

...get a move on!" Coleman, with a nervous smile, looked long enough at Jimmie to say, "Move on, I say!"

...thus addressed by the man who for several days had been furiously watching Jimmie, crooked-backed fellow, with an iron hook into several streets near an alley in one of the streets of the banking district, occasionally thrusting a rag or a bit of old junk or a burlap bag hung over his shoulders.

...picker looked up with a dead snarl.

...move!" he resentfully muttered. "You bigga no good, you tella me!"

...you dog, and get out!" sternly retorted, not liking the looks "Move lively, too, or you'll see!"

...picker's dirty face took on a leer, and he now rejoined in a low, snaky voice, "I know you, you dog, and I'll make you wise later."

...could have been floored by the other's returned, hangdog face, but the subtle gleam of the eyes he thought he knew so well.

...!" he growled. "Is that what the devil—"

...!" whispered Mr. Felix. "I'll be with you later, Jimmie."

...while he spoke he worked the strap bag squarely upon his head, and he shuffled slowly away, and unsteady, with his unshaken as if with palsy, he presently disappeared into the nearest corner.

...dropped into his Pine street office, and at once in the hours later, and at once in the unusual episode.

...to run me in were you, Jimmie, he, with a quizzical light in his expressive eyes. "You pair of double-convex glasses, what out," growled Coleman. "A man would need an eye along with the glasses, to see some of your infernally arduous-ups. In what sort of a counter-game, Jimmie," said he gravely. "I want to keep my shoulders, even admitting a cabbage-head."

...!" Has it come to that, Jimmie?"

...less," replied Boyd, with a shrug. "I'll tell you about it after my parties out after my work in dead earnest; yet I can't let them get it. Still, the fact has been a bit strenuous of late, and close calls are coming in often."

...the level, Felix?" demanded Boyd seriously.

...statement is on the level, Jimmie, that's what you mean. Not so, the several recent attempts by toes up. They were far from the level. Let's see, to-day is it?"

...of course," laughed Boyd grimly. "The fact is, Jimmie, so deucedly occupied in looking my head that I may have lost something."

...oh! Not you, Felix Boyd!" Coleman, dropping into a danger serves only to sharpen, that I'll swear to. What Saturday?"

...Jimmie, Saturday's little isn't been made yet, so I can't just what it may prove to be," Boyd. "Wednesday's was rather a rath, however."

...was that?"

...merely an incident. As I was the stone building on the corner of the street, just before dusk, something ring by my ear, I went out of shape against the wall, and I found it to be a bullet!" cried Coleman.

...ing less," answered Boyd. "A man an air-pistol, evidently, and heard no report. My head target, Jimmie, or the marks of a deucedly had shot. I made out looking him up, but such things cover themselves well, and I don't matter, since he missed me."

...a bit, Jimmie," smiled Boyd. "Late Thursday evening, while Fifth avenue, I was struck automobile, and tossed some 20 the park wall. The chauffeur do even better than that, and into the hereafter, but luckily my eyes open and saw him suddenly in my direction. He and gone before I could gather any agitated remains."

...did you identify?"

...ity nothing!" interposed Boyd. "I had only time to see where he had to the best advantage."

...once more, Jimmie. On Friday, as I was passing near the building on Forty-first street, of blocking weighing about 200 lbs. fell down, and struck the back of my head, and I saw—nobody! It had been an accident, eh?"

...by a long chalk!" cried Coleman with much indignation. "I say, indeed, that parties are out your belt. Why, Boyd, this is only a bit stimulating."

...Boyd, reaching for his pipe, as to keep one alert. This is in a brand-new move against Jimmie each day is rather interesting grows curious to know what they will exhaust their last. I remarked, I hardly know Boyd's move will be. Dynamite, or, since it's a short business, and to-morrow the Sabbath, I'll go until Monday."

...he gravely shook his head.

...said, Felix, what do you say?"

...steadily, "I'm not sure, but I think you should expect to see me in the office."

life emanate from a far greater knowledge than Paul Wykoff. As I told you after that Dickson case, Jimmie, I wished to remain as much as possible in the background, but this matter criminal in these operations below the dead-line should get a range on me before I had one on him."

"No sign of it yet, eh?"

"Not a line that I can run down, Jimmie. I have shadowed both Wykoff and that Dole girl to the top of my bent, yet nothing comes of it, and you know I'm neither blind nor green at such business."

"Well, I should say not."

"They make not a move that serves me for a pointer. Yet it's plain as two and two that this gang, or the chief of it, now entertains a very profound respect for me, if not a feeling of genuine fear, since I queered that cipher robber for him and come so near landing Wykoff. They want me out of the way, Jimmie, there's no doubt about that."

"I should say as much," growled Coleman thoughtfully. "Is there no way by which I can help you?"

"Not at present, thanks. I mean to let these knaves have what rope they want, in the hope that I may yet get hold of one end of it," smiled Boyd.

"But the end of it may prove to be the end of you, Felix."

"Possibly. Yet I'll tanke the chances. I don't feel as if I should go under at the hands of a mongrel who stabs in the dark."

"God forbid! Yet the odds plainly are great. This gang must comprise many shrewd and desperate hands, since you are so cleverly watched and frequently threatened."

"No doubt at all of it, Jimmie," assented Boyd. "And their director-general is a past master of crime. I am equally certain. It is proving difficult, indeed, to land him; but wait until I get a clue which—ah, well, we shall see!"

As if loath to make an idle boast, Boyd abruptly checked himself, and resumed his pipe, at which he puffed complacently for several moments; but the drawn lines of his thin, firm lips, the knitting of his brows, and the steel-like gleam of his cold gray eyes, betrayed the inflexible determination he had refrained from expressing.

The central office detective, familiar though he was with brave associates, and used to deeds of daring, could not but admire this man whose surpassing courage he so many times had seen perils as one might face a morning breeze. Aside from his keen discernment and rare detective art, Boyd's every quality was such as wins the love of men like Coleman, and inspires the deepest fear of such knaves as they had been discussing.

"I don't like this work a cent, Felix," growled Coleman, after some moments. "If you were one of the force, I should insist upon working with you and sharing your chances. As it is, you refuse to allow it?"

"Most decidedly, Jimmie," Boyd gravely answered. "My work is not quite in a line with yours, Jimmie, and my contracts do not require me to run down criminals. If I finally land this obscure gang now operating below the dead-line, it will be done only incidentally; yet I think it quite probable, and very likely with your help. Let that suffice, dear fellow."

"I have no alternative," replied Coleman slowly. "But what was your game down in K—street this morning? You haven't explained that. Holy smoke, what a make-up that was!"

Boyd laughed lightly, and laid aside his pipe.

"Well, Jimmie," said he oddly, "I was watching for the man who vanished."

"The man who vanished!" echoed Coleman amazedly. "What the dicken do you mean by the—man who vanished?"

"I'll explain," replied Boyd, moving nearer in his chair. "Last Tuesday, Jimmie, I discovered that I was being shadowed. The party who betrayed this unusual interest in my movements was a total stranger to me. I decided that I had better learn something about him, he hung so long at my heels; and late Tuesday afternoon I managed, after having secretly prepared myself, to turn the tables on him."

"Quite right. That was just the thing to do."

"I did it, moreover, without his suspecting it," continued Boyd. "He suddenly lost sight of me, Jimmie, and I presently emerged from a near saloon, so effectually disguised that my wife, if I had one, would not have known me."

"I see."

"I had the fellow under my eye, however; yet up to that time he cannot possibly have learned that I suspected him. He plainly was trying to locate me again, and I followed him about for a time, and presently into K—street."

"Where I saw you this morning?"

"Not far removed," nodded Boyd. "Nearly opposite that alley where you mistook me for a son of sunny Italy, there is a small shop occupied by a man who cleans and repairs men's clothing—a man named Broger, or so his sign states. He has occupied the shop about six months."

"I know the shop," bowed Coleman. "But not the man."

"Well, Jimmie, my man went into that shop," continued Boyd. "I waited awhile for him to come out, and when he failed to do so I felt so sure of my disguise that I decided to enter after him; to learn quietly who he was, if possible, and to have a look at the place 'twice."

"Well, I didn't!" returned Boyd, with a queer intonation. "Jimmie, the shop has no rear door, no rear window; in fact, no visible way of exit save that by which I had entered; and yet, Jimmie—"

"Well?"

"My man was not there!"

"Not there!"

"Decidedly not. He had vanished."

"Did you make any inquiries?" asked Coleman perplexedly.

"Only about the cost of cleaning an depressing the suit I then had on."

"Why not more?"

"Because, Jimmie, the incident was so peculiar, along with the fact that I had been so persistently shadowed, that I did not wish to betray any misgivings by asking pertinent questions," explained Boyd. "The shop is only a small one, and as I saw Broger there once, I had entered. I cannot have"

perhaps. If not, things there may not be so well and good. That's all, Jimmie. Yet do me the favor to keep away from that shop until I have again located the man who vanished."

"Certainly, Felix, if you really wish it," nodded Coleman. "Have you since been watching the place?"

"Frequently."

"Seen any others come off go?"

"Only persons whom I since have learned to be genuine customers, and not at all worthy of serious suspicion."

"Humph!" grunted Coleman. "This whole business appears deucedly odd."

"It is so odd that I shall leave no stone unturned to discover what it means," Boyd grimly answered.

Then glancing at his desk, he quickly added:

"By the way, Jimmie, reverting to what I might expect to-day in the way of an innovation, here is a wire I received about 10 o'clock from Grimshaw & Co., Boston brokers. Do you know them?"

"Never heard of them."

"Following the wire came a long-distance telephone call from Grimshaw himself, with whom I had a short interview. He referred me to Morgan, of Wall Street, from whom he once worked. He wishes me to come to Boston to-night to investigate a mysterious theft from his office. I could not get the particulars over the wire, however; yet he offers me a very good price."

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Very reasonable. I am sure," laughed Boyd. "Well, well, let's not anticipate such a disaster. There is a saying that men get what they are looking for, so we will look for something better than a bank burglary. Let's hour for you to be at lunch on a Saturday, isn't it?"

"Sanderson glanced up at the handsome lock on the elaborately decorated wall. It already was after three.

"Quite so," said he. "I am more than an hour late."

"Very busy striking a balance for the week, I take it."

"Well, not unusually so," was the reply. "The fact is, Boyd, I have been testing my mental powers in a way. Curious, too; I'm blessed if it wasn't."

"How so?"

"Why, it happened in this way," explained Sanderson, while he concluded his lunch. "An acquaintance of mine named Kramer, who rents an office in our building, came to my window just before noon, and asked me to place his tin box in our vault over Sunday, as he was going out of town. It contained some bonds recently sent him to be negotiated, and a few valuables which he did not wish to leave in his own office over Sunday."

"Has he no safe in his office?" inquired Boyd.

"No, he has not; so I frequently have favored him in this way."

"New York man?"

"I am not sure about that, only that he is the New York agent for a lime concern of Rockland, Maine. He has

...I certainly found it difficult," smiled the other, perceiving no strain on Boyd's part. "I suffered my mind to cheat my stomach a full hour."

"You were the last to leave the bank, eh?" inquired Boyd, glancing indifferently over the several occupants of the room, to make sure he knew them, and was not being watched by any stranger.

"The very last," nodded Sanderson. "Yet that is not unusual. I frequently am the last to leave."

"You close the vault in that case, don't you?"

"Certainly."

"Are the vault doors secured by a combination lock or by a time lock?"

"A time lock, Mr. Boyd. It now is set for 1 o'clock Monday morning. Until that day and hour, Boyd, the devil himself could not open that vault, which is one of the best in the city."

"Until that day and hour, then," quietly observed Felix Boyd, with a curious smile, "the time lock on the vault door, and Kramer's valuable little clock reposing securely in his tin box, may merrily tick away the seconds in genial company."

"Just so," laughed Sanderson. "Bright thought, that."

"Friend of yours, this Kramer, did you say?"

"Acquaintance, rather. I have known him only about two months, since he became our tenant."

"Young man?"

"About 40, I should say. A genial fellow. Taken me to the theatre several times, with a bird and bottle to

...able to be used little less than a week. Also a brace of trusty servants."

He had just secured the last step about the bag, when Terry Gowan returned, followed a few moments later by Jimmie Coleman.

"Hello!" exclaimed the detective, who observed the grip. "Have you decided to go to Boston?"

"I have decided to make a bluff at it, Jimmie," Boyd quickly answered. "A bluff at it! What do you mean?" demanded Coleman, startled less by the announcement than by the ominous ring in Boyd's subdued voice.

"I have only time to give you a hint at what I mean, Jimmie," Boyd hurriedly answered. "There's a devil's own game afoot. That wire from Grimshaw is only a decoy, a scheme to get me out of New York over Sunday."

"The dickens!"

"Their more serious attempts upon my life having failed, that wire was the last resort of this coterie of knaves, by which to insure my absence at the culmination of their long protracted work. It shows that they fear me, Jimmie; fear me beyond telling—and not without reason! I will land them yet—land them yet, the renegades!"

"Good heavens!" cried Coleman, amazed at Boyd's rare display of feeling. "What do you now suspect?"

"I must tell you in a nutshell, Jimmie, for time presses," cried Boyd. "Come here, Terry. Draw nearer, both of you. I'll quickly tell you what I suspect, and give you my instructions."

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"Very good," nodded Boyd, inform them when we arrive there."

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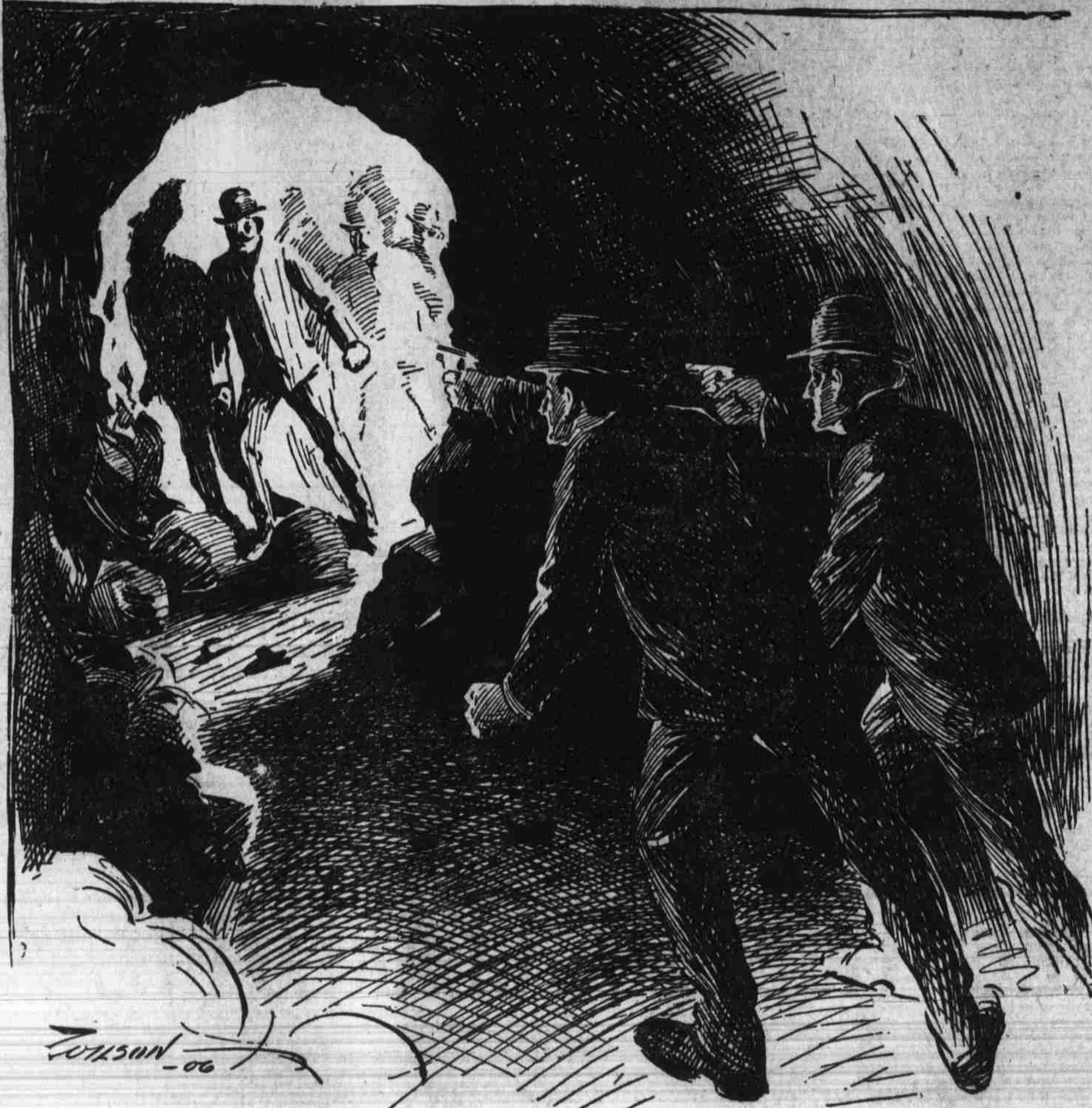
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"That suggested by the deposited by Kramer in the Trinity Trust Company, quickly answered. "Note fully the way was prepared for ing Sanderson, and averting givings on his part. This Kramer of the Trinity people, has without a safe, and has succ making a friend of Sanderson ing him to the theatre now a and the like of that. Several Sanderson has been asked by to care for the tin box in the described, yet never with any results. On this occasion, he claims to have placed in a valuable little clock, or previously had called Sanderson, stating that he had highly. Sanderson has



"AT THEM, JIMMIE!" BOYD CRIED, SOFTLY "IF THEY SHOW FIGHT, SHOOT TO KILL!"

"Are you going?" Boyd smiled oddly, and arose to take his hat.

"I did not decide," said he. "I told Grimshaw that I would wire him this afternoon. Perhaps, after looking him up, I may decide to go. A change of base for a day or two may set my mould-be assassins guessing."

"Not a bad idea."

"If I decide to go, however," added Boyd. "I would like to see you before leaving. Drop in here again at 4 o'clock, Jimmie, will you?"

"Yes, at four sharp. Where now?"

"To lunch. Had yours?"

"Yes, yes; an hour ago."

"See me at four then. So long!"

And Mr. Felix Boyd nodded and laughed as he moved away, quite as if he ignored the fact that his life at that very moment might be hanging by a thread.

CHAPTER II.

At the exclusive French restaurant patronized by Mr. Felix Boyd, chiefly because it was a favorite resort of many of the wealthy bankers and brokers with whose interests he was concerned, there were but few late lunchers in the second-floor dining room to which he habitually repaired. At one of the tables, however, he discovered an acquaintance, the head book-keeper of the Trinity Trust Company, and he bowed and joined him, taking the opposite chair.

"You may find poor company better than none, Sanderson," said he genially, as he sat down. "How are you?"

"Very well, Boyd. Glad to see you. Anything new?"

"Nothing worth telling—save that the world has grown honest," quoth Boyd, laughing. "I find hardly enough going to keep me busy. Affairs all right down your way?"

"As far as I know," replied Sanderson. "If not, we should expect you to

friends in Bridgeport, whom he occasionally visits for a day or two, and at such times he always leaves his box of securities in my care—no great trouble for me, you know. As he is rather a genial fellow, and also a tenant of ours, I try to accommodate him."

"Very natural, I am sure," nodded Boyd. "But where did the exercise of your mental powers come in?"

Sanderson laughed, and laid aside his napkin.

"I'll tell you, said he. "Among other things, Kramer had placed in his box a small, gold-embossed clock, quite a valuable little ornament, which was given him by his fiancée. I have seen it on his desk several times, and do not wonder that he prizes it quite highly."

"A clock, eh?"

"Precisely. The curious feature of the circumstances, however, lies in the fact that its constant ticking in the tin box, which I temporarily placed on my desk, rather annoyed me while I balanced my books. My first impulse was to place the box in the vault, and so rid myself of the noise. It occurred to me, however, that I ought to be able to concentrate my mind on my work despite so trivial a disturbance, and I resolved to try to do so."

"Ah, I see."

"Well, Boyd," and Sanderson broke out laughing. "I'm blessed if that ticking didn't annoy me so that I was good 90 minutes longer than usual in closing up my books. If I went to the desk, I couldn't add a column correctly the first time. I beat out the infernal little timepiece at the finish, however; but not until all of my associates in the bank had wound up their work and departed. Then I placed Kramer's deuced box on the floor of the vault, where I hope it may tick itself dumb before Monday. That, Boyd, is why I am so late at lunch to-day."

Boyd's clean-cut features did not

follow; complimentary, no doubt, in recognition of my little favors."

"Yes, very likely," said Boyd, with unappreciated dryness.

"Well, I'll now be off. Glad to have seen you, Mr. Boyd."

"You are dead lucky to have seen me—far luckier than you imagine!" Boyd mentally observed, as Sanderson departed. "Yet the luck is not all his, not quite all; since a slice of it comes my way."

The light in his keen, gray eyes was burning brighter, at times intensely. A look of serious concern now and then appeared in his fine, forceful face. He finished his soup in a hurry, and countermanded his order for subsequent courses.

Having paid his bill and emerged to the street, however, he betrayed no further sign of his unusual mental activity. That the eyes of a spy might be watching him at every available moment, he now had scarce a doubt. Without a suspicious glance in any direction, however, he moderately proceeded to his office in Pine street, where self-restraint was not deemed quite so imperative.

"My grip, Terry," he cried sharply, addressing his office boy. "Look lively!"

"Something on, eh?" ventured the lad, hastening to bring a stout leather bag from the closet.

"Either that or I am away off my—ah, but I am not!"

"It must be that—it must be that!"

"Must be what, sir?"

"Don't bother me with questions. Here, send this wire; then return at once. Wait—"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't betray any haste. Crafty eyes may observe you, and shrewd deductions be drawn."

"All right, sir. I'm wise."

"Be off, then."

The lad vanished.

Boyd sprang up from his desk, at which he had written a despatch to

They must be followed to the letter—to the letter, mind you! Millions may depend upon it! Listen—listen!"

His voice fell almost to a whisper, thrilling his hearers with its suppressed intensity. Their amazement at what he imparted was even greater, however; and Coleman stared dumfounded while he signified his willing co-operation in the stirring sequence of events that quickly followed, born of the remarkable discernment and keen deductions of Mr. Felix Boyd.

CHAPTER III.

At quarter past four that afternoon, Jimmie Coleman sauntered out of Boyd's office, and proceeded up-town to carry out the latter's instructions.

At half past four Mr. Felix Boyd came down to Pine street, tossed his grip into a hansom for which he had telephoned, and went directly to pier 28, where he purchased a ticket for Boston, engaging a stateroom, and at once boarded the palatial steamer Puritan.

At five minutes of five, just before the steamer's gangplank was hauled ashore, a youngster bearing but little resemblance to Terry Gowan came off the boat with a grip, and lugged it away up Warren street. The lad was Terry Gowan, nevertheless, and the grip that of Mr. Felix Boyd.

When the steamer drew out of the dock, Boyd occupied a prominent position on the saloon-deck aft, where he could be plainly seen by any person on the pier having an interest in his departure. That he then was booked for-Newport, at least, no sane person could reasonably have doubted.

Thereupon a man clad as a stevedore, who had been lounging near the trucks and freight on the pier, abruptly turned away and departed. The last object on which his gaze lingered, however, as the Puritan veered round toward the Battery, was the clean-cut athletic figure of a man in the after-

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"He must have gone some where."

"And the fact that he did by the door, which plainly only ordinary way of exit at o gester, that he may have gone cellar," declared Boyd quite n. "That he did precisely that, designs suggested by the clue to-day, I already am quite con. "What clue do you me Boyd?"

"That suggested by the deposited by Kramer in the Trinity Trust Company, quickly answered. "Note fully the way was prepared for ing Sanderson, and averting givings on his part. This Kramer of the Trinity people, has without a safe, and has succ making a friend of Sanderson ing him to the theatre now a and the like of that. Several Sanderson has been asked by to care for the tin box in the described, yet never with any results. On this occasion, he claims to have placed in a valuable little clock, or previously had called Sanderson, stating that he had highly. Sanderson has