been handsome, yet his eyes were cunning and about them was a network of betraying lines—to any who had skill to read them.

Lahleet leaped out of the car and hurried into the courthouse. "Mr. White! Mr. White! Oh, Mr. White!" she clamored, dancing impatiently before that

astonished but easy-going official. "Take me to Mr. Harrington quick—quick! I have wonderful news for him, wonderful! He didn't do it, Mr. White! Everybody will know he didn't do it now."

Jailor White, cool and phlegmatic, was tantalizingly immobile, looking down at the little woman whose dark eyes were ablaze with such an eager, happy light. Her ardor was most persuasive; also quite convincing.

"Darn me if I ever thought he did," conceded Jailor White, reversing himself quite shamelessly.

"Oh, you—you good man!" beamed Lahleet, and seizing his elbows was almost for hugging him. "But hurry . . . hurry! I always knew Mr. Harrington didn't do it, of course; but I want to run quick and tell him that everybody is going to know it now."

By main strength of personality, the little woman was herding the jailor toward the first steel door. She leaped three steps ahead of him up the iron stairway to the second tier, then turned, her finger to her lips. "Whish-h-h-h!" she commanded. "I want to surprise him. Give me the key. I want to unlock. . . . I want to let him out myself."

Jailor White found his hands strangely weak against those wresting fingers. The girl, noiseless as the hopping of a bird, flitted down the corridor. Noiselessly she slipped the huge key into the massive lock; softly she was turning—had the handle ready to yield before Harrington was aware that anyone was there; for, dull and dejected after his sleepless night, he sat brooding with his hands over his ears. Not even what the missionary of the Indians had come to say had cheered him up, because it pulled not one single stone from the barrier which kept him from the woman

he loved, who would never need him more than at this moment.

"Hen-ree!" Lahleet burst out, unable to contain herself longer, and flung the door wide; but, instead of rushing in, stepped back and waited in the corridor. "You are free!" she cried wildly. "You are free! They are coming to let you out. You didn't kill the man. Everybody knows you didn't do it now."

Harrington had started up, staring dumbly.

"They've got the man that did!" Lahleet concluded, then stamped her foot, impatient for him to understand.

Henry was the more bewildered. "But you—then you——" he stammered. The truth crashed into his mind. Neither had Lahleet killed the unknown in the ferns! A vast sickening sense of oppression lifted from him; and in the same instant he saw that she had never known that he thought she had—and that she must never be permitted to know it.

But her naive impatience could not endure that trifling interval of time which it took Harrington to do this much of thinking. She went bounding through the door and into his arms. "Henry!" she sobbed. "Henry!" and was crying on his breast.

He clasped her tight—a dear little burden—and then, tenderly, like a father, lowered her to the floor beside him and raised questioning eyes to White.

"Search me!" proclaimed the jailor with honest bewilderment. "I don't know a thing. She carried me off my feet. It must be all right though. She's about the last one to kid herself, that piece!"

"Of course, it's all right, you big goose!" Lahleet

half-pouted, dashing the back of her hand across her eyes and then looking slyly at Henry. "They'll be coming to let you out in a minute."

"But who did kill him?" Harrington demanded dazedly.

"They'll tell you—they'll tell you in a minute," effervesced the girl, her natural love of sensation and climax asserting itself.

"But it was you that found out who, of course," divined Henry.

"Oh, yes—of course!" admitted little Miss Marceau, with impish pride.

Harrington, quite coming to, seized her arms and shook her joyously from head to foot. "You," he realized, "you got me out of this mess!" Then he held her off and gazed at her up and down, estimating, admiringly; so that the girl for a moment had an enraptured feeling that he was seeing her for the first time—really seeing her. She felt this more as he flung an arm about her and gave her a succession of ecstatic pressures while they walked behind Jailor White, along the corridor and down the stair.

But though Henry's arm was round Lahleet, they were proxy pressures that he gave her, for his mind was already racing up the hill to Billie. He had one of those delicious moments of feeling immensely strong—very rare in this last week. He saw himself as a huge and towering tree, snatched at by the storm, smashed at by lightning bolts; but the storm was over, the thunderings past, and he still stood—triumphant! In a few minutes he could be offering himself to Billie, not furtively but boldly, a bright and shining pillar for her to lean upon.

Henry was thinking thoughts like this as they sat in White's office waiting for something . . . for what? Oh, yes; the official deliverance. It was to come. Lahleet had said so. His mind, his eyes came back from distance and he turned to speak to Lahleet; but—why . . . where was she?

"She—she just sort of stepped out," remembered Jailor White, in answer to Henry's look of complete mystification.

"The little devil!" muttered Henry in the hollow tones of chagrin and self-reproach. "My mind just went off for one minute and she—she gets huffy and——"

A confusion of voices echoed out of the tunnel of the causeway from the courthouse. It was the officers who had come with Lahleet. One of them was a United States Marshal. The three men in the tonneau represented among them the Secret Service of the United States and an international detective agency, while the fourth with the Vandyke beard was the man they had run down and captured—with the recent assistance of a woman—and after a chase that was more than twenty-four months long, a master criminal—one with a most unusual relationship to confidence men on one side and yeggmen upon the other—making him the most dangerous felon of his brand in all the country.

Behind them had arrived another car with local officers and a local prisoner.

"My old friend! Count Ulric!" exulted Henry, recognizing the beard. "Why—which materialization of yours is this Count? Where on earth did you come from?"

Count Ulric only scowled.

"That Indian teacher-girl put 'em on his trail," elucidated District Attorney Younger, who was one of the local officers with the party. "She dug up the clue that hung bracelets on Scanlon, too."

But Henry was already staring, astounded at the spectacle of the Chief Fixer in manacles.

"Scanlon killed that fellow on the island—killed him cold, Henry!" volunteered Younger.

"Scanlon!" barked Harrington, instantly livid with rage. "You—you did this to me? . . . You—you hound of hell!"

The Chief Fixer's face took on a grayer look, and weakly a wide tongue licked his flabby lips; but he kept his glance straight, yellow eyes aglow with sullen fire. "'At's right. Bawl me out, Harrington!" he said. "I'm going; you're coming," he recognized dejectedly. "When I got into a jam I played it crooked; when you got in the same fix, you played it straight, and the straight play wins . . . sometimes."

Harrington was astounded by the callous cynicism of the man. "But I'd never harmed you!" he protested.

"You were a living insult to me," denounced Scanlon, "—by being straight when I was crooked. Besides, I saw you stepping into my shoes and a man keeps always trying to save himself. Nothing else matters—once he's been crooked. That's how I got these"—he lifted his irons. "Ulric was threatening to double-cross me; and so I was doubling him. I had him tipped off about the gold and I went there to kill him. That was desperate; but I'd been brought to it. Only the Burns man got himself up to look so much like Ulric that I plugged him instead; and Ulric got the gold."

"Careful. Anything you say can be used against you Scanlon," warned Younger.

"Then use it!" challenged Scanlon brazenly. "Do you think I don't know what I'm up against? It'll be the chair for me, but I'll take this double-crossing — — — with me. If they'll only let me hear his death yell first, I'll bump off to sweet music."

The next moment, however, Scanlon's air of bravado was abandoned for one of chastened earnestness, as he said:

"But one last word, Harrington; and not for me either—for Old Two Blades. John thinks he's right all the time. He figured some moral statute of limitations must have run against what was done back yonder about the survey. He figured he was God A'mighty's silent partner—and not so damn silent either."

Harrington, who had been listening with both interest and amazement, relieved himself of a quick gesture of contempt; for in those jail days of his he had come to hold John Boland as personally culpable—more culpable than anybody else, besides accusing him of a colossal cruelty to his own daughter.

"All the same, Harrington," answered Scanlon to that gesture, "old J. B. has never looked crooked to himself."

"I'll make him look crooked—even to himself," Harrington flamed out.

But by this time the officers had completed the formality of releasing one man and incarcerating two, and Jailor White came up to shake hands with Henry, who thanked him for his courtesies which had been numerous. Then Harrington turned toward the Court-

house, eager to get outside, with District Attorney Younger falling into stride beside him.

"I was getting pretty darned tired of being kicked around like a houn' dog, Younger," he was making talk, when tumultuous sounds began to issue from the causeway, a far-away murmuring that grew nearer quickly. Henry was surprised to hear his name rising above the clamor—his name—wild cries of "Harrington! Where's Harrington?" chantings of "We want Henry!" and the like.

He felt the district attorney squeeze his arm; strange sensations began to heave his breast; his throat grew lumpy and his knees a bit uncertain; his heart was leaping wildly as this volume of clamorous sound grew louder. As he rounded the turn from the jail a milling mass which had been pressing toward the sheriff's office sighted and dashed upon him, led by Gaylord and Schuler. Somehow these two had got there and inevitably gravitated to the front. They rushed upon Henry, seizing his hands and shaking them.

"I knew you didn't do it," cried Gaylord, bluff and unabashed even in apology; "I knew it all the time, except for a little while when I was off my nut."

"Henry, we gave you an awful deal," lamented Schuler tearfully.

"Oh, Henry!" A soft hand, but hearty, smote him upon the back. It was President Amelia Hutton of the Woman's Club; somehow she too had got into the front wave. The feather upon her hat was much awry but her eyes gleamed with suspicious brightness.

The corridor now seemed to contain none but old-time personal friends, each struggling to reach his

side, shouting congratulations, mumbling shamefaced apologies, manifesting combined emotions of shame, joy and exultation.

Henry was exultant and joyous too. This was something like. It was something as he had pictured it. Resent these people now—be churlish with them—that was not in Henry Harrington. It had never been. They had been duped—that was all—tools, as he had been a tool—victims, as he had been a victim. Besides, he had had yesterday the satisfaction of heaping coals of fire upon the heads of these people of Edgewater, who had treated him so outrageously; and it is a law of the heart to soften toward the enemy it succors.

Every manifestation of regret was balm to his bruises and it gratified him immensely when with an air of proprietorship his townspeople surrounded him. They seized his arms, they pulled at his hands, they got behind and pushed him, shouldered him toward the front door. "We've come to take you out, Henry." "We're a committee to take you out," they cried.

Henry reached the space between the front pillars riding on the shoulders of his delirious, repentant friends. The Greek porch of wide stone slabs and the long granite steps were crowded; the nearer courthouse yard was filling and the conical tents of the houseless began to look like dunce-caps of khaki, afloat in a sea of upturned faces. It appeared that all Edgewater had suddenly gravitated hither; for the news had broadcasted rapidly from the moment when loiterers upon the curb had noted the arrival of the well known Scanlon and the unknown Ulric, both in irons, and learned from the local officers the meaning of what they saw.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

CHOOSING his words haltingly but rather happily, Mayor Foster, in that high penetrating voice of his, boldly assumed to make confession for himself and for all.

“We did Henry Harrington about all the harm we could do him,” he began bluntly, “and now we’re here to ’fess up—to make his sore heart glad by telling him that he’s about the most loyal citizen Socatullo County ever had and at last we’ve got sense enough to know it. When he was trying to tell us what was right, we wouldn’t listen. We called him a traitor and we howled him down. He wasn’t a traitor. We were a lot of suckers, and I guess I was the great big he-sucker of ’em all. Furthermore, it’s admitted he’s not guilty of what he’s been in jail for. The officers say so. Our hearts had acquitted him already. We are here to tell him how wrong we were—how ashamed we are—and to ask him what we can do to make it right.”

The massed people had with difficulty restrained themselves. “That’s right. That’s right, Foster!” irrepressibles kept breaking in.

“Three cheers for Henry Harrington! Yip! Yip!” shouted a voice on the far edge of the throng to be followed immediately by a vast sustained outburst of emotional cheering, with hand-clappings, with wavings of head-gear and tossings of the same into the air.

Harrington stood, thrilling to the satisfactions of the moment, eyes sweeping the crowd, shoulders lifting, blood tingling, nostrils quivering with delight in it all. This was vindication; this was the triumph he had looked forward to—this was everything . . . but Billie! If she could only be here now—but of course she couldn't be—and he would be rushing to her in a few minutes now anyway.

Henry was touched with realizing how completely his townsmen had forgot their own great wrongs to undo a wrong to him. It filled him with a respect, a yearning, a compassion for them that was wholly unexpected. He lifted his hand and the crowd slowly stilled.

“Forget it, won't you?” he urged gravely, generously. “It was all a mistake anyhow—a very human mistake. There were times when I almost doubted myself. Forget it, won't you, please!”

“We can't ever forget it, Henry!” declared Mayor Foster loudly, and from the mass there were cries of: “You're right, Foster!” and “You bet your life we can't!”

“Speech!” “Speech!” the crowd began to call; and it came to Henry who had been planning only to get away, that in this plastic hour he might help these people with a few words that flamed into mind out of his so recent and so poignant experiences.

But it was not until some one shouted: “Tell us what we are going to do, Henry!” and there were spontaneous vociferations from many quarters of: “Yes; that's it; tell us what we are going to do;” that it dawned on Harrington that these distressed contrite people were not only looking to him but were

looking *up* to him, trusting him, desiring guidance of him. He thrilled afresh at the perception. They had cast him out, then hailed him guiltless; and now they appealed to him as leader—to him who in his bitterness had said that he would never lead again.

It came to him with a new tingling of his veins that this was his real vindication; it came to him that he could lead these people; that he must; that for him a rare opportunity had come, bought with a very great price, and that he would be the Judas they had called him at the Chamber of Commerce meeting if he did not embrace the opportunity. He felt his soul harden with a sort of spiritual hardness that had never been there before. He remembered too what it was the Salisheuttes were waiting an opportunity to tell these squatters on their ancient domain, and at that memory his enthusiasm kindled.

“I’ll tell you what we’re going to do!” he trumpeted suddenly, stern in his acceptance of their challenge to leadership. “We’re going to triumph over our adversity. We’re going to build our homes again and make them better homes—build Edgewater again and make it a better Edgewater. We’ll give it better principles. We’ll build a town where the little man is equal to the big man before the law—where no man’s private interest can ever be made the public interest.

“We’ll remember what President Coolidge once said, that ‘a thing is not right because it will pay; but that it will pay because it is right.’ If we do that, we will have a community in which legal crimes like those against Soderman and Adam John, with their inevitable train of bloodshed, will be impossible—or the little one against me even.”

The crowd ceased to cheer, awed and self-convicted now.

“Oh, I do not say this with any bitterness,” the speaker went on; “for the first thing I would insist upon in the new Edgewater is a spirit of charity, of brotherliness, where men at opposite poles of thought, like Jim Gaylord and Adolph Salzberg, can each recognize that the other has a point of view. Not that I am going to be mushy. Deliberate criminals must be punished, of course. I am not one who would line a murderer’s cell with flowers, nor wash him with sentimental tears. I would send the flowers to the grave of his victim and reserve my tears for those bereft by his bloody hand. I would, as Roosevelt said once, ‘rather seem hard in the heart than soft in the head.’ But our crimes must be measured by the circumstances that created them. Our punishments must do justice and not injustice.”

Again the audience was breathless, drinking down the thought—accepting it as authoritative from the man who had earned the right to speak with authority.

“And now let me tell you, my friends, that our most immediate duty is to be hopeful. There’s hope in most any situation if you’ll look for it. Today, instead of owning the ground you stand on, the Salisheuttes are your landlords; yet there’s hope even in that.”

But the mental attitude of the crowd was instantly changed and up from the face of it came a sort of mass groan; but Henry challenged this by going on stoutly:

“You will have to make your terms with them. They are not absentee landlords. They are here. I see them about me on the steps—curious spectators of a scene

that we as white men can't be altogether proud of. Their missionary pastor, Mr. Collins, was just in the jail conferring with me. As this seems as representative an audience as can be gathered in Edgewater under present circumstances, I take for you the liberty of suggesting that he step up here and announce to you the terms of the Salisheuttes who have been declared by the highest court to be the owners of all that their eyes rest upon and far beyond."

There was an instant snarl. Terms? With the Salisheuttes? The idea was still unthinkable. Henry had jeopardized his new-gained leadership. Angry voices ejaculated and mutterings arose on every side; yet as the tall form of the Reverend Jedediah Collins forced its way upward to the flagged stone porch, a mildly intent expression on his bony, serious face, crowd anger was giving way to crowd anxiety. Facts were facts—and stubborn things.

Gaylord, over-excited, made himself the spokesman of this increasing chord of anxiety, and broke in upon the Reverend Jedediah before he could utter a word. "If you'll give us deeds and help us quiet title," he shouted rather frantically, from the base of a column that raised him over the heads of those about him, "we can bond the city for enough to make your Indians rich, them and their children till the end of time."

"Bonds!" reproved the Reverend Jedediah placidly, but in a trained speaking voice that carried easily as far as Gaylord's excited tone. Yet mildness and the timber of suasion was lost on the banker.

"They did nothing to make this town—to make it rich," Gaylord complained. "Let 'em be fair—let 'em be half-way fair!"

“Fair?” reproached the Reverend Jedediah in a voice of sweetness and calm, and then rather lifted himself above Gaylord. “Be patient, my friends,” he appealed; “and hear the message of the Salisheutte Indians to the distressed people of Edgewater. Chief Charlie, come here and stand beside me. Chief Big Fish, Chief William, and the others of you, come and stand in front of me on the top step here and witness to these distressed people if I correctly interpret your wishes.”

Chief Charlie came, dignified as majesty, and stood below the missionary, facing the once more breathless masses. He was impassive as a graven image, except that his hand still nursed the bowl of the short pipe and his lips from time to time appeared to suck sustenance from it. Beside him ranged the other chiefs. Over them their spiritual leader lifted his voice once more.

“They ask me to assure you at once that it is white men who have tricked you; that they will not take advantage of your distresses; and to admit that the great court at Washington, in doing its duty, has given to them wealth which they did not create. It has snatched the ground from under you and given it to them. They ask me to tell you that you can have it back—*freely*. They give it to you now. They would put your minds at ease as quickly as possible.”

Instant sensation swept the close packed masses.

“*What? What’s that? . . . What’d he say?*”

Breathless questionings raced through the gaping crowd. Gaylord formulated the mental confusion of all when he lifted his voice to urge: “Make it plainer, Parson. I’m not sure I get you.”

The missionary smiled, a patient, indulgent sort of smile, as if he, an apostle of light, dealt with a groping

child of darkness. "Why, Mr. Gaylord, the banker—for they tell me that is who you are—I'm just saying that the Salisheutte Indians are not grasping like some white men. They have not learned to covet. They have been treated badly for so long, robbed of homes and hunting ground for so long, that they have a great sympathy for people deceived and despoiled and exploited as you have been. Therefore they give you back your homes."

"Give 'em back? *How?*" Gaylord seemed still not quite able to grasp the idea.

"Yes," affirmed the Reverend Jedediah. "They have decided to ask the Great Father at Washington to appoint a trustee for them—a man whom they trust very much and whom they are glad to see now that you have begun to trust again—a lawyer, a missionary of the human law, as I, in my humble way, am a missionary of the divine—Henry Harrington! He will act for them. When the proper power is given to him, he will confirm the titles of each of you."

"Without payment of any kind?" demanded Gaylord, incredulous to the last.

"Except in good will," smiled the Reverend Jedediah benevolently. "The Salisheuttes hope that the white men will treat them a little more as brothers hereafter." This hope was uttered modestly, appealingly.

"For nothing?" inquired the amazed citizens incredulously one of another.

"Why, that's not human nature!" echoed somebody right under the Reverend Jedediah's ear.

"It's Christian nature, my brother," he replied.

"It just shows you never can civilize an Indian!" complained Julius Hornblower in disgust.

CHAPTER XXXIX

BUT Hornblower's acid observation, like his presence, went unnoticed in the crowd; for after one more dazed moment a cheer had gone up.

"Hurrah! Hurrah for the Siwashes!"

The unbelievable had happened. Relief—mercy had come from where whites had least right to expect mercy. Men and women turned to look at each other and read in the faces before them confirmation of what they felt in their own hearts. There was shouting, there was shaking of hands, and pounding upon backs. Husbands and wives fell into each other's arms and wept. They had back the land their homes had stood on. Everybody was laughing, everybody was crying; some people were singing and it is just possible that some were praying. The crowd spread out as if seized with a sudden impulse to scatter the good news; householders felt all at once a desire to rush out and look at their lots again to make sure that they were there.

Neither were their benefactors forgotten. There was a rush of the more exuberant youth for Chief Charlie. "Let me kiss you, Charlie," one hilarious reveler cried, and the venerable Indian greeted the proposal with a jagged grin. Immediately two lusties swung the old man to their shoulders, while crowding admirers slapped him playfully on the back, chucked him in the ribs, pulled at his arms, pinched him and otherwise manhandled his dignity with rude, bear-like

manifestations of joy and good will. Within a minute his bearers had started down the steps with him.

Other joy-mad celebrants swung up the other chiefs to their shoulders. They even laid violent but approving hands upon the Reverend Jedediah Collins, and him also, laughing, they bore aloft. They caught up squaws and papooses, and headed a promenade that streamed like a human waterfall down the broad steps and along the concrete walk with the crowd milling in behind and forming a serpentine in the street, with shouts and cheers and songs and a more organized manifestation of the popular rejoicing.

For once in Edgewater the Siwash had his due.

Presently the tumult of good feeling subsided. The old chiefs, permitted to resume their feet and their gravity, gathered once more around their spiritual Moses and looked up into his face as meekly content with what his leadership had brought them to. Yet this resumption of satisfied impassive calm was almost immediately broken in upon. This was because, before anyone else in Edgewater knew that Henry Harrington was to be exonerated of the murder charge, John Boland knew—for he had heard what the detectives said to Scanlon in his library, and when he read confession in the consummate scoundrel's face, he backed away from him with horror burning in his eyes, his stunned mind trying to comprehend the incomprehensible. Then he too accused Scanlon—but weakly, for he was weak. “And you—you let me do what I have done!” He gasped this charge and sat trembling. He had ceased to be any longer a self-confident man. His head sank weakly prone upon his library table and it lay there some time.

It was lying there, a wrinkled, parchment face, like some grotesque paper-weight amid the litter of the desk, when, well, say, when Lahleet stepped so excitedly out of the automobile in front of the courthouse to be followed so sullenly by Count Ulric. But about the time when Lahleet was leading Henry from his cell, John Boland's head had got back upon his shoulders again. He was sitting up—by a supreme effort of the will, he was standing up; he was walking toward the door, then down the steps and out between the statues of Lewis and Clark. He had started for the jail but he never got there, being caught in this jam on the courthouse pavement within a dozen feet of the porch to find himself presently staring up into the face of Henry Harrington at a distance of no more than a dozen feet.

Held, perforce, a single unnoticed figure in this human mosaic, he witnessed Henry's vindication. With mortification scalding deeper every moment, his state of mind was violently upheaved. What—what was that this missionary fellow was saying? What—what was that he was proposing? The people—the people were to get their titles back! Mr. Boland's mind kindled and his heart leaped.

The Salisheuttes had become merciful to the townspeople. God in His heaven! Was there to be mercy also for him? The bare possibility struck a kind of mellowness into him that he had seldom known before—a sort of preparedness of soul as for some great spiritual light to break.

And so, when at length the abating crowd hysteria gave him his chance, he laid a hand, trembling in its eagerness on Chief Charlie's shoulder, and his voice,

an oldish voice, husky with anxiety, importuned quaveringly: "You mean, Chief Charlie, that you were joking with me? That—that you will give me *my* land back too?"

The old Indian started and looked offense, then surprise, then sardonic gratification. His glance was one which sifted and weighed and found utterly wanting for a time, then seemed at length to discover in the strained features before him something that might be worthy at least of deliberation—say, before a referee.

"You askum that boy!" he directed bluntly, pointing with the short stem of his pipe; and, lo, there before Mr. Boland, looking at him level, was a half-breed with sloe-black eyes and twisted, half-emerged features.

Quite possibly Old Two Blades had never seen this man before; yet he recognized him intuitively—Adam John! Yes: whether assuming a breakdown of police power or sensing that atmosphere of general amnesty which had begun to spread itself abroad, or proudly indifferent to the chance he took—however it was, here was Adam John, standing among the Salisheuttes as if naively he expected that justice would be done to him automatically when it was done to them.

As Mr. Boland gazed at his patient features, mildly curious rather than hotly resentful, a sense that he had committed an enormity upon this inarticulate half-breed grew up in him swiftly. He recalled with shame how ruthlessly the mighty mass of his power and the trained cunning of his brain had been employed to crush this one superfluous little Indian. And now before this same insignificant Siwash the issues of his fortune were made to tremble.

Adam John had become the arbiter of John Bo-

land's destiny. It had been left to him to say. It seemed as if God were mocking him.

Standing thus, harried by the look of the sloe-black eyes in this twisted intent face before him, illumination broke upon John Boland's mind. Wrongs, wrongs, wrongs! He perceived that he had wrought great, tremendous wrongs!

For the first time John Boland saw himself in a true perspective, his life as a vaster wreck than his fortune. All at once he wanted, not an opportunity to reconstruct the fortune, but respite in which to reconstruct the life—to undo some of its awful mistakes. It was the coldest, cruelest, meanest thing that could be conceived—what he had done to this boy! All at once he didn't want his acres back—didn't want anything, but just this stupid-looking half-breed's forgiveness. It was an odd craving to come to him but it came; it was there and demanding expression.

"Adam! Adam John!" he labored throatily, reaching toward him. "Can I make it right with you?" His feeling was deep enough that the light in his recessed eyes was dimmed and his long chin trembled. "Will you say so, Adam?"

But Adam John was cannily suspending judgment on this apparent penitence of the man who had dealt with him so ruthlessly. "Mebbe so—you keep off—my island?" he questioned gravely.

"Why—sure! Surely!" J. B.'s voice broke with the sudden surge of emotion that was sweet as he had ever known. "It's yours, boy; yours, of course!" he gulped, grateful tears streaming from the deep sockets of his eyes, while his groping hands found at length the hands of Adam John and shook them with all the

energy of which he was capable. "I have no right there—never had any, I see now. I haven't got any right now anywhere," he conceded brokenly, with a new accession of humility.

Chief Charlie had been overlooking this dialogue from a higher step with a sort of paternal interest, and he appeared to see in this speech of Boland's evidence of a very genuine repentance, and to be touched by it. His seamed old countenance began to beam and there was a brightening moisture in his own opaque orbs. "Salisheuttas give you land back!" he grunted, and managed a smile, beautiful in its ugliness.

"Back?" cried Mr. Boland, incredulous now that he had got the very thing he had been asking for. "Back?"

"Mebbe so, you not squash little Indian now any more—mebbe so?" speculated the old chief.

"You rebuke me, Charlie! You rebuke me utterly!" cried Mr. Boland in anguish. At the same time he disengaged one of his hands from Adam John to reach up and grasp Chief Charlie's gnarled old claw. The chief took it heartily and it was a grotesque picture that they made, John Boland, sartorially correct as ever, overcome with emotion and supported fraternally between a half-breed in overalls and an old baboon in a rusty frock coat.

"You will need to see Henry Harrington, Mr. Boland," suggested the kindly voice of the Reverend Jedediah Collins, who from his six feet of stature had also been interestedly overlooking this spectacle of the magnate before the mercy seat. "He will act for my people. They will give him a power of attorney."

See Henry Harrington! Boland had stripped Henry Harrington of everything that once-glowing young man possessed, and now he was being told that if he wanted to get back anything that he himself had possessed, he must receive it from this same Henry Harrington.

Two days before, that would have been the bitterest punishment devisable for him; now it only reminded him that to see Henry Harrington was what he had set out to do. But when he turned to look for him, that young man had disappeared.

CHAPTER XL

HARRINGTON had watched the demonstration of gratitude to the Salisheuttes get under way, then judged that the moment had come when he could slip off to attend to a private affair of paramount importance. The courthouse being so entirely surrounded, he decided that it would be good strategy to retire into the corridor and across the bridge of sighs to where White or one of the guards could let him out of the front door of the jail. This tactical movement developed perfectly. Not a soul was in sight nearer than some men absorbed in the exploration of debris in basements away off on the other side of Sound Avenue—not a soul, except that as he leaped down the steps Lahleet appeared most casually from under the trees.

“You little life-saver!” he cried, reaching for her with both hands. “What did you run away for?” Then, without waiting for an answer, he demanded eagerly: “Did you see it? . . . Wasn’t it great? . . . Worth all the chamber of commerce agony—worth everything!”

“No! Not everything!” objected Lahleet, with a wayward switch of her shoulders. Evidently she was in a contrary mood, perhaps meaning to punish him for forgetting her a while ago; and Harrington noticed that the aboriginal in her was somehow less disguised than he had ever seen it. There was more of the feline in her expression; she was more wilful in manner and

there was a smoldering something in her eyes which he had never noticed there before.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" she demanded impishly, pulling herself free of his grateful handclasp.

But Henry's effervescent happiness was not to be choked up now by any temperamental outburst of his most loyal and serviceable friend. "To tell Billie that I didn't do it—that everybody knows now I didn't do it!" he overflowed, concealing none of his joy in the prospect.

"Huh!" shrugged Lahleet, and wrinkled her short nose. "That won't be any news to her!"

"It won't?" inquired Henry, startled by some pregnancy in the girl's tone. "What do you mean?"

"She knew you didn't do it all the time," Lahleet assured, then smiled as if at his naïve simplicity.

"She—she knew?" stammered Harrington, astounded, indignant. Seizing her wrists fiercely, he demanded: "How do you know what she thought?"

Lahleet, accepting the captivity of his hands, gazed up demurely, hers the expression of a woman innocent of anything yet capable of everything—if Henry had had the keenness to interpret it. "I went to see her," the girl confessed without a blush, "that first night you were in jail—to—to tell her they were driving you insane; to plead with her to go your bail, to come to you, write to you, telephone to you, send you a flower even, do anything to—to——"

"You—you did that?" murmured the shaken Harrington, surprised—incredulous—grateful, all in one. Then, forgetting everything but that this was his first opportunity to learn something of the state

of Billie's mind during those awful days, he pressed on Lahleet what had been his most agonizing question. "But why—why didn't she help me?"

The girl seemed innocently unaware that Harrington was deeply stirred—as innocently unaware as that her first speech had been a mischief-making one or that this next one would complete its work of demolition. "She said she was trying to teach you a lesson," Lahleet intoned carelessly.

"Lesson?" groaned Henry unbelieving, horrified.

"Yes. She thought it would be a good lesson for you to——"

"Lesson!" exploded Harrington. "Oh, my God!" Flinging Lahleet's hands from him, he leaned dizzily against the iron hand-rail, while across the screen of his mind there reeled the film of all that he had endured. There had come to him the saving hypothesis that Billie actually believed him guilty, that because of that all her faith in him had been shattered; hence she must naturally be indifferent until his vindication came. Until his vindication came! That hypothesis had sweetened all his later sufferings, been the foundation of all of his surviving hopes. "But—but are you sure that she believed that I was—was innocent?" he besought Lahleet, hurt eyes peering.

"Oh, she knew it!" affirmed Lahleet, with satisfied assurance.

Harrington's glance was lowered while he gripped the hand-rail tighter.

The girl's expression was peculiar, relentless. She revealed now that she knew her words had hurt him, that they had been meant to, and the minute his eyes were off her, her own gleamed with savage joy. No

ancestor of hers, torturing an enemy at the stake, could have taken keener delight in the pain he inflicted than Lahleet Marceau when she saw Henry Harrington writhing as from a fatal wound. She gazed at his unseeing face quite merciless, with the corners of her lips turned up. Ruthlessly she was killing something—not him but something in him that must hurt him all but mortally when it died.

That it could so hurt him was more nearly true than the single-minded Lahleet could have conceived; for love had been Henry Harrington's whole life for three years now. Why had he chosen all at once to strive and struggle up to where he had become a target? It was for love. What had blinded his eyes till he could so be made the victim of this designing group of men? It was love. Why had it hurt so when they hurled him down? Because he was in love. It was in the love chambers of his heart that he had suffered the agony that had so weakened him. And now he was understanding that he had loved a woman whose heart was calculatingly hard.

"And she knew I was innocent all the while?" he iterated once more, opening and closing his hands helplessly.

"She rather thought the more you suffered the quicker you'd come to your senses," explained Lahleet, hands casually busy with her back hair.

"Senses!" Harrington roared out angrily; and then broke swiftly away—away from the torturing voice which had told him these unpalatable truths, away too from the unpleasant conspicuousness of the place in which he had been standing. With no more design than that he blundered, by the simple accident of walking

round the corner, into the one leafy seclusion that the whole outdoors of the town this day afforded. This was Lahleet's erstwhile bench of mourning beneath the tamarack tree, with the angle of two blind walls in front and a screening crescent of cedar shrubs surrounding. Grateful for the solitude, Henry sank down upon the bench, a prey to this final despair.

The girl had followed softly and stood at a little distance watching the lines of realization etch themselves steadily into his lean face—watched savage, relentless, exultant, till at length it seemed to her her hated enemy must have died. Then, like an autopsist trying to determine that the dead are dead, she began merciless verbal stabbings to see if sensation still remained.

"The girl's no good, Henry!" she announced tentatively, then waited. Harrington's bent head did not move, his graven face changed no expression, not so much as a single chiseled line.

"She isn't worth a damn!" the Indian girl experimented more boldly, and again waited. No answer.

"She hasn't got a kick in her—not one!" . . . Silence still.

"She's a doll—not a woman." This with tones of infinite scorn. "She was a business connection only; and now the business is busted. Forget her, Henry—dear!"

Harrington had let these insults to his love fall unchallenged. Perhaps his heart was past sensation.

Lahleet came boldly near now and sat down upon the bench. Harrington was motionless, bowed. The girl studied him critically, clinically almost, and at length the merciless lines about her mouth began to

fade. The cold, penetrating light went out of her eyes to be replaced by one that was soft and compassionate. She appeared to see the man now, instead of something inside him, and at the sight all her expressions mellowed and grew tender. She touched his hand softly, experimentally. When it was not drawn away from her she took it fondly between her palms and warmed it, toyed with the fingers of it, petted it; and when presently she felt his figure less immobile, more responsive to her presence, heaved a sigh at last of grateful relief. She saw him too breathe deep at last and straighten. He was coming back to life—back to life . . . with her beside him!

“Henry,” she breathed, “oh, Henry, dear!” and drew closer. “You are tired, dear; and no wonder! But you’ve won,” she crowed. “You’ve whipped ’em all-1-1!” Her smile was wide. “And now what you need is rest—and love! Come away,” she wooed softly. “Come away to Lahleet’s island and rest. To my island! Wouldn’t that be wonderful, Henry?” she coaxed, in soft, purring, arousing tones.

But Harrington’s mind, still abstracted, associated only slowly. The thing that waked him like a magic was the mention of her island. Weary, jaded as he was, his imagination kindled at the contrast between these arid ashes and that enchanted speck of which his memory held so entrancing an experience. The island was soft and green and secluded, set like an emerald in a sapphire sea.

And Lahleet’s lodge—with its low, down-stuffed couches of furs, with its soothing semi-darkness, with its glow of sun-gold at the cretonne-curtained windows, with its fragrance of herbs, with its broad fireplace in

which were smothered simmering broths, roasting grouse and browning biscuit—with the padding footsteps of the little Indian maiden, with her bright face and playful, kittenish, comradely ways to feed him and coddle him and make over his bruised spirit! Why, that lodge on that island appealed to him as the most delectable spot in the world right now.

The picture took hold of him so violently that he rose to his feet in contemplation of its prospect; and Lahleet rose with him. They came up almost as one, with her suddenly clinging so to him that Harrington took quick, startled account of what was happening; he saw her eyes glowing up into his, her lips yearning toward his lips until their wistfulness was pain; and he felt her veins hot against his veins.

“My island, Henry,” she panted, “and me!” Then her eyes closed, her chin pressed his breast.

Harrington himself was breathless; his heart stopped while he comprehended slowly. The girl was offering to his hectored spirit a haven that was paradise; but with it she was offering—herself! At last he realized it. Lahleet loved him; she was confessing it—proclaiming it; but even then he thought it had just broken out of her, and the fact seemed to him at once glorious and pitiful. The elemental in her had triumphed over the stoic. With heart of gold, but with coppery drops in the warm tide that visited it, she had suddenly found this new thing in her and scorned to suppress it for one moment. She had flung away the white maiden’s coy inhibitions, if ever she had held them, and frankly, with the chaste simplicity of the natural woman, disclosed to him a preference and a meaning that his eyes had been too blind to see.

As if, having given him time to understand, her eyes that had closed in one passionate sigh upon Henry's breast, opened now with redoubled intensity in their dark beams and a convulsive strength in her grasp that would not be resisted. Harrington swayed to it inevitably. But beside her passionate young strength, the man in him felt also the lure of the woman. Resistance was low; he was frayed, heart-weary, fed-up; and here was this beautiful, colorful little savage hanging about his neck and ingenuously proposing that they who owed each other much should abandon civilization and go off to her island to discharge their mutual debt.

Yet, after a moment, Harrington was, as it were, lifting his head clear of the vapors of passion. Her arms were still about his neck, but over her shoulders he stared at the blank wall. And that was what he saw—a blank wall. It would be so easy to take her—so easy to solace at least a part of him with her, now so plastic in his arms. Her warm, soft little body, her sparkling spirit were temptation—yes!

But didn't he owe her better than to yield—ever so much better? She loved him but would get over it in time. Should he do her so unkind a turn as do that which she would never get over?

And his townsmen? With that new leadership and sense of responsibility which he had just accepted—should he fail them now? . . . because a girl that he loved had failed him?

No! He had decided even as his mind formulated the questions. No! He owed his townsmen better as he owed Lahleet better. He even owed himself better, poor thing as he conceived himself now to be.

Taking the girl by her shoulders, gently, reverently indeed, he lifted her out of his embrace, his head shaking slowly from side to side, his eyes in hers, aglow with tenderness but no beam of responsive love.

The girl saw—she read his answer; there was no need to speak it. And then it was that the stoic came out in her again! Henry saw for a moment pain-filled eyes, pain-constricted lips, one dark moment of wicked resentment instantly conquered, and then, nostrils quivering, the whole dramatized struggle of pride crushing the show of suffering, battling resolutely till it ironed out even the sullen lines of defeat about the mouth.

Harrington had never felt so tenderly for Lahleet, never felt such devotion to her; and yet never dared so little to show any feeling of softness. He perceived that it would not do—it would be unkind.

Her self-control proved the greater, and it was she who spoke first, from some immeasurable sublimated height of renunciation to which she had been lifted by the trueness of her love for him. "Go your way, white man," she said gravely, in a deep throaty voice that was strange to her, "into the high places that are waiting for you. I go mine—back to the blanket!"

"No, no!" protested Henry sharply. "You are not savage. You are a woman—one of the finest, noblest, most inspiring! Everything that woman can be, *you* can be!"

"But not to you," she answered with a bitter smile.

"To me?" he asked, bitter also. "Who am I?"

Without daring another word, another touch—so they prepared to part: thwarted in love, cemented in friendship. Henry turned the corner, she following at

a little distance till he started once more up the stone steps.

“Where are you going, Henry?” she asked, and the casual wonder in her tone was a triumph of self-control.

“Back to jail!” he answered miserably.

Her eyes were on him till the iron door had swallowed him up, and she knew that his had slanted back for one last image of her.

CHAPTER XLI

IT WAS the jailor himself who admitted Harrington, gazing in unconcealed astonishment at the dejected figure of the man whom he had seen dart out of that same door half an hour before, radiating cheer and confidence.

"I've come back to you, White," Henry confessed hoarsely. "I want a place to kind of sit down and pull myself together. I've had one more wallop, White; and one more was the limit!"

"Sure," said the jailor sympathetically. "Sure, Henry! Come right in here to my office. Set there as long as you like."

Tactfully he led Harrington within and tactfully took himself out; but the door remained open and from the corridor he gazed speculatively upon the bowed shoulders of the young attorney—speculatively and, he fancied, knowingly. "Henry," he ventured presently, advancing to the door, "excuse me for butting in but there's one thing I probably oughta tell you."

"Yes?" inquired Harrington, without looking up, not relishing White's intervention yet recognizing its friendly intent.

"Sometimes a guy makes a promise he oughta break and I got a notion I oughta bust one now."

"Well?" interrogated Henry, raising his eyes and forcing a faint smile. "Let your conscience be your guide!"

"It was the night of the fire, hell a-poppin' all round us," began White, edging inside and lowering his voice to a confidential note, when advancing footsteps—quick, impatient footsteps—interrupted and there loomed in the doorway the tall, once tough and wiry, but now fragile-looking figure of John Boland.

"Henry!" Old Two Blades faltered huskily. "Henry!"

"Gosh! Come in, Mr. Boland!" blundered Jailer White, unable to get over his long-instilled deference to the man, then faded somehow out of the room, while Mr. Boland advanced an eager stride and the door closed behind him.

Harrington straightened instantly, lifted to his feet by the sheer force of indignation. Was he to be boxed in willy-nilly with the man he hated more than any other in the world—the man whom he regarded as the sole author of that very despair which enveloped him at this moment?

"Henry!" faltered Boland, again.

"Don't 'Henry' me!" the young man blazed vehemently. "You did everything in your power to ruin me and it isn't your fault that you didn't succeed any farther than you have."

"That's right," admitted Old Two Blades, humble to the heels. "But you told me sometime I'd turn—and I have. You told me I'd see my mistake and I have. I've come back to you, Harrington, and I—I want you again."

"Well, I don't want you again!" scorned Henry, with vengeful emphasis. "That's a mortal cinch!"

"That's hard, Harrington," reproached Boland, whitening to the lips.

"I feel hard," Henry bit out uncompromisingly.

"Naturally," conceded his caller, swallowing contritely; "but perhaps you won't feel so bitter when I tell you how horrified and ashamed I am at finding out what wrongs I did you."

"Ha! You admit that?" Henry exulted, rather in spite of himself, but with an implacable light in his stern gray eyes.

Boland wavered on his legs, not knowing how to go on. He was nonplused by such hardness. Why, this was as hard as he could have been in his own hardest days. He could make no impression—get no start with a real confession of fault. How was he to get over to this rightly outraged young man that he was a changed Two Blades now, a contrite, broken-shelled Two Blades, seeking his own merely that he might right the wrongs that he had done with it before.

"I—I wanted to have a little talk with you," he stammered, and his face filled with yearning. "I—I——" His voice broke as he passed over everything else to blurt out his one great objective—his now dearest hope: "Harrington, I—I wanted to ask you to be receiver of Boland General!"

Harrington only started, then laughed bitterly, almost mockingly. "Me? Receiver of Boland General? Ha, ha! That's a hot one! Ha, ha!" And yet there had been circumstances in which this would have seemed a marvelous, a grateful triumph to him. It was the very triumph he had looked forward to. "No. That would be impossible!" he declared with finality.

"Why?" persisted his petitioner, and persisted with a manner so damply abject that Henry felt that in justice to his own humanity he must give an answer.

“Well—for one thing”—he hesitated, eyes roving questioningly as his mind did—“for one thing, I am leaving here tomorrow!” he discovered suddenly.

“Leaving?” The shaken Old Two Blades almost wept. He was aghast, frightened, trembling. Horror peered out of his recessed eyes. “Why, you are the only man who can cope with the situation at all—the only man everybody trusts!” he quavered.

“Everybody? Huh!” scoffed Henry, with another bitter laugh: for the one person who hadn’t trusted him made all the rest negligible. Yet the very genuineness of this tenacious old man’s consternation waked something within that made Henry question wildly the justice of his own sudden resolve, so that instead of arguing with a hated enemy, he seemed to himself to be merely protesting to his own conscience, and was presently answering in hoarse desperation, eyes roving helplessly again: “I had thought I—I might cope with it—try to cope with it; but—it’s not worth the—the—— Oh, what the hell’s the use?” And a frankly harried man, harried beyond enduring, beyond caring, opened his hands in a gesture of helpless negation.

“But you’re trustee for the Indians,” reminded Boland, taking hope. “They sent me here to make terms with you.”

Henry recalled the Salisheuttes with a start, and then with a sigh of resignation, consigned them to the discard. “They’ll have to get somebody else.”

“But the townspeople have put their faith in you!” argued Boland cunningly.

“They’ll have to put it in somebody else,” said Harrington desperately.

"There isn't anybody else," agonized Old Two Blades, with a wail in his voice.

But for Henry this thing had reached its limit. Nerves frazzled, tears of vexation springing to his eyes, banging the table with his hand, he cried: "Damn it, what if there isn't? . . . This place is torture to me. Torture! Do you understand. I'm going to get out of it—tomorrow—today—now! Ditch the whole thing!"

Despite the frenzy of this announcement, there was a ring of unalterable conviction in the words and in the manner, from which Old Two Blades stood back appalled. That this young man should fail them, prove a deserter, refuse himself to him—to Edgewater! Well—if Henry Harrington was going to collapse, what was there left? Who was there left?

The Boland chin was trembling. This seemed the last, the crowning calamity to Old Two Blades—greater than the upsetting of his fortune, the burning of his mills, the destruction of the town. Why, they had all, all of them, come to believe in these last forty-eight hours that Henry Harrington was a sort of human rock who could not crumble.

The spectacle of him weakening, threatening to run away, affected Boland strangely. As he looked at this disheveled, distraught young man so innocently ruined, he fancied he saw a picture of himself. He wondered if he too had not been innocently ruined. It raised the whole question. It sent him like a Napoleon groping back over the plan of his Waterloo to see why and wherein he had lost the battle. As of a comrade in catastrophe, he asked: "Why did it have to happen, Harrington—all—all of this?"

But sensing this note of self-pity on Boland's part, Henry was instantly fierce. "Because you made it happen!" he snapped out.

"I? . . . How could I have helped it?" fended Two Blades, forgetting his penitence, leaning on the old fallacies again.

"By being what you seemed to be—an honest, benevolent-hearted man!" retorted Henry, direct and painful as a poke to the nose.

Boland winced. "But I've stood for the law!" he urged.

"Law?" scorned Harrington, wrathfully. There was something he had been waiting the longest days of his life to say to this old half-devil, who was trying to repent and couldn't quite make the grade; and here was his opportunity. "Boland," he began hotly, "I told you once you must make the law respectable if you wanted people to respect it. Your regard for law has been pretense only. You have made the law a convenient weapon—a pistol to make the world stand still while you picked pockets."

Boland lifted a hand in pained protest, but Henry blazed along: "By the subtlest forms of bribery, Boland, by the most skilful appeals to self-interest, you have corrupted this whole community. Councils, legislatures, yes, and the very voters, have framed the laws to suit your purposes. District attorneys, sheriffs, tax-assessors, juries and judges have bent the laws to suit your will—because you had enlisted them all in a selfish partnership."

"But it was a partnership for the common good," labored J. B., when Henry had stopped to breathe.

"It was a partnership in selfish lawlessness," in-

sisted Harrington. "Lawless in your heart, you have made these people lawless; hence the mobs. A crowd does not proceed by the nice forms of diplomacy and self-control that you employ. It gets what it wants as you get what you want; but its methods are different. It is quick, primal, brutal—yet not more brutal, not more remorseless than you with your calculating cunning—less cruel, if you ask me."

"Why, even—even the big—the biggest chance I took was a chance in the interest of civilization," Boland defended stubbornly.

But Henry lashed out indignantly: "You mean that fundamental rapacity of yours in accepting U. S. patents which you knew were based on an error—an error which you connived at suppressing? No—emphatically no! It was cold, calculating fraud. Better, Boland, that forest had stood untouched for generations than that you should hack it down to build a business on a crime, and create a county government which was not sound because the power was in the top instead of in the bottom. Oh, you can't be law and court and conscience for forty thousand people and have them retain character and courage and self-control! You make children out of them, not citizens. The very essential of democracy is that people shall do their own thinking."

"But the people make mistakes," urged Old Two Blades weakly.

"They couldn't make a bigger one than you have!"

Boland started, then went white and stood silent, with head slightly bowed.

"This country is a democracy, not a paternalism," Harrington declaimed. "You want to go too fast. The

fern grows six feet in the season, but it takes a hundred years to grow a fir. The civilization which you created, Boland, has reduced itself to the ashes you see around you."

This was the final unanswerable argument. Ashes—failure! By it Boland was crushed and self-convicted. He reached for a chair and sank into it. There was nothing left but—but this young man who had weakened so incomprehensibly but now seemed to have grown strong again. He reached an appealing hand across the table. "You—you won't refuse—the receivership?" he implored.

"Yes, Boland; I do refuse it," he answered decisively. "And in saying my say to you, I think I've done my last duty to the town of Edgewater. Good day!"

John Boland started and stared, then wet a pendent lip. This was refusal, flat and final; it was also dismissal, so curt and imperative that no course was left him but to accept it. Rebuked and rebuffed, he gathered what shreds of dignity remained to him into the stiffest bow that he could manage and went out, baffled in mind, buffeted in spirit, wondering what could possibly have made Henry Harrington so hard.

On his part, Henry watched that departure with a vast deal of satisfaction. "I guess I made him look crooked, what! Even to himself," he reflected, recalling that last word with Scanlon—who was upstairs now in the cell de luxe.

CHAPTER XLII

FOR a few seconds after John Boland's departure, Harrington sat pondering wretchedly. "Yes; that's the thing," he decided. "Chuck the whole mess. I'm not up to it."

But by now, Jailor White, having noted the manner of John Boland's departure and reflected upon it, felt himself impelled to break in upon Henry immediately, and to guarantee against interruptions this time, he closed the door behind him and turned the key in the lock. "Gee! You must have soaked Old Two Blades between the eyes!" he remarked, gazing in awe upon the man who could do such a thing.

"It was coming to him," affirmed Harrington, seething still.

"I'll tell 'em," agreed White with diplomatic emphasis. "But say! I was starting to tell you about Miss Billie coming down here the night of the fire."

For a moment Harrington's face wore a silly, staring look, as if someone might have clipped him behind the ear with a black-jack. Then he lifted himself, slowly at first, while his voice deepened with incredulous amazement. "Billie Boland . . . down here . . . the night of the fire?" He had ended by leaping to his feet while his hands reached out fiercely to the jailor as if he would tear the story out of him. "What for? . . . Who for?" he pleaded excitedly.

"Well, she didn't say who," qualified White cannily;

“but . . .” And then, while Harrington held him madly by the shoulders, shaking the story out of him, urging continually, “Yes, yes; go on, man; go on!” the jailor told him all about it.

“Oh, my God!” breathed Harrington like a prayer of thanksgiving, as he pushed White from him. “Why, then, she—she did care for me—enough to come for me at the first sign of any immediate danger.” He stood a moment drinking in the significance of what he had heard, a wondrous smile of heart-happiness forming on his lips, the lines in his face filling, his figure straightening, his head going up as he adjusted himself to the perception that she had loved him all the while and that there must be some key that furnished a satisfying solution of her conduct.

“Billie!” he trumpeted exultingly, his voice breaking with the sheer weight of its joy into something mellow and marvelously revealing of the depths of his passion for the girl. “Bil-lie!” and it seemed as if he were calling to her, far away in Humboldt House.

“White, you blundering old coot, you! Why didn’t you tell me this before?” he demanded, at the same time reaching for his hat, when there came a tap on the locked door, faint and muffled, as from a gloved knuckle. The two men exchanged inquiring glances in a kind of strained silence. “Now, what the——” White started to ejaculate, then felt his way noiselessly around the table to the door and opened it.

Pale and perturbed, Billie Boland stood there—in her shapeless tweed coat, in her little cloth hat, the brim of which had been pulled moodily low but was now alertly up; and out from under it her blue pain-filled eyes gazed in doubt and fear, wonder and glory

upon the paralyzed person of Henry Harrington. Her lips tremblingly framed a word but her spirit could not utter it.

"Billie!" her lover exclaimed, and leaped for her. "Billie!" In one hoarse inarticulate cry, all the anguish, all the bitterness of his sore heart emptied itself, and he swept her rapturously into his arms; yet not to cover her tremulous lips with kisses. The moment, the event, was too sacred to him even for the interchange of that most sacred of tokens between lovers. Instead he gathered her closely in his arms and, as making sure that she was there, pressed her soft cheek upon his, head bowed over her shoulder in acknowledgment to God of this inestimable gift while between his lids, closed in a transport of happiness, there streamed grateful tears. So he held her! She had come! She was there! He already knew enough to make sure that misunderstandings would be explained. Love would justify itself to love.

"The key is on the inside of the door, Henry!" shouted a far-away voice, and the rapt man broke out of his delirium long enough to note that White had somehow vanished and that the door was closed. He reached out and gave the key precautionary attention; yet with his first motion became aware that Billie began gently to put herself away from him.

"But you—you did love me—didn't you dear? . . . You did believe in me every minute?" he began to importune, clinging as if he would refuse to lose her.

"Yes, oh, yes, Henry! Of course I loved you!" she sighed with painful intensity. "Of course I believed in you; but—" the blue eyes, lifting themselves now to his, were shame-charged—"but—I failed you!"

"You did hurt me, Billie," Henry admitted soberly, feeling that the sooner some things came out the sooner they could be put behind forever. "But there must have been some reason," he conceded quickly; then urged gently: "Why was it, dear, that you didn't send—didn't come to me?"

"Because I was a jealous cat!" she accused herself bitterly.

"Jealous? . . . You? Billie!" Henry was both incredulous and tenderly reproachful.

"Although at first it was just because I loved you," she recalled, her distressed features beautiful in their perfect candor.

"Because you loved me?" Harrington asked, perplexed.

"Yes," she averred with a nod of simple conviction. "I thought I was helping to save you."

This was what had sounded so preposterous when Lahleet had told it to him; but it fell differently from Billie's white lips, the dear! She had actually believed it.

"Besides, Henry," Billie explained—entirely in the tone of self-indictment, not at all in self-justification—"you'd hurt my pride by refusing to let me persuade you out of your course, as I'd boasted to father I could. But the chamber of commerce meeting was the worst. I actually thought it was you who were traitor to your town, Henry." Her voice quavered and her blue eyes filled with horror of herself. "Oh, I was bitter at you—until they went further and put you in jail on that absurd murder charge." As she said this, her voice got a shudder in it and the deeps of the eyes glowed with a reminiscent indignation—

glowed beautifully to Henry's delighted perception. "Then I was wild at them all. By morning I think I should have rushed down to tear your bars away myself, but that——"

"Yes? Yes?" demanded Henry eagerly.

"But that little Miss Marceau came and told me you were breaking under the strain. That gave me hope—hope that you were going to turn and be sensible—be one of us again. Oh, wasn't I a fool? You standing like a rock, and me trying to make another—another—Scanlon out of you. But that's what I was, and so each day I said to my heart: 'O heart, be hard! Be hard for Henry's sake!' But finally I couldn't be hard any longer. I was dressed and ready to rush to you when father told me about that little teacher-woman being on the island with you. That's when I turned into a jealous cat, Henry! From that moment there wasn't a chance that I would come. Oh, Henry, wasn't it shameful?" Her face reddened, and unable to bear even his sympathetic glance, with its surprised light of growing comprehension, she turned from him entirely and dropped into a chair, yet not weakly—dropped into it to sit bolt upright, staring out the window, breathing fast, utterly indignant with herself.

Harrington stood confounded at perceiving how comprehensible all her actions and reactions had been, once he got her point of view. He was not only deeply touched but moved to a new admiration for that stern slender figure, so utterly out of patience with itself. "Oh, Billie!" he was going to cry out to her in remorse when she, in a plaintive little voice, eyes still turned out the window, and, not in extenuation at all, merely as completing the record, recalled:

"Of course you'd never told me anything about you and this little teacher-woman being so—so well acquainted."

Henry's eyes widened, his heart stabbed with a memory of guilty concealments of—of nothings, that had become significant because they were concealments—for no other reason.

"And after," she went on, still in that plaintive, non-accusing voice, "after they put you in jail, you—you didn't send me word or anything—offer me any explanation—say that you wanted to hear from me or—anything."

"Yes; my accursed pride!" groaned Henry, outraged to perceive how he had expected everything and offered nothing. Ruthless with himself now, determined this girl should prove herself entirely innocent of that coldness of heart of which he had accused her so bitterly, he reminded her calculatingly: "But for two hours now—ever since they arrested Scanlon, you have known there was nothing in any of it but just a damnable plot."

"Oh, before that," she explained quickly, eyebrows lifted high in the fulness of her candor, "ever since the court decision and the other great upsetting things, the mob and the fire and all, every instinct cried out that you had been right in everything. Oh, from that moment you have seemed a heroic, a tragic, a triumphant figure to me; but"—a look of deeper distress came into her face—"but then it was too late," she whispered hoarsely, pulling at her hands. "Because if—if—if I wouldn't go to you when the daughter of John Boland was somebody, I couldn't come to you when she was nobody."

“But, dear——”

“And while I was just, just wringing my hands,” she went on, with now a pathetic little cry in her every word, “that—that teacher-woman went out and saved you—saved you by finding the real murderer weeks before anyone else might have done it. Hers was a real helpful love. Mine was just——” she was laboring pitifully now——“just selfish and useless like—like me! She’s entitled to you, Henry. I release you from your engagement. That’s what I came to tell you. Oh, Henry!”

At last she had burst into tears and lowered her face into her hands; but even then she had not done with the indictment: “Oh, I’ve been so disappointed with myself,” she sobbed through her fingers. “I thought I was strong, but I’ve been weak. I thought I was keen, but I’ve been blind. Oh, Henry! I’ve been so wrong—so wrong all the way.”

Harrington stood quite astounded—at her—at himself; for he was strangely gratified by these tears. He’d seen her in tears before, of course; petulant storms of weeping that came after thwarting or bafflement of some sort; but those were tears of defeat. These, he discerned, were tears of triumph—tears of victory over herself. Why—he gazed more startled still, with a sudden feeling that he had been bereft of something—why, his old Billie, imperious, self-willed, self-sufficient, was gone. But there had come a new Billie, this contrite, broken blossom of a woman, humbly winsome, helplessly appealing as she proposed a most astounding sacrifice. Why, she was finer in every way, more lovable than the old Billie, who had swept him into raptures enough. He wanted to fall down

and worship this Billie. Yet his first duty was to lighten the burden of her self-reproaches. They were too many, too unjust.

"Why, you *were* loving me all the while, dear," he soothed her in a voice breaking with the weight of its sympathetic devotion.

"But I didn't *do* a thing," she wailed, inconsolable.

"You came down to the jail the night of the fire."

Abruptly the girl lifted her tear-stained face with a new fright upon it. "That—that jailor told on me," she divined; then managed a sporting half-smile.

"Yes; he did," said Henry with satisfaction; "but only just before you got here or I'd have been spared a good deal and got to you sooner; for I'd already had a chance to know how you were feeling that night because I saw you."

"Saw me?" breathed Billie, beautiful in her surprise and incomprehension.

"Yes. When you came to the jail I wasn't even here. I'd gone up to Humboldt House to make sure that you were safe. I was in the rose garden when you came back—you passed within a yard of me; I stood within a foot of you."

"You—you were there? In the rose garden?" She beamed up at him, her eyes jeweled by their late moisture. "Oh, I can't believe it! And I was wanting you so! But—the woman outside," she suddenly remembered, bitter with herself but still firm in her resolution. "She has won the right to you. Go! Go to her quick, or—oh, Henry, dear, I—I can't stand it; I can't!" Her face was white again, lips quivering, tears starting.

But Harrington could smile quite light-heartedly

now. "Say, girl; come out of it!" he commanded, but with a lump of welling joy in his throat. "Love doesn't go by rights, Billie. Love goes by—by itself; by whims, by attractions, by—I can't tell you what. But mine goes all to you. I should have been concealing something if I hadn't admitted that your silence stung me terribly. In fact my love for you seemed to die in each of those awful nights; but it came to life each morning. Only today it was dead again, I thought; till White told me of your visit to the jail; and then it came alive again forevermore. You speak of shame, but you've made me a thousand times ashamed that I ever doubted you or reproached you. Now I know, Billie, that you were as right all the time as I thought I was. Our love is a deathless thing; yours couldn't be killed and mine couldn't.

"Here we are together, Billie, in the least romantic place in the world, this dingy old jail, in this tobacco-smelling office of Larry White's; but it all fades away. We're alone—alone on a mountain-peak. God and the sunlight are all around us, and the pulse of love sings in our veins. I want you, Billie; I want you, and I'm going to take you."

"In spite of everything?" she cried up to him timidly, her face lighting brilliantly with that new glory which had been growing upon it all the while her lover had been speaking.

"Because of everything," he answered fondly.

With a long, happy sigh, she rose to his embrace and he took her. But after what they two had passed through, it was withal a spiritual embrace; tenderness rather than heat; devotion, adoration rather than pas-

sion characterized it; and its breathless moments were followed presently by little bursts of confidence.

"We understand each other this time," Henry reflected gratefully; "you take me for what I am."

"And you take me for what I'm not," Billie said with a little laugh. "Oh, Henry! My money's gone, I haven't got a thing but you; and I never felt so rich in all my life. And, oh, I'm so glad I couldn't bend you—make you into a conceited imperialist of business. You remembered the little cases still, and it's because you were true in the little things that you made good in the big things."

"You're the first big thing I ever made good in," insisted Henry fondly, "and I came near messing that. We'll get married and we'll shake the ashes of this place off our feet and get away and never see it again."

"Never see it again?" Billie exclaimed in amazement. "Why, you're going to be receiver of Boland General," she told him, and in her blue eyes there was just a faint return of the old imperiousness, and it made her wonderfully attractive.

"Oh, am I?" ejaculated Henry, suddenly doubtful as he looked into those violet deeps and began to take new account of all that lay behind them.

"Why, yes, Henry; you are," she told him, though not imperiously; merely as reminding him of a duty.

As accepting the reminder Harrington turned, still with his arm around the slender grace in the tweed coat beneath which he could feel a heart beating so happily—turned and looked out upon that scarred, chimney-stabbed segment of ruins that lay beneath his vision and with his mind's eye also that wide band of mourning on both sides the inlet where the Boland

erections had been. He saw it all and the chaos in the hearts of the citizens as well—he saw the task it would be and slowly his mind kindled to it. To resuscitate, to re-create, to organize anew and on a right basis this little sector of the world-front, to build again and build better—this was a job worth while if ever a worth-while job was offered to a man. And it was his for the taking. He remembered his Salisheutte Indians too, with vast business problems thrust upon them; and the Shell Point Indians with the millions of oil beneath their feet—and both tribes trusting him, needing him.

Billie was watching his absorbed face concernedly. “We haven’t gone through all—all this to be just selfish at the last, when we’ve gained each other, have we?” she asked, giving his arm an intimate squeeze.

He looked at her startled. “No, no; of course not, dear,” he confessed, and felt himself somehow sublimated and consecrated to unselfishness forever because of this priceless treasure within the circle of his arm.

“Yes, we’ll—we’ll stay right here. We’ll have our honeymoon ‘on the lot,’ as they say in moviedom.”

Three days later many things had happened. Various courts had appointed Henry Harrington receiver of Boland General and of numbers of its subsidiaries. The Commissioners of the Land Office and of Indian Affairs had both telegraphed from Washington to Henry an appointment as special agent. Another Shell Point Land Company was to be organized, of which Henry Harrington was to be president, and Lahleet Marceau, vice-president; for she had reconsidered her determination to return to the blanket. She too had

consulted her better self and found that she could not desert.

Yellow piles of lumber and red piles of brick began to fleck the ruins, machinery was being ordered, a vast program of reconstruction was being inaugurated; and one way and another, officially or unofficially, Henry Harrington was in the forefront of it all. Tsar of the Zone, someone had already called him playfully.

But most important of all to the two people concerned, Henry and Billie had been married. On this, the first morning of their wedded life, Billie was reminding Henry: "'Member that lofty talk of mine once about the world wanting producers—stuff I'd heard father use—and me mourning over you because you weren't a producer—only a lawyer? Well, Henry, dear, you're going to be the greatest producer of all—a producer of happiness; and most of all to me!"

The bride kissed her husband ecstatically and he accepted the caress with evidences of satisfaction; then warned: "You know, Billie, hardly anybody is as big, as important as they think they are, or as other people may think. Let's just play our part kind of—kind of small. Let's, as you sort of hinted the other day—let's try to make good in the little things and trust the big things to take care of themselves."

"Which reminds me," said Billie; "for one little thing, I'm going to have the Salzberg children sent up to the house this morning—until their father can do for them."

[THE END]

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