The BLIND MAN'S EYE

WILLIAM MacHARG
EDWIN BALMER

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Author: William MacHarg
        Edwin Balmer

Illustrator: Wilson C. Dexter

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"Until I come to you as--as you have never known me yet!"

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THE BLIND MAN'S EYES

By WILLIAM MACHARG & EDWIN BALMER

With Frontispiece
By WILSON C. DEXTER

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To
R. G.

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THE BLIND MAN'S EYES

CHAPTER I

A FINANCIER DIES

Gabriel Warden—capitalist, railroad director, owner of mines and timber lands, at twenty a cow-puncher, at forty-eight one of the predominant men of the Northwest Coast—paced with quick, uneven steps the great wicker-furnished living room of his home just above Seattle on Puget Sound. Twice within ten minutes he had used the telephone in the hall to ask the same question and, apparently to receive the same reply—that the train from Vancouver, for which he had inquired, had come in and that the passengers had left the station.

It was not like Gabriel Warden to show nervousness of any sort; Kondo, the Japanese doorman, who therefore had found something strange in this telephoning, watched him through the portières which shut off the living-room from the hall. Three times Kondo saw him—big, uncouth in the careless fit of his clothes, powerful and impressive in his strength of feature and the carriage of his well-shaped head—go to the window and, watch in hand, stand staring out. It was a Sunday evening toward the end of February—cold, cloudy and with a chill wind driving over the city and across the Sound. Warden evidently saw no one as he gazed out into the murk; but each moment, Kondo observed, his nervousness increased. He turned suddenly and pressed the bell to call a servant. Kondo, retreating silently down the hall, advanced again and entered the room; he noticed then that Warden's hand, which was still holding the watch before him, was shaking.

"A young man who may, or may not, give a name, will ask for me in a few moments. He will say he called by appointment. Take him at once to my smoking-room, and I will see him there. I am going to Mrs. Warden's room now."

He went up the stairs, Kondo noticed, still absently holding his watch in his

hand.

Warden controlled his nervousness before entering his wife's room,—where she had just finished dressing to go out,—so that she did not at first sense anything unusual. In fact, she talked with him casually for a moment or so before she even sent away her maid. He had promised a few days before to accompany her to a concert; she thought he had come simply to beg off. When they were alone, she suddenly saw that he had come to her to discuss some serious subject.

"Cora," he said, when he had closed the door after the maid, "I want your advice on a business question."

"A business question!" She was greatly surprised. She was a number of years younger than he; he was one of those men who believe all business matters should be kept from their wives.

"I mean it came to me through some business—discoveries."

"And you cannot decide it for yourself?"

"I had decided it." He looked again at his watch. "I had quite decided it; but now—It may lead to some result which I have suddenly felt that I haven't the right to decide entirely for myself."

Warden's wife for the first time felt alarmed. She could not well describe his manner; it did not suggest fear for himself; she could not imagine his feeling such fear; but she was frightened. She put her hand on his arm.

"You mean it affects me directly?"

"It may. For that reason I feel I must do what you would have me do."

He seized both her hands in his and held her before him; she waited for him to go on.

"Cora," he said, "what would you have me do if you knew I had found out that a young man—a man who, four or five years ago, had as much to live for as any man might—had been outraged in every right by men who are my friends? Would you have me fight the outfit for him? Or would you have me—lie down?"

His fingers almost crushed hers in his excitement. She stared at him with only pride then; she was proud of his strength, of his ability to fight, of the power she knew he possessed to force his way against opposition. "Why, you would fight them!"

"You mean you want me to?"

"Isn't that what you had decided to do?"

He only repeated. "You want me to fight them?"

"Of course."

"No matter what it costs?"

She realized then that what he was facing was very grave.

"Cora," he said, "I didn't come to ask your advice without putting this squarely to you. If I go into this fight, I shall be not only an opponent to some of my present friends; I shall be a threat to them—something they may think it necessary to remove."

"Remove?"

"Such things have happened—to better men than I, over smaller matters."

She cried out. "You mean some one might kill you?"

"Should that keep me from going in?"

She hesitated. He went on: "Would you have me afraid to do a thing that ought to be done, Cora?"

"No," she said; "I would not."

"All right, then. That's all I had to know now. The young man is coming to see me to-night, Cora. Probably he's downstairs. I'll tell you all I can after I've talked with him."

Warden's wife tried to hold him a moment more, but he loosed himself from her and left her.

He went directly downstairs; as he passed through the hall, the telephone bell rang. Warden himself answered it. Kondo, who from his place in the hall overheard Warden's end of the conversation, made out only that the person at the other end of the line appeared to be a friend, or at least an acquaintance, of Warden's. Kondo judged this from the tone of the conversation; Warden spoke no names. Apparently the other person wished to see Warden at once. Warden finished, "All right; I'll come and get you. Wait for me there." Then he hung up.

Turning to Kondo, he ordered his limousine car. Kondo transmitted the order and brought Warden's coat and cap; then Kondo opened the house door for him and the door of the limousine, which had been brought under the porte-cochère. Kondo heard Warden direct the chauffeur to a drug store near the center of the city; the chauffeur was Patrick Corboy, a young Irishman who had been in Warden's employ for more than five years; his faithfulness to Warden was never questioned. Corboy drove to the place Warden had directed. As they stopped, a young man of less than medium height, broad-shouldered and wearing a mackintosh, came to the curb and spoke to Warden. Corboy did not hear the name, but Warden immediately asked the man into the car; he directed Corboy to return home. The chauffeur did this, but was obliged on the way to come to a complete stop several times, as he met streetcars or other vehicles on intersecting streets.

Almost immediately after Warden had left the house, the door-bell rang and Kondo answered it. A young man with a quiet and pleasant bearing inquired for Mr. Warden and said he came by appointment. Kondo ushered him into the smoking room, where the stranger waited. The Jap did not announce this arrival to any one, for he had already received his instructions; but several times in the next half hour he looked in upon him. The stranger was always sitting where he had seated himself when Kondo showed him in; he was merely waiting. In about forty minutes, Corboy drove the car under the porte-cochère again and got down and opened the door. Kondo had not heard the car at once, and the chauffeur had not waited for him. There was no motion inside the limousine. The chauffeur looked in and saw Mr. Warden lying back quietly against the cushions in the back of the seat; he was alone.

Corboy noticed then that the curtains all about had been pulled down; he touched the button and turned on the light at the top of the car, and then he saw that Warden was dead; his cap was off, and the top of his head had been smashed in by a heavy blow.

The chauffeur drew back, gasping; Kondo, behind him on the steps, cried out and ran into the house calling for help. Two other servants and Mrs. Warden, who had remained nervously in her room, ran down. The stranger who had been waiting, now seen for the first time by Mrs. Warden, came out from the smoking room to help them. He aided in taking the body from the car and helped to carry it into the living room and lay it on a couch; he remained until it was certain that Warden had been killed and nothing could be done. When this had been established and further confirmed by the doctor who was called, Kondo and Mrs. Warden looked around for the young man—but he was no longer there.

The news of the murder brought extras out upon the streets of Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland at ten o'clock that night; the news took the first page in San Francisco, Chicago, and New York papers, in competition with the war news, the next morning. Seattle, stirred at once at the murder of one of its most prominent citizens, stirred still further at the new proof that Warden had been a power in business and finance; then, as the second day's dispatches from the larger cities came in, it stirred a third time at the realization—for so men said—that this was the second time such a murder had happened.

Warden had been what was called among men of business and finance a member of the "Latron crowd"; he had been close, at one time, to the great Western capitalist Matthew Latron; the properties in which he had made his wealth, and whose direction and administration had brought him the respect and attention of other men, had been closely allied with or even included among those known as the "Latron properties"; and Latron, five years before, had been murdered. The parallel between the two cases was not as great as the newspapers in their search for the startling made it appear; nevertheless, there was a parallel. Latron's murderer had been a man who called upon him by appointment, and Warden's murderer, it appeared, had been equally known to him, or at least equally recommended. Of this as much was made as possible in the suggestion that the same agency was behind the two.

The statement of Cora Warden, indicating that Warden's death might have been caused by men with whom he was—or had been at one time—associated, was compared with the fact that Latron's death had occurred at a time of fierce financial stress and warfare. But in this comparison Warden's statement to his wife was not borne out. Men of high place in the business world appeared, from time to time during the next few days, at Warden's offices and even at his house, coming from other cities on the Coast and from as far east as Chicago; they felt

the need, many of them, of looking after interests of their own which were involved with Warden's. All concurred in saying that, so far as Warden and his properties were concerned, the time was one of peace; neither attack nor serious disagreement had threatened him.

More direct investigation of the murder went on unceasingly through these days. The statements of Kondo and Corboy were verified; it was even learned at what spot Warden's murderer had left the motor unobserved by Corboy. Beyond this, no trace was found of him, and the disappearance of the young man who had come to Warden's house and waited there for three quarters of an hour to see him was also complete.

No suspicion attached to this young man; Warden's talk with his wife made it completely clear that, if he had any connection with the murder, it was only as befriending him brought danger to Warden. His disappearance seemed explicable therefore only in one way. Appeals to him to come forward were published in the newspapers; he was offered the help of influential men, if help was what he needed, and a money reward was promised for revealing himself and explaining why Warden saw inevitable danger in befriending him. To these offers he made no response. The theory therefore gained ground that his appointment with Warden had involved him in Warden's fate; it was generally credited that he too must have been killed; or, if he was alive, he saw in Warden's swift and summary destruction a warning of his own fate if he came forward and sought to speak at this time.

Thus after ten days no information from or about this mysterious young man had been gained.

CHAPTER II

THE EXPRESS IS HELD FOR A PERSONAGE

On the morning of the eleventh day, Bob Connery, special conductor for the Coast division of one of the chief transcontinentals, was having late breakfast on his day off at his little cottage on the shore of Puget Sound, when he was treated

to the unusual sight of a large touring car stopping before his door. The car carried no one but the chauffeur, however, and he at once made it plain that he came only as a message-bearer when he hurried from the car to the house with an envelope in his hand. Connery, meeting him at the door, opened the envelope and found within an order in the handwriting of the president of the railroad and over his signature.

Connery:

No. 5 being held at Seattle terminal until nine o'clock—will run one hour late. This is your authority to supersede the regular man as conductor—prepared to go through to Chicago. You will facilitate every desire and obey, when possible, any request even as to running of the train, which may be made by a passenger who will identify himself by a card from me.

H. E. JARVIS.

The conductor, accustomed to take charge of trains when princes, envoys, presidents and great people of any sort took to travel publicly or privately, fingered the heavy cream-colored note-paper upon which the order was written and looked up at the chauffeur.

The order itself was surprising enough even to Connery. Some passenger of extraordinary influence, obviously, was to take the train; not only the holding of the transcontinental for an hour told this, but there was the further plain statement that the passenger would be incognito. Astonishing also was the fact that the order was written upon private note-paper. There had been a monogram at the top of the sheet, but it had been torn off; that would not have been if Mr. Jarvis had sent the order from home. Who could have had the president of the road call upon him at half past seven in the morning and have told Mr. Jarvis to hold the Express for an hour?

Connery, having served for twenty of his forty-two years under Mr. Jarvis, and the last five, at least, in almost a confidential capacity, was certain of the distinctive characters of the president's handwriting. The enigma of the order, however, had piqued him so that he pretended doubt.

"Where did you get this?" he challenged the chauffeur.

"From Mr. Jarvis."

"Of course; but where?"

"You mean you want to know where he was?"

Connery smiled quietly. If he himself was trusted to be cautious and circumspect, the chauffeur also plainly was accustomed to be in the employ of one who required reticence. Connery looked from the note to the bearer more keenly. There was something familiar in the chauffeur's face—just enough to have made Connery believe, at first, that probably he had seen the man meeting some passenger at the station.

"You are—" Connery ventured more casually.

"In private employ; yes, sir," the man cut off quickly. Then Connery knew him; it was when Gabriel Warden traveled on Connery's train that the conductor had seen this chauffeur; this was Patrick Corboy, who had driven Warden the night he was killed. But Connery, having won his point, knew better than to show it. "Waiting for a receipt from me?" he asked as if he had abandoned his curiosity.

The chauffeur nodded. Connery took a sheet of paper, wrote on it, sealed it in an envelope and handed it over; the chauffeur hastened back to his car and drove off. Connery, order in hand, stood at the door watching the car depart. He whistled softly to himself. Evidently his passenger was to be one of the great men in Eastern finance who had been brought West by Warden's death. As the car disappeared, Connery gazed off to the Sound.

The March morning was windy and wet, with a storm blowing in from the Pacific. East of the mountains—in Idaho and Montana—there was snow, and a heavy fall of it, as the conductor well knew from the long list of incoming trains yesterday stalled or badly overdue; but at Seattle, so far, only rain or a soft, sloppy sleet had appeared. Through this rose the smoke from tugs and a couple of freighters putting out in spite of the storm, and from further up Eliot Bay reverberated the roar of the steam-whistle of some large ship signaling its intention to pass another to the left. The incoming vessel loomed in sight and showed the graceful lines, the single funnel and the white- and red-barred flag of

the Japanese line, the Nippon Yusen Kaisha. Connery saw that it was, as he anticipated, the *Tamba Maru*, due two days before, having been delayed by bad weather over the Pacific. It would dock, Connery estimated, just in time to permit a passenger to catch the Eastern Express if that were held till nine o'clock. So, as he hastened to the car-line, Connery smiled at himself for taking the trouble to make his earlier surmises. More probably the train was being held just for some party on the boat. Going to the chief dispatcher's office to confirm understanding of his orders, he found that Mr. Jarvis had sent simply the curt command, "Number Five will run one hour late." Connery went down to the trainsheds.

The Eastern Express, with its gleaming windows, shining brass and speckless, painted steel, was standing between the sooty, slush-splashed trains which had just struggled in from over the mountain; a dozen passengers, tired of waiting on the warm, cushioned seats of the Pullmans, sauntered up and down beside the cars, commenting on the track-conditions which, apparently, prevented even starting a train on time. Connery looked these over and then got aboard the train and went from observation to express car. Travel was light that trip; in addition to the few on the platform, Connery counted only fourteen passengers on the train. He scrutinized these without satisfaction; all appeared to have arrived at the train long before and to have been waiting. Connery got off and went back to the barrier.

Old Sammy Seaton, the gateman, stood in his iron coop twirling a punch about his finger. Old Sammy's scheme of sudden wealth—every one has a plan by which at any moment wealth may arrive—was to recognize and apprehend some wrongdoer, or some lost or kidnaped person for whom a great reward would be given. His position at the gate through which must pass most of the people arriving at the great Coast city, or wishing to depart from it, certainly was excellent; and by constant and careful reading of the papers, classifying and memorizing faces, he prepared himself to take advantage of any opportunity. Indeed, in his years at the gate, he had succeeded in no less than seven acknowledged cases in putting the police upon the track of persons "wanted"; these, however, happened to be worth only minor rewards. Sammy still awaited his great "strike."

"Any one off on Number Five, Sammy?" Connery questioned carelessly as he approached. Sammy's schemes involved the following of the comings and goings of the great as well as of the "wanted."

Old Sammy shook his head. "What're we holding for?" he whispered. "Ah—for them?"

A couple of station-boys, overloaded with hand-baggage, scurried in from the street; some one shouted for a trunk-truck, and baggagemen ran. A group of people, who evidently had come to the station in covered cars, crowded out to the gate and lined up to pass old Sammy. The gateman straightened importantly and scrutinized each person presenting a ticket. Much of the baggage carried by the boys, and also the trunks rushed by on the trucks, bore foreign hotel and steamship "stickers." Connery observed the label of the Miyaka Hotel, Kioto, leaving visible only the "Bombay" of another below it; others proclaimed "Amoy," "Tonkin," and "Shanghai." This baggage and some of the people, at least, undoubtedly had just landed from the *Tamba Maru*. Connery inspected with even greater attention the file at the gate and watched old Sammy also as each passed him.

The first of the five in line was a girl—a girl about twenty-two or three, Connery guessed. She was of slightly more than medium height, slender and erect in figure, and with slim, gloved hands. She had the easy, interested air of a person of assured position. She evidently had come to the station in a motor-car which had kept off the sleet, but had let in the wind—a touring-car, possibly, with top up. Her fair cheeks were ruddy and her blue eyes bright; her hair, which was deep brown and abundant, was caught back from her brow, giving her a more outdoor and boyish look. When Connery first saw her, she seemed to be accompanying the man who now was behind her; but she offered her own ticket for perusal at the gate, and as soon as she was through, she hurried on ahead alone.

Whether or not she had come from the Japanese boat, Connery could not tell; her ticket, at least, disclaimed for her any connection with the foreign baggage-labels, for it was merely the ordinary form calling for transportation from Seattle to Chicago. Connery was certain he did not know her. He noticed that old Sammy had held her at the gate as long as possible, as if hoping to recollect who she might be; but now that she was gone, the gateman gave his attention more closely to the first man—a tall, strongly built man, neither heavy nor light, and with a powerful patrician face. His hair and his mustache, which was clipped short and did not conceal his good mouth, were dark; his brows were black and distinct, but not bushy or unpleasantly thick; his eyes were hidden by smoked glasses such as one wears against a glare of snow.

"Chicago?" old Sammy questioned. Connery knew that it was to draw the voice in reply; but the man barely nodded, took back his ticket—which also was the ordinary form of transportation from Seattle to Chicago—and strode on to the train. Connery found his gaze following this man; the conductor did not know him, nor had old Sammy recognized him; but both were trying to place him. He, unquestionably, was a man to be known, though not more so than many who traveled in the transcontinental trains.

A trim, self-assured man of thirty—his open overcoat showed a cutaway underneath—came past next, proffering the plain Seattle-Chicago ticket.

An Englishman, with red-veined cheeks, fumbling, clumsy fingers and curious, interested eyes, immediately followed. To him, plainly, the majority of the baggage on the trucks belonged; he had "booked" the train at Hong Kong and seemed pleasantly surprised that his tourist ticket was instantly accepted. The name upon the strip, "Henry Standish," corresponded with the "H. S., Nottingham," emblazoned on the luggage.

The remaining man, carrying his own grips, which were not initialed, set them down in the gate and felt in his pocket for his transportation.

This fifth person had appeared suddenly after the line of four had formed in front of old Sammy at the gate; he had taken his place with them only after scrutiny of them and of the station all around. Like the Englishman's, his ticket was a strip which originally had held coupons for the Pacific voyage and some indefinite journey in Asia before; unlike the Englishman's,—and his baggage did not bear the pasters of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha,—the ticket was close to the date when it would have expired. It bore upon the line where the purchaser signed, the name "Philip D. Eaton" in plain, vigorous characters without shading or flourish. An American, and too young to have gained distinction in any of the ordinary ways by which men lift themselves above others, he still made a profound impression upon Connery. There was something about him which said, somehow, that these strips of transportation were taking him home after a long and troublesome absence. He combined, in some strange way, exaltation with weariness. He was, plainly, carefully observant of all that went on about him, even these commonplace formalities connected with taking the train; and Connery felt that it was by premeditation that he was the last to pass the gate.

As a sudden eddy of the gale about the shed blew the ticket from old

Sammy's cold fingers, the young man stooped to recover it. The wind blew off his cloth cap as he did so, and as he bent and straightened before old Sammy, the old man suddenly gasped; and while the traveler pulled on his cap, recovered his ticket and hurried down the platform to the train, the gateman stood staring after him as though trying to recall who the man presenting himself as Philip D. Eaton was.

Connery stepped beside the old man.

"Who is it, Sammy?" he demanded.

"Who?" Sammy repeated. His eyes were still fixed on the retreating figure. "Who? I don't know."

The gateman mumbled, repeating to himself the names of the famous, the great, the notorious, in his effort to fit one to the man who had just passed. Connery awaited the result, his gaze following Eaton until he disappeared aboard the train. No one else belated and bound for the Eastern Express was in sight. The president's order to the conductor and to the dispatcher simply had directed that Number Five would run one hour late; it must leave in five minutes; and Connery, guided by the impression the man last through the gate had made upon him and old Sammy both, had no doubt that the man for whom the train had been held was now on board.

For a last time, the conductor scrutinized old Sammy. The gateman's mumblings were clearly fruitless; if Eaton were not the man's real name, old Sammy was unable to find any other which fitted. As Connery watched, old Sammy gave it up. Connery went out to the train. The passengers who had been parading the platform had got aboard; the last five to arrive also had disappeared into the Pullmans, and their luggage had been thrown into the baggage car. Connery jumped aboard. He turned back into the observation car and then went forward into the next Pullman. In the aisle of this car the five whom Connery had just watched pass the gate were gathered about the Pullman conductor, claiming their reservations. Connery looked first at Eaton, who stood beside his grips a little apart, but within hearing of the rest; and then, passing him, he joined the Pullman conductor.

The three who had passed the gate first—the girl, the man with the glasses and the young man in the cutaway—it had now become clear were one party.

They had had reservations made, apparently, in the name of Dorne; and these reservations were for a compartment and two sections in this car, the last of the four Pullmans. As they discussed the disposition of these, the girl's address to the spectacled man made plain that he was her father; her name, apparently, was Harriet; the young man in the cutaway coat was "Don" to her and "Avery" to her father. His relation, while intimate enough to permit him to address the girl as "Harry," was unfailingly respectful to Mr. Dorne; and against them both Dorne won his way; his daughter was to occupy the drawing-room; he and Avery were to have sections in the open car.

"You have Sections One and Three, sir," the Pullman conductor told him. And Dorne directed the porter to put Avery's luggage in Section One, his own in Section Three.

The Englishman who had come by the Japanese steamer was unsupplied with a sleeping-car ticket; he accepted, after what seemed only an automatic and habitual debate on his part, Section Four in Car Three—the next car forward—and departed at the heels of the porter. Connery watched more closely, as now it came the turn of the young man whose ticket bore the name of Eaton. Like the Englishman with the same sort of ticket from Asia, Eaton had no reservation in the sleepers; he appeared, however, to have some preference as to where he slept.

"Give me a Three, if you have one," he requested of the Pullman conductor. His voice, Connery noted, was well modulated, rather deep, distinctly pleasant. At sound of it, Dorne, who with his daughter's help was settling himself in his section, turned and looked that way and said something in a low tone to the girl. Harriet Dorne also looked, and with her eyes on Eaton, Connery saw her reply inaudibly, rapidly and at some length.

"I can give you Three in Car Three, opposite the gentleman I just assigned," the Pullman conductor offered.

"That'll do very well," Eaton answered in the same pleasant voice.

As the porter now took his bags, Eaton followed him out of the car. Connery looked around the sleeper; then, having allowed a moment to pass so that he would not too obviously seem to be following Eaton, he went after them into the next car. He expected, rather, that Eaton would at once identify himself to him as

the passenger to whom President Jarvis' short note had referred. Eaton, however, paid no attention to him, but was busy taking off his coat and settling himself in his section as Connery passed.

The conductor, willing that Eaton should choose his own time for identifying himself, passed slowly on, looking over the passengers as he went. The cars were far from full.

Besides Eaton, Connery saw but half a dozen people in this car: the Englishman in Section Four; two young girls of about nineteen and twenty and their parents—uninquisitive-looking, unobtrusive, middle-aged people who possessed the drawing-room; and an alert, red-haired, professional-looking man of forty whose baggage was marked "D. S.—Chicago." Connery had had nothing to do with putting Eaton in this car, but his survey of it gave him satisfaction; if President Jarvis inquired, he could be told that Eaton had not been put near to undesirable neighbors. The next car forward, perhaps, would have been even better; for Connery saw, as he entered it, that but one of its sections was occupied. The next, the last Pullman, was quite well filled; beyond this was the diner. Connery stood a few moments in conversation with the dining car conductor; then he retraced his way through the train. He again passed Eaton, slowing so that the young man could speak to him if he wished, and even halting an instant to exchange a word with the Englishman; but Eaton allowed him to pass on without speaking to him. Connery's step quickened as he entered the next car on his way back to the smoking compartment of the observation car, where he expected to compare sheets with the Pullman conductor before taking up the tickets. As he entered this car, however, Avery stopped him.

"Mr. Dorne would like to speak to you," Avery said. The tone was very like a command.

Connery stopped beside the section, where the man with the spectacles sat with his daughter. Dorne looked up at him.

"You are the train conductor?" he asked, seeming either unsatisfied of this by Connery's presence or merely desirous of a formal answer.

"Yes, sir," Connery replied.

Dorne fumbled in his inner pocket and brought out a card-case, which he opened, and produced a card. Connery, glancing at the card while the other still

held it, saw that it was President Jarvis' visiting card, with the president's name in engraved block letters; across its top was written briefly in Jarvis' familiar hand, "*This is the passenger*"; and below, it was signed with the same scrawl of initials which had been on the note Connery had received that morning—"*H. R. J.*"

Connery's hand shook as, while trying to recover himself, he took the card and looked at it more closely, and he felt within him the sinking sensation which follows an escape from danger. He saw that his too ready and too assured assumption that Eaton was the man to whom Jarvis' note had referred, had almost led him into the sort of mistake which is unpardonable in a "trusted" man; he had come within an ace, he realized, of speaking to Eaton and so betraying the presence on the train of a traveler whose journey his superiors were trying to keep secret.

"You need, of course, hold the train no longer," Dorne said to Connery.

"Yes, sir; I received word from Mr. Jarvis about you, Mr. Dorne. I shall follow his instructions fully." Connery recalled the discussion about the drawing-room which had been given to Dorne's daughter. "I shall see that the Pullman conductor moves some one in one of the other cars to have a compartment for you, sir."

"I prefer a place in the open car," Dorne replied. "I am well situated here. Do not disturb any one."

As he went forward again after the train was under way, Connery tried to recollect how it was that he had been led into such a mistake, and defending himself, he laid it all to old Sammy. But old Sammy was not often mistaken in his identifications. If Eaton was not the person for whom the train was held, might he be some one else of importance? Now as he studied Eaton, he could not imagine what had made him accept this passenger as a person of great position. It was only when he passed Eaton a third time, half an hour later, when the train had long left Seattle, that the half-shaped hazards and guesses about the passenger suddenly sprang into form. Connery stood and stared back. Eaton did not look like any one whom he remembered having seen; but he fitted perfectly some one whose description had been standing for ten days in every morning and evening edition of the Seattle papers. Yes, allowing for a change of clothes and a different way of brushing his hair, Eaton was exactly the man whom

Warden had expected at his house and who had come there and waited while Warden, away in his car, was killed.

Connery was walking back through the train, absent-minded in trying to decide whether he could be at all sure of this from the mere printed description, and trying to decide what he should do if he felt sure, when Mr. Dorne stopped him.

"Conductor, do you happen to know," he questioned, "who the young man is who took Section Three in the car forward?"

Connery gasped; but the question put to him the impossibility of his being sure of any recognition from the description. "He gave his name on his ticket as Philip D. Eaton, sir," Connery replied.

"Is that all you know about him?"

"Yes, sir."

"If you find out anything about him, let me know," Dorne bade.

"Yes, sir." Connery moved away and soon went back to look again at Eaton. Had Mr. Dorne also seen the likeness of Eaton in the published descriptions of the man whom Warden had said was most outrageously wronged? the man for whom Warden had been willing to risk his life, who afterwards had not dared to come forward to aid the police with anything he might know? Connery determined to let nothing interfere with learning more of Eaton; Dorne's request only gave him added responsibility.

Dorne, however, was not depending upon Connery alone for further information. As soon as the conductor had gone, he turned back to his daughter and Avery upon the seat opposite.

"Avery," he said in a tone of direction, "I wish you to get in conversation with this Philip Eaton. It will probably be useful if you let Harriet talk with him too. She would get impressions helpful to me which you can't."

The girl started with surprise but recovered at once. "Yes, Father," she said.

"What, sir?" Avery ventured to protest.

CHAPTER III

MISS DORNE MEETS EATON

Dorne motioned Avery to the aisle, where already some of the passengers, having settled their belongings in their sections, were beginning to wander through the cars seeking acquaintances or players to make up a card game. Eaton, however, was not among these. On the contrary, when these approached him in his section, he frankly avoided chance of their speaking to him, by an appearance of complete immersion in his own concerns. The Englishman directly across the aisle from Eaton clearly was not likely to speak to him, or to anybody else, without an introduction; the red-haired man, "D. S.," however, seemed a more expansive personality. Eaton, seeing "D. S." look several times in his direction, pulled a newspaper from the pocket of his overcoat and engrossed himself in it; the newspaper finished, he opened his traveling bag and produced a magazine.

But as the train settled into the steady running which reminded of the days of travel ahead during which the half-dozen cars of the train must create a world in which it would be absolutely impossible to avoid contact with other people, Eaton put the magazine into his traveling bag, took from the bag a handful of cigars with which he filled a plain, uninitialed cigar-case, and went toward the club and observation car in the rear. As he passed through the sleeper next to him,—the last one,—Harriet Dorne glanced up at him and spoke to her father; Dorne nodded but did not look up. Eaton went on into the wide-windowed observation-room beyond, which opened onto the rear platform protected on three sides.

The observation-room was nearly empty. The sleet which had been falling when they left Seattle had changed to huge, heavy flakes of fast-falling snow, which blurred the windows, obscured the landscape and left visible only the two thin black lines of track that, streaming out behind them, vanished fifty feet away in the white smother. The only occupants of the room were a young woman who was reading a magazine, and an elderly man. Eaton chose a seat as

far from these two as possible.

He had been there only a few minutes, however, when, looking up, he saw Harriet Dorne and Avery enter the room. They passed him, engaged in conversation, and stood by the rear door looking out into the storm. It was evident to Eaton, although he did not watch them, that they were arguing something; the girl seemed insistent, Avery irritated and unwilling. Her manner showed that she won her point finally. She seated herself in one of the chairs, and Avery left her. He wandered, as if aimlessly, to the reading table, turning over the magazines there; abandoning them, he gazed about as if bored; then, with a wholly casual manner, he came toward Eaton and took the seat beside him.

"Rotten weather, isn't it?" Avery observed somewhat ungraciously.

Eaton could not well avoid reply. "It's been getting worse," he commented, "ever since we left Seattle."

"We're running into it, apparently." Again Avery looked toward Eaton and waited.

"It'll be bad in the mountains, I suspect," Eaton said.

"Yes—lucky if we get through."

The conversation on Avery's part was patently forced; and it was equally forced on Eaton's; nevertheless it continued. Avery introduced the war and other subjects upon which men, thrown together for a time, are accustomed to exchange opinions. But Avery did not do it easily or naturally; he plainly was of the caste whose pose it is to repel, not seek, overtures toward a chance acquaintance. His lack of practice was perfectly obvious when at last he asked directly: "Beg pardon, but I don't think I know your name."

Eaton was obliged to give it.

"Mine's Avery," the other offered; "perhaps you heard it when we were getting our berths assigned."

And again the conversation, enjoyed by neither of them, went on. Finally the girl at the end of the car rose and passed them, as though leaving the car. Avery

looked up.

"Where are you going, Harry?"

"I think some one ought to be with Father."

"I'll go in just a minute."

She had halted almost in front of them. Avery, hesitating as though he did not know what he ought to do, finally arose; and as Eaton observed that Avery, having introduced himself, appeared now to consider it his duty to present Eaton to Harriet Dorne, Eaton also arose. Avery murmured the names. Harriet Dorne, resting her hand on the back of Avery's chair, joined in the conversation. As she replied easily and interestedly to a comment of Eaton's, Avery suddenly reminded her of her father. After a minute, when Avery—still ungracious and still irritated over something which Eaton could not guess—rather abruptly left them, she took Avery's seat; and Eaton dropped into his chair beside her.

Now, this whole proceeding—though within the convention which, forbidding a girl to make a man's acquaintance directly, says nothing against her making it through the medium of another man—had been so unnaturally done that Eaton understood that Harriet Dorne deliberately had arranged to make his acquaintance, and that Avery, angry and objecting, had been overruled.

She seemed to Eaton less alertly boyish now than she had looked an hour before when they had boarded the train. Her cheeks were smoothly rounded, her lips rather full, her lashes very long. He could not look up without looking directly at her, for her chair, which had not been moved since Avery left it, was at an angle with his own. A faint, sweet fragrance from her hair and clothing came to him and made him recollect how long it was—five years—since he had talked with, or even been near, such a girl as this; and the sudden tumult of his pulses which her nearness caused warned him to keep watch of what he said until he had learned why she had sought him out.

To avoid the appearance of studying her too openly, he turned slightly, so that his gaze went past her to the white turmoil outside the windows.

"It's wonderful," she said, "isn't it?"

"You mean the storm?" A twinkle of amusement came to Eaton's eyes. "It

would be more interesting if it allowed a little more to be seen. At present there is nothing visible but snow."

"Is that the only way it affects you?" She turned to him, apparently a trifle disappointed.

"I don't exactly understand."

"Why, it must affect every man most as it touches his own interests. An artist would think of it as a background for contrasts—a thing to sketch or paint; a writer as something to be written down in words."

Eaton understood. She could not more plainly have asked him what he was.

"And an engineer, I suppose," he said, easily, "would think of it only as an element to be included in his formulas—an *x*, or an *a*, or a *b*, to be put in somewhere and square-rooted or squared so that the roof-truss he was figuring should not buckle under its weight."

"Oh—so that is the way you were thinking of it?"

"You mean," Eaton challenged her directly, "am I an engineer?"

"Are you?"

"Oh, no; I was only talking in pure generalities, just as you were."

"Let us go on, then," she said gayly. "I see I can't conceal from you that I am doing you the honor to wonder what you are. A lawyer would think of it in the light of damage it might create and the subsequent possibilities of litigation." She made a little pause. "A business man would take it into account, as he has to take into account all things in nature or human; it would delay transportation, or harm or aid the winter wheat."

"Or stop competition somewhere," he observed, more interested.

The flash of satisfaction which came to her face and as quickly was checked and faded showed him she thought she was on the right track.

"Business," she said, still lightly, "will—how is it the newspapers put it?—

will marshal its cohorts; it will send out its generals in command of brigades of snowplows, its colonels in command of regiments of snow-shovelers and its spies to discover and to bring back word of the effect upon the crops."

"You talk," he said, "as if business were a war."

"Isn't it?—like war, but war in higher terms."

"In higher terms?" he questioned, attempting to make his tone like hers, but a sudden bitterness now was betrayed by it. "Or in lower?"

"Why, in higher," she declared, "demanding greater courage, greater devotion, greater determination, greater self-sacrifice."

"What makes you say that?"

"Soldiers themselves say it, Mr. Eaton, and all the observers in this horrible war say it when they say that they find almost no cowards and very few weaklings among all the millions of every sort of men at the front. They could not say the same of those identical millions under the normal conditions of everyday business life."

He remained silent, though she waited for him to reply.

"You know that is so, Mr. Eaton," she said. "One has only to look on the streets of any great city to find thousands of men who have not had the courage and determination to carry on their share of the ordinary duties of life. Recruiting officers can pick any man off the streets and make a good soldier of him, but no one could be so sure of finding a satisfactory employee in that way. Doesn't that show that daily life, the everyday business of earning a living and bearing one's share in the workaday world, demands greater qualities than war?"

Her face had flushed eagerly as she spoke; a darker, livid flush answered her words on his.

"But the opportunities for evil are greater, too," he asserted almost fiercely.

"What do you mean?"

"For deceit, for lies, for treachery, Miss Dorne! Violence is the evil of war,

and violence is the evil most easily punished, even if it does not bring its own punishment upon itself. But how many of those men you speak of on the streets have been deliberately, mercilessly, even savagely sacrificed to some business expediency, their future destroyed, their hope killed!" Some storm of passion, whose meaning she could not divine, was sweeping him.

"You mean," she asked after an instant's silence, "that you, Mr. Eaton, have been sacrificed in such a way?"

"I am still talking in generalities," he denied ineffectively.

He saw that she sensed the untruthfulness of these last words. Her smooth young forehead and her eyes were shadowy with thought. Eaton was uneasily silent. The train roared across some trestle, giving a sharp glimpse of gray, snow-swept water far below. Finally Harriet Dorne seemed to have made her decision.

"I think you should meet my father, Mr. Eaton," she said. "Would you like to?"

He did not reply at once. He knew that his delay was causing her to study him now with greater surprise.

"I would like to meet him, yes," he said, "but,"—he hesitated, tried to avoid answer without offending her, but already he had affronted her,—"but not now, Miss Dorne."

She stared at him, rebuffed and chilled.

"You mean—" The sentence, obviously, was one she felt it better not to finish. As though he recognized that now she must wish the conversation to end, he got up. She rose stiffly.

"I'll see you into your car, if you're returning there," he offered.

Neither spoke, as he went with her into the next car; and at the section where her father sat, Eaton bowed silently, nodded to Avery, who coldly returned his nod, and left her. Eaton went on into his own car and sat down, his thoughts in mad confusion.

How near he had come to talking to this girl about himself, even though, he

had felt from the first that that was what she was trying to make him do! Was he losing his common sense? Was the self-command on which he had so counted that he had dared to take this train deserting him? He felt that he must not see Harriet Dorne again alone. At first this was all he felt; but as he sat, pale and quiet, staring vacantly at the snow-flakes which struck and melted on the window beside him, his thoughts grew more clear. In Avery he had recognized, by that instinct which so strangely divines the personalities one meets, an enemy from the start; Dorne's attitude toward him, of course, was not yet defined; as for Harriet Dorne—he could not tell whether she was prepared to be his enemy or friend.

CHAPTER IV

TRUCE

The Eastern Express, mantled in a seething whirl of snow, but still maintaining very nearly its scheduled time and even regaining a few lost minutes from hour to hour as, now well past the middle of the State, it sped on across the flatter country in its approach to the mountains, proceeded monotonously through the afternoon. Eaton watched the chill of the snow battle against the warmth of the double windows on the windward side of the car, until finally it conquered and the windows became—as he knew the rest of the outside of the cars must have been long before—merely a wall of white. This coating, thickening steadily with the increasing severity of the storm as they approached the Rockies, dimmed the afternoon daylight within the car to dusk.

Presently all became black outside the windows, and the passengers from the rear cars filed forward to the dining car and then back to their places again. Eaton took care to avoid the Dorne party in the diner. Soon the porter began making up the berths to be occupied that night; but as yet no one was retiring. The train was to reach Spokane late in the evening; there would be a stop there for half an hour; and after the long day on the train, every one seemed to be waiting up for a walk about the station before going to bed. But as the train slowed, and with a sudden diminishing of the clatter of the fishplates under its

wheels and of the puffings of exhausted steam, slipped into the lighted trainsheds at the city, Eaton sat for some minutes in thought. Then he dragged his overcoat down from its hook, buttoned it tightly about his throat, pulled his traveling cap down on his head and left the car. All along the train, vestibule doors of the Pullmans had been opened, and the passengers were getting out, while a few others, snow-covered and with hand-luggage, came to board the train. Eaton, turning to survey the sleet-shrouded car he had left, found himself face to face with Miss Dorne, standing alone upon the station platform.

Her piquant, beautiful face was half hidden in the collar of the great fur coat she had worn on boarding the train, and her cheeks were ruddy with the bite of the crisp air.

"You see before you a castaway," she volunteered, smiling.

He felt it necessary to take the same tone. "A castaway?" he questioned. "Cast away by whom?"

"By Mr. Avery, if you must know, though your implication that anybody should have cast me away—anybody at all, Mr. Eaton—is unpleasant."

"There was no implication; it was simply inquiry."

"You should have put it, then, in some other form; you should have asked how I came to be in so surprising a position."

"'How,' in this part of the country, Miss Dorne, is not regarded as a question, but merely as a form of salutation," he bantered. "It was formerly employed by the Indian aborigines inhabiting these parts, who exchanged 'How's' when passing each other on the road. If I had said 'How,' you might simply have replied 'How,' and I should have been under the necessity of considering the incident closed."

She laughed. "You do not wish it to be closed."

"Not till I know more about it."

"Very well; you shall know more. Mr. Avery brought me out to take a walk. He remembered, after bringing me as far as this, that we had not asked my father whether he had any message to be sent from here or any commission to execute;

so he went back to find out. I have now waited so many minutes that I feel sure it is my father who has detained him. The imperfectly concealed meaning of what I am telling you is that I consider that Mr. Avery, by his delay, has forfeited his right. The further implication—for *I* do imply things, Mr. Eaton—is that you cannot very well avoid offering to take the post of duty he has abandoned."

"You mean walk with you?"

"I do."

He slipped his hand inside her arm, sustaining her slight, active body against the wind which blew strongly through the station and scattered over them snow-flakes blown from the roofs of the cars, as they walked forward along the train. Her manner had told him that she meant to ignore her resentment of the morning; but as, turning, they commenced to walk briskly up and down the platform, he found he was not wholly right in this.

"You must admit, Mr. Eaton, that I am treating you very well."

"In pardoning an offense where no offense was meant?"

"It is partly that—that I realized no offense was meant. Partly it is because I do not pass judgment on things I do not understand. I could imagine no possible reason for your very peculiar refusal."

"Not even that I might be perhaps the sort of person who ought not to be introduced into your party in quite that way?"

"That least of all. Persons of that sort do not admit themselves to be such; and if I have lived for twen—I shall not tell you just how many years—the sort of life I have been obliged to live almost since I was born, without learning to judge men in that respect, I must have failed to use my opportunities."

"Thank you," he returned quietly; then, as he recollected his instinctive prejudice against Avery: "However, I am not so sure."

She plainly waited for him to go on, but he pretended to be concerned wholly with guiding her along the platform.

"Mr. Eaton!"

"Yes."

"Do you know that you are a most peculiar man?"

"Exactly in what way, Miss Dorne?"

"In this: The ordinary man, when a woman shows any curiosity about himself, answers with a fullness and particularity and eagerness which seems to say, 'At last you have found a subject which interests me!'"

"Does he?"

"Is that the only reply you care to make?"

"I can think of none more adequate."

"Meaning that after my altogether too open display of curiosity regarding you, I can still do nothing better than guess, without any expectation that you, on your part, will deign to tell me whether I am right or wrong. Very well; my first guess is that you have not done much walking with young women on station platforms—certainly not much of late."

"I'll try to do better, if you'll tell me how you know that?"

"You do very well. I was not criticising you, and I don't have to tell why. Ask no questions; it is a clairvoyant diviner who is speaking."

"Divinity?"

"Diviner only. My second guess is that you have been abroad in far lands."

"My railroad ticket showed as much as that."

"Pardon me, if it seriously injures your self-esteem; but I was not sufficiently interested in you when you came aboard the train, to observe your ticket. What I know is divined from the exceedingly odd and reminiscent way in which you look at all things about you—at this train, this station, the people who pass."

"You find nothing reminiscent, I suppose, in the way I look at you?"

"You do yourself injustice. You do not look at me at all, so I cannot tell; but

there could hardly be any reminiscence extending beyond this morning, since you never saw me before then."

"No; this is all fresh experience."

"I hope it is not displeasing. My doubt concerning your evidently rather long absence abroad is as to whether you went away to get or to forget."

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand."

"Those are the two reasons for which young men go to Asia, are they not?—to get something or to forget something. At least, so I have been given to understand. Shall I go on?"

"Go on guessing, you mean? I don't seem able to prevent it."

"Then my third guess is this—and you know no one is ever allowed more than three guesses." She hesitated; when she went on, she had entirely dropped her tone of banter. "I guess, Mr. Eaton, that you have been—I think, are still—going through some terrible experience which has endured for a very long time—perhaps even for years—and has nearly made of you and perhaps even yet may make of you something far different and—and something far less pleasing than you—you must have been before. There! I have transcended all bounds, said everything I should not have said, and left unsaid all the conventional things which are all that our short acquaintance could have allowed. Forgive me—because I'm not sorry."

He made no answer. They walked as far as the rear of the train, turned and came back before she spoke again:

"What is it they are doing to the front of our train, Mr. Eaton?"

He looked. "They are putting a plow on the engine."

"Oh!"

"That seems to be only the ordinary push-plow, but if what I have been overhearing is correct, the railroad people are preparing to give you one of the minor exhibitions of that everyday courage of which you spoke this morning, Miss Dorne."

"In what particular way?"

"When we get across the Idaho line and into the mountains, you are to ride behind a double-header driving a rotary snow-plow."

"A double-header? You mean two locomotives?"

"Yes; the preparation is warrant that what is ahead of us in the way of travel will fully come up to anything you may have been led to expect." They stood a minute watching the trainmen; as they turned, his gaze went past her to the rear cars. "Also," he added, "Mr. Avery, with his usual gracious pleasure at my being in your company, is hailing you from the platform of your car."

She looked up at Eaton sharply, seemed about to speak, and then checked what was upon her tongue. "You are going into your own car?" She held out to him her small gloved hand. "Good-by, then—until we see one another again."

"Good night, Miss Dorne."

He took her hand and retaining it hardly the fraction of an instant, let it go. Was it her friendship she had been offering him? Men use badinage without respect to what their actual feelings may be; women—some memory from the past in which he had known such girls as this, seemed to recall—use it most frequently when their feelings, consciously or unconsciously, are drawing toward a man.

Eaton now went into the men's compartment of his car, where he sat smoking till after the train was under way again. The porter looked in upon him there to ask if he wished his berth made up now; Eaton nodded assent, and fifteen minutes later, dropping the cold end of his cigar and going out into the car, he found the berth ready for him. "D. S.'s" section, also made up but with the curtains folded back displaying the bedding within, was unoccupied; jerkings of the curtains, and voices and giggling in the two berths at the end of the car, showed that Amy and Constance were getting into bed; the Englishman was wide awake in plain determination not to go to bed until his accustomed Nottingham hour. Eaton, drawing his curtains together and buttoning them from the inside, undressed and went to bed. A half-hour later the passage of some one through the aisle and the sudden dimming of the crack of light which showed above the curtains told him that the lights in the car had been turned down. Eaton closed his eyes, but sleep was far from him.

Presently he began to feel the train beginning to labor with the increasing grade and the deepening snow. It was well across the State line and into Idaho; it was nearing the mountains, and the weather was getting colder and the storm more severe. Eaton lifted the curtain from the window beside him and leaned on one elbow to look out. The train was running through a bleak, white desolation; no light and no sign of habitation showed anywhere. Eaton lay staring out, and now the bleak world about him seemed to assume toward him a cruel and merciless aspect. The events of the day ran through his mind again with sinister suggestion. He had taken that train for a certain definite, dangerous purpose which required his remaining as obscure and as inconspicuous as possible; yet already he had been singled out for attention. So far, he was sure, he had received no more than that—attention, curiosity concerning him. He had not suffered recognition; but that might come at any moment. Could he risk longer waiting to act?

He dropped on his back upon the bed and lay with his hands clasped under his head, his eyes staring up at the roof of the car.

In the card-room of the observation car, playing and conversation still went on for a time; then it diminished as one by one the passengers went away to bed. Connery, looking into this car, found it empty and the porter cleaning up; he slowly passed on forward through the train, stopping momentarily in the rear Pullman opposite the berth of the passenger whom President Jarvis had commended to his care. His scrutiny of the car told him all was correct here; the even breathing within the berth assured him the passenger slept.

Connery went on through to the next car and paused again outside the berth occupied by Eaton. He had watched Eaton all day with results that still he was debating with himself; he had found in a newspaper the description of the man who had waited at Warden's, and he reread it, comparing it with Eaton. It perfectly confirmed Connery's first impression; but the more Connery had seen of Eaton, and the more he had thought over him during the day, the more the conductor had become satisfied that either Eaton was not the man described or, if he was, there was no harm to come from it. After all, was not all that could be said against Eaton—if he was the man—simply that he had not appeared to state why Warden was befriending him? Was it not possible that he was serving Warden in some way by not appearing? Certainly Mr. Dorne, who was the man most on the train to be considered, had satisfied himself that Eaton was fit for an acquaintance; Connery had seen what was almost a friendship, apparently, spring

up between Eaton and Dorne's daughter during the day.

The conductor went on, his shoulders brushing the buttoned curtains on both sides of the narrow aisle. Except for the presence of the passenger in the rear sleeper, this inspection was to the conductor the uttermost of the commonplace; in its monotonous familiarity he had never felt any strangeness in this abrupt and intimate bringing together of people who never had seen one another before, who after these few days of travel together, might probably never see one another again, but who now slept separated from one another and from the persons passing through the cars by no greater protection than these curtains designed only to shield them from the light and from each other's eyes. He felt no strangeness in this now. He merely assured himself by his scrutiny that within his train all was right. Outside—

Connery was not so sure of that; rather, he had been becoming more certain hour by hour all through the evening, that they were going to have great difficulty in getting the train through. Though he knew by President Jarvis' note that the officials of the road must be watching the progress of this especial train with particular interest, he had received no train-orders from the west for several hours. His inquiry at the last stop had told him the reason for this; the telegraph wires to the west had gone down. To the east, communication was still open, but how long it would remain so he could not guess. Here in the deep heart of the great mountains—they had passed the Idaho boundary-line into Montana—they were getting the full effect of the storm; their progress, increasingly slow, was broken by stops which were becoming more frequent and longer as they struggled on. As now they fought their way slower and slower up a grade, and barely topping it, descended the opposite slope at greater speed as the momentum of the train was added to the engine-power, Connery's mind went back to the second sleeper with its single passenger, and he spoke to the Pullman conductor, who nodded and went toward that car. The weather had prevented the expected increase of their number of passengers at Spokane; only a few had got aboard there; there were worse grades ahead, in climbing which every pound of weight would count; so Connery—in the absence of orders and with Jarvis' note in his pocket—had resolved to drop the second sleeper.

At Fracroft—the station where he was to exchange the ordinary plow which so far had sufficed, and couple on the "rotary" to fight the mountain drifts ahead—he swung himself down from the train, looked in at the telegraph office and then went forward to the two giant locomotives, on whose sweating, monstrous backs the snow, suddenly visible in the haze of their lights, melted as it fell. He waited on the station platform while the second sleeper was cut out and the train made up again. Then, as they started, he swung aboard and in the brightly lighted men's compartment of the first Pullman checked up his report-sheets with a stub of pencil. They had stopped again, he noticed; now they were climbing a grade, more easily because of the decrease of weight; now a trestle rumbled under the wheels, telling him just where they were. Next was the powerful, steady push against opposition—the rotary was cutting its way through a drift.

Again they stopped—once more went on. Connery, having put his papers into his pocket, dozed, awoke, dozed again. The snow was certainly heavy, and the storm had piled it up across the cuts in great drifts which kept the rotary struggling almost constantly now. The progress of the train halted again and again; several times it backed, charged forward again—only to stop, back and charge again and then go on. But this did not disturb Connery. Then something went wrong. All at once he found himself, by a trainman's instinctive and automatic action, upon his feet; for the shock had been so slight as barely to be felt, far too slight certainly to have awakened any of the sleeping passengers in their berths. He went to the door of the car, lifted the platform stop, threw open the door of the vestibule and hanging by one hand to the rail, swung himself out from the side of the car to look ahead. He saw the forward one of the two locomotives wrapped in clouds of steam, and men arm-deep in snow wallowing forward to the rotary still further to the front, and the sight confirmed fully his apprehension that this halt was more important and likely to last much longer than those that had gone before.

CHAPTER V

ARE YOU HILLWARD?

It is the wonder of the moment of first awakening that one—however tried or troubled he may be when complete recollection returns—may find, at first, rehearsal of only what is pleasant in his mind. Eaton, waking and stretching himself luxuriously in his berth in the reverie halfway between sleep and full consciousness, found himself supremely happy. His feelings, before recollection came to check them, reminded him only that he had been made an acquaintance, almost a friend, the day before, by a wonderful, inspiring, beautiful girl. Then suddenly, into his clearing memory crushed and crowded the reason for his being where he was. By an instinctive jerk of his shoulders, almost a shudder, he drew the sheet and blanket closer about him; the smile was gone from his lips; he lay still, staring upward at the berth above his head and listening to the noises in the car.

The bell in the washroom at the end of the car was ringing violently, and some one was reinforcing his ring with a stentorian call for "Porter! Porter!"

Eaton realized that it was very cold in his berth—also that the train, which was standing still, had been in that motionless condition for some time. He threw up the window curtain as he appreciated that and, looking out, found that he faced a great unbroken bank of glistening white snow as high as the top of the car at this point and rising even higher ahead. He listened, therefore, while the Englishman—for the voice calling to the porter was his—extracted all available information from the negro.

"Porter!" Standish called again.

"Yessuh!"

"Close my window and be quick about it!"

"It's closed, suh."

"Closed?"

"Yessuh; I shut it en-durin' the night."

"Closed!" the voice behind the curtains iterated skeptically; there was a pause during which, probably, there was limited exploration. "I say, then, how cold is it outside?"

"Ten below this morning, suh."

"What, what? Where are we?"

"Between Fracroft and Simons, suh."

"Yet?"

"Yessuh, yit!"

"Hasn't your silly train moved since four o'clock?"

"Moved? No, suh. Not mo'n a yahd or two nohow, suh, and I reckon we backed them up again."

"That foolish snow still?"

"Yessuh; and snow some more, suh."

"But haven't we the plow still ahead?"

"Oh, yessuh; the plow's ahaid. We still got it; but that's all, suh. It ain't doin' much; it's busted."

"Eh—what?"

"Yessuh—busted! There was right smart of a slide across the track, and the crew, I understands, diagnosed it jus' fo' a snowbank and done bucked right into it. But they was rock in this, suh; we's layin' right below a hill; and that rock jus' busted that rotary like a Belgium shell hit it. Yessuh—pieces of that rotary essentially scattered themselves in four directions besides backwards and fo'wards. We ain't done much travelin' since then."

"Ah! But the restaurant car's still attached?"

"De restaur—oh, yessuh. We carries the diner through—from the Coast to Chicago."

"H'm! Ten below! Porter, is that wash-compartment hot? And are they serving breakfast yet?"

"Yessuh; yessuh!"

The Briton, from behind his curtains, continued; but Eaton no longer paid attention.

"Snowed in and stopped since four!" The realization startled him with the necessity of taking it into account in his plans. He jerked himself up in his berth and began pulling his clothes down from the hooks; then, as abruptly, he stopped dressing and sat absorbed in thought. Finally he parted the curtains and looked out into the aisle.

The Englishman, having elicited all he desired, or could draw, from the porter, now bulged through his curtains and stood in the aisle, unabashed, in gaudy pajamas and slippers, while he methodically bundled his clothes under his arm; then, still garbed only in pajamas, he paraded majestically to the washroom. The curtains over the berths at the other end of the car also bulged and emitted the two dark-haired girls. They were completely kimono-ed over any temporary deficiency of attire and skipped to the drawing-room inhabited by their parents. The drawing-room door instantly opened at Amy's knock, admitted the girls and shut again. Section Seven gave to the aisle the reddish-haired D. S. He carried coat, collar, hairbrushes and shaving case and went to join the Briton in the men's washroom.

There was now no one else in the main part of the car; and no berths other than those already accounted for had been made up. Yet Eaton still delayed; his first impulse to get up and dress had been lost in the intensity of the thought in which he was engaged. He had let himself sink back against the pillows, while he stared, unseeingly, at the solid bank of snow beside the car, when the door at the further end of the coach opened and Conductor Connery entered, calling a name. "Mr. Hillward! Mr. Lawrence Hillward! Telegram for Mr. Hillward!"

Eaton started at the first call of the name; he sat up and faced about.

"Mr. Hillward! Telegram for Mr. Lawrence Hillward!"

The conductor was opposite Section Three; Eaton now waited tensely and delayed until the conductor was past; then putting his head out of his curtains and assuring himself that the car was otherwise empty as when he had seen it last, he hailed as the conductor was going through the door.

"What name? Who is that telegram for?"

"Mr. Lawrence Hillward."

"Oh, thank you; then that's mine." He put his hand out between the curtains to take the yellow envelope.

Connery held back. "I thought your name was Eaton."

"It is. Mr. Hillward—Lawrence Hillward—is an associate of mine who expected to make this trip with me but could not. So I should have telegrams or other communications addressed to him. Is there anything to sign?"

"No, sir—train delivery. It's not necessary."

Eaton drew his curtains close again and ripped the envelope open; but before reading the message, he observed with alarm that his pajama jacket had opened across the chest, and a small round scar, such as that left by a high-powered bullet penetrating, was exposed. He gasped almost audibly, realizing this, and clapped his hand to his chest and buttoned his jacket. The message—nine words without signature—lay before him:

Thicket knot youngster omniscient issue foliage lecture tragic instigation.

It was some code which Eaton recognized but could not decipher at once. It was of concern, but at that instant, less of concern than to know whether his jacket had been open and his chest exposed when he took the message. The conductor was still standing in the aisle.

"When did you get this?" Eaton asked, looking out.

"Just now."

"How could you get it here?" Eaton questioned, watching the conductor's face.

"We've had train instruments—the emergency telegraph—on the wires since four o'clock and just got talking with the stations east; wires are still down to the west. That message came through yesterday some time and was waiting for you at Simons; when we got them this morning, they sent it on."

"I see; thanks." Eaton, assured that if the conductor had seen anything, he suspected no significance in what he saw, closed his curtains and buttoned them carefully. The conductor moved on. Eaton took a small English-Chinese pocket-dictionary from his vest pocket and opened it under cover of the blanket; counting five words up from *thicket* he found *they*; five down from *knot* gave him *know*; six up from *youngster* was *you*; six down from *omniscient* was *one*; seven up from *issue* was *is*; and so continuing, he translated the nine words to:

"They know you. One is following. Leave train instantly."

Eaton, nervous and jerky, as he completed the first six words, laughed as he compiled the final three. "Leave train instantly!" The humor of that advice in his present situation, as he looked out the window at the solid bank of snow, appealed to him. He slapped the little dictionary shut and returned it to his pocket. A waiter from the dining car came back, announcing the first call for breakfast, and spurred him into action. Passengers from the Pullman at the rear passed Eaton's section for the diner. He glanced out at the first two or three; then he heard Harriet Dorne's voice in some quiet, conventional remark to the man who followed her. Eaton started at it; then he dressed swiftly and hurried into the now deserted washroom and then on to breakfast.

The dining car, all gleaming crystal and silver and white covers within, also was surrounded by snow. The space outside the windows seemed somewhat wider than that about the sleeping car. And a moment before Eaton went forward, the last cloud had cleared and the sun had come out bright. The train was still quite motionless; the great drifts of snow, even with the tops of the cars on either side, made perfectly plain how hopeless it would be to try to proceed without the plow; and the heavy white frost which had not yet cleared from some of the window-panes, told graphically of the cold without. But the dining car was warm and cheerful, and it gave assurance that, if the train was helpless to move, it at least offered luxuries in its idleness. As Eaton stepped inside the door, the car seemed all cheer and good spirits.

Fresh red carnations and ruddy roses were, as usual, in the cut-glass vases on

the white cloths; the waiters bore steaming pots of coffee and bowls of hot cereals to the different tables. These, as usual, were ten in number—five with places for four persons each, on one side of the aisle, and five, each with places for two persons, beside the windows on the other side of the car.

Harriet Dorne was sitting facing the door at the second of the larger tables; opposite her, and with his back to Eaton, sat Donald Avery. A third place was laid beside the girl, as though they expected Dorne to join them; but they had begun their fruit without waiting. The girl glanced up as Eaton halted in the doorway; her blue eyes brightened with a look part friendliness, part purpose. She smiled and nodded, and Avery turned about.

"Good morning, Mr. Eaton," the girl greeted.

"Good morning, Miss Dorne," Eaton replied collectedly. He nodded also to Avery, who, stiffly returning the nod, turned back again to Miss Dorne.

Amy and Constance, with their parents, occupied the third large table; the other three large tables were empty. "D. S." was alone at the furthest of the small tables; a traveling-salesman-looking person was washing down creamed Finnan haddock with coffee at the next; the passenger who had been alone in the second car was at the third; the Englishman, Standish, was beginning his iced grape-fruit at the table opposite Miss Dorne; and at the place nearest the door, an insignificant broad-shouldered and untidy young man, who had boarded the train at Spokane, had just spilled half a cup of coffee over the egg spots on his lapels as his unsteady and nicotine-stained fingers all but dropped the cup.

The dining car conductor, in accordance with the general determination to reserve the larger tables for parties traveling together, pulled back the chair opposite the untidy man; but Eaton, with a sharp sense of disgust, went past to the chair opposite the Englishman.

As he was about to seat himself there, the girl again looked up. "Oh, Mr. Eaton," she smiled, "wouldn't you like to sit with us? I don't think Father is coming to breakfast now; and if he does, of course there's still room."

She pulled back the chair beside her enticingly; and Eaton accepted it.

"Good morning, Mr. Avery," he said to Miss Dorne's companion formally as he sat down, and the man across the table murmured something perforce.

As Eaton ordered his breakfast, he appreciated for the first time that his coming had interrupted a conversation—or rather a sort of monologue of complaint on the part of Standish addressed impersonally to Avery.

"Extraordinarily exposed in these sleeping cars of yours, isn't one, wouldn't you say?" the Englishman appealed across the aisle.

"Exposed?" Avery repeated, more inclined to encourage the conversation.

"I say, is it quite the custom for a train servant—whenever he fancies he should—to reach across one, sleeping?"

"He means the porter closed his window during the night," Eaton explained to Avery.

"Quite so; and I knew nothing about it—nothing at all. Fancy! There was I in the bunk, and the beggar comes along, pulls my curtains aside, reaches across me—"

"It got very cold in the night," Avery offered.

"I know; but is that any reason for the beggar invading my bunk that way? He might have done anything to me! Any one in the car might have done anything to me! Any one in your bally corridor-train might have done anything. There was I, asleep—quite unconscious; people passing up and down the aisle just the other side of a foolish fall of curtain! How does any one know one of those people might not be an enemy of mine? Remarkable people, you Americans—inconsistent, I say. Lock your homes with most complicated fastenings—greatest lock-makers in the world—burglar alarms on windows; but when you travel, expose yourselves as one wouldn't dream of exposing oneself elsewhere. Amazing places, your Pullman coaches! Why, any one might do anything to any one! What's to stop him, what?"

Eaton, suddenly reminded of his telegram, put a hand into his pocket and fingered the torn scraps; he had meant to remove and destroy them, but had forgotten. He glanced at Harriet Dorne.

"What he says is quite true," she observed. She was smiling, however, as most of the other passengers were, at the Englishman's vehemence.

They engaged in conversation as they breakfasted—a conversation in which Avery took almost no part, though Miss Dorne tried openly to draw him in; then the sudden entrance of Connery, followed closely by a stout, brusque man who belonged to the rear Pullman, took Eaton's attention and hers.

Other passengers also looked up; and the nervous, untidy young man at the table near the door again slopped coffee over himself as the conductor gazed about.

"Which is him?" the man with Connery demanded loudly.

Connery checked him, but pointed at the same time to Eaton.

"That's him, is it?" the other man said. "Then go ahead."

Eaton observed that Avery, who had turned in his seat, was watching this diversion on the part of the conductor with interest. Connery stopped beside Eaton's seat.

"You took a telegram for Lawrence Hillward this morning," he asserted.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because it was mine, or meant for me, as I said at the time. My name is Eaton; but Mr. Hillward expected to make this trip with me."

The stout man with the conductor forced himself forward.

"That's pretty good, but not quite good enough!" he charged. "Conductor, get that telegram for me!"

Eaton got up, controlling himself under the insult of the other's manner.

"What business is it of yours?" he demanded.

"What business? Why, only that I'm Lawrence Hillward—that's all, my friend! What are you up to, anyway? Lawrence Hillward traveling with you! I never set eyes on you until I saw you on this train; and you take my telegram!"

The charge was made loudly and distinctly; every one in the dining car—Eaton could not see every one, but he knew it was so—had put down fork or cup or spoon and was staring at him. "What did you do it for? What did you want with it?" the stout man blared on. "Did you think I wasn't on the train? What?

"I was in the washroom," he continued, roaring for the benefit of the car, "when the conductor went by with it. I couldn't take the telegram then—so I waited for the conductor to come back. When I got dressed, I found him, and he said you'd claimed my message. Say, hand it over now! What were you up to? What did you do that for?"

Eaton felt he was paling as he faced the blustering smaller man. He realized that the passengers he could see—those at the smaller tables—already had judged his explanation and found him wanting; the others unquestionably had done the same. Avery was gazing up at him with a sort of contented triumph.

"The telegram was for me, Conductor," he repeated.

"Get that telegram, Conductor!" the stout man demanded again.

"I suppose," Connery suggested, "you have letters or a card or something, Mr. Eaton, to show your relationship to Lawrence Hillward."

"No; I have not."

The man asserting himself as Hillward grunted.

"Have you anything to show you are Lawrence Hillward?" Eaton demanded of him.

"Did you tell any one on the train that your name was Hillward before you wanted this telegram?"

It was Harriet Dorne's voice which interposed; and Eaton felt his pulse leap as she spoke for him.

"I never gave any other name than Lawrence Hillward," the other declared.

Connery gazed from one claimant to the other. "Will you give this gentleman the telegram?" he asked Eaton.

"I will not."

"Then I shall furnish him another copy; it was received here on the train by our express-clerk as the operator. I'll go forward and get him another copy."

"That's for you to decide," Eaton said; and as though the matter was closed for him, he resumed his seat. He was aware that, throughout the car, the passengers were watching him curiously; he would have foregone the receipt of the telegram rather than that attention should be attracted to him in this way. Avery was still gazing at him with that look of quiet satisfaction; Eaton had not dared, as yet, to look at Harriet Dorne. When, constraining himself to a manner of indifference, he finally looked her way, she began to chat with him as lightly as before. Whatever effect the incident just closed had had upon the others, it appeared to have had none at all upon her.

"Are you ready to go back to our car now, Harriet?" Avery inquired when she had finished her breakfast, though Eaton was not yet through.

"Surely there's no hurry about anything to-day," the girl returned. They waited until Eaton had finished.

"Shall we all go back to the observation car and see if there's a walk down the track or whether it's snowed over?" she said impartially to the two. They went through the Pullmans together.

The first Pullman contained four or five passengers; the next, in which Eaton had his berth, was still empty as they passed through. The porter had made up all the berths, and only luggage and newspapers and overcoats occupied the seats. The next Pullman also, at first glance, seemed to have been deserted in favor of the diner forward or of the club-car further back. The porter had made up all the berths there also, except one; but some one still was sleeping behind the curtains of Section Three, for a man's hand hung over the aisle. It was a gentleman's hand, with long, well-formed fingers, sensitive and at the same time strong. That was the berth of Harriet Dorne's father; Eaton gazed down at the hand as he approached the section, and then he looked up quickly to the girl. She had observed the hand, as also had Avery; but, plainly, neither of them noticed anything strange either in its posture or appearance. Their only care had been to avoid brushing against it on their way down the aisle so as not to disturb the man behind the curtain; but Eaton, as he saw the hand, started.

He was the last of the three to pass, and so the others did not notice his start; but so strong was the fascination of the hand in the aisle that he turned back and gazed at it before going on into the last car. Some eight or ten passengers—men and women—were lounging in the easy-chairs of the observation-room; a couple, ulstered and fur-capped, were standing on the platform gazing back from the train.

The sun was still shining, and the snow had stopped some hours before; but the wind which had brought the storm was still blowing, and evidently it had blown a blizzard after the train stopped at four that morning. The canyon through the snowdrifts, bored by the giant rotary plow the night before, was almost filled; drifts of snow eight or ten feet high and, in places, pointing still higher, came up to the rear of the train; the end of the platform itself was buried under three feet of snow; the men standing on the platform could barely look over the higher drifts.

"There's no way from the train in that direction now," Harriet Dorne lamented as she saw this.

"There was no way five minutes after we stopped," one of the men standing at the end of the car volunteered. "From Fracroft on—I was the only passenger in sleeper Number Two, and they'd told me to get up; they gave me a berth in another car and cut my sleeper out at Fracroft—we were bucking the drifts about four miles an hour; it seemed to fill in behind about as fast and as thick as we were cutting it out in front. It all drifted in behind as soon as we stopped, the conductor tells me."

The girl made polite acknowledgment and referred to her two companions.

"What shall we do with ourselves, then?"

"Cribbage, Harriet? You and I?" Avery invited.

CHAPTER VI

THE HAND IN THE AISLE

The man whose interest in the passenger in Section Three of the last sleeper was most definite and understandable and, therefore, most openly acute, was Conductor Connery. Connery had passed through the Pullmans several times during the morning—first in the murk of the dawn before the dimmed lamps in the cars had been extinguished; again later, when the passengers had been getting up; and a third time after all the passengers had left their berths except Dorne, and after nearly all the berths had been unmade and the bedding packed away behind the panels overhead. Each time he passed, Connery had seen the hand which hung out into the aisle from between the curtains; but the only definite thought that came to him was that Dorne was a sound sleeper.

Nearly all the passengers had now breakfasted. Connery, therefore, took a seat in the diner, breakfasted leisurely and after finishing, went forward to see what messages had been received as to the relieving snow-plows. Nothing definite yet had been learned; the snow ahead of them was fully as bad as this where they were stopped, and it would be many hours before help could get to them. Connery walked back through the train. Dorne by now must be up, and might wish to see the conductor. Unless Dorne stopped him, however, Connery did not intend to speak to Dorne. The conductor had learned in his many years of service that nothing is more displeasing to the sort of people for whom trains are held than officiousness.

As Connery entered the last sleeper, his gaze fell on the dial of pointers which, communicating with the pushbuttons in the different berths, tell the porter which section is calling him, and he saw that while all the other arrows were pointing upward, the arrow marked "3" was pointing down. Dorne was up, then—for this was the arrow denoting his berth—or at least was awake and had recently rung his bell.

Connery looked in upon the porter, who was cleaning up the washroom.

"Section Three's getting up?" he asked.

"No, Mistah Connery—not yet," the porter answered.

"What did he ring for?" Connery thought Dorne might have asked for him.

"He didn't ring. He ain't moved or stirred this morning."

"He must have rung." Connery looked to the dial, and the porter came out of the washroom and looked at it also.

"Fo' the lan's sake. I didn't hear no ring, Mistah Connery. It mus' have been when I was out on the platform."

"When was that?"

"Jus' now. There ain't been nobody but him in the car for fifteen minutes, and I done turn the pointers all up when the las' passenger went to the diner. It can't be longer than a few minutes, Mistah Connery."

"Answer it, then," Connery directed.

As the negro started to obey, Connery followed him into the open car. He could see over the negro's shoulder the hand sticking out into the aisle, and this time, at sight of it, Connery started violently. If Dorne had rung, he must have moved; a man who is awake does not let his hand hang out into the aisle. Yet the hand had not moved. Nothing was changed about it since Connery had seen it before. The long, sensitive fingers fell in precisely the same position as before, stiffly separated a little one from another; they had not changed their position at all.

"Wait!" Connery seized the porter by the arm. "I'll answer it myself."

He dismissed the negro and waited until he had gone. He looked about and assured himself that the car, except for himself and the man lying behind the curtains of Section Three, was empty. He slowed, as he approached the hand. He halted and stood a moment beside the berth, himself almost breathless as he listened for the sound of breathing within. He heard nothing, though he bent closer to the curtain. Yet he still hesitated, and retreating a little and walking briskly as though he were carelessly passing up the aisle, he brushed hard against the hand and looked back, exclaiming an apology for his carelessness.

The hand fell back heavily, inertly, and resumed its former position and hung as white and lifeless as before. No response to the apology came from behind the curtains; the man in the berth had not roused. Connery rushed back to the curtains and touched the hand with his fingers. It was cold! He seized the hand

and felt it all over; then, gasping, he parted the curtains and looked into the berth. He stared; his breath whistled out; his shoulders jerked, and he drew back, instinctively pressing his two clenched hands against his chest and the pocket which held President Jarvis' order.

The man in the berth was lying on his right side facing the aisle; the left side of his face was thus exposed; and it had been crushed in by a violent blow from some heavy weapon which, too blunt to cut the skin and bring blood, had fractured the cheekbone and bludgeoned the temple. The proof of murderous violence was so plain that the conductor, as he saw the face in the light, recoiled with starting eyes, white with horror.

He looked up and down the aisle to assure himself that no one had entered the car during his examination; then he carefully drew the curtains together again, and hurried to the forward end of the car where he had left the porter.

"Lock the rear door of the car," he commanded. "Then come back here."

He gave the negro the keys, and himself waited to prevent any one from entering the car at his end. Looking through the glass of the door, he saw the young man Eaton standing in the vestibule of the car next ahead. Connery hesitated; then he opened the door and beckoned Eaton to him.

"Will you go forward, please," he requested, "and see if there isn't a doctor —"

"You mean the man with red hair in my car?" Eaton inquired.

"That's the one."

Eaton started off without asking any questions. The porter, having locked the rear door of the car, returned and gave Connery back the keys. Connery still waited, until Eaton returned with the red-haired man, "D. S." He let them in and locked the door behind them.

"You are a doctor?" Connery questioned the red-haired man.

"I am a surgeon; yes."

"That's what's wanted. Doctor—"

"My name is Sinclair. I am Douglas Sinclair, of Chicago."

Connery nodded. "I have heard of you." He turned then to Eaton. "Do you know where the gentleman is who belongs to Mr. Dorne's party?—Avery, I believe his name is."

"He is in the observation car," Eaton answered.

"Will you go and get him? The car-door is locked. The porter will let you in and out. Something serious has happened here—to Mr. Dorne. Get Mr. Avery, if you can, without alarming Mr. Dorne's daughter."

Eaton nodded understanding and followed the porter, who, taking the keys again from the conductor, let him out at the rear door of the car and reclosed the door behind him. Eaton went on into the observation car. As he passed the club compartment of this car, he sensed an atmosphere of disquiet which gave him first the feeling that some of these people must know already that there was something wrong farther forward; but this was explained when he heard some one say that the door of the car ahead was locked. Another asked Eaton how he had got through; he put the questioner off and went on into the observation-room. No suspicion of anything having occurred had as yet penetrated there.

"How long you've been!" Harriet Dorne remarked as he came near. "And how is it about the roof promenade?"

"Why, all right, I guess, Miss Dorne—after a little." Controlling himself to an appearance of casualness, he turned then to Avery: "By the way, can I see you a moment?"

Without alarming Harriet Dorne, he got Avery away and out of the car. A few passengers now were collected upon the platforms between this car and the next, who questioned and complained as Eaton, pushing by them with Avery, was admitted by the negro, who refused the others admittance.

"Is it something wrong with Mr. Dorne?" Donald Avery demanded as Eaton drew back to let Avery precede him into the open part of the car.

"So the conductor says."

Avery hurried forward toward the berth where Connery was standing beside

the surgeon. Connery turned toward him.

"I sent for you, sir, because you are the companion of the man who had this berth."

Avery pushed past him, and leaped forward as he looked past the surgeon. "What has happened to Mr. Dorne?"

"You see him as we found him, sir." Connery stared down nervously beside him.

Avery leaned inside the curtains and recoiled. "He's dead!"

"The doctor hasn't made his examination yet; but, there seems no doubt he's dead." Connery was very pale but controlled.

"He's been murdered!"

"It looks so, Mr. Avery. Yes; if he's dead, he's certainly been murdered," Connery agreed. "This is Doctor Douglas Sinclair, a Chicago surgeon. I called him just now to make an examination; but since Mr. Dorne seems to have been dead for some time, I waited for you before moving the body. You can tell,"—Connery avoided mention of President Jarvis' name,—"tell any one who asks you, Mr. Avery, that you saw him just as he was found."

He looked down again at the form in the berth, and Avery's gaze followed his; then, abruptly, it turned away. Avery stood clinging to the curtain, his eyes darting from one to another of the three men.

"As he was found? When?" he demanded. "Who found him that way? When? How?"

"I found him so," Connery answered.

Avery said nothing more.

"Will you start your examination now, Dr. Sinclair," Connery suggested. "No —I'll ask you to wait a minute."

Noises were coming to them from the platforms at both ends of the car, and

the doors were being tried and pounded on, as passengers attempted to pass through. Connery went to the rear, where the negro had been posted; then, repassing them, he went to the other end of the car. The noises ceased. "The Pullman conductor is forward, and the brakeman is back there now," he said, as he turned to them. "You will not be interrupted, Dr. Sinclair."

"What explanation did you give them?" Eaton asked.

"Why?" Connery returned.

"I was thinking of Miss Dorne."

"I told them nothing which could disturb her." Connery, as he spoke, pulled back the curtains, entirely exposing the berth.

The surgeon, before examining the man in the berth more closely, lifted the shades from the windows. Everything about the berth was in place, undisturbed; except for the mark of the savage blow on the side of the man's head, there was no evidence of anything unusual. The man's clothes were carefully and neatly hung on the hooks or in the little hammock; his glasses were in their case beside the pillow; his watch and purse were under the pillow; the window at his feet was still raised a crack to let in fresh air while he slept. Save for the marks upon the head, the man might yet be sleeping. It was self-evident that, whatever had been the motives of the attack, robbery was not one; whoever had struck had done no more than reach in and deliver his murderous blow; then he had gone on.

Connery shut the window.

As the surgeon carefully and deliberately pulled back the bedclothing and exposed the body of the man clothed in pajamas, the others watched him. Sinclair made first an examination of the head; completing this, he unbuttoned the pajamas upon the chest, loosened them at the waist and prepared to make his examination of the body.

"How long has he been dead?" Connery asked.

"He is not dead yet."

"You mean he is still dying?"

"I did not say so."

"You mean he is alive, then?"

"Life is still present," Sinclair answered guardedly. "Whether he will live or ever regain consciousness is another question."

"One you can't answer?"

"The blow, as you can see,"—Sinclair touched the man's face with his deft finger-tips,—"fell mostly on the cheek and temple. The cheekbone is fractured. He is in a complete state of coma; and there may be some fracture of the skull. Of course, there is some concussion of the brain."

Any inference to be drawn from this as to the seriousness of the injuries was plainly beyond Connery. "How long ago was he struck?" he asked.

"Some hours."

"You can't tell more than that?"

"Longer ago than five hours, certainly."

"Since four o'clock, then, rather than before?"

"Since midnight, certainly; and longer ago than five o'clock this morning."

"Could he have revived half an hour ago—say within the hour—enough to have pressed the button and rung the bell from his berth?"

Sinclair straightened and gazed at the conductor curiously. "No, certainly not," he replied. "That is completely impossible. Why did you ask?"

Connery avoided answer.

The doctor glanced down quickly at the form of the man in the berth; then again he confronted Connery. "Why did you ask that?" he persisted. "Did the bell from this berth ring recently?"

Connery shook his head, not in negation of the question, but in refusal to answer then. But Avery pushed forward. "What is that? What's that?" he

demanded.

"Will you go on with your examination, Doctor?" Connery urged.

"You said the bell from this berth rang recently!" Avery accused Connery.

"I did not say that; he asked it," the conductor evaded.

"But is it true?"

"The pointer in the washroom, indicating a signal from this berth, was turned down a minute ago," Connery had to reply. "A few moments earlier, all pointers had been set in the position indicating no call."

"What!" Avery cried. "What was that?"

Connery repeated the statement.

"That was before you found the body?"

"That was why I went to the berth—yes," Connery replied; "that was before I found the body."

"Then you mean you did not find the body," Avery charged. "Some one, passing through this car a minute or so before you, must have found him!"

Connery attended without replying.

"And evidently that man dared not report it and could not wait longer to know whether Mr.—Mr. Dorne, was really dead; so he rang the bell!"

"Ought we keep Dr. Sinclair any longer from the examination, sir?" Connery now seized Avery's arm in appeal. "The first thing for us to know is whether Mr. Dorne is dying. Isn't—"

Connery checked himself; he had won his appeal. Eaton, standing quietly watchful, observed that Avery's eagerness to accuse now had been replaced by another interest which the conductor's words had recalled. Whether the man in the berth was to live or die—evidently that was momentously to affect Donald Avery one way or the other.

"Of course, by all means proceed with your examination, Doctor," Avery directed.

As Sinclair again bent over the body, Avery leaned over also; Eaton gazed down, and Connery—a little paler than before and with lips tightly set.

CHAPTER VII

"ISN'T THIS BASIL SANTOINE?"

The surgeon, having finished loosening the pajamas, pulled open and carefully removed the jacket part, leaving the upper part of the body of the man in the berth exposed. Conductor Connery turned to Avery.

"You have no objection to my taking a list of the articles in the berth?"

Avery seemed to oppose; then, apparently, he recognized that this was an obvious part of the conductor's duty. "None at all," he replied.

Connery gathered up the clothing, the glasses, the watch and purse, and laid them on the seat across the aisle. Sitting down, then, opposite them, he examined them and, taking everything from the pockets of the clothes, he began to catalogue them before Avery. In the coat he found only the card-case, which he noted without examining its contents, and in the trousers a pocket-knife and bunch of keys. He counted over the gold and banknotes in the purse and entered the amount upon his list.

"You know about what he had with him?" he asked.

"Very closely. That is correct. Nothing is missing," Avery answered.

The conductor opened the watch. "The crystal is missing."

Avery nodded. "Yes; it always—that is, it was missing yesterday."

Connery looked up at him, as though slightly puzzled by the manner of the reply; then, having finished his list, he rejoined the surgeon.

Sinclair was still bending over the naked torso. With Eaton's help, he had turned the body upon its back in order to look at its right side, which before had been hidden. It had been a strong, healthy body; Sinclair guessed its age at fifty. As a boy, the man might have been an athlete,—a college track-runner or oarsman,—and he had kept himself in condition through middle age. There was no mark or bruise upon the body, except that on the right side and just below the ribs there now showed a scar about an inch and a half long and of peculiar crescent shape. It was evidently a surgical scar and had completely healed.

Sinclair scrutinized this carefully and then looked up to Avery. "He was operated on recently?"

"About two years ago."

"For what?"

"It was some operation on the gall-bladder."

"Performed by Kuno Garrt?"

Avery hesitated. "I believe so."

He watched Sinclair more closely as he continued his examination; the surgeon had glanced quickly at the face on the pillow and seemed about to question Avery again; but instead he laid the pajama jacket over the body and drew up the sheet and blanket. Connery touched the surgeon on the arm. "What must be done, Doctor? And where and when do you want to do it?"

Sinclair, however, it appeared, had not yet finished his examination. "Will you pull down the window-curtains?" he directed.

As Connery, reaching across the body, complied, the surgeon took a matchbox from his pocket, and glancing about at the three others as though to select from them the one most likely to be an efficient aid, he handed it to Eaton. "Will you help me, please?"

"What is it you want done?"

"Strike a light and hold it as I direct—then draw it away slowly."

He lifted the partly closed eyelid from one of the eyes of the unconscious man and nodded to Eaton: "Hold the light in front of the pupil."

Eaton obeyed, drawing the light slowly away as Sinclair had directed, and the surgeon dropped the eyelid and exposed the other pupil.

"What's that for?" Avery now asked.

"I was trying to determine the seriousness of the injury to the brain. I was looking to see whether light could cause the pupil to contract."

"Could it?" Connery asked.

"No; there was no reaction."

Avery started to speak, checked himself—and then he said: "There could be no reaction, I believe, Dr. Sinclair."

"What do you mean?"

"His optic nerve is destroyed."

"Ah! He was blind?"

"Yes, he was blind," Avery admitted.

"Blind!" Sinclair ejaculated. "Blind, and operated upon within two years by Kuno Garrt!" Kuno Garrt operated only upon the all-rich and -powerful or upon the completely powerless and poor; the unconscious man in the berth could belong only to the first class of Garrt's clientele. The surgeon's gaze again searched the features in the berth; then it shifted to the men gathered about him in the aisle.

"Who did you say this was?" he demanded of Avery.

"I said his name was Nathan Dorne," Avery evaded.

"No, no!" Sinclair jerked out impatiently. "Isn't this—" He hesitated, and finished in a voice suddenly lowered: "Isn't this Basil Santoine?"

Avery, if he still wished to do so, found it impossible to deny.

"Basil Santoine!" Connery breathed.

To the conductor alone, among the four men standing by the berth, the name seemed to have come with the sharp shock of a surprise; with it had come an added sense of responsibility and horror over what had happened to the passenger who had been confided to his care, which made him whiten as he once more repeated the name to himself and stared down at the man in the berth.

Conductor Connery knew Basil Santoine only in the way that Santoine was known to great numbers of other people—that is, by name but not by sight. There was, however, a reason why the circumstances of Santoine's life had remained in the conductor's mind while he forgot or had not heeded the same sort of facts in regard to men who traveled much more often on trans-continental trains. Thus Connery, staring whitely at the form in the berth, recalled for instance Santoine's age; Santoine was fifty-one.

Basil Santoine at twenty-two had been graduated from Harvard, though blind. His connections,—the family was of well-to-do Southern stock,—his possession of enough money for his own support, made it possible for him to live idly if he wished; but Santoine had not chosen to make his blindness an excuse for doing this. He had disregarded too the thought of foreign travel as being useless for a man who had no eyes; and he had at once settled himself to his chosen profession, which was law. He had not found it easy to get a start in this; lawyers had shown no willingness to take into their offices a blind boy to whom the surroundings were unfamiliar and to whom everything must be read; and he had succeeded only after great effort in getting a place with a small and unimportant firm. Within a short time, well within two years, men had begun to recognize that in this struggling law-firm there was a powerful, clear, compelling mind. Santoine, a youth living in darkness, unable to see the men with whom he talked or the documents and books which must be read to him, was beginning to put the stamp of his personality on the firm's affairs. A year later, his name appeared with others of the firm; at twenty-eight, his was the leading name. He had begun to specialize long before that time, in corporation law; he married shortly after this. At thirty, the firm name represented to those who knew its particulars only one personality, the personality of Santoine; and at thirty-five—though his indifference to money was proverbial—he was many times a millionaire. But except among the small and powerful group of men who had learned to consult

him, Santoine himself at that time was utterly unknown.

There are many such men in all countries,—more, perhaps, in America than anywhere else,—and in their anonymity they are like minds without physical personality; they advise only, and so they remain out of public view, behind the scenes. Now and then one receives publicity and reward by being sent to the Senate by the powers that move behind the screen, or being called to the President's cabinet. More often, the public knows little of them until they die and men are astonished by the size of the fortunes or of the seemingly baseless reputations which they leave. So Santoine—consulted continually by men concerned in great projects, immersed day and night in vast affairs, capable of living completely as he wished—had been, at the age of forty-six, great but not famous, powerful but not publicly known. At that time an event had occurred which had forced the blind man out unwillingly from his obscurity.

This event had been the murder of the great Western financier Matthew Latron. There had been nothing in this affair which had in any way shadowed dishonor upon Santoine. So much as in his role of a mind without personality Santoine ever fought, he had fought against Latron; but his fight had been not against the man but against methods. There had come then a time of uncertainty and unrest; public consciousness was in the process of awakening to the knowledge that strange things, approaching close to the likeness of what men call crime, had been being done under the unassuming name of business. Government investigation threatened many men, Latron among others; no precedent had yet been set for what this might mean; no one could foresee the end. Scandal—financial scandal—breathed more strongly against Latron than perhaps against any of the other Western men. He had been among their biggest; he had his enemies, of whom impersonally Santoine might have been counted one, and he had his friends, both in high places; he was a world figure. Then, all of a sudden, the man had been struck down—killed, because of some private quarrel, men whispered, by an obscure and till then unheard-of man.

The trembling wires and cables, which should have carried to the waiting world the expected news of Latron's conviction, carried instead the news of Latron's death; and disorder followed. The first public concern had been, of course, for the stocks and bonds of the great Latron properties; and Latron's bigness had seemed only further evidenced by the stanchness with which the Latron banks, the Latron railroads and mines and public utilities stood firm even against the shock of their builder's death. Assured of this, public interest had

shifted to the trial, conviction and sentence of Latron's murderer; and it was during this trial that Santoine's name had become more publicly known. Not that the blind man was suspected of any knowledge—much less of any complicity—in the crime; the murder had been because of a purely private matter; but in the eager questioning into Latron's circumstances and surroundings previous to the crime, Santoine was summoned into court as a witness.

The drama of Santoine's examination had been of the sort the public—and therefore the newspapers—love. The blind man, led into the court, sitting sightless in the witness chair, revealing himself by his spoken, and even more by his withheld, replies as one of the unknown guiders of the destiny of the Continent and as counselor to the most powerful,—himself till then hardly heard of but plainly one of the nation's "uncrowned rulers,"—had caught the public sense. The fate of the murderer, the crime, even Latron himself, lost temporarily their interest in the public curiosity over the personality of Santoine. So, ever since, Santoine had been a man marked out; his goings and comings, beside what they might actually reveal of disagreements or settlements among the great, were the object of unfounded and often disturbing guesses and speculations; and particularly at this time when the circumstances of Warden's death had proclaimed dissensions among the powerful which they had hastened to deny, it was natural that Santoine's comings and goings should be as inconspicuous as possible.

It had been reported for some days that Santoine had come to Seattle directly after Warden's death; but when this was admitted, his associates had always been careful to add that Santoine, having been a close personal friend of Gabriel Warden, had come purely in a personal capacity, and the impression was given that Santoine had returned quietly some days before. The mere prolonging of his stay in the West was more than suggestive that affairs among the powerful were truly in such state as Warden had proclaimed; this attack upon Santoine, so similar to that which had slain Warden, and delivered within eleven days of Warden's death, must be of the gravest significance.

Connery stood overwhelmed for the moment with this fuller recognition of the seriousness of the disaster which had come upon this man entrusted to his charge; then he turned to the surgeon.

"Can you do anything for him here, Doctor?" he asked.

The surgeon glanced down the car. "That stateroom—is it occupied?"

"It's occupied by his daughter."

"We'll take him in there, then. Is the berth made?"

The conductor went to the rear of the car and brought the porter who had been stationed there, with the brakeman. He set the negro to making up the berth; and when it was finished, the four men lifted the inert figure of Basil Santoine, carried it into the drawing-room and laid it on its back upon the bed.

"I have my instruments," Sinclair said. "I'll get them; but before I decide to do anything, I ought to see his daughter. Since she is here, her consent is necessary before any operation on him."

The surgeon spoke to Avery. Eaton saw by Avery's start of recollection that Harriet Dorne's—or Harriet Santoine's—friend could not have been thinking of her at all during the recent moments. The chances of life or death of Basil Santoine evidently so greatly and directly affected Donald Avery that he had been absorbed in them to the point of forgetting all other interests than his own. Eaton's own thought had gone often to her. Had Connery in his directions said anything to the trainmen guarding the door or to the passengers on the platforms, that had frightened her with suspicions of what had happened here? When the first sense of something wrong spread back to the observation car, what word had reached her? Did she connect it with her father? Was she—the one most closely concerned—among those who had been on the rear platform seeking admittance? Was she standing there in the aisle of the next car waiting for confirmation of her dread? Or had no word reached her, and must the news of the attack upon her father come to her with all the shock of suddenness?

Eaton had been about to leave the car, where he now was plainly of no use, but these doubts checked him.

"Miss Santoine is in the observation car," Avery said. "I'll get her."

The tone was in some way false—Eaton could not tell exactly how. Avery started down the aisle.

"One moment, please, Mr. Avery!" said the conductor. "I'll ask you not to tell Miss Santoine before any other passengers that there has been an attack upon her

father. Wait until you get her inside the door of this car."

"You yourself said nothing, then, that can have made her suspect it?" Eaton asked.

Connery shook his head; the conductor, in doubt and anxiety over exactly what action the situation called for,—unable, too, to communicate any hint of it to his superiors to the West because of the wires being down,—clearly had resolved to keep the attack upon Santoine secret for the time. "I said nothing definite even to the trainmen," he replied; "and I want you gentlemen to promise me before you leave this car that you will say nothing until I give you leave."

His eyes shifted from the face of one to another, until he had assured himself that all agreed. As Avery left the car, Eaton found a seat in one of the end sections near the drawing-room. Sinclair and the conductor had returned to Santoine. The porter was unmaking the berth in the next section which Santoine had occupied, having been told to do so by Connery; the negro bundled together the linen and carried it to the cupboard at the further end of the car; he folded the blankets and put them in the upper berth; he took out the partitions and laid them on top of the blankets. Eaton stared out the window at the bank of snow. He did not know whether to ask to leave the car, or whether he ought to remain; and he would have gone except for recollection of Harriet Santoine. He had heard the rear door of the car open and close some moments before, so he knew that she must be in the car and that, in the passage at that end, Avery must be telling her about her father. Then the curtain at the end of the car was pushed further aside, and Harriet Santoine came in.

She was very pale, but quite controlled, as Eaton knew she would be. She looked at Eaton, but did not speak as she passed; she went directly to the door of the drawing-room, opened it and went in, followed by Avery. The door closed, and for a moment Eaton could hear voices inside the room—Harriet Santoine's, Sinclair's, Connery's. The conductor then came to the door of the drawing-room and sent the porter for water and clean linen; Eaton heard the rip of linen being torn, and the car became filled with the smell of antiseptics.

Donald Avery came out of the drawing-room and dropped into the seat across from Eaton. He seemed deeply thoughtful—so deeply, indeed, as to be almost unaware of Eaton's presence. And Eaton, observing him, again had the sense that Avery's absorption was completely in consequences to himself of what was

going on behind the door—in how Basil Santoine's death or continued existence would affect the fortunes of Donald Avery.

"Is he going to operate?" Eaton asked.

"Operate? Yes; he's doing it," Avery replied shortly.

"And Miss Santoine?"

"She's helping—handing instruments and so on."

Avery could not have replied, as he did, if the strain this period must impose upon Harriet Santoine had been much in his mind. Eaton turned from him and asked nothing more. A long time passed—how long, Eaton could not have told; he noted only that during it the shadows on the snowbank outside the window appreciably changed their position. Once during this time, the door of the drawing-room was briefly opened, while Connery handed something out to the porter, and the smell of the antiseptics grew suddenly stronger; and Eaton could see behind Connery the surgeon, coatless and with shirt-sleeves rolled up, bending over the figure on the bed. Finally the door opened again, and Harriet Santoine came out, paler than before, and now not quite so steady.

Eaton rose as she approached them; and Avery leaped up, all concern and sympathy for her immediately she appeared. He met her in the aisle and took her hand.

"Was it successful, dear?" Avery asked.

She shut her eyes before she answered, and stood holding to the back of a seat; then she opened her eyes, saw Eaton and recognized him and sat down in the seat where Avery had been sitting.

"Dr. Sinclair says we will know in four or five days," she replied to Avery; she turned then directly to Eaton. "He thought there probably was a clot under the skull, and he operated to find it and relieve it. There was one, and we have done all we can; now we may only wait. Dr. Sinclair has appointed himself nurse; he says I can help him, but not just yet. I thought you would like to know."

"Thank you; I did want to know," Eaton acknowledged. He moved away from

them, and sat down in one of the seats further down the car. Connery came out from the drawing-room, went first to one end of the car, then to the other; and returning with the Pullman conductor, began to oversee the transfer of the baggage of all other passengers than the Santoine party to vacant sections in the forward sleepers. People began to pass through the aisle; evidently the car doors had been unlocked. Eaton got up and left the car, finding at the door a porter from one of the other cars stationed to warn people not to linger or speak or make other noises in going through the car where Santoine was.

As the door was closing behind Eaton, a sound came to his ears from the car he just had left—a young girl suddenly crying in abandon. Harriet Santoine, he understood, must have broken down for the moment, after the strain of the operation; and Eaton halted as though to turn back, feeling the blood drive suddenly upon his heart. Then, recollecting that he had no right to go to her, he went on.

CHAPTER VIII

SUSPICION FASTENS ON EATON

As he entered his own car, Eaton halted; that part of the train had taken on its usual look and manner, or as near so, it seemed, as the stoppage in the snow left possible. Knowing what he did, Eaton stared at first with astonishment; and the irrational thought came to him that the people before him were acting. Then he realized that they were almost as usual because they did not know what had happened; the fact that Basil Santoine had been attacked—or that he was on the train—still had been carefully kept secret by the spreading of some other explanation of the trouble in the car behind. So now, in their section, Amy and Constance were reading and knitting; their parents had immersed themselves in double solitaire; the Englishman looked out the window at the snow with no different expression than that with which he would have surveyed a landscape they might have been passing. Sinclair's section, of course, remained empty; and a porter came and transferred the surgeon's handbag and overcoat to the car behind in which he was caring for Santoine.

Eaton found his car better filled than it had been before, for the people shifted from the car behind had been scattered through the train. He felt a hand on his arm as he started to go to his seat, and turned and faced Connery.

"If you must say anything, say it was appendicitis," the conductor warned when he had brought Eaton back to the vestibule. "Mr. Dorne—if a name is given, it is that—was suddenly seized with a recurrence of an attack of appendicitis from which he had been suffering. An immediate operation was required to save him; that was what Dr. Sinclair did."

Eaton reaffirmed his agreement to give no information. He learned by the conversation of the passengers that Connery's version of what had happened had been easily received; some one, they said, had been taken suddenly and seriously ill upon the train. Their speculation, after some argument, had pitched on the right person; it was the tall, distinguished-looking man in the last car who wore glasses. At noon, food was carried into the Santoine car.

Keeping himself to his section, Eaton watched the car and outside the window for signs of what investigation Connery and Avery were making. What already was known had made it perfectly clear that whoever had attacked Santoine must still be upon the train; for no one could have escaped through the snow. No one could now escape. Avery and Connery and whoever else was making investigation with them evidently were not letting any one know that an investigation was being made. A number of times Eaton saw Connery and the Pullman conductor pass through the aisles. Eaton went to lunch; on his way back from the diner, he saw the conductors with papers in their hands questioning a passenger. They evidently were starting systematically through the cars, examining each person; they were making the plea of necessity of a report to the railroad offices of names and addresses of all held up by the stoppage of the train. As Eaton halted at his section, the two conductors finished with the man from the rear who had been installed in Section One, and they crossed to the Englishman opposite. Eaton heard them explain the need of making a report and heard the Englishman's answer, with his name, his address and particulars as to who he was, where he was coming from and whither he was going.

Eaton started on toward the rear of the train.

"A moment, sir!" Connery called.

Eaton halted. The conductors confronted him.

"Your name, sir?" Connery asked.

"Philip D. Eaton."

Connery wrote down the answer. "Your address?"

"I—have no address."

"You mean you don't want to give it?"

"No, I have none. I was going to a hotel in Chicago—which one I hadn't decided yet."

"Where are you coming from?"

"From Asia."

"That's hardly an address, Mr. Eaton!"

"I can give you no address abroad. I had no fixed address there. I was traveling most of the time. You could not reach me or place me by means of any city or hotel there. I arrived in Seattle by the Asiatic steamer and took this train."

"Ah! you came on the *Tamba Maru*."

Connery made note of this, as he had made note of all the other questions and answers. Then he said something to the Pullman conductor, who replied in the same low tone; what they said was not audible to Eaton.

"You can tell us at least where your family is, Mr. Eaton," Connery suggested.

"I have no family."

"Friends, then?"

"I—I have no friends."

"What?"

"I say that I can refer you to no friends."

"Nowhere?"

"Nowhere."

Connery pondered for several moments. "The Mr. Hillward—Lawrence Hillward, to whom the telegram was addressed which you claimed this morning, your associate who was to have taken this train with you—will you give me his address?"

"I thought you had decided the telegram was not meant for me."

"I am asking you a question, Mr. Eaton—not making explanations. It isn't impossible there should be two Lawrence Hillwards."

"I don't know Hillward's address."

"Give me the address, then, of the man who sent the telegram."

"I am unable to do that, either."

Connery spoke again to the Pullman conductor, and they conversed inaudibly for a minute. "That is all, then," Connery said finally.

He signed his name to the sheet on which he had written Eaton's answers, and handed it to the Pullman conductor, who also signed it and returned it to him; then they went on to the passenger now occupying Section Four, without making any further comment.

Eaton abandoned his idea of going to the rear of the train; he sat down, picked up his magazine and tried to read; but after an instant, he leaned forward and looked at himself in the little mirror between the windows. It reassured him to find that he looked entirely normal; he had been afraid that during the questioning he might have turned pale, and his paleness—taken in connection with his inability to answer the questions—might have seriously directed the suspicions of the conductors toward him. The others in the car, who might have overheard his refusal to reply to the questions, would be regarding him only curiously, since they did not know the real reasons for the examination. But the conductors—what did they think?

Already, Eaton reflected, before the finding of the senseless form of Basil Santoine, there had occurred the disagreeable incident of the telegram to attract unfavorable attention to him. On the other hand, might not the questioning of him have been purely formal? Connery certainly had treated him, at the time of the discovery of Santoine, as one not of the class to be suspected of being the assailant of Santoine. Avery, to be sure, had been uglier, more excited and hostile; but Harriet Santoine again had treated him trustfully and frankly as one with whom thought of connection with the attack upon her father was impossible. Eaton told himself that there should be no danger to himself from this inquiry, directed against no one, but including comprehensively every one on the train.

As Eaton pretended to read, he could hear behind him the low voices of the conductors, which grew fainter and fainter as they moved further away, section by section, down the car. Finally, when the conductors had left the car, he put his magazine away and went into the men's compartment to smoke and calm his nerves. His return to America had passed the bounds of recklessness; and what a situation he would now be in if his actions brought even serious suspicions against him! He finished his first cigar and was debating whether to light another, when he heard voices outside the car, and opening the window and looking out, he saw Connery and the brakeman struggling through the snow and making, apparently, some search. They had come from the front of the train and had passed under his window only an instant before, scrutinizing the snowbank beside the car carefully and looking under the car—the brakeman even had crawled under it; now they went on. Eaton closed the window and lighted his second cigar. Presently Connery passed the door of the compartment carrying something loosely wrapped in a newspaper in his hands. Eaton finished his cigar and went back to his seat in the car.

As he glanced at the seat where he had left the magazine and his locked traveling-bag, he saw that the bag was no longer there. It stood now between the two seats on the floor, and picking it up and looking at it, he found it unfastened and with marks about the lock which told plainly that it had been forced.

His quick glance around at the other passengers, which showed him that his discovery of this had not been noticed, showed also that they had not seen the bag opened. They would have been watching him if they had; clearly the bag had been carried out of the car during his absence, and later had been brought back. He set it on the floor between his knees and checked over its contents.

Nothing had been taken, so far as he could tell; for the bag had contained only clothing, the Chinese dictionary and the box of cigars, and these all apparently were still there. He had laid out the things on the seat across from him while checking them up, and now he began to put them back in the bag. Suddenly he noticed that one of his socks was missing; what had been eleven pairs was now only ten pairs and one odd sock.

The disappearance of a single sock was so strange, so bizarre, so perplexing that—unless it was accidental—he could not account for it at all. No one opens a man's bag and steals one sock, and he was quite sure there had been eleven complete pairs there earlier in the day. Certainly then, it had been accidental: the bag had been opened, its contents taken out and examined, and in putting them back, one sock had been dropped unnoticed. The absence of the sock, then, meant no more than that the contents of the bag had been thoroughly investigated. By whom? By the man against whom the telegram directed to Lawrence Hillward had warned Eaton?

Ever since his receipt of the telegram, Eaton—as he passed through the train in going to and from the diner or for other reasons—had been trying covertly to determine which, if any one, among the passengers was the "one" who, the telegram had warned him, was "following" him. For at first he had interpreted it to mean that one of "them" whom he had to fear must be on the train. Later he had felt certain that this could not be the case, for otherwise any one of "them" who knew him would have spoken by this time. He had watched particularly for a time the man who had claimed the telegram and given the name of Hillward; but the only conclusion he had been able to reach was that the man's name might be Hillward, and that coincidence—strange as such a thing seemed—might have put aboard the train a person by this name. Now his suspicions that one of "them" must be aboard the train returned.

The bag certainly had not been carried out the forward door of the car, or he would have seen it from the compartment at that end of the car where he had sat smoking. As he tried to recall who had passed the door of the compartment, he remembered no one except trainmen. The bag, therefore, had been carried out the rear door, and the man who had opened it, if a passenger, must still be in the rear part of the train.

Eaton, refilling his cigar-case to give his action a look of casualness, got up and went toward the rear of the train. A porter was still posted at the door of the Santoine car, who warned him to be quiet in passing through. The car, he found, was entirely empty; the door to the drawing-room where Santoine lay was closed. Two berths near the farther end of the car had been made up, no doubt for the surgeon and Harriet Santoine to rest there during the intervals of their watching; but the curtains of these berths were folded back, showing both of them to be empty, though one apparently had been occupied. Was Harriet

Santoine with her father?

He went on into the observation-car. The card-room was filled with players, and he stood an instant at the door looking them over, but "Hillward" was not among them, and he saw no one whom he felt could possibly be one of "them." In the observation-room, the case was the same; a few men and women passengers here were reading or talking. Glancing on past them through the glass door at the end of the car, he saw Harriet Santoine standing alone on the observation platform. The girl did not see him; her back was toward the car. As he went out onto the platform and the sound of the closing door came to her, she turned to meet him.

She looked white and tired, and faint gray shadows underneath her eyes showed where dark circles were beginning to form.

"I am supposed to be resting," she explained quietly, accepting him as one who had the right to ask.

"Have you been watching all day?"

"With Dr. Sinclair, yes. Dr. Sinclair is going to take half the night watch, and I am going to take the other half. That is why I am supposed to be lying down now to get ready for it; but I could not sleep."

"How is your father?"

"Just the same; there may be no change, Dr. Sinclair says, for days. It seems all so sudden and so—terrible, Mr. Eaton. You can hardly appreciate how we feel about it without knowing Father. He was so good, so strong, so brave, so independent! And at the same time so—so dependent upon those around him, because of his blindness! He started out so handicapped, and he has accomplished so much, and—and it is so unjust that there should have been such an attack upon him."

Eaton, leaning against the rail beside her and glancing at her, saw that her lashes were wet, and his eyes dropped as they caught hers.

"They have been investigating the attack?"

"Yes; Donald—Mr. Avery, you know—and the conductor have been working

on it all day."

"What have they learned?"

"Not much, I think; at least not much that they have told me. They have been questioning the porter."

"The porter?"

"Oh, I don't mean that they think the porter had anything to do with it; but the bell rang, you know."

"The bell?"

"The bell from Father's berth. I thought you knew. It rang some time before Father was found—some few minutes before; the porter did not hear it, but the pointer was turned down. They have tested it, and it cannot be jarred down or turned in any way except by means of the bell."

Eaton looked away from her, then back again rather strangely.

"I would not attach too much importance to the bell," he said.

"Father could not have rung it; Dr. Sinclair says that is impossible. So its being rung shows that some one was at the berth, some one must have seen Father lying there and—and rung the bell, but did not tell any one about Father. That could hardly have been an innocent person, Mr. Eaton."

"Or a guilty one, Miss Santoine, or he would not have rung the bell at all."

"I don't know—I don't understand all it might mean. I have tried not to think about anything but Father."

"Is that all they have learned?"

"No; they have found the weapon."

"The weapon with which your father was struck?"

"Yes; the man who did it seems not to have realized that the train was stopped—or at least that it would be stopped for so long—and he threw it off the train,

thinking, I suppose, we should be miles away from there by morning. But the train didn't move, and the snow didn't cover it up, and it was found lying against the snowbank this afternoon. It corresponds, Dr. Sinclair says, with Father's injuries."

"What was it?"

"It seems to have been a bar of metal—of steel, they said, I think, Mr. Eaton—wrapped in a man's black sock."

"A sock!" Eaton's voice sounded strange to himself; he felt that the blood had left his cheeks, leaving him pale, and that the girl must notice it. "A man's sock!"

Then he saw that she had not noticed, for she had not been looking at him.

"It could be carried in that way through the sleepers, you know, without attracting attention," she observed.

Eaton had controlled himself. "A sock!" he said again, reflectively.

He felt suddenly a rough tap upon his shoulder, and turning, he saw that Donald Avery had come out upon the platform and was standing beside him; and behind Avery, he saw Conductor Connery. There was no one else on the platform.

"Will you tell me, Mr. Eaton—or whatever else your name may be—what it is that you have been asking Miss Santoine?" Avery demanded harshly.

Eaton felt his blood surge at the tone. Harriet Santoine had turned, and sensing the strangeness of Avery's manner, she whitened. "What is it, Don?" she cried. "What is the matter? Is something wrong with Father?"

"No, dear; no! Harry, what has this man been saying to you?"

"Mr. Eaton?" Her gaze went wonderingly from Avery to Eaton and back again. "Why—why, Don! He has only been asking me what we had found out about the attack on Father!"

"And you told him?" Avery swung toward Eaton. "You dog!" he mouthed. "Harriet, he asked you that because he needed to know—he had to know! He had

to know how much we had found out, how near we were getting to him! Harry, this is the man that did it!"

Eaton's fists clenched; but suddenly, recollecting, he checked himself. Harriet, not yet comprehending, stood staring at the two; then Eaton saw the blood rush to her face and dye forehead and cheek and neck as she understood.

"Not here, Mr. Avery; not here!" Conductor Connery had stepped forward, glancing back into the car to assure himself the disturbance on the platform had not attracted the attention of the passengers in the observation-room. He put his hand on Eaton's arm. "Come with me, sir," he commanded.

Eaton thought anxiously for a moment. He looked to Harriet Santoine as though about to say something to her, but he did not speak; instead, he quietly followed the conductor. As they passed through the observation-car into the car ahead, he heard the footsteps of Harriet Santoine and Avery close behind them.

CHAPTER IX

QUESTIONS

Connery pulled aside the curtain of the washroom at the end of the Santoine car—the end furthest from the drawing-room where Santoine lay.

"Step in here, sir," he directed. "Sit down, if you want. We're far enough from the drawing-room not to disturb Mr. Santoine."

Eaton, seating himself in the corner of the leather seat built against two walls of the room, and looking up, saw that Avery had come into the room with them. The girl followed. With her entrance into the room came to him—not any sound from her or anything which he could describe to himself as either audible or visual—but a strange sensation which exhausted his breath and stopped his pulse for a beat. To be accused—even to be suspected—of the crime against Santoine was to have attention brought to him which—with his unsatisfactory account of himself—threatened ugly complications. Yet, at this moment of realization, that

did not fill his mind. Whether his long dwelling close to death had numbed him to his own danger, however much more immediate it had become, he could not know; probably he had prepared himself so thoroughly, had inured himself so to expect arrest and imminent destruction, that now his finding himself confronted with accusers in itself failed to stir new sensation; but till this day, he had never imagined or been able to prepare himself for accusation before one like Harriet Santoine; so, for a moment, thought solely of himself was a subcurrent. Of his conscious feelings, the terror that she would be brought to believe with the others that he had struck the blow against her father was the most poignant.

Harriet Santoine was not looking at him; but as she stood by the door, she was gazing intently at Avery; and she spoke first:

"I don't believe it, Don!"

Eaton felt the warm blood flooding his face and his heart throb with gratitude toward her.

"You don't believe it because you don't understand yet, dear," Avery declared. "We are going to make you believe it by proving to you it is true."

Avery pulled forward one of the leather chairs for her to seat herself and set another for himself facing Eaton. Eaton, gazing across steadily at Avery, was chilled and terrified as he now fully realized for the first time the element which Avery's presence added. What the relations were between Harriet Santoine and Avery he did not know, but clearly they were very close; and it was equally clear that Avery had noticed and disliked the growing friendship between her and Eaton. Eaton sensed now with a certainty that left no doubt in his own mind that as he himself had realized only a moment before that his strongest feeling was the desire to clear himself before Harriet Santoine, so Avery now was realizing that—since some one on the train had certainly made the attack on Santoine—he hoped he could prove before her that that person was Eaton.

"Why did you ring the bell in Mr. Santoine's berth?" Avery directed the attack upon him suddenly.

"To call help," Eaton answered.

Question and answer, Eaton realized, had made some effect upon Harriet Santoine, as he did not doubt Avery intended they should; yet he could not look

toward her to learn exactly what this effect was but kept his eyes on Avery.

"You had known, then, that he needed help?"

"I knew it—saw it then, of course."

"When?"

"When I found him."

"'Found' him?"

"Yes."

"When was that?"

"When I went forward to look for the conductor to ask him about taking a walk on the roof of the cars."

"You found him then—that way, the way he was?"

"That way? Yes."

"How?"

"How?" Eaton iterated.

"Yes; how, Mr. Eaton, or Hillward, or whatever your name is? How did you find him? The curtains were open, perhaps; you saw him as you went by, eh?"

Eaton shook his head. "No; the curtains weren't open; they were closed."

"Then why did you look in?"

"I saw his hand in the aisle."

"Go on."

"When I came back it didn't look right to me; its position had not been changed at all, and it hadn't looked right to me before. So I stopped and touched it, and I found that it was cold."

"Then you looked into the berth?"

"Yes."

"And having looked in and seen Mr. Santoine injured and lying as he was, you did not call any one, you did not bring help—you merely leaned across him and pushed the bell and went on quickly out of the car before any one could see you?"

"Yes; but I waited on the platform of the next car to see that help did come; and the conductor passed me, and I knew that he and the porter must find Mr. Santoine as they did."

"Do you expect us to believe that very peculiar action of yours was the act of an innocent man?"

"If I had been guilty of the attack on Mr. Santoine, I'd not have stopped or looked into the berth at all."

"If you are innocent, you had, of course, some reason for acting as you did. Will you explain what it was?"

"No—I cannot explain."

With a look almost of triumph Avery turned to Harriet Santoine, and Eaton felt his flesh grow warm with gratitude again as he saw her meet Avery's look with no appearance of being convinced.

"Mr. Eaton spoke to me about that," she said quietly.

"You mean he told you he was the one who rang the bell?"

"No; he told me we must not attach too much importance to the ringing of the bell in inquiring into the attack on Father."

Avery smiled grimly. "He did, did he? Don't you see that that only shows more surely that he did not want the ringing of the bell investigated because it would lead us to himself? He did not happen to tell you, did he, that the kind and size of socks he wears and carries in his traveling-bag are very nearly the same as the black sock in which the bar was wrapped with which your father was

struck?"

"It was you, then, who took the sock from my bag?" Eaton demanded.

"It was the conductor, and I can assure you, Mr. Eaton-Hillward, that we are preserving it very carefully along with the one which was found in the snow."

"But the socks were not exactly the same, were they?" Harriet Santoine asked.

Avery made a vexed gesture, and turned to Connery. "Tell her the rest of it," he directed.

Connery, who had remained standing back of the two chairs, moved slightly forward. His responsibility in connection with the crime that had been carried out on his train had weighed heavily on the conductor; he was worn and nervous.

"Where shall I begin?" he asked of Avery; he was looking not at the girl but at Eaton.

"At the beginning," Avery directed.

"Mr. Eaton, when you came to this train, the gateman at Seattle called my attention to you," Connery began. "I didn't attach enough importance, I see now, to what he said; I ought to have watched you closer and from the first. Old Sammy has recognized men with criminal records time and time again. He's got seven rewards out of it."

Eaton felt his pulses close with a shock. "He recognized me?" he asked quietly.

"No, he didn't; he couldn't place you," Connery granted. "He couldn't tell whether you were somebody that was 'wanted' or some one well known—some one famous, maybe; but I ought to have kept my eye on you because of that, from the very start. Now this morning you claim a telegram meant for another man—a man named Hillward, on this train, who seems to be all right—that is, by his answers and his account of himself he seems to be exactly what he claims to be."

"Did he read the telegram to you?" Eaton asked. "It was in code. If it was

meant for him, he ought to be able to read it."

"No, he didn't. Will you?"

Eaton halted while he recalled the exact wording of the message. "No."

Connery also paused.

"Is this all you have against me?" Eaton asked.

"No; it's not. Mr. Avery's already told you the next thing, and you've admitted it. But we'd already been able by questioning the porter of this car and the ones in front and back of it to narrow down the time of the ringing of Mr. Santoine's bell not to quarter-hours but to minutes; and to find out that during those few minutes you were the only one who passed through the car. So there's no use of my going into that." Connery paused and looked to Avery and the girl. "You'll wait a minute, Mr. Avery; and you, Miss Santoine. I won't be long."

He left the washroom, and the sound of the closing of a door which came to Eaton a half-minute later told that he had gone out the front end of the car.

As the three sat waiting in the washroom, no one spoke. Eaton, looking past Avery, gazed out the window at the bank of snow. Eaton understood fully that the manner in which the evidence against him was being presented to him was not with any expectation that he could defend himself; Avery and Connery were obviously too certain of their conclusion for that; rather, as it was being given thus under Avery's direction, it was for the effect upon Harriet Santoine and to convince her fully. But Eaton had understood this from the first. It was for this reason he had not attempted to deny having rung Santoine's bell, realizing that if he denied it and it afterwards was proved, he would appear in a worse light than by his inability to account for or assign a reason for his act. And he had proved right in this; for the girl had not been convinced. So now he comprehended that something far more convincing and more important was to come; but what that could be, he could not guess.

As he glanced at her, he saw her sitting with hands clasped in her lap, pale, and merely waiting. Avery, as though impatient, had got up and gone to the door, where he could look out into the passage. From time to time people had passed through the car, but no one had stopped at the washroom door or looked in; the voices in the washroom had not been raised, and even if what was going on there

could have attracted momentary attention, the instructions to pass quickly through the car would have prevented any one from stopping to gratify his curiosity. Eaton's heart-beat quickened as, listening, he heard the car door open and close again and footsteps, coming to them along the aisle, which he recognized as those of Conductor Connery and some one else with him.

Avery returned to his seat, as the conductor appeared in the door of the washroom followed by the Englishman from Eaton's car, Henry Standish. Connery carried the sheet on which he had written the questions he had asked Eaton, and Eaton's answers.

"What name were you using, Mr. Eaton, when you came from Asia to the United States?" the conductor demanded.

Eaton reflected. "My own," he said. "Philip D. Eaton."

Connery brought the paper nearer to the light of the window, running his finger down it till he found the note he wanted. "When I asked this afternoon where you came from in Asia, Mr. Eaton, you answered me something like this: You said you could give me no address abroad; you had been traveling most of the time; you could not be placed by inquiring at any city or hotel; you came to Seattle by the Asiatic steamer and took this train. That was your reply, was it not?"

"Yes," Eaton answered.

"The 'Asiatic steamer'—the *Tamba Maru* that was, Mr. Eaton."

Eaton looked up quickly and was about to speak; but from Connery his gaze shifted swiftly to the Englishman, and checking himself, he said nothing.

"Mr. Standish,"—Connery faced the Englishman,—"you came from Yokohama to Seattle on the *Tamba Maru*, didn't you?"

"I did, yes."

"Do you remember this Mr. Eaton among the passengers?"

"No."

"Do you know he was not among the passengers?"

"Yes, I do."

"How do you know?"

The Englishman took a folded paper from his pocket, opened it and handed it to the conductor. Connery, taking it, held it out to Eaton.

"Here, Mr. Eaton," he said, "is the printed passenger-list of the people aboard the *Tamba Maru* prepared after leaving Yokohama for distribution among the passengers. It's unquestionably correct. Will you point out your name on it?"

Eaton made no move to take the paper; and after holding it long enough to give him full opportunity, Connery handed it back to the Englishman.

"That's all, Mr. Standish," he said.

Eaton sat silent as the Englishman, after staring curiously around at them with his bulging, interested eyes, left the washroom.

"Now, Mr. Eaton," Connery said, as the sound of Standish's steps became inaudible, "either you were not on the *Tamba Maru* or you were on it under some other name than Eaton. Which was it?"

"I never said I was on the *Tamba Maru*," Eaton returned steadily. "I said I came from Asia by steamer. You yourself supplied the name *Tamba Maru*."

"In case of questioning like that, Mr. Eaton, it makes no difference whether you said it or I supplied it in your hearing. If you didn't correct me, it was because you wanted me to get a wrong impression about you. You can take notice that the only definite fact about you put down on this paper has proved to be incorrect. You weren't on the *Tamba Maru*, were you?"

"No, I was not."

"Why didn't you say so while Mr. Standish was here?"

"I didn't know how far you had taken him into your confidence in this matter."

"You did come from Asia, though, as your railroad ticket seemed to show?"

"Yes."

"From where?"

Eaton did not answer.

"From Yokohama?"

"The last port we stopped at before sailing for Seattle was Yokohama—yes."

Connery reflected. "You had been in Seattle, then, at least five days; for the last steamer you could have come on docked five days before the *Tamba Maru*."

"You assume that; I do not tell you so."

"I assume it because it must be so. You'd been in Seattle—or at least you had been in America—for not less than five days. In fact, Mr. Eaton, you had been on this side of the water for as many as eleven days, had you not?"

"Eleven days?" Eaton repeated.

"Yes; for it was just eleven days before this train left Seattle that you came to the house of Mr. Gabriel Warden and waited there for him till he was brought home dead!"

Eaton, sitting forward a little, looked up at the conductor; his glance caught Avery's an instant; he gazed then to Harriet Santoine. At the charge, she had started; but Avery had not. The identification, therefore, was Connery's, or had been agreed upon by Connery and Avery between them; suggestion of it had not come from the Santoines. And Connery had made the charge without being certain of it; he was watching the effect, Eaton now realized, to see if what he had accused was correct.

"What do you mean by that?" Eaton returned.

"What I said. You came to see Gabriel Warden in Seattle eleven days ago," Connery reasserted. "You are the man who waited in his house that night and whom every one has been looking for since!"

"Well?" inquired Eaton.

"Isn't that so?" Connery demanded. "Or do you want to deny that too and have it proved on you later?"

Again for a moment Eaton sat silent. "No," he decided, "I do not deny that."

"Then you are the man who was at Warden's the night he was murdered?"

"Yes," said Eaton, "I was there that evening. I was the one who came there by appointment and waited till after Mr. Warden was brought home dead."

"So you admit that?" Connery gloated; but he could not keep from Eaton a sense that, by Eaton's admission of the fact, Connery had been disappointed. Avery too plainly had expected Eaton to deny it; the identification of Eaton with the man who had waited at Warden's was less a triumph to Avery, now that it was confessed. Indeed, Eaton's heart leaped with quick gratitude as he now met Harriet Santoine's eyes and as he heard her turning it into a fact in his favor.

"All you have brought against Mr. Eaton is that he has been indefinite in his replies to your questions or has refused answers; isn't that all, Don?" she said. "So if Mr. Eaton is the one who had the appointment with Mr. Warden that night, does not that explain his silence?"

"Explain it?" Avery demanded. "How?"

"We have Mr. Warden's word that Mr. Eaton came that night because he was in trouble—he had been outrageously wronged, Don. He was in danger. Because of that danger, undoubtedly, he has not made himself known since. May not that be the only reason he has avoided answering your questions now?"

"No!" Avery jerked out shortly.

Eaton's heart, from pulsating fast with Harriet Santoine's attempt at his defense, now constricted with a sudden increase of his terror and anxiety.

"All right, Mr. Eaton!" Connery now returned to his charge. "You are that man. So besides whatever else that means, you'd been in Seattle eleven days and yet you were the last person to get aboard this train, which left a full hour after its usual starting time. Who were you waiting to see get on the train before you

yourself took it?"

Eaton wet his lips. To what was Connery working up? The probability, now rapidly becoming certainty, that in addition to the recognition of him as the man who had waited at Warden's—which fact any one at any time might have charged—Connery knew something else which the conductor could not have been expected to know—this dismayed Eaton the more by its indefiniteness. And he saw, as his gaze shifted to Avery, that Avery knew this thing also. All that had gone before had been only preliminary, then; they had been leading up step by step to the circumstance which had finally condemned him in their eyes and was to condemn him in the eyes of Harriet Santoine.

She, he saw, had also sensed the feeling that something else more definite and conclusive was coming. She had paled after the flush in which she had spoken in Eaton's defense, and her hands in her lap were clenched so tightly that the knuckles showed only as spots of white.

Eaton controlled himself to keep his voice steady.

"What do you mean by that question?" he asked.

"I mean that—however innocent or guilty may be the chance of your being at Mr. Warden's the night he was killed—you'll have a hard time proving that you did not wait and watch and take this train because Basil Santoine had taken it; and that you were not following him. Do you deny it?"

Eaton was silent.

"You asked the Pullman conductor for a Section Three after hearing him assign Mr. Santoine to Section Three in this car. Do you deny that you did this so as not to be put in the same car with him?"

Eaton, in his uncertainty, still said nothing. Connery, bringing the paper in his hand nearer to the window again, glanced down once more at the statement Eaton had made. "I asked you who you knew in Chicago," he said, "and you answered 'No one.' That was your reply, was it not?"

"Yes."

"You still make the same statement?"

"Yes."

"You know no one in Chicago?"

"No one," Eaton repeated.

"And certainly no one there knows you well enough to follow your movements in relation to Mr. Santoine. That's a necessary assumption from the fact that you know no one at all there."

The conductor pulled a telegram from his pocket and handed it to Avery, who, evidently having already seen it, passed it on to Harriet Santoine. She took it, staring at it mechanically and vacantly; then suddenly she shivered, and the yellow paper which she had read slipped from her hand and fluttered to the floor. Connery stooped and picked it up and handed it toward Eaton.

"This is yours," he said.

Eaton had sensed already what the nature of the message must be, though as the conductor held it out to him he could read only his name at the top of the sheet and did not know yet what the actual wording was below. Acceptance of it must mean arrest, indictment for the crime against Basil Santoine; and that, whether or not he later was acquitted, must destroy him; but denial of the message now would be hopeless.

"It is yours, isn't it?" Connery urged.

"Yes; it's mine," Eaton admitted; and to make his acceptance definite, he took the paper from Connery. As he looked dully down at it, he read:

He is on your train under the name of Dorne.

The message was not signed.

Connery touched him on the shoulder. "Come with me, Mr. Eaton."

Eaton got up slowly and mechanically and followed the conductor. At the door he halted and looked back; Harriet Santoine was not looking; her face was covered with her hands; Eaton hesitated; then he went on. Connery threw open the door of the compartment next to the washroom and corresponding to the drawing-room at the other end of the car, but smaller.

"You'll do well enough in here." He looked over Eaton deliberately. "Judging from your manner, I suppose there's not much use expecting you to answer anything more about yourself—either in relation to the Warden murder or this?"

"No," said Eaton, "there is not."

"You prefer to make us find out anything more?"

Eaton made no answer.

"All right," Connery concluded. "But if you change your mind for the better, or if you want anything bad enough to send for me, ring for the porter and he'll get me."

He closed the door upon Eaton and locked it. As Eaton stood staring at the floor, he could hear through the metal partition of the washroom the nervous, almost hysterical weeping of an overstrained girl. The thing was done; in so far as the authorities on the train were concerned, it was known that he was the man who had had the appointment with Gabriel Warden and had disappeared; and in so far as the train officials could act, he was accused and confined for the attack upon Basil Santoine. But besides being overwhelmed with the horror of this position, the manner in which he had been accused had roused him to helpless anger, to rage at his accusers which still increased as he heard the sounds on the other side of the partition where Avery was now trying to silence Harriet Santoine and lead her away.

Why had Avery gone at his accusation of him in that way? Connery had had the telegram in his pocket from the start of the questioning in the washroom; Avery had seen and read it; they could have condemned him with whomever they wished, merely by showing it. Why, then, had Avery chosen to drag this girl —strained and upset already by the attack upon her father and with long hours of nursing ahead of her before expert help could be got—step by step through their accusation of him? Eaton saw that—whatever Harriet Santoine's casual interest in himself might be—this showed at least that Avery's relation to her was not so

completely accepted by her and so definite as appeared on the surface, since Avery thought it necessary to convince her rather than merely tell her. And what sent the blood hot and throbbing into Eaton's temples was the cruelty of Avery's action.

So Avery was that kind of a man! The kind that, when an end is to be attained, is ready to ignore as though unimportant the human side of things. Concurrently with these thoughts—as always with all his thoughts—was running the memory of his own experience—that experience of which Eaton had not spoken and of which he had avoided speaking at any cost; and as he questioned now whether Avery might be one of those men who to gain an end they deem necessary are ready to disregard humanity,—to inflict suffering, wrong, injustice, —he realized that he was beginning to hate Avery for himself, for what he was, aside from the accusation he brought.

No sounds came to him now from the washroom—the girl must have controlled herself; footsteps passing the door of his compartment told him then that the two had gone out into the open car.

CHAPTER X

THE BLIND MAN'S EYES

Half an hour later, Connery unlocked the door of Eaton's compartment, entered and closed the door behind him. He had brought in Eaton's traveling bag and put it down.

"You understand," said the conductor, "that when a train is stalled like this it is considered as if under way. So I have local police power, and I haven't exceeded my rights in putting you under arrest."

"I don't recall that I have questioned your right," Eaton answered shortly.

"I thought you might question it now. I'm going to search you. Are you going to make trouble or needn't I send for help?"

"I'll help you." Eaton took off his coat and vest and handed them over. The conductor put them on a seat while he felt over his prisoner for weapons or other concealed objects. Eaton handed him a pocket-knife, and the key to his traveling-bag—he had no other keys—from his trousers pockets. The conductor discovered nothing else. He found a pencil—but no papers or memorandum book—a plain gold watch, unengraved, and a bill-fold containing seven hundred dollars in United States bank-notes in the vest. Connery wrote out a receipt for the money and handed it to his prisoner. He returned the other articles. In the coat, the conductor found a handkerchief and in another pocket the torn scraps of the telegram delivered to Eaton in his berth.

"That's the one we had the fuss over in the dining car," Eaton volunteered, as the conductor began fitting the scraps together.

"You forgot to completely destroy it, eh?"

"What was the use?" Eaton took up the other's point of view. "You had a copy anyway."

"You might have wanted to get rid of it since the discovery of the murder."

"Murder?"

"I guess it's the same thing." The conductor dropped the scraps into an envelope and put it in his pocket. He examined the coat for a tailor's name.

"That coat was copied by a Chinaman in Amoy from the coat I had before. Before the new one was made, I took out the name of the other tailor so it wouldn't be copied too," Eaton remarked in explanation of the lack of any mark. Connery handed back the coat, went out and locked the door behind him.

Eaton opened his traveling bag and checked over the contents. He could tell that everything in it had been again carefully examined, but nothing more had been taken except the small Chinese-English dictionary; that was now gone. There had been nothing in the bag to betray any other identity than the one he had given. Eaton put the bag away and went back to his seat by the window.

The clear, bright day was drawing toward its dusk: there had been no movement or attempt to move the train all day. About six o'clock, as people began passing forward to the diner, Connery appeared again with a waiter from

the dining car bearing a tray with dinner.

"This is 'on' the Department of Justice, Conductor?" Eaton tried to ask lightly.

"The check is a dollar twenty. If you want this, I'll charge it against your money which I have."

"Make it a dollar, forty-five then," Eaton directed. "Remember the waiter."

The black boy grinned and spread the table.

"How is Mr.—" Eaton began.

"Dorne?" Connery put in sharply.

"Thanks," said Eaton. "I understand. How is he?"

Connery did not answer, and with the waiter left him, locking him in again. At ten, Connery came once more with the porter of the car, and the conductor stood by silently while the porter made up the berth. Eaton went to bed with the car absolutely still, with only the wall of snow outside his window and no evidence of any one about but a subdued step occasionally passing his door. Though he had had nothing to do all the long, lonely hours of the evening but to think, Eaton lay awake thinking. He understood definitely now that whatever action was to be taken following his admission of his presence at Warden's, a charge of murder or of assault to kill—dependent upon whether Santoine died or seemed likely to recover—would be made against him at the first city they reached after the train had started again. He would be turned over to the police; inquiry would be made; then—he shrank from going further with these thoughts.

The night again was very cold; it was clear, with stars shining; toward midnight wind came; but little snow drifted now, for the cold had frozen a crust. In the morning, from somewhere over the snow-covered country, a man and a boy appeared at the top of the shining bank beside the train. They walked beside the sleepers to the dining car, where, apparently, they disposed of whatever they had brought in the bags they carried; they came back along the cars and then disappeared.

As he watched them, Eaton felt the desperate impulse to escape through the window and follow them; but he knew he surely would be seen; and even if he

could get away unobserved, he would freeze; his overcoat and hat had been kept by Connery. The conductor came after a time and let in the porter, who unmade the berth and carried away the linen; and later, Connery came again with the waiter bringing breakfast. He had brought a magazine, which he dropped upon the seat beside Eaton; and he stood by until Eaton had breakfasted and the dishes were carried away.

"Want to talk yet?" he asked.

"No."

"Is there anything else you want?" he asked.

"I'd like to see Miss Santoine."

Connery turned away.

"You will tell Miss Santoine I have something I want to say to her?" Eaton asked more definitely.

Connery turned back. "If you've anything to say, tell it to me," he bade curtly.

"It will do no good to tell it to you. Will you tell her what I asked?"

"No," said Connery.

At noon, when they brought Eaton's luncheon, he repeated his request and was again refused; but less than an hour afterward Connery came to his door again, and behind Connery, Eaton saw Harriet Santoine and Avery.

Eaton jumped up, and as he saw the girl's pale face, the color left his own.

"Miss Santoine has asked to speak to you," Connery announced; and he admitted Harriet Santoine and Avery, and himself remaining outside in the aisle, closed the door upon them.

"How is your father?" Eaton asked the girl.

"He seems just the same; at least, I can't see any change, Mr. Eaton." She said something in a low tone to Avery, who nodded; then she sat down opposite

Eaton, and Avery seated himself on the arm of the seat beside her.

"Can Dr. Sinclair see any difference?" Eaton asked.

"Dr. Sinclair will not commit himself except to say that so far as he can tell, the indications are favorable. He seems to think—" The girl choked; but when she went on, her blue eyes were very bright and her lips did not tremble. "Dr. Sinclair seems to think, Mr. Eaton, that Father was found just in time, and that whatever chance he has for recovery came from you. Mr. Avery and I had passed by the berth; other people had gone by. Sometimes Father had insomnia and wouldn't get to sleep till late in the morning; so I—and Mr. Avery too—would have left him undisturbed until noon. Dr. Sinclair says that if he had been left as long as that, he would have had no chance at all for life."

"He has a chance, then, now?"

"Yes; but we don't know how much. The change Dr. Sinclair is expecting may be either for better or worse. I—I wanted you to know, Mr. Eaton, that I recognize—that the chance Father may have came through you, and that I am trying to think of you as the one who gave him the chance."

The warm blood flooded Eaton's face, and he bowed his head. She, then, was not wholly hostile to him; she had not been completely convinced by Avery.

"What was it you wanted to tell Miss Santoine?" Avery challenged.

"What did Miss Santoine want to tell me?"

"What she has just told you."

Eaton thought for a moment. The realization that had come to him just now that something had kept the girl from condemning him as Avery and Connery had condemned him, and that somehow, for some reason, she must have been fighting within herself to-day and last night against the proof of his guilt, flushed him with gratitude and changed the attitude he had thought it was going to be necessary for him to take in this talk with her. As he looked up, her eyes met his; then she looked quickly away. Avery moved impatiently and repeated his question:

"What was it you wanted to say?"

"Are they looking for any one, Miss Santoine—any one besides me in connection with the attack upon your father?"

She glanced at Avery and did not answer. Avery's eyes narrowed. "We are quite satisfied with what we have been doing," he answered.

"Then they are not looking, Miss Santoine!"

Her lips pressed together, and again it was Avery who answered. "We have not said so."

"I must assume it, then," Eaton said to the girl without regarding Avery. "I have been watching as well as I could since they shut me up here, and I have listened, but I haven't found any evidence that anything more is being done. So I'm obliged to assume that nothing is being done. The few people who know about the attack on your father are so convinced and satisfied that I am the one who did it that they aren't looking any further. Among the people moving about on the train, the—the man who made the attack is being allowed to move about; he could even leave the train, if he could do so without being seen and was willing to take his chance in the snow; and when the train goes on, he certainly will leave it!"

Harriet Santoine turned questioningly to Avery again.

"I am not asking anything of you, you see," Eaton urged. "I'm not asking you to let me go or to give me any—any increase of liberty which might make it possible for me to escape. I—I'm only warning you that Mr. Avery and the conductor are making a mistake; and you don't have to have any faith in me or any belief that I'm telling the truth when I say that I didn't do it! I'm only warning you, Miss Santoine, that you mustn't let them stop looking! Why, if I had done it, I might very likely have had an accomplice whom they are going to let escape. It's only common sense, you see."

"That is what you wanted to say?" Avery asked.

"That is it," Eaton answered.

"We can go, then, Harriet."

But she made no move to go. Her eyes rested upon Eaton steadily; and while

he had been appealing to her, a flush had come to her cheeks and faded away and come again and again with her impulses as he spoke.

"If you didn't do it, why don't you help us?" she cried.

"Help you?"

"Yes: tell us who you are and what you are doing? Why did you take the train because Father was on it, if you didn't mean any harm to him? Why don't you tell us where you are going or where you have been or what you have been doing? What did your appointment with Mr. Warden mean? And why, after he was killed, did you disappear until you followed Father on this train? Why can't you give the name of anybody you know or tell us of any one who knows about you?"

Eaton sank back against the seat away from her, and his eyes shifted to Avery standing ready to go, and then fell.

"I might ask you in return," Eaton said, "why you thought it worth while, Miss Santoine, to ask so much about myself when you first met me and before any of this had happened? You were not so much interested then in me personally as that; and it was not because you could have suspected I had been Mr. Warden's friend; for when the conductor charged that, it was a complete surprise to you."

"No; I did not suspect that."

"Then why were you curious about me?"

Before Avery could speak or even make a gesture, Harriet seemed to come to a decision. "My Father asked me to," she said.

"Your father? Asked you to do what?"

"To find out about you."

"Why?"

As she hesitated, Avery put his hand upon her shoulder as though warning her to be still; but she went on, after only an instant.

"I promised Mr. Avery and the conductor," she said, "that if I saw you I would listen to what you had to say but would not answer questions without their consent; but I seem already to have broken that promise. I have been wondering, since we have found out what we have about you, whether Father could possibly have suspected that you were Mr. Warden's friend; but I am quite sure that was not the original reason for his inquiring about you. My Father thought he recognized your voice, Mr. Eaton, when you were speaking to the conductor about your tickets. He thought he ought to know who you were. He knew that some time and somewhere he had been near you before, and had heard you speak; but he could not tell where or when. And neither Mr. Avery nor I could tell him who you were; so he asked us to find out. I do not know whether, after we had described you to Father, he may have connected you with Mr. Warden or not; but that could not have been in his mind at first."

Eaton had paled; Avery had seemed about to interrupt her, but watching Eaton, he suddenly had desisted.

"You and Mr. Avery?" Eaton repeated. "He sent you to find out about me?"

"Sent me—in this case—more than Mr. Avery; because he thought it would be easier for me to do it." Harriet had reddened under Eaton's gaze. "You understand, Mr. Eaton, it was—was entirely impersonal with me. My Father, being blind, is obliged to use the eyes of others—mine, for one; he has trained me to see for him ever since we used to take walks together when I was a little girl, and he has made me learn to tell him what I see in detail, in the way that he would see it himself; and for helping him to see other things on which I might be unable to report so definitely and clearly, he has Mr. Avery. He calls us his eyes, sometimes; and it was only—only because I had been commissioned to find out about you that I was obliged to show so much curiosity."

"I understand," said Eaton quietly. "Your report to your father, I suppose, convinced him that he had been mistaken in thinking he knew my voice."

"No—not that. He knew that he had heard it; for sounds have so much meaning to him that he never neglects or forgets them, and he carries in his mind the voices of hundreds of different people and almost never makes a mistake among them. It did make him surer that you were not any one with whose voice he ought to have been familiar, but only some one whom he had heard say something—a few words or sentences, maybe—under conditions which

impressed your voice upon his mind. And he told Mr. Avery so, and that has only made Mr. Avery and the conductor more certain that you must be the—one. And since you will not tell—"

"To tell would only further confirm them—"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean they would be more certain it was I who—" Eaton, as he blundered with the words and checked himself, looked up apprehensively at Avery; but Avery, if he had thought that it was worth while to let this conversation go on in the expectation that Eaton might let slip something which could be used against himself, now had lost that expectation.

"Come, Harry," he said.

Harriet arose, and Eaton got up as she did and stood as she went toward the door.

"You said Mr. Avery and the conductor believe—" he began impulsively, in answer to the something within him which was urging him to know, to make certain, how far Harriet Santoine believed him to have been concerned in the attack upon her father. And suddenly he found that he did not need to ask. He knew; and with this sudden realization he all at once understood why she had not been convinced in spite of the conviction of the others—why, as, flushing and paling, she had just now talked with him, her manner had been a continual denial of the suspicion against him.

To Avery and to Connery the attack upon Santoine was made a vital and important thing by the prominence of Santoine and their own responsibility toward him, but after all there was nothing surprising in there having been an attack. Even to Harriet Santoine it could not be a matter of surprise; she knew—she must know—that the father whom she loved and thought of as the best of men, could not have accomplished all he had done without making enemies; but she could conceive of an attack upon him being made only by some one roused to insane and unreasoning hate against him or by some agent wicked and vile enough to kill for profit. She could not conceive of its having been done by a man whom, little as she had known him, she had liked, with whom she had chatted and laughed upon terms of equality. The accusation of the second telegram had overwhelmed her for a time, and had driven her from the defense

of him which she had made after he had admitted his connection with Gabriel Warden; but now, Eaton felt, the impulse in his favor had returned. She must have talked over with her father many times the matter of the man whom Warden had determined to befriend; and plainly she had become so satisfied that he deserved consideration rather than suspicion that Connery's identification of Eaton now was to his advantage. Harriet Santoine could not yet answer the accusation of the second telegram against him, but—in reason or out of reason—her feelings refused acceptance of it.

It was her feelings that were controlling her now, as suddenly she faced him, flushed and with eyes suffused, waiting for the end of the sentence he could not finish. And as his gaze met hers, he realized that life—the life that held Harriet Santoine, however indefinite the interest might be that she had taken in him—was dearer to him than he had thought.

Avery had reached the door, holding it open for her to go out. Suddenly Eaton tore the handle from Avery's grasp, slammed the door shut upon him and braced his foot against it. He would be able to hold it thus for several moments before they could force it open.

"Miss Santoine," he pleaded, his voice hoarse with his emotion, "for God's sake, make them think what they are doing before they make a public accusation against me—before they charge me with this to others not on this train! I can't answer what you asked; I can't tell you now about myself; there is a reason—a fair and honest reason, and one which means life or death to me. It will not be merely accusation they make against me—it will be my sentence! I shall be sentenced before I am tried—condemned without a chance to defend myself! That is the reason I could not come forward after the murder of Mr. Warden. I could not have helped him—or aided in the pursuit of his enemies—if I had appeared; I merely would have been destroyed myself! The only thing I could hope to accomplish has been in following my present course—which, I swear to you, has had no connection with the attack upon your father. What Mr. Avery and Connery are planning to do to me, they cannot undo. They will merely complete the outrage and injustice already done me,—of which Mr. Warden spoke to his wife,—and they will not help your father. For God's sake, keep them from going further!"

Her color deepened, and for an instant, he thought he saw full belief in him growing in her eyes; but if she could not accept the charge against him, neither

could she consciously deny it, and the hands she had been pressing together suddenly dropped.

"I—I'm afraid nothing I could say would have much effect on them, knowing as little about—about you as I do!"

They dashed the door open then—silenced and overwhelmed him; and they took her from the room and left him alone again. But there was something left with him which they could not take away; for in the moment he had stood alone with her and passionately pleading, something had passed between them—he could give no name to it, but he knew that Harriet Santoine never could think of him again without a stirring of her pulses which drew her toward him. And through the rest of the lonely day and through the sleepless night, he treasured this and thought of it again and again.

The following morning the relieving snowplows arrived from the east, and Eaton felt it was the beginning of the end for him. He watched from his window men struggling in the snow about the forward end of the train; then the train moved forward past the shoveled and trampled snow where rock and pieces of the snowplow were piled beside the track—stopped, waited; finally it went on again and began to take up its steady progress.

The attack upon Santoine having taken place in Montana, Eaton thought that he would be turned over to the police somewhere within that State, and he expected it would be done at the first stop; but when the train slowed at Simons, he saw the town was nothing more than a little hamlet beside a side-track. They surely could not deliver him to the village authorities here. The observation car and the Santoine car were uncoupled here and the train made up again with the Santoine car as the last car of the train and the observation car ahead of it. This, evidently, was to stop the passing of passengers through the Santoine car. Did it mean that the change in Santoine's condition which Dr. Sinclair had been expecting had taken place and was for the worse? Eaton would have liked to ask about this of Connery, whom he saw standing outside his window and keeping watch upon him during the switching of the cars; but he knew that the conductor would not answer him.

He rang, instead, for the porter and asked him for a railway folder, and when this had been brought, he opened it to the map of the railroad and checked off the names of the towns they would pass through. Nearly all the names set in the

bold-face letters which denoted the cities and larger towns ahead of them were, he found, toward the eastern end of the State; the nearest—and the one, therefore, at which he thought he would be given up—was several hours away. At long intervals the train passed villages all but buried in the snow; the inhabitants of these, gathered at the stations, stared in on him as they looked in on any other passenger; and at each of these stops Connery stood outside his window guarding against possibility of his escape. Each time, too, that the train slowed, the porter unlocked the door of the compartment, opened it and stood waiting until the train had regained its speed; plainly they were taking no chances of his dropping from the window.

Early in the afternoon, as they approached the town whose name in bold-face had made him sure that it was the one where he would be given to the police, Eaton rang for the porter again.

"Will you get me paper and an envelope?" he asked.

The negro summoned the conductor.

"You want to write?" Connery asked.

"Yes."

"You understand that anything you write must be given to me unsealed."

"That's satisfactory to me. I don't believe that, even though it is unsealed, you'll take it upon yourself to read it."

The conductor looked puzzled, but sent the porter for some of the stationery the railroad furnished for passengers. The negro brought paper, and pen and ink, and set up the little table in front of Eaton; and when they had left him and had locked the door, Eaton wrote:

Miss Santoine:

The questions—all of them—that you and others have asked me you are going to find answered very soon—within a very few hours, it may be, certainly within a few days—though they are not going to be answered by me. When they

are answered, you are going to think me the most despicable kind of man; you are not going to doubt, then,—for the answers will not let you doubt,—that I was the one who hurt your father. You, and every one else, are going to feel—not only because of that, but because of what you will learn about me—that nothing that may happen to me will be more than I justly deserve.

I don't seem to care very much what people other than you may think; as the time grows nearer, I feel that I care less and less about that; but I do care very much—and more and more—that you are going to think of me in this way. It is very hard for me to know that you are going to regret that you ever let me talk with you in the friendly way you did, or that you let me walk beside you on the station platform at Spokane, and that you are going to shrink with horror when you recollect that you let me touch you and put my hand upon your arm. I feel that you do not yet believe that it was I who attacked your father; and I ask you —even in face of the proof which you are so soon to receive—not to believe it. I took this train—

He stopped writing, recollecting that the letter was to be given to Connery unsealed and that Connery might read it; he scratched out the sentence he had begun; then he thought a moment and went on:

I ask you not to believe that. More than that, I ask you—when you have learned who I am—still to believe in me. I don't ask you to defend me against others; you could not do that, for you will see no one who will not hate and despise me. But I beg of you, in all honesty and faith, not to let yourself feel as they do toward me. I want you to believe—

He stopped again, but not because he felt that Harriet Santoine would not believe what he was asking her to believe; instead, it was because he knew she would. Mechanically he opened his traveling-bag and got out a cigar, bit off the end and forgetting in his absorption to light it, puffed and sucked at it. The future was sure ahead of him; he foresaw it plainly, in detail even, for what was happening to him was only the fulfillment of a threat which had been over him ever since he landed at Seattle. He was going out of life—not only Harriet

Santoine's life, but all life, and the letter he was writing would make Harriet Santoine believe his death to have been an act of injustice, of cruelty. She could not help but feel that she herself had been in a way instrumental in his death, since it was the accusation of violence against her father which was going to show who he was and so condemn him. Dared he, dying, leave a sting like that in the girl's life?

He continued to puff at the unlighted cigar; then, mechanically, he struck a match to light it. As the match flared up, he touched it to the sheet on which he had been writing, held the paper until the written part was all consumed, and dropped it on the floor of the car, smiling down at it wryly and grimly. He would go out of Harriet Santoine's life as he had come into it—no, not that, for he had come into it as one who excited in her a rather pleasing doubt and curiosity, but he would go out of it as a man whom she must hate and condemn; to recall him would be only painful to her, so that she would try to kill within her all memory of him.

As he glanced to the window, he saw that they were passing through the outskirts of some place larger than any they had stopped at before; and realizing that this must be the place he had picked out on the map as the one where they would give him to the police, he closed his traveling bag and made ready to go with them. The train drew into the station and stopped; the porter, as it slowed, had unlocked and opened the door of his compartment, and he saw Connery outside upon the platform; but this was no different from their procedure at every stop. Several people got on the train here; others got off; so Connery, obviously, was not preventing those who had been on the train when Santoine was struck, from leaving it now. Eaton, as he saw Connery make the signal for the train to go ahead, sank back suddenly, conscious of the suspense he had been under.

He got out the railroad folder and looked ahead to the next town where he might be given up to the authorities; but when they rolled into this in the late afternoon the proceedings were no different. Eaton could not understand. He saw by studying the time-table that some time in the night they would pass the Montana state line into North Dakota. Didn't they intend to deliver him to the State authorities in Montana?

When the waiter brought his supper, Connery came with him.

"You wrote something to-day?" the conductor asked.

"I destroyed it."

Connery looked keenly around the compartment. "You brought me two envelopes; there they are. You brought three sheets of paper; here are two, and there's what's left of the other on the floor."

Connery seemed satisfied.

"Why haven't you jailed me?" Eaton asked.

"We're waiting to see how things go with Mr. Santoine."

"Has he been conscious?"

Connery did not answer; and through the conductor's silence Eaton sensed suddenly what the true condition of affairs must be. To give him up to the police would make public the attack upon Santoine; and until Santoine either died or recovered far enough to be consulted by them, neither Avery nor Connery—nor Connery's superiors, apparently—dared to take the responsibility of doing this. So Eaton would be carried along to whatever point they might reach when Santoine died or became fully conscious. Where would that be? Clear to Chicago?

It made no material difference to him, Eaton realized, whether the police took him in Montana or Chicago, since in either case recognition of him would be certain in the end; but in Chicago this recognition must be immediate, complete, and utterly convincing.

The next day the weather had moderated, or—here in North Dakota—it had been less severe; the snow was not deep except in the hollows, and on the black, windswept farmlands sprouts of winter wheat were faintly showing. The train was traveling steadily and faster than its regular schedule; it evidently was running as a special, some other train taking the ordinary traffic; it halted now only at the largest cities. In the morning it crossed into Minnesota; and in the late afternoon, slowing, it rolled into some large city which Eaton knew must be Minneapolis or St. Paul. All day he had listened for sounds in the Santoine car, but had heard nothing; the routine which had been established to take care of him had gone on through the day, and he had seen no one but Connery and the negro, and his questions to them had been unanswered.

The car here was uncoupled from the train and picked up by a switch engine; as dusk fell, Eaton, peering out of his window, could see that they had been left lying in the railroad yards; and about midnight, awakening in his berth, he realized that the car was still motionless. He could account for this stoppage in their progress only by some change in the condition of Santoine. Was Santoine sinking, so that they no longer dared to travel? Was he, perhaps—dead?

No sounds came to him from the car to confirm Eaton in any conclusion; there was nothing to be learned from any one outside the car. A solitary man, burly and alert, paced quietly back and forth below Eaton's window. He was a guard stationed to prevent any escape while the car was motionless in the yard.

Eaton lay for a long time, listening for other sounds and wondering what was occurring—or had occurred—at the other end of his car. Toward morning he fell asleep.

CHAPTER XI

PUBLICITY NOT WANTED

"Basil Santoine dying! Blind Millionaire lawyer taken ill on train!"

The alarm of the cry came to answer Eaton's question early the next morning. As he started up in his berth, he shook himself into realization that the shouts were not merely part of an evil dream; some one was repeating the cry outside the car window. He threw up the curtain and saw a vagrant newsboy, evidently passing through the railroad yards to sell to the trainmen. Eaton's guard outside his window was not then in sight; so Eaton lifted his window from the screen, removed that, and hailing the boy, put out his hand for a paper. He took it before he recalled that he had not even a cent; but he looked for his knife in his trousers pocket and tossed it out to the boy with the inquiry: "How'll that do?"

The boy gaped, picked it up, grinned and scampered off. Eaton spread the news-sheet before him and swiftly scanned the lines for information as to the fate of the man who, for four days, had been lying only forty feet away from him at the other end of a Pullman car.

The paper—a Minneapolis one—blared at him that Santoine's condition was very low and becoming rapidly worse. But below, under a Montana date-line, Eaton saw it proclaimed that the blind millionaire was merely sick; there was no suggestion anywhere of an attack. The paper stated only that Basil Santoine, returning from Seattle with his daughter and his secretary, Donald Avery, had been taken seriously ill upon a train which had been stalled for two days in the snow in Montana. The passenger from whom the information had been gained had heard that the malady was appendicitis, but he believed that was merely given out to cover some complication which had required surgical treatment on the train. He was definite as regarded the seriousness of Mr. Santoine's illness and described the measures taken to insure his quiet. The railroad officials refused, significantly, to make a statement regarding Mr. Santoine's present condition. There was complete absence of any suggestion of violence having been done; and also, Eaton found, there was no word given out that he himself had been found on the train. The column ended with the statement that Mr. Santoine had passed through Minneapolis and gone on to Chicago under care of Dr. Douglas Sinclair.

Eaton stared at the newspaper without reading, after he saw that. He thought first—or rather, he felt first—for himself. He had not realized, until now that he was told that Harriet Santoine had gone,—for if her father had gone on, of course she was with him,—the extent to which he had felt her fairness, almost her friendship to him. At least, he knew now that, since she had spoken to him after he was first accused of the attack on her father, he had not felt entirely deserted or friendless till now. And with this start of dread for himself, came also feeling for her. Even if they had taken her father from the other end of this car early in the night to remove him to another special car for Chicago, she would be still watching beside him on the train. Or was her watch beside the dying man over now? And now, if her father were dead, how could Harriet Santoine feel toward the one whom all others—if not she herself—accused of the murder of her father? For evidently it was murder now, not just "an attack."

But why, if Santoine had been taken away, or was dead or dying, had they left Eaton all night in the car in the yards? Since Santoine was dying, would there be any longer an object in concealing the fact that he had been murdered?

Eaton turned the page before him. A large print of a picture of Harriet Santoine looked at him from the paper—her beautiful, deep eyes gazing at him, as he often had surprised her, frankly interested, thoughtful, yet also gay. The newspaper had made up its lack of more definite and extended news by associating her picture with her father's and printing also a photograph of Donald Avery—"closely associated with Mr. Santoine in a confidential capacity and rumored to be engaged to Miss Santoine." Under the blind man's picture was a biography of the sort which newspaper offices hold ready, prepared for the passing of the great.

Eaton did not read that then. The mention in the paper of an engagement between Avery and Harriet Santoine had only confirmed the relation which Eaton had imagined between them. Avery, therefore, must have gone on with her; and if she still watched beside her father, Avery was with her; and if Basil Santoine was dead, his daughter was turning to Avery for comfort.

This feature somehow stirred Eaton so that he could not stay quiet; he dressed and then paced back and forth the two or three steps his compartment allowed him. He stopped now and then to listen; from outside came the noises of the yard; but he made out no sound within the car. If it had been occupied as on the days previous, he must have heard some one coming to the washroom at his end.

Was he alone in the car now? or had the customary moving about taken place before he awoke?

Eaton had seen no one but the newsboy when he looked out the window, but he felt sure that, if he had been left alone in the car, he was being watched so that he could not escape.

His hand moved toward the bell, then checked itself. By calling any one, he now must change his situation only for the worse; as long as they were letting him stay there, so much the better. He realized that it was long past the time when the porter usually came to make up his berth and they brought him breakfast; the isolation of the car might account for this delay, but it was more likely that he was to find another reason.

Finally, to free himself from his nervous listening for sounds which never came, he picked up the paper again. A column told of Santoine's youth, his blindness, his early struggle to make a place for himself and his final triumph—position, wealth and power gained; Eaton, reading of Harriet Santoine's father, followed these particulars with interest; and further down the column his interest became even greater. He read:

The news of Mr. Santoine's visit of a week on the Coast, if not known already in great financial circles, is likely to prove interesting there. Troubles between little people are tried in the courts; the powerful settle their disagreements among themselves and without appeal to the established tribunals in which their cases are settled without the public knowing they have been tried at all. Basil Santoine, of late years, has been known to the public as one of the greatest and most influential of the advisers to the financial rulers of America; but before the public knew him he was recognized by the financial masters as one of the most able, clear-minded and impartial of the adjudicators among them in their own disputes. For years he has been the chief agent in keeping peace among some of the great conflicting interests, and more than once he has advised the declaring of financial war when war seemed to him the correct solution. Thus, five years ago, when the violent death of Matthew Latron threatened to precipitate trouble among Western capitalists, Santoine kept order in what might very well have become financial chaos. If his recent visit to the Pacific Coast was not purely for personal reasons but was also to adjust antagonisms such as charged by Gabriel

Warden before his death, the loss of Santoine at this time may precipitate troubles which, living, his advice and information might have been able to prevent.

Having read and reread this long paragraph, Eaton started to tear out the picture of Harriet Santoine before throwing the paper away; then he desisted and thrust the sheets out the window. As he sat thinking, with lips tight closed, he heard for the first time that morning footsteps at his end of the car. The door of his compartment was unlocked and opened, and he saw Dr. Sinclair.

"Mr. Santoine wants to speak to you," the surgeon announced quietly.

This startling negation of all he imagined, unnerved Eaton. He started up, then sank back for better composure.

"Mr. Santoine is here, then?"

"Here? Of course he's here."

"And he's conscious?"

"He has been conscious for the better part of two days. Didn't they tell you?" Sinclair frowned. "I heard Miss Santoine send word to you by the conductor soon after her father first came to himself."

"You mean he will recover!"

"He would recover from any injury which was not inevitably fatal. He was in perfect physical condition, and I never have known a patient to grasp so completely the needs of his own case and to help the surgeon as much by his control of himself."

Eaton looked toward the window, breathing hard. "I heard the newsboys—"

Sinclair shrugged. "The papers print what they can get and in the way which seems most effective to them," was his only comment.

Eaton pulled himself together. So Santoine was neither dead nor dying.

Therefore, at worst, the charge of murder would not be made; and at best—what? He was soon to find out; the papers evidently were entirely in error or falsely informed. Basil Santoine was still at the other end of the car, and his daughter would be with him there. But as Eaton followed Sinclair out of the compartment into the aisle, he halted a moment—the look of the car was so entirely different from what he had expected. A nurse in white uniform sat in one of the seats toward the middle of the car, sewing; another nurse, likewise clothed in white, had just come out from the drawing-room at the end of the car; Avery and Sinclair apparently had been playing cribbage, for Avery sat at a little table in the section which had been occupied by Santoine, with the cards and cribbage board in front of him. The surgeon led Eaton to the door of the drawing-room, showed him in and left him.

Harriet Santoine was sitting on the little lounge opposite the berth where her father lay. She was watching the face of her father, and as Eaton stood in the door, he saw her lean forward and gently touch her father's hand; then she turned and saw Eaton.

"Here is Mr. Eaton, Father," she said.

"Sit down," Santoine directed.

Harriet made room for Eaton upon the seat beside her; and Eaton, sitting down, gazed across at the blind man in the berth. Santoine was lying flat on his back, his bandaged head turned a little toward Eaton and supported by pillows; he was not wearing his dark glasses, and his eyes were open. Eyes of themselves are capable of no expression except as they may be clear or bloodshot, or by the contraction or dilation of the pupils, or as they shift or are fixed upon some object: their "expression" is caused by movements of the lids and brows and other parts of the face. Santoine's eyes had the motionlessness of the eyes of those who have been long blind; seeing nothing, with pupils which did not change in size, they had only the abstracted look which, with men who see, accompanies deep thought. The blind man was very weak and must stay quite still; and he recognized it; but he knew too that his strength was more than equal to the task of recovery, and he showed that he knew it. His mind and will were, obviously, at their full activity, and he had fully his sense of hearing.

This explained to Eaton the better color in his daughter's face; yet she was still constrained and nervous; evidently she had not found her ordeal over with

the start of convalescence of her father. Her lips trembled now as she turned to Eaton; but she did not speak directly to him yet; it was Basil Santoine who suddenly inquired:

"What is it they call you?"

"My name is Philip D. Eaton." Eaton realized as soon as he had spoken that both question and answer had been unnecessary, and Santoine had asked only to hear Eaton's voice.

The blind man was silent for a moment, as he seemed to consider the voice and try again vainly to place it in his memories. Then he spoke to his daughter.

"Describe him, Harriet."

Harriet paled and flushed.

"About thirty," she said, "—under rather than over that. Six feet or a little more in height. Slender, but muscular and athletic. Skin and eyes clear and with a look of health. Complexion naturally rather fair, but darkened by being outdoors a good deal. Hair dark brown, straight and parted at the side. Smooth shaven. Eyes blue-gray, with straight lashes. Eyebrows straight and dark. Forehead smooth, broad and intelligent. Nose straight and neither short nor long; nostrils delicate. Mouth straight, with lips neither thin nor full. Chin neither square nor pointed, and without a cleft. Face and head, in general, of oval Anglo-American type."

"Go on," said Santoine.

Harriet was breathing quickly. "Hands well shaped, strong but without sign of manual labor; nails cared for but not polished. Gray business suit, new, but not made by an American tailor and of a style several years old. Soft-bosomed shirt of plain design with soft cuffs. Medium-height turn-down white linen collar. Four-in-hand tie, tied by himself. Black shoes. No jewelry except watch-chain."

"In general?" Santoine suggested.

"In general, apparently well-educated, well-bred, intelligent young American. Expression frank. Manner self-controlled and reserved. Seems sometimes younger than he must be, sometimes older. Something has happened at some

time which has had a great effect and can't be forgotten."

While she spoke, the blood, rising with her embarrassment, had dyed Harriet's face; suddenly now she looked away from him and out the window.

Her feeling seemed to be perceived by Santoine. "Would you rather I sent for Avery, daughter?" he asked.

"No; no!" She turned again toward Eaton and met his look defiantly.

Eaton merely waited. He was confident that much of this description of himself had been given Santoine by his daughter before the attack had been made on him and that she had told him also as fully as she could the two conversations she had had with Eaton. He could not, somehow, conceive it possible that Santoine needed to refresh his memory; the description, therefore, must have been for purposes of comparison. Santoine, in his blindness, no doubt found it necessary to get descriptions of the same one thing from several people, in order that he might check one description against another. He probably had Harriet's and Avery's description of Eaton and now was getting Harriet's again.

"He would be called, I judge, a rather likable-looking man?" Santoine said tentatively; his question plainly was only meant to lead up to something else; Santoine had judged in that particular already.

"I think he makes that impression."

"Certainly he does not make the impression of being a man who could be hired to commit a crime?"

"Very far from it."

"Or who would commit a crime for his own interest—material or financial interest, I mean?"

"No."

"But he might be led into crime by some personal, deeper interest. He has shown deep feeling, I believe—strong, personal feeling, Harriet?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Eaton,"—Santoine addressed him suddenly,—"I understand that you have admitted that you were at the house of Gabriel Warden the evening he was killed while in his car. Is that so?"

"Yes," said Eaton.

"You are the man, then, of whom Gabriel Warden spoke to his wife?"

"I believe so."

"You believe so?"

"I mean," Eaton explained quietly, "that I came by appointment to call on Mr. Warden that night. I believe that it must have been to me that Mr. Warden referred in the conversation with his wife which has since been quoted in the newspapers."

"Because you were in such a situation that, if Mr. Warden defended you, he would himself meet danger?"

"I did not say that," Eaton denied guardedly.

"What, then, was your position in regard to Mr. Warden?"

Eaton remained silent.

"You refuse to answer?" Santoine inquired.

"I refuse."

"In spite of the probability that Mr. Warden met his death because of his intention to undertake something for you?"

"I have not been able to fix that as a probability."

The blind man stopped. Plainly he appreciated that, where Connery and Avery had failed in their questionings, he was not likely to succeed easily; and with his limited strength, he proceeded on a line likely to meet less prepared resistance.

"Mr. Eaton, have I ever injured you personally—I don't mean directly, as man

to man, for I should remember that; have I ever done anything which indirectly has worked injury on you or your affairs?"

"No," Eaton answered.

"Who sent you aboard this train?"

"Sent me? No one."

"You took the train of your own will because I was taking it?"

"I have not said I took it because you were taking it."

"That seems to be proved. You can accept it from me; it has been proved. Did you take the train in order to attack me?"

"No."

"To spy upon me?"

"No."

Santoine was silent for an instant. "What was it you took the train to tell me?"

"I? Nothing."

Santoine moved his head upon the pillow.

"Father!" his daughter warned.

"Oh, I am careful, Harriet; Dr. Sinclair allows me to move a little.... Mr. Eaton, in one of the three answers you have just given me, you are not telling the truth. I defy you to find in human reasoning more than four reasons why my presence could have made you take this train in the manner and with the attending circumstances you did. You took it to injure me, or to protect me from injury; to learn something from me, or to inform me of something. I discard the second of these possibilities because you asked for a berth in another car and for other reasons which make it impossible. However, I will ask it of you. Did you take the train to protect me from injury?"

"No."

"Which of your former answers do you wish to change, then?"

"None."

"You deny all four possibilities?"

"Yes."

"Then you are using denial only to hide the fact, whatever it may be; and of the four possibilities I am obliged to select the first as the most likely."

"You mean that I attacked you?"

"That is not what I said. I said you must have taken the train to injure me, but that does not mean necessarily that it was to attack me with your own hand. Any attack aimed against me would be likely to have several agents. There would be somewhere, probably, a distant brain that had planned it; there would be an intelligent brain near by to oversee it; and there would be a strong hand to perform it. The overseeing brain and the performing hand—or hands—might belong to one person, or to two, or more. How many there were I cannot now determine, since people were allowed to get off the train. The conductor and Avery—"

"Father!"

"Yes, Harriet; but I expected better of Avery. Mr. Eaton, as you are plainly withholding the truth as to your reason for taking this train, and as I have suffered injury, I am obliged—from the limited information I now have—to assume that you knew an attack was to be made by some one, upon that train. In addition to the telegram, addressed to you under your name of Eaton and informing of my presence on the train, I have also been informed, of course, of the code message received by you addressed to Hillward. You refused, I understand, to favor Mr. Avery with an explanation of it; do you wish to give one now?"

"No," said Eaton.

"It has, of course, been deciphered," the blind man went on calmly. "The fact that it was based upon your pocket English-Chinese dictionary as a word-book was early suggested; the deciphering from that was simply a trial of some score

of ordinary enigma plans, until the meaning appeared."

Eaton made no comment. Santoine went on:

"And that very interesting meaning presented another possible explanation—not as to your taking the train, for as to that there can be only the four I mentioned—but as to the attack itself, which would exonerate you from participation in it. It is because of this that I am treating you with the consideration I do. If that explanation were correct, you would—"

"What?"

"You would have had nothing to do with the attack, and yet you would know who made it."

At this, Eaton stared at the blind man and wet his lips.

"What do you mean?" he said.

Santoine did not reply to the question. "What have you been doing yesterday and to-day?" he asked.

"Waiting," Eaton answered.

"For what?"

"For the railroad people to turn me over to the police."

"So I understood. That is why I asked you. I don't believe in cat-and-mouse methods, Mr. Eaton; so I am willing to tell you that there is no likelihood of your being turned over to the police immediately. I have taken this matter out of the hands of the railroad people. We live in a complex world, Mr. Eaton, and I am in the most complex current of it. I certainly shall not allow the publicity of a police examination of you to publish the fact that I have been attacked so soon after the successful attack upon Mr. Warden—and in a similar manner—until I know more about both attacks and about you—why you came to see Warden that night and how, after failing to see him alive, you followed me, and whether that fact led to the attempt at my life."

Eaton started to speak, and then stopped.

"What were you going to say?" Santoine urged.

"I will not say it," Eaton refused.

"However, I think I understand your impulse. You were about to remind me that there has been nothing to implicate you in any guilty connection with the murder of Mr. Warden. I do not now charge that."

He hesitated; then, suddenly lost in thought, as some new suggestion seemed to come to him which he desired to explain alone, he motioned with a hand in dismissal. "That is all." Then, almost immediately: "No; wait! ... Harriet, has he made any sign while I have been talking?"

"Not much, if any," Harriet answered. "When you said he might not have had anything to do with the attack upon you, but in that case he must know who it was that struck you, he shut his eyes and wet his lips."

"That is all, Mr. Eaton," Santoine repeated.

Eaton started back to his compartment. As he turned, Harriet Santoine looked up at him and their eyes met; and her look confirmed to him what he had felt before—that her father, now taking control of the investigation of the attack upon himself, was not continuing it with prejudice or predisposed desire to damage Eaton, except as the evidence accused him. And her manner now told, even more plainly than Santoine's, that the blind man had viewed the evidence as far from conclusive against Eaton; and as Harriet showed that she was glad of that, Eaton realized how she must have taken his side against Avery in reporting to her father.

For Santoine must have depended entirely upon circumstances presented to him by Avery and Connery and her; and Eaton was very certain that Avery and Connery had accused him; so Harriet Santoine—it could only be she—had opposed them in his defense. The warmth of his gratitude to her for this suffused him as he bowed to her; she returned a frank, friendly little nod which brought back to him their brief companionship on the first day on the train.

And as Eaton went back to his compartment through the open car, Dr. Sinclair looked up at him, but Avery, studying his cribbage hand, pretended not to notice he was passing. So Avery admitted too that affairs were turning toward the better, just now at least, for Eaton. When he was again in his compartment,

no one came to lock him in. The porter who brought his breakfast a few minutes later, apologized for its lateness, saying it had had to be brought from a club car on the next track, whither the others in the car, except Santoine, had gone.

Eaton had barely finished with this tardy breakfast when a bumping against the car told him that it was being coupled to a train. The new train started, and now the track followed the Mississippi River. Eaton, looking forward from his window as the train rounded curves, saw that the Santoine car was now the last one of a train—presumably bound from Minneapolis to Chicago.

South they went, through Minnesota and Wisconsin, and the weather grew warmer and the spring further advanced. The snow was quite cleared from the ground, and the willows beside the ditches in the fields were beginning to show green sprouts. At nine o'clock in the evening, some minutes after crossing the state line into Illinois, the train stopped at a station where the last car was cut off.

A motor-ambulance and other limousine motor-cars were waiting in the light from the station. Eaton, seated at the window, saw Santoine carried out on a stretcher and put into the ambulance. Harriet Santoine, after giving a direction to a man who apparently was a chauffeur, got into the ambulance with her father. The surgeon and the nurses rode with them. They drove off. Avery entered another automobile, which swiftly disappeared. Conductor Connery came for the last time to Eaton's door.

"Miss Santoine says you're to go with the man she's left here for you. Here's the things I took from you. The money's all there. Mr. Santoine says you've been his guest on this car."

Eaton received back his purse and bill-fold. He put them in his pocket without examining their contents. The porter appeared with his overcoat and hat. Eaton put them on and stepped out of the car. The conductor escorted him to a limousine car. "This is the gentleman," Connery said to the chauffeur to whom Harriet Santoine had spoken. The man opened the door of the limousine; another man, whom Eaton had not before seen, was seated in the car; Eaton stepped in. Connery extended his hand—"Good-by, sir."

"Good-by."

The motor-car drove down a wide, winding road with tall, spreading trees on both sides. Lights shone, at intervals, from windows of what must be large and

handsome homes. The man in the car with Eaton, whose duty plainly was only that of a guard, did not speak to Eaton nor Eaton to him. The motor passed other limousines occasionally; then, though the road was still wide and smooth and still bounded by great trees, it was lonelier; no houses appeared for half a mile; then lights glowed directly ahead; the car ran under the porte-cochère of a great stone country mansion; a servant sprang to the door of the limousine and opened it; another man seized Eaton's hand-baggage from beside the chauffeur. Eaton entered a large, beamed and paneled hallway with an immense fireplace with logs burning in it; there was a wide stairway which the servant, who had appointed himself Eaton's guide, ascended. Eaton followed him and found another great hall upstairs. The servant led him to one of the doors opening off this and into a large room, fitted for a man's occupancy, with dark furniture, cases containing books on hunting, sports and adventure, and smoking things; off this was a dressing room with the bath next; beyond was a bedroom.

"These are to be your rooms, sir," the servant said. A valet appeared and unpacked Eaton's traveling bag.

"Anything else, sir?" The man, who had finished unpacking his clothes and laying them out, approached respectfully. "I've drawn your bath tepid, sir; is that correct?"

"Quite," Eaton said. "There's nothing else."

"Very good. Good night, sir. If there's anything else, the second button beside the bed will bring me, sir."

When the man had withdrawn noiselessly and closed the door, Eaton stood staring about the rooms dazedly; then he went over and tried the door. It opened; it was not locked. He turned about and went into the dressing room and began taking off his clothes; he stepped into the bathroom and felt the tepid bath. In a moment he was in the bath; fifteen minutes later he was in bed with the window open beside him, letting in the crisp, cool breeze. But he had not the slightest idea of sleep; he had undressed, bathed, and gone to bed to convince himself that what he was doing was real, that he was not acting in a dream.

He got up and went to the window and looked out, but the night was cloudy and dark, and he could see nothing except some lighted windows. As he watched, the light was switched out. Eaton went back to bed, but amazement

would not let him sleep.

He was in Santoine's house; he knew it could be no other than Santoine's house. It was to get into Santoine's house that he had come from Asia; he had thought and planned and schemed all through the long voyage on the steamer how it was to be done. He would have been willing to cross the Continent on foot to accomplish it; no labor that he could imagine would have seemed too great to him if this had been its end; and here it had been done without effort on his part, naturally, inevitably! Chance and circumstance had done it! And as he realized this, his mind was full of what he had to do in Santoine's house. For many days he had not thought about that; it had seemed impossible that he could have any opportunity to act for himself. And the return to his thoughts of possibility of carrying out his original plan brought before him thoughts of his friends—those friends who, through his exile, had been faithful to him but whose identity or existence he had been obliged to deny, when questioned, to protect them as well as himself.

As he lay on his bed in the dark, he stared upward to the ceiling, wide awake, thinking of those friends whose devotion to him might be justified at last; and he went over again and tested and reviewed the plan he had formed. But it never had presumed a position for him—even if it was the position of a semi-prisoner—inside Santoine's house. And he required more information of the structure of the house than he as yet had, to correct his plan further. But he could not, without too great risk of losing everything, discover more that night; he turned over and set himself to go to sleep.

CHAPTER XII

THE ALLY IN THE HOUSE

The first gray of dawn roused Eaton, and drawing on trousers and coat over his pajamas, he seated himself by the open window to see the house by daylight. The glow, growing in the east, showed him first that the house stood on the shore of the lake; the light came to him across water, and from the lake had come the crisp, fresh-smelling breeze that had blown into his windows through the night.

As it grew lighter, he could see the house; it was an immense structure of smooth gray stone. Eaton was in its central part, his windows looking to the south. To the north of him was a wing he could not see—the wing which had contained the porte-cochère under which the motor-car had stopped the night before; and the upper part of this wing, he had been able to tell, contained the servants' quarters. To the south, in front of him, was another wing composed, apparently in part at least, of family bedrooms.

Between the house and the lake was a terrace, part flagged, part gravel, part lawn not yet green but with green shoots showing among the last year's grass. A stone parapet walled in this terrace along the top of the bluff which pitched precipitously down to the lake fifty feet below, and the narrow beach of sand and shingle. As Eaton watched, one of the two nurses who had been on the train came to a window of the farthest room on the second floor of the south wing and stood looking out; that, then, must be Santoine's room; and Eaton drew back from his window as he noted this.

The sun had risen, and its beams, reflected up from the lake, danced on his ceiling. Eaton, chilled by the sharp air off the water—and knowing now the locality where he must be—pulled off his coat and trousers and jumped back into bed. The motor driveway which stretches north from Chicago far into Wisconsin leaves between it and the lake a broad wooded strip for spacious grounds and dwellings; Santoine's house was one of these.

Eaton felt that its location was well suited for his plans; and he realized, too, that circumstances had given him time for anything he might wish to do; for the night's stop at Minneapolis and Santoine's unexpected taking him into his own charge must have made Eaton's disappearance complete; for the present he was lost to "them" who had been "following" him, and to his friends alike. His task, then, was to let his friends know where he was without letting "them" learn it; and thinking of how this was to be done, he fell asleep again.

At nine he awoke with a start; then, recollecting everything, he jumped up and shut his windows. There was a respectful, apologetic knock at the door; evidently a servant had been waiting in the hall for some sound within the room.

"May I come in, sir?"

"Come in."

The man who had attended him the evening before entered.

"Your bath, sir; hot or cold in the morning, sir?"

"Hot," Eaton answered.

"Of course, sir; I'd forgotten you'd just come from the Orient, sir. Do you wish anything first, sir?"

"Anything?"

"Anything to drink, sir."

"Oh, no."

The man again prepared the bath. When Eaton returned to his dressing-room, he found the servant awaiting him with shaving mug, razor and apron. The man shaved him and trimmed his hair.

"I shall tell them to bring breakfast up, sir; or will you go down?" the man asked then.

Eaton considered. The manners of servants are modeled on the feelings of their masters, and the man's deference told plainly that, although Eaton might be a prisoner, he was not to be treated openly as such.

"I think I can go down," Eaton replied, when the man had finished dressing him. He found the hall and the rooms below bright and open but unoccupied; a servant showed him to a blue Delft breakfast room to the east, where a fire was burning in an old-fashioned Dutch fireplace. A cloth was spread on the table, but no places were set; a number of covered dishes, steaming above electric discs, were on the sideboard. The servant in attendance there took covers off these dishes as Eaton approached; he chose his breakfast and sat down, the man laying one place for him. This manner of serving gave Eaton no hint as to how many others were in the house or might be expected to breakfast. He had half finished his bacon and greens before any one else appeared.

This was a tall, carefully dressed man of more than fifty, with handsome, well-bred features—plainly a man of position and wealth but without experience in affairs, and without power. He was dark haired and wore a mustache which,

like his hair, was beginning to gray. As he appeared in the hall without hat or overcoat, Eaton understood that he lived in the house; he came directly into the breakfast room and evidently had not breakfasted. He observed Eaton and gave him the impersonal nod of a man meeting another whom he may have met but has forgotten.

"Good morning, Stiles," he greeted the servant.

"Good morning, sir," the man returned.

The newcomer sat down at the table opposite Eaton, and the servant, without inquiring his tastes, brought pineapple, rolls and coffee.

"I am Wallace Blatchford," the stranger volunteered as Eaton looked up. He gave the name in a manner which seemed to assume that he now must be recalled; Eaton therefore feigned recognition as he gave him his name in return.

"Basil Santoine is better this morning," Blatchford announced.

"I understood he was very comfortable last evening," Eaton said. "I have not seen either Miss Santoine or Mr. Avery this morning."

"I saw Basil Santoine the last thing last night," the other boasted. "He was very tired; but when he was home, of course he wished me to be beside him for a time."

"Of course," Eaton replied, as the other halted. There was a humility in the boast of this man's friendship for Santoine which stirred sympathy, almost pity.

"I believe with the doctors that Basil Santoine is to be spared," the tall man continued. "The nation is to be congratulated. He is certainly one of the most useful men in America. The President—much as he is to be admired for unusual qualities—cannot compare in service. Suppose the President were assassinated; instantly the Vice President would take his place; the visible government of the country would go on; there would be no chaos, scarcely any confusion. But suppose Basil Santoine had died—particularly at this juncture!"

Eaton finished his breakfast but remained at the table while Blatchford, who scarcely touched his food, continued to boast, in his queer humility, of the blind man and of the blind man's friendship for him. He checked himself only when

Harriet Santoine appeared in the doorway. He and Eaton at once were on their feet.

"My dear! He wants to see me now?" the tall man almost pleaded. "He wants me to be with him this morning?"

"Of course, Cousin Wallace," the girl said gently, almost with compassion.

"You will excuse me then, sir," Blatchford said hastily to Eaton and hurried off. The girl gazed after him, and when she turned the next instant to Eaton her eyes were wet.

"Good morning!"

"Good morning, Miss Santoine. You are coming to breakfast?"

"Oh, no; I've had my breakfast; I was going out to see that things outside the house have been going on well since we have been away."

"May I go with you while you do that?" Eaton tried to ask casually. Important to him as was the plan of the house, it was scarcely less essential for him to know the grounds.

She hesitated.

"I understand it's my duty at present to stay wherever I may be put; but I'd hardly run away from you while inside your own grounds."

This did not seem to be the question troubling her. "Very well," she said at last. The renewed friendliness—or the reservation of judgment of him—which she had let him see again after the interview with her father in the car the morning before, was not absent; it seemed only covered over with responsibilities which came upon her now that she was at home. She was abstracted as they passed through the hall and a man brought Eaton's overcoat and hat and a maid her coat. Harriet led the way out to the terrace. The day was crisp, but the breeze had lost the chill it had had earlier in the morning; the lake was free from ice; only along the little projecting breakwaters which guarded the bluff against the washing of the waves, some ice still clung, and this was rapidly melting. A graveled path led them around the south end of the house.

"Your father is still better this morning?" Eaton asked.

"What did you say?" she asked.

He repeated his question. Was her constraint, he wondered, due to her feeling, somehow, that for the first time in their short acquaintance he was consciously "using" her, if only for the purpose of gaining an immediate view of the grounds? He felt that; but he told himself he was not doing the sort of thing he had refused to do when, on the train, he had avoided her invitation to present him to her father. Circumstances now were entirely different. And as he shook off the reproach to himself, she also came from her abstraction.

"Yes; Father's improving steadily and—Dr. Sinclair says—much more rapidly than it would have been right to expect. Dr. Sinclair is going to remain only to-day; then he is to turn Father over to the village doctor, who is very good. We will keep the same nurses at present."

"Mr. Blatchford told me that might be the arrangement."

"Oh, you had some talk with Mr. Blatchford, then?"

"We introduced ourselves."

Harriet was silent for a moment, evidently expecting some comment from him; when he offered none, she said, "Father would not like you to accept the estimate of him which Mr. Blatchford must have given you."

"What do you mean?"

"Didn't Mr. Blatchford argue with you that Father must be the greatest man living?"

"He certainly expressed great admiration for your father," Eaton said. "He is your cousin?"

"I call him that; he's Father's cousin. They were very close friends when they were boys, though Cousin Wallace is a few years older. They entered preparatory school together and were together all through college and ever since. I suppose Cousin Wallace told you that it was he— Those are the garages and stables over there to the north, Mr. Eaton. This road leads to them. And over there are the

toolhouses and gardeners' quarters; you can only just see them through the trees."

She had interrupted herself suddenly, as though she realized that his attention had not been upon what she was saying but given to the plan of the grounds. He recalled himself quickly.

"Yes; what was it you were saying about Mr. Blatchford?"

She glanced at him keenly, then colored and went on. "I was saying that Father and he went through college together. They both were looked upon as young men of very unusual promise—Mr. Blatchford especially; I suppose because Father, being younger, had not shown so plainly what he might become. Then Father was blinded—he was just sixteen; and—and Cousin Wallace never fulfilled the promise he had given."

"I don't quite see the connection," Eaton offered.

"Oh, I thought Cousin Wallace must have told you; he tells almost every one as soon as he meets them. It was he who blinded Father. It was a hunting accident, and Father was made totally blind. Father always said it wasn't Cousin Wallace's fault; but Mr. Blatchford was almost beside himself because he believed he had ruined Father's life. But Father went on and did all that he has done, while it stopped poor Cousin Wallace. It's queer how things work out! Cousin Wallace thought it was Father's, but it was his own life that he destroyed. He's happy only when Father wants him with him; and to himself—and to most people—he's only the man that blinded Basil Santoine."

"I think I shall understand him now," Eaton said quietly.

"I like the way you said that.... Here, Mr. Eaton, is the best place to see the grounds."

Their path had topped a little rise; they stopped; and Eaton, as she pointed out the different objects, watched carefully and printed the particulars and the general arrangement of the surroundings on his memory.

As he looked about, he could see that further ahead the path they were on paralleled a private drive which two hundred yards away entered what must be the public pike; for he could see motor-cars passing along it. He noted the

direction of this and of the other paths, so that he could follow them in the dark, if necessary. The grounds were broken by ravines at right angles to the shore, which were crossed by little bridges; other bridges carried the public pike across them, for he could hear them rumble as the motor-cars crossed them; a man could travel along the bottom of one of those ravines for quite a distance without being seen. To north and south outside of the cared-for grounds there were clumps of rank, wild-growing thicket. To the east, the great house which the trees could not hide stood out against the lake, and beyond and below it, was the beach; but a man could not travel along the beach by daylight without being visible for miles from the top of the bluff, and even at night, one traveling along the beach would be easily intercepted.

Could Harriet Santoine divine these thoughts in his mind? He turned to her as he felt her watching him; but if she had been observing him as he looked about, she was not regarding him now. He followed her direction and saw at a little distance a powerful, strapping man, half-concealed—though he did not seem to be hiding—behind some bushes. The man might have passed for an undergardener; but he was not working; and once before during their walk Eaton had seen another man, powerfully built as this one, who had looked keenly at him and then away quickly. Harriet flushed slightly as she saw that Eaton observed the man; Eaton understood then that the man was a guard, one of several, probably, who had been put about the house to keep watch of him.

Had Harriet Santoine understood his interest in the grounds as preparatory to a plan to escape, and had she therefore taken him out to show him the guards who would prevent him? He did not speak of the men, and neither did she; with her, he went on, silently, to the gardeners' cottages, where she gave directions concerning the spring work being done on the grounds. Then they went back to the house, exchanging—for the first time between them—ordinary inanities.

She left him in the hall, saying she was going to visit her father; but part way up the stairs, she paused.

"You'll find books in the library of every conceivable sort, Mr. Eaton," she called down to him.

"Thank you," he answered; and he went into the library, but he did not look for a book. Left alone, he stood listening.

As her footsteps on the stairs died away, no other sound came to him. The lower part of the house seemed deserted. He went out again into the hall and looked about quickly and waited and listened; then he stepped swiftly and silently to a closet where, earlier, he had noticed a telephone. He shut himself in and took up the receiver of the instrument. As he placed it to his ear, he heard the almost imperceptible sound of another receiver on the line being lifted; then the girl at the suburban central said, "Number, please."

Eaton held the receiver to his ear without making reply. The other person on the line—evidently it was an extension in the house—also remained silent. The girl at central repeated the request; neither Eaton nor the other person replied. Eaton hung up the receiver and stepped from the closet. He encountered Donald Avery in the hall.

"You have been telephoning?" Avery asked.

"No."

"Oh; you could not get your number?"

"I did not ask for it."

Eaton gazed coolly at Avery, knowing now that Avery had been at the other telephone on the line or had had report from the person who had been prepared to overhear.

"So you have had yourself appointed my—warden?"

Avery took a case from his pocket and lighted a cigar without offering Eaton one. Eaton glanced past him; Harriet Santoine was descending the stair. Avery turned and saw her, and again taking out his cigar-case, now offered it to Eaton, who ignored it.

"I found Father asleep," Harriet said to Eaton.

"May I see you alone for a moment?" he asked.

"Of course," she said; and as Avery made no motion, she turned toward the door of the large room in the further end of the south wing. Eaton started to follow.

"Where are you taking him, Harriet?" Avery demanded of her sharply.

She had seemed to Eaton to have been herself about to reconsider her action; but Avery decided her.

"In here," she replied; and proceeded to open the door which exposed another door just within, which she opened and closed after she had entered and Eaton had followed her in. Her manner was like that of half an hour before, when she showed him the grounds beyond the house. And Eaton, feeling his muscles tighten, strove to control himself and examine the room with only casual curiosity. It would well excuse any one's interest.

It was very large, perhaps forty feet long and certainly thirty in width. There was a huge stone fireplace on the west wall where the wing connected with the main part of the house; and all about the other wall, and particularly to the east, were high and wide windows; and through those to the south, the sunlight now was flooding in. Bookcases were built between the windows up to the ceiling, and bookcases covered the west wall on both sides of the fireplace. And every case was filled with books; upon a table at one side lay a pile of volumes evidently recently received and awaiting reading and classification. There was a great rack where periodicals of every description—popular, financial, foreign and American—were kept; and there were great presses preserving current newspapers.

At the center of the room was a large table-desk with a chair and a lounge beside it; there were two other lounges in the room, one at the south in the sun and another at the end toward the lake. There were two smaller table-desks on the north side of the room, subordinate to the large desk. There were two "business phonograph" machines with cabinets for records; there was a telephone on the large desk and others on the two smaller tables. A safe, with a combination lock, was built into a wall. The most extraordinary feature of the room was a steep, winding staircase, in the corner beyond the fireplace, evidently connecting with the room above.

The room in which they were was so plainly Basil Santoine's work-room that the girl did not comment upon that; but as Eaton glanced at the stairs, she volunteered:

"They go to Father's room; that has the same space above."

"I see. This is a rather surprising room."

"You mean the windows?" she asked. "That surprises most people—so very much light. Father can't see even sunlight, but he says he feels it. He likes light, anyway; and it is true that he can tell, without his eyes, whether the day is bright or cloudy, and whether the light is turned on at night. The rooms in this wing, too, are nearly sound-proof. There is not much noise from outside here, of course, except the waves; but there are noises from other parts of the house. Noise does not irritate Father, but his hearing has become very acute because of his blindness, and noises sometimes distract him when he is working.... Now, what was it you wished to say to me, Mr. Eaton?"

Eaton, with a start, recollected himself. His gaining a view of that room was of so much more importance than what he had to say that, for a moment, he had forgotten. Then:

"I wanted to ask you exactly what my position here is to be."

"Oh," she said. "I thought that was plain to you from what Father said."

"You mean that I am to be kept here?"

"Yes."

"Indefinitely?"

"Until—as Father indicated to you on the train—he has satisfied himself as to the source of the attack upon him."

"I understand. In the meantime, I am not to be allowed to communicate at all with any one outside?"

"That might depend upon the circumstances."

He gazed at the telephone instrument on the desk. "Miss Santoine, a moment ago I tried to telephone, when I—" He described the incident to her. The color on her cheeks heightened. "Some one was appointed to listen on the wire?" he challenged.

"Yes." She hesitated, and then she added, in the manner in which she had

directed him to the guard outside the house: "And besides, I believe there are—or will be—the new phonographic devices on every line, which record both sides of a conversation. Subject to that, you may use the telephone."

"Thank you," said Eaton grimly. "I suppose if I were to write a letter, it would be taken from me and opened and read."

She colored ruddier and made no comment.

"And if I wished to go to the city, I would be prevented or followed?"

"Prevented, for the present," she replied.

"Thank you."

"That is all?"

The interview had become more difficult for her; he saw that she was anxious to have it over.

"Just one moment more, Miss Santoine. Suppose I resist this?"

"Yes?"

"Your father is having me held here in what I might describe as a free sort of confinement, but still in confinement, without any legal charge against me. Suppose I refuse to submit to that—suppose I demand right to consult, to communicate with some one in order, let us say, to defend myself against the charge of having attacked your father. What then?"

"I can only answer as before, Mr. Eaton."

"That I will be prevented?"

"For the present. I don't know all that Father has ordered done about you; but he is awaiting the result of several investigations. The telegrams you received doubtless are being traced to their sources; other inquiries are being made. As you have only lately come back to America, they may extend far and take some time."

"Thank you," he acknowledged. He went to the door, opened it and went out; he closed it after him and left her alone.

Harriet stood an instant vacantly staring after him; then she went to the door and fastened it with a catch. She came back to the great table-desk—her blind father's desk—and seated herself in the great chair, his chair, and buried her face in her hands. She had seemed—and she knew that she had seemed—quite composed as she talked to Eaton; now she was not composed. Her face was burning hot; her hands, against her cheeks, were cold; tremors of feeling shook her as she thought of the man who just had left her. Why, she asked herself, was she not able to make herself treat this man in the way that her mind told her she should have treated him? That he might be the one who had dealt the blow intended to kill her father—her being could not and would not accept that. Yet, the only reason she had to deny it, was her feeling.

That Eaton must have been involved in the attack or, at least, must have known and now knew something about it which he was keeping from them, seemed certain. Yet she did not, she could not, abominate and hate this man. Instead, she found herself impelled, against all natural reason, more and more to trust him. Moreover, was it fair to her father for her to do this?

Since childhood, since babyhood, even, no one had ever meant anything to her in comparison with her father. Her mother had died when she was young; she had never had, in her play as a child, the careless abandon of other children, because in spite of play she had been thinking of her father; the greatest joy of childhood she could remember was walking hand in hand with her father and telling him the things she saw; it had been their "game"; and as she grew older and it had ceased to be merely a game—as she had grown more and more useful to the blind man, and he had learned more fully to use and trust her—she had found it only more interesting, a greater pleasure. She had never had any other ambition—and she had no other now—except to serve her father; her joy was to be his eyes; her triumph had been when she had found that, though he searched the world and paid fortunes to find others to "see" for him, no one could serve him as she could; she had never thought of herself apart from him.

Now her father had been attacked and injured—attacked foully, while he slept; he had come close to death, had suffered; he was still suffering. Certainly she ought to hate, at least be aloof from any one, every one, against whom the faintest suspicion breathed of having been concerned in that dastardly attack

upon her father; and that she found herself without aversion to Eaton, when he was with her, now filled her with shame and remorse.

She crouched lower against this desk which so represented her father in his power; she felt tears of shame at herself hot on her cold hands. Then she got up and recollected herself. Her father, when he would awake, would wish to work; there were certain, important matters he must decide at once.

Harriet went to the end of the room and to the right of the entrance door. She looked about, with a habit of caution, and then removed a number of books from a shelf about shoulder high; she thus exposed a panel at the back of the bookcase, which she slid back. Behind it appeared the steel door of a combination wall-safe. She opened it and took out two large, thick envelopes with tape about them, sealed and addressed to Basil Santoine; but they were not stamped, for they had not been through the mail; they had been delivered by a messenger. Harriet reclosed the safe, concealed it and took the envelopes back to her father's desk and opened them to examine their contents preparatory to taking them to him. But even now her mind was not on her work; she was thinking of Eaton, where he had gone and what he was doing and—was he thinking of her?

Eaton had left the room, thinking of her. The puzzle of his position in relation to her, and hers to him, filled his mind too. That she had been constrained by circumstances and the opinions of those around her to assume a distrust of him which she did not truly feel, was plain to him; but it was clear that, whatever she felt, she would obey her father's directions in regard to him. And she had told that Basil Santoine, if he was to hold his prisoner as almost a guest in his house pending developments, was to keep that guest strictly from communication with any one outside. Santoine, of course, was aware from the telegram that others had been acting with Eaton; the incident at the telephone had shown that Santoine had anticipated that Eaton's first necessity would be to get in touch with his friends. And this, now, indeed was a necessity. The gaining of Santoine's house, under conditions which he would not have dared to dream of, would be worthless now unless immediately—before Santoine could get any further trace of him—he could get word to and receive word from his friends.

He had stopped, after leaving Santoine's study, in the alcove of the hall in front of the double doors which he had closed behind him; he heard Harriet fasten the inner one. As he stood now, undecided where to go, a young woman

crossed the main part of the hall, coming evidently from outside the house—she had on hat and jacket and was gloved; she was approaching the doors of the room he just had left, and so must pass him. He stared at sight of her and choked; then, he controlled himself rigidly, waiting until she should see him.

She halted suddenly as she saw him and grew very pale, and her gloved hands went swiftly to her breast and pressed against it; she caught herself together and looked swiftly and fearfully about her and out into the hall. Seeing no one but himself, she came a step nearer, "Hugh!" she breathed. Her surprise was plainly greater than his own had been at sight of her; but she checked herself again quickly and looked warningly back at the hall; then she fixed on him her blue eyes—which were very like Eaton's, though she did not resemble him closely in any other particular—as though waiting his instructions.

He passed her and looked about the hall. There was no one in sight in the hall or on the stairs or within the other rooms which opened into the hall. The door Eaton had just come from stayed shut. He held his breath while he listened; but there was no sound anywhere in the house which told him they were likely to be seen; so he came back to the spot where he had been standing.

"Stay where you are, Edith," he whispered. "If we hear any one coming, we are just passing each other in the hall."

"I understand; of course, Hugh! But you—you're here! In his house!"

"Even lower, Edith; remember I'm Eaton—Philip Eaton."

"Of course; I know; and I'm Miss Davis here—Mildred Davis."

"They let you come in and out like this—as you want, with no one watching you?"

"No, no; I do stenography for Mr. Avery sometimes, as I wrote you. That is all. When he works here, I do his typing; and some even for Mr. Santoine himself. But I am not confidential yet; they send for me when they want me."

"Then they sent for you to-day?"

"No; but they have just got back, and I thought I would come to see if anything was wanted. But never mind about me; you—how did you get here?

What are you doing here?"

Eaton drew further back into the alcove as some one passed through the hall above. The girl turned swiftly to the tall pier mirror near to which she stood; she faced it, slowly drawing off her gloves, trembling and not looking toward him. The foot-steps ceased overhead; Eaton, assured no one was coming down the stairs, spoke swiftly to tell her as much as he might in their moment. "He—Santoine—wasn't taken ill on the train, Edith; he was attacked."

"Attacked!" Her lips barely moved.

"He was almost killed; but they concealed it, Edith—pretended he was only ill. I was on the train—you know, of course; I got your wire—and they suspected me of the attack."

"You? But they didn't find out about you, Hugh?"

"No; they are investigating. Santoine would not let them make anything public. He brought me here while he is trying to find out about me. So I'm here, Edith—here! Is it here too?"

Again steps sounded in the hall above. The girl swiftly busied herself with gloves and hat; Eaton stood stark in suspense. The servant above—it was a servant they had heard before, he recognized now—merely crossed from one room to another overhead. Now the girl's lips moved again.

"It?" She formed the question noiselessly.

"The draft of the new agreement."

"It either has been sent to him, or it will be sent to him very soon—here."

"Here in this house with me!"

"Mr. Santoine has to be a party to it—he's to draft it, I think. Anyway, he hasn't seen it yet—I know that. It is either here now, Hugh, or it will be here before long."

"You can't find out about that?"

"Whether it is here, or when it will be? I think I can."

"Where will it be when it is here?"

"Where? Oh!" The girl's eyes went to the wall close to where Eaton stood; she seemed to measure with them a definite distance from the door and a point shoulder high, and to resist the impulse to come over and put her hand upon the spot. As Eaton followed her look, he heard a slight and muffled click as if from the study; but no sound could reach them through the study doors and what he heard came from the wall itself.

"A safe?" he whispered.

"Yes; Miss Santoine—she's in there, isn't she?—closed it just now. There are two of them hidden behind the books one on each side of the door."

Eaton tapped gently on the wall; the wall was brick; the safe undoubtedly was backed with steel.

"The best way is from inside the room," he concluded.

She nodded. "Yes. If you—"

"Look out!"

Some one now was coming downstairs. The girl had time only to whisper swiftly, "If we don't get a chance to speak again, watch that vase." She pointed to a bronze antique which stood on a table near them. "When I'm sure the agreement is in the house, I'll drop a glove-button in that—a black one, if I think it'll be in the safe on the right, white on the left. Now go."

Eaton moved quietly on and into the drawing-room. Avery's voice immediately afterwards was heard; he was speaking to Miss Davis, whom he had found in the hallway. Eaton was certain there was no suspicion that he had talked with her there; indeed, Avery seemed to suppose that Eaton was still in the study with Harriet Santoine. It was her lapse, then, which had let him out and had given him that chance; but it was a lapse, he discovered, which was not likely to favor him again. From that time, while never held strictly in restraint, he found himself always in the sight of some one. Blatchford, in default of any one else, now appeared to assume the oversight of him as his duty. Eaton

lunched with Blatchford, dined with Blatchford and Avery—Blatchford's presence as a buffer against Avery's studied offense to him alone making the meal endurable. Eaton went to his room early, where at last he was left alone.

The day, beginning with his discovery of the fact that he was in Santoine's house and continuing through the walk outside, which first had shown him the lay of the grounds, and then the chance at the sight of Santoine's study followed by the meeting just outside the study door—all this had been more than satisfactory to him. He sat at his window thinking it over. The weather had been clear and there was a moon; as he watched the light upon the water and gazed now and again at the south wing where Santoine had his study, suddenly several windows on the first floor blazed out simultaneously; some one had entered Santoine's work-room and turned on the light. Almost at once the light went out; then, a minute or so later, the same windows glowed dully. The lights in the room had been turned on again, but heavy, opaque curtains had been drawn over the windows before the room was relighted. These curtains were so close over the windows that, unless Eaton had been attracted by the first flash of light, he scarcely would have noticed that the lights were burning within the room.

He had observed, during the day, that Avery or Harriet had been at work in that room—one of them or both—almost all day; and besides the girl he had met in the hall, there had been at least one other stenographer. Must work in this house go on so continuously that it was necessary for some one to work at night, even when Santoine lay ill and unable to make other than the briefest and most important dispositions? And who was working in that room now, Avery or Harriet? He let himself think, idly, about the girl—how strange her life had been—that part of it at least which was spent, as he had gathered most of her waking hours of recent years had been spent, with her father. Strange, almost, as his own life! And what a wonderful girl it had made of her—clever, sweet, lovable, with more than a woman's ordinary capacity for devotion and self-sacrifice.

But, if she were the one working there, was she the sort of girl she had seemed to be? If her service to her father was not only on his personal side but if also she was intimate in his business affairs, must she not therefore have shared the cruel code which had terrorized Eaton for the last four years and kept him an exile in Asia and which, at any hour yet, threatened to take his life? A grim set came to Eaton's lips; his mind went again to his own affairs.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MAN FROM THE TRAIN

In the supposition that he was to have less liberty, Eaton proved correct. Harriet Santoine, to whose impulses had been due his first privileges, showed toward him a more constrained attitude the following morning. She did not suggest hostility, as Avery constantly did; nor, indeed, was there any evidence of retrogression in her attitude toward him; she seemed merely to be maintaining the same position; and since this seemed difficult if they were often together, she avoided him. Eaton found his life in the house after that first day more strictly ordered into a routine which he was obliged to keep. He understood that Santoine, steadily improving but not yet able to leave his bed, had taken up his work again, propped up by pillows; one of the nurses had been dismissed; the other was only upon day duty. But Eaton did not see Santoine at all; and though he learned that Miss Davis or another stenographer, whose name was West, came daily to the house, he never was in a position again to encounter any outsider either coming or going. Besides the servants of the house, he met Blatchford, with whom Eaton usually breakfasted; he also lunched with Blatchford, and Harriet sometimes—sometimes with Avery; he dined with Blatchford and Avery or with all three.

At other times, except that he was confined to the house or to a small space of the grounds about it and was kept under constant surveillance, he was left largely to his own devices; and these at least sufficed to let him examine morning and night, the vase in which he was to find the signal that was to be left for him; these permitted examination of window-locks in other rooms, if not in Santoine's study; these permitted the examination of many other items also and let him follow at least the outline of the method of Santoine's work.

There was no longer room for Eaton to doubt that Harriet had the confidence of her father to almost a complete extent. Now that Santoine was ill, she worked with him daily for hours; and Eaton learned that she did the same when he was well. But Avery worked with the blind man too; he too was certainly in a confidential capacity. Was it not probable then that Avery, and not Harriet, was entrusted with the secrets of dangerous and ugly matters; or was it possible that this girl, worshiping her father as she did, could know and be sure that, because

her father approved these matters, they were right?

A hundred times a day, as Eaton saw or spoke with the girl or thought of her presence near by, this obsessed him. A score of times during their casual talk upon meeting at meals or elsewhere, he found himself turned toward some question which would aid him in determining what must be the fact; but each time he checked himself, until one morning—it was the fifth after his arrival at Santoine's house—Harriet was taking him for his walk in the garden before the house.

It was a bright, sunshiny morning and warm—a true spring day. As they paced back and forth in the sunshine—she bare-haired and he holding his cap in his hand—he looked back at the room in the wing where Santoine still lay; then Eaton looked to the daughter, clear-eyed, clear-skinned, smiling and joyous with the day. She had just told him, at his inquiry, that her father was very much stronger that morning, and her manner more than ever evidenced her pride in him.

"I have been intending to ask you, Miss Santoine," Eaton said to her suddenly then, "if your belief in the superiority of business over war—as we were discussing it ten days ago—-hasn't suffered a shock since then?"

"You mean because of—Father?"

"Yes; you can hardly go back far enough in the history of war to find a time when the soldier's creed was not against killing—or trying to kill—a sleeping enemy."

She looked at him quickly and keenly. "I can't think of Father as being any one's enemy, though I know of course no man can do big things without making some people hate him. Even if what he does is wholly good, bad people hate him for it." She was silent for a few steps. "I like your saying what you did, Mr. Eaton."

"Why?"

"It implies your own creed would be against such a thing. But aren't we rather mixing things up? There is nothing to show yet that the attack on Father sprang out of business relations; and even if it did, it would have to be regarded as an—an atrocity outside the rules of business, just as in war, atrocities occur which are

outside the rules of war. Wait! I know what you are going to say; you are going to say the atrocities are a part of war even if they are outside its recognized rules."

"Yes; I was going to say that."

"And that atrocities due to business are a part of business, even if they are outside the rules."

"Yes; as business is at present conducted."

"But the rules are a part of the game, Mr. Eaton."

"Do you belong among the apologists for war, Miss Santoine?"

"I?"

"Yes; what you say is exactly what the apologists for war say, isn't it? They say that war, in spite of its open savagery and inevitable atrocities, is not a different sort of combat from the combat between men in time of peace. That is, the acts of war differ only in appearance or in degree from the acts of peace. Is that what you believe, Miss Santoine?"

"That men in times of peace perform acts upon each other which differ only in degree from the acts of war?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that, Mr. Eaton?"

He hesitated. "Do you want me to answer that question from my own experience or from what I would like to believe life to be?"

"From your own experience, of course."

"Then I must answer that I believe the apologists to be right as to that fact."

He saw her clear eyes darken. "But you don't believe that argument itself, do you, Mr. Eaton?" she appealed. "It is only the old, old argument, 'Whatever is, is right.' You don't excuse those acts—those atrocities in time of peace? Or was I

mistaken in thinking such things were against your creed? Life is part right, part wrong, isn't it?"

"I am not in a good position to judge, I'm afraid; for what I have seen of it has been all wrong—both business and life."

He had tried to speak lightly; but a sudden bitterness, a sharp hardness in his tone, seemed to assail her; it struck through her and brought her shoulders together in a shudder; but, instead of alienating her, she turned with a deeper impulse of feeling toward him.

"You—you do not want to tell more—to tell how it has been wrong; you don't want to tell that—" She hesitated, and then in an intimate way which surprised and frightened him, she added, "to me?"

After she had said it, she herself was surprised, and frightened; she looked away from him with face flushed, and he did not dare answer, and she did not speak again.

They had come to the end of the gardens where he was accustomed to turn and retrace his steps toward the house; but now she went on, and he went on with her. They were upon the wide pike which ran northward following, but back from, the shore of the lake. He saw that now, as a motor passed them on the road, she recalled that she was taking him past the previously appointed bounds; but in the intimacy of the moment, she could not bring herself to speak of that. It was Eaton who halted and asked, "Shall we go on?"

"Wouldn't you like to?"

They walked on slowly. "I wish you could tell me more about yourself, Mr. Eaton."

"I wish so too," he said.

"Then why can you not?" She turned to him frankly; he gazed at her a moment and then looked away and shook his head. How had she answered, in what she already had said, the question which lay below what he had asked her? In her defense of business, did she know all the cruelties of business and defend the wrong she knew, together with the right, as inevitable? Or did she not know all of what was known even under her father's roof; and if she knew all, would

she then loathe or defend it? Another motor sped near, halted and then speeded on again; Eaton, looking up, saw it was a runabout with Avery alone in it; evidently, seeing them in the road, Avery had halted to protest, then thought better of it and gone on. But other motors passed now with people who spoke to Harriet and who stopped to inquire for her father and wish him well.

"Your father does not seem to be one of the great men without honor in his own neighborhood," Eaton said to her after one of these had halted and gone on.

"Every one who knows Father likes and admires him!" she rejoiced.

"I don't mean exactly that," Eaton went on. "They must trust him too, in an extraordinary way. His associates must place most complete confidence in him when they leave to him the adjustment of matters such as I understand they do. There is no way, as I comprehend it, that any of the powerful men who ask his advice could hold him accountable if he were unfair to them; yet men of the most opposite types, the most inimical and hostile, place their affairs in his hands. He tells them what is just, and they abide by his decision."

Harriet shook her head. "No; it isn't quite that," she said.

"What, then?"

"You are correct in saying that men of the most opposite sorts—and most irreconcilable to each other—constantly place their fate in Father's hand; and when he tells them what they must do, they abide by his decision. But he doesn't decide for them what is just."

"I don't understand."

"Father cannot tell them which side is just because, if he did that, they wouldn't consider his decision; and they wouldn't ask him to make any more; he would lose all influence for better relations. So he doesn't tell them what is just."

"What does he tell them, then?"

"He tells them what would be the outcome if they fought, who would win and who would lose and by how much. And they believe him and abide by his decision without fighting; for he knows; and they know that he knows and is absolutely honest."

Eaton was silent for a moment as they walked along. "How can he come to his decision?" he asked at last.

"How?"

"I mean, much of the material presented to him must be documentary."

"Much of it is."

"You will pardon me," Eaton prefaced, "but of course I am immensely interested. How are these written out for him—in Braille characters or other letters for the blind?"

"No; that would not be practicable for all documents, and so it is done with none of them."

"Then some one must read them to him."

"Of course."

Eaton started to speak—then refrained.

"What were you going to say?" she questioned.

"That the person—or persons—who reads the documents to him must occupy an extremely delicate position."

"He does. In fact, I think that position is Father's one nightmare."

"Nightmare?"

"The person he trusts must not only be absolutely discreet but absolutely honest."

"I should think so. If any one in that position wanted to use the information brought to your father, he could make himself millions overnight, undoubtedly, and ruin other men."

"And kill Father too," the girl added quietly. "Yes," she said as Eaton looked at her. "Father puts nothing above his trust. If that trust were betrayed—whether or not Father were in any way to blame for it—I think it would kill him."

"So you are the one who is in that position."

"Yes; that is, I have been."

"You mean there is another now; that is, of course, Mr. Avery?"

"Yes; here at this house Mr. Avery and I, and Mr. Avery at the office. There are some others at the office whom Father trusts, but not completely; and it is not necessary to trust them wholly, for all Father's really important decisions are made at the house, and the most important records are kept here. Before Mr. Avery came, I was the only one who helped here at the house."

"When was that?"

"When Mr. Avery came? About five years ago. Father had an immense amount of work at that time. Business conditions were very much unsettled. There was trouble at that time between some of the big Eastern and the big Western men, and at the same time the Government was prosecuting the Trusts. Nobody knew what the outcome of it all would be; many of the biggest men who consulted Father were like men groping in the dark. I don't suppose you would remember the time by what I say; but you would remember it, as nearly everybody else does by this: it was the time of the murder of Mr. Latron."

"Yes; I remember that," said Eaton; "and Mr. Avery came to you at that time?"

"Yes; just at that time I was thrown from my horse, and could not do as much as I had been doing, so Mr. Avery was sent to Father."

"Then Mr. Avery was reading to him at the time you speak of—the time of the Latron murder?"

"No; Mr. Avery came just afterward. I was reading to him at that time."

"No one but you?"

"No one. Before that he had had Mr. Blatchford read to him sometimes, but—poor Cousin Wallace!—he made a terrible mistake in reading to Father once. Father discovered it before it was too late; and he never let Cousin Wallace know. He pretends to trust Cousin Wallace now with reading some things; but he

always has Mr. Avery or me go over them with him afterward."

"The papers must have been a good deal for a girl of eighteen."

"At that time, you mean? They were; but Father dared trust no one else."

"Mr. Avery handles those matters now for your father?"

"The continuation of what was going on then? Yes; he took them up at the time I was hurt and so has kept on looking after them; for there has been plenty for me to do without that; and those things have all been more or less settled now. They have worked themselves out as things do, though they seemed almost unsolvable at the time. One thing that helped in their solution was that Father was able, that time, to urge what was just, as well as what was advisable."

"You mean that in the final settlement of them no one suffered?"

"No one, I think—except, of course, poor Mr. Latron; and that was a private matter not connected in any direct way with the questions at issue. Why do you ask all this, Mr. Eaton?"

"I was merely interested in you—in what your work has been with your father, and what it is," he answered quietly.

His step had slowed, and she, unconsciously, had delayed with him. Now she realized that his manner toward her had changed from what it had been a few minutes before; he had been strongly moved and drawn toward her then, ready to confide in her; now he showed only his usual quiet reserve—polite, casual, unreadable. She halted and faced him, abruptly, chilled with disappointment.

"Mr. Eaton," she demanded, "a few minutes ago you were going to tell me something about yourself; you seemed almost ready to speak; now—"

"Now I am not, you mean?"

"Yes; what has changed you? Is it something I have said?"

He seemed to reflect. "Are you sure that anything has changed me? I think you were mistaken. You asked if I could not tell you more about myself; I said I wished I could, and that perhaps I might. I meant some time in the future; and I

still hope I may—some time."

His look and tone convinced her; for she could recall nothing he had asked about herself or that she had replied to, which could have made any change in him. She studied him an instant more, fighting her disappointment and the feeling of having been rebuffed.

They had been following the edge of the road, she along a path worn in the turf, he on the edge of the road itself and nearer to the tracks of the motors. As she faced him, she was slightly above him, her face level with his. Suddenly she cried out and clutched at him. As they had stopped, she had heard the sound of a motor approaching them rapidly from behind. Except that this car seemed speeding faster than the others, she had paid no attention and had not turned. Instantaneously, as she had cried and pulled upon him, she had realized that this car was not passing; it was directly behind and almost upon him. She felt him spring to the side as quickly as he could; but her cry and pull upon him were almost too late; as he leaped, the car struck. The blow was glancing, not direct, and he was off his feet and in motion when the wheel struck; but the car hurled him aside and rolled him over and over.

As she rushed to Eaton, the two men in the rear seat of the car turned their heads and looked back.

"Are you all right?" one called to Eaton; but without checking its speed or swerving, the car dashed on and disappeared down the roadway.

She bent over Eaton and took hold of him. He struggled to his feet and, dazed, tottered so that she supported him. As she realized that he was not greatly hurt, she stared with horror at the turn in the road where the car had disappeared.

"Why, he tried to run you down! He meant to! He tried to hurt you!" she cried.

"No," Eaton denied. "Oh, no; I don't think so."

"But they went on without stopping; they didn't wait an instant. He didn't care; he meant to do it!"

"No!" Eaton unsteadily denied again. "It must have been—an accident. He was—frightened when he saw what he had done."

"It wasn't at all like an accident!" she persisted. "It couldn't have been an accident there and coming up from behind the way he did! No; he meant to do it! Did you see who was in the car—who was driving?"

He turned to her quickly. "Who?" he demanded.

"One of the people who was on the train! That man—the morning we—the morning Father was hurt—do you remember, when you came into the dining car for breakfast and the conductor wanted to seat you opposite a young man who had just spilled coffee? You sat down at our table instead. Don't you remember—a little man, nervous, but very strong; a man almost like an ape?"

He shuddered and then controlled himself. "Nothing!" he answered her clasp of concern on his arm. "Quite steady again; thanks. Just dizzy; I guess I was jarred more than I knew. Yes, I remember a fellow the conductor tried to seat me opposite."

"This was the same man!"

Eaton shook his head. "That could hardly be; I think you must be mistaken."

"I am not mistaken; it was that man!"

"Still, I think you must be," he again denied.

She stared, studying him. "Perhaps I was," she agreed; but she knew she had not been. "I am glad, whoever it was, he didn't injure you. You are all right, aren't you?"

"Quite," he assured. "Please don't trouble about it, Miss Santoine."

He dusted himself off with her help and tried to limp as little as possible; and when she insisted upon returning to the house, he made no objection, but he refused to wait while she went back for a car to take him. They walked back rather silently, she appreciating how passionately she had expressed herself for him, and he quiet because of this and other thoughts too.

They found Donald Avery in front of the house looking for them as they came up. Eaton succeeded in walking without limping; but he could not conceal the marks on his clothes.

"Harriet, I've just come from your father; he wants you to go to him at once," Avery directed. "Good morning, Eaton. What's happened?"

"Carelessness," Eaton deprecated. "Got rather in the way of a motor and was knocked over for it."

Harriet did not correct this to Avery. She went up to her father; she was still trembling, still sick with horror at what she had seen—an attempt to kill one walking at her side. She stopped outside her father's door to compose herself; then she went in.

The blind man was propped up on his bed with pillows into almost a sitting position; the nurse was with him.

"What did you want, Father?" Harriet asked.

He had recognized her step and had been about to speak to her; but at the sound of her voice he stopped the words on his lips and changed them into a direction for the nurse to leave the room.

He waited until the nurse had left and closed the door behind her. Harriet saw that, in his familiarity with her tones and every inflection of her voice, he had sensed already that something unusual had occurred; she repeated, however, her question as to what he wanted.

"That does not matter now, Harriet. Where have you been?"

"I have been walking with Mr. Eaton."

"What happened?"

She hesitated. "Mr. Eaton was almost run down by a motor-car."

"Ah! An accident?"

She hesitated again. She had seen on her father's face the slight heightening of his color which, with him, was the only outward sign that marked some triumph of his own mind; his blind eyes, abstracted and almost always motionless, never showed anything at all.

"Mr. Eaton said it was an accident," she answered.

"But you?"

"It did not look to me like an accident, Father. It—it showed intention."

"You mean it was an attack?"

"Yes; it was an attack. The man in the car meant to run Mr. Eaton down; he meant to kill him or to hurt him terribly. Mr. Eaton wasn't hurt. I called to him and pulled him—he jumped away in time."

"To kill him, Harriet? How do you know?"

She caught herself. "I—I don't know, Father. He certainly meant to injure Mr. Eaton. When I said kill him, I was telling only what I thought."

"That is better. I think so too."

"That he meant to kill Mr. Eaton?"

"Yes."

She watched her father's face; often when relating things to him, she was aware from his expression that she was telling him only something he already had figured out and expected or even knew; she felt that now.

"Father, did you expect Mr. Eaton to be attacked?"

"Expect? Not that exactly; it was possible; I suspected something like this might occur."

"And you did not warn him?"

The blind man's hands sought each other on the coverlet and clasped together. "It was not necessary to warn him, Harriet; Mr. Eaton already knew. Who was in the car?"

"Three men."

"Had you seen any of them before?"

"Yes, one—the man who drove."

"Where?"

"On the train."

The color on Santoine's face grew brighter. "Did you know who he was?"

"No, Father."

"Describe him, dear," Santoine directed.

He waited while she called together her recollections of the man.

"I can't describe him very fully, Father," she said. "He was one of the people who had berths in the forward sleeping-car. I can recall seeing him only when I passed through the car—I recall him only twice in that car and once in the diner."

"That is interesting," said Santoine.

"What, Father?"

"That in five days upon the train you saw the man only three times."

"You mean he must have kept out of sight as much as possible?"

"Have you forgotten that I asked you to describe him, Harriet?"

She checked herself. "Height about five feet, five," she said, "broad-shouldered, very heavily set; I remember he impressed me as being unusually muscular. His hair was black; I can't recall the color of his eyes; his cheeks were blue with a heavy beard closely shaved. I remember his face was prognathous, and his clothes were spotted with dropped food. I—it seems hard for me to recall him, and I can't describe him very well."

"But you are sure it was the same man in the motor?"

"Yes."

"Did he seem a capable person?"

"Exactly what do you mean?"

"Would he be likely to execute a purpose well, Harriet—either a purpose of his own, or one in which he had been instructed?"

"He seemed an animal sort of person, small, strong, and not particularly intelligent. It seems hard for me to remember more about him than that."

"That is interesting."

"What?"

"That it is hard for you to remember him very well."

"Why, Father?"

Her father did not answer. "The other men in the motor?" he asked.

"I can't describe them. I—I was excited about Mr. Eaton."

"The motor itself, Harriet?"

"It was a black touring car."

"Make and number?"

"I don't know either of those. I don't remember that I saw a number; it—it may have been taken off or covered up."

"Thank you, dear."

"You mean that is all, then?"

"No; bring Eaton to me."

"He has gone to his room to fix himself up."

"I'll send for him, then." Santoine pressed one of the buttons beside his bed to call a servant; but before the bell could be answered, Harriet got up.

"I'll go myself," she said.

She went out into the hall and closed the door behind her; she waited until she heard the approaching steps of the man summoned by Santoine's bell; then, going to meet him, she sent him to call Eaton in his rooms, and she still waited until the man came back and told her Eaton had already left his rooms and gone downstairs. She dismissed the man and went to the head of the stairs, but her steps slowed there and stopped. She was strained and nervous; often in acting as her father's "eye" and reporting to him what she saw, she felt that he found many insignificant things in her reports which were hidden from herself; and she never had had that feeling more strongly than just now as she was telling him about the attack made on Eaton. So she knew that the blind man's thought in regard to Eaton had taken some immense stride; but she did not know what that stride had been, or what was coming now when her father saw Eaton.

She went on slowly down the stairs, and when halfway down, she saw Eaton in the hall below her. He was standing beside the table which held the bronze antique vase; he seemed to have taken something from the vase and to be examining it. She halted again to watch him; then she went on, and he turned at the sound of her footsteps. She could see, as she approached him, what he had taken from the vase, but she attached no importance to it; it was only a black button from a woman's glove—one of her own, perhaps, which she had dropped without noticing. He tossed it indifferently toward the open fireplace as he came toward her.

"Father wants to see you, Mr. Eaton," she said.

He looked at her intently for an instant and seemed to detect some strangeness in her manner and to draw himself together; then he followed her up the stairs.

CHAPTER XIV

IT GROWS PLAINER

Basil Santoine's bedroom, like the study below it, was so nearly sound-proof that anything going on in the room could not be heard in the hall outside it, even

close to the double doors. Eaton, as they approached these doors, listened vainly, trying to determine whether any one was in the room with Santoine; then he quickened his step to bring him beside Harriet.

"One moment, please, Miss Santoine," he urged.

She stopped. "What is it you want?"

"Your father has received some answer to the inquiries he has been having made about me?"

"I don't know, Mr. Eaton."

"Is he alone?"

"Yes."

Eaton thought a minute. "That is all I wanted to know, then," he said.

Harriet opened the outer door and knocked on the inner one. Eaton heard Santoine's voice at once calling them to come in, and as Harriet opened the second door, he followed her into the room. The blind man turned his sightless eyes toward them, and, plainly aware—somehow—that it was Eaton and Harriet who had come in, and that no one else was with them, he motioned Harriet to close the door and set a chair for Eaton beside the bed. Eaton, understanding this gesture, took the chair from her and set it as Santoine's motion had directed; then he waited for her to seat herself in one of the other chairs.

"Am I to remain, Father?" she asked.

"Yes," Santoine commanded.

Eaton waited while she went to a chair at the foot of the bed and seated herself—her clasped hands resting on the footboard and her chin upon her hands—in a position to watch both Eaton and her father while they talked; then Eaton sat down.

"Good morning, Eaton," the blind man greeted him.

"Good morning, Mr. Santoine," Eaton answered; he understood by now that

Santoine never began a conversation until the one he was going to address himself to had spoken, and that Santoine was able to tell, by the sound of the voice, almost as much of what was going on in the mind of one he talked with as a man with eyes is able to tell by studying the face. He continued to wait quietly, therefore, glancing up once to Harriet Santoine, whose eyes for an instant met his; then both regarded again the face of the blind man on the bed.

Santoine was lying quietly upon his back, his head raised on the pillows, his arms above the bed-covers, his finger-tips touching with the fingers spread.

"You recall, of course, Eaton, our conversation on the train," Santoine said evenly.

"Yes."

"And so you remember that I gave you at that time four possible reasons—as the only possible ones—why you had taken the train I was on. I said you must have taken it to attack me, or to protect me from attack; to learn something from me, or to inform me of something; and I eliminated as incompatible with the facts, the second of these—I said you could not have taken it to protect me."

"Yes."

"Very well; the reason I have sent for you now is that, having eliminated to-day still another of those possibilities,—leaving only two,—I want to call your attention in a certain order to some of the details of what happened on the train."

"You say that to-day you have eliminated another of the possibilities?" Eaton asked uneasily.

"To-day, yes; of course. You had rather a close call this morning, did you not?"

"Rather, I was careless."

"You were careless?" Santoine smiled derisively. "Perhaps you were—in one sense. In another, however, you have been very careful, Eaton. You have been careful to act as though the attempt to run you down could not have been a deliberate attack; you were careful to call it an accident; you were careful not to recognize any of the three men in the motor."

"I had no chance to recognize any of them, Mr. Santoine," Eaton replied easily. "I did not see the car coming; I was thrown from my feet; when I got up, it was too far away for me to recognize any one."

"Perhaps so; but were you surprised when my daughter recognized one of them as having been on the train with us?"

Eaton hesitated, but answered almost immediately:

"Your question doesn't exactly fit the case. I thought Miss Santoine had made a mistake."

"But you were not surprised; no. What would have been a surprise to you, Eaton, would have been—if you had had a chance to observe the men—to have found that none of them—none of them had been on the train!"

Eaton started and felt that he had colored. How much did Santoine know? Had the blind man received, as Eaton feared, some answer to his inquiries which had revealed, or nearly revealed, Eaton's identity? Or was it merely that the attack made on Eaton that morning had given Santoine new light on the events that had happened on the train and particularly—Eaton guessed—on the cipher telegram which Santoine claimed to have translated? Whatever the case might be, Eaton knew that he must conceal from Harriet the effect the blind man's words produced on him. Santoine, of course, could not see these effects; and he had kept his daughter in the room to watch for just such things. Eaton glanced at her; she was watching him and, quite evidently, had seen his discomposure, but she made no comment. As he regained possession of himself, her gaze went back intently to her father. Eaton looked from her back to the blind man, and saw that Santoine was waiting for him to speak.

"You assume that, Mr. Santoine," he asserted, "because—" He checked himself and altered his sentence. "Will you tell me why you assume that?"

"That that would have surprised you? Yes; that is what I called you in here to tell you."

As Santoine waited a moment before going on, Eaton watched him anxiously. The blind man turned himself on his pillows so as to face Eaton more directly; his sightless, motionless eyes told nothing of what was going on in his mind.

"Just ten days ago," Santoine said evenly and dispassionately, "I was found unconscious in my berth—Section Three of the rearmost sleeper—on the transcontinental train, which I had taken with my daughter and Avery at Seattle. I had been attacked,—assailed during my sleep some time in that first night that I spent on the train,—and my condition was serious enough so that for three days afterward I was not allowed to receive any of the particulars of what had happened to me. When I did finally learn them, I naturally attempted to make certain deductions as to who it was that had attempted to murder me, and why; and ever since, I have continued to occupy myself with those questions. I am going to tell you a few of my deductions. You need not interrupt me unless you discover me to be in error, and then in error only in fact or observation which, obviously, had to be reported to me. If you fancy I am at fault in my conclusions, wait until you discover your error."

Santoine waited an instant; Eaton thought it was to allow him to speak if he wanted to, but Eaton merely waited.

"The first thing I learned," the blind man went on, "was the similarity of the attack on me to the more successful attack on Warden, twelve days previous, which had caused his death. The method of the two attacks was the same; the conditions surrounding them were very similar. Warden was attacked in his motor, in a public street; his murderer took a desperate chance of being detected by the chauffeur or by some one on the street, both when he made the attack and afterward when he escaped unobserved, as it happened, from the automobile. The attack upon me was made in the same way, perhaps even with the same instrument; my assailant took equally desperate chances. The attack on me was made on a public conveyance where the likelihood of the murderer being seen was even greater, for the train was stopped, and under conditions which made his escape almost impossible. The desperate nature of the two attacks, and their almost identical method, made it practically certain that they originated at the same source and were carried out—probably—by the same hand and for the same purpose.

"Mrs. Warden's statement to me of her interview with her husband a half-hour before his murder, made it certain that the object of the attack on him was to 'remove' him. It seemed almost inevitable, therefore, that the attack on me must have been for the same purpose. There have been a number of times in my life, Eaton, when I have known that it would be to the advantage of some one if I were 'removed'; that I do not know now any definite reason for such an act does

not decrease its probability; for I do not know why Warden was 'removed.'

"I found that a young man—yourself—had acted so suspiciously both before and after the attack on me that both Avery and the conductor in charge of the train had become convinced that he was my assailant, and had segregated him from the rest of the passengers. Not only this, but—and this seemed quite conclusive to them—you admitted that you were the one who had called upon Warden the evening of his murder. Warden's statement to his wife that you were some one he was about to befriend—which had been regarded as exculpating you from share in his murder—ceased to be so conclusive now that you had been present at a second precisely similar attack; and it certainly was no proof that you had not attacked me. It seemed likely, too, that you were the only person on the train aside from my daughter and Avery who knew who I was; for I had had reason to believe from the time when I first heard you speak when you boarded the train, that you were some one with whom I had, previously, very briefly come in contact; and I had asked my daughter to find out who you were, and she had tried to do so, but without success."

Eaton wet his lips.

"Also," the blind man continued, "there was a telegram which definitely showed that there was some connection, unknown to me, between you and me, as well as a second—or rather a previous—suspicious telegram in cipher, which we were able to translate."

Eaton leaned forward, impelled to speak; but as Santoine clearly detected this impulse and waited to hear what he was going to say, Eaton reconsidered and kept silent.

"You were going to say something about that telegram in cipher?" Santoine asked.

"No," Eaton denied.

"I think you were; and I think that a few minutes ago when I said you were not surprised by the attempt made to-day to run you down, you were also going to speak of it; for that attempt makes clear the meaning of the telegram. Its meaning was not clear to me before, you understand. It said only that you were known and followed. It did not say why you were followed. I could not be certain of that; there were several possible reasons why you might be followed—

even that the 'one' who 'was following' might be some one secretly interested in preventing you from an attack on me. Now, however, I know that the reason you feared the man who was following was because you expected him to attack you. Knowing that, Eaton—knowing that, I want to call your attention to the peculiarity of our mutual positions on the train. You had asked for and were occupying Section Three in the third sleeper, in order—I assume and, I believe, correctly—to avoid being put in the same car with me. In the night, the second sleeper—the car next in front of yours—was cut off from the train and left behind. That made me occupy in relation to the forward part of the train exactly the same position as you had occupied before the car ahead of you had been cut out. I was in Section Three in the third sleeper from the front."

Eaton stared at Santoine, fascinated; what had been only vague, half felt, half formed with himself, was becoming definite, tangible, under the blind man's reasoning. He was aware that Harriet Santoine was looking alternately from him to her father, herself startled by the revelation thus passionlessly recited. What her father was saying was new to her; he had not taken his daughter into his confidence to this extent.

Eaton's hands closed instinctively, in his emotion. "What do you mean?"

"You understand already," Santoine asserted. "The attack made on me was meant for you. Some one stealing through the cars from the front to the rear of the train and carrying in his mind the location Section Three in the third car, struck through the curtains by mistake at me instead of you. Who was that, Eaton?"

Eaton sat unanswering, staring.

"You did not realize before, that the man on the train meant to murder you?" Santoine demanded.

"No," said Eaton.

"I see you understand it now; and that it was the same man—or some one accompanying the man—who tried to run you down this morning. Who is that man?"

"I don't know," Eaton answered.

"You mean you prefer to shield him?"

"Shield him?"

"That is what you are doing, is it not? For, even if you don't know the man directly, you know in whose cause and under whose direction he murdered Warden—and why and for whom he is attempting to murder you."

Eaton remained silent.

In his intensity, Santoine had lifted himself from his pillows. "Who is that man?" he challenged. "And what is that connection between you and me which, when the attack found and disabled me instead of you, told him that—in spite of his mistake—his result had been accomplished? told him that, if I was dying, a repetition of the attack against you was unnecessary?"

Eaton knew that he had grown very pale; Harriet must be aware of the effect Santoine's words had on him, but he did not dare look at her now to see how much she was comprehending. All his attention was needed to defend himself against Santoine.

"I don't understand." He fought to compose himself.

"It is perfectly plain," Santoine said patiently. "It was believed at first that I had been fatally hurt; it was even reported at one time—I understand—that I was dead; only intimate friends have been informed of my actual condition. Yesterday, for the first time, the newspapers announced the certainty of my recovery; and to-day an attack is made on you."

"There has been no opportunity for an attack on me before, if this was an attack. On the train I was locked up under charge of the conductor."

"You have been off the train nearly a week."

"But I have been kept here in your house."

"You have been allowed to walk about the grounds."

"But I've been watched all the time; no one could have attacked me without being seen by your guards."

"They did not hesitate to attack you in sight of my daughter."

"But—"

"You are merely challenging my deductions! Will you reply to my questions? —tell me the connection between us?—who you are?"

"No."

"Come here!"

"What?" said Eaton.

"Come here—close to me, beside the bed."

Eaton hesitated, and then obeyed.

"Bend over!"

Eaton stooped, and the blind man's hands seized him. Instantly Eaton withdrew.

"Wait!" Santoine warned. "If you do not stay, I shall call help." One hand went to the bell beside his bed.

Harriet had risen; she met Eaton's gaze warningly and nodded to him to comply. He bent again over the bed. He felt the blind man's sensitive fingers searching his features, his head, his throat. Eaton gazed at Santoine's face while the fingers were examining him; he could see that Santoine was merely finding confirmation of an impression already gained from what had been told him about Eaton. Santoine showed nothing more than this confirmation; certainly he did not recognize Eaton. More than this, Eaton could not tell.

"Now your hands," Santoine ordered.

Eaton extended one hand and then the other; the blind man felt over them from wrists to the tips of the fingers; then he let himself sink back against the pillows, absorbed in thought.

Eaton straightened and looked to Harriet where she was standing at the foot

of the bed; she, however, was intently watching her father and did not look Eaton's way.

"You may go," Santoine said at last.

"Go?" Eaton asked.

"You may leave the room. Blatchford will meet you downstairs."

Santoine reached for the house telephone beside his bed—receiver and transmitter on one light band—and gave directions to have Blatchford await Eaton in the hall below.

Eaton stood an instant longer, studying Santoine and trying fruitlessly to make out what was passing in the blind man's mind. He was distinctly frightened by the revelation he just had had of Santoine's clear, implacable reasoning regarding him; for none of the blind man's deductions about him had been wrong—all had been the exact, though incomplete, truth. It was clear to him that Santoine was close—much closer even than Santoine himself yet appreciated—to knowing Eaton's identity; it was even probable that one single additional fact—the discovery, for instance, that Miss Davis was the source of the second telegram received by Eaton on the train—would reveal everything to Santoine. And Eaton was not certain that Santoine, even without any new information, would not reach the truth unaided at any moment. So Eaton knew that he himself must act before this happened. But so long as the safe in Santoine's study was kept locked or was left open only while some one was in the room with it, he could not act until he had received help from outside; and he had not yet received that help; he could not hurry it or even tell how soon it was likely to come. He had seen Miss Davis several times as she passed through the halls going or coming for her work with Avery; but Blatchford had always been with him, and he had been unable to speak with her or to receive any signal from her.

As his mind reviewed, almost instantaneously, these considerations, he glanced again at Harriet; her eyes, this time, met his, but she looked away immediately. He could not tell what effect Santoine's revelations had had on her, except that she seemed to be in complete accord with her father. As he went toward the door, she made no move to accompany him. He went out without speaking and closed the inner and the outer doors behind him; then he went down to Blatchford.

For several minutes after Eaton had left the room, Santoine thought in silence. Harriet stayed motionless, watching him; the extent to which he had been shaken and disturbed by the series of events which had started with Warden's murder, came home strongly to her now that she saw him alone and now that his talk with Eaton had shown partly what was passing in his mind.

"Where are you, Harriet?" he asked at last.

She knew it was not necessary to answer him, but merely to move so that he could tell her position; she moved slightly, and his sightless eyes shifted at once to where she stood.

"How did he act?" Santoine asked.

She reviewed swiftly the conversation, supplementing his blind apperceptions of Eaton's manner with what she herself had seen.

"What have been your impressions of Eaton's previous social condition, Daughter?" he asked.

She hesitated; she knew that her father would not permit the vague generality that Eaton was "a gentleman." "Exactly what do you mean, Father?"

"I don't mean, certainly, to ask whether he knows which fork to use at table or enough to keep his napkin on his knee; but you have talked with him, been with him—both on the train and here: have you been able to determine what sort of people he has been accustomed to mix with? Have his friends been business men? Professional men? Society people?"

The deep and unconcealed note of trouble in her father's voice startled her, in her familiarity with every tone and every expression. She answered his question: "I don't know, Father."

"I want you to find out."

"In what way?"

"You must find a way. I shall tell Avery to help." He thought for several moments, while she stood waiting. "We must have that motor and the men in it traced, of course. Harriet, there are certain matters—correspondence—which

Avery has been looking after for me; do you know what correspondence I mean?"

"Yes, Father."

"I would rather not have Avery bothered with it just now; I want him to give his whole attention to this present inquiry. You yourself will assume charge of the correspondence of which I speak, Daughter."

"Yes, Father. Do you want anything else now?"

"Not of you; send Avery to me."

She moved toward the door which led to the circular stair. Her father, she knew, seldom spoke all that was in his mind to any one, even herself; she was accustomed, therefore, to looking for meanings underneath the directions which he gave her, and his present order—that she should take charge of a part of their work which ordinarily had been looked after by Avery—startled and surprised her by its implication that her father might not trust Avery fully. But now, as she halted and looked back at him from the door and saw his troubled face and his fingers nervously pressing together, she recognized that it was not any definite distrust of Avery that had moved him, but only his deeper trust in herself. Blind and obliged to rely on others always in respect of sight, and now still more obliged to rely upon them because he was confined helpless to his bed, Santoine had felt ever since the attack on him some unknown menace over himself and his affairs, some hidden agency threatening him and, through him, the men who trusted him. So, with instinctive caution, she saw now, he had been withdrawing more and more his reliance upon those less closely bound to him—even Avery—and depending more and more on the one he felt he could implicitly trust—herself. As realization of this came to her, she was stirred deeply by the impulse to rush back to him and throw herself down beside him and assure him of her love and fealty; but seeing him again deep in thought, she controlled herself and went out.

CHAPTER XV

DONALD AVERY IS MOODY

Harriet went down the stair into the study; she passed through the study into the main part of the house and found Donald and sent him to her father; then she returned to the study. She closed and fastened the doors, and after glancing about the room, she removed the books in front of the wall-safe to the right of the door, slid back the movable panel, opened the safe and took out a bundle of correspondence. She closed safe and panel and put back the books; and carrying the correspondence to her father's desk, she began to look over it.

This correspondence—a considerable bundle of letters held together with wire clips and the two envelopes bound with tape which she had put into the safe the day before—made up the papers of which her father had spoken to her. These letters represented the contentions of willful, powerful and sometimes ruthless and violent men. Ruin of one man by another—ruin financial, social or moral, or all three together—was the intention of the principals concerned in this correspondence; too often, she knew, one man or one group had carried out a fierce intent upon another; and sometimes, she was aware, these bitter feuds had carried certain of her father's clients further even than personal or family ruin: fraud, violence and—twice now—even murder were represented by this correspondence; for the papers relating to the Warden and the Latron murders were here. There were in this connection the documents concerning the Warden and the Latron properties which her father had brought back with him from the Coast; there were letters, now more than five years old, which concerned the Government's promised prosecution of Latron; and, lastly, there were the two envelopes which had just been sent to her father concerning the present organization of the Latron properties.

She glanced through these and the others with them. She had felt always the horror of this violent and ruthless side of the men with whom her father dealt; but now she knew that actual appreciation of the crimes that passed as business had been far from her. And, strangely, she now realized that it was not the attacks on Mr. Warden and her father—overwhelming with horror as these had been—which were bringing that appreciation home to her. It was her understanding now that the attack was not meant for her father but for Eaton.

For when she had believed that some one had meant to murder her father, as Mr. Warden had been murdered, the deed had come within the class of crimes comprehensible to her. She was accustomed to recognize that, at certain times

and under special circumstances, her father might be an obstacle to some one who would become desperate enough to attack; but she had supposed that, if such an attack were delivered, it must be made by a man roused to hate his victim, and the deed would be palliated, as far as such a crime could be, by an overwhelming impulse of terror or antipathy at the moment of striking the blow. But she had never contemplated a condition in which a man might murder—or attempt to murder—without hate of his victim. Yet now her father had made it clear that this was such a case. Some one on that train in Montana—acting for himself or for another—had found this stranger, Eaton, an obstacle in his way. And merely as removing an obstacle, that man had tried to murder Eaton. And when, instead, he had injured Basil Santoine, apparently fatally, he had been satisfied so that his animus against Eaton had lapsed until the injured man began to recover; and then, when Eaton was out on the open road beside her, that pitiless, passionless enemy had tried again to kill. She had seen the face of the man who drove the motor down upon Eaton, and it had been only calm, determined, businesslike—though the business with which the man had been engaged was murder.

Though Harriet had never believed that Eaton had been concerned in the attack upon her father, her denial of it had been checked and stilled because he would not even defend himself. She had not known what to think; she had seemed to herself to be waiting with her thoughts in abeyance; until he should be cleared, she had tried not to let herself think more about Eaton than was necessary. Now that her father himself had cleared Eaton of that suspicion, her feelings had altered from mere disbelief that he had injured her father to recollection that Mr. Warden had spoken of him only as one who himself had been greatly injured. Eaton was involved with her father in some way; she refused to believe he was against her father, but clearly he was not with him. How could he be involved, then, unless the injury he had suffered was some such act of man against man as these letters and statements represented? She looked carefully through all the contents of the envelopes, but she could not find anything which helped her.

She pushed the letters away, then, and sat thinking. Mr. Warden, who appeared to have known more about Eaton than any one else, had taken Eaton's side; it was because he had been going to help Eaton that Mr. Warden had been killed. Would not her father be ready to help Eaton, then, if he knew as much about him as Mr. Warden had known? But Mr. Warden, apparently, had kept what he knew even from his own wife; and Eaton was now keeping it from

every one—her father included. She felt that her father had understood and appreciated all this long before herself—that it was the reason for his attitude toward Eaton on the train and, in part, the cause of his considerate treatment of him all through. She sensed for the first time how great her father's perplexity must be; but she felt, too, how terrible the injustice must have been that Eaton had suffered, since he himself did not dare to tell it even to her father and since, to hide it, other men did not stop short of double murder.

So, instead of being estranged by Eaton's manner to her father, she felt an impulse of feeling toward him flooding her, a feeling which she tried to explain to herself as sympathy. But it was not just sympathy; she would not say even to herself what it was.

She got up suddenly and went to the door and looked into the hall; a servant came to her.

"Is Mr. Avery still with Mr. Santoine?" she asked.

"No, Miss Santoine; he has gone out."

"How long ago?"

"About ten minutes."

"Thank you."

She went back, and bundling the correspondence together as it had been before, she removed the books from a shelf to the left of the door, slid back another panel and revealed the second wall-safe corresponding to the one to the right of the door from which she had taken the papers. The combination of this second safe was known only to her father and herself. She put the envelopes into it, closed it, and replaced the books. Then she went to her father's desk, took from a drawer a long typewritten report of which he had asked her to prepare a digest, and read it through; consciously concentrating, she began her work. The servant came at one to tell her luncheon was served, but—immersed now—she ordered her luncheon brought to the study. At three she heard Avery's motor, and went to the study door and looked out as he entered the hall.

"What have you found out, Don?" she inquired.

"Nothing yet, Harry."

"You got no trace of them?"

"No; too many motors pass on that road for the car to be recalled particularly. I've started what inquiries are possible and arranged to have the road watched in case they come back this way."

He went past her and up to her father. She returned to the study and put away her work; she called the stables on the house telephone and ordered her saddle-horse; and going to her rooms and changing to her riding-habit, she rode till five. Returning, she dressed for dinner, and going down at seven, she found Eaton, Avery and Blatchford awaiting her.

The meal was served in the great Jacobean dining room, with walls paneled to the high ceiling, logs blazing in the big stone fireplace. As they seated themselves, she noted that Avery seemed moody and uncommunicative; something, clearly, had irritated and disturbed him; and as the meal progressed, he vented his irritation upon Eaton by affronting him more openly by word and look than he had ever done before in her presence. She was the more surprised at his doing this now, because she knew that Donald must have received from her father the same instructions as had been given herself to learn whatever was possible of Eaton's former position in life. Eaton, with his customary self-control, met Avery's offensiveness with an equability which almost disarmed it. Instinctively she tried to help him in this. But now she found that he met and put aside her assistance in the same way.

The change in his attitude toward her which she had noted first during their walk that morning had not diminished since his talk with her father but, plainly, had increased. He was almost openly now including her among those who opposed him. As that feeling which she called sympathy had come to her when she realized that what he himself had suffered must be the reason for his attitude toward her father, so now it only came more strongly when she saw him take the same attitude toward herself; and as she felt it, she found she was feeling more and more away from Donald Avery. Donald's manner toward Eaton was forcing her to invoice exactly the materials of her companionship with Donald.

Before Eaton's entrance into her life she had supposed that some time, as a matter of course, she was going to marry Donald. In spite of this, she had never

thought of herself as apart from her father; when she thought of marrying, it had been always with the idea that her duty to her husband must be secondary to that to her father; she knew now that she had accepted Donald Avery not because he had become necessary to her but because he had seemed essential to her father and her marrying Donald would permit her life to go on much as it was. Till recently, Avery's complaisance, his certainty that it must be only a matter of time before he would win her, had been the most definite—almost the only definable—fault she had found with her father's confidential agent; now her sense of many other faults in him only marked the distance she had drawn away from him. If Harriet Santoine could define her own present estimate of Avery, it was that he did not differ in any essential particular from those men whose correspondence had so horrified her that afternoon.

Donald had social position and a certain amount of wealth and power; now suddenly she was feeling that he had nothing but those things, that his own unconscious admission was that to be worth while he must have them, that to retain and increase them was his only object in life. She had the feeling that these were the only things he would fight for; but that for these he would fight—fairly, perhaps, if he could—but, if he must, unfairly, despicably.

She had finished dinner, but she hesitated to rise and leave the men alone; after-dinner cigars and the fiction of a masculine conversation about the table were insisted on by Blatchford. As she delayed, looking across the table at Eaton, his eyes met hers; reassured, she rose at once; the three rose with her and stood while she went out. She went upstairs and looked in upon her father; he wanted nothing, and after a conversation with him as short as she could make it, she came down again. No further disagreement between the two men, apparently, had happened after she left the table. Avery now was not visible. Eaton and Blatchford were in the music-room; as she went to them, she saw that Eaton had some sheets of music in his hand. So now, with a repugnance against her father's orders which she had never felt before, she began to carry out the instructions her father had given her.

"You play, Mr. Eaton?" she asked.

"I'm afraid not," he smiled.

"Really don't you?"

"Only drum a little sometimes, Miss Santoine. Won't you play? Please do."

She saw that they were songs which he had been examining. "Oh, you sing!"

He could not effectively deny it. She sat down at her piano and ran over the songs and selections from the new opera. He followed her with the delight of a music-lover long away from an instrument. He sang with her a couple of the songs; he had a good, unassuming tone. And as she went through the music, she noticed that he was familiar with almost everything she had liked which had been written or was current up to five years before; all later music was strange to him. To this extent he had been of her world, plainly, up to five years before; then he had gone out of it.

She realized this only as something which she was to report to her father; yet she felt a keener, more personal interest in it than that. Harriet Santoine knew enough of the world to know that few men break completely all social connections without some link of either fact or memory still holding them, and that this link most often is a woman. So now, instinctively, she found, she was selecting among the music on the racks arias of lost, disappointed or unhappy love. But she saw that Eaton's interest in these songs appeared no different from his interest in others; it was, so far as she could tell, for their music he cared for them—not because they recalled to him any personal recollection. So far as her music could assure her, then, there was—and had been—no woman in Eaton's life whose memory made poignant his break with his world.

Presently she desisted and turned to other sorts of music. Toward ten o'clock, after she had stopped playing, he excused himself and went to his rooms. She sat for a time, idly talking with Blatchford; then, as a servant passed through the hall and she mistook momentarily his footsteps for those of Avery, she got up suddenly and went upstairs. It was only after reaching her own rooms that she appreciated that the meaning of this action was that she shrank from seeing Avery again that night. But she had been in her rooms only a few minutes when her house telephone buzzed, and answering it, she found that it was Donald speaking to her.

"Will you come down for a few minutes, please, Harry?"

She withheld her answer momentarily. Before Eaton had come into her life, Donald sometimes had called her like this,—especially on those nights when he

had worked late with her father,—and she had gone down to visit with him for a few minutes as an ending for the day. She had never allowed these meetings to pass beyond mere companionship; but to-night she thought of that companionship without pleasure.

"Please, Harry!" he repeated.

Some strangeness in his tone perplexed her.

"Where are you?" she asked.

"In the study."

She went down at once. As he came to the study door to meet her, she saw that what had perplexed her in his tone was apparently only the remnant of that irritation he had showed at dinner. He took her hand and drew her into the study. The lights in the room turned full on and the opaque curtains drawn closely over the windows told that he had been working,—or that he wished to appear to have been working,—and papers scattered on one of the desks, and the wall safe to the right of the door standing open, confirmed this. But now he led her to the big chair, and guided her as she seated herself; then he lounged on the flat-topped desk in front of and close to her and bending over her.

"You don't mind my calling you down, Harry; it is so long since we had even a few minutes alone together," he pleaded.

"What is it you want, Don?" she asked.

"Only to see you, dea—Harry." He took her hand again; she resisted and withdrew it. "I can't do any more work to-night, Harry. I find the correspondence I expected to go over this evening isn't here; your father has it, I suppose."

"No; I have it, Don."

"You?"

"Yes; Father didn't want you bothered by that work just now. Didn't he tell you?"

"He told me that, of course, Harry, and that he had asked you to relieve me as

much as you could; he didn't say he had told you to take charge of the papers. Did he do that?"

"I thought that was implied. If you need them, I'll get them for you, Don. Do you want them?"

She got up and went toward the safe where she had put them; suddenly she stopped. What it was that she had felt under his tone and manner, she could not tell; it was probably only irritation at having important work taken out of his hands. But whatever it was, he was not openly expressing it—he was even being careful that it should not be expressed. And now suddenly, as he followed and came close behind her and her mind went swiftly to her father lying helpless upstairs, and her father's trust in her, she halted.

"We must ask Father first," she said.

"Ask him!" he ejaculated. "Why?"

She faced him uncertainly, not answering.

"That's rather ridiculous, Harry, especially as it is too late to ask him to-night." His voice was suddenly rough in his irritation. "I have had charge of those very things for years; they concern the matters in which your father particularly confides in me. It is impossible that he meant you to take them out of my hands like this. He must have meant only that you were to give me what help you could with them!"

She could not refute what he said; still, she hesitated.

"When did you find out those matters weren't in your safe, Don?" she asked.

"Just now."

"Didn't you find out this afternoon—before dinner?"

"That's what I said—just now this afternoon, when I came back to the house before dinner, as you say." Suddenly he seized both her hands, drawing her to him and holding her in front of him. "Harry, don't you see that you are putting me in a false position—wronging me? You are acting as though you did not trust me!"

She drew away her hands. "I do trust you, Don; at least I have no reason to distrust you. I only say we must ask Father."

"They're in your little safe?"

She nodded. "Yes."

"And you'll not give them to me?"

"No."

He stared angrily; then he shrugged and laughed and went back to his desk and began gathering up his scattered papers. She stood indecisively watching him. Suddenly he looked up, and she saw that he had quite conquered his irritation, or at least had concealed it; his concern now seemed to be only over his relations with herself.

"We've not quarreled, Harry?" he asked.

"Quarreled? Not at all, Don," she replied.

She moved toward the door; he followed and let her out, and she went back to her own rooms.

CHAPTER XVI

SANTOINE'S "EYES" FAIL HIM

Eaton, coming down rather late the next morning, found the breakfast room empty. He chose his breakfast from the dishes on the sideboard, and while the servant set them before him and waited on him, he inquired after the members of the household. Miss Santoine, the servant said, had breakfasted some time before and was now with her father; Mr. Avery also had breakfasted; Mr. Blatchford was not yet down. As Eaton lingered over his breakfast, Miss Davis passed through the hall, accompanied by a maid. The maid admitted her into the study and closed the door; afterward, the maid remained in the hall busy with some morning duty, and her presence and that of the servant in the breakfast room made it impossible for Eaton to attempt to go to the study or to risk speaking to Miss Davis. A few minutes later, he heard Harriet Santoine descending the stairs; rising, he went out into the hall to meet her.

"I don't ask you to commit yourself for longer than to-day, Miss Santoine," he said, when they had exchanged greetings, "but—for to-day—what are the limits of my leash?"

"Mr. Avery is going to the country-club for lunch; I believe he intends to ask you if you care to go with him."

He started and looked at her in surprise. "That's rather longer extension of the leash than I expected," he replied.

He stood an instant thoughtful. Did the invitation imply merely that he was to have greater freedom now?

"Do you wish me to go?" he asked.

Her glance wavered and did not meet his. "You may go if you please."

"And if I do not?"

"Mr. Blatchford will lunch with you here."

"And you?"

"Yes, I shall lunch here too, probably. This morning I am going to be busy with Miss Davis on some work for my father; what I do depends on how I get along with that."

"Thank you," Eaton acknowledged.

She turned away and went into the study, closing the door behind her. Eaton, although he had finished his breakfast, went back into the breakfast room. He did not know whether he would refuse or accept Avery's invitation; suddenly he decided. After waiting for some five minutes there over a second cup of coffee, he got up and crossed to the study door and knocked. The door was opened by Miss Davis; looking past her, he could see Harriet Santoine seated at one of the desks.

"I beg pardon, Miss Santoine," he explained his interruption, "but you did not tell me what time Mr. Avery is likely to want me to be ready to go to the country club."

"About half-past twelve, I think."

"And what time shall we be coming back?"

"Probably about five."

He thanked her and withdrew. As Miss Davis stood holding open the door, he had not looked to her, and he did not look back now as she closed the door behind him; their eyes had not met; but he understood that she had

comprehended him fully. To-day he would be away from the Santoine house, and away from the guards who watched him, for at least four hours, under no closer espionage than that of Avery; this offered opportunity—the first opportunity he had had—for communication between him and his friends outside the house.

He went to his room and made some slight changes in his dress; he came down then to the library, found a book and settled himself to read. Toward noon Avery looked in on him there and rather constrainedly proffered his invitation; Eaton accepted, and after Avery had gone to get ready, Eaton put away his book. Fifteen minutes later, hearing Avery's motor purring outside, Eaton went into the hall; a servant brought his coat and hat, and taking them, he went out to the motor. Avery appeared a moment later, with Harriet Santoine.

She stood looking after them as they spun down the curving drive and onto the pike outside the grounds; then she went back to the study. The digest Harriet had been working on that morning and the afternoon before was finished; Miss Davis, she found, was typewriting its last page. She dismissed Miss Davis for the day, and taking the typewritten sheets and some other papers her father had asked to have read to him, she went up to her father.

Basil Santoine was alone and awake; he was lying motionless, with the cord and electric button in his hand which served to start and stop the phonograph, with its recording cylinder, beside his bed. His mind, even in his present physical weakness, was always working, and he kept this apparatus beside him to record his directions as they occurred to him. As she entered the room, he pressed the button and started the phonograph, speaking into it; then, as he recognized his daughter's presence, the cylinder halted; he put down the cord and motioned her to seat herself beside the bed.

"What have you, Harriet?" he asked.

She sat down and glancing through the papers in her hand, gave him the subject of each; then at his direction she began to read them aloud. She read slowly, careful not to demand straining of his attention; and this slowness leaving her own mind free in part to follow other things, her thoughts followed Eaton and Avery. As she finished the third page, he interrupted her.

"Where is it you want to go, Harriet?"

"Go? Why, nowhere, Father!"

"Has Avery taken Eaton to the country-club as I ordered?"

"Yes."

"I shall want you to go out there later in the afternoon; I would trust your observation more than Avery's to determine whether Eaton has been used to such surroundings. They are probably at luncheon now; will you lunch with me here, dear?"

"I'll be very glad to, Father."

He reached for the house telephone and gave directions for the luncheon in his room.

"Go on until they bring it," he directed.

She read another page, then broke off suddenly.

"Has Donald asked you anything to-day, Father?"

"In regard to what?"

"I thought last night he seemed disturbed about my relieving him of part of his work."

"Disturbed? In what way?"

She hesitated, unable to define even to herself the impression Avery's manner had made on her. "I understood he was going to ask you to leave it still in his hands."

"He has not done so yet."

"Then probably I was mistaken."

She began to read again, and she continued now until the luncheon was served. At meal-time Basil Santoine made it a rule never to discuss topics relating to his occupation in working hours, and in his present weakness, the rule was rigidly enforced; father and daughter talked of gardening and the new

developments in aviation. She read again for half an hour after luncheon, finishing the pages she had brought.

"Now you'd better go to the club," the blind man directed.

She put the reports and letters away in the safe in the room below, and going to her own apartments, she dressed carefully for the afternoon. The day was a warm, sunny, early spring day, with the ground fairly firm. She ordered her horse and trap, and leaving the groom, she drove to the country-club beyond the rise of ground back from the lake. Her pleasure in the drive and the day was diminished by her errand. It made her grow uncomfortable and flush warmly as she recollected that—if Eaton's secrecy regarding himself was accounted for by the unknown injury he had suffered—she was the one sent to "spy" upon him.

As she drove down the road, she passed the scene of the attempt by the men in the motor to run Eaton down. The indefiniteness of her knowledge by whom or why the attack had been made only made it seem more terrible to her. Unquestionably, he was in constant danger of its repetition, and especially when —as to-day—he was outside her father's grounds. Instinctively she hurried her horse. The great white club-house stood above the gentle slope of the valley to the west; beyond it, the golf-course was spotted by a few figures of men and girls out for early-season play. And further off and to one side of the course, she saw mounted men scurrying up and down the polo field in practice. A number of people were standing watching, and a few motors and traps were halted beside the barriers. Harriet stopped at the club-house only to make certain that Mr. Avery and his guest were not there; then she drove on to the polo field.

As she approached, she recognized Avery's lithe, alert figure on one of the ponies; with a deft, quick stroke he cleared the ball from before the feet of an opponent's pony, then he looked up and nodded to her. Harriet drove up and stopped beside the barrier; people hailed her from all sides, and for a moment the practice was stopped as the players trotted over to speak to her. Then play began again, and she had opportunity to look for Eaton. Her father, she knew, had instructed Avery that Eaton was to be introduced as his guest; but Avery evidently had either carried out these instructions in a purely mechanical manner or had not wished Eaton to be with others unless he himself was by; for Harriet discovered Eaton standing off by himself. She waited till he looked toward her, then signaled him to come over. She got down, and they stood together following the play.

"You know polo?" she questioned him, as she saw the expression of appreciation in his face as a player daringly "rode-off" an antagonist and saved a "cross." She put the question without thought before she recognized that she was obeying her father's instructions.

"I understand the game somewhat," Eaton replied.

"Have you ever played?"

"It seems to deserve its reputation as the summit of sport," he replied.

He answered so easily that she could not decide whether he was evading or not; and somehow, just then, she found it impossible to put the simple question direct again.

"Good! Good, Don!" she cried enthusiastically and clapped her hands as Avery suddenly raced before them, caught the ball with a swinging, back-handed stroke and drove it directly toward his opponent's goal. Instantly whirling his mount, Avery raced away after the ball, and with another clean stroke scored a goal. Every one about cried out in approbation.

"He's very quick and clever, isn't he?" Harriet said to Eaton.

Eaton nodded. "Yes; he's by all odds the most skillful man on the field, I should say."

The generosity of the praise impelled the girl, somehow, to qualify it. "But only two others really have played much—that man and that."

"Yes, I picked them as the experienced ones," Eaton said quietly.

"The others—two of them, at least—are out for the first time, I think."

They watched the rapid course of the ball up and down the field, the scurry and scamper of the ponies after it, then the clash of a mêlée again.

Two ponies went down, and their riders were flung. When they arose, one of the least experienced boys limped apologetically from the field. Avery rode to the barrier.

"I say, any of you fellows, don't you want to try it? We're just getting warmed up."

Harriet glanced at the group Avery had addressed; she knew nearly all of them—she knew too that none of them were likely to accept the invitation, and that Avery must be as well aware of that as she was. Avery, indeed, scarcely glanced at them, but looked over to Eaton and gave the challenge direct.

"Care to take a chance?"

Harriet Santoine watched her companion; a sudden flush had come to his face which vanished, as she turned, and left him almost pale; but his eyes glowed. Avery's manner in challenging him, as though he must refuse from fear of such a fall as he just had witnessed, was not enough to explain Eaton's start.

"How can I?" he returned.

"If you want to play, you can," Avery dared him. "Furden"—that was the boy who had just been hurt—"will lend you some things; his'll just about fit you; and you can have his mounts."

Harriet continued to watch Eaton; the challenge had been put so as to give him no ground for refusal but timidity.

"You don't care to?" Avery taunted him deftly.

"Why don't you try it?" Harriet found herself saying to him.

He hesitated. She realized it was not timidity he was feeling; it was something deeper and stronger than that. It was fear; but so plainly it was not fear of bodily hurt that she moved instinctively toward him in sympathy. He looked swiftly at Avery, then at her, then away. He seemed to fear alike accepting or refusing to play; suddenly he made his decision.

"I'll play."

He started instantly away to the dressing-rooms; a few minutes later, when he rode onto the field, Harriet was conscious that, in some way, Eaton was playing a part as he listened to Avery's directions. Then the ball was thrown in for a scrimmage, and she felt her pulses quicken as Avery and Eaton raced side by

side for the ball. Eaton might not have played polo before, but he was at home on horseback; he beat Avery to the ball but, clumsy with his mallet, he missed and overrode; Avery stroked the ball smartly, and cleverly followed through. But the next instant, as Eaton passed her, shifting his mallet in his hand, Harriet watched him more wonderingly.

"He could have hit that ball if he'd wanted to," she declared almost audibly to herself; and the impression that Eaton was pretending to a clumsiness which was not real grew on her. Donald Avery appointed himself to oppose Eaton wherever possible, besting him in every contest for the ball; but she saw that Donald now, though he took it upon himself to show all the other players where they made their mistakes, did not offer any more instruction to Eaton. One of the players drove the ball close to the barrier directly before Harriet; Eaton and Avery raced for it, neck by neck. As before, Eaton by better riding gained a little; as they came up, she saw Donald's attention was not upon the ball or the play; instead, he was watching Eaton closely. And she realized suddenly that Donald had appreciated as fully as herself that Eaton's clumsiness was a pretense. It was no longer merely polo the two were playing; Donald, suspecting or perhaps even certain that Eaton knew the game, was trying to make him show it, and Eaton was watchfully avoiding this. Just in front of her, Donald, leaning forward, swept the ball from in front of Eaton's pony's feet.

For a few moments the play was all at the further edge of the field; then once more the ball crossed with a long curving shot and came hopping and rolling along the ground close to where she stood. Again Donald and Eaton raced for it.

"Stedman!" Avery called to a teammate to prepare to receive the ball after he had struck it; and he lifted his mallet to drive the ball away from in front of Eaton. But as Avery's club was coming down, Eaton, like a flash and apparently without lifting his mallet at all, caught the ball a sharp, smacking stroke. It leaped like a bullet, straight and true, toward the goal, and before Avery could turn, Eaton was after it and upon it, but he did not have to strike again; it bounded on and on between the goal-posts, while together with the applause for the stranger arose a laugh at the expense of Avery. But as Donald halted before her, Harriet saw that he was not angry or discomfited, but was smiling triumphantly to himself; and as she called in praise to Eaton when he came close again, she discovered in him only dismay at what he had done.

The practice ended, and the players rode away. She waited in the clubhouse

till Avery and Eaton came up from the dressing-rooms. Donald's triumphant satisfaction seemed to have increased; Eaton was silent and preoccupied. Avery, hailed by a group of men, started away; as he did so, he saluted Eaton almost derisively. Eaton's return of the salute was openly hostile. She looked up at him keenly, trying unavailingly to determine whether more had taken place between the two men than she herself had witnessed.

"You had played polo before—and played it well," she charged. "Why did you want to pretend you hadn't?"

He made no reply. As she began to talk of other things, she discovered with surprise that his manner toward her had taken on even greater formality and constraint than it had had since his talk with her father the day before.

The afternoon was not warm enough to sit outside; in the club-house were gathered groups of men and girls who had come in from the golf-course or from watching the polo practice. She found herself now facing one of these groups composed of some of her own friends, who were taking tea and wafers in the recess before some windows. They motioned to her to join them, and she could not well refuse, especially as this had been a part of her father's instructions. The men rose, as she moved toward them, Eaton with her; she introduced Eaton; a chair was pushed forward for her, and two of the girls made a place for Eaton on the window-seat between them.

As they seated themselves and were served, Eaton's participation in the polo practice was the subject of conversation. She found, as she tried to talk with her nearer neighbors, that she was listening instead to this more general conversation which Eaton had joined. She saw that these people had accepted him as one of their own sort to the point of jesting with him about his "lucky" polo stroke for a beginner; his manner toward them was very different from what it had been just now to herself; he seemed at ease and unembarrassed with them. One or two of the girls appeared to have been eager—even anxious—to meet him; and she found herself oddly resenting the attitude of these girls. Her feeling was indefinite, vague; it made her flush and grow uncomfortable to recognize dimly that there was in it some sense of a proprietorship of her own in him which took alarm at seeing other girls attracted by him; but underneath it was her uneasiness at his new manner to herself, which hurt because she could not explain it. As the party finished their tea, she looked across to him.

"Are you ready to go, Mr. Eaton?" she asked.

"Whenever Mr. Avery is ready."

"You needn't wait for him unless you wish; I'll drive you back," she offered.

"Of course I'd prefer that, Miss Santoine."

They went out to her trap, leaving Donald to motor back alone. As soon as she had driven out of the club grounds, she let the horse take its own gait, and she turned and faced him.

"Will you tell me," she demanded, "what I have done this afternoon to make you class me among those who oppose you?"

"What have you done? Nothing, Miss Santoine."

"But you are classing me so now."

"Oh, no," he denied so unconvincingly that she felt he was only putting her off.

Harriet Santoine knew that what had attracted her friends to Eaton was their recognition of his likeness to themselves; but what had impressed her in seeing him with them was his difference. Was it some memory of his former life that seeing these people had recalled to him, which had affected his manner toward her?

Again she looked at him.

"Were you sorry to leave the club?" she asked.

"I was quite ready to leave," he answered inattentively.

"It must have been pleasant to you, though, to—to be among the sort of people again that you—you used to know. Miss Furden"—she mentioned one of the girls who had seemed most interested in him, the sister of the boy whose place he had taken in the polo practice—"is considered a very attractive person, Mr. Eaton. I have heard it said that a man—any man—not to be attracted by her must be forearmed against her by thought—or memory of some other woman

whom he holds dear."

"She seemed very pleasant," he answered automatically.

"Only pleasant? You were forearmed, then," she said.

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand."

The mechanicalness of his answer reassured her. "I mean, Mr. Eaton,"—she forced her tone to be light,—"Miss Furden was not as attractive to you as she might have been, because there has been some other woman in your life—whose memory—or—or the expectation of seeing whom again—protected you."

"Has been? Oh, you mean before."

"Yes; of course," she answered hastily.

"No—none," he replied simply. "It's rather ungallant, Miss Santoine, but I'm afraid I wasn't thinking much about Miss Furden."

She felt that his denial was the truth, for his words confirmed the impression she had had when singing with him the night before. She drove on—or rather let the horse take them on—for a few moments during which neither spoke. They had come about a bend in the road, and the great house of her father loomed ahead. A motor whizzed past them, coming from behind. It was only Avery's car on the way home; but Harriet had jumped a little in memory of the day before, and her companion's head had turned quickly toward the car. She looked up at him swiftly; his lips were set and his eyes gazed steadily ahead after Avery, and he drew a little away from her. A catch in her breath—almost an audible gasp—surprised her, and she fought a warm impulse which had all but placed her hand on his.

"Will you tell me something, Miss Santoine?" he asked suddenly.

"What?"

"I suppose, when I was with Mr. Avery this afternoon, that if I had attempted to escape, he and the chauffeur would have combined to detain me. But on the way back here—did you assume that when you took me in charge you had my parole not to try to depart?"

"No," she said. "I don't believe Father depended entirely on that."

"You mean that he has made arrangements so that if I—exceeded the directions given me, I would be picked up?"

"I don't know exactly what they are, but you may be sure that they are made if they are necessary."

"Thank you," Eaton acknowledged.

She was silent for a moment, thoughtful. "Do you mean that you have been considering this afternoon the possibilities of escape?"

"It would be only natural for me to do that, would it not?" he parried.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I don't mean that you might not try to exceed the limits Father has set for you; you might try that, and of course you would be prevented. But you will not" (she hesitated, and when she went on she was quoting her father) "—sacrifice your position here."

"Why not?"

"Because you tried to gain it—or—or if not exactly that, at least you had some object in wanting to be near Father which you have not yet gained." She hesitated once more, not looking at him. Her words were unconvincing to herself; that morning, when her father had spoken them, they had been quite convincing, but since this afternoon she was no longer sure of their truth. What it was that had happened during the afternoon she could not make out; instinctively, however, she felt that it had so altered Eaton's relations with them that now he might attempt to escape.

They had reached the front of the house, and a groom sprang to take the horse. She let Eaton help her down; as they entered the house, Avery—who had reached the house only a few moments before them—was still in the hall. And again she was startled in the meeting of the two men by Avery's triumph and the swift flare of defiance on Eaton's face.

As she went up to her apartments, her maid met her at the door.

"Mr. Santoine wishes you to dine with him, Miss Santoine," the maid announced.

"Very well," she answered.

She changed from her afternoon dress slowly. As she did so, she brought swiftly in review the events of the day. Chiefly it was to the polo practice and to Eaton's dismay at his one remarkable stroke that her mind went. Had Donald Avery seen something in that which was not plain to herself?

Harriet Santoine knew polo from watching many games, but she was aware that—as with any one who knows a game merely as a spectator—she was unacquainted with many of the finer points of play. Donald had played almost since a boy, he was a good, steady, though not a brilliant player. Had Donald recognized in Eaton something more than merely a good player trying to pretend ignorance of the game? The thought suddenly checked and startled her. For how many great polo players were there in America? Were there a hundred? Fifty? Twenty-five? She did not know; but she did know that there were so few of them that their names and many of the particulars of their lives were known to every follower of the sport.

She halted suddenly in her dressing, perplexed and troubled. Her father had sent Eaton to the country club with Avery; there Avery, plainly, had forced Eaton into the polo game. By her father's instructions? Clearly there seemed to have been purpose in what had been done, and purpose which had not been confided to herself either by her father or Avery. For how could they have suspected that Eaton would betray himself in the game unless they had also suspected that he had played polo before? To suspect that, they must at least have some theory as to who Eaton was. But her father had no such theory; he had been expending unavailingly, so far, every effort to ascertain Eaton's connections. So her thoughts led her only into deeper and greater perplexity, but with them came sudden—and unaccountable—resentment against Avery.

"Will you see what Mr. Avery is doing?" she said to the maid.

The girl went out and returned in a few moments. "He is with Mr. Santoine."

"Thank you."

At seven Harriet went in to dinner with her father. The blind man was now alone; he had been awaiting her, and they were served at once. All through the dinner she was nervous and moody; for she knew she was going to do something she had never done before: she was going to conceal something from her father. She told herself it was not really concealment, for Donald must have already told him. It was no more, then, than that she herself would not inform upon Eaton, but would leave that to Avery. So she told of Eaton's reception at the country club, and of his taking part in the polo practice and playing badly; but of her own impression that Eaton knew the game and her present conviction that Donald Avery had seen even more than that, she said nothing. She watched her father's face, but she could see there no consciousness that she was omitting anything in her account.

An hour later, when after reading aloud to him for a time, he dismissed her, she hesitated before going.

"You've seen Donald?" she asked.

"Yes."

"What did he tell you?"

"The same as you have told, though not quite so fully."

She was outside the door and in the hall before realization came to her that her father's reply could mean only that Donald, like herself, had concealed his discovery of Eaton's ability to play polo. She turned back suddenly to return to her father; then again she hesitated, stopped with her hand upon the blind man's door by her recollection of Donald's enmity to Eaton. Why Donald had not told, she could not imagine; the only conclusion she could reach was that Donald's silence in some way menaced Eaton; for—suddenly now—it came to her what this must mean to Eaton. All that Eaton had been so careful to hide regarding himself and his connections must be obtainable by Avery now. Why Eaton had played at all; why he had been afraid to refuse the invitation to play, she could not know; but sympathy and fear for him swept over her, as she comprehended that it was to Avery the betrayal had been made and that Avery, for some purpose of his own, was withholding this betrayal to make use of it as he saw fit.

She moved once more to return to her father; again she stopped; then, swiftly, she turned and went downstairs.

As she descended, she saw in the lower hall the stenographer, Miss Davis, sitting waiting. There was no adequate reason for the girl's being there at that hour; she had come—she said, as she rose to greet Harriet—to learn whether she would be wanted the next day; she had already seen Mr. Avery, and he would not want her. Harriet, telling her she would not need her, offered to send a servant home with her, as the roads were dark. Miss Davis refused this and went out at once. Harriet, as the door was closed behind the girl, looked hurriedly about for Avery. She did not find him, nor at first did she find Eaton either. She discovered him presently in the music-room with Blatchford. Blatchford at once excused himself, tired evidently of his task of watching over Eaton.

Harriet caught herself together and controlled herself to her usual manner.

"What shall it be this evening, Mr. Eaton?" she asked. "Music? Billiards?"

"Billiards, if you like," he responded.

They went up to the billiard room, and for an hour played steadily; but her mind was not upon the game—nor, she saw, was his. Several times he looked at his watch; he seemed to her to be waiting. Finally, as they ended a game, he put his cue back in the rack and faced her.

"Miss Santoine," he said, "I want to ask a favor."

"What is it?"

"I want to go out—unaccompanied."

"Why?"

"I wish to speak to a friend who will be waiting for me."

"How do you know?"

"He got word to me at the country club to-day. Excuse me—I did not mean to inform on Mr. Avery; he was really most vigilant. I believe he only made one slip."

"He was not the only one observing you."

"I suppose not. In fact, I was certain of it. However, I received a message which was undoubtedly authentic and had not been overseen."

"But you were not able to make reply."

"I was not able to receive all that was necessary."

She considered for a moment. "What do you want me to do?"

"Either because of my presence or because of what has happened—or perhaps normally—you have at least four men about the grounds, two of whom seem to be constantly on duty to observe any one who may approach."

"Or try to leave."

"Precisely."

"There are more than two."

"I was stating the minimum."

"Well?"

"I wish you to order them to let me pass and go to a place perhaps ten minutes' walk from here. If you do so, I will return at the latest within half an hour" (he glanced at his watch) "—to be definite, before a quarter of eleven."

"Why should I do this?"

He came close to her and faced her. "What do you think of me now, Miss Santoine?"

"Why—"

"You are quite certain now, are you not, that I had nothing to do with the attack on your father—that is, in any other connection than that the attack might be meant for me. I denied yesterday that the men in the automobile meant to run me down; you did not accept that denial. I may as well admit to you that I know perfectly well they meant to kill me; the man on the train also meant to kill me. They are likely to try again to kill me."

"We recognize that too," she answered. "The men on watch about the house are warned to protect you as well as watch you."

"I appreciate that."

"But are they all you have to fear, Mr. Eaton?" She was thinking of Donald Avery.

He seemed to recognize what was in her mind; his eyes, as he gazed intently at her, clouded, then darkened still more with some succeeding thought. "No, not all."

"And it will aid you to—to protect yourself if you see your friend to-night?"

"Yes."

"But why should not one of Father's men be with you?"

"Unless I were alone, my friend would not appear."

"I see."

He moved away from her, then came back; the importance to him of what he was asking was very plain to her—he was shaking nervously with it. "Miss Santoine," he said intently, "you do not think badly of me now. I do not have to doubt that; I can see it; you have wanted me to see it. I ask you to trust me for a few minutes to-night. I cannot tell you whom I wish to see or why, except that the man comes to do me a service and to endanger no one—except those trying to injure me."

She herself was trembling with her desire to help him, but recollection of her father held her back; then swiftly there came to her the thought of Gabriel Warden; because Warden had tried to help him—in some way and for some reason which she did not know—Warden had been killed. And feeling that in helping him there might be danger to herself, she suddenly and eagerly welcomed that danger, and made her decision. "You'll promise, Mr. Eaton, not to try to—leave?"

"Yes."

"Let us go out," she said.

She led the way downstairs and, in the hall, picked up a cape; he threw it over her shoulders and brought his overcoat and cap. But in his absorption he forgot to put them on until, as they went out into the garden together, she reminded him; then he put on the cap. The night was clear and cool, and no one but themselves seemed to be about the house.

"Which way do you want to go?" she asked.

He turned toward the forested acres of the grounds which ran down to a ravine at the bottom of which a little stream trickled toward the lake. As they approached the side of this ravine, a man appeared and investigated them. He recognized the girl's figure and halted.

"It's all right, Willis," she said quietly.

"Yes, ma'am."

They passed the man and went down the path into the ravine and up the tiny valley. Eaton halted.

"Your man's just above there?" he asked her.

"Yes."

"He'll stay there?"

"Yes; or close by."

"Then you don't mind waiting here a few moments for me?"

"No," she said. "You will return here?"

"Yes," he said; and with that permission, he left her.

Both had spoken so that the man above could not have heard; and Harriet now noticed that, as her companion hurried ahead, he went almost noiselessly. As he disappeared, the impulse to call him back almost controlled her; then she started to follow him; but she did not. She stood still, shivering a little now in the

cold; and as she listened, she no longer heard his footsteps. What she had done was done; then just as she was telling herself that it must be many moments before she would know whether he was coming back, she heard him returning; at some little distance, he spoke her name so as not to frighten her. She knew at once it was he, but a change in the tone surprised her. She stepped forward to meet him.

"You found your friend?"

"Yes."

"What did he tell you?" Her hand caught his sleeve in an impulse of concern, but she tried to make it seem as though she grasped him to guide her through the trees of the ravine. "I mean what is wrong that you did not expect?"

She heard his breath come fast.

"Nothing," he denied.

"No; you must tell me!" Her hand was still on his arm.

"I cannot."

"Why can you not?"

"Why?"

"Can't you trust me?"

"Trust you!" he cried. He turned to her and seized her hands. "You ask me to —trust you!"

"Yes; I've trusted you. Can't you believe as much in me?"

"Believe in you, Miss Santoine!" He crushed her fingers in his grasp. "Oh, my God, I wish I could!"

"You wish you could?" she echoed. The tone of it struck her like a blow, and she tore her hands away. "What do you mean by that?"

He made no reply but stood staring at her through the dark. "We must go

back," he said queerly. "You're cold."

She did not answer but started back up the path to the house. He seemed to have caught himself together against some impulse that stirred him strongly. "The man out there who saw us? He will report to your father, Miss Santoine?" he asked unsteadily.

"Reports for Father are first made to me."

"I see." He did not ask her what she was going to do; if he was assuming that her permission to exceed his set limits bound her not to report to her father, she did not accept that assumption, though she would not report to the blind man tonight, for she knew he must now be asleep. But she felt that Eaton was no longer thinking of this. As they entered the house and he helped her lay off her cape, he suddenly faced her.

"We are in a strange relation to each other, Miss Santoine—stranger than you know," he said unevenly.

She waited for him to go on.

"We have talked sometimes of the likeness of the everyday life to war," he continued. "In war men and women sometimes do or countenance things they know to be evil because they believe that by means of them there is accomplished some greater good; in peace, in life, men—and women—sometimes do the same. When the time comes that you comprehend what our actual relation is, I—I want you to know that I understand that whatever you have done was done because you believed it might bring about the greater good. I—I have seen in you—in your father—only kindness, high honor, sympathy. If I did not know—"

She started, gazing at him; what he said had absolutely no meaning for her. "What is it that you know?" she demanded.

He did not reply; his hand went out to hers, seized it, crushed it, and he started away. As he went up the stair—still, in his absorption, carrying cap and overcoat—she stood staring after him in perplexity.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FIGHT IN THE STUDY

Eaton dismissed the man who had been waiting in his rooms for him; he locked the door and carefully drew down all the window-shades. Then he put his overcoat, folded as he had been carrying it under his arm, on the writing table in the center of the room, and from its folds and pockets took a "breast-drill" such as iron workers use in drilling steel, an automatic pistol with three clips of cartridges, an electric flashlight and a little bottle of nitroglycerine. He loaded the pistol and put it in his pocket; then he carefully inspected the other things.

The room he was in, the largest of his suite, resembled Santoine's study on the floor below in the arrangement of its windows, though it was smaller than the study. The writing-desk in its center occupied much the position of Santoine's large desk; he moved it slightly to make the relative positions coincide. The couch against the end wall represented the position of the study's double doors. Eaton switched out the lights, and starting at the windows, he crossed the room in the darkness, avoiding the desk, and stopping a few feet to the right of the couch; here he flashed his light upon the wall at the height of the little wall-safe to the right of the doors in the study below. A dozen times he did this, passing from the windows to the position of the wall-safe and only momentarily flashing his light.

He assured himself thus of being able to pass in the dark from the windows of Santoine's study to the wall-safe. As the study was larger than this room, he computed that he must add two steps to what he took here in each direction. He paid no attention to the position of the safe to the left of the doors, for he had kept watch of the vase on the table in the lower hall, and the only sign he had found there had told him that what he wanted was in the safe to the right.

He raised a shade and window, then, and sat in the dark. The night was cloudy and very dark; and the lake was smooth with barely a ripple. Near at hand a steamer passed, blazing with lights, and further out he saw the mast-head light of some other steamer. The lake was still ice-locked at its northern end, and so the farther of these steamers, he knew, was bound to some southern Michigan port; the nearer was one of the Chicago-Milwaukee boats. For some moments

after it had passed, the waves of its wake washed in and sounded on the shore at the foot of the bluff. Next Eaton made out the hum of a motor-car approaching the house. It was Avery, who evidently had been out and was now returning; the chauffeur spoke the name in his reply to some question as the car swung away to the garage. Eaton still sat in the dark. By degrees all noises ceased in the house, even in the servants' quarters. Twice Eaton leaned forward looking out of the window and found all quiet; but both times he settled back in his chair and waited.

The wash of waves, as from a passing boat, sounded again on the shore. Eaton leaned nearer the window and stared out. There was no light in sight showing any boat; but the waves on the shore were distinct; indeed, they had been more distinct than those from the steamer. They must have been made by a large vessel or from a small ship close in and moving fast. The waves came in first on the north and swept south; Eaton strained his eyes and now saw a vague blur off to the south and within half a mile of shore—a boat without lights. If it had passed at high speed, it had stopped now. He watched this for some time; but he could make out no more, and soon he could not be sure even that the blur was there.

He gazed at the south wing of the house; it was absolutely dark and quiet; the windows of the first floor were closed and the curtains drawn; but to-night there was no light in the room. The windows of the room on the second floor were open; Basil Santoine was undoubtedly asleep. Eaton gazed again at the lower room. Then in the dark he moved to the table where he had left his overcoat, and distributed in his pockets and within his clothing the articles he had brought; and now he felt again in the overcoat and brought out a short, strong bar of steel curved and flattened at one end—a "jimmy" for forcing the windows.

Eaton slipped off his shoes and went to his room door; he opened the door and found the hall dark and quiet. He stepped out, closing his door carefully behind him, and with great caution he descended the stairs. Below, all was quiet; the red embers and glowing charcoal of wood fires which had blazed on the hearths gave the only light. Eaton crept to the doors of the blind man's study and softly tried them. They were, as he had expected, locked. He went to a window in the drawing-room which was set in a recess and so placed that it was not visible from other windows in the house. He opened this window and let himself down upon the lawn.

There he stood still for a moment, listening. There was no alarm of any sort. He crept along beside the house till he came to the first windows of the south wing. He tried these carefully and then went on. He gained the south corner of the wing, unobserved or at least without sign that he had been seen, and went on around it.

He stopped at the first high French window on the south. It was partly hidden from view from south and west by a column of the portico, and was the one he had selected for his operations; as he tried to slip his jimmy under the bottom of the sash, the window, to his amazement, opened silently upon its hinges; it had not been locked. The heavy curtains within hung just in front of him; he put out his hand and parted them. Then he started back in astonishment and crouched close to the ground; inside the room was a man moving about, flashing an electric torch before him and then exploring an instant in darkness and flashing his torch again.

The unexpectedness of this sight took for an instant Eaton's breath and power of moving; he had not been at all prepared for this; now he knew suddenly that he ought to have been prepared for it. If the man within the room was not the one who had attacked him with the motor, he was closely allied with that man, and what he was after now was the same thing Eaton was after. Eaton looked about behind him; no one apparently had been left on watch outside. He drew his pistol, and loosing the safety, he made it ready to fire; with his left hand, he clung to the short, heavy jimmy. He stepped into the great room through the curtains, taking care they did not jingle the rings from which they hung; he carefully let the curtains fall together behind him, and treading noiselessly in his stocking feet, he advanced upon the man, moving forward in each period of darkness between the flashes of the electric torch.

The man, continuing to flash his light about, plainly had heard nothing, and the curtains had prevented him from being warned by the chill of the night air that the window was open; but now, at the further side of the room, another electric torch flashed out. Another man had been in the room; he neither alarmed nor was alarmed by the man flashing the first light; each had known the other's presence before. There were at least two men in the room, working together—or rather, one was working, the other supervising; for Eaton heard now a steady, almost inaudible grinding noise as the second man worked. Eaton halted again and waited; if there were two, there might be others.

The discovery of the second man had not made Eaton afraid; his pulses were beating faster and hotter, and he felt the blood rushing to his head and his hands growing cold with his excitement; but he was conscious of no fear. He crouched and crept forward noiselessly again. No other light appeared in the room, and there was no sound elsewhere from the darkness; but the man who supervised had moved closer to the other. The grinding noise had stopped; it was followed by a sharp click; the men, side by side, were bending over something; and the light of the man who had been working, for a fraction of a second shot into the face of the other. It did not delay at all; it was a purely accidental flash and could not have been said to show the features at all—only a posture, an expression, a personality of a strong and cruel man. He muttered some short, hoarse imprecation at the other; but before Eaton heard the voice, he had stopped as if struck, and his breath had gone from him.

His instant's glimpse of that face astounded, stunned, stupefied him. He could not have seen that man! The fact was impossible! He must have been mad; his mind must have become unreliable to let him even imagine it. Then came the sound of the voice—the voice of the man whose face he had seen! It was he! And, in place of the paralysis of the first instant, now a wild, savage throe of passion seized Eaton; his pulses leaped so it seemed they must burst his veins, and he gulped and choked. He had not filled in with insane fancy the features of the man whom he had seen; the voice witnessed too that the man in the dark by the wall was he whom Eaton—if he could have dreamed such a fact as now had been disclosed—would have circled the world to catch and destroy; yet now with the destruction of that man in his power—for he had but to aim and empty his automatic pistol at five paces—such destruction at this moment could not suffice; mere shooting that man would be petty, ineffectual. Eaton's fingers tightened on the handle of his pistol, but he held it now not as a weapon to fire but as a dull weight with which to strike. The grip of his left hand clamped onto the short steel bar, and with lips parted—breathing once, it seemed, for each heartbeat and yet choking, suffocating—he leaped forward.

At the same instant—so that he could not have been alarmed by Eaton's leap—the man who had been working moved his torch, and the light fell upon Eaton.

"Look out!" the man cried in alarm to his companion; with the word the light of the torch vanished.

The man toward whom Eaton rushed did not have time to switch off his light;

he dropped it instead; and as Eaton sprang for him, he crouched. Eaton, as he struck forward, found nothing; but below his knees, Eaton felt a man's powerful arms tackling him; as he struggled to free himself, a swift, savage lunge lifted him from his feet; he was thrown and hurled backwards.

Eaton ducked his head forward and struggled to turn, as he went down, so that a shoulder and not his head or back would strike the floor first. He succeeded in this, though in his effort he dropped the jimmy. He clung with his right hand to the pistol, and as he struck the floor, the pistol shot off; the flash of flame spurted toward the ceiling. Instantly the grip below his knees was loosed; the man who had tackled him and hurled him back had recoiled in the darkness. Eaton got to his feet but crouched and crept about behind a table, aiming his pistol over it in the direction in which he supposed the other men must be. The sound of the shot had ceased to roar through the room; the gases from the powder only made the air heavier. The other two men in the room also waited, invisible and silent. The only light, in the great curtained room, came from the single electric torch lying on the floor. This lighted the legs of a chair, a corner of a desk and a circle of books in the cases on the wall. As Eaton's eyes became more accustomed to the darkness, he could see vague shapes of furniture. If a man moved, he might be made out; but if he stayed still, probably he would remain indistinguishable.

The other men seemed also to have recognized this; no one moved in the room, and there was complete silence.

Eaton knelt on one knee behind his table; now he was wildly, exultantly excited; his blood leaped hotly to his hand pointing his pistol; he panted, almost audibly, for breath, but though his pulse throbbed through his head too, his mind was clear and cool as he reckoned his situation and his chances. He had crossed the Pacific, the Continent, he had schemed and risked everything with the mere hope of getting into this room to discover evidence with which to demand from the world righting of the wrong which had driven him as a fugitive for five years; and here he found the man who was the cause of it all, before him in the same room a few paces away in the dark!

For it was impossible that this was not that man; and Eaton knew now that this was he who must have been behind and arranging and directing the attacks upon him, Eaton had not only seen him and heard his voice, but he had felt his grasp; that sudden, instinctive crouch before a charge, and the savage lunge and

tackle were the instant, natural acts of an old linesman on a championship team in the game of football as it was played twenty years before. That lift of the opponent off his feet and the heavy lunge hurling him back to fall on his head was what one man—in the rougher, more cruel days of the college game—had been famous for. On the football field that throw sufficed to knock a helmeted opponent unconscious; here it was meant, beyond doubt, to do more.

Upon so much, at least, Eaton's mind at once was clear; here was his enemy whom he must destroy if he himself were not first destroyed. Other thoughts, recasting of other relations altered or overturned in their bearing by the discovery of this man here—everything else could and must wait upon the mighty demand of that moment upon Eaton to destroy this enemy now or be himself destroyed.

Eaton shook in his passion; yet coolly he now realized that his left shoulder, which had taken the shock of his fall, was numb. He shifted his pistol to cover a vague form which had seemed to move; but, if it had stirred, it was still again now. Eaton strained to listen.

It seemed certain that the noise of the shot, if not the sound of the struggle which preceded it, must have raised an alarm, though the room was in a wing and shut off by double doors from the main part of the house; it was possible that the noise had not gone far; but it must have been heard in the room directly above and connected with the study by a staircase at the head of which was a door. Basil Santoine, as Eaton knew, slept above; a nurse must be waiting on duty somewhere near. Eaton had seen the row of buttons which the blind man had within arm's-length with which he must be able to summon every servant in the house. So it could not last much longer now—this deadlock in the dark—the two facing one, and none of them daring to move. And one of the two, at least, seemed to have recognized that.

Eaton had moved, warily and carefully, but he had moved; a revolver flashed before him. Instantly and without consciousness that his finger pulled the trigger, Eaton's pistol flashed back. In front of him, the flame flashed again, and another spurt of fire spat at one side.

Eaton fired back at this—he was prostrate on the floor now, and whether he had been hit or not he did not yet know, or whether the blood flowing down his face was only from a splinter sprayed from the table behind which he had hid.

He fired again, holding his pistol far out to one side to confuse the aim of the others; he thought that they too were doing the same and allowed for it in his aim. He pulled his trigger a ninth time—he had not counted his shots, but he knew he had had seven cartridges in the magazine and one in the barrel—and the pistol clicked without discharging. He rolled over further away from the spot where he had last fired and pulled an extra clip of cartridges from his pocket.

The blood was flowing hot over his face. He made no effort to staunch it or even to feel with his fingers to find exactly where or how badly he had been hit. He jerked the empty cartridge clip from his pistol butt and snapped in the other. He swept his sleeve over his face to clear the blood from his brows and eyes and stared through the dark with pistol at arm's-length loaded and ready. Blood spurted over his face again; another sweep of his sleeve cleared it; and he moved his pistol-point back and forth in the dark. The flash of the firing from the other two revolvers had stopped; the roar of the shots had ceased to deafen. Eaton had not counted the shots at him any better than he had kept track of his own firing; but he knew now that the other two must have emptied their magazines as well as he. It was possible, of course, that he had killed one of them or wounded one mortally; but he had no way to know that. He could hear the click as one of the men snapped his revolver shut again after reloading; then another click came. Both the others had reloaded.

"All right?" the voice which Eaton knew questioned the other.

"All right," came the reply.

But, if they were all right, they made no offer to fire first again. Nor yet did they dare to move. Eaton knew they lay on the floor like himself. They lay with fingers on trigger, as he also lay, waiting again for him to move so they could shoot at him. But surely now the sound of the firing in that room must have reached the man in the room above; surely he must be summoning his servants!

Eaton listened; there was still no sound from the rest of the house. But overhead now, he heard an almost imperceptible pattering—the sound of a bare-footed man crossing the floor; and he knew that the blind man in the bedroom above was getting up.

CHAPTER XVIII

UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS

Basil Santoine was oversensitive to sound, as are most of the blind; in the world of darkness in which he lived, sounds were by far the most significant—and almost the only—means he had of telling what went on around him; he passed his life in listening for or determining the nature of sounds. So the struggle which ended in Eaton's crash to the floor would have waked him without the pistol-shot immediately following. That roused him wide-awake immediately and brought him sitting up in bed, forgetful of his own condition.

Santoine at once recognized the sound as a shot; but in the instant of waking, he had not been able to place it more definitely than to know that it was close. His hand went at once to the bellboard, and he rang at the same time for the nurse outside his door and for the steward. But for a few moments after that first shot, nothing followed; there was silence. Santoine was not one of those who doubt their hearing; that was the sense in which the circumstances of his life made him implicitly trust; he had heard a shot near by; the fact that nothing more followed did not make him doubt it; it made him think to explain it.

It was plain that no one else in the house had been stirred by it; for his windows were open and other windows in bedrooms in the main part of the house were open; no one had raised any cry of alarm. So the shot was where he alone had heard it; that meant indoors, in the room below.

Santoine pressed the bells quickly again and sat up straighter and more strained; no one breaking into the house for plate or jewelry would enter through that room; he would have to break through double doors to reach any other part of the house; Santoine did not consider the possibility of robbery of that sort long enough to have been said to consider it at all; what he felt was that the threat which had been hanging vaguely over himself ever since Warden's murder was being fulfilled. But it was not Santoine himself that was being attacked; it was something Santoine possessed. There was only one sort of valuable article for which one might enter that room below. And those articles—

The blind man clenched his jaw and pressed the bells to call all the men-

servants in the house and Avery also. But still he got no response.

A shot in the room below meant, of course, that in addition to the intruder there must be a defender; the defender might have been the one who fired or the one who was killed. For it seemed likely, in the complete silence now, that whoever had fired had disposed of his adversary and was undisturbed. At that moment the second shot—the first fired at Eaton—rang out below; Eaton's return fire followed nearly simultaneously, and then the shot of the third man. These explosions and the next three the blind man in bed above was able to distinguish; there were three men, at least, in the room below firing at each other; then, as the automatic revolvers roared on, he no longer could separate attack and reply; there might be three men, there might be half a dozen; the fusillade of the automatics overlapped; it was incessant. Then all at once the firing stopped; there was no sound or movement of any sort; everything seemed absolutely still below.

The blind man pressed and pressed the buttons on his bellboard. Any further alarm, after the firing below, seemed superfluous. But his wing of the house had been built for him proof against sound in the main portion of the building; the house, therefore, was deadened to noise within the wing. Santoine, accustomed to considering the manner in which sounds came to himself, knew how these sounds would come to others. Coming from the open windows of the wing and entering the open windows of the other parts of the house, they would not appear to the household to come from within the house at all; they would appear to come from some part of the grounds or from the beach.

Yet some one or more than one from his house must be below or have been there. Santoine pressed all the bells again and then got up. He had heard absolutely no sound outside, as must be made by any one escaping from the room below; but the battle seemed over. One side must have destroyed the other. From the character of the fighting, it was most probable that some one had secretly entered the room—Santoine thought of that one definitely now as the man he was entertaining as Eaton; a servant, or some one else from the house, had surprised him in the room and was shot; other servants, roused by the alarm, rushed in and were shot. Santoine counted that, if his servants had survived, one of them must be coming to tell him what had happened. But there was no noise now nor any movement at all below. His side had been beaten, or both sides had ceased to exist. Those alternatives alone occurred to the blind man; the number of shots fired within the confines of the room below precluded any other

explanation. He did not imagine the fact that the battle had been fought in the dark; himself perpetually in the dark, he thought of others always in the light.

The blind man stood barefooted on the floor, his hands clasping in one of the bitterest moments of his rebellion against, and defiance of, his helplessness of blindness. Below him—as he believed—his servants had been sacrificing life for him; there in that room he held in trust that which affected the security, the faith, the honor of others; his guarding that trust involved his honor no less. And particularly, now, he knew he was bound, at whatever cost, to act; for he did not doubt now but that his half-prisoned guest, whom Santoine had not sufficiently guarded, was at the bottom of the attack. The blind man believed, therefore, that it was because of his own retention here of Eaton that the attack had been made, his servants had been killed, the private secrets of his associates were in danger. Santoine crossed to the door of the hall and opened it and called. No one answered immediately; he started to call again; then he checked himself and shut the door, and opened that to the top of the stairs descending to his study below.

The smoke and fumes of the firing rushed into his face; it half choked him; but it decided him. He was going to go down. Undoubtedly there was danger below; but that was why he did not call again at the other door for some one else to run a risk for him. Basil Santoine, always held back and always watched and obliged to submit to guard even of women in petty matters because of his blindness, held one thing dearer far than life—and that thing was the trust which other men reposed in him. Since it was that trust which was threatened, the impulse now, in that danger, to act for himself and not be protected and pushed back by any one who merely could see, controlled him.

He put his hand on the rail and started to descend the stairs. He was almost steady in step and he had firm grasp on the rail; he noticed that now to wonder at it. When he had aroused at the sound of firing, his blindness, as always when something was happening about him, was obtruded upon him. He felt helpless because he was blind, not because he had been injured. He had forgotten entirely that for almost two weeks he had not stirred from bed; he had risen and stood and walked, without staggering, to the door and to the top of the stairs before, now, he remembered. So what he already had done showed him that he had merely again to put his injury from his mind and he could go on. He went down the stairs almost steadily.

There was still no sound or any evidence of any one below. The gases of the

firing were clearing away; the blind man could feel the slight breeze which came in through the windows of his bedroom and went with him down the stairs; and now, as he reached the lower steps, there was no other sound in the room but the tread of the blind man's bare feet on the stairs. This sound was slight, but enough to attract attention in the silence there. Santoine halted on the next to the last step—the blind count stairs, and he had gone down twenty-one—and realized fully his futility; but now he would not retreat or merely call for help.

"Who is here?" he asked distinctly. "Is any one here? Who is here?"

No one answered. And now Santoine knew by the sense which let him feel whether it was night or day, that the room was really dark—dark for others as well as for himself; the lights were not burning. So an exaltation, a sense of physical capability, came to Santoine; in the dark he was as fit, as capable as any other man—not more capable, for, though he was familiar with the room, the furniture had been moved in the struggle; he had heard the overturning of the chairs.

Santoine stepped down on the floor, and in his uncertainty as to the position of the furniture, felt along the wall. There were bookcases there, but he felt and passed along them swiftly, until he came to the case which concealed the safe at the left side of the doors. The books were gone from that case; his bare toes struck against them where they had been thrown down on the floor. The blind man, his pulse beating tumultuously, put his hand through the case and felt the panel behind. That was slid back exposing the safe; and the door of the safe stood open. Santoine's hands felt within the safe swiftly. The safe was empty.

He recoiled from it, choking back an ejaculation. The entry to this room had been made for the purpose which he supposed; and the thieves must have succeeded in their errand. The blind man, in his uselessness for pursuit, could delay calling others to act for him no longer. He started toward the bell, when some scrape on the floor—not of the sort to be accounted for by an object moved by the wind—sounded behind him. Santoine swung toward the sound and stood listening again; and then, groping with his hands stretched out before him, he left the wall and stepped toward the center of the room. He took two steps—three, four—with no result; then his foot trod into some fluid, thick and sticky and not cold.

Santoine stooped and put a finger-tip into the fluid and brought it near his

nose. It was what he supposed it must be—blood. He raised his foot and with his great toe traced the course of the blood; it led to one side, and then the blind man's toe touched some hard, metal object which was warm. He stooped and picked it up and felt over it with his fingers. It was an electric torch with the light turned on. Santoine stood holding it with the warm end—the lighted end—turned away from him; he swiftly switched it off; what put Santoine at a disadvantage with other men was light. But since there had been this light, there might be others; there had been at least three men, perhaps, therefore, three lights. Santoine's senses could not perceive light so dim and soft; he stood trying fruitlessly to determine whether there were other lights.

He could hear now some one breathing—more than one person. From the house, still shut off by its double, sound-proof doors, he could hear nothing; but some one outside the house was hurrying up to the open window at the south end of the room.

That one came to, or just inside the window, parting the curtains. He was breathing hard from exertion or from excitement.

"Who is it?" Santoine challenged clearly.

"Basil!" Blatchford's voice exclaimed his recognition in amazement. "Basil; that is you! What are you doing down here?" Blatchford started forward.

"Wait!" Santoine ordered sharply. "Don't come any further; stand there!"

Blatchford protested but obeyed. "What is it? What are you doing down here, Basil? What is the matter here? What has happened?"

"What brought you here?" Santoine demanded instead of reply. "You were running outside; why? What was out there? What did you see?"

"See? I didn't see anything—except the window here open when I came up. But I heard shots, Basil. I thought they were toward the road. I went out there; but I found nothing. I was coming back when I saw the window open. I'm sure I heard shots."

"They were here," Santoine said. "But you can see; and you just heard the shots. You didn't see anything!" the blind man accused. "You didn't see any one going away from here!"

"Basil, what has happened here?"

Santoine felt again the stickiness at his feet. "Three or four persons fought in this room, Wallace. Some—or one was hurt. There's blood on the floor. There are two here I can hear breathing; I suppose they're hurt. Probably the rest are gone. The room's all dark, isn't it? That is you moving about now, Wallace?"

"Yes."

"What are you doing?"

"Looking for the light."

"Don't."

"Why, Basil?"

"Get help first. I think those who aren't hurt are gone. They must be gone. But —get help first, Wallace."

"And leave you here?" Blatchford rejoined. He had not halted again; the blind man heard his cousin still moving along the wall. The electric switch clicked, and Santoine knew that the room was flooded with light. Santoine straightened, strained, turning his head a little to better listen. With the flashing on of the light, he had heard the sharp, involuntary start of Blatchford as he saw the room; and, besides that, Santoine heard movement now elsewhere in the room. Then the blind man heard his friend's cry. "Good God!"

It was not, Santoine instantly sensed, from mere surprise or fright at finding some intruder in the room; that must have been expected. This was from something more astounding, from something incredible.

"What is it?" Santoine cried.

"Good God! Basil!"

"Who is it, Wallace?" the blind man knew now that his friend's incoherence came from recognition of some one, not alone from some sight of horror. "Who is it, Wallace?" he repeated, curbing himself.

"Basil! It is—-it must be—I know him! It is—"

A shot roared in front of Santoine. The blind man, starting back at the shock of it, drew in the powder-gas with his breath; but the bullet was not for him. Instead, he heard his friend scream and choke and half call, half cough.

"Wallace!" Santoine cried out; but his voice was lost in the roar of another shot. This was not fired by the same one who had just fired; at least, it was not from the same part of the room; and instantly, from another side, a third shot came. Then, in the midst of rush and confusion, another shot roared; the light was out again; then all was gone; the noise was outside; the room was still except for a cough and choke as Blatchford—somewhere on the floor in front of the blind man—tried again to speak.

Basil Santoine, groping with his hands, found him. The blind man knelt and with his fingers went over his cousin's face; he found the wound on the neck where Blatchford's life was running away. He was still conscious. Santoine knew that he was trying his best to speak, to say just one word—a name—to tell whom he had seen and who had shot him; but he could not.

Santoine put his hand over a hand of his cousin. "That's all right, Wally; that's all right," he assured him. And now he knew that Blatchford's consciousness was going forever. Santoine knew what must be most on his friend's mind at that last moment as it had been most on his mind during more than thirty years. "And about my blindness, Wallace, that was the best thing that ever happened to me. I'd never have done what I have if I hadn't been blind."

Blatchford's fingers closed tightly on Santoine's; they did not relax but now remained closed, though without strength. The blind man bowed and then lifted his head. His friend was dead, and others were rushing into the room—the butler, one of the chauffeurs, Avery, more menservants; the light was on again, and amid the tumult and alarms of the discoveries shown by the light, some rushed to the windows to the south in pursuit of those who had escaped from the room. Avery and one or two others rushed up to Santoine; now the blind man heard, above their cries and alarms, the voice of his daughter. She was beside him, where he knelt next the body of Blatchford, and she put back others who crowded about.

"Father! What has happened? Why are you here? Oh, Father, Cousin Wallace!"

"He is dead," Santoine said. "They shot him!"

"Father; how was it? You—"

"There are none of them in the room?" he asked her in reply.

"None of them?"

Her failure to understand answered him. If any of the men who fought there had not got away, she would have understood. "They were not all together," he said. "They were three, at least. One was not with the others. They fired at each other, I believe, after one shot him." Santoine's hand was still in Blatchford's. "I

heard them below." He told shortly how he had gone down, how Blatchford had entered and been shot.

The blind man, still kneeling, heard the ordering and organizing of others for the pursuit; now women servants from the other part of the house were taking charge of affairs in the room. He heard Avery questioning them; none of the servants had had part in the fight in the room; there had been no signal heard, Santoine was told, upon any of the bells which he had tried to ring from his room. Eaton was the only person from the house who was missing. Harriet had gone for a moment; the blind man called her back and demanded that she stay beside him; he had not yet moved from Blatchford's body. His daughter returned; her hand on his shoulder was trembling and cold—he could feel it cold through the linen of his pajama jacket.

"Father, you must go back to bed!" she commanded uselessly. He would not stir yet. A servant, at her call, brought a robe which she put over him, and she drew slippers on his feet.

"They came, at least some of them came,"—Santoine had risen, fighting down his grief over his cousin's death; he stood holding the robe about him —"for what was in your safe, Harriet."

"I know; I saw it open."

"What is gone?" Santoine demanded.

He heard her picking up the contents of the safe from the floor and carrying them to the table and examining them; he was conscious that, having done this, she stood staring about the room as though to see whether anything had escaped her search.

"What is gone?" Santoine repeated.

"Why—nearly all the formal papers seem to be gone; lists and agreements relating to a dozen different things."

"None of the correspondence?"

"No; that all seems to be here."

Santoine was breathing quickly; the trust for which he had been ready to die—for which Blatchford had died—seemed safe; but recognition of this only emphasized and deepened his perplexity as to what the meaning had been of the struggle which an instant before had been going on around him.

"We don't know whether he got it, then, or not!" It was Avery's voice which broke in upon him; Santoine merely listened.

"He? Who?" He heard his daughter's challenge.

"Why, Eaton. It is plain enough what happened here, isn't it?" Avery answered. "He came here to this room for what he was after—for what he has been after from the first—whatever that may have been! He came prepared to force the safe and get it! But he was surprised—"

"By whom?" the blind man asked.

"By whomever it is that has been following him. I don't attempt to explain who they were, Mr. Santoine; for I don't know. But—whoever they were—in doing this, he laid himself open to attack by them. They were watching—saw him enter here. They attacked him here. Wallace switched on the light and recognized him; so he shot Wallace and ran with whatever he could grab up of the contents of the safe, hoping that by luck he'd get what he was after."

"It isn't so—it isn't so!" Harriet denied.

Her father checked her; he stood an instant thoughtful. "Who is directing the pursuit, Donald?" he asked.

Avery went out at once. The window to the south, which stood open, was closed. The blind man turned to his daughter.

"Now, Harriet," he commanded. He put a hand out and touched Harriet's clothing; he found she had on a heavy robe. She understood that her father would not move till she had seen the room for him. She gazed about again, therefore, and told him what she saw.

"There was some sort of a struggle near my safe," she said. "Chairs—everything there is knocked about."

"Yes."

"There is also blood there—a big spot of it on the floor."

"I found that," said Santoine.

"There is blood behind the table near the middle of the room."

"Ah! A man fired from near there, too!"

"There are cartridges on the floor—"

"Cartridges?"

"Cartridge shells, I mean, empty, near both those spots of blood. There are cartridge shells near the fireplace; but no blood there."

"Yes; the bullets?"

"There are marks everywhere—above the mantel, all about."

"Yes."

"There is a bar of iron with a bent end near the table—between it and the window; there are two flashlights, both extinguished."

"How was the safe opened?"

"The combination has been cut completely away; there is an—an instrument connected with the electric-light fixture which seems to have done the cutting. There is a hand-drill, too—I think it is a hand-drill. The inner door has been drilled through, and the catches drawn back."

"Who is this?"

The valet, who had been sent to Eaton's room, had returned with his report. "Mr. Eaton went from his room fully dressed, sir," he said to Santoine, "except for his shoes. I found all his shoes in his room."

During the report, the blind man felt his daughter's grasp on his arm become tense and relax and tighten again. Then, as though she realized she was adding to

his comprehension of what she had already betrayed, she suddenly took her hand from her father's arm. Santoine turned his face toward his daughter. Another twinge racked the tumult of his emotions. He groped and groped again, trying to catch his daughter's hand; but she avoided him. She directed servants to lift Blatchford's body and told them where to bear it. After that, Santoine resisted no longer. He let the servants, at his daughter's direction, help him to his room. His daughter went with him and saw that he was safe in bed; she stood beside him while the nurse washed the blood-splotches from his hands and feet. When the nurse had finished, he still felt his daughter's presence; she drew nearer to him.

"Father?" she questioned.

"Yes."

"You don't agree with Donald, do you?—that Mr. Eaton went to the study to —to get something, and that whoever has been following him found him there and—and interrupted him and he killed Cousin Wallace?"

Santoine was silent an instant. "That seems the correct explanation, Harriet," he evaded. "It does not fully explain; but it seems correct as far as it goes. If Donald asks you what my opinion is, tell him it is that."

He felt his daughter shrink away from him.

The blind man made no move to draw her back to him; he lay perfectly still; his head rested flat upon the pillows; his hands were clasped tightly together above the coverlet. He had accused himself, in the room below, because, by the manner he had chosen to treat Eaton, he had slain the man he loved best and had forced a friendship with Eaton on his daughter which, he saw, had gone further than mere friendship; it had gone, he knew now, even to the irretrievable between man and woman—had brought her, that is, to the state where, no matter what Eaton was or did, she must suffer with him! But Santoine was not accusing himself now; he was feeling only the fulfillment of that threat against those who had trusted him with their secrets, which he had felt vaguely after the murder of Gabriel Warden and, more plainly with the events of each succeeding day, ever since. For that threat, just now, had culminated in his presence in purposeful, violent action; but Santoine in his blindness had been unable—and was still unable—-to tell what that action meant.

Of the three men who had fought in his presence in the room below—one

before the safe, one at the fireplace, one behind the table—which had been Eaton? What had he been doing there? Who were the others? What had any of them—or all of them—wanted? For Santoine, the answer to these questions transcended now every personal interest. So, in his uncertainty, Santoine had drawn into himself—withdrawn confidence in his thoughts from all around, from Donald Avery, even from his daughter—until the answer should be found. His blind eyes were turned toward the ceiling, and his long, well-shaped fingers trembled with the intensity of his thought. But he realized, even in his absorption, that his daughter had drawn away from him. So, presently, he stirred.

"Harriet," he said.

It was the nurse who answered him. "Miss Santoine has gone downstairs. What is it you want of her, Mr. Santoine?"

The blind man hesitated, and checked the impulse he had had. "Nothing," he replied.

CHAPTER XIX

PURSUIT

Harriet Santoine, still clad only in the heavy robe over her nightdress and in slippers, went from her father's bedroom swiftly down into the study again; what she was going to do there she did not definitely know. She heard, as she descended the stairs, the steward in the hall outside the study calling up the police stations of the neighboring villages and giving news of what had happened and instructions to watch the roads; but as she reached the foot of the stairs, a servant closed the study doors. The great, curtained room in its terrifying disorder was brightly lighted, empty, absolutely still. She had given directions that, except for the removal of Blatchford's body, all must be left as it was in the room till the arrival of the police. She stood an instant with hands pressed against her breast, staring down at the spots upon the floor.

There were three of these spots now—one where Blatchford's body had lain.

They were soaking brownly into the rugs but standing still red and thick upon the polished floor. Was one of them Eaton's?

Something within her told her that it was, and the fierce desire to go to him, to help him, was all she felt just now. It was Donald Avery's and her father's accusation of Eaton that had made her feel like this. She had been feeling, the moment before Donald had spoken, that Philip Eaton had played upon her that evening in making her take him to his confederate in the ravine in order to plan and consummate something here. Above her grief and horror at the killing of her cousin and the danger to her father, had risen the anguish of her guilt with Eaton, the agony of her betrayal. But their accusation that Eaton had killed Wallace Blatchford, seeing him, knowing him—in the light—had swept all that away; all there was of her seemed to have risen in denial of that. Before her eyes, half shut, she saw again the body of her cousin Wallace lying in its blood on the floor, with her father kneeling beside it, his blind eyes raised in helplessness to the light; but she saw now another body too—Eaton's—not here—-lying somewhere in the bare, wind-swept woods, shot down by those pursuing him.

She looked at the face of the clock and then down to the pendulum to see whether it had stopped; but the pendulum was swinging. The hands stood at half past one o'clock; now she recalled that, in her first wild gaze about the room when she rushed in with the others, she had seen the hands showing a minute or so short of twenty minutes past one. Not quite a quarter of an hour had passed since the alarm! The pursuit could not have moved far away. She reopened the window through which the pursuers had passed and stepped out onto the dark lawn. She stood drawing the robe about her against the chill night air, dazed, stunned. The house behind her, the stables, the chauffeurs' quarters above the garages, the gardeners' cottages, all blazed now with light, but she saw no one about. The menservants—except the steward—had joined the pursuit; she heard them to the south beating the naked woods and shrubbery and calling to each other. A half mile down the beach she heard shouts and a shot; she saw dimly through the night in that direction a boat without lights moving swiftly out upon the lake.

Her hands clenched and pressed against her breast; she stood straining at the sounds of the man-hunt. It had turned west, it seemed; it was coming back her way, but to the west of the house. She staggered a little and could not stand; she stepped away from the house in the direction of the pursuit; following the way it seemed to be going, she crossed the lawn toward the garage. A light suddenly

shone out there, and she went on.

The wide door at the car driveway was pushed open, and some one was within working over a car. His back was toward her, and he was bent over the engine, but, at the glance, she knew him and recoiled, gasping. It was Eaton. He turned at the same instant and saw her.

"Oh; it's you!" he cried to her.

Her heart, which almost had ceased to beat, raced her pulses again. At the sound she had made on the driveway, he had turned to her as a hunted thing, cornered, desperate, certain that whoever came must be against him. His cry to her had recognized her as the only one who could come and not be against him; it had hailed her with relief as bringing him help. He could not have cried out so at that instant at sight of her if he had been guilty of what they had accused. Now she saw too, as he faced her, blood flowing over his face; blood soaked a shoulder of his coat, and his left arm dangling at his side; but now, as he threw back his head and straightened in his relief at finding it was she who had surprised him, she saw in him an exultation and excitement she had never seen before—something which her presence alone could not have caused. To-night, she sensed vaguely, something had happened to him which had changed his attitude toward her and everything else.

"Yes; it's I!" she cried quickly and rushed to him. "It's I! It's I!" wildly she reassured him. "You're hurt!" She touched his shoulder. "You're hurt! I knew you were!"

He pushed her back with his right hand and held her away from him. "Did they hurt your father?"

"Hurt Father? No."

"But Mr. Blatchford—"

"Dead," she answered dully.

"They killed him, then!"

"Yes; they—" She iterated. He was telling her now—unnecessarily—that he had had nothing to do with it; it was the others who had done that.

He released her and wiped the blood from his eyes with the heel of his hand. "The poor old man," he said, "—the poor old man!"

She drew toward him in the realization that he could find sympathy for others even in such a time as this.

"Where's the key?" he demanded of her. He stared over her again but without surprise even in his eyes, at her state; if she was there at all at that time, that was the only way she could have come.

"The key?"

"The key for the battery and magneto—the key you start the car with."

She ran to a shelf and brought it to him; he used it and pressed the starting lever. The engine started and he sprang to the seat. His left arm still hanging useless at his side; he tried to throw in the gears with his right hand; but the mechanism of the car was strange to him. She leaped up beside him.

"Move over!" she commanded. "It's this way!"

He slipped to the side and she took the driving seat, threw in the gears expertly, and the car shot from the garage. She switched on the electric headlights as they dashed down the driveway and threw a bright white glare upon the roadway a hundred yards ahead to the gates. Beyond the gates the public pike ran north and south.

"Which way?" she demanded of him, slowing the car.

"Stop!" he cried to her. "Stop and get out! You mustn't do this!"

"You could not pass alone," she said. "Father's men would close the gates upon you."

"The men? There are no men there now—they went to the beach—before! They must have heard something there! It was their being there that turned him —the others back. They tried for the lake and were turned back and got away in a machine; I followed—back up here!"

Harriet Santoine glanced at the face of the man beside her. She could see his

features only vaguely; she could see no expression; only the position of his head. But now she knew that she was not helping him to run away; he was no longer hunted—at least he was not only hunted; he was hunting others too. As the car rolled down upon the open gates and she strained forward in the seat beside her, she knew that what he was feeling was a wild eagerness in this pursuit.

"Right or left—quick!" she demanded of him. "I'll take one or the other."

"Right," he shot out; but already, remembering the direction of the pursuit, she had chosen the road to the right and raced on. He caught the driving wheel with his good hand and tried to take it from her; she resisted and warned him:

"I'm going to drive this car; if you try to take it, it'll throw us both into the ditch."

"If we catch up with them, they'll shoot; give me the car," he begged.

"We'll catch up with them first."

"Then you'll do what I say?"

"Yes," she made the bargain.

"There are their tracks!" he pointed for her.

The road was soft with the rains that precede spring, and she saw in the bright flare of the headlights, where some heavy car, fast driven, had gouged deep into the earth at the roadside; she noted the pattern of the tires.

"How do you know those are their tracks?" she asked him.

"I told you, I followed them to where they got their machine."

"Who are they?"

"The men who shot Mr. Blatchford."

"Who are they?" she put to him directly again.

He waited, and she knew that he was not going to answer her directly. She was running the car now at very high speed; the tiny electric light above the

speedometer showed they were running at forty-five miles an hour and the strip was still turning to higher figures.

Suddenly he caught her arm. The road had forked, and he pointed to the left; she swung the car that way, again seeing as they made the turn, the tire-tracks they were following. She was not able now to watch these tracks; she could watch only the road and car; but she was aware that the way they were following had led them into and out of private grounds. Plainly the men they were following knew the neighborhood well and had chosen this road in advance as avoiding the more public roads which might be watched. She noted they were turning always to the left; now she understood that they were making a great circle to west and north and returning toward, but well west of, her father's house; thus she knew that those they were following had made this circuit to confuse pursuit and that their objective was the great city to the south.

They were racing now over a little used road which bisected a forested section still held as acreage; old, rickety wooden bridges spanned the ravines. One of these appeared in the radiance of the headlight a hundred yards ahead; the next instant the car was dashing upon it. Harriet could feel the shake and tremble of the loosely nailed boards as the driving wheels struck; there was a crash as some strut, below, gave way; the old bridge bent but recoiled; the car bounded across it, the rear wheels skidding in the moist earth as they swung off the boards.

Harriet felt Eaton grab her arm.

"You mustn't do that again!"

"Why?"

"You mustn't do that again!" he repeated the order; it was too obvious to tell her it was not safe.

She laughed. Less than five minutes before, as she stood outside the room where her father's cousin had just been murdered, it had seemed she could never laugh again. The car raced up a little hill and now again was descending; the headlights showed another bridge over a ravine.

"Slow! Stop!" her companion commanded.

She paid no attention and raced the car on; he put his hand on the wheel and with his foot tried to push hers from the accelerator; but she fought him; the car swayed and all but ran away as they approached the bridge. "Give it to me!" she screamed to him and wrenched the car about. It was upon the bridge and across it; as they skidded upon the mud of the road again, they could hear the bridge cracking behind.

"Harriet!" he pleaded with her.

She steered the car on, recklessly, her heart thumping with more than the thrill of the chase. "They're the men who tried to kill you, aren't they?" she rejoined. The speed at which they were going did not permit her to look about; she had to keep her eyes on the road at that moment when she knew within herself and was telling the man beside her that she from that moment must be at one with him. For already she had said it; as she risked herself in the pursuit, she thought of the men they were after not chiefly as those who had killed her cousin but as those who had threatened Eaton. "What do I care what happens to me, if we catch them?" she cried.

"Harriet!" he repeated her name again.

"Philip!"

She felt him shrink and change as she called the name. It had been clear to her, of course, that, since she had known him, the name he had been using was not his own. Often she had wondered what his name was; now she had to know. "What should I call you?" she demanded of him.

"My name," he said, "is Hugh."

"Hugh!" she called it.

"Yes."

"Hugh—" She waited for the rest; but he told no more. "Hugh!" she whispered to herself again his name now. "Hugh!"

Her eyes, which had watched the road for the guiding of the car, had followed his gesture from time to time pointing out the tracks made by the machine they were pursuing. These tracks still ran on ahead; as she gazed down the road, a red

glow beyond the bare trees was lighting the sky. A glance at Hugh told that he also had seen it.

"A fire?" she referred to him.

"Looks like it."

They said no more as they rushed on; but the red glow was spreading, and yellow flames soon were in sight shooting higher and higher; these were clouded off for an instant only to appear flaring higher again, and the breeze brought the smell of seasoned wood burning.

"It's right across the road!" Hugh announced as they neared it.

"It's the bridge over the next ravine," Harriet said. Her foot already was bearing upon the brake, and the power was shut off; the car coasted on slowly. For both could see now that the wooden span was blazing from end to end; it was old wood, swift to burn and going like tinder. There was no possible chance for the car to cross it. The girl brought the machine to a stop fifty feet from the edge of the ravine; the fire was so hot that the gasoline tank would not be safe nearer. She gazed down at the tire-marks on the road.

"They crossed with their machine," she said to Hugh.

"And fired the bridge behind. They must have poured gasoline over it and lighted it at both ends."

She sat with one hand still straining at the driving wheel, the other playing with the gear lever.

"There's no other way across that ravine, I suppose," Hugh questioned her.

"The other road's back more than a mile, and two miles about." She threw in the reverse and started to turn. Hugh shook his head. "That's no use."

"No," she agreed, and stopped the car again. Hugh stepped down on the ground. A man appeared on the other side of the ravine. He stood and stared at the burning span and, seeing the machine on the other side, he scrambled down the slope of the ravine. Eaton met him as he came up to the road again. The man was one of the artisans—a carpenter or jack-of-all-work—who had little

cottages, with patches for garden, through the undivided acreage beyond the big estates. He had hastily and only partly dressed; he stared at Eaton's hurt with astonishment which increased as he gazed at the girl in the driving seat of the car. He did not recognize her except as one of the class to whom he owed employment; he pulled off his cap and stared back to Eaton with wonder.

"What's happened, sir? What's the matter?"

Eaton did not answer, but Harriet now recognized the man. "Mr. Blatchford was shot to-night at Father's house, Dibley," she said.

"Miss Santoine!" Dibley cried.

"We think the men went this way," she continued.

"Did you see any one pass?" Eaton challenged the man.

"In a motor, sir?"

"Yes; down this road in a motor."

"Yes, sir."

"When?"

"Just now, sir."

"Just now?"

"Not five minutes ago. Just before I saw the bridge on fire here."

"How was that?"

"I live there just beyond, near the road. I heard my pump going."

"Your pump?"

"Yes, sir. I've a pump in my front yard. There's no water piped through here, sir."

"Of course. Go on, Dibley."

"I looked out and saw a machine stopped out in the road. One man was pumping water into a bucket for another."

"Then what did you do?"

"Nothing, sir. I just watched them. Motor people often stop at my pump for water."

"I see. Go on."

"That's all about them, sir. I thought nothing about it—they wouldn't wake me to ask for water; they'd just take it. Then I saw the fire over there—"

"No; go back," Eaton interrupted. "First, how many men were there in the car?"

"How many? Three, sir."

Eaton started. "Only three; you're sure?"

"Yes, sir; I could see them plain. There was the two at the pump; one more stayed in the car."

Eaton seized the man in his intentness. "You're sure there weren't any more, Dibley? Think; be sure! There weren't three more or even one more person hidden in the tonneau of the car?"

"The tonneau, sir?"

"The back seats, I mean."

"No, sir; I could see into the car. It was almost right below me, sir. My house has a room above; that's where I was sleeping."

"Then did you watch the men with the water?"

"Watch them, sir?"

"What they did with it; you're sure they didn't take it to the rear seat to give it to some one there. You see, we think one of the men was hurt," Eaton explained.

"No, sir. I'd noticed if they did that."

"Then did they put it into the radiator—here in front where motorists use water?"

Dibley stared. "No, sir; I didn't think of it then, but they didn't. They didn't put it into the car. They took it in their bucket with them. It was one of those folding buckets motor people have."

Eaton gazed at the man. "Only three, you are sure!" he repeated. "And none of them seemed to be hurt!"

"No, sir."

"Then they went off in the other direction from the bridge?"

"Yes, sir. I didn't notice the bridge burning till after they went. So I came down here."

Eaton let the man go. Dibley looked again at the girl and moved away a little. She turned to Eaton.

"What does that mean?" she called to him. "How many should there have been in the machine? What did they want with the water?"

"Six!" Eaton told her. "There should have been six in the machine, and one, at least, badly hurt!"

Dibley stood dully apart, staring at one and then at the other and next to the flaming bridge. He looked down the road. "There's another car coming," he announced. "Two cars!"

The double glare from the headlights of a motor shone through the tree-trunks as the car topped and came swiftly down a rise three quarters of a mile away and around the last turn back on the road; another pair of blinding lights followed. There was no doubt that this must be the pursuit from Santoine's house. Eaton stood beside Harriet, who had stayed in the driving-seat of the car.

"You know Dibley well, Harriet?" he asked.

"He's worked on our place. He's dependable," she answered.

Eaton put his hand over hers which still clung to the driving wheel. "I'm going just beside the road here," he said to her, quietly. "I'm armed, of course. If those are your people, you'd better go back with them. I'm sure they are; but I'll wait and see."

She caught at his hand. "No; no!" she cried. "You must get as far away as you can before they come! I'm going back to meet and hold them." She threw the car into the reverse, backed and turned it and brought it again onto the road. He came beside her again, putting out his hand; she seized it. Her hands for an instant clung to it, his to hers.

"You must go—quick!" she urged; "but how am I to know what becomes of you—where you are? Shall I hear from you—shall I ever see you?"

"No news will be good news," he said, "until—"

"Until what?"

"Until—" And again that unknown something which a thousand times—it seemed to her—had checked his word and action toward her made him pause; but nothing could completely bar them from one another now. "Until they catch and destroy me, or—until I come to you as—as you have never known me yet!"

An instant more she clung to him. The double headlights flared into sight again upon the road, much nearer now and coming fast. She released him; he plunged into the bushes beside the road, and the damp, bare twigs lashed against one another at his passage; then she shot her car forward. But she had made only a few hundred yards when the first of the two cars met her. It turned to its right to pass, she turned the same way; the approaching car twisted to the left, she swung hers to oppose it. The two cars did not strike; they stopped, radiator to radiator, with rear wheels locked. The second car drew up behind the first. The glare of her headlights showed her both were full of armed men. Their headlights, revealing her to them, hushed suddenly their angry ejaculations. She recognized Avery in the first car; he leaped out and ran up to her.

"Harriet! In God's name, what are you doing here?"

She sat unmoved in her seat, gazing at him. Men leaping from the cars, ran

past her down the road toward the ravine and the burning bridge. She longed to look once more in the direction in which Eaton had disappeared, but she did not. Avery reached up and over the side of the car and caught her arm, repeating his demand for an explanation. She could see, turning in her seat, the men who had run past surrounding Dibley on the road and questioning him. Avery, gaining no satisfaction from her, let go her arm; his hand dropped to the back of the seat and he drew it up quickly.

"Harriet, there's blood here!"

She did not reply. He stared at her and seemed to comprehend.

He shouted to the men around Dibley and ran toward them. They called in answer to his shout, and she could see Dibley pointing out to them the way Eaton had gone. The men, scattering themselves at intervals along the edge of the wood and, under Avery's direction, posting others in each direction to watch the road, began to beat through the bushes after Eaton. She sat watching; she put her cold hands to her face; then, recalling how just now Eaton's hand had clung to hers, she pressed them to her lips. Avery came running back to her.

"You drove him out here, Harriet!" he charged. "Dibley says so."

"Him? Who?" she asked coolly.

"Eaton. Dibley did not know him, but describes him. It can have been no one else. He was hurt!" The triumph in the ejaculation made her recoil. "He was hurt and could not drive, and you drove him out"—his tone changed suddenly—"like this!"

For the first time since she had left the garage she was suddenly conscious that she was in her night-dress with only a robe and slippers. She drew the robe quickly about her, shrinking and staring at him. In all the miles she had driven that night with Eaton at her side, she never a moment had shrunk from her companion or thought how she was dressed. It was not the exaltation and excitement of what she was doing that had prevented her; it went deeper than that; it was the attitude of her companion toward her. But Avery had thought of it, and made her think of it, at once, even in the excitement under which he was laboring.

He left her again, running after the men into the woods. She sat in the car,

listening to the sounds of the hunt. She could see, back of her, in the light of the burning bridge, one of the armed men standing to watch the road; ahead of her, but almost indistinguishable in the darkness, was another. The noise of the hunt had moved further into the woods; she had no immediate fear that they would find Eaton; her present anxiety was over his condition from his hurts and what might happen if he encountered those he had been pursuing. In that neighborhood, with its woods and bushes and ravines to furnish cover, the darkness made discovery of him by Avery and his men impossible if Eaton wished to hide himself. Avery appeared to have realized this; for now the voices in the woods ceased and the men began to straggle back toward the cars. A party was sent on foot across the ravine, evidently to guard the road beyond. The rest began to clamber into the cars. She backed her car away from the one in front of it and started home.

She had gone only a short distance when the cars again passed her, traveling at high speed. She began then to pass individual men left by those in the cars to watch the road. At the first large house she saw one of the cars again, standing empty. She passed it without stopping. A mile farther, a little group of men carrying guns stopped her, recognized her and let her pass. They had been called out, they told her, by Mr. Avery over the telephone to watch the roads for Eaton; they had Eaton's description; members of the local police were to take charge of them and direct them. She comprehended that Avery was surrounding the vacant acreage where Eaton had taken refuge to be certain that Eaton did not get away until daylight came and a search for him was possible.

Lights gleamed at her across the broad lawns of the houses near her father's great house as she approached it; at the sound of her car, people came to the windows and looked out. She understood that news of the murder at Basil Santoine's had aroused the neighbors and brought them from their beds.

As she left her motor on the drive beside the house—for to-night no one came from the garages to take it—the little clock upon its dash marked half past two.

CHAPTER XX

WAITING

Harriet went into the house and toward her own rooms; a maid met and stopped her on the stairs.

"Mr. Santoine sent word that he wishes to see you as soon as you came in, Miss Santoine."

Harriet went on toward her father's room, without stopping at her own—wet with the drive through the damp night and shivering now with its chill. Her father's voice answered her knock with a summons to come in. As she obeyed, pushing the doors open, he dismissed the nurse; the girl, passing Harriet as she went out, returned Harriet's questioning look with a reassuring nod; Basil Santoine had endured the shock and excitement of the night better than could have been expected; he was quite himself.

As Harriet went toward the bed, her father's blind eyes turned toward her; he put out his hand and touched her, seeming startled to find her still in the robe she had worn an hour before and to feel that the robe was wet.

"Where have you been, Daughter?" he asked.

She hesitated, drawing the robe out of his hand. "I—I have been driving Mr. Eaton in a motor," she said.

"Helping him to escape?" A spasm crossed the blind man's face.

"He said not; he—he was following the men who shot Cousin Wallace."

The blind man lay for an instant still. "Tell me," he commanded finally.

She told him, beginning with her discovery of Eaton in the garage and ending with his leaving her and with Donald Avery's finding her in the motor; and now she held back one word only—his name which he had told her, Hugh. Her father listened intently; when she had finished, he made no move, no comment, no reproach. She had seated herself on the chair beside his bed; she looked away, then back to him.

"That is not all," she said; and she told him of her expedition with Eaton to the ravine before the attack in the house.

Again she waited.

"You and Mr. Eaton appear to have become rather well acquainted, Harriet," he said. "Has he told you nothing about himself which you have not told me? You have seen nothing concerning him, which you have not told?"

Her mind went quickly back to the polo game; she felt a flush, which his blind eyes could not see, dyeing her cheeks and forehead.

"No," she answered. She was aware that he did not accept the denial, that he knew she was concealing something.

"Nothing?" he asked again.

She put her hands to her face; then she drew them quickly away. "Nothing," she said steadily.

The blind man waited for a moment; he put out his hand and pressed the bell which called the steward. Neither spoke until the steward had come.

"Fairley," Santoine said then, quietly, "Miss Santoine and I have just agreed that for the present all reports regarding the pursuit of the men who entered the study last night are to be made direct to me, not through Miss Santoine or Mr. Avery."

"Very well, sir."

She still sat silent after the steward had gone; she thought for an instant her father had forgotten her presence; then he moved slightly.

"That is all, dear," he said quietly.

She got up and left him, and went to her own rooms; she did not pretend to herself that she could rest. She bathed and dressed and went downstairs. The library had windows facing to the west; she went in there and stood looking out. Somewhere to the west was Eaton, alone, wounded; she knew she need not think of him yet as actively hunted, only watched; with daylight the hunt would begin. Would he be able to avoid the watchers and escape before the actual hunt for him began?

She went out into the hall to the telephone. She could not get the use of the 'phone at once; the steward was posted there; the calls upon the 'phone were continual—from neighbors who, awakened to learn the news of Blatchford's death and the hunt for his murderer, called to offer what help they could, and from the newspapers, which somehow had been notified. The telephones in the bedrooms all were on this wire. There was a private telephone in the library; somehow she could not bring herself to enter that room, closed and to be left with everything in its disorder until the arrival of the police. The only other telephone was in her father's bedroom.

She took advantage of a momentary interruption in the calls to call up the local police station. Hearing her name, the man at the other end became deferential at once; he told her what was being done, confirming what she already knew; the roads were being watched and men had been posted at all near-by railway stations and at the stopping points of the interurban line to prevent Eaton from escaping that way. The man spoke only of Eaton; he showed the conviction—gathered, she felt sure, by telephone conversation with Donald Avery—that Eaton was the murderer.

"He ain't likely to get away, Miss Santoine," he assured her. "He's got no shoes, I understand, and he has one or maybe two shots through him."

She shrunk back and nearly dropped the 'phone at the vision which his words called up; yet there was nothing new to her in that vision—it was continually before her eyes; it was the only thing of which she could think.

"You'll call me as soon as you know anything more," she requested; "will you call me every hour?"

She hung up, on receiving assurance of this.

A servant brought a written paper. She took it before she recognized that it was not for her but for the steward. It was a short statement of the obvious physical circumstances of the murder, evidently dictated by her father and intended for the newspapers. She gave it to Fairley, who began reading it over the telephone to the newspapers. She wandered again to the west windows. She was not consciously listening to the telephone conversation in the hall; yet enough reached her to make her know that reporters were rushing from the city by train and automobile. The last city editions of the morning papers would have

at least the fact of the murder; there would be later extras; the afternoon papers would have it all. There was a long list of relatives and friends to whom it was due that telegraphic announcement of Wallace Blatchford's death reach them before they read it as a sensation publicly printed. Recollection of these people at least gave her something to do.

She went up to her own room, listed the names and prepared the telegrams for them; she came down again and gave the telegrams to Fairley to transmit by telephone. As she descended the stairs, the great clock in the lower hall struck once; it was a quarter past three.

There was a stir in these lower rooms now; the officers of the local police had arrived. She went with them to the study, where they assumed charge nervously and uncertainly. She could not bear to be in that room; nevertheless she remained and answered their questions. She took them to Eaton's rooms on the floor above, where they searched through and took charge of all his things. She left them and came down again and went out to the front of the house.

The night was sharp with the chill preceding the day; it had cleared; the stars were shining. As she stood looking to the west, the lights of a motor turned into the grounds. She ran toward it, thinking it must be bringing word of some sort; but the men who leaped from it were strangers to her—they were the first of the reporters to arrive. They tried to question her, but she ran from them into the house. She watched from the windows and saw other reporters arriving. To Harriet there seemed to be scores of them. Every morning paper in Chicago, immediately upon receipt of the first flash, had sent at least three men; every evening paper seemed to have aroused half its staff from their beds and sent them racing to the blind millionaire's home on the north shore. Even men from Milwaukee papers arrived at four o'clock. Forbidden the house, they surrounded it and captured servants. They took flashlights till, driven from the lawn, they went away—many of them—to see and take part in the search through the woods for Blatchford's murderer. The murder of Santoine's cousin—the man, moreover, who had blinded Santoine—in the presence of the blind man was enough of itself to furnish a newspaper sensation; but, following so closely Santoine's visit to the Coast because of the murder of Gabriel Warden, the newspaper men sensed instantly in it the possibility of some greater sensation not yet bared.

Harriet was again summoned. A man—a stranger—was awaiting her in the

hall; he was the precursor of those who would sit that day upon Wallace Blatchford's death and try to determine, formally, whose was the hand that had done it—the coroner's man. He too, she saw, was already convinced what hand it had been—Eaton's. She took him to the study, then to the room above where Wallace Blatchford lay dead. She stood by while he made his brief, conventional examination. She looked down at the dead man's face. Poor Cousin Wallace! he had destroyed his own life long before, when he had destroyed her father's sight; from that time on he had lived only to recompense her father for his blindness. Cousin Wallace's life had been a pitiable, hopeless, loving perpetuation of his penance; he had let himself hold nothing of his own in life; he had died, as she knew he would have wished to die, giving his life in service to his cousin; she was not unduly grieving over him.

She answered the man's questions, calmly and collectedly; but her mind was not upon what she was saying. Her mind was upon only one thing—even of that she could not think connectedly. Some years ago, something—she did not know what—had happened to Hugh; to-night, in some strange way unknown to her, it had culminated in her father's study. He had fought some one; he had rushed away to follow some one. Whom? Had he heard that some one in the study and gone down? Had he been fighting their battle—her father's and hers? She knew that was not so. Hugh had been fully dressed. What did it mean that he had said to her that these events would either destroy him or would send him back to her as—as something different? Her thought supplied no answer.

But whatever he had done, whatever he might be, she knew his fate was hers now; for she had given herself to him utterly. She had told that to herself as she fled and pursued with him that night; she had told it to him; she later had told it—though she had not meant to yet—to her father. She could only pray now that out of the events of this night might not come a grief to her too great for her to bear.

She went to the rooms that had been Eaton's. The police, in stripping them of his possessions, had overlooked his cap; she found the bit of gray cloth and hugged it to her. She whispered his name to herself—Hugh—that secret of his name which she had kept; she gloried that she had that secret with him which she could keep from them all. What wouldn't they give just to share that with her—his name, Hugh!

She started suddenly, looking through the window. The east, above the lake,

was beginning to grow gray. The dawn was coming! It was beginning to be day!

She hurried to the other side of the house, looking toward the west. How could she have left him, hurt and bleeding and alone in the night! She could not have done that but that his asking her to go had told that it was for his safety as well as hers; she could not help him any more then; she would only have been in the way. But now— She started to rush out, but controlled herself; she had to stay in the house; that was where the first word would come if they caught him; and then he would need her, how much more! The reporters on the lawn below her, seeing her at the window, called up to her to know further particulars of what had happened and what the murder meant; she could see them plainly in the increasing light. She could see the lawn and the road before the house.

Day had come.

And with the coming of day, the uncertainty and disorder within and about the house seemed to increase.... But in the south wing, with its sound-proof doors and its windows closed against the noises from the lawn, there was silence; and in this silence, an exact, compelling, methodic machine was working; the mind of Basil Santoine was striving, vainly as yet, but with growing chances of success, to fit together into the order in which they belonged and make clear the events of the night and all that had gone before—arranging, ordering, testing, discarding, picking up again and reordering all that had happened since that other murder, of Gabriel Warden.

CHAPTER XXI

WHAT ONE CAN DO WITHOUT EYES

The blind man, lying on his bed in that darkness in which he had lived since his sixteenth year and which no daylight could lessen, felt the light and knew that day had come; he stirred impatiently. The nurse, the only other occupant of the room, moved expectantly; then she sank back; Santoine had moved but had not roused from that absorption in which he had been ever since returning to his bed. He had not slept. The connections of the electric bells had been repaired,—

the wires had been found pulled from their batteries,—but Santoine had not moved a hand to touch a button. He had disregarded the warning of the doctor who had been summoned at once after the murder and had come to his room again just before dawn to warn him that after his recklessness of the night he must expect a reaction. He had given such injunctions in regard to any new development that he was certain that, even if his servants believed him asleep, they would report to him. But there had been no report; and Santoine expected none immediately. He had not lain awake awaiting anything; he felt that so much had happened, so many facts were at his command, that somewhere among them must be the key to what they meant.

The blind man knew that his daughter was concealing something from him. He could not tell what the importance of the thing she was concealing might be; but he knew his daughter was enough like himself for it to be useless for him to try to force from her something she did not mean to tell. The new intimacy of the relation between his daughter and Eaton was perfectly plain to Santoine; but it did not cause him to try to explain anything in Eaton's favor; nor did it prejudice him against him. He had appeared to accept Avery's theory of what had happened in the study because by doing so he concealed what was going on in his own mind; he actually accepted it only to the point of agreeing that Eaton must have met in the study those enemies—or some one representing the enemies—who had attacked him with the motor-car and had before attempted to attack him on the train.

Three men—at least three men—had fought in the study in Santoine's presence. Eaton, it was certain, had been the only one from the house present when the first shots were fired. Had Eaton been alone against the other two? Had Eaton been with one of the other two against the third? It appeared probable to Santoine that Eaton had been alone, or had come alone, to the study and had met his enemies there. Had these enemies surprised Eaton in the study or had he surprised them? Santoine was inclined to believe that Eaton had surprised them. The contents taken from the safe had certainly been carried away, and these would have made rather a bulky bundle. Eaton could not have carried it without Harriet knowing it. Santoine believed that, whatever knowledge his daughter might be concealing from him, she would not have concealed this. It was certain that some time had been necessary for opening the safe, before those opening it suffered interruption.

Santoine felt, therefore, that the probabilities were that Eaton's enemies had

opened the safe and had been surprised by Eaton. But if they had opened the safe, they were not only Eaton's enemies; they were also Santoine's; they were the men who threatened Santoine's trust.

Those whom Eaton had fought in the room had had perfect opportunity for killing Santoine, if they wished. He had stood first in the dark with the electric torch in his hand; then he had been before them in the light after Blatchford had entered. But Santoine felt certain no one had made any attack upon him at any moment in the room; he had had no feeling, at any instant, that any of the shots fired had been directed at him. Blatchford, too, had been unattacked until he had made it plain that he had recognized one of the intruders; then, before Blatchford could call the name, he had been shot down.

It was clear, then, that what had protected Santoine was his blindness; he had no doubt that, if he had been able to see and recognize the men in the room after the lights were turned on, he would have been shot down also. But Santoine recognized that this did not fully account for his immunity. Two weeks before, an attack which had been meant for Eaton had struck down Santoine instead; and no further attempt against Eaton had been made until it had become publicly known that Santoine was not going to die. If Santoine's death would have served for Eaton's death two weeks before, why was Santoine immune now? Did possession of the contents of Santoine's safe accomplish the same thing as Santoine's death? Or more than his death for these men? For what men?

It was not, Santoine was certain, Eaton's presence in the study which had so astounded Blatchford; Wallace and Eaton had passed days together, and Blatchford was accustomed to Eaton's presence in the house. Some one whom Blatchford knew and whose name Santoine also would know and whose presence in the room was so strange and astonishing that Blatchford had tried to prepare Santoine for the announcement, had been there. The man whose name was on Blatchford's tongue, or the companion of that man, had shot Blatchford rather than let Santoine hear the name.

The blind man stirred upon his bed.

"Do you want something, Mr. Santoine?" the nurse asked. The blind man did not answer. He was beginning to find these events fit themselves together; but they fitted imperfectly as yet.

Santoine knew that he lacked the key. Many men could profit by possessing the contents of Santoine's safe and might have shot Blatchford rather than let Santoine know their presence there; it was impossible for Santoine to tell which among these many the man who had been in the study might be. Who Eaton's enemies were was equally unknown to Santoine. But there could be but one man—or at most one small group of men—who could be at the same time Eaton's enemy and Santoine's. To have known who Eaton was would have pointed this man to Santoine.

The blind man lay upon his back, his open, sightless eyes unwinking in the intensity of his thought.

Gabriel Warden had had an appointment with a young man who had come from Asia and who—Warden had told his wife—he had discovered lately had been greatly wronged. Eaton, under Conductor Connery's questioning, had admitted himself to be that young man; Santoine had verified this and had learned that Eaton was, at least, the young man who had gone to Warden's house that night. But Gabriel Warden had not been allowed to help Eaton; so far from that, he had not even been allowed to meet and talk with Eaton; he had been called out, plainly, to prevent his meeting Eaton, and killed.

Eaton disappeared and concealed himself at once after Warden's murder, apparently fearing that he would also be attacked. But Eaton was not a man whom this personal fear would have restrained from coming forward later to tell why Warden had been killed. He had been urged to come forward and promised that others would give him help in Warden's place; still, he had concealed himself. This must mean that others than Warden could not help Eaton; Eaton evidently did not know, or else could not hope to prove, what Warden had discovered.

Santoine held this thought in abeyance; he would see later how it checked with the facts.

Eaton had remained in Seattle—or near Seattle—eleven days; apparently he had been able to conceal himself and to escape attack during that time. He had been obliged, however, to reveal himself when he took the train; and as soon as possible a desperate attempt had been made against him, which, through mistake, had struck down Santoine instead of Eaton. This attack had been made under circumstances which, if it had been successful, would have made it

improbable that Eaton's murderer could escape. It had not been enough, then, to watch Eaton and await opportunity to attack him; it had been necessary to attack him at once, at any cost.

The attack having reached Santoine instead of Eaton, the necessity for immediate attack upon Eaton, apparently, had ceased to exist; those who followed Eaton had thought it enough to watch him and wait for more favorable opportunity. But as soon as it was publicly known that Santoine had not been killed but was getting well, then Eaton had again been openly and daringly attacked. The reason for the desperate chances taken to attack Eaton, then, was that he was near Santoine.

Santoine's hands clenched as he recognized this. Eaton had taken the train at Seattle because Santoine was on it; he had done this at great risk to himself. Santoine had told Eaton that there were but four possible reasons why he could have taken the train in the manner he did, and two of those reasons later had been eliminated. The two possibilities which remained were that Eaton had taken the train to inform Santoine of something or to learn something from him. But Eaton had had ample opportunity since to inform Santoine of anything he wished; and he had not only not informed him of anything, but had refused consistently and determinedly to answer any of Santoine's questions. It was to learn something from Santoine, then, that Eaton had taken the train.

The blind man turned upon his bed; he was finding that these events fitted together perfectly. He felt certain now that Eaton had gone to Gabriel Warden expecting to get from Warden some information that he needed, and that to prevent Warden's giving him this, Warden had been killed. Then Warden's death had caused Santoine to go to Seattle and take charge of many of Warden's affairs; Eaton had thought that the information which had been in Warden's possession might now be in Santoine's; Eaton, therefore, had followed Santoine onto the train.

Santoine had not had the information Eaton required, and he could not even imagine yet what the nature of that information could be. This was not because he was not familiar enough with Warden's affairs; it was because he was too familiar with them. Warden had been concerned in a hundred enterprises; Santoine had no way of telling which of this hundred had concerned Eaton. He certainly could recall no case in which a man of Eaton's age and class had been so terribly wronged that double murder would have been resorted to for the

concealment of the facts. But he understood that, in his familiarity with Warden's affairs, he had probably been in a position to get the information, if he had known what specific matters it concerned. That, then, had been the reason why his own death would have served for the time being in place of Eaton's.

Those who had followed Eaton had known that Santoine could get this information; that accounted for all that had taken place on the train. It accounted for the subsequent attack on Eaton when it became known that Santoine was getting well. It accounted also—Santoine was breathing quickly as he recognized this—for the invasion of his study and the forcing of the safe last night.

The inference was plain that something which would have given Santoine the information Warden had had and which Eaton now required had been brought into Santoine's house and put in Santoine's safe. It was to get possession of this "something" before it had reached Santoine that the safe had been forced.

Santoine put out his hand and pressed a bell. A servant came to the door.

"Will you find Miss Santoine," the blind man directed, "and ask her to come here?"

The servant withdrew.

Santoine waited. Presently the door again opened, and he heard his daughter's step.

"Have you listed what was taken from the safe, Harriet?" Santoine asked.

"Not yet, Father."

The blind man thought an instant. "Day before yesterday, when I asked you to take charge for the present of the correspondence Avery has looked after for me, what did you do?"

"I put it in my own safe—the one that was broken into last night. But none of it was taken; the bundles of letters were pulled out of the safe, but they had not been opened or even disturbed."

"I know. It was not that I meant." Santoine thought again. "Harriet, something

has been brought into the house—or the manner of keeping something in the house had been changed—within a very few days—since the time, I think, when the attempt to run Eaton down with the motor-car was made. What was that 'something'?"

His daughter reflected. "The draft of the new agreement about the Latron properties and the lists of stockholders in the properties which came through Mr. Warden's office," she replied.

"Those were in the safe?"

"Yes; you had not given me any instructions about them, so I had put them in the other safe; but when I went to get the correspondence I saw them there and put them with the correspondence in my own safe."

Santoine lay still.

"Who besides Donald knew that you did that, daughter?" he asked.

"No one."

"Thank you."

Harriet recognized this as dismissal and went out. The blind man felt the blood beating fiercely in his temples and at his finger-tips. It amazed, astounded him to realize that Warden's murder and all that had followed it had sprung from the Latron case. The coupling of Warden's name with Latron's in the newspapers after Warden's death had seemed to him only flagrant sensationalism. He himself had known—or had thought he had known—more about the Latron case than almost any other man; he had been a witness at the trial; he had seen—or had thought he had seen—even-handed justice done there. Now, by Warden's evidence, but more still by the manner of Warden's death, he was forced to believe that there had been something unknown to him and terrible in what had been done then.

And as realization of this came to him, he recollected that he had been vaguely conscious ever since Latron's murder of something strained, something not wholly open, in his relations with those men whose interests had been most closely allied with Latron's. It had been nothing open, nothing palpable; it was only that he had felt at times in them a knowledge of some general condition

governing them which was not wholly known to himself. As he pressed his hands upon his blind eyes, trying to define this feeling to himself, his thought went swiftly back to the events on the train and in the study.

He had had investigated the accounts of themselves given by the passengers to Conductor Connery; two of these accounts had proved to be false. The man who under the name of Lawrence Hillward had claimed the cipher telegram from Eaton had been one of these; it had proved impossible to trace this man and it was now certain that Hillward was not his real name; the other, Santoine had had no doubt, was the heavy-set muscular man who had tried to run Eaton down with the motor. These men, Santoine was sure, had been acting for some principal not present. One or both of these men might have been in the study last night; but the sight of neither of these could have so startled, so astounded Blatchford. Whomever Blatchford had seen was some one well known to him, whose presence had been so amazing that speech had failed Blatchford for the moment and he had feared the effect of the announcement on Santoine. This could have been only the principal himself.

Some circumstance which Santoine comprehended only imperfectly as yet had forced this man to come out from behind his agents and to act even at the risk of revealing himself. It was probably he who, finding Blatchford's presence made revealment inevitable, had killed Blatchford. But these circumstances gave Santoine no clew as to who the man might be. The blind man tried vainly to guess. The rebellion against his blindness, which had seized him the night before, again stirred him. The man had been in the light just before his face; a second of sight then and everything would have been clear; or another word from Blatchford, and he would have known. But Santoine recalled that if he had had that second of sight, and the other man had known it, or if Blatchford had spoken that next word, Santoine too would probably be dead.

The only circumstance regarding the man of which Santoine now felt sure was that he was one of the many concerned in the Latron case or with the Latron properties. Had the blood in which Santoine had stepped upon the study floor been his, or that of one of the others?

"What time is it?" the blind man suddenly asked the nurse.

"It is nearly noon, Mr. Santoine, and you have eaten nothing."

The blind man did not answer. He recalled vaguely that, several hours before, breakfast had been brought for him and that he had impatiently waved it away. In his absorption he had felt no need then for food, and he felt none now.

"Will you leave me alone for a few moments?" he directed.

He listened till he heard the door close behind the nurse; then he seized the private 'phone beside his bed and called his broker. Instinctively, in his uncertainty, Santoine had turned to that barometer which reflects day by day, even from hour to hour, the most obscure events and the most secret knowledge.

"How is the market?" he inquired.

There was something approaching to a panic on the stock-exchange, it appeared. Some movement, arising from causes not yet clear, had dropped the bottom out of a score of important stocks. The broker was only able to relate that about an hour after the opening of the exchange, selling had developed in certain issues and prices were going down in complete lack of support.

"How is Pacific Midlands?" Santoine asked.

"It led the decline."

Santoine felt the blood in his temples. "M. and N. Smelters?" he asked.

"Down seven points."

"S. F. and D.?"

"Eight points off."

Santoine's hand, holding the telephone, shook in its agitation; his head was hot from the blood rushing through it, his body was chilled. An idea so strange, so astounding, so incredible as it first had come to him that his feelings refused it though his reason told him it was the only possible condition which could account for all the facts, now was being made all but certain. He named stock after stock; all were down—seriously depressed or had been supported only by a desperate effort of their chief holders.

"A. L. & M. is down too," the broker volunteered.

"That is only sympathetic," Santoine replied.

He hung up. His hand, straining to control its agitation, reached for the bell; he rang; a servant came.

"Get me note-paper," Santoine commanded.

The servant went out and returned with paper. The nurse had followed him in; she turned the leaf of the bed-table for Santoine to write. The blind man could write as well as any other by following the position of the lines with the fingers of his left hand. He wrote a short note swiftly now, folded, sealed and addressed it and handed it to the servant.

"Have that delivered by a messenger at once," he directed. "There will be no written answer, I think; only something sent back—a photograph. See that it is brought to me at once."

He heard the servant's footsteps going rapidly away. He was shaking with anger, horror, resentment; he was almost—not quite—sure now of all that had taken place; of why Warden had been murdered, of what vague shape had moved behind and guided all that had happened since. He recalled Eaton's voice as he had heard it first on the train at Seattle; and now he was almost sure—not quite—that he could place that voice, that he knew where he had heard it before.

He lay with clenched hands, shaking with rage; then by effort of his will he put these thoughts away. The nurse reminded him again of his need for food.

"I want nothing now," he said. "Have it ready when I wake up. When the doctor comes, tell him I am going to get up to-day and dress."

He turned and stretched himself upon his bed; so, finally, he slept.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MAN HUNT

The rolling, ravine-gullied land where Harriet had left Eaton was wooded thickly with oaks, maples and ash; the ground between these trees was clear of undergrowth upon the higher parts of the land, but its lower stretches and the ravines themselves were shrouded with closely growing bushes rising higher than a man's waist, and, where they grew rankest, higher than a man's head. In summer, when trees and bushes were covered with leaves, this underbrush offered cover where a man could conceal himself perfectly; now, in the early spring before the trees had even budded, that man would be visible for some distance by day and nearly as clearly visible by night if the headlights of the motor-cars chanced to shine into the woods.

Eaton, fully realizing this chance as he left Harriet, had plunged through the bushes to conceal himself in the ravine. The glare from the burning bridge lighted the ravine for only a little way; Eaton had gained the bottom of the ravine beyond the point where this light would have made him visible and had made the best speed he could along it away from the lights and voices on the road. This speed was not very great; his stockinged feet sank to their ankles in the soft mud of the ravine; and when, realizing that he was leaving a trace easily followed even by lantern-light, he clambered to the steep side and tried to travel along its slope, he found his progress slower still. In the darkness he crashed sometimes full against the tree-trunks; bushes which he could not see seized and held him, ripping and tearing at his clothes; invisible, fallen saplings tripped him, and he stepped into unseen holes which threw him headlong, so that twice he rolled clear to the bottom of the ravine with fierce, hot pains which nearly deprived him of his senses shooting through his wounded shoulder.

When he had made, as he thought, fully three quarters of a mile in this way and must be, allowing for the winding of the ravine, at least half a mile from his

pursuers, he climbed to the brink of the bank and looked back. He was not, as he had thought, half a mile from the road; he was not a quarter of a mile; he could still see plainly the lights of the three motor-cars upon the road and men moving in the flare of these lights. He was certain that he had recognized the figure of Avery among these men. Pursuit of him, however, appeared to have been checked for the moment; he heard neither voices nor any movement in the woods. Eaton, panting, threw himself down to recover breath and strength to think.

There was no question in Eaton's mind what his fate would be if he surrendered to, or was captured by, his pursuers. What he had seen in Santoine's study an hour before was so unbelievable, so completely undemonstrable unless he himself could prove his story that he felt that he would receive no credence. Blatchford, who had seen it in the light in the study, was dead; Santoine, who would have seen it if he had had eyes, was blind. Eaton, still almost stunned and yet wildly excited by that sight, felt only, in the mad confusion of his senses, the futility of telling what he had seen unless he were in a position to prove it. Those opposed to him would put his statement aside with the mere answer that he was lying; the most charitably inclined would think only that what he had been through had driven him insane.

Besides, Eaton was not at all sure that even if he had attempted to tell what he had seen he would be allowed to tell it, or, if he attempted to surrender to the men now pursuing him, he would be allowed to surrender. Donald Avery was clearly in command of those men and was directing the pursuit; in Avery, Eaton had recognized an instinctive enemy from the first; and now, since the polo game, he sensed vaguely in Avery something more than that. What Avery's exact position was in regard to himself Eaton was not at all sure; but of Avery's active hostility he had received full evidence; and he knew now—though how he knew it was not plain even to himself—that Avery would not allow him to surrender but that, if he tried to give himself up, the men under Avery's orders would shoot him down.

As Eaton watched, the motor, which from its position on the road he knew must be Harriet's, backed out from the others and went away. The other motors immediately afterward were turned and followed it. But Eaton could see that they left behind them a man standing armed near to the bridge, and that other men, also armed, passed through the light as they scrambled across the ravine and gained the road on its opposite side. The motors, too, stopped at intervals

and then went on; he understood that they were posting men to watch the road. He traced the motor headlights a long way through the dark; one stopped, the other went on. He remembered vaguely a house near the place where the car he watched had stopped, and understanding that where there was a house there was a telephone, he knew that the alarm must be given still more widely now; men on all sides of him must be turning out to watch the roads. He knew they did turn out like that when the occasion demanded.

These waste places bordering upon the lake to north and south of Chicago, and within easy car-ride of the great city, had been the scene of many such man-hunts. Hobos, gypsies, broken men thrown off by the seething city, wandered through them and camped there; startling crimes took place sometimes in these tiny wildernesses; fugitives from the city police took refuge there and were hunted down by the local police, by armed details of the city police, by soldiers from Fort Sheridan. These fugitives might much better have stayed in the concealment of the human jungle of the city; these rolling, wooded, sandy vacant lands which seemed to offer refuge, in reality betrayed only into certain capture. The local police had learned the method of hunting, they had learned to watch the roads and railways to prevent escape.

Eaton understood, therefore, that his own possibility of escape was very small, even if escape had been his only object; but Eaton's problem was not one of escape—it was to find those he pursued and make certain that they were captured at the same time he was; and, as he crouched panting on the damp earth, he was thinking only of that.

The man at the bridge—Dibley—had told enough to let Eaton know that those whom Eaton pursued were no longer in the machine he had followed with Harriet. As Eaton had rushed out of Santoine's study after the two that he had fought there, he had seen that one of these men was supporting and helping the other; he had gained on them because of that. Then other men had appeared suddenly, to give their help, and he had no longer been able to gain; but he had been close enough to see that the one they dragged along and helped into the car was that enemy whose presence in the study had so amazed him. Mad exultation had seized Eaton to know that he had seriously wounded his adversary. He knew now that the man could not have got out of the car by himself—he was too badly wounded for that; he had been taken out of the car, and the other men who were missing had him in charge. The three men who had gone on in the machine had done so for their own escape, but with the added object of misleading the

pursuit; the water they had got at Dibley's had been to wash the blood from the car.

And now, as Eaton recalled and realized all this, he knew where the others had left the machine. Vaguely, during the pursuit, he had sensed that Harriet was swinging their motor-car in a great circle, first to the north, then west, then to the south. Two or three miles back upon the road, before they had made their turn to the south, Eaton had lost for a few moments the track of the car they had been following. He had picked it up again at once and before he could speak of it to Harriet; but now he knew that at that point the car they were following had left the road, turning off onto the turf at the side and coming back onto the road a hundred yards beyond.

This place must be nearly due north of him. The road where he had left Harriet ran north and south; to go north he must parallel this road, but it was dangerous to move too near to it because it was guarded. The sky was covered with clouds hiding the stars; the night in the woods was intensely black except where it was lighted by the fire at the bridge. To the opposite side, a faint gray glow against the clouds, which could not be the dawn but must be the reflection of the electric lights along the public pike which followed the shore of the lake, gave Eaton inspiration. If he kept this grayness of the clouds always upon his right, he would be going north.

The wound in Eaton's shoulder still welled blood each time he moved; he tore strips from the front of his shirt, knotted them together and bound his useless left arm tightly to his side. He felt in the darkness to be sure that there was a fresh clip of cartridges in his automatic pistol; then he started forward.

For the first time now he comprehended the almost impossibility of traveling in the woods on a dark night. To try to walk swiftly was to be checked after only two or three steps by sharp collision with some tree-trunk which he could not see before he felt it, or brought to a full stop by clumps of tangled, thorny bushes which enmeshed him, or to be tripped or thrown by some inequality of the ground. When he went round any of these obstacles he lost his sense of direction and wasted minutes before he could find again the dim light against the eastern sky which gave him the compass-points.

As he struggled forward, impatient at these delays, he came several times upon narrow, unguarded roads and crossed them; at other times the little

wilderness which protected him changed suddenly to a well-kept lawn where some great house with its garages and out-buildings loomed ahead, and afraid to cross these open places, he was obliged to retrace his steps and find a way round. The distance from the bridge to the place where the three men he was following had got out of their motor, he had thought to be about two miles; but when he had been traveling more than an hour, he had not yet reached it. Then, suddenly he came upon the road for which he was looking; somewhere to the east along it was the place he sought. He crouched as near to the road as he dared and where he could look up and down it. This being a main road, was guarded. A motor-car with armed men in it passed him, and presently repassed, evidently patroling the road; its lights showed him a man with a gun standing at the first bend of the road to the east. Eaton drew further back and moved parallel to the road but far enough away from it to be hidden. A quarter of a mile further he found a second man. The motor-car, evidently, was patroling only to this point; another car was on duty beyond this. As Eaton halted, this second car approached, and was halted, backed and turned.

Its headlights, as it turned, swept through the woods and revealed Eaton. The man standing in the road cried out the alarm and fired at Eaton point blank; he fired a second and third time. Eaton fled madly back into the shadow; as he did so, he heard the men crying to one another and leaping from the car and following him. He found low ground less thickly wooded, and plunged along it. It was not difficult to avoid the men in the blackness of the woods; he made a wide circuit and came back again to the road further on. He could still hear for a time the sounds of the hunt on the turf. Apparently he had not yet reached the right spot; he retreated to the woods, went further along and came back to the road, lying flat upon his face again and waiting till some other car in passing should give him light to see.

Eaton, weak and dizzy from his wounds and confused by darkness and his struggle through the woods, had no exact idea how long it had taken him to get to this place; but he knew that it could have been hardly less than two hours since he had left Harriet. The men he was following, therefore, had that much start of him, and this made him wild with impatience but did not discourage him. His own wounds, Eaton understood, made his escape practically impossible, because any one who saw him would at once challenge and detain him; and the other man was still more seriously wounded. It was not his escape that Eaton feared; it was concealment of him. The man had been taken from the car because his condition was so serious that there was no hope of hiding it; Eaton thought

he must be dead. He expected to find the body concealed under dead leaves, hurriedly hidden.

The night had cleared a little; to the north, Eaton could see stars. Suddenly the road and the leafless bushes at its sides flashed out in the bright light of a motor-car passing. Eaton strained forward. He had found the place; there was no doubt a car had turned off the road some time before and stopped there. The passing of many cars had so tracked the road that none of the men in the motors seemed to have noticed anything of significance there; but Eaton saw plainly in the soft ground at the edge of the woods the footmarks of two men walking one behind the other. When the car had passed, he crept forward in the dark and I fingered the distinct heel and toe marks in the soft soil. For a little distance he could follow them by feeling; then as they led him into the edge of the woods the ground grew harder and he could no longer follow them in that way.

It was plain to him what had occurred; two men had got out of the car here and had lifted out and carried away a third. He knelt where he could feel the last footsteps he could detect and looked around. The gray of the electric lights to the east seemed growing, spreading; against this lightness in the sky he could see plainly the branches of the trees; he recognized then that the grayness was the coming of the dawn. It would be only a few minutes before he could see plainly enough to follow the tracks. He drew aside into the deeper cover of some bushes to wait.

The wound in his shoulder no longer bled, but the pain of it twinged him through and through; his head throbbed with the hurt there; his feet were raw and bleeding where sharp roots and branches had cut through his socks and torn the flesh; his skin was hot and dry with fever, and his head swam. He followed impatiently the slow whitening of the east; as soon as he could make out the ground in front of him, he crept forward again to the tracks.

There was not yet light enough to see any distance, but Eaton, accustomed to the darkness and bending close to the ground, could discern the footmarks even on the harder soil. They led away from the road into the woods. On the rotted leaves and twigs was a dark stain; a few steps beyond there was another. The stains had sunk into the damp ground but were plainer on the leaves; Eaton picking up a leaf and fingering it, knew that they were blood. So the man was not dead when he had been lifted from the car. But he had been hurt desperately, was unable to help himself, was probably dying; if there had been any hope for

him, his companions would not be carrying him in this way away from any chance of surgical attention.

Eaton followed, as the tracks led through the woods. The men had gone very slowly, carrying this heavy weight; they had been traveling, as he himself had traveled, in the dark, afraid to show a light and avoiding chance of being seen by any one on the roads. They had been as uncertain of their road as he had been of his, but the general trend of their travel was toward the east, and this evidently was the direction in which they wished to go. They had stopped frequently to rest and had laid their burden down. Then suddenly he came to a place where plainly a longer halt had been made.

The ground was trampled around this spot; when the tracks went on they were changed in character. The two men were still carrying the third—a heavy man whose weight strained them and made their feet sink in deeply where the ground was soft. But now they were not careful how they carried him, but went forward merely as though bearing a dead weight. Now, too, no more stains appeared on the brown leaves where they had passed; their burden no longer bled. Eaton, realizing what this meant, felt neither exultation nor surprise. He had known that the man they carried, though evidently alive when taken from the car, was dying. But now he watched the tracks more closely even than before, looking for them to show him where the men had got rid of their burden.

It had grown easier to follow the tracks with the increase of the light, but the danger that he would be seen had also grown greater. He was obliged to keep to the hollows; twice, when he ventured onto the higher ground, he saw motor-cars passing at a distance, but near enough so that those in them could have seen him if they had been looking his way. Once he saw at the edge of the woods a little group of armed men. His dizziness and weakness from the loss of blood was increasing; he became confused at times and lost the tracks. He went forward slowly then, examining each clump of bushes, each heap of dead leaves, to see whether the men had hidden in them that of which he was in search; but always when he found the tracks again their character showed him that the men were still carrying their burden. The tracks seemed fresher now; in spite of his weakness he was advancing much faster than the others had been able to do in the darkness and heavily laden. As near as he could tell, the men had passed just before dawn. Suddenly he came upon the pike which ran parallel to the line of the lake, some hundred yards back from the shore.

He shrank back, throwing himself upon his face in the bushes; the men evidently had crossed this pike. Full day had come, and as Eaton peered out and up and down the road, he saw no one; this road appeared unguarded. Eaton, assured no one was in sight, leaped up and crossed the road. As he reached its further side, a boy carrying a fishpole appeared suddenly from behind some bushes. He stared at Eaton; then, terrified by Eaton's appearance, he dropped the fishpole and fled screaming up the road. Eaton stared dazedly after him for a fraction of an instant, then plunged into the cover. He found the tracks again, and followed them dizzily.

But the boy had given the alarm. Eaton heard the whirring of motors on the road and men shouting to one another; then he heard them beating through the bushes. The noise was at some distance; evidently the boy in his fright and confusion had not directed the men to the exact spot where Eaton had entered the woods or they in their excitement had failed to understand him. But the sounds were drawing nearer. Eaton, exhausted and dizzy, followed feverishly the footmarks on the ground. It could not be far now—the men could not have carried their burden much further than this. They must have hidden it somewhere near here. He would find it near by—must find it before these others found him. But now he could see men moving among the tree-trunks. He threw himself down among some bushes, burrowing into the dead leaves. The men passed him, one so close that Eaton could have thrown a twig and hit him. Eaton could not understand why the man did not see him, but he did not; the man stopped an instant studying the footmarks imprinted in the earth; evidently they had no significance for him, for he went on.

When the searchers had passed out of sight, Eaton sprang up and followed the tracks again. They were distinct here, plainly printed, and he followed easily. He could hear men all about him, out of sight but calling to one another in the woods. All at once he recoiled, throwing himself down again upon the ground. The clump of bushes hiding him ended abruptly only a few yards away; through their bare twigs, but far below him, the sunlight twinkled, mockingly, at him from the surface of water. It was the lake!

Eaton crept forward to the edge of the steep bluff, following the tracks. He peered over the edge. The tracks did not stop at the edge of the bluff; they went on down it. The steep sandy precipice was scarred where the men, still bearing their burden, had slipped and scrambled down it. The marks crossed the shingle sixty feet below; they were deeply printed in the wet sand down to the water's

very edge. There they stopped.

Eaton had not expected this. He stared, worn out and with his senses in confusion, and overcome by his physical weakness. The sunlit water only seemed to mock and laugh at him—blue, rippling under the breeze and bearing no trail. It was quite plain what had occurred; the wet sand below was trampled by the feet of three or four men and cut by a boat's bow. They had taken the body away with them in the boat. To sink it somewhere weighted with heavy stones in the deep water? Or had it been carried away on that small, swift vessel Eaton had seen from Santoine's lawn? In either case, Eaton's search was hopeless now.

But it could not be so; it must not be so! Eaton's eyes searched feverishly the shore and the lake. But there was nothing in sight upon either. He crept back from the edge of the bluff, hiding beside a fallen log banked with dead leaves. What was it he had said to Harriet? "I will come back to you—as you have never known me before!" He rehearsed the words in mockery. How would he return to her now? As he moved, a fierce, hot pain from the clotted wound in his shoulder shot him through and through with agony and the silence and darkness of unconsciousness overwhelmed him.

CHAPTER XXIII

NOT EATON—OVERTON

Santoine awoke at five o'clock. The messenger whom he had despatched a few hours earlier had not yet returned. The blind man felt strong and steady; he had food brought him; while he was eating it, his messenger returned. Santoine saw the man alone and, when he had dismissed him, he sent for his daughter.

Harriet had waited helplessly at the house all day. All day the house had been besieged. The newspaper men—or most of them—and the crowds of the curious could be kept off; but others—neighbors, friends of her father's or their wives or other members of their families—claimed their prerogative of intrusion and question in time of trouble. Many of those who thus gained admittance were unused to the flattery of reporter's questions; and from their interviews,

sensations continued to grow.

The stranger in Santoine's house—the man whom no one knew and who had given his name as Philip Eaton—in all the reports was proclaimed the murderer. The first reports in the papers had assailed him; the stories of the afternoon papers became a public clamour for his quick capture, trial and execution. The newspapers had sent the idle and the sensation seekers, with the price of carfare to the country place, to join the pack roaming the woods for Eaton. Harriet, standing at a window, could see them beating through the trees beyond the house; and as she watched them, wild, hot anger against them seized her. She longed to rush out and strike them and shame them and drive them away.

The village police station called her frequently on the telephone to inform her of the progress of the hunt. Twice, they told her, Eaton had been seen, but both times he had avoided capture; they made no mention of his having been fired upon. Avery, in charge of the pursuit in the field, was away all day; he came in only for a few moments at lunch time and then Harriet avoided him. As the day progressed, the pursuit had been systematized; the wooded spots which were the only ones that Eaton could have reached unobserved from the places where he had been seen, had been surrounded. They were being searched carefully one by one. Through the afternoon, Harriet kept herself informed of this search; there was no report that Eaton had been seen again, but the places where he could be grew steadily fewer.

The day had grown toward dusk, when a servant brought her word that her father wished to see her. Harriet went up to him fearfully. The blind man seemed calm and quiet; a thin, square packet lay on the bed beside him; he held it out to her without speaking.

She snatched it in dread; the shape of the packet and the manner in which it was fastened told her it must be a photograph. "Open it," her father directed.

She snapped the string and tore off the paper.

She stared at it, and her breath left her; she held it and stared and stared, sobbing now as she breathed. The photograph was of Hugh, but it showed him as she had never seen or known him; the even, direct eyes, the good brow, the little lift of the head were his; he was younger in the picture—she was seeing him when he was hardly more than a boy. But it was a boy to whom something

startling, amazing, horrible had happened, numbing and dazing him so that he could only stare out from the picture in frightened, helpless defiance. That oppression which she had felt in him had just come upon him; he was not yet used to bearing what had happened; it seemed incredible and unbearable to him; she felt instinctively that he had been facing, when this picture was taken, that injustice which had changed him into the self-controlled, watchful man that she had known.

So, as she contrasted this man with the boy that he had been, her love and sympathy for him nearly overpowered her. She clutched the picture to her, pressed it against her cheek; then suddenly conscious that her emotion might be audible to her father, she quickly controlled herself.

"What is it you want to know, Father?" she asked.

"You have answered me already what I was going to ask, my dear," he said to her quietly.

"What, Father?"

"That is the picture of Eaton?"

"Yes."

"I thought so."

She tried to assure herself of the shade of the meaning in her father's tone; but she could not. She understood that her recognition of the picture had satisfied him in regard to something over which he had been in doubt; but whether this was to work in favor of Hugh and herself—she thought of herself now inseparably with Hugh—or whether it threatened them, she could not tell.

"Father, what does this mean?" she cried to him.

"What, dear?"

"Your having the picture. Where did you get it?"

Her father made no reply; she repeated it till he granted, "I knew where it might be. I sent for it."

"But—but, Father—" It came to her now that her father must know who Hugh was. "Who—"

"I know who he is now," her father said calmly. "I will tell you when I can."

"When you can?"

"Yes," he said. He was still an instant; she waited. "Where is Avery?" he asked her, as though his mind had gone to another subject instantly.

"He has not been in, I believe, since noon."

"He is overseeing the search for Eaton?"

"Yes."

"Send for him. Tell him I wish to see him here at the house; he is to remain within the house until I have seen him."

Something in her father's tone startled and perplexed her; she thought of Donald now only as the most eager and most vindictive of Eaton's pursuers. Was her father removing Donald from among those seeking Eaton? Was he sending for him because what he had just learned was something which would make more rigorous and desperate the search? The blind man's look and manner told her nothing.

"You mean Donald is to wait here until you send for him, Father?"

"That is it."

It was the blind man's tone of dismissal. He seemed to have forgotten the picture; at least, as his daughter moved toward the door, he gave no direction concerning it. She halted, looking back at him. She would not carry the picture away, secretly, like this. She was not ashamed of her love for Eaton; whatever might be said or thought of him, she trusted him; she was proud of her love for him.

"May I take the picture?" she asked steadily.

"Do whatever you want with it," her father answered quietly.

And so she took it with her. She found a servant of whom she inquired for Avery; he had not returned so she sent for him. She went down to the deserted library and waited there with the picture of Hugh in her hand. The day had drawn to dusk. She could no longer see the picture in the fading light; she could only recall it; and now, as she recalled it, the picture itself—-not her memory of her father's manner in relation to it—gave her vague discomfort. She got up suddenly, switched on the light and, holding the picture close to it, studied it. What it was in the picture that gave her this strange uneasiness quite separate and distinct from all that she had felt when she first looked at it, she could not tell; but the more she studied it, the more troubled and frightened she grew.

The picture was a plain, unretouched print pasted upon common square cardboard without photographer's emboss or signature; and printed with the picture, were four plain, distinct numerals—8253. She did not know what they meant or if they had any real significance, but somehow now she was more afraid for Hugh than she had been. She trembled as she held the picture again to her cheek and then to her lips.

She turned; some one had come in from the hall; it was Donald. He was in riding clothes and was disheveled and dusty from leading the men on horseback through the woods. She saw at her first glance at him that his search had not yet succeeded and she threw her head back in relief. Donald seemed to have returned without meeting the servant sent for him and, seeing the light, he had looked into the library idly; but when he saw her, he approached her quickly.

"What have you there?" he demanded of her.

She flushed at the tone. "What right have you to ask?" Her instant impulse had been to conceal the picture, but that would make it seem she was ashamed of it; she held it so Donald could see it if he looked. He did look and suddenly seized the picture from her.

"Don!" she cried at him.

He stared at the picture and then up at her. "Where did you get this, Harriet?"

"Don!"

"Where did you get it?" he repeated. "Are you ashamed to say?"

"Ashamed? Father gave it to me!"

"Your father!" Avery started; but if anything had caused him apprehension, it instantly disappeared. "Then didn't he tell you who this man Eaton is?"

His tone terrified her, made her confused; she snatched for the picture but he held it from her. "Didn't he tell you what this picture is?"

"What?" she repeated.

"What did he say to you?"

"He got the picture and had me see it; he asked me if it was—Mr. Eaton. I told him yes."

"And then didn't he tell you who Eaton was?" Avery iterated.

"What do you mean, Don?"

He put the picture down on the table beside him and, as she rushed for it, he seized both her hands and held her before him. "Harry, dear!" he said to her. "Harry, dear—"

"Don't call me that! Don't speak to me that way!"

"Why not?"

"I don't want you to."

"Why not?"

She struggled to free herself from him.

"I know, of course," he said. "It's because of him." He jerked his head toward the picture on the table; the manner made her furious.

"Let me go, Don!"

"I'm sorry, dear." He drew her to him, held her only closer.

"Don; Father wants to see you! He wanted to know when he came in; he will

let you know when you can go to him."

"When did he tell you that?"

"Just now."

"When he gave you the picture?"

"Yes."

Avery had almost let her go; now he held her hard again. "Then he wanted me to tell you about this Eaton."

"Why should he have you tell me about—Mr. Eaton?"

"You know!" he said to her.

She shrank and turned her head away and shut her eyes not to see him. And he was the man whom, until some strange moment a few days ago, she had supposed she was some time to marry. Amazement burned through her now at the thought; because this man had been well looking, fairly interesting and amusing and got on well both with her father and herself and because he cared for her, she had supposed she could marry him. His assertion of his right to intimacy with her revolted her, and his confidence that he had ability, by something he might reveal, to take her from Eaton and bring her back within reach of himself.

Or wasn't it merely that? She twisted in his arms until she could see his face and stared at him. His look and manner were full of purpose; he was using terms of endearment toward her more freely than he ever had dared to use them before; and it was not because of love for her, it was for some purpose or through some necessity of his own that he was asserting himself like this.

So she ceased to struggle against him, only drawing away from him as far as she could and staring at him, prepared, before she asked her question, to deny and reject his answer, no matter what it was.

"What have you to say about him, Donald?"

"Harry, you haven't come to really care for him; it was just madness, dear,

only a fancy, wasn't it?"

"What have you to say about him?"

"You must never think of him again, dear; you must forget him forever!"

"Why?"

"Harry—"

"Donald, I am not a child. If you have something to say which you consider hard for me to hear, tell it to me at once."

"Very well. Perhaps that is best. Dear, either this man whom you have known as Eaton will never be found or, if he is found, he cannot be let to live. You understand?"

"Why? For the shooting of Cousin Wallace? He never did that! I don't believe that; I don't think Father believes that; you'll never make any jury believe that. So if that's all you have to tell me, let me go!"

She struggled again but Avery held her. "I was not talking about that; that's not necessary—to bring that against him."

"Necessary?"

"No; nor is it necessary, if he is caught, even to bring him before a jury. That's been done already, you see."

"Done already?"

Avery nodded again toward the photograph on the table. "Yes, Harry, have you never seen a picture with the numbers printed in below like that? Can't you guess yet where your father must have sent for that picture? Don't you know what those numbers mean?"

"What do they mean?"

"They are the figures of his number in what is called 'The Rogue's Gallery'; now have you heard of it?"

"Go on."

"And they mean he has committed a crime and been tried and convicted of it; they mean in this case that he has committed a murder!"

"A murder!"

"For which he was convicted and sentenced."

"Sentenced!"

"Yes; and is alive now only because before the sentence could be carried out, he escaped. That man, Philip Eaton, is Hugh—"

"Hugh!"

"Hugh Overton, Harry!"

"Hugh Overton!"

"Yes; I found it out to-day. The police have just learned it, too. I was coming to tell your father. He's Hugh Overton, the murderer of Matthew Latron!"

Harriet fought herself free. Denial, revolt stormed in her. "It isn't so!" she cried. "He is not that man! Hugh—his name is Hugh; but he is not Hugh Overton. Mr. Warden said Hugh—this Hugh had been greatly wronged—terribly wronged. Mr. Warden tried to help Hugh even at the risk of his own life. He would not—nobody would have tried to help Hugh Overton!"

"Mr. Warden probably had been deceived."

"No; no!"

"Yes, Harry; for this man is certainly Hugh Overton."

"It isn't so! I know it isn't so!"

"You mean he told you he was—some one else, Harry?"

"No; I mean—" She faced him defiantly. "Father let me keep the photograph! I asked him, and he said, 'Do whatever you wish with it.' He knew I meant to

keep it! He knows who Hugh is, so he would not have said that, if—if—"

She heard a sound behind her and turned. Her father had come into the room. And as she saw his manner and his face she knew that what Avery had just told her was the truth. She shrank away from them. Her hands went to her face and hid it.

So this was that unknown thing which had stood between herself and Hugh—that something which she had seen a hundred times check the speech upon his lips and chill his manner toward her! Hadn't Hugh himself told her—or almost told her it was something of that sort? He had said to her on the train, when she urged him to defend himself against the charge of having attacked her father, "If I told them who I am, that would make them only more certain their charge is true; it would condemn me without a hearing!" And his being Hugh Overton explained everything.

She knew now why it was that her father, on hearing Hugh's voice, had become curious about him, had tried to place the voice in his recollection—the voice of a prisoner on trial for his life, heard only for an instant but fixed upon his mind by the circumstances attending it, though those circumstances afterward had been forgotten. She knew why she, when she had gazed at the picture a few minutes before, had been disturbed and frightened at feeling it to be a kind of picture unfamiliar to her and threatening her with something unknown and terrible. She knew the reason now for a score of things Hugh had said to her, for the way he had looked many times when she had spoken to him. It explained all that! It seemed to her, in the moment, to explain everything—except one thing. It did not explain Hugh himself; the kind of man he was, the kind of man she knew him to be—the man she loved—he could not be a murderer!

Her hands dropped from her face; she threw her head back proudly and triumphantly, as she faced now both Avery and her father.

"He, the murderer of Mr. Latron!" she cried quietly. "It isn't so!"

The blind man was very pale; he was fully dressed. A servant had supported him and helped him down the stairs and still stood beside him sustaining him. But the will which had conquered his disability of blindness was holding him firmly now against the disability of his hurts; he seemed composed and steady.

She saw compassion for her in his look; and compassion—under the present circumstances—terrified her. Stronger, far more in control of him than his compassion for her, she saw purpose. She recognized that her father had come to a decision upon which he now was going to act; she knew that nothing she or any one else could say would alter that decision and that he would employ his every power in acting upon it.

The blind man seemed to check himself an instant in the carrying out of his purpose; he turned his sightless eyes toward her. There was emotion in his look; but, except that this emotion was in part pity for her, she could not tell exactly what his look expressed.

"Will you wait for me outside, Harriet?" he said to her. "I shall not be long."

She hesitated; then she felt suddenly the futility of opposing him and she passed him and went out into the hall. The servant followed her, closing the door behind him. She stood just outside the door listening. She heard her father—she could catch the tone; she could not make out the words—asking a question; she heard the sound of Avery's response. She started back nearer the door and put her hand on it to open it; inside they were still talking. She caught Avery's tone more clearly now, and it suddenly terrified her. She drew back from the door and shrank away. There had been no opposition to Avery in her father's tone; she was certain now that he was only discussing with Avery what they were to do.

She had waited nearly half an hour, but the library door had not been opened again. The closeness of the hall seemed choking her; she went to the front door and threw it open. The evening was clear and cool; but it was not from the chill of the air that she shivered as she gazed out at the woods through which she had driven with Hugh the night before. There the hunt for him had been going on all day; there she pictured him now, in darkness, in suffering, alone, hurt, hunted and with all the world but her against him!

She ran down the steps and stood on the lawn. The vague noises of the house now no longer were audible. She stood in the silence of the evening strained and fearfully listening. At first there seemed to be no sound outdoors other than the gentle rush of the waves on the beach at the foot of the bluff behind her; then, in the opposite direction, she defined the undertone of some faraway confusion. Sometimes it seemed to be shouting, next only a murmur of movement and noise. She ran up the road a hundred yards in its direction and halted again. The

noise was nearer and clearer—a confusion of motor explosions and voices; and now one sound clattered louder and louder and leaped nearer rapidly and rose above the rest, the roar of a powerful motor car racing with "cut-out" open. The rising racket of it terrified Harriet with its recklessness and triumph. Yes; that was it; triumph! The far-off tumult was the noise of shouts and cries of triumph; the racing car, blaring its way through the night, was the bearer of news of success of the search.

Harriet went colder as she knew this; then she ran up the road to meet the car coming. She saw the glare of its headlights through the trees past a bend in the road; she ran on and the beams of the car's headlight straightened and glared down the road directly upon her. The car leaped at her; she ran on toward it, arms in the air. The clatter of the car became deafening and the machine was nearly upon her when the driver recognized that the girl in the road was heedless and might throw herself before him unless he stopped. He brought his car up short and skidding. "What is it?" he cried, as he muffled the engine.

"What is it? What is it?" she cried in return.

The man recognized her. "Miss Santoine!"

"What is it?"

"We've got him!" the man cried. "We've got him!"

"Him?"

"Him! Hugh Overton! Eaton, Miss Santoine. He's Hugh Overton; hadn't you heard? And we've got him!"

"Got him!"

She seemed to the man not to understand; and he had not time to explain further even to her. "Where is Mr. Avery?" he demanded. "I've got to tell Mr. Avery."

She made no response but threw herself in front of the car and clasped a wheel as the man started to throw in his gear. He cried to her and tried to get her off; but she was deaf to him. He looked in the direction of the house, shut off his power and leaped down. He left the machine and ran on the road toward the

house. Harriet waited until he was away, then she sprang to the seat; she started the car and turned it back in the direction from which it had come. She speeded and soon other headlights flared at hers—a number of them; four or five cars, at least, were in file up the road and men were crowding and horsemen were riding beside them.

The captors of Hugh were approaching in triumphal procession. Harriet felt the wild, savage impulse to hurl her racing car headlong and at full speed among them. She rushed on so close that she saw she alarmed them; they cried a warning; the horsemen and the men on foot jumped from beside the road and the leading car swung to one side; but Harriet caught her car on the brakes and swung it straight across the road and stopped it; she closed the throttle and pulled the key from the starting mechanism and flung it into the woods. So she sat in the car, waiting for the captors of Hugh to come up.

These appreciated the hostility of her action without yet recognizing her. The motors stopped; the men on foot closed around. One of them cried her name and men descended from the leading car. Harriet got down from her machine and met them. The madness of the moments past was gone; as the men addressed her with astonishment but with respect, she gazed at them coolly.

"Where is he?" she asked them. "Where is he?"

They did not tell her; but reply was unnecessary. Others' eyes pointed hers to Hugh. He was in the back seat of the second machine with two men, one on each side of him. The lights from the car following and the refractions from the other lights showed him to her. He was sitting, or was being held, up straight; his arms were down at his sides. She could not see whether they were tied or not. The light did not shine so as to let her see his face clearly; but his bearing was calm, he held his head up. She looked for his hurts; there seemed to be bandages on his head but some one had given him a large cap which was pulled down so as to conceal the bandages. Plainly there had been no other capture; excitement was all centered upon him. Harriet heard people telling her name to others; and the newspaper men, who seemed to be all about, pushed back those who would interfere with her reaching the second machine.

She disregarded them and every one else but Hugh, who had seen her and had kept his gaze steadily upon her as she approached. She stopped at the side of the car where he was and she put her hand on the edge of the tonneau.

"You have been hurt again, Hugh?" she managed steadily.

"Hurt? No," he said as constrainedly. "No."

A blinding flare and an explosion startled her about. It was only a flashlight fired by one of the newspaper photographers who had placed his camera during the halt. Harriet opened the door to the tonneau. Two men occupied the seats in the middle of the car; it was a large, seven passenger machine. "I will take this seat, please," she said to the man nearer. He got out and she sat down. Those who had been trying to start the car which she had driven across the road, had given up the task and were pushing it away to one side. Harriet sat down in front of Eaton—it was still by that name she thought of him; her feelings refused the other name, though she knew now it was his real one. She understood now her impulse which had driven her to try to block the road to her father's house if only for a moment; they were taking him there to deliver him up to Avery—to her father—who were consulting there over what his fate was to be.

She put her hand on his; his fingers closed upon it, but after his first response to her grasp he made no other; and now, as the lights showed him to her more clearly, she was terrified to see how unable he was to defend himself against anything that might be done to him. His calmness was the calmness of exhaustion; his left arm was bound tightly to his side; his eyes, dim and blank with pain and weariness, stared only dully, dazedly at all around.

The car started, and she sat silent, with her hand still upon his, as they went on to her father's house.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE FLAW IN THE LEFT EYE

Santoine, after Harriet had left the library, stood waiting until he heard the servant go out and close the door; he had instructed the man and another with him to remain in the hall. The blind man felt no physical weakness; he was wholly absorbed in the purpose for which he had dressed and come downstairs;

now, as he heard Avery start forward to help him, he motioned him back. It was the rule in Santoine's house that the furniture in the rooms he frequented should be kept always in the same positions; the blind man could move about freely, therefore, in these rooms.

He walked slowly now to a large chair beside the table in the center of the room and sat down, resting his arm on the table; when he felt the familiar smoothness of the table under his finger-tips he knew he was facing the part of the room where the sound he had just heard had told him Avery must be.

"When did you learn that Eaton was Hugh Overton, Avery?" he asked.

"To-day."

"How did you discover it?"

He heard Avery, who had been standing, come forward and seat himself on the arm of the chair across the table from him; the blind man turned to face this place directly.

"It was plain from the first there was something wrong with the man," Avery replied; "but I had, of course, no way of placing him until he gave himself away at polo the other day."

"At polo? Then you knew about it the other day?"

"Oh, no," Avery denied. "I saw that he was pretending not to know a game which he did know; when he put over one particular stroke I was sure he knew the game very well. The number of men in this country who've played polo at all isn't very large and those who can play great polo are very few. So I sent for the polo annuals for a few years back; the ones I wanted came to the club to-day. His picture is in the group of the Spring Meadows Club; he played 'back' for them five years ago. His name was under the picture, of course."

"You didn't tell me, however, that he could play polo when you first found it out."

"No; I wanted to be sure of him before I spoke; besides, Harriet had seen it as well as I; I supposed she had told you."

"I understand. I am glad to know how it was. One less certain of your fidelity than I am might have put another construction on your silence; one less certain, Avery, might have thought that, already knowing Eaton's identity, you preferred instead of telling it to me to have me discover it for myself and so, for that reason, you trapped him into a polo game in Harriet's presence. I, myself, do not think that. The other possibility which might occur to one not certain of your fidelity we will not now discuss."

For a moment Santoine paused; the man across from him did not speak, but—Santoine's intuition told him—drew himself suddenly together against some shock; the blind man felt that Avery was watching him now with tense questioning.

"Of course," said Santoine, "knowing who Eaton is, gives us no aid in determining who the men were that fought with him in my study last night?"

"It gives none to me, Mr. Santoine," Avery said steadily.

"It gives none to you," Santoine repeated; "and the very peculiar behavior of the stock exchange to-day, I suppose that gives you no help either. All day they have been going down, Avery—the securities, the stocks and bonds of the properties still known as the Latron properties; the very securities which five years ago stood staunch against even the shock of the death of the man whose coarse but powerful personality had built them up into the great properties they are to-day—of Matthew Latron's death. To-day, without apparent reason, they have been going down, and that gives you no help either, Avery?"

"I'm afraid I don't follow you, sir."

"Yet you are a very clever man, Avery; there is no question about that. Your friend and my friend who sent you to me five years ago was quite correct in calling you clever; I have found you so; I have been willing to pay you a good salary—a very good salary—because you are clever."

"I'm glad if you have found my work satisfactory, Mr. Santoine."

"I have even found it worth while at times to talk over with you matters—problems—which were troubling me; to consult with you. Have I not?"

"Yes."

"Very well; I am going to consult with you now. I have an infirmity, as you know, Avery; I am blind. I have just found out that for several years—for about five years, to be exact; that is, for about the same length of time that you have been with me—my blindness has been used by a certain group of men to make me the agent of a monstrous and terrible injustice to an innocent man. Except for my blindness—except for that, Avery, this injustice never could have been carried on. If you find a certain amount of bitterness in my tone, it is due to that; a man who has an infirmity, Avery, cannot well help being a little sensitive in regard to it. You are willing I should consult with you in regard to this?"

"Of course I am at your service, Mr. Santoine." Avery's voice was harsh and dry.

The blind man was silent for an instant. He could feel the uneasiness and anxiety of the man across from him mounting swiftly, and he gave it every opportunity to increase. He had told Eaton once that he did not use "cat and mouse" methods; he was using them now because that was the only way his purpose could be achieved.

"We must go back, then, Avery, to the quite serious emergency to which I am indebted for your faithful service. It is fairly difficult now for one contemplating the reverence and regard in which 'big' men are held by the public in these days of business reconstruction to recall the attitude of only a few years ago. However, it is certainly true that five years ago the American people appeared perfectly convinced that the only way to win true happiness and perpetuate prosperity was to accuse, condemn and jail for life—if execution were not legal—the heads of the important groups of industrial properties. Just at that time, one of these men—one of the most efficient but also, perhaps, the one personally most obnoxious or unpopular—committed one of his gravest indiscretions. It concerned the private use of deposits in national banks; it was a federal offense of the most patent and provable kind. He was indicted. Considering the temper of any possible jury at that time, there was absolutely no alternative but to believe that the man under indictment must spend many succeeding years, if not the rest of his life, in the Federal penitentiary at Atlanta or Leavenworth.

"Now, not only the man himself but his closest associates contemplated this certainty with dismay. The man was in complete control of a group of the most valuable and prosperous properties in America. Before his gaining control, the properties had been almost ruined by differences between the minor men who

tried to run them; only the calling of Matthew Latron into control saved those men from themselves; they required him to govern them; his taking away would bring chaos and ruin among them again. They knew that. There were a number of important people, therefore, who held hope against hope that Latron would not be confined in a prison cell. Just before he must go to trial, Latron himself became convinced that he faced confinement for the rest of his life; then fate effectively intervened to end all his troubles. His body, charred and almost consumed by flames—but nevertheless the identified body of Matthew Latron—was found in the smoking ruins of his shooting lodge which burned to the ground two days before his trial. I have stated correctly these particulars, have I not, Avery?"

"Yes." Avery was no longer sitting on the arm of the chair; he had slipped into the seat—he was hunched in the seat watching the blind man with growing conviction and fear.

"There were, of course," Santoine went on, "many of the violent and passion-inflamed who carped at this timely intervention of fate and criticised the accident which delivered Latron at this time. But these were silenced when Latron's death was shown to have been, not accident, but murder. A young man was shown to have followed Latron to the shooting lodge; a witness appeared who had seen this young man shoot Latron; a second witness had seen him set fire to the lodge. The young man—Hugh Overton—was put on trial for his life. I, myself, as a witness at the trial, supplied the motive for the crime; for, though I had never met Overton, I knew that he had lost the whole of a large fortune through investments recommended to him by Latron. Overton was convicted, sentenced to death; he escaped before the sentence was carried out—became a fugitive without a name, who if he ever reappeared would be handed over for execution. For the evidence had been perfect—complete; he had shot Latron purely for revenge, killed him in the most despicable manner. For there was no doubt Latron was dead, was there, Avery?"

Santoine waited for reply.

"What?" Avery said huskily.

"I say there was no doubt Latron was dead?"

"None."

"That was the time you came into my employ, Avery, recommended to me by one of the men who had been closest to Latron. I was not connected with the Latron properties except as an adviser; but many papers relating to them must go inevitably through my hands. I was rather on the inside in all that concerned those properties. But I could not myself see the papers; I was blind; therefore, I had to have others serve as eyes for me. And from the first, Avery, you served as my eyes in connection with all papers relating to the Latron properties. If anything ever appeared in those papers which might have led me to suspect that any injustice had been done in the punishment of Latron's murderer, it could reach me only through you. Nothing of that sort ever did reach me, Avery. You must have made quite a good thing out of it."

"What?"

"I say, your position here must have been rather profitable to you, Avery; I have not treated you badly myself, recognizing that you must often be tempted by gaining information here from which you might make money; and your other employers must have overbid me."

"I don't understand; I beg your pardon, Mr. Santoine, but I do not follow what you are talking about."

"No? Then we must go a little further. This last year a minor reorganization became necessary in some of the Latron properties. My friend, Gabriel Warden —who was an honest man, Avery—had recently greatly increased his interest in those properties; it was inevitable the reorganization should be largely in his hands. I remember now there was opposition to his share in it; the fact made no impression on me at the time; opposition is common in all things. During his work with the Latron properties, Warden—the honest man, Avery—discovered the terrible injustice of which I speak.

"I suspect there were discrepancies in the lists of stockholders, showing a concealed ownership of considerable blocks of stock, which first excited his suspicions. Whatever it may have been Warden certainly investigated further; his investigation revealed to him the full particulars of the injustice done to the nameless fugitive who had been convicted as the murderer of Matthew Latron. Evidently this helpless, hopeless man had been thought worth watching by some one, for Warden's discoveries gave him also Overton's address. Warden risked and lost his life trying to help Overton.

"I do not need to draw your attention, Avery, to the very peculiar condition which followed Warden's death. Warden had certainly had communication with Overton of some sort; Overton's enemies, therefore, were unable to rid themselves of him by delivering him up to the police because they did not know how much Overton knew. When I found that Warden had made me his executor and I went west and took charge of his affairs, their difficulties were intensified, for they did not dare to let suspicion of what had been done reach me. There was no course open to them, therefore, but to remove Overton before my suspicions were aroused, even if it could be done only at desperate risk to themselves.

"What I am leading up to, Avery, is your own connection with these events. You looked after your own interests rather carefully, I think, up to a certain point. When—knowing who Eaton was—you got him into a polo game, it was so that, if your interests were best served by exposing him, you could do so without revealing the real source of your knowledge of him. But an unforeseen event arose. The drafts and lists relating to the reorganization of the Latron properties—containing the very facts, no doubt, which first had aroused Warden's suspicions—were sent me through Warden's office. At first there was nothing threatening to you in this, because their contents could reach me only through you. But in the uncertainty I felt, I had my daughter take these matters out of your hands; you did not dare then even to ask me to give them back, for fear that would draw my attention to them and to you.

"That night, Avery, you sent an unsigned telegram from the office in the village; almost within twenty-four hours my study was entered, the safe inaccessible to you was broken open, the contents were carried away. The study window had not been forced; it had been left open from within. Do you suppose I do not know that one of the two men in the study last night was the principal whose agents had failed in two attempts to get rid of Overton for him, whose other agent—yourself, Avery—had failed to intercept the evidence which would have revealed the truth to me, so that, no longer trusting to agents, he himself had come in desperation to prevent my learning the facts? I realize fully, Avery, that by means of you my blindness and my reputation have been used for five years to conceal from the public the fact that Matthew Latron had not been murdered, but was still alive!"

The blind man halted; he had not gone through this long conversation, with all the strain that it entailed upon himself, without a definite object; and now, as he listened to Avery's quick breathing and the nervous tapping of his fingers

against the arm of his chair, he realized that this object was accomplished. Avery not only realized that the end of deception and concealment had come; he recognized thoroughly that Santoine would not have spoken until he had certain proof to back his words. Avery might believe that, as yet, the blind man had not all the proof in his possession; but Avery knew—as he was aware that Santoine also knew—that exposure threatened so many men that some one of them now was certain to come forward to save himself at the expense of the others. And Avery knew that only one—and the first one so to come forward—could be saved.

So Santoine heard Avery now get up; he stood an instant and tried to speak, but his breath caught nervously; he made another effort.

"I don't think you have much against me, Mr. Santoine," he managed; it was—as the blind man had expected—only of himself that Avery was thinking.

"No?" Santoine asked quietly.

"I didn't have anything to do with convicting Overton, or know anything about it until that part was all over; I never saw him till I saw him on the train. I didn't know Warden was going to be killed."

"But you were accessory to the robbery of my house last night and, therefore, accessory to the murder of Wallace Blatchford. Last night, too, knowing Overton was innocent of everything charged against him, you gave orders to fire upon him at sight and he was fired upon. And what were you telling Harriet when I came in? You have told the police that Overton is the murderer of Latron. Isn't that so the police will refuse to believe anything he may say and return him to the death cell for the sentence to be executed upon him? The law will call these things attempted murder, Avery."

The blind man heard Avery pacing the floor, and then heard him stop in front of him.

"What is it you want of me, Mr. Santoine?"

"The little information I still require."

"You mean you want me to sell the crowd out?"

"Not that; because I offer you nothing. A number of men are going to the gallows or the penitentiary for this, Avery, and you—I suspect—among them; though I also suspect—from what I have learned about your character in the last few days—that you'll take any means open to you to avoid sharing their fate."

"I suppose you mean by that that I'll turn State's evidence if I get a chance, and that I might as well begin now."

"That, I should say, is entirely up to you. The charge of what I know—with the simultaneous arrest of a certain number of men in different places whom I know must be implicated—will be made to-morrow. You, perhaps, are a better judge than I of the cohesion of your group in the contingencies which it will face to-morrow morning. I offer you nothing now, Avery—no recommendation of clemency—nothing. If you prefer to have me learn the full facts from the first of another who breaks, very well."

Santoine waited. He heard Avery take a few more steps up and down; then he halted; now he walked again; they were uneven steps as Santoine heard them; then Avery stopped once more.

"What is it you want to know, sir?"

"Who killed Warden?"

"John Yarrow is his name; he was a sort of hanger-on of Latron's. I don't know where Latron picked him up."

"Was it he who also made the attack on the train?"

"Yes."

"Who was the other man on the train—the one that claimed the telegram addressed to Lawrence Hillward?"

"His name's Hollock. He's the titular owner of the place on the Michigan shore where Latron has been living. The telegram I sent night before last was addressed to his place, you know. He's been a sort of go-between for Latron and the men—those who knew—who were managing the properties. I'd never met him, though, Mr. Santoine, and I didn't know either him or Hollock on the train. As I said, I wasn't in the know about killing Warden."

"When did you learn who Eaton was, Avery?"

"The day after we got back here from the West I got word from Latron; they didn't tell me till they needed to use me." Avery hesitated; then he went on—he was eager now to tell all he knew in his belief that by doing so he was helping his own case. "You understand, sir, about Latron's pretended death—a guide at the shooting lodge had been killed by a chance shot in the woods; purely accidental; some one of the party had fired at a deer, missed, and never knew he'd killed a man with the waste shot. When the guide didn't come back to camp, they looked for him and found his body. He was a man who never would be missed or inquired for and was very nearly Latron's size; and that gave Latron the idea.

"At first there was no idea of pretending he had been murdered; it was the coroner who first suggested that. Things looked ugly for a while, under the circumstances, as they were made public. Either the scheme might come out or some one else be charged as the murderer. That put it up to Overton. He'd actually been up there to see Latron and had had a scene with him which had been witnessed. That part—all but the evidence which showed that he shot Latron afterwards—was perfectly true. He thought that Latron, as he was about to go to trial, might be willing to give him information which would let him save something from the fortune he'd lost through Latron's manipulations. The circumstances, motive, everything was ready to convict Overton; it needed very little more to complete the case against him."

"So it was completed."

"But after Overton was convicted, he was not allowed to be punished, sir."

Santoine's lips straightened in contempt. "He was not allowed to be punished?"

"Overton didn't actually escape, you know, Mr. Santoine—that is, he couldn't have escaped without help; Latron was thoroughly frightened and he wanted it carried through and Overton executed; but some of the others rebelled against this and saw that Overton got away; but he never knew he'd been helped. I understand it was evidence of Latron's insistence on the sentence being carried out that Warden found, after his first suspicions had been aroused, and that put Warden in a position to have Latron tried for his life, and made it necessary to

kill Warden."

"Latron is dead, of course, Avery, or fatally wounded?"

"He's dead. Over—Eaton, that is, sir—hit him last night with three shots."

"As a housebreaker engaged in rifling my safe, Avery."

"Yes, sir. Latron was dying when they took him out of the car last night. They got him away, though; put him on the boat he'd come on. I saw them in the woods last night. They'll not destroy the body or make away with it, sir, at present."

"In other words, you instructed them not to do so until you had found out whether Overton could be handed over for execution and the facts regarding Latron kept secret, or whether some other course was necessary."

The blind man did not wait for any answer to this; he straightened suddenly, gripping the arms of his chair, and got up. There was more he wished to ask; in the bitterness he felt at his blindness having been used to make him an unconscious agent in these things of which Avery spoke so calmly, he was resolved that no one who had shared knowingly in them should go unpunished. But now he heard the noise made by approach of Eaton's captors. He had noted it a minute or more earlier; he was sure now that it was definitely nearing the house. He crossed to the window, opened it and stood there listening; the people outside were coming up the driveway. Santoine went into the hall.

"Where is Miss Santoine?" he inquired.

The servant who waited in the hall told him she had gone out. As Santoine stood listening, the sounds without became coherent to him.

"They have taken Overton, Avery," he commented. "Of course they have taken no one else. I shall tell those in charge of him that he is not the one they are to hold prisoner but that I have another for them here."

The blind man heard no answer from Avery. Those having Overton in charge seemed to be coming into the house; the door opened and there were confused sounds. Santoine stood separating the voices.

"What is it?" he asked the servant.

"Mr. Eaton—Mr. Overton, sir—fainted as they were taking him out of the motor-car, sir. He seems much done up, sir."

Santoine recognized that four or five men, holding or carrying their prisoner between them, had come in and halted in surprise at sight of him.

"We have him!" he heard one of them cry importantly to him. "We have him, sir! and he's Hugh Overton, who killed Latron!"

Then Santoine heard his daughter's voice in a half cry, half sob of hopeless appeal to him; Harriet ran to him; he felt her cold, trembling fingers clasping him and beseeching him. "Father! Father! They say—they say—they will—"

He put his hands over hers, clasping hers and patting it, "My dear," he said, "I thought you would wait for me; I told you to wait."

He heard others coming into the house now; and he held his daughter beside him as he faced them.

"Who is in charge here?" he demanded.

The voice of one of those who had just come in answered him. "I, sir—I am the chief of police."

"I wish to speak to you; I will not keep you long. May I ask you to have your prisoner taken to the room he occupied here in my house and given attention by a doctor? You can have my word that it is not necessary to guard him. Wait! Wait!" he directed, as he heard exclamations and ejaculations to correct him. "I do not mean that you have mistaken who he is. He is Hugh Overton, I know; it is because he is Hugh Overton that I say what I do."

Santoine abandoned effort to separate and comprehend or to try to answer the confusion of charge and questioning around him. He concerned himself, at the moment, only with his daughter; he drew her to him, held her and said gently, "There, dear; there! Everything is right. I have not been able to explain to you, and I cannot take time now; but you, at least, will take my word that you have nothing to fear for him—nothing!"

He heard her gasp with incredulity and surprise; then, as she drew back from him, staring at him, she breathed deep with relief and clasped him, sobbing. He still held her, as the hall was cleared and the footsteps of those carrying Overton went up the stairs; then, knowing that she wished to follow them, he released her. She drew away, then clasped his hand and kissed it; as she did so, she suddenly stiffened and her hand tightened on his spasmodically.

Some one else had come into the hall and he heard another voice—a woman's, which he recognized as that of the stenographer, Miss Davis.

"Where is he? Hugh! Hugh! What have you done to him? Mr. Santoine! Mr. Santoine! where is he?"

The blind man straightened, holding his daughter to him; there was anxiety, horror, love in the voice he heard; Harriet's perplexity was great as his own. "Is that you, Miss Davis?" he inquired.

"Yes; yes," the girl repeated. "Where is—Hugh, Mr. Santoine?"

"You do not understand," the voice of a young man—anxious and strained now, but of pleasing timbre—broke in on them.

"I'm afraid I don't," Santoine said quietly.

"She is Hugh's sister, Mr. Santoine—she is Edith Overton."

"Edith Overton? And who are you?"

"You do not know me. My name is Lawrence Hillward."

Santoine asked nothing more for the moment. His daughter had left his side. He stood an instant listening to the confusion of question and answer in the hall; then he opened the door into the library and held it for the police chief to enter.

CHAPTER XXV

"IT'S ALL RIGHT, HUGH"—AT LAST

Eaton—he still, with the habit of five years of concealment, even thought of himself by that name—awoke to full consciousness at eight o'clock the next morning. He was in the room he had occupied before in Santoine's house; the sunlight, reflected from the lake, was playing on the ceiling. His wounds had been dressed; his body was comfortable and without fever. He had indistinct memories of being carried, of people bending over him, of being cared for; but of all else that had happened since his capture he knew nothing.

He saw and recognized, against the lighted square of the window, a man standing looking out at the lake.

"Lawrence," he said.

The man turned and came toward the bed. "Yes, Hugh."

Eaton raised himself excitedly upon his pillows. "Lawrence, that was he—last night—in the study. It was Latron! I saw him! You'll believe me, Lawrence—you at least will. They got away on a boat—they must be followed—" With the first return of consciousness he had taken up again that battle against

circumstances which had been his only thought for five years.

But now, suddenly he was aware that his sister was also in the room, sitting upon the opposite side of the bed. Her hand came forward and clasped his; she bent over him, holding him and fondling him.

"It is all right, Hugh," she whispered—"Oh, Hugh! it is all right now."

"All right?" he questioned dazedly.

"Yes; Mr. Santoine knows; he—he was not what we thought him. He believed all the while that you were justly sentenced. Now he knows otherwise—"

"He—Santoine—believed that?" Eaton asked incredulously.

"Yes; he says his blindness was used by them to make him think so. So now he is very angry; he says no one who had anything to do with it shall escape. He figured it all out—most wonderfully—that it must have been Latron in the study. He has been working all night—they have already made several arrests and every port on the lake is being watched for the boat they got away on."

"Is that true, Edith? Lawrence, is it true?"

"Yes; quite true, Hugh!" Hillward choked and turned away.

Eaton sank back against his pillows; his eyes—dry, bright and filled still with questioning for a time, as, he tried to appreciate what he just had heard and all that it meant to him—dampened suddenly as he realized that it was over now, that long struggle to clear his name from the charge of murder—the fight which had seemed so hopeless. He could not realize it to the full as yet; concealment, fear, the sense of monstrous injustice done him had marked so deeply all his thoughts and feelings that he could not sense the fact that they were gone for good. So what came to him most strongly now was only realization that he had been set right with Santoine—Santoine, whom he himself had misjudged and mistrusted. And Harriet? He had not needed to be set right with her; she had believed and trusted him from the first, in spite of all that had seemed against him. Gratitude warmed him as he thought of her—and that other feeling, deeper, stronger far than gratitude, or than anything else he ever had felt toward any one but her, surged up in him and set his pulses wildly beating, as his thought strained toward the future.

"Where is—Miss Santoine?" he asked.

His sister answered. "She has been helping her father. They left word they were to be sent for as soon as you woke up, and I've just sent for them."

Eaton lay silent till he heard them coming. The blind man was unfamiliar with this room; his daughter led him in. Her eyes were very bright, her cheeks which had been pale flushed as she met Eaton's look, but she did not look away. He kept his gaze upon her.

Santoine, under her guidance, took the chair Hillward set beside the bed for him. The blind man was very quiet; he felt for and found Eaton's hand and pressed it. Eaton choked, as he returned the pressure. Then Santoine released him.

"Who else is here?" the blind man asked his daughter.

"Miss Overton and Mr. Hillward," she answered.

Santoine found with his blind eyes their positions in the room and acknowledged their presence; afterward he turned back to Eaton.

"I understand, I think, everything now, except some few particulars regarding yourself," he said. "Will you tell me those?"

"You mean—-" Eaton spoke to Santoine, but he looked at Harriet. "Oh, I understand, I think. When I—escaped, Mr. Santoine of course, my picture had appeared in all the newspapers and I was not safe from recognition anywhere in this country. I got into Canada and, from Vancouver, went to China. We I had very little money left, Mr. Santoine; what had not been—lost through Latron had been spent in my defense. I got a position in a mercantile house over there. It was a good country for me; people over there don't ask questions for fear some one will ask questions about them. We had no near relatives for Edith to go to and she had to take up stenography to support herself and—and change her name, Mr. Santoine, because of me."

Eaton's hand went out and clasped his sister's.

"Oh, Hugh; it didn't matter—about me, I mean!" she whispered.

"Hillward met her and asked her to marry him and she—wouldn't consent without telling him who she was. He—Lawrence—believed her when she said I hadn't killed Latron; and he suggested that she come out here and try to get employed by you. We didn't suspect, of course, that Latron was still alive. We thought he had been killed by some of his own crowd—in some quarrel or because his trial was likely to involve some one else so seriously that they killed him to prevent it; and that it was put upon me to—to protect that person and that you—"

Eaton hesitated.

"Go on," said Santoine. "You thought I knew who Latron's murderer was and morally, though not technically, perjured myself at your trial to convict you in his place. What next?"

"That was it," Eaton assented. "We thought you knew that and that some of those around you who served as your eyes must know it, too."

Harriet gasped. Eaton looking at her, knew that she understood now what had come between them when she had told him that she herself had served as her father's eyes all through the Latron trial. He felt himself flushing as he looked at her; he could not understand now how he could have believed that she had aided in concealing an injustice against him, no matter what influence had been exerted upon her. She was all good; all true!

"At first," Eaton went on, "Edith did not find out anything. Then, this year, she learned that there was to be a reorganization of some of the Latron properties. We hoped that, during that, something would come out which might help us. I had been away almost five years; my face was forgotten, and we thought I could take the chance of coming back to be near at hand so I could act if anything did come out. Lawrence met me at Vancouver. We were about to start East when I received a message from Mr. Warden. I did not know Warden and I don't know now how he knew who I was or where he could reach me. His message merely said he knew I needed help and he was prepared to give it and made an appointment for me to see him at his house. He was one of the Latron crowd but, I found out, one of those least likely to have had a hand in my conviction. I thought possibly Warden was going to tell me the name of Latron's murderer and I decided to take the risk of seeing him. You know what happened when I tried to keep the appointment.

"Then you came to Seattle and took charge of Warden's affairs. I felt certain that if there was any evidence among Warden's effects as to who had killed Latron, you would take it back with you with the other matters relating to the Latron reorganization. You could not recognize me from your having been at my trial because you were blind; I decided to take the train with you and try to get possession of the draft of the reorganization agreement and the other documents with it which Warden had been working on. I had suspected that I was being watched by agents of the men protecting Latron's murderer while I was in Seattle. I had changed my lodgings there because of that, but Lawrence had remained at the old lodgings to find out for me. He found there was a man following me who disappeared after I had taken the train, and Lawrence, after questioning the gateman at Seattle decided the man had taken the same train I did. He wired me in the cipher we had sometimes used in communicating with each other, but not knowing what name I was using on the train he addressed it to himself, confident that if a telegram reached the train addressed to 'Lawrence Hillward' I would understand and claim it.

"Of course, I could not follow his instructions and leave the train; we were snowed in. Besides, I could not imagine how anybody could have followed me onto the train, as I had taken pains to prevent that very thing by being the last passenger to get aboard it."

"The man whom the gateman saw did not follow you; he merely watched you get on the train and notified two others, who took the train at Spokane. They had planned to get rid of you after you left Seattle so as to run less risk of your death being connected with that of Warden. It was my presence which made it necessary for them to make the desperate attempt to kill you on the train."

"Then I understand. The other telegram was sent me, of course, by Edith from Chicago, when she learned here that you were using the name of Dorne on your way home. I learned from her when I got here that the documents relating to the Latron properties, which I had decided you did not have with you, were being sent you through Warden's office. Through Edith I learned that they had reached you and had been put in the safe. I managed to communicate with Hillward at the country club, and that night he brought me the means of forcing the safe."

Eaton felt himself flushing again, as he looked at Harriet. Did she resent his having used her in that way? He saw only sympathy in her face.

"My daughter told me that she helped you to that extent," Santoine offered, "and I understood later what must have been your reason for asking her to take you out that night."

"When I reached the study," Eaton continued, "I found others already there. The light of an electric torch flashed on the face of one of them and I recognized the man as Latron—the man for whose murder I had been convicted and sentenced! Edith tells me that you know the rest."

There was silence in the room for several minutes. Santoine again felt for Eaton's hand and pressed it. "We've tired you out," he said. "You must rest."

"You must sleep, Hugh, if you can," Edith urged.

Eaton obediently closed his eyes, but opened them at once to look for Harriet. She had moved out of his line of vision.

Santoine rose; he stood an instant waiting for his daughter, then suddenly he comprehended that she was no longer in the room. "Mr. Hillward, I must ask your help," he said, and he went out with Hillward guiding him.

Eaton, turning anxiously on his pillow and looking about the room, saw no one but his sister. He had known when Harriet moved away from beside the bed; but he had not suspected that she was leaving the room. Now suddenly a great fear filled him.

"Why did Miss Santoine go away? Why did she go, Edith?" he questioned.

"You must sleep, Hugh," his sister answered only.

Harriet, when she slipped out of the room, had gone downstairs. She could not have forced herself to leave before she had heard Hugh's story, and she could not define definitely even to herself what the feeling had been that had made her leave as soon as he had finished; but she sensed the reason vaguely. Hugh had told her two days before, "I will come back to you as you have never known me yet"—and it had proved true. She had known him as a man in fear, constrained, carefully guarding himself against others and against betrayal by himself; a man to whom all the world seemed opposed; so that her sympathy—and afterward something more than her sympathy—had gone out to him. To that repressed and threatened man, she had told all she felt toward him, revealing her feelings with

a frankness that would have been impossible except that she wanted him to know that she was ready to stand against the world with him.

Now the world was no longer against him; he had friends, a place in life was ready to receive him; he would be sought after, and his name would be among those of the people of her own sort. She had no shame that she had let him—and others—know all that she felt toward him; she gloried still in it; only now—now, if he wished her, he must make that plain; she could not, of herself, return to him.

So unrest possessed her and the suspense of something hoped for but unfulfilled. She went from room to room, trying to absorb herself on her daily duties; but the house—her father's house—spoke to her now only of Hugh and she could think of nothing but him. Was he awake? Was he sleeping? Was he thinking of her? Or, now that the danger was over through which she had served him, were his thoughts of some one else?

Her heart halted at each recurrence of that thought; and again and again she repeated his words to her at parting from her the night before. "I will come back to you as you have never known me yet!" To her he would come back, he said; to her, not to any one else. But his danger was not over then; in his great extremity and in his need of her, he might have felt what he did not feel now. If he wanted her, why did he not send for her?

She stood trembling as she saw Edith Overton in the hall.

"Hugh has been asking for you continually, Miss Santoine. If you can find time, please go in and see him."

Harriet did not know what answer she made. She went upstairs: she ran, as soon as she was out of sight of Hugh's sister; then, at Hugh's door, she had to halt to catch her breath and compose herself before she opened the door and looked in upon him. He was alone and seemed asleep; at least his eyes were closed. Harriet stood an instant gazing at him.

His face was peaceful now but worn and his paleness was more evident than when he had been talking to her father. As she stood watching him, she felt her blood coursing through her as never before and warming her face and her fingertips; and fear—fear of him or of herself, fear of anything at all in the world—fled from her; and love—love which she knew that she need no longer try to

deny—possessed her.

"Harriet!" She heard her name from his lips and she saw, as he opened his eyes and turned to her, there was no surprise in his look; if he had been sleeping, he had been dreaming she was there; if awake, he had been thinking of her.

"What is it, Hugh?" She was beside him and he was looking up into her eyes.

"You meant it, then?"

"Meant it, Hugh?"

"All you said and—and all you did when we—you and I—were alone against them all! It's so, Harriet! You meant it!"

"And you did too! Dear, it was only to me that you could come back—only to me?"

"Only to you!" He closed his eyes in his exaltation. "Oh, my dear, I never dreamed—Harriet in all the days and nights I've had to plan and wonder what might be for me if everything could come all right, I've never dreamed I could win a reward like this."

"Like this?"

He opened his eyes again and drew her down toward him. "Like you!"

She bent until her cheek touched his and his arms were about her. He felt her tears upon his face.

"Not that; not that—you mustn't cry, dear," he begged. "Oh, Harriet, aren't you happy now?"

"That's why. Happy! I didn't know before there could be anything like this."

"Nor I.... So it's all right, Harriet; everything is all right now?"

"All right? Oh, it's all right now, if I can make it so for you," she answered.

THE END

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