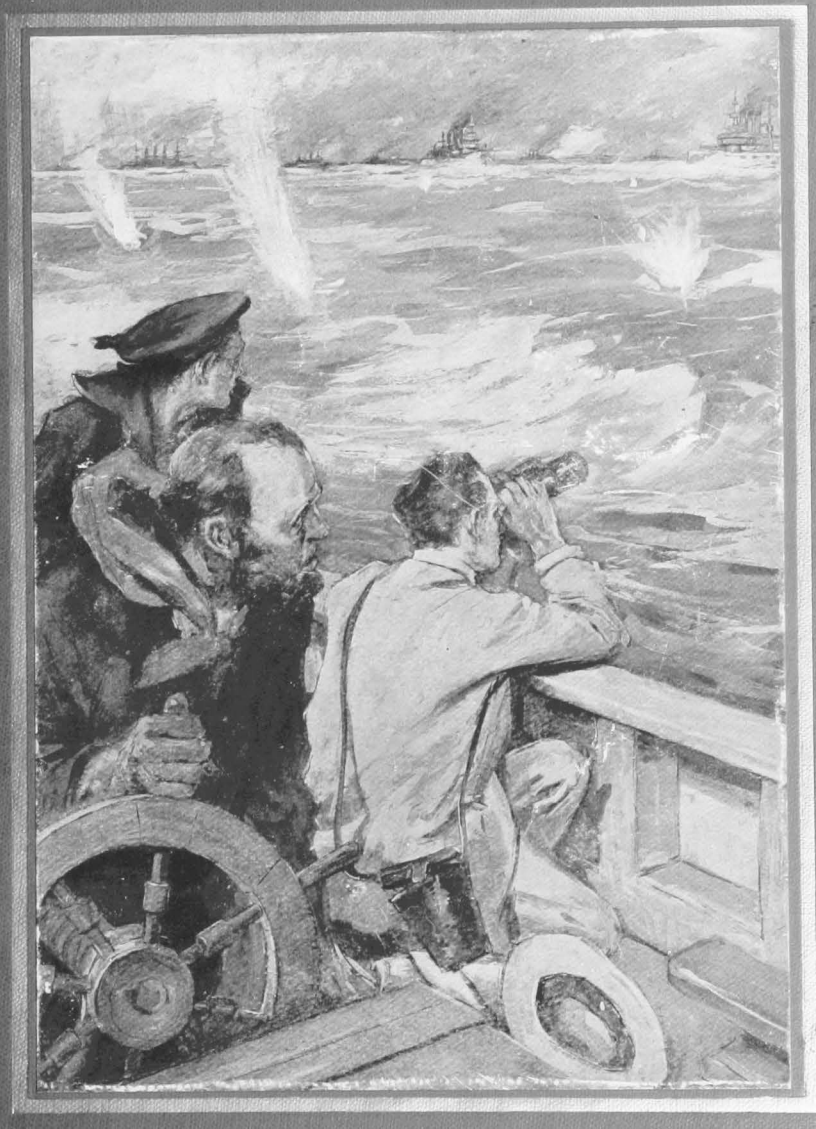
THE MAN WHO ENDED WAR



HOLLIS GODFREY

THE MAN WHO ENDED WAR

"THERE'S REGNIER!" I CRIED, POINTING AT THE WINDOW.

[*Frontispiece. See p. 277.*

THE MAN WHO ENDED WAR

By

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Illustrated from drawings by

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BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, & COMPANY

1908

Published September, 1908

COLONIAL PRESS
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, U. S. A.

TO

My Wife

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE MAN WHO ENDED WAR

CHAPTER I

THE Secretary of War ended his statement. "That is all there is to tell, gentlemen, concerning the building of the new transports."

I had closed my notebook and was rising, as Ordway, the private secretary, entered.

"May I give the correspondents that freak letter that came this morning?" he asked. His chief nodded indulgently and left the room. I opened my notebook expectantly.

"This is a very serious matter, and a great piece of news," Ordway remarked in a mock grandiose manner. "It is a declaration of war against the civilized world in the interests of peace." He threw himself into an oratorical posture and began:

"To the United States of America and to all other nations — Greeting!"

"Whereas war has too long devastated the earth and the time has now come for peace, I, the man destined to stop all war, hereby declare unto you that you shall, each and all, disarm; that your troops shall be disbanded, your navies sunk or turned to peaceful ends, your fortifications dismantled. One year from this date will I allow for disarmament and no more. At the end of that time, if no heed has been paid to my injunction, I will destroy, in rapid succession, every battleship in the world. By the happenings of the next two months you shall know that my words are the words of truth.

"Given under my hand and seal this first of June, 19—

"Signed —

"THE MAN WHO WILL STOP ALL WAR."

Ordway ceased and a laughing clamor rose.

"The biggest crank yet." "Where was it mailed?" "I thought you said you had something really good this time." "Do you suppose he sent it to any other country than the United States?"

Ordway raised his hand for a hearing and replied to the last question. "The letter was mailed from London, and was sent to other countries. I read

the missive to one of the English attachés when it came, and he looked the matter up. This notice has been sent to all the foreign chancelleries, as well as the departments of war and of the navy. It has been done in such a wholesale fashion that I thought you could use it for a column anyway."

"But is it such a fool idea?" asked Reid, one of the older correspondents. "Couldn't a man build a submarine in which he could run amuck and destroy battleship after battleship, something as old Jules Verne's Captain Nemo did?"

"Not to-day," said Ordway emphatically. "The new armor of the last years, with its permanent torpedo nets, has stopped all that. The only way you can destroy a modern battleship is by ramming, or by another battleship. The day of the torpedo boat and of the submarine ended almost as it began."

"Well," said Reid argumentatively, "why couldn't a man have a battleship? Any one of five hundred men living to-day could afford it."

"No battleship could be built by a private citizen without some nation knowing it and stopping it," said Ordway seriously. "It takes months, reaching into years, to build one. It takes skilled naval constructors, hundreds of workmen and thousands of tons of material that must be bought in the markets of the world."

"Let's see the paper it's written on," I said.

As I held the message, Reid looked over my shoulder and read for a moment. Then, turning, he cried, "Come over here, boys, and look at this a little more closely. That's old parchment, just like that of some of those papal bulls in the glass cases over in the library."

As he spoke a sudden remembrance flashed across me. "Anybody got a microscope around here?" I asked quickly.

"There's a reading glass," said Ordway, and opening a drawer he handed one to me. I took the paper to the sunlit window, and began examining it closely with the lens. The rest watched me curiously. At last I shook my head. "No use," I exclaimed. "I thought I had a clue, but it didn't pan out. There's a good story though, without anything more. Here, Ordway," and I handed back the letter.

The other correspondents moved away, seeking fresh fields for copy, but I lingered a moment as John King, my classmate at Columbia and my good friend, stepped forward to bid Ordway good-bye. As I watched his deeply lined, melancholy face and his emaciated form, I wondered if wealth had not come to him too late.

"Good-bye, Ordway," said John. "This is the last you'll see of me. I'm through with the daily grind at six o'clock to-night."

"I'm sorry to hear that in one way, King," said

Ordway gravely. " I felt last year when you went abroad that you were running down hill and I expected, when I heard you had come into your uncle's money, that you would pull out. What are you going to do ? "

"Oh ! I shall travel again for a bit," replied John. " There are some things I want to do before I get through with this old earth, if I am to get through."

" You'll be all right," answered Ordway. " I only wish I had your chance. There's my bell now. You see how it is — tied like a slave to the wheels of the chariot, etc. But good luck, anyway, and good-bye."

He gave John a friendly grasp, and as he turned away, threw the massive folded sheet, which he still held, into the waste basket. " I guess we won't file that with the state documents," he said laughing. " Good-bye, and good luck once more."

We parted and John and I started down the corridor. We had gone but a few steps when exclaiming, " There, I've left my stick," I turned swiftly back, recovered the letter from its place in the waste basket, and emerged with my cane. Silently we walked down the broad avenue until, just before we reached my office, I turned sharply.

" Come in here," I said, dragging John into a café. We sat down at one of the small tables. " You used to do the Smithsonian and scientific stories for your paper, didn't you ? " I asked.

John was sitting staring into vacancy. He paid no attention to my question and I repeated it twice before he turned nervously with a shake of the head and asked sharply, "What is it?"

I repeated the question once more.

"Yes," he said abstractedly.

"Well, who do you know that owns any radium?"

He thought for a moment and said slowly, "Why, the Smithsonian people have a little, of course, and there's some in half a dozen places in the city."

"But from whom could we get some most easily?" I inquired.

"Oh! I know," he answered. "Dorothy Haldane has some. She's here in Washington working with part of her brother's radium, and she's with her cousin Mrs. Hartnell."

"Who's Dorothy Haldane? Any relation to Tom Haldane who was just ahead of us, the chap who went into the Physical Laboratory at Columbia and who's doing private research now?"

"His sister. She is Barnard A. M., and his research assistant."

"Regular bluestocking," I remarked with some dislike, for the learned research woman never appealed to me.

"Oh, no," said John. "Not at all. She is one of the prettiest, nicest girls I ever knew."

"Any feeling about your remarks, John?" I said hopefully.

"Of course not," he answered with some irritation. "There'll never be any more feeling. Since Anna's death there can't be. I know you'll like Dorothy, though. What do you want her radium for?"

"There's just a chance that I may have a scoop, and if you'll take me up there to-night I ll let you in."

"I'll take you up there," said John, "but you can have your scoop to yourself. For the last word of copy I ever write will be in print before we call."

That afternoon came an unexpected Cabinet change. For hours I interviewed, and wrote, telephoned and telegraphed, reaching my room at half after eight, to find John just ready to leave without me. He had written the story of the man who was to stop all war, only to see it killed by more important news. His experience had been that of every man in the secretary's office, a common fate in the crowding rush of newspaper life. I had never seen John more distrait than that night, and we walked up to the Hartnells' in utter silence.

I so completely expected, despite John's assurances, to find a stooping, bespectacled student type inside the Hartnells' door, that the girl who rose as I entered gave me a sudden shock of amazement

and delight. She was the sunniest, daintiest type of American girl you could meet the country through. Her mobile face was lit with glowing life and interest in the world around. Her fine firm form showed no trace of scholastic life. Her laugh was like rippling water. Her eyes held the fine deep beauty of a summer's night. With her was a dark and clear-cut Southerner who was introduced to me as Richard Regnier. The talk went hither and thither until John broached my search for radium.

"What is your need of radium, Mr. Orrington?" said Miss Haldane.

I hesitated for a moment and John broke in. "Don't be afraid of Regnier, Jim. He's no newspaper man. He's a reformer like myself. We're co-members of the Tuberculosis League and the Civic League and the Peace Society. Now what's up? You haven't told me yet."

So urged, I told the story of the morning and brought forth the heavy parchment which I had retrieved from the waste basket. Regnier sat immobile during the whole tale, though Dorothy broke into it with pointed questions a dozen times.

"That's what I want the radium for," I said in ending.

"But what has radium to do with that letter?" asked John.

"Just this," I replied. "As you may have seen,

I held that letter to the light under a reading glass, which acted as a burning glass, for some minutes. I was looking for invisible ink, which could be brought out by heating. I didn't find any, but as I turned away, the paper came for a moment into the shadow and I saw a slight gleam like the glimmer of phosphorescence on water. Now last year I met an old scientist, Von Meyren, who happened to mention that he had found that certain inks which had been used for parchments in olden times held a substance which becomes phosphorescent when exposed to radium. He got a second letter in that way once, from beneath a message one of the Popes sent to a king of France. You see parchment was and is expensive, and hard to get. They used the same piece over and over again, removing the old inks by scraping or dissolving. Somehow the radium brought out the stuff that had been apparently removed. When Reid said 'Papal Bulls' it gave me an idea. It is barely possible that the man who wrote the letter might have written something on that piece of parchment before and then erased it. I thought I'd try radium on the chance. There may be nothing in it, but it will do no harm, will it, Miss Haldane?"

"Oh, no," said Miss Haldane. "I have some of my brother's radium right here. I'll bring it down and we'll expose the letter to it."

A moment later she returned, this time with her

cousin Mrs. Hartnell. "Now we will darken the room," she said, holding out a small lead case with hinged cover, "and try this wonder worker. But you must not move from your places. If you get in the way of the rays, you are likely to be badly burned."

We were grouped in a semi-circle before a bared table whereon was placed the open letter in a holder, confronted with the leaden casket. I was given the place of honor, directly in front, and Miss Haldane put her chair beside mine. Carefully she opened the hinged door in the front of the radium holder, stepped to the switch, threw off the electric light, and came to sit beside me.

We waited in perfect silence, our eyes bent on the blackness before us. I could hear her regular breathing, I could feel the brush of her skirt as she leaned forward, and I forgot all else, — the noise of the city without, the audience within, both disappeared from my consciousness. There was but a vast rolling ocean of blackness, and she and I, bound by a swiftly tightening chain, were being dragged closer and closer together. Old Von Meyren's pet saying, "Love! Pah! What is it but an excess of positive electrons in a certain man, urging him towards the negative electrons in a certain woman?" kept ringing in my ears, the while I indignantly refuted it. Again and again it persisted, and with it came the thought that the waves

from the radium were the chain which bound us.

I had forgotten the letter utterly when suddenly I heard a slight catch in the regular breathing beside me, and a soft warm hand, raised swiftly, brushed mine for a moment as it was raised. The sharp thrill shook me into consciousness. I looked before me, and there, glimmering into light, a single curve came from the darkness, then a straight line, then appeared a large U. One by one letters filled out, whole words appeared, — "United States" first, "July" second, and a single capital "I" next. Word after word appeared. Half lines filled into sentences. I could hear behind me a quick, almost sobbing breath that half penetrated my mind, but leaning forward close beside was Miss Haldane. At last in a clear low voice she began to read, "I, the man who will stop all war, hereby declare that I will destroy one battleship of the United States during the first week of July, 19—, one battleship of England during the second week of July, 19—, one battleship of France during the third week of July, 19—, one battleship of Germany during the fourth week of July, 19—. I shall follow that destruction by sinking, in regular order, one battleship of each of the other great powers. May the Lord have mercy on the souls of them who suffer for the cause of peace!"

She stopped and we waited, watching the glowing signal for what seemed hours, for what was

minutes. No more appeared, though the brightness of the words of the second message did not dim. At last Miss Haldane rose and with a quick movement turned on the lights and shut the cover. The letter returned to its former appearance. I sat blinking. Regnier still sat immobile. John held his face in his hands. Mrs. Hartnell sat with closed eyes.

"Do you believe it?" I asked Miss Haldane quickly.

She nodded gravely. "It's what he means to do," she said. "He wrote it that way first, and then erased it and made it general afterwards."

"I don't believe it," said Mrs. Hartnell, sharply. "It's impossible."

"It certainly doesn't seem probable," said John, at last raising his face. Regnier alone did not speak.

For a moment we were silent, each busy with the thoughts the message had roused within him. At last I rose with an effort. "Good-night, Miss Haldane," I said, "I thank you for your help."

"I am very glad you brought the letter to me," she said simply, "I am going back to New York to-morrow so I cannot ask you to call upon me here, but if you are in New York won't you come and see me and give me any news you may have of this threatening peril?"

"I shall be only too glad to do so," I responded,

my heart bounding. I had reached the door when Miss Haldane called after me. "Oh, Mr. Orrington, would you be willing to let me have the letter? I should like to show it to my brother. I'll send it to you any time you wish."

"Certainly you may have it," I replied, and I handed her the parchment.

Regnier left the house with John and me. We walked in silence to the corner where Regnier turned off. As we parted, he hesitated for a moment.

"You were strangely right in your surmise, Mr. Orrington," he said slowly. "I am very glad to have been present at so curious an event."

"Queer chap Regnier," said John musingly, as we watched the retreating form. "Clever scientist and good fellow, but queer. I hope he'll never get Dorothy Haldane. She wouldn't be happy with him."

My heart sank like lead. "Do you think there's much chance that he will?" I queried anxiously.

"To tell the truth," answered John slowly, "I don't know." We had come by this time to the door of John's hotel. "I'm not going to ask you up to-night. Jim," he said, "I'm utterly fagged out and exhausted. Besides, I must get off early in the morning. So good-night and good-bye both."

He paused and I could see the muscles of his face twitching and his hands nervously clasping. He went on with a rush, " Don't forget me while I'm gone, old man, will you? Remember our commencement night when we walked up Riverside, and talked of the great future lying before us? Of all I cared for then, not one remains except yourself. Of all the health and vigor I had then, only a shred is left. I shall not see you for two years anyway. There's nobody left to write to me. Don't forget me. Drop me a line occasionally, care Barings, will you? "

With such an intensity of pleading came the last words that I was shaken despite myself. " Write you? I guess I will," I cried. " Don't you worry about that." We grasped hands and parted.

CHAPTER II

"It's no use, Orrington, there's nothing in it," said the managing editor decisively. "We can't publish a fairy story like that. We've got to stick to probabilities, at least. What did the Secretary of War say when you told him?"

"Oh, he said it was simply the insane freak of a crazy man," I answered glumly enough, for I had set my whole heart on this scoop, and felt more and more convinced that it was true, the more I was rebuffed. I went on with a gleam of hope. "I'd like to have you see radium bring out the second letter, that was underneath the first."

"My dear chap," said the chief, a little impatiently, "I'll take your word for that, and you could use that story very well in another way, but it isn't news. Whole fleets can't be sunk by a single man. It's nonsense." He placed his glasses on his nose with a vigorous gesture, and picked up a fresh bunch of copy.

Without a word, I passed out into the big office where, sitting down at an empty desk by the window, I lighted my pipe and lost myself in thought. Not very pleasant thoughts they were, for I had

been rebuffed for my enthusiasm on every side, since I took up the quixotic task of persuading the United States that one of her battleships was in danger. My own chief, the Washington correspondent, the War Department, the President, and now the managing editor of the New York office whither I had been suddenly called — all laughed at my tale. Dorothy Haldane alone had believed. Together we had seen the message grow from the darkness. We were convinced of its truth. From that one meeting had come the feeling that, when Dorothy agreed, the opinion of the rest of the world faded to minor account. Over and over again her name threaded the shuttle of my thoughts. Dorothy was my last thought as I lay down at night. Dorothy was my first thought with the dawn.

I had an hour to wait before I could reach a man whom I had been told to interview, and I sat back waiting and dreaming. It was Tuesday of the fatal week, the first week in July. Suddenly the door of the chief's office opened, and I heard my name. "Orrington! Orrington!" I jumped to my feet and hurried in. The chief was sitting with the receiver to his ear. "Close that door!" he ordered. "Here's Orrington now. Tell him what you told me."

I took the 'phone at his gesture and listened.

"Orrington?"

"Yes." (The man on the other end was the head of our Washington office.)

"There may be something in that story of yours. The War Department has just called me up. The Alaska has disappeared somewhere between Newport News and Bar Harbor. They talked with her by wireless yesterday morning, and have been unable to get into communication with her since. She has two sets of wireless on board, and has not been out of close communication for three years. They have sent four revenue cutters out searching the coast, but nothing has been seen. Finally the secretary thought of you and the message from the man who intended to stop all war. Have you found out anything?"

"No."

"Well, take your orders from New York now. They've asked for you for this. I don't think the other papers have it yet."

I straightened up with a throb of joy and turned to the chief. He looked at me keenly. "Better not write anything till you have something more. The assignment is yours. Go out and find the Alaska or what happened to her. I give you carte blanche."

Hardly were the last words out of his mouth before I had jumped for my hat and was hurrying down the stairs with a generous order for expense money in my hand. A moment's stop at the

cashier's, and I was out on the street. Up and down I looked for cab or automobile. I was bound for the water front. For once, there was not even a street car going my way. I started hurriedly on, half running in my speed. As I rushed along, I heard my name, "Mr. Orrington!" The voice would have called me miles. It was Dorothy Haldane, seated in a big blue motor. Her chauffeur drew up beside me, and she threw open the door.

"Let me take you wherever you are going, and tell me if you have heard more from that letter."

I needed no second invitation, gave the wharf address to the chauffeur, and turned to answer Dorothy. As I told her the news, she leaned forward to the chauffeur.

"Go back to where we left Mr. Haldane's launch," she said, and turned to me. "I've just left Tom at his launch, which was to take him out to the Black Arrow. They were waiting for some provisions at the wharf, and may be there yet. He'll be delighted to take you, and the Black Arrow is one of the swiftest motor yachts in the bay. Will you make your search on her? If you will, I'll go with you. I only stayed ashore to-day to do some shopping that can wait."

When the gods befriend a man, who is he to say nay? Through the hot and dirty markets we sped and reached the wharf, just as the Black Arrow's launch was leaving the shore. A clear call and a

wave of Dorothy's parasol brought it back, while a bewildered smile passed over Tom Haldane's face as he saw us awaiting him. "Why, Jim!" he began.

"Don't stop to talk now," said Dorothy. "Take us to the Black Arrow as fast as you can."

In a moment we had cleared the wharves and were passing from the dirt and smells of the city on to the clear waters of the bay. As we went, Dorothy explained the situation to Tom, who fell in with the plan joyously. Once on the slim rakish yacht, he spoke.

"Now, Jim, you're in command. Where are we going?"

"Right down the coast," I said, "and we'll megaphone every fisherman and yacht. It's the men on the coasters who will know, if any one does."

Swift as her name, the Black Arrow ploughed her way through the summer sea. Pleasantest of all assignments to sit on her deck and watch Dorothy Haldane as she talked and speculated on the problem before us. Could one man have sunk so mighty a battleship? Was there any possibility that a single man could make war on the world? Tom came up to us in the midst of the discussion, and stood listening.

"Queer this should come up now," he said. "It was only last winter that some one was talking

about something like this up at our house, one Sunday night. Who was it, Dorothy?"

A sudden look of alarm flashed across her face. She started to speak and then broke off. "Oh! I hardly remember."

Tom persisted. "Let's see, there was a crowd of the fellows there, and, queer thing too, John King and Dick Regnier. The same pair that were with you the other night."

"Regnier!" That name shot across me like a bullet. The short, quick, troubled breathing of some one behind me on the night we read the letter! "Can it be!" I burst forth.

Dorothy made no pretence of misunderstanding me. "No," she said firmly. "Dick was up to see me last night. It couldn't have been he."

The coast had been rushing by us rapidly as we talked, and now the summer cottages and bathing beaches were giving way to longer stretches of bare sand and wooded inlets. I rose and looked forward.

"We may as well commence here," I said, and we began systematic inquiry. Catboat and sloop tacking out on pleasure bent, tramp steamer ploughing heavily up the coast, — one after another, we came alongside and asked the same questions. "Have you seen a battleship to-day or yesterday? Have you seen or heard anything unusual?"

The answers came back in every vein. Brusque denials — ironical inquiries — would-be humorous sallies — courteous rejoinders — one and all had the same word. No battleship seen. Nothing unusual seen or heard. The morning had become noon, ere we were fairly on our quest. The afternoon wore on towards night, as it progressed. As the hours passed, I protested against my hosts giving up their yacht to my service, but quite in vain. They were as firmly resolved to pursue the quest to the end as I was myself.

About five o'clock, when we were some six or seven miles off the coast, came the first success. We hailed a schooner whose lookout replied negatively to our questions. As we passed slowly, we heard a sudden hail, as a gaunt man, the skipper, rushed to the side.

"Lookin' for anything unusual, be ye?" he shouted. "I've seen one thing, — a catboat takin' on a crazy man out of a knockabout."

"Whereabouts?" I shouted.

"'Bout ten miles back, I reckon," came the answer.

He knew no more than that, and the interchange over, I turned to Dorothy.

"Shall we run that clue down?" I asked.

She nodded decisively. "By all means," she said. "It's the only one we have. Send the Arrow inshore, will you, Tom, on a long slant?"

Once more the engine took up its racing speed, as the boat bore down on the shore. As we went in, we changed the questions, and asked the few boats we met if they had picked up a man. At last we saw a catboat just sailing out of a little bay, and bore down on it. A man and a boy sat in the stern. As I shouted my question once more, the man jumped up.

" Yes, we picked one up."

" Where is he ? " I shouted.

" At my house, but he's crazy," replied the man.

" Can we get in there with the yacht ? "

" No, but I can take you in," he answered, and it was but a moment's work to lower a boat from the davits. As I stepped to the side, Tom and Dorothy hurried up.

" We're going, too," Tom cried.

The launch bore us rapidly across to the catboat, and as we approached, I studied the faces of the man and the boy. They were simple folk, of evidently limited intelligence. Hardly had we come alongside, when I began my questions, and a strange story came in reply. Stripped of its vernacular and repetitions, this was the tale finally dragged from the man and boy, as we sailed towards the shore.

They had started out in the early morning and had fished with some success. In the afternoon, they had seen a knockabout running free before

the wind, with all sorts of strange action. The sail widespread, she turned and reared, started and checked, swung and circled. There was no sign of life on board that they could ascertain, and they made up their minds that the boat had either lost its occupants or had been driven offshore with its sail hoisted. On boarding, much to their surprise, they found a man, apparently a solitary fisherman, lying unconscious in the stern sheets. Throwing water over him roused him. He sat up and looked around, but with unseeing eyes. His lips quivered, and in a low whisper he began to speak. " Disappeared, disappeared, disappeared. Nothing real, nothing real." Rising, he started to walk straight ahead, but struck the side and fell. His murmur now changed to a loud moan. " Disappeared, disappeared, disappeared. Nothing real, nothing real." Again he tried to walk, but this time they caught him, bound him, and carried him to shore, to their house, where he went quietly enough to bed, with the unceasing moan. " Disappeared, disappeared, disappeared. Nothing real, nothing real," rising and falling like the waves on the shore.

The story had taken all the way in, and as we rowed towards shore, leaving the catboat and launch at the mooring where the knockabout lay, the night was swiftly shutting in. A light glimmered in a low house on the bluff.

"That's my house," said the man, as we hastened towards it. A woman with a kindly face met us at the door.

"Wife, these are some folks that are looking for the crazy man," said our friend.

"He's fast asleep," was the answer, "but you can go in and see him, if you want to."

My heart rose. The second step of my quest was in sight.

"Tom," I said quietly, "come along with me. Miss Haldane, will you remain here?"

Dorothy nodded. Tom and I followed the woman as she passed down a narrow passage. Opening a rude door, she entered. In front of the bed, she stopped short and threw up her hands. "For the land's sake," she cried. "He's gone!"

Gone! The word echoed dismally in my brain.

"Wait till I get a lamp," said the woman, and she pattered nervously out.

By the fading light, we could see the disordered bed, the open window, and an overturned chair. A glimmer of light came down the passage, and the woman hurried back, followed by Dorothy. No more information could be gleaned. Evidently the lost man had risen, dressed completely, and left by the low open window. The woman of the house was in great distress, weeping and rocking. "The poor crazy man, lost in these woods. He

was as harmless as anything. I thought he was all right."

Dorothy sat down beside her, and, soothing her, began a series of quiet questions. "How long did you leave him?"

"An hour or more." She had been doing the supper dishes. Dorothy turned to the husband.

"What roads are there from here?"

"Only one for a mile. That goes from the front of the house."

The woman broke in. "If he'd taken that, I'd have seen him. He'd have gone by my window. He must have gone to the shore or the woods."

"There's no use waiting. He's only getting farther away from us," cried Tom. "Let's look around the house."

Our fisher friend had two lanterns and a kerosene light. With these, we began the search. The sand and rock around the house gave no sign of footprints, and we passed out in widening circles, meeting and calling without avail. A half hour's exploration left us just where we started. We had found nothing. Turning back, we met Dorothy at the door.

"I was afraid you would find nothing," she said. "I've just found out that he said one thing beside the sentence which he continually repeated. Once he said, 'The sea, the sea, the awful sea.' I believe he has gone to the shore."

Together, we went in that direction. Tom and the fisherman took one way, Dorothy and I the other. As we hastened on, the light of the lantern threw circles of hazy light on the black water and on the shore. Dorothy, in the depths of thought, walked on a little in advance, and, despite myself, my thoughts turned from the man I sought and the errand for which I sought him, and I gazed wholly at the round cheek shaded by a flying tress that escaped from the close veil, and at the erect figure, now stooping to look ahead, now rising and passing on in deep thought. The same thrill which had held me the first night came again, that binding call, that tightening chain. I lost myself in a dreamy exhilaration.

Suddenly, Dorothy stopped. "It's no use to go farther."

Obediently I turned, and we retraced our steps. Just below the house, we met Tom and the fisherman, returned from an equally unavailing search. We all four stood gazing out to sea where the Black Arrow lay, her lights the sole gemmed relief of the dark waters, save where her search-light blazed a widening path of changing silver before her. All at once I saw Dorothy raise her head with a quick breath.

"If he's on the shore, I know how we can find him, no matter what start he has."

CHAPTER III

We waited anxiously for her next words.

'The search-light of the Arrow will do it. We can run the launch along the coast twice as fast as a man can walk or run, and play the search-light of the yacht on the shore as we go."

Though simplicity itself, it was the only plan that promised success, and it took but little time to put it into operation. The fisherman volunteered as pilot, and while Tom went back in the launch to give instructions to the captain, we waited in the darkness of the little bay, holding our lights as beacons. The night, without a single star, but darkly showed the lapping waves and sighing pines which made the background of our tiny, rocky amphitheatre. Tom had not covered half the distance to the yacht, when we heard his hail, and the search-light swung at right angles, limning the launch speeding from the shore in a lane of light. We watched them till they reached the shadow of the side. There was a brief interval before we saw the launch returning down the silvery way, but, as she neared us, to our surprise we saw Tom was not there. In his stead came the first officer, who touched his cap, and said, " Mr.

Haldane will stay on the yacht and run the search-light, and has asked me to run the launch."

It was but the work of a moment to embark, and the boat headed out of the cove towards the north, the side agreed upon with Tom. Up in the prow stood the officer at the wheel, the fisherman pilot beside him. The engineer bent over his small engine in the centre, and in the stern sat Dorothy and I, peering into the space of light on the shore, where played the search-light. Bravely the little launch found her way forward, with the slight chug-chug of her engine the only sound. I could not rid myself of a feeling of unreality. Constantly we moved in light, while all else was in shadow. Before us was the shore, lighted as by a ghostly radiance, on either side was darkness, such darkness that we could barely distinguish the sky line of bluff and tree against the sky. We neither spoke nor moved, and the sailors forward scarce broke by a movement the silence, with its single sound rising above the monotony of the waves. Dark green of pine and cedar, lighter green of scrub oak, yellow gray of sand dune, soft brown warmth of massive boulder, curling white where splashing waves broke on the glistening pebbles of the shore, ragged stump and lofty maple — all were etherealized by the silver, shifting light. It was a night of enchantment, wherein I, taken up by a genie from my dusty tasks, had been

placed beside a fairy queen to behold the wonders of Eastern magic. Mile after mile rolled by with no result. Once we flashed our light on a startled fisherman lifting his lobster pots from his boat. Now and again we cast it on veranda of summer cottage, or on kitchen steps of farmhouse. Where we found men, we inquired for the object of our search, but it was all in vain, and at last I looked questioningly at Dorothy.

" He could not have come so far as this."

She shook her head. " No," she said regretfully. " We may as well turn. But we'll find him on the other shore. I feel certain he went to the sea." She gave a low order to the officer at the wheel. He raised a lantern thrice, and the search-light paused and reversed its way.

Back over the ground we passed, more swiftly this time than on our way up. Back to the cove where we started, we went, and from there we took our course southward along the shore. We had gone perhaps three miles, when the fisherman turned suddenly. " There's some one ahead there on the bluff."

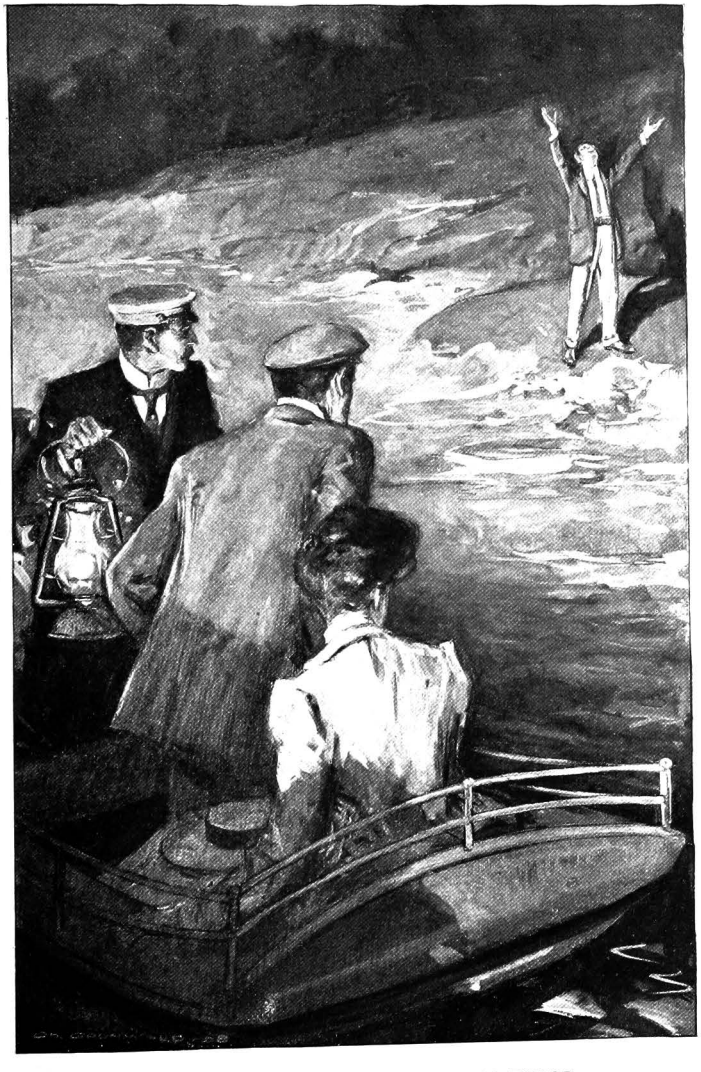
On swept the search-light, and outlined on a little knoll scarcely fifty yards from us stood a man, his hands stretched to heaven, and an expression of awful doubt and agony on his face. His lips moved, and a moaning cry came from them. Quickly the engineer threw the lever, and

the sound of the engine ceased. Out of the stillness, made yet more manifest by the stopping of the single accustomed sound, came the moan. "Disappeared, disappeared, disappeared. Nothing real, nothing real!" The man paid no attention to the light or to our boat. He looked beyond us, at the ocean, with an unseeing gaze.

"Hold the search-light there!" I called, in a low tone.

The officer raised his lantern twice, and the search-light stopped with the man in the centre of its field.

"Go on," I said, and the launch passed slowly on into the darkness. In hurried tones, I told Dorothy my plans. The fisherman and I would go ashore at the first point possible, come up from behind, and take him. It was quickly and easily done. The launch was brought close in shore, where the fisherman and I could wade in, and, as we stole quietly up behind the man, we could see that he had not moved. His hands were still raised on high. His lips still uttered the same moan. To my surprise, he offered no resistance, and came quietly and peaceably on board the launch and the yacht, where they put him to bed. Through the whole he never ceased his plaint. We looked for sign or letter that might show his identity, but there was nothing. However, we had won the second step. Next came the question, "Did he know



THE OFFICER RAISED HIS LANTERN TWICE.

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anything of the Alaska?" That was the last thing we discussed before turning in, but it was not the last thing in my thoughts as I fell asleep.

I woke up next morning among the familiar sounds of New York harbor, and came on deck to find Tom and Dorothy already there. Our visitor was safe. He was still in a heavy sleep.

The newspapers had come on board, and we found that the disappearance of the battleship was now known, but that there was as yet no news. In the excitement, the story of the message from the man had been wholly forgotten. Every newspaper was searching, but none had any clue. The Navy Department could give no information, though besieged by hundreds of the relatives and friends of the men on board. There was no clue as to the identity of the insane man. No paper reported any man as lost. I thought the matter over as we breakfasted. Finally Tom spoke.

"What's the next move, Jim?"

"To open the mouth of this man here," I answered. "I believe that he knows something; that a sudden shock drove him crazy, and our next move is to get him sane again."

"How will you do that?" queried Dorothy.

"I don't quite know," I answered hesitatingly. "But I think I had better try some physician. I want a bright, resourceful specialist."

"I know just the man," said Tom. "Forres-

ter; he's making a name fast. You know him, Dorothy?"

Dorothy nodded. "I don't think you can get a better man," she said, and so the next move was decided.

Our man awoke with no change from the night before, and with the same cry ever issuing from his lips. Tom went ashore, 'phoned Dr. Forrester, and arranged for attendants to remove the unfortunate to a private hospital. We preceded the carriage which was sent for him, in Tom's motor car.

We had waited perhaps five minutes in Dr. Forrester's office, when he entered. Clear-cut, with clean shaven mouth and searching eyes, he seemed the very man to solve our problem, if it could be solved. Briefly I told him the condition. Here was an unknown man, with absolutely no clue to his identity, who, we believed, possessed certain information which we needed, information of the utmost public importance. Our desire was to bring him back to a normal sanity and to learn his story. My tale done, Forrester looked questioningly at Tom.

"It's all right, Doctor, every bit of it," said Tom decisively. "I'm right behind this thing, and it's all perfectly straight. My sister and I were with Mr. Orrington when he found the man."

Forrester rose as Tom spoke the last words.

"That's all that is necessary. I shall be very glad to do what I can. If you'll excuse me now, I think that the patient has arrived. If you care to wait, I'll make a preliminary examination and let you know something of the result immediately."

For half an hour we waited anxiously for the verdict. Could Dr. Forrester find the missing spring which would roll the curtain from that brain, and enable it to give forth the information which might mean so much to me? Finally the door opened and he entered. We sprang up. He shook his head.

"A most trying and puzzling case. There seems to have been absolutely no injury to the brain, that can be recognized. None of the ordinary causes seem to have any share in the causation of this. I can do nothing for you to-day. I will try every means known to us in succession, and report to you day by day."

I felt baffled and seriously puzzled. It was most essential that I should get the story the moment the man recovered, if he did recover. It was equally essential that I should be free to hunt for new clues. Dorothy saw my anxiety.

"What is it, Mr. Orrington?" she questioned.

"Simply wondering how I could be in two places at the same time — here waiting and on the coast searching," I answered.

"I can settle that," said she. "I am going to

take a week of observing in Tom's research laboratory, and I'll be right in reach of a telephone every minute."

I objected in vain. Dorothy settled matters as she had settled them before. Tom and I were to go down the coast in the Black Arrow, returning every night to New York. She was to remain in the city.

I reported my findings to the paper, and still the chief said, "Wait! Don't write anything till you have more. Keep at it till you have something."

Morning after morning we telephoned the hospital and found no change. Day after day we spent in the Black Arrow, searching the coast, or in the motor car, skirting the shores. Evening after evening we spent in the library at the Haldanes', in endless discussion and consultation. The country was daily growing more and more alarmed. Rumors of war, of foreign fleets coming to attack our shores, filled the papers. Stories that the Alaska had been sent to the Pacific and had been seen in South American ports, that she had been seen in European waters, that she had struck a derelict and, badly disabled, was coming slowly in, were current. Every story run to earth proved a fake, and every day had a new story. The Government knew no more than any one else, and had been driven to a sphinx-like silence in self-defence. They had employed, as had the newspapers, every

known means of getting some news of the battleship, but all in vain.

The Alaska had disappeared on Monday or Tuesday of the first week in July. On Tuesday, we had found the man who was still gazing with unseeing eyes at the bare wall of the hospital room, still moaning the same cry. In six days he had never varied it but twice, and both those times he repeated his words in the cottage, " The sea, the awful sea."

Experiment after experiment had been tried without avail. Two consultations with the best alienists of the city had given Dr. Forrester no more light. Six days of searching the coast gave us not a single clue. On Monday night we reached the wharf about six, to find Dorothy waiting for us in the automobile. As we rode up town she rapidly explained the plan for the evening.

" They tried a high frequency current on the patient to-day," said Dorothy, " and it seemed to have the first effect. He stopped his plaint, went off to sleep, and woke silent for the first time. He did not drop back into his old condition until three hours later. They are going to try it again, as soon as we get there."

In one of Dr. Forrester's offices stood the high frequency apparatus. Before it sat the man, his eyes staring before him, his lips moving with his moaning cry. The doctor moved the cup-shaped

terminal above his head, adjusted the negatives, then nodded to the nurse at the switch. Slowly increasing in sound and speed went the motor. Hissing low and sibilantly shot the vibrant discharge. Five minutes passed as we gazed intently on the man in the chair, five more, and yet five more. His words came slowly, drowsily now. The harsh, clashing syllables became a low hum. He dropped off into sleep, breathing regularly, and the nurse threw off the switch.

"That regular sleep is a great gain," said Forrester. "He'll probably wake soon."

Silently we sat waiting. The clock ticked loudly. I fell at once to my constant occupation, watching Dorothy. She sat beside Tom, her eager face bent intently on the man, so intently that it would seem as if she must obtain the secret from his sleeping form. I had watched her expressive face for perhaps half an hour, Forrester had been out and returned, when the man stirred drowsily, put up his hand to his eyes, rubbed them, yawned and looked up.

"Where — where am I?" he said stumblingly. "Where's the boat?" he went on.

Forrester soothed him. "You're all right," he said. "You had an accident, but you're all right again."

The man sank back resignedly. "Well —" he began, and then a wave of remembrance flashed

across his face, a look of horror. We bent forward instinctively, hanging on his words.

"Where's the ship?" he cried. "What's happened to the Alaska? I saw her disappear. For God's sake tell me I didn't—" The red flush in his face grew deeper, his breath grew labored, and the watching physician, stepping beside his bared arm, brought something concealed in his hand against it once, twice. "Oh!" said the man shrinking. "What—" and then without another word he became unconscious.

I jumped up in excitement. "Couldn't you have,—" I began, but Forrester stopped me.

"I let him say all that was safe. Wait three hours, and he will probably be all right." He smiled somewhat exultantly. "The high frequency did it. Somehow it seems to rearrange the disordered parts by the electric flow."

"Why do you think the high frequency current did the work when all other methods failed?" asked Tom, as we descended the stairs.

Forrester pulled at his chin with an air of abstraction. "I don't really know," he answered frankly "The action is almost as if some electrical matter in the patient had been jarred by an electrical shock, and when the high frequency got control, it put things back into shape. Readjusted the parts, as it were. I don't believe at all that the shock of seeing the battleship go down

did the whole mischief. There was something else, something decidedly out of the common, mixed up in the case."

As we waited, I telephoned the office, and found the chief still there.

"Victory is in sight," I said. "Save as many columns as you can."

"You can have all you want," came back over the wire.

I asked for a desk, and began to write. I sketched the scene in the War Department, quoted the entire message from the man who was trying to stop all war, reviewed briefly what was known of the ship and of her disappearance, and told of our search down the coast, and of the finding of the man upstairs. Hour after hour went by as I wrote, and no call came. Dorothy and Tom sat reading. At last I brought my story down to the point where I wished to introduce the story of the man. There I stopped, and with idle pen sat and watched the beautiful head below the shaded light. If a man could only sit and see that "Picture of a woman reading" every night! I found myself figuring costs of living more zealously than ever before. A knock broke in on my thoughts.

"The patient has roused," said the nurse, "and the doctor would like to have you come."

Silently we passed through the bare corridors

and up the wide stairs. As we entered, the doctor sat beside the man on the narrow iron bed. I looked with eager inquiry at the face. It shone with normal intelligence. We had conquered again.

"I have just been telling Mr. Joslinn of your finding him, and of his being here," said Forrester. "Now he is ready to talk."

Dorothy greeted him and began the talk, while I wrote feverishly as Joslinn spoke in a low steady tone. Yes, he had gone out fishing. He had left a little shooting box, whither he had run down alone on Monday, and taken the knock-about out. The reason no one had known of his disappearance was that there was no one to care. He had no family and had retired from business, made little trips now and then, so his landlady and friends simply thought of him as away. I chafed at the time that he took in coming to the point. If he only reached it, his long description of his acts was all a part of the story. Then came the crisis:

"I was out ten or twelve miles from shore, just about sunset," said Joslinn, "when I saw a battleship coming up the coast. She was the only ship in sight, and she passed within a short distance of me, so near that I felt the last of her wake. I never saw a finer spectacle than that boat as she swept on." He paused.

"Go on, go on," I said anxiously.

"I knew it was the Alaska," he resumed, "because I had seen her lying for weeks below my apartment house in Riverside Drive. I watched her as she went on triumphant. It was the time of evening colors. Out across the water came the bugle call, which I had heard so often as I hung over the parapet of the Drive at nightfall. The marine guard and the crew stood mustered and facing aft. The flag fell a fluttering inch, and at the moment of its fall the band crashed into the full strain of the Star Spangled Banner. I stood with bared head, and my eyes filled as the great ship bore proudly on. Just as the last note of 'Oh long may it wave' came to me, like a bursting soap bubble, like a light cloud scattered by the wind, she disappeared without a sound! Not so much as the splash of a pebble in the water could I hear."

"Do you mean to say," cried Tom, in utter amazement, "that all those thousands of tons of armored steel, those great guns in their huge turrets, that terrific mass of metal, disappeared without a sound?"

"Absolutely without a sound," answered Joslinn gravely. "The Alaska disappeared with less commotion than a ring of tobacco smoke in the air. It utterly destroyed one's belief in the reality of anything in this world!"

Bewilderment, complete bewilderment, is the only word which can express the appearance of our little group, as we stood in the bare room. Even Forrester temporarily forgot his professional attitude in the absorbing interest of the tale. But a sigh from Joslinn recalled him.

"That's quite enough, Mr. Joslinn," he said hurriedly, and, at his nod of dismissal, we turned and went down the stairs.

"Nothing real, with a vengeance," remarked Tom, as we descended. "I can't imagine a more unearthly spectacle than that noiseless fading away. I'd have said mirage, if he hadn't heard the music, and if the ship hadn't actually disappeared. Hold on — if this is the work of man, is it possible that he has discovered some new substance which, placed in armored steel, causes it to disintegrate? If he got hold of such stuff, he might get it into armored steel, while it was making, and then after a certain time the whole thing might crumble away."

Tom had finished speaking as he stood in the door of the doctor's pleasant library.

Dorothy nodded as he closed. "That's not a bad idea, Tom. If anything could be found that would make steel crumble into dust, as a puff ball crumbles, it might of course be timed. But the whole thing dazes me. I want plenty of time to think it over."

"And I must get to work on my story," I said, trying to shake myself back into the world of reality again, and I rushed back to my desk.

Word for word I wrote the story, drew Joslinn's life history briefly, ran rapidly through the whole, and as Dorothy entered, "I know how I'll end," I exclaimed. "I'll prophesy the sinking of a British battleship this week."

She clapped her hands. "Good! good!" she cried. "You couldn't do better."

The last words of my story were the prophecy, and I hurried to the telephone. It was 1 A. M., but the chief himself answered. "I'll be there with the whole story in half an hour," I cried exultantly.

"Did he see her go down?" asked the chief eagerly.

"He did," I answered, and a long whistle came over the wires.

Through dark streets and light, through the roar of upper Broadway and the sombre silence of lower Broadway the motor ran, and I tried to calm my hurrying brain. The excitement which had possessed me every day of the week was still over me. The awful wonder of Joslinn's tale possessed me, until my longed-for beat seemed but a minor accident in the great happenings of the world. Up the elevator and through the door at a bound I passed, to the chief's office. He reached eagerly

from his chair for my copy. Page by page he read silently, as I sat handing them to him, and passing them from his hands to the boys running back and forth to the tubes. I could hear the crash of the presses, and I thought, strangely enough, of Pendennis and Warrington standing in Fleet Street and talking of the mightiest engine in the world, — the press. And after all, it was my story that was enlightening the world through those great presses below. I had solved the mystery that filled the newspapers from the Atlantic to the Pacific, nay more, that was discussed in the clubs of London and of Tokio, and my story would go through them all. I had won. Twice only I stopped in giving the copy to the chief, once to light my pipe, and once to look up Joslinn. I found him easily in the directory and in Bradstreet's. He was evidently a man of complete reliability.

The last page had gone down the tube, and the chief leaned back and meditatively took up his pipe.

" That's the best stuff for some years, Orrington," he said. " I guess you'd better take this as a permanent assignment. The prophecy was a long chance, but I guess we'll take it. Now go to bed."

I slept till ten, but once up, I read my story with huge approval in my early paper, and saw every-

body else reading it, as I went down town. My ears were filled with excited comment, and I examined with much glee the pained comments or total silence of our contemporaries. Especially did they condemn my prophecy. Reaching the office, I stopped on the first floor to get a late edition, among a general stare which I endeavored to bear modestly. At the elevator door, I paused. "Should I walk or ride? Walk it is," I decided. I wanted to stop in the hall outside the big office to look over my story again. As I sat in the hall window, I looked down. I could see a multitude before our bulletin board. None of the other papers had any crowd at all. As I looked, the throng went wild. A great roar rose, and the mass seethed and swayed as they gazed at the bulletin below me, but out of my sight. "Something's up," I said to myself, and bolted for the office. The reporters and editors were all clustered in one corner. As they saw me, a shout went up.

"Orrington, the British battleship Dreadnought, Number 8, has disappeared!"

CHAPTER IV

THE disappearance of His Britannic Majesty's battleship Dreadnought Number 8 sent the world wild. Two great nations had suffered severe blows, and lay in quivering expectation of the future. The chief of my paper smiled at me more amicably than ever before, as I entered the office the third day after the British battleship disappeared utterly in the channel.

"You'd better run that prophecy of yours about the French battleship to-day," he said, "and then keep out of the office. I don't want you to be in evidence. We've got too good a thing to take any chances. Work as hard as you want to on the assignment, but don't appear publicly."

I nodded acquiescence.

"By the way," he went on, "just how many people outside our own staff know of the second letter?"

"Seven," I answered. "The President, the Secretary of War, the two Haldanes and their cousin Mrs. Hartnell, Richard Regnier and John King. The former Secretary of the Navy did know, but he's dead. They are all pledged to

secrecy, and all have kept the story wholly to themselves."

"That's all," said the chief, and I left.

That night I sent in a prediction that a French battleship would sink within a week, and then spent the next few days going over the naval registers of the nations, and in correlating the mass of data concerning the navies of the world, which had been collected at the office by my request. I wanted to get all the information concerning the subject in hand that I could possibly obtain.

Immersed in masses of data, struggling with theory after theory that arose only to be rejected, I passed the week. Weary from my labors, one afternoon I left my work to go to the Haldanes to report progress. Tom and Dorothy were both immersed in a research Tom was carrying on, but they always had time to discuss the great question.

"I had a letter from Dick Regnier yesterday," said Dorothy, the first words over. "He says he is doing some work he has long wanted to do. He speaks of seeing John King at Cowes. John had his new yacht down there."

I followed every word intently. "Nothing at all about the loss of the Alaska or the Dreadnought Number 8?" I asked significantly.

"No," answered Dorothy.

" When was the letter mailed ? " I asked.

" Two days after the British ship went down," she answered. " But — " She stopped as Tom came in. I continued the conversation no farther.

As I left, Tom called after me. " I've been fooling with some phosphorescent paint," he said, " and I've run down a few interesting results. Don't you want to come up to the laboratory tomorrow morning about three o'clock ? We're going to run some tests between twelve midnight, and five in the morning, so as to have the least current and vibration that the city can give."

" I'll be glad to come," I answered instantly. No chance to be near Dorothy was ever to be refused.

The last revellers were just passing from the great white way, as I rode up town in a late surface car, which held, beside myself, only a few dull and sleepy workers. I was ahead of time and, as I came up near Riverside Drive, I jumped off the car and walked down towards the Drive and up by the river. Below me, in the full moonlight, lay an American fleet. The white sides and lofty turrets of the ships stood sharply outlined against the other bank. They seemed to personify the might of the nation resting there in huge impassive stolidity, fearful of nothing, ready for all. Yet as I remembered Joslinn's words, " vanished like a breaking soap bubble," spoken of the Alaska,

I shuddered at the helplessness of those floating forts, massive as they were. I looked at my watch in the moonlight. Quarter of three. I turned and made my way to the gray stone building on the height, which held the research laboratory.

I found Tom and Dorothy bending over a series of instruments under a big incandescent light. I watched them for a moment silently, then, as they rose from their task, I greeted them. Never had Dorothy looked more charming than in this setting of bare walls and severe tables, hooded instruments and wires, glass cases and shelves. Most girls whom I had seen at three o'clock in the morning, as they left a ballroom, were sorry spectacles, worn and dishevelled. Dorothy, in her trim working clothes, was as fresh as a summer's morn. Her first greeting over, she turned to her work again, adjusting a micrometer levelling screw.

" What are you doing ? " I asked idly.

" Adjusting a reflectoscope to detect the presence of radio-active waves. Tom is just going to have his assistant test the radium he is to use to-night, and has half a dozen reflectoscopes here," and she waved her hand at the bench before her, where half a dozen similar instruments were placed.

" They are a good deal like the old electroscopes, only infinitely more sensitive. You see that gold leaf," she pointed to two tiny ribbons of gold that hung limply together, " when a wave from a radio-

active source, such as radium, comes along, those ribbons fly apart. All our reflectoscopes are discharged now, but they'll be charged later."

As we spoke, Tom joined us. "I've sent Jones down-stairs for the radium in the safe, Dorothy," he said, and we three stood looking silently at the instruments before us. Through the open windows a fresh breeze fluttered in, and the soft night gave back but the slightest hum, a minimum of that sound that never ceases in the quietest hours of the great city. A church tower rang out — One, Two, Three, Four. Tom glanced at the chronometer. "Just right," he said, and looked back. A strange hush filled the air. Again a terrific force seemed to be pulling me towards Dorothy, but my eyes never turned from the reflectoscopes. Suddenly, as I gazed, the golden ribbons sprang to life, parted and stood stiffly separate.

"Good heavens!" cried Tom. "What did that? They were perfectly insulated. What did that, Dorothy? It must be Jones bringing the radium."

Dorothy's eyes glowed with excited interest. "I don't think it was Jones," she said eagerly. "I believe I know what it was, but anyway, let's go first and see where Jones is. There's absolutely nothing else in the laboratory that could have charged them, insulated as they were."

Down the stairs, flight after flight, four in all,

we trooped, and found Jones in an office on the first floor, seated in a chair before the safe, and looking disconsolately at its closed door. At Tom's voice, he rose.

"Professor, I've forgotten the combination again. I was sitting here trying to bring it to mind."

"Then you haven't taken the radium from the safe at all?" shouted Tom, in wild excitement.

"No," answered Jones, staring in amazement.

"Then how in blazes did those reflectoscopes get charged?"

Jones showed a sudden interest, "Have they got charged again?"

"Yes, have they been charged before?"

"Twice before, and I meant to speak to you about it, but it slipped my mind."

"When did it happen?" Dorothy broke in.

"I've got full particulars noted down, up-stairs," said Jones. "But how about the combination?"

"Never mind that," cried Tom. "Let me see your data."

Rapidly we ascended, the slower Jones following some way behind. In the laboratory the assistant turned to a littered desk and fumbled among a mass of papers. I could see that Dorothy was burning with impatience which I could not understand. Jones fumbled on, picking up paper after paper, peering at them blindly through his black-

rimmed spectacles. Tom seized my arm and walked me down the room impatiently.

"That man will drive me mad some day," he exclaimed. "He's the most accurate investigator and observer we ever had, but he keeps his desk in an unspeakable mess. He's got that data somewhere, and when he finds it, it will be correct, but he'll take perhaps an hour to find it. There, thank the Lord!" he remarked, as we turned back, "Dorothy's taking a hand."

Then came order from chaos, regularity from irregularity. Paper by paper was read, rejected and placed in its appropriate place, while Jones looked on, by no means displeased. Scarcely five minutes had passed, and the desk had assumed an order foreign to its nature. Ten minutes passed, and Dorothy turned. "It isn't here, Mr. Jones. Now think, where did you put it?"

Jones seized the knotty problem, bent his mind to it, struggled with it, emerged victorious. "I know," he said. "It's in the middle of that black, leather note-book in the third right-hand drawer."

Before he had finished, the note-book was in Dorothy's hand, was open, and a paper fluttered out into her lap. She picked it up and read, "July 3d, 19—. Reflectoscopes charged without apparent cause at 3.45-30 P. M.; July 11th, 19—. Reflectoscopes charged without apparent cause between 9.35 and 10.10 P. M."

"I thought so, I thought so," said Dorothy, jumping from her chair. "Tom, it's as straight as a die. Oh, Jim, it's a big step."

Tom looked as bewildered as poor Jones had seemed before the safe, or as he did now. I was thoroughly puzzled. The only thing that struck me forcibly was that Dorothy had called me by my first name. That was a big step surely, but evidently it was not the step she meant. Dorothy saw our bewilderment, and went on emphatically.

"You are stupid. I'd like to know how far you men would get in this world without women to find things out for you. What happened on July 3d in the afternoon, and what occurred sometime in the evening, our time, on July 11th?"

Tom and I stood still, looking at each other in bewilderment. Suddenly I saw a great light.

"Why, those were the times the Alaska and the Dreadnought Number 8 disappeared!" I shouted, in wildest excitement, "and just now."

"A French battleship went down," said Dorothy gravely. "And, —" she broke her sentence with a brief sob, "the poor wives and children."

We had turned instinctively to watch the golden ribbons that told of the sinking of the proud battleship, and of the death of hundreds, and I bowed my head as when the death angel comes close beside us in his flight. A moment's silence, and Tom turned to Jones.

"If you don't mind, Jones, I wish you would say nothing of this, no matter what you see or hear. We shall do no more to-night; you may go home."

With Jones' departure, we began another council. Tom drew out his pipe. "Dorothy, I know Jim and I need to smoke over this, do you mind?" and at her word we filled our pipes and invoked the help of that great aid to philosophers, tobacco. Dorothy was at the desk, her brow knotted in deep thought. Tom and I sat on a side bench against the wall, facing her. The dawn was coming in through the wide windows, and the city stirred as we talked.

"Your theory about the disintegrating steel of the battleships was evidently wrong, Tom," said Dorothy. "The wave that charged the reflectoscopes was a wave definitely projected from some definite place."

"Yes," said Tom musingly. "I was wrong. The man who is trying to stop all war must have some radio-active generator, some means of wave disturbance greater than anything we have yet attained. As a man starts a dynamo, and uses the electricity it furnishes to do work, so this man starts this unknown engine of destruction, and its waves destroy the ship."

"But how could he possibly cause a ship to vanish without a sound?" I asked.

"Of course, I'm not perfectly sure," answered

Dorothy. "But the moment the reflectoscopes were charged, I thought of a possible theory. His force, so powerful that it affects our reflectoscopes thousands of miles away, may be able to resolve the metal which makes up a battleship into its electrons, which would disappear as intangible gas."

"What are electrons?" I persisted. "I've heard of them, of course, but I'm not quite sure what they are."

"They're the very smallest division of matter, the infinitely small particles that make up the atom. If a man could find a way to break matter down to them, it's entirely possible that they would then go off as a gas. The waves the man sends out must be terrifically strong, anyway. One thing I don't see, though, is how he could break down organic matter. He could break down everything metallic, perhaps, but I don't see how he could break down wood — or human beings," she ended, with a shudder.

"Part of that's easy," said Tom, with a long whiff at his pipe. "Absolutely no wood for the last two years on any battleship. All nations have taken out what wood they had on their new ships and put in metal of some sort. I don't know about the action on man; it's not essential to settle that now."

The excitement of the moment had been so great,

standing in the midst of history making had been so poignant, that for the nonce my newspaper instinct had been lost in the stronger thrill. Now it suddenly awoke.

"Great Scott!" I cried. "I must get this to the paper instantly. Where's the telephone?"

Without a word, Tom pointed to the desk 'phone on his own desk, and I rushed over to it. Again and again I rang, with no response. "I can't get Central," I said.

Tom looked at the clock. "It's a branch exchange, but there's usually some one on our exchange board by now. I'll try."

Five more precious minutes were lost in his attempt to gain the board. At last he looked up. "No use, Jim."

I waited for no more, but grabbed my hat and ran down the long flights. Out across the square I sped and down the street. A blue bell showed on the corner in a small store. I ran to it — locked. Another block, and I had the same experience. At the third, a corner drug store, I met success. A yawning boy, sweeping out the store, gazed with open mouth as, hot and perspiring from my run, I hurried in and rushed to the booth. In a moment I had the office and the night editor's desk, had told him who I was, and began to dictate. "At one minute past four by our time (see what time Paris time is for that, and put it in) a

French battleship was sunk by the man who is to stop all war. Probably no one on board escaped." That last was a guess based on the experience of the past. The night editor's voice came back.

"Feel sure of this, Orrington?"

"Very sure," I said.

"I hate to run a thing like this on a chance."

"The chief said to run anything I sent, didn't he?"

"Yes," said the night editor.

"Well, rush it in then, before word comes."

"All right, if you insist," came back, and I hung up the 'phone, paid my fee, and departed.

I slept like a log until eleven, then rose to gather in the file of morning papers outside my door. My statement was in big headlines in my own paper. No other morning paper had a single word of it. I paused at the news-stand, as I went down to breakfast. Staring from every paper was the headline, "La Patrie Number 3 disappeared. French battleship follows the Alaska and the Dreadnought Number 8."

They had the news from France five hours after we had published it. Leisurely I ate my breakfast, the while I read the late news of my rivals, turning with especial interest to an editorial of my own paper, commenting on my work and reviewing the situation. "This should mean another big jump in circulation," I thought to myself,

"and another jump in salary, too." My salary was really getting up to a point where marriage was the only sensible thing for a man to do. I was to meet the Haldanes at three. I wondered how long an acquaintance should last before one could propose.

As I sipped my last cup of coffee, I saw two men in the dining-room door speaking to a waiter, who nodded, and led them my way. They were not the type of men who usually breakfasted in the restaurant. Just before me they stopped.

"Mr. Orrington?" said one inquiringly.

"I am James Orrington," I answered. The waiter had gone back to the kitchen. We were left alone in the rear of the dining-room. The man who had spoken opened his coat and showed a silver shield.

"We are secret service officials. You are under arrest."

CHAPTER V

"THIS is an outrage," I exclaimed indignantly. "Why should I be put under arrest?"

"On complaint of the French government as being concerned in the sinking of the French battleship La Patrie Number 3 off Brest this morning," replied the officer coolly. "As it is an international complaint, it came under the Federal courts, and we were empowered to make the arrest."

As he spoke, the whole thing flashed across me. My predictions of the destruction of the Dreadnought Number 8 and of La Patrie Number 3 had come true. I had told of the sinking at the very moment it occurred. My story had been spread over the world by cable and by wireless, and my arrest as an accomplice in the act was the result. I immediately felt more cheerful.

"The charge is too absurd to stand for a moment," I said. "I am entirely ready to go with you."

Back up-stairs with my two companions I went for my hat, and then I accompanied them to the Federal building. The inquiry was sharp and

searching. I admitted unhesitatingly that I had written the original account of the sinking of the Alaska and had prophesied the loss of the Dreadnought Number 8 and of La Patrie Number 3, also that I had given information of the sinking of the ship an hour or two before it had been known in France. On being questioned as to the source of my knowledge, I gave the account already published of the discovery of the man who saw the Alaska disappear, and spoke of the original letter sent by the man who intended to stop all war. Of the two essential factors, the discovery of the hidden letter and the charging of the reflectoscopes, I did not speak. These were valuable assets to me, as long as they were not made public. I could not throw them away. They meant higher salary, greater reputation, and these things meant a third, far more essential than either.

My story done, the judge sat for some moments without moving. Finally he spoke. "Frankly, Mr. Orrington, I cannot see that you have explained that inside information which enabled you to make your predictions, or tell of the loss of the La Patrie Number 3. You are the only person who seems to know anything of this. You offer no explanation of your knowledge. I do not see that I can do otherwise than commit you without bail."

Commit me without bail, keep me from follow-

ing out my assignment, keep me from seeing Dorothy! I thought rapidly. Of course there was a solution. I addressed the judge.

"Your honor, I gave this information in advance to the President and to the Secretary of War. If you will get either one of them on the telephone, they will corroborate my words."

The judge's attitude changed. "If that proves correct, I shall have no reason to detain you," he said, and, turning to a court officer, he ordered him to call up Washington, state the case to the President's private secretary, and ask the President for a statement.

"If you cannot get the President, get the Secretary of War," I broke in, and the judge said, "Very well."

I did not want to bring the office into this at all if I could help it. I was out playing a lone hand, with the whole responsibility resting on me, and I did not wish to ask for aid if I could possibly avoid it. I thought of the Haldanes, but decided to save them for a last resort. I could not bear to think of Dorothy in the courtroom. For a long half hour I waited, reading the morning papers, till the return of the messenger. He entered and walked before the bench.

"Your honor, the President has gone shooting in Virginia. He will not return for three days, and can only be seen on urgent official business. The

Secretary of War is dangerously ill and cannot be disturbed."

I remembered with a shock that I had seen the second fact in the newspapers. Of the first I had no knowledge. As he heard the news, the judge again shook his head. "I cannot release you on that mere statement, Mr. Orrington. Is there anything else you would like to have done?"

I gave way with an inward sigh. "Yes, telephone, if you will, to Professor Thomas Haldane at his laboratory, saying that I am under arrest here, and ask him to come and bring a lawyer."

Another weary period of waiting in the stifling heat passed before the door opened and Tom entered, accompanied by another man.

"Hello, old man. This is a shame," ejaculated Tom, as he came towards me. As his lawyer went up to the bench for an interview with the judge, he went on in a lower tone. "It is a shame, Jim, but I expected it."

"What?" I said in amazement.

"I expected it," repeated Tom. "It was the only logical outcome of your prophecies. You had too much inside information. People couldn't help suspecting you knew more than you had told. You were the only person on whom they could lay their hands. It's really not surprising at all that you are here. The only thing is, we've got to get you out of this right off."

He turned to the lawyer. "Can't you get the judge to take my word that I know all the circumstances, and can swear to Mr. Orrington's innocence?"

The lawyer went up to the bench and had a brief conversation with the judge. In a few moments he returned. "I hope I've solved the difficulty," said he. "The judge will accept your statement and Mr. Orrington's together. If you will explain the whole thing to him, he will see that it goes to no one save the Attorney General."

"You'd better do it," said Tom briefly.

"I suppose I'll have to," I replied. We adjourned to the judge's private office and told the whole story.

"I can understand," said the judge, as I finished, "that the story of the disappearance of the French battleship might be a lucky guess, once given the letter of which you speak, but the narrative as told by you seems almost too incredible to be admitted as evidence. Is this letter containing the second message still in your possession?"

"No," I said, and hesitated.

Tom broke in. "It's in my sister's hands, judge. She has had it ever since that first night. If you will wait I will get some radium from my laboratory and show the hidden message to you."

"It could not, then, disappear in the time which has elapsed?" queried the judge.

"No," answered Tom, decisively. "I have been experimenting with inks of that kind since I knew of this, and I should say unhesitatingly that it would still be there, although I've never happened to see it myself. I'll bring the things back at once. My motor is at the door."

By that time I had exhausted the news possibilities of the newspapers and was left to the real estate columns. "Which was better for a young couple, a small apartment in the city or a suburban home?" That was a question which made even the flamboyant advertisements of farthest Suburbia a matter of deep and abiding interest to me. I was half through the columns when, to my joy and surprise, the door opened, and Dorothy entered, followed by Tom and the lawyer. At her coming, the nodding court officer roused and became a model of soldierly deportment, the secret service men straightened in their chairs, the judge felt of his tie and rose hastily to offer a seat beside him with a courtly bow. Gracious and stately, Dorothy bowed to him, but she came to me.

"Oh, Jim," she said, in a low voice, "what a shame. I am so glad I was here to help."

I passed the gap from Miss Haldane to Dorothy at a bound. "Dorothy," I answered, "I'm so glad you were."

After that how little mattered the long weary afternoon. It took but a few minutes to arrange a

closet off the judge's room for the exhibition of the evidence. As Dorothy brought forth the letter which had been the forerunner of three mighty tragedies, the judge asked to see it, and read it curiously.

" And there is a second letter below this, Miss Haldane ? " he queried.

" Yes," answered Dorothy, " I have seen it."

" Have you had this in your possession ever since the night's meeting of which your brother and Mr. Orrington spoke ? " he asked again.

" It has been in my personal possession, or in a locked drawer of my own, in a locked safe in my own house," replied Dorothy. " I asked Mr. Orrington for it, as I intended to make some tests with my brother on the ink. We have, however, not used it as yet."

" You are ready to swear that this is the original letter ? "

" I am," said Dorothy calmly.

" Very well, then, let us go on with the test."

The letter was placed open as before, with the radium in its leaden case before it. Tom threw back the cover, as we sat in front of the table, and turned off the lights. I waited as before, beside Dorothy. If I had felt a tightening bond before, I felt one a thousand times stronger now. I had seen the dear girl beside me day in and day out since our first meeting, and never had she failed

to show the same fire of brilliant imagination, the same power of achievement. She had blazed my path to success in the weeks past. She had come to help me in my distress to-day. To gain her had become the whole end of my life. I looked into the darkness towards the letter, expecting each moment to see the curves and lines springing out luminous. Minute after minute passed. I could hear the ticking of the great clock, two rooms away, and the stifled roar of the summer afternoon in the great city, but the darkness held no light. No line appeared. Finally Tom spoke.

" How long an exposure did you give it last time, Dorothy ? "

" Two or three minutes," said she. He rose, turned on the lights and looked at his watch.

" Twelve minutes and no results. It's the same lot of radium, too. Look this over with me, will you, Dorothy ? "

They examined the apparatus carefully, turned off the light and tried again. No result. Tom went back into the other room and brought another sample of radium and used that. Still no result. At last he turned on the lights and spoke. " I can't understand, judge, but I cannot bring out the second letter."

The judge rose blinking. " According to your own statements," he said, " the letter has not been out of Miss Haldane's possession at all, and the

message once on there could not disappear. I fear I shall have to hold Mr. Orrington after all, till we can hear from the President."

My heart sank. Tom turned to me.

"Never you mind, Jim, we'll find the President for you, and have you out inside two days."

I smiled somewhat wearily. "You mustn't leave your work to do that, Tom."

Dorothy broke in. "We can't work alone. It needs all three of us to get anywhere, doesn't it, Tom?"

"Sure thing," said Tom sturdily, and they left me, but not before Dorothy had given me a word of comfort that was a stay in time of trouble.

I had often watched the gloomy walls of the prison as I passed, and wondered at the sensations of the prisoners when the gates closed behind them. My sensations as I drove into the courtyard and passed up the stairs, into the cell whose iron gate clanged shut behind me, were all poignant enough, but I could not be wholly downhearted. The whole thing seemed utterly absurd, yet as night came on, a deep gloom gradually settled over me. I could not see my way out. "Suppose the President and Secretary of War should both die, as had the last Secretary of the Navy!" I had no proof but the letter and the witnesses who saw the second message shine forth, and with that thought of witnesses came back the puzzling question, "Why

did not the second message appear?" It had been there. I had seen it with my own eyes. Dorothy, Mrs. Hartnell, John King, Regnier,—each and all had seen it and read it. Tom had declared it impossible for the writing to disappear. What could be the explanation? One thought kept coming, returning to my mind again and again, as I sat on the edge of my narrow cot, watching the barred moonlight streaming through the great window opposite my tier. The letter must have been changed. The letter which we examined in the judge's room could not be the same as that which had shown us the second message. Somewhere, somehow, an exchange must have been effected. It could have been no easy matter, either. Parchment of the kind used in all the letters was no easy thing to come by. It could by no means be bought in every stationer's store, nor could so complete a copy of the message be produced without much trouble and labor. Only one man would be likely to have such a copy ready at hand, without the second message, the man who was trying to stop all war. He might have an extra copy. But how could he know the letter was in Dorothy's hands? How could he get a chance to change the papers? Hour after hour, the long night through, I struggled with the question, and with the morning some crystallization came from the dull haze of my thoughts. There

was one time and place where a man might easily make an exchange. At Mrs. Hartnell's house in Washington, in the time which elapsed between the closing of the radium case and the turning on of the lights. It might be improbable, but it was the only solution I could find. Towards early morning I dropped off into a troubled sleep, and dreamed I was in court, where Regnier, as judge, was trying me, with John King as prosecuting attorney. I had just been condemned to disappear as had the Alaska, when Dorothy sailed through the courtroom in the Black Arrow's launch, with Tom at the wheel. She reached out her hand to me. I leaped in and escaped.

The late morning brought me a weary and exhausted waking. I had breakfast brought in from outside, sent word to the office that I would not be in for a few days, a by no means uncommon thing for me to do since I went on this assignment, and then I settled down to wait. I got enough waiting before eight o'clock that evening to last me the rest of my natural life, but at that hour came a warder with a short request to follow him to the office. There was Tom, good fellow, rushing towards me as I entered.

"You're a free man, Jim; I have the order for your release," he cried. "The President came to your rescue, like the trump he is. Hurry up now, and come to our house for a late dinner."

The clang of the gates behind me was as much music to my ears as it had been discord on my entrance. I had endured all the prison life that I wanted. I was willing to leave any writing up of such experiences to the yellow newspaper reporter.

Fifth Avenue never seemed so gay. New York never seemed so full of the wine of life as on that drive. It needed only Dorothy to make it complete, and I was speeding towards her as rapidly as the speed regulations would allow. As we went on, Tom told me the story of his search for the President. How he had found him off shooting in Virginia and how gladly he had given the word for my release.

Once in the hall of the Haldanes' house, Dorothy appeared at the head of the stairs. "Oh, Jim!" she cried. Thank Heaven she had forgotten all about Mr. Orrington now. "Oh, Jim, I'm so glad. It's all right now, isn't it?"

"It is," I said emphatically.

She hurried down, waving a blue foreign-looking sheet. "Oh, boys, I've got the best thing yet. We can tell just where 'the man' is now. I've just found out the way."

CHAPTER VI

"WHAT's the new find, Dorothy?" asked Tom, smiling at her eagerness.

"A letter from Carl Denckel," she replied.

"Impossible!" cried Tom. "The dear old boy died nine months ago."

"But this was written nearly a year ago," she rejoined. "Look at this envelope."

The big blue square inscribed in crabbed German script was filled with addresses. "See," said Dorothy. "He thought you were still at Columbia, so he addressed it to Columbia, America, forgetting New York. His 'u' was so much like an 'o' that they sent it to Colombia, South America. It travelled half over South America, and then they sent it up here. It went to three or four Columbias and Columbus's in different States. Finally some bright man sent it to the University, and they sent it over to you. It's for you all right."

"Read it, Dorothy. What does he say?"

"An Herrn Doktor Thomas Haldane.

"Lieber Professor: — Es geht mir an den tod —" She had gone thus far in the German, when she glanced up and saw my uncomprehending face. "The German too much for you?"

she asked. " I'll translate." She went on rapidly in English.

" To Doctor Thomas Haldane.

" Dear Professor:

" I am about to die. My physician tells me that I have less than a month left to work. I have just completed the apparatus which had engaged my attention exclusively for the last six years, — my wave-measuring machine. By means of this machine, any wave of a given intensity may be registered as regards its velocity and power."

" If you don't mind, I'd like to break in right there," I interrupted.

" Go on," said Tom.

" What kind of waves is he talking about? Is this some sort of a machine for measuring the tides down on the beach, or what is it? "

Tom laughed. " Not exactly," he said. " Denckel's machine is to measure waves like those of electrical energy. You know, don't you, that we believe wireless messages go from one station to another by means of ether waves, as they call them? "

I nodded.

" Well, Denckel means to measure waves of that kind, and waves that would come from an arc lamp or a dynamo or a piece of radium or anything like that. It's to measure the same sort of wave that charged the reflectoscopes, in short — See? "

"I do," I answered. "But—"

"Hold on till we finish the letter, Jim, and we'll go over it." I subsided and Dorothy went on.

"More than that, the distance from the point of generation of the wave, and the exact direction from which it comes, can be ascertained. It is, as you may see, the unique discovery of the past five years. In computing and making it, I have used some discoveries made by my late colleague, Professor Mingern. At his death, six years ago, he passed his work on to me. Now that my death approaches, I pass my work on to you. I have had many pupils in my long life, but none so worthy, none so able to carry on the work, as you, my dear friend and pupil. Farewell.

"CARL DENCKEL."

"He was as fine an old chap as ever I knew," said Tom, with deep feeling. "To think of his sending that to me. But what can have happened to it?"

Dorothy stood with a second sheet in her hand. "Here's something about it," she said. "Manuscripts sent under cover to same address, apparatus sent to New York via Hamburg-American line."

"Then the first thing to do is to find the apparatus," said Tom. "We can send a trailer after the manuscript, but we can't bank on getting it

I'll go down to the custom-house to-morrow morning. What a blow to science, if the whole thing were lost." "But," he went on suddenly, "isn't it extraordinary that this should come along just now? It helps us a whole lot."

"That is so," remarked Dorothy reflectively. "We ought to be able to tell just where 'the man' is every time."

"Once more I humbly confess my ignorance," I remarked, "but will you kindly enlighten me as to the way in which this is to help us in the search for the man?"

"Certainly," said Dorothy smiling. "We know that the reflectoscopes were charged by a wave which 'the man' sent out from some definite spot. Theoretically, that place might be anywhere in the world. Practically, it's probably somewhere not many miles from the ship he is destroying. But it is somewhere. His waves start from some definite point. There is some single point of generation. Now, with this machine, I ought to be able to find out just where the place is from which the wave starts, and not only within a hundred miles, but within a very brief space. Say, for instance, we had the machine in London, I could tell that 'the man' started his waves from Sandy Hook, and not from Hell Gate. That power of fixing the exact position of 'the man' gives us a tremendous step."

"Absolutely tremendous," I cried, and Tom chimed in, his eyes blazing with enthusiasm. "Here's to the successful working out of the new clue."

The announcement of dinner made rather an anti-climax to our discovery.

Tom laughed — "Well, we've got to eat, anyway. Come on."

No feast could equal a dinner with Dorothy as hostess. Never did her sweet face look more charming than when she presided at her own board. The talk soon became confined to technicalities, as Dorothy and Tom discussed the possibilities of the new apparatus, and I sat watching Dorothy's expressive face, as she talked of velocities and lengths, methods of generation and of control. But her absorption in her subject lasted but a brief time. Dinner over she turned to the piano. Then for two hours her music wafted me through many a lofty old Iberian turret.

As I walked to my rooms from the Haldanes', I revelled in every breath of the city air. The very noises of the street exhilarated me, as I strolled along, one of the crowd, and a free man. The unexpected setback of my arrest now safely over, I could attack the new clue with eagerness, and the early morning found all three of us at the Hamburg-American pier. No trace of any such invoice as Carl Denckel had described was

to be found in any of the office records. Book after book was searched for some account of the shipment, but in vain. As a last resort, we went out to the huge warehouses and searched them, up and down, back and forth. The morning passed in unavailing work. We swung up town to lunch, and then turned again to our task. The most unruly of warehouse men turned into an obedient slave at Dorothy's behest, and from one long bare shed to another we passed, escorted by a retinue of willing workers. We paused at length at the end of the pier, where the big doors looked out on the water, glowing beneath the sun. The burly Irishman who had been our escort from the first took off his cap and wiped his wet brow.

"I'm feared it's no use, mum," he said apologetically. "Shure and I'd go on fer hours huntin' fer you, if 'twas anny use, but it's niver a bit. We've been iverywhere that a machine loike thot could be."

With regret we gave up our futile search and retraced our steps towards the waiting car. We had seated ourselves and were watching the chauffeur, as he bent to crank the machine, when we heard a cry behind us. We turned and saw our guide running at full speed, his arms waving wildly. As he came near he shouted, "There's just wan chance. I remembered meself that a while ago, there was a lot of old unclaimed and seized

stuff sint to the appraiser's stores to be auctioned off. They've been havin' the sale the day and to-morrer at three. You might find it there."

"We'll try," said Tom, and we quickly ran across to the auction. As we stepped inside the room, we saw a motley assembly before us, — junk dealers, Jew peddlers, old clothes men, clerks, buyers of hardware houses, and a few reporters. A lot of fancy door bolts were being sold, and competition was running high. Foremost among the bidders was a woman who was evidently an old acquaintance of the auctioneer's. She was a queer compromise between the old and the new. On the tight brown wig of the conservative old Jewish matron was set askew a gay lacy hat, such as adorns the head of an East Side belle on a Tammany picnic. Her costume was in harmony with her head gear, consisting of a black skirt, and a flaming red waist trimmed with gorgeous gold embroidery. Her keen eyes twinkled at the badinage of the auctioneer, and her face showed an acumen hard to overcome. One by one the bidders withdrew, till only this woman and another Jew, an old man, were left. The price was mounting by cents, till the last limit of the woman's purse seemed reached, and she stopped bidding. In vain the auctioneer tried to rouse her to another bid. "Twenty-six, twenty-six. Absolutely thrown away at twenty-six. Come, Mrs. Rosnosky, give

me thirty. You can sell the lot for fifty. It's the chance of your life." Mrs. Rosnosky was not to be moved.

Again the auctioneer appealed in vain and, glancing around him, he reached down beside him and brought up a dusty broken mixture of wires and metals, of cones and cylinders. "Here, Mrs. Rosnosky! Make it thirty, and I'll throw this in."

As the eyes of my companions lighted on the mass, they started forward. Tom opened his mouth to bid, but, before the words could come from his lips, Mrs. Rosnosky had nodded decisively. Her competitor behind her had shaken his head, and the cry of "Sold to Mrs. Rosnosky at thirty" came through the air. Tom looked at Dorothy expressively, and she nodded back and whispered. "It looks as if it might be the machine. We'll get it from her."

Clearly Mrs. Rosnosky had obtained all she desired. Motioning to a boy in the rear, she stepped to the clerk's desk, paid her money, and started to remove her goods by the aid of her helper, paying no attention to the cries and movement about her. We followed the machine as it left the building, and stood on the opposite side of the street, as the boy and the woman filled an old express cart with their purchases.

Last of all they put in the medley of apparatus

on its wooden stand. As they placed it on the wagon, I lounged across the street. "Want to sell that?" I asked, pointing to the apparatus.

"Not for anything you want to pay, young man," came back the answer, to my surprise.

"I'll give you five dollars for it," I said.

Mrs. Rosnosky vouchsafed no reply to my offer, and mounted the seat.

Tom, who had heard the conversation, came hurrying across. "What do you want for it?" he asked.

"Five thousand dollars," replied Mrs. Rosnosky, clucking to her horse. Tom seized the bridle.

"Nonsense, woman. You got that for nothing, and you ask five thousand dollars. We're willing to give you a fair price, but that's robbery."

Mrs. Rosnosky looked at us keenly. "If you really want to talk business," she said, "say so. That's worth five thousand dollars." She seized a cylinder, with a sudden gesture, ripping it from its place. She pointed to a band of silvery metal round it. "That's platinum," she said. "There's five thousand dollars in that stuff for me. If you want it, you take it now or not at all. I know what platinum is worth."

Dorothy, who had crossed the street and stood beside us, broke in. "Take it, Tom," and Tom obeyed, with a nod.

He turned to the woman. "I haven't five thousand or five hundred dollars with me, but if you'll come up town, I'll get five thousand for you."

Mrs. Rosnosky would not part with the apparatus. Tom would not let it out of his sight. Either Tom had to mount the express wagon, or Mrs. Rosnosky had to come in the motor car. The latter was her choice, and Mrs. Rosnosky had the joy of sitting enthroned in a big blue motor, while we sped up town. The bank had long since been closed, and for swiftness and surety we decided to run up to Tom's club. There he was able to cash a check. Mrs. Rosnosky bore the gaze of the few men who lingered around the big club windows with a perfect and patronizing equanimity, and, her money in hand, finally descended from the car and returned to her East Side abode, a richer woman.

Tom heaved a sigh of relief as we started off again. "Thank heaven that red and gold nightmare with the wig is gone. She was a clever one, though. Who'd have thought of her recognizing platinum at a glance. I didn't, I confess, under all that dust. Poor old Denckel, his heart would break if he could see the machine now."

"Never mind, Tom," said Dorothy, as he gazed ruefully at the wreck before him. "I think we can get that together again. But how I wish we had the data in the manuscript!"

CHAPTER VII

THE wreck of the wave-measuring machine once installed in the laboratory, every energy was bent towards putting it into perfect working condition. A maddening task it was. Thrown hither and thither in the corners of warehouses, the missing parts and waving broken wires of the apparatus, as it first stood on the laboratory table, gave but little promise of final renovation. But the possibilities which it held entranced both Dorothy and Tom. Each day I came up to find them working. Each night they came back to the laboratory for a few more hours' work. The minds of all of us were turning more and more to our one fixed purpose, the discovery of the man who was trying to stop all war. The stir and tremor of the tumultuous world around, eager for news of the dread tragedies, seemed to be but an outside interest, compared with the tremendous possibilities of running down the individual at the bottom of this gigantic undertaking.

Gradually the chaos began to take on form. Cylinders of shining metal rose above the polish of the base. Revolving hemispheres and cones

resumed their original forms or were replaced by reproductions. Broken wires, replaced by new wire, found their connections. Jones was indefatigable. He was forever polishing, adjusting, scraping, and his mild blue eyes behind his big spectacles glowed with enthusiasm, as he sat gazing at the wave-measuring machine and working on one of its parts.

On the evening of the fourth day I came up to the laboratory about ten o'clock, and found Tom making some last adjustments, while Dorothy and Jones looked on.

"We think we have it," said Dorothy, as she greeted me. "This is the last connection."

"Now that you have it all set up, tell me how it works," I said. "You've been so tied up in the thing, that I've hardly heard a word from you in a week."

"Too bad," answered Dorothy, laughing. "We'll tell you enough about it to show you what to expect."

I leaned over curiously to examine the wave-measuring machine. It stood on a round table ten or twelve feet in diameter looking not unlike some fortressed town, such as rises on the banks of many a river in southern Europe. A belt of broad, shining metal a foot high encircled it as the gray walls of stone surround the town. Within the belt stood polished cones and hemispheres,

which rose for a height of some two feet, bringing to mind round towers of fortalice and dwelling within battlemented walls. Wires, ranged with mathematical preciseness, completed the comparison by their similarity to streets surmounted by telegraph wires. The surrounding belt seemed solid, but, as Jones threw the reflector of a powerful incandescent on it, I could see it was lined with millions of tiny seams. Tom threw a switch and, to my surprise, the belt began slowly to revolve about the central portion.

"What's that belt for?" I asked.

"That's where the wave of electrical energy enters. It goes into the interior of the machine through one of those tiny slits which you see. Once inside, the wave strikes a magnetic coil about a mirror, which swings when the energy acts upon it, and throws a beam of light down that scale." He pointed to the opposite wall.

There, extending from one side to the other of the room, some fifty feet in all, stretched a scale like a foot rule suddenly grown gigantic. Its space was covered with divisions, a big zero in the middle and numbers running up from zero into the hundreds of thousands and millions on either side. Just at the zero point rested a long narrow beam of light.

"You see that beam," Tom went on. "When the waves come into the machine, they go through

as I explained, the machine stops, and the light goes up or down the scale. The distance that it goes shows how far away the wave started. The slit through which the wave comes shows the exact direction from which it comes, and we can get that easily because the machine stops as the wave goes through. Then, by means of a certain amount of mathematics, we hope to be able to find just where a wave comes from. We can adjust the machine so that it will register anything from a wireless telegraph message through a radium discharge to the enormously powerful waves which 'the man' uses. We have it adjusted now for the waves which 'the man' uses in destroying battleships. We know something of them from the way in which they charged the reflectoscopes. That's the whole thing."

"One thing more," I said inquiringly. "If 'the man' destroys a battleship, does the machine stop and the beam of light run down the scale."

"Yes," answered Tom. "That's just what it does."

"All right," I said.

"Now, we'll start up," remarked Tom. "Turn off the lights, throw off the inner insulation," he commanded, turning to Jones, who obediently threw a couple of switches.

We were left in partial darkness. On the long

scale, on the opposite side of the room, the single line of light rested at the centre, illuminating the zero. There was a shaded incandescent in one corner, which threw no light on the black wall where stood the scale, but gave a dim radiance sufficient to reveal the belt of polished metal as it swiftly revolved about the mass within. Dorothy sat near the apparatus. Jones was puttering with something at one end of the scale, and Tom and I sat side by side, watching the whole scale. Suddenly the beam swept swiftly far up the scale, fluttered for a moment and rested on a point. The moving belt stopped with a slight click.

"That's it. There's another battleship gone," cried Tom, as we all hurried over to the scale. "Now we can tell just where he is doing his deadly work. 2, 340, 624. 1401" he read, scrutinizing with a microscope the scale at the point where the beam rested. "Here, Jones, turn on the lights. Bring me the logarithm tables, our table of constants, and Denckel's table of constants that we found under the middle cylinder."

Jones ran excitedly across the laboratory, returning with the needed things. Tom, Dorothy and Jones each sat down to figure while I watched Dorothy's nimble fingers, as they flew over the paper, filling sheet after sheet with computations. What different powers lay in those little hands. Abstruse calculations vied with bread making,

careful manipulations of delicate instruments with the steering wheel of her motor car. Last week we had eaten a dinner prepared wholly by her. This week she was working out one of the great triumphs of modern science. It seemed almost a shame to confine those talents in a single home — but yet — and the old train of thought started on its ever recurring cycle.

Suddenly Tom threw down his pen. "Beat you that time, old girl!" he said. Dorothy gave no heed, but figured on for a minute more. Then she, too, dropped her pen.

"Want my figures, Tom?" she asked.

"Not yet," answered Tom. "Wait for Jones. I'll go and get the maps, and we'll work the second step as soon as we have checked these figures."

Jones worked laboriously on, and Tom had gone and returned, bearing two huge portfolios, before his task was ended.

"Read off," said Tom, and a whole series of numerals came from Dorothy's lips, at each of which Jones nodded his head. As she ended she looked inquiringly at Tom.

"Right," said he. "Now reverse the beam to find the slit."

Jones brought a small scale, with lights mounted with flexible cords. He placed it across the beam, sighted through it as Tom threw off the lights, and, after a brief manipulation, threw a switch.

All turned to gaze at the belt. Through a single slit an almost geometric line of light shone forth.

"Beautiful! beautiful!" cried Tom; and Dorothy cried, "Oh, Jim! oh, Tom! we've got it."

My name came first to her hour of triumph. I had time to notice that, before the lights went on once more. Tom took a dozen hasty readings, and rapidly read them off. Another period of rapid computation followed, then one by one, Dorothy leading, they made a swift survey of maps. More and more anxious grew the trio as they went on. Map followed map, till Dorothy came to a final one, made her last measurement, and sat back in apparently complete bewilderment. Tom, by a different route, reached the same map and drew it from her, shaking his head vehemently, and Jones, laboring heavily along in the rear, finally stretched his hand for the same sheet.

"What have you got, Jones?" said Tom sharply.

"Tokio, Japan," said Jones. "What do you get?"

"Tokio, confound it!" said Tom.

Dorothy sat back in her chair and began to laugh at his disgusted tone. "Tom, you get excited too easily. How do you know that he may not be there!"

"I don't," growled Tom. "But I don't believe he's gone from Brest to Tokio in ten days, especially when he is to sink a German warship next."

"But there may be a German warship there," answered Dorothy.

"There isn't a first-class German battleship in Asiatic waters to-day," I broke in. "I'm following every one, and they've all been called in to home stations within a month, on some excuse of trial mobilization. They've all passed Suez."

Tom gave a long whistle. "We set the machine for those terrific waves that 'the man' uses. Of course somebody in Tokio might have them, but it's improbable. Let's start her up again."

Once more the lights were lowered, once more the belt resumed its revolution, as we watched. Scarcely a minute passed, and the machine stopped as before, with a click. The beam fluttered for a moment, and stopped apparently in the same place where it started.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" said Tom, as he hurried over to examine it. ".0001," he read off.

"Why, that's not outside New York. Don't figure it," said Dorothy. "Reverse the beam."

No sooner said than done, and a slit on the left sprang into light. Tom stood blankly, his hands deep in his pockets, as he gazed.

"Telephone Carrener in the Physical Labora-

tory up at U. C. N. Y." said Dorothy excitedly. " Ask him what he's doing now."

Tom jumped for the telephone, and a rapid-fire volley of calls and questions followed. As he hung up the receiver, he turned to us despairingly. " It was Carrener. He's just been making some radio-active experiments. The blamed machine registers every strong radio-active wave that's sent out anywhere in the world."

" Then all you've got to do is to adjust the apparatus till you get a new adjustment which will register ' the man's ' wave, isn't it ? " I asked.

" Yes," snapped Tom, " and it took Denckel three years to get that adjustment, and there's no data on how he did it. The rest was easy compared to this. If we only had that lost manuscript."

Jones sat huddled in a dejected heap. Dorothy's cheery face was downcast. " I must confess," she sighed, " that I'm afraid the apparatus isn't going to be of any immediate use to us without the manuscript."

" Any immediate use ! " sputtered Tom. " The old thing isn't worth a rap. It'll be registering every trolley car that goes by next. We've done every thing we know how to fix it, and it may be ten years before we find out what's the trouble. If we only had the Denckel manuscript."

" Yes, if we only had Denckel's work," said Dorothy wearily. " But we haven't. There's

no use doing anything more to-night. We'll go at it again in the morning."

The next two days brought no result. The wave-measuring machine would tell where the waves came from, but it would do nothing towards separating them. Day after day the reflectoscopes were watched for the expected sinking of the German ship, but without avail. Change after change was made in the Denckel apparatus, in the hope that the next alteration might be the right one, and that it might come in time to place the man, before the next battleship went down. Saturday afternoon, the last day of the week in which the man was to sink the German battleship, we sat as usual in the laboratory. The last adjustment had been as unsuccessful as the rest, and Tom and Dorothy sat in deep thought, while Jones was scraping the insulation from some wire at one side.

"If we only had that manuscript," said Tom, for the thousandth time, "but failing it, let's have another try. Jones, will you bring me that manuscript? I mean the old table of wave constants we made up last winter."

"That's it," remarked Dorothy. "His mind is so intent on the manuscript that he ordered it instead of soup the other day."

To that maelstrom of papers, his desk, Jones turned to find the needed table of constants, and,

after watching his efforts for a few minutes, Tom turned to Dorothy.

"Find it, will you, Dorothy? I imagine it's there."

Dorothy took command, as Tom and I sat in silence. Suddenly Dorothy's clear voice rang out. "Look, look!" and she came rushing across the room to us, holding aloft a big brown paper package, followed by Jones. "It's here, it's here! Mr. Jones had it in his desk, and forgot to give it to you."

Tom cast one look of scorn on the apologetic Jones, as he came slowly forward.

"You immortal id—" he began, but Dorothy put her hand over his mouth.

"Never mind, dear, it's here. Don't waste time. Open it, and see what it says."

Scarcely five minutes passed, when Tom cried, "Here it is," and read rapidly in German to his assistants. "We can have it in shape in an hour. There's just that one missing part that threw us completely off," he ended. He looked at his watch. "Five o'clock by London time, and sometime before twelve, if the man does as he said he would, the German battleship will be destroyed, if it's not gone already. We've got to hustle."

They had worked before eagerly. They worked feverishly now. Even my unskilled labor was

called in, and I held and scraped, polished and hammered to the best of my limited ability. Six o'clock, seven, eight, nine, one by one they passed. Tom's hour had grown to four, and reached almost to five, ere the last connection was made. He stood back and threw the switch that set the belt in motion. As the belt revolved, he glanced at the reflectoscope beside him. "No result there as yet," he said reflectively. "I guess we are safe." Ten had passed, eleven come and gone, still we waited. Tom had set his laboratory clock to London time, and as the first stroke of twelve struck he rose, stretching his arms. "First time he's mis—" As he spoke, the beam flashed from the zero well down the board, fluttered as before, and stood still while the belt stopped. We glanced at the reflectoscopes. Their golden ribbons had sprung apart and stood stiffly separate. Everything was at hand this time. Not a word was spoken, but the three bent to their task, figuring with intense rapidity. Tom and Dorothy finished together. Jones, just behind, ran his computing rule faster than he had ever done anything before in my presence. As they ended, Tom spoke. "The harbor —"

"Of Portsmouth, England," finished Dorothy, and the other two nodded gravely. I sat beside the telephone. We had made sure that an operator who knew that a call was coming sat at the branch

exchange, and without a second's delay I had the office and had told the news. I held the wire till the word came back. "O. K. Nobody has heard of it yet. If it is true, it is another big beat."

The real gravity of the situation did not come to me with full force, until I read the accounts in the morning papers. The first news that appeared of the sinking of His Germanic Majesty's first-class battleship, Kaiser Charlemagne, had come from me. The moment my story was received in the office, they had cabled their London correspondent in cipher. As soon as the other papers saw the story in our special edition, they had likewise rushed cables and wireless messages across. In consequence, a horde of correspondents had descended on Portsmouth before morning dawned. The night before there had lain in the harbor three German battleships, the Kaiser Charlemagne, the flagship, standing farthest out. In the morning there were but two. At first, half incredulous but yet fearful from the past, the officers of the German and of the English fleets refused to believe the story, but the watch on three ships had seen the lights of the German flagship disappear, and hasty search had proved the fact of her disappearance. By early morning they were forced to the conviction that the Kaiser Charlemagne had followed the Alaska, the Dreadnought Number 8 and La Patrie Number 3.

The cumulative effect of this last blow was tremendous. Before this the world had been hoping against hope, but now sudden, unreasoning panic took control. Up to this time the stock markets of the world had been buoyed up by the support of the great capitalists, and by the aid of the governments. But they had been growing steadily weaker and weaker, and the opening of the Exchange in London and of the Bourses on the continent saw stocks tumbling as never before. All America knew of the ruin abroad when our stock markets opened here, and a panic day unparalleled in our financial history began. After a sleepless night one operator remarked to another, as they walked up Wall Street, " The sinking of battleships is bad enough, but how much worse if he should begin to sink merchant vessels." The market quivered. The next man passed it on. " How terrible if ' the man ' should sink the transatlantic liners carrying gold." The market trembled. A brokerage house gave forth the tip. " The man who is stopping all war has declared that he will sink every transatlantic liner carrying gold, as he considers gold the sinews of war." The market shook to its very foundations. The papers heard the lying news, and published it in scare heads. The market broke utterly and went plunging to utter destruction. Industrials and railroads dropped sixty to two hundred points in

an hour. It was one wild scramble, which ended only when no one would buy at any price whatsoever. The day ended with meetings of ruined men sending delegates to the various governments, in a first general appeal for disarmament.

The morning of the second day after the sinking of the Kaiser Charlemagne showed practically but three things in the papers; the account of the panic the day before; futile discussions as to the identity and plans of the man who was trying to stop all war; and stories of deputations entreating the governments of the various powers to disarm. Apparently the last months had raised the numbers of the peace advocates by millions. The papers which had given a few columns a year to such propaganda now gave pages daily. Other factional differences became forgotten. The real need for protecting the lives and property of the nation, the fancied need of protecting commerce, was the theme of every orator at every meeting.

In one place only were these deputations received with no consideration. The German Kaiser, the War Lord, bearded by a single man, stripped of one of his proudest battleships, received all words regarding peace with utter contumely. All papers agreed in considering him the chief stumbling block in the way of a universal peace.

I was running over the morning papers when a card was brought to me. It was that of Ordway,

my old Washington friend, who, as private secretary to the Secretary of War, gave me the message!

"Hullo, Malachi, you old prophet of evil!" he remarked, with a cheerful grin, as he entered. "Give me an inside tip on the end of the world, will you? I'll use it to bear the market."

"My prophecy shop is closed to-day," I replied, in his own vein. "What brings you from Washington?"

"I came wholly to see you," he said seriously. "The President made me a special agent to get a line on what you were doing. The report that came to him from the Attorney General, the time they put you in jail, whetted his curiosity, so he sent me up here to see things for myself. Will you let me see Haldane's machine?"

"Gladly," I answered, and we started for the laboratory.

"Between ourselves," remarked Ordway, as we walked from the car, "and strictly not for publication, there's the deuce to pay with the Kaiser. He's mad as hops about his ship's going down in Portsmouth Harbor. He thinks it's an invidious distinction to have the Kaiser Charlemagne go down in a foreign port, when the other boats have gone down on their own shores. He'd declare war on England for sixpence. Things were strained enough with the commercial rivalry

of the last few years, but they're at breaking point now. It would take a mighty small straw to break that uneasy camel's back."

Tom and Dorothy were both in the laboratory, and they greeted Ordway cordially. The especial interest centred in the wave-measuring apparatus. The polished belt was revolving with regular precision, and the beam stood fixed at zero.

"I wish you could have been here and seen it work, when the Kaiser Charlemagne went down," said Dorothy.

"I wish I might," answered Ordway.

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when the click and the springing beam sent my heart into my mouth. Dorothy and Tom sprang for paper and their data. Ordway looked on in amazement.

"What's up, Orrington?" he asked. "What did the thing stop for?"

"Another ship has gone down," I answered; "but of what nation I know no more than you."

We waited silently till the computation was ended. Dorothy looked up with knotted brow. "I make it Portsmouth again. Do you, Tom?"

"So do I," said Tom. "There must be some mistake. Let's go over the figures again."

Again they obtained the same result, and an hour passed before they gave up searching for possible errors.

"What are you going to do about it, Orrington?" asked Ordway finally.

"I'm not going to do anything. It must be a mistake."

"Why not telephone your office and see if they've heard anything?"

"I did so. They heard nothing, but promised to telephone me as soon as they did."

We had sat for a couple of hours talking when the bell rang, and I answered. It was the office.

"You slipped up this time, Orrington," said the man at the other end. "A German battleship, the Kaiserin Luisa, has just disappeared off Portsmouth."

I passed the word to the eager trio.

"That means war between England and Germany," cried Ordway.

"I believe it does," I exclaimed, "and I'm going to take the first boat for London. Here's just the chance to run him down. He'll be sure to stay in one place now. His work will be in the British Channel."

"We'll come too," cried Dorothy, her eyes lighting at the prospect of the chase. "We'll bring along the wave-measuring machine, and run him down at close quarters, won't we, Tom?"

Tom nodded vigorously. "I'm with you. This man has simply obsessed me. I can't do any decent work till I've found him."

CHAPTER VIII

A FIERCE and sudden gust, which swelled to greater fury the flood of a howling gale, slammed the smoking-room door in my face, at the very moment that a quivering, throbbing heave from the great screw shook the mighty liner from stem to stern. Beaten back from the wall, as the ship rolled heavily, I pitched headlong, and went sliding and tumbling across the deck, clutching wildly at its edge for the netting of the rail. There, huddled against the side, I gasped until breath came, and then painfully traversed the wet and slippery deck on hands and knees. With a sudden effort I caught at the big brass handle, turned it and sprang within, accompanied by a drenching spray.

No contrast could have been greater than the sudden change from the wild drift of bitter wind and rain without to the bright warmth and quiet comfort of the smoking-room within. The habitués who commonly filled the alcoves and the centre were mainly absent, chained to their berths, for the gale which had lasted a full two days had swept from the room all but two quar-

tettes of bridge players, a placid Britisher in full dress in the centre, who was solacing himself with his invariable evening's occupation of Scotch and soda, and Tom, alone, in a corner alcove, his back against the wall, his feet sprawling along the cushions, and his pipe firmly clenched between his teeth. As I pushed my way by the square centre table of the alcove and sank down on the opposite cushions, he looked up, a thoughtful frown wrinkling his forehead.

"I've been thinking about our next move," he began, only to break off abruptly. "What on earth is the matter with you? You look as if you had been shipwrecked."

"This is merely the result," I answered, "of a perilous trip outside the smoking-room door for the purpose of taking a weather observation. As a matter of fact, you're responsible for it; I was driven to the act by your loquacity. We came up here at half past seven and you have spoken exactly three times since, each time to give an order. I really had to do something desperate to attract your attention."

"You did it," said Tom decisively. "Hurt in any way?"

"Oh, no," I answered. "Slight bruises, really nothing of any consequence at all."

Turned by the incident from his preoccupation, Tom rose, stretched himself thoroughly, and bent

to peer out of the rain-swept porthole. "This certainly is a nasty night," he said, as he resumed his original position. "She is rolling and pitching at a great rate. If it does not quit soon, this gale will send many a good ship to the bottom. We're safe enough here, but this weather must be pretty hard on the small boats."

As Tom refilled his pipe, I sat musing on the images his words had roused of the strange and sudden plunge of a mighty ship down, down to the very depths of the sea, of that wonderful world that lies below the waves, upon whose sandy floor lie many navies whose gallant ships rest in their last anchorage, whose thousands of rugged sailors are buried in their last sleep, whose burdened, hoarded wealth is kept forever idle by that great miser, the deep. As I mused, I spoke unconsciously. "I wonder how this storm would seem on the bottom of the sea."

"Quiet enough there, I presume," answered Tom, following, to my surprise, my spoken thought. "You know men who sought for sunken treasure ships have found things quite unmoved, after centuries have rolled away. Save for the covering of sand or silt, the boat which reaches the bottom may leave its bones for centuries unchanged."

My mind travelled a step farther, from normal shipwrecks to abnormal ones, and then turned

swiftly to those catastrophes which were never far from my mind, the beginning and in one sense the end of our mission, the battleships which disappeared. "If Dorothy's belief is correct, and the engines of destruction used by 'the man' affect metal only, then I suppose the crews of the Alaska and the rest went to the bottom."

"Undoubtedly," answered Tom laconically.

One by one, as in a naval review, the Alaska, the Dreadnought Number 8, La Patrie Number 3, the Kaiserin Luisa and the Kaiser Charlemagne imaged themselves upon the tablets of my brain, and with the last appeared a film of Portsmouth Harbor where the great engine of war anchored for the last time. I straightened up suddenly and leaned across to Tom, who now sat gazing peacefully at space.

"Tom," I exclaimed quietly, but earnestly, "I can tell you the next move. We'll send down to the bottom of the sea, and find out what record remains there of the work done by 'the man.'"

Quick as a flash Tom was all attention. "By George," he ejaculated, lowering his voice an instant later, as he saw that his exclamation had startled the bridge players opposite. "I believe that is the scheme. It ought not to take us very long, and we might get a bully clue from it. How shall we go about it?"

Swiftly I unfolded my plan, the ideas rushing

in upon me as I proceeded. "We land at Southampton, anyway, and it's only an hour's run down Southampton Water to Portsmouth. We won't go up to London at all; we'll go straight to Portsmouth and put up there. Then we'll find out just where the Kaiser Charlemagne or the Kaiserin Luisa stood, and get some divers to go down and report."

"That's a great idea," said Tom reflectively. "It resolves itself really into two parts, — finding out just exactly where one of the German ships stood, and getting down to the bottom there. It ought not to be so very difficult. I wonder nobody has thought of it. But if they had, I imagine, we should have heard of it, because the wireless newspaper on board is giving news of that kind pretty well in full. I'll tell you one thing though," he went on, "I wish Dorothy could have been with us instead of having to wait over a couple of boats to straighten out that Boy's Club business of hers. I'd like mighty well to get her opinion."

"Same here," I remarked forcefully.

Two days later saw us safely through the English Customs and rolling along over the little line which runs past old Clausentrum, relic of the days when Rome with bloody hand made peace in Britain, to Portsmouth and its harbor, with the Isle of Wight forming the foreground to the broad blue reaches of the Channel.

No greater hum of business could have been found all Britain over than in this seaport town. Jackies hurried to and fro with orders. Marines marched in companies to the wharves. Officers in service dress scurried by in motor cars. Tommies for once moved swiftly, without even a sidelong glance at the red-cheeked nurses in the Park. Everything gave the impression of activity, of preparation pushed to the last degree of haste. Whatever the prospects of war might be, Portsmouth was as busy as if war were on.

Though we reached Portsmouth at noon, it was more than two o'clock before we could secure rooms. Every hotel was crowded. Scarcely could we get a word from the busy clerks, and at last we were driven to lodgings. Throwing ourselves on the mercy of a cabman we wandered up and down, thoroughly thankful when we obtained some clean, decent rooms in a little house in the Portsea region.

Somewhat to our surprise, our quest proved difficult. We drove to the dockyard. "No admittance without special orders from the admiralty," stared us in the face, — an order made yet more effective by the gruff silence of the sentinels. We tried the harbor authorities and the Town Hall. Both had been turned into governmental bureaus, and both refused admittance on any terms. Vainly I pleaded my connection

with the press. That move only increased the suspicious reserve which surrounded us. Vainly we tried the soothing effect of the golden sovereign. We were rebuffed at every turn, till forced to temporary inaction, we gloomily turned back towards our lodgings.

"There's nothing doing so far as the authorities are concerned," remarked Tom, as we walked along. "We've got to try some other tack. If we could only find somebody here in town who wasn't an official, and yet who would know where either of those ships stood. None of the dealers in ships' stores would know, because the German boats would have received their stores at the wharf. By Jove, though, here's an idea." He brightened up. "If, by any lucky chance, they took on fuel here, we might get some light on the place from the coal man. Here's a chemist's shop, let's look up a directory."

We entered, and ran rapidly over the names of dealers in the business directory that was handed us. Dealer after dealer, whose name appeared therein, sold goods that belong with the sea. Ship chandlery, plumbing for yachts and vessels, calkers, sailmakers. Ah, here it was! Fuel supplied to vessels. There were some fifteen names on the list. I copied them off, and turned to the young man behind the counter. "Which of this list," I asked, "would be entirely capable of

coaling a large merchantman immediately?" The clerk ran his eye down the list. "This, and this, and this firm," he answered briefly, pointing at three.

The office before which we finally stopped looked peculiarly businesslike as we reconnoitred through its broad window. "Looks just like home," murmured Tom, as we gazed at the smart young man in dapper tweeds dictating to a stenographer whose pompadour, though like a single tree in a forest had it been on lower Broadway, yet seemed a rare exotic in this English seaport town. The Remington machine at one side, the brightness of the office furniture, the whole atmosphere, in short, was a stage picture, a sudden revival of the world we had left less than a week ago.

"He is," exclaimed Tom, without the slightest apparent connection. "See that life insurance calendar on the wall!"

A flaming, big-lettered, American calendar appeared at the end of his pointing finger.

"May as well play it boldly, anyway," murmured Tom, pushing open the door. "Pardon me," he said, as he entered. "We're Americans, and want to know something about coal."

Our dapper friend from behind the desk was on his feet in a moment, stepping towards me with outstretched hand. "Mr. Orrington, I'm

proud to see you here." I looked at him in complete surprise, while Tom looked on in equal amaze. The stenographer sitting behind her keys raised one hand to pat her hair, and stared in undisguised and interested wonder.

"I'm afraid you have the advantage of me," I remarked.

"That's not surprising," answered the young man with a smile. "You never saw me before, but look here."

I followed blindly around his desk, and waited while he pulled open a drawer at the side. "Exhibit Number one," he remarked as he took out an American illustrated weekly bearing an imprint of my features. It had appeared just after my second signed story came out.

"Oh," I remarked briefly and lucidly.

"Exhibit Number two," our friend went on, bringing to my astonished gaze a file of my own paper, whereupon my own stories showed their large familiar headlines at the top.

"That's what it is to be famous," said a laughing voice over my shoulder. "Now, I could travel the world over and never find anybody to recognize me."

"Then it's up to me to bring you into the limelight," I said, recovering. "This is Prof. Haldane, Mr. —?"

"Thompson, at your service," supplied the

manager. "From New York, sent over here to take charge of this end two years ago, likewise a sincere admirer of your work. Now, what can I do for you?"

I glanced at the stenographer meaningly.

"Say anything you please; it will go no farther, gentlemen. Let me introduce Mrs. Thompson."

We rose and bowed.

"We were both in the same office there," explained the manager, "and when they gave me this berth we decided to come together."

"I am over here on business," I began.

"Still after the man who is trying to stop all war?" interrupted Thompson.

"Yes," I answered. "What we want now is to find out just where the Kaiser Charlemagne or the Kaiserin Luisa went down. If we can find that, we shall get divers and go down to the bottom. As we could get no news at any of the government offices, we thought we would try to find some dealer here who might have supplied either of the boats with coal."

"Hit it first time trying," said Thompson, with a smile. "The Kaiser Charlemagne took on no liquid here, but the Kaiserin Luisa took a thousand barrels the day before she sunk." Tom let out a long whistle. "That's one reason why the Kaiserin Luisa, the Alaska, and the rest went down without a sound. Extraordinary that I never

thought of that before. They all burn hydrocarbons instead of coal, and the new hydrocarbon fuels would disappear in the water.

"Not a modern warship left to-day which doesn't burn liquid fuel, and most of it's ours," said Thompson enthusiastically. "They had to come to it, especially when we put out our new boiler attachment by which they could change their furnaces over to use liquids without changing any other part of the machinery."

Tom nodded appreciatively. "I see," he said. "Now as to the main question. How can we find out just where the Kaiserin Luisa went down?"

Thompson turned to his wife. "Lulu, will you telephone down and see if Cap'n McPherson is at the wharf. If he is, have them send him here at once."

A moment's low conversation in the telephone booth, and Mrs. Thompson returned. "He'll come right up," she said, and, turning to her machine, was soon pounding away at the keys with a practised hand.

"Remarkable woman, my wife," said Thompson, swelling with intense pride behind the shelter of his rolltop desk. "Took a medal for speed in an open competition. Smart as they make 'em in any deal. Never lets family relationships stand in the way of business. B. F. T. S. I call her, 'business from the start.'" He would have

gone on, but the door opened, and a huge grizzled sailor with an officer's cap in his hand lumped in. His massive bulk loomed above us for a moment, as Thompson motioned him to a chair.

"You put the liquid on board the Kaiserin Luisa the day before she disappeared, didn't you?" asked Thompson.

"Aye, sir," came the deep answer from the depths of the Captain's chest.

"Can you tell us just where she lay?" the manager went on.

Captain McPherson stirred uneasily as he looked at us. "I've heer'd said we were to say naught of that unfort'nit ship," he rumbled, turning half round to regard us with a fixed stare.

"That's all right, Cap'n," said Thompson. "These gentlemen have been sent here to investigate the matter, and you are to tell them all you know."

The Captain evidently felt misgivings, but the habit of obeying the orders of his superiors was not lightly to be broken. "If ye go straight out from the carstle till the Ry'al Jarge buoy's in line with three chimneys t'gether on the shore, ye'll have the spot where she lay when we were 'longside."

"Thank you, Cap'n, that's all," said Thompson.

Whereupon Captain McPherson rose and lumbered off as heavily as he had come.

"I've seen the castle," I remarked, "but how

on earth can I find the Royal George buoy, and what is it?"

"Queer thing that," said Thompson. "That's where the Royal George went down, with all on board, a hundred and thirty years or so ago. Now the Kaiserin Luisa disappears, in the same place. It's a red buoy right off Smithsea, you can't miss it."

"Right," said Tom. "So far so good. Now, you haven't a couple of divers in your desk drawer, have you?"

Thompson laughed. "Sure thing," he said. "At least I can send you to one, Joe Miggs, who has done more or less work for us. There's the address," he said, writing it on a card. "Come and see us before you go."

Exultantly we left the office, looking back through the window to see our compatriot waving farewell, while his wife, patting her pompadour with one hand, fluttered her handkerchief with the other. By dock and arsenal, through sounds of clanging furnaces and roar of forges, we passed to the street we sought and to the house, a house of mark which bore proudly upon its front a life-size picture of a diver completely apparisoned, with the words "J. Miggs, Diver," in very small letters below. The low, dark door gave entrance to a small shop, where a man, whistling cheerfully, was using a small soldering tool on a diver's helmet,

assisted by a boy clad in a ticking apron. The man was J. Miggs. Our friend Thompson's card brought a sudden stop to the cheerful whistle, and it was with a somewhat troubled face that J. Miggs rose, sending his young assistant from the room. The boy out, he locked both doors to the shop carefully, and returned to us.

"Mr. Thompson says that you want a diver," said Miggs, in a low voice. "I'd do anything I could for Mr. Thompson. Many's the good job he's got for me, but I can't, I absolutely can't. We've been forbidden to take any jobs at all. Notice was served on every diver in town, and me and my partner can't risk it."

"What's your regular rate for going down here in the harbor?" asked Tom.

"Two pounds a day, sir, for each of us. Four pounds for the two, if me and my partner work together."

"I'll give you ten pounds apiece for one night's work," said Tom.

The man wavered. "I've no money for a fortnight, sir, and I'd like to do it, but I dare not; the officers would put me out of business, and I've got to support my family."

Tom persisted. "I'll give you ten pounds for your family, and ten pounds more when you go down."

J. Miggs took thought, hesitated, wavered,

and at length capitulated. "I'll do it, sir," he said, "if you'll do one thing. If they take my diving rig away, will you agree to pay for a new one?"

"I will," said Tom, "and I'll leave the price of it with Mr. Thompson to-night."

His last scruples vanished, and J. Miggs was ours. "We've got two suits over at Brading Harbor, on the Isle of Wight, where we were working. If you'll tell me your place, we'll meet you to-night where you're staying, take you across in the motor boat, get the suits, and get back in time to have five or six hours to work, wherever you say. But it must be to-night. To-night's the last night without a moon."

Leaving J. Miggs our address, we went back to our lodgings, by way of Southsea Castle and the piers, to take a preliminary observation of the buoy of the "R'yal Jarge." We had swallowed a hasty supper, laid in a good store of clothing for the chill of night on the water, and were waiting patiently for the call, when there was a knock at the door. As it opened, there entered not J. Miggs, but his small boy helper, whom we had seen earlier.

"Miggs's been jugged," he cried breathlessly. "He and Joe Hines. The bobbies come and took 'em an hour ago. He told me, when he saw 'em comin', to run and tell you."

CHAPTER IX

THE engines of the motor boat slowed, gave a final chug, and stopped. "Brading Harbor," remarked our boy guide laconically, as he threw the anchor, and stepped to the stern to pull in the skiff that trailed after us. Before us lay the estuary of the Yar, its black water scarcely differentiated in color from the dark shores that rose above it. A huddle of buildings lifting on our left changed from blots of blackness into shadowy outlines, sprinkled here and there with light, as we rowed in. The lad pulled steadily, with but an occasional glance at the shore. The steady strokes of the oar slowed down, the blackness ahead seemed to rush towards us more swiftly, and the boat ran silently up on to the sand. I jumped out, the little anchor in my hand. We were at Brading Harbor.

Without a word, the boy pulled up the boat, dug the flukes of the anchor deep into the sand, and started off into the darkness.

"Come on, Tom," I said laughing. "This is an Arabian Night Expedition headed by one of the mutes of Haroun Al Raschid. Hustle up, or

we'll be left behind." About three hundred yards from our landing-place our guide suddenly disappeared; we came abruptly on the corner of a small brick building, and rounded it to find him working on the padlock of a broad, low door.

"Bee's here," remarked the boy, flinging the door open as we came up.

We stepped just inside and paused. The scratch of a fusee, the clatter of a lifted lantern, and the low room sprung into light.

A weird sight met our eyes. On a shelf three great diving helmets, with shining cyclopean eyes of heavy glass, reflected back the lantern's flame, and showed barred side windows looking like caged ear-muffs. On the shelf below three pair of huge shoes, with leaden soles, seemed ready for some giant's foot, rather than for the use of man. As the light shifted, the armor on the wall came into view; copper breastplate and twilled overalls, hosepipe and coils of safety line; a veritable museum of diving paraphernalia.

Tom turned to the boy. "You'll have to show us very carefully how to run the safety line and the air pump, while you're down."

"I don't go down," said the boy. "Heart's wike loike. Niver go down."

Tom and I stared at each other in consternation. With one accord we turned to the boy again.

"Who is going down?" I cried.

"Ayther of you thot loikes," responded the boy calmly.

"I'll be the one to go, Tom," I cried, "I've got to see it with my own eyes to write it up properly."

"Why can't we both go?" exclaimed Tom eagerly. "I don't want to be out of this."

The boy broke in. "Needs two men oop on rope and poomp."

"Oh pshaw!" said Tom disgustedly, "I don't see why I shouldn't be in this. I tell you what we'll do," he went on, his face brightening, "you go down first, and then come up, and I'll go down after you."

"All right," I said. "It's a go."

The boy had stood motionless while our discussion had gone on.

"How'll you get the stuff down?" I asked.

"Tike it on a barrow," he replied briefly, turning to bring a big wheelbarrow forward.

"Tike they two," he said, pointing to the two helmets on the right and the shoes below them. Tom and the lad took a helmet, and placed it on the barrow. I took a pair of shoes, and nearly dropped them. "Great Scott," I ejaculated, "they weigh a ton."

"Twinty pund," corrected the lad, without a smile. "You'll need it on bottom."

We loaded till the boy said "stop," then took

our burden to the skiff, carried it out to the boat, returned for a second load, shipped that, locked the door, and came down to the shore through the still night. We had neither seen nor heard any one during our visit.

As we started out of Brading Harbor, Tom remarked, " I'll take the wheel, boy, I've got the course. Get the armor on Mr. Orrington."

Never did I experience such a strange toilet. The dress of tan twill, interlined with sheet rubber, and the copper breastplate were clumsy and awkward enough. The shoes, twenty pounds to each foot, were no winged sandals of Mercury, but the huge helmet was worst of all. I seemed to be prisoned in a narrow cell and, despite myself, I could not wholly keep from wondering what would happen, if the air pipe should break, or the rope snap. The big lens, the bull's-eye that was the window of the front of the helmet, was left open till I went down, and I took in the salt air in huge breaths through the orifice, expanding my chest to its full capacity, while the lad silently plied his wrench on the nuts that clamped the helmet water-tight. At length the suit was adjusted, and the safety line tied securely round my waist. Then the boy spoke.

" Up one, down two. That's all ye need."

He jerked the rope in my hand once, twice, and then started forward to take the wheel. We had

been racing swiftly across, towards the lights of Portsmouth, as I made my diving toilet, but my thoughts, far swifter, had gone thousands of miles more. Suppose I never came up? If I did not, would Dorothy ever know? Had I made a mistake in not speaking before? Unavailing regret tore at me. Yet stronger than any regret or any weakness was my determination to fulfil my mission. Here was the next step. I must see what lay below the waves. As I sat there, in my cumbrous raiment, I tried to analyze my sensations. No danger I had heretofore encountered had ever caused me anything but a pleasing excitement. Why should this have a disquieting effect upon me, when Tom was so eager to go. The answer came like a flash, in Lord Bacon's words, " He that hath wife and children, hath given hostages to fortune." I had neither as yet, but my whole heart was set on having them. My feeling was not cowardly fear. Rather, it was instinctive regret at taking the chance of going and leaving Dorothy behind. I breathed easier when I had worked that out, and gradually, as my mind quieted, the uneasiness gave away to a sense of eager expectation. The shore lights were growing brighter, and Tom, leaving his place at the bow, came down the boat towards my seat in the stern.

" We're almost there, old man," he remarked

jubilantly. "The lad has the bearings. He'll put us over the exact spot, and then you can go overboard. It's a chance of a lifetime."

Just as he spoke, the lad turned. "Bee's there," he said, as he stopped the motor and threw out an anchor. The great coil of rope ran swiftly down for a considerable distance, and brought the boat up with a jerk. The boy came back towards us.

"Screw up t' bull's-eye now an' start t' poomp," he directed.

"Good luck, old man," said Tom, wringing my hand, as he started up the air pump.

"Same to you. I go with leaden steps," I remarked, waving my lead-soled shoe as I spoke.

Tom's hearty laugh was the last thing I heard. The bull's-eye shut, and I found myself breathing fast. To my surprise the air supply was ample, no trace of taint,—good, wholesome air. "Come," I said to myself. "This is not half bad." Aided by the boy, I clambered clumsily over the bow and went down the little ladder. As I entered the water, the weight of my suit went from me, I was borne up as if I were in swimming, but, as I sank slowly, I began to feel a strange earache, increasing in intensity till I thought I should cry out with the agony. My forehead above my eyes seemed clamped in a circlet of red hot iron, and the bells of a thousand church spires seemed ringing and

reverberating through my head. I could see dimly the black water about me, and I gripped the metal case of the electric lamp that I held in my hand, till I feared it would crush into fragments. All of a sudden I touched bottom, and the pain ceased. The relief was so great that for a moment or two I stood motionless, luxuriating in the respite and, as I started to go on, I realized that a slight depression was the only unusual bodily feeling left. I turned the switch of my lamp and looked about me. Nothing but clean, white sand, nothing to show which way I should turn. "Straight ahead is the best course," I decided, and I started forward, my boots and dress, heavy and dragging on the surface as they were, of but the slightest inconvenience here. Fortunately for me, the tide was no serious hindrance, and I was to windward of the boat. Before moving I turned my lantern in every direction. One thing was sure. There was no huge hulking shadow, such as a warship lying on the bottom would make. My lamp but dimly outlined the lane of light on the sand along which I started forward. Now that I was about my work, and had safely reached the bottom, the strangeness of the situation began to wear off. I went ahead twenty measured steps, casting my light in every direction. No result. I paced back the same number to keep my position even. Turned to the right, and repeated the

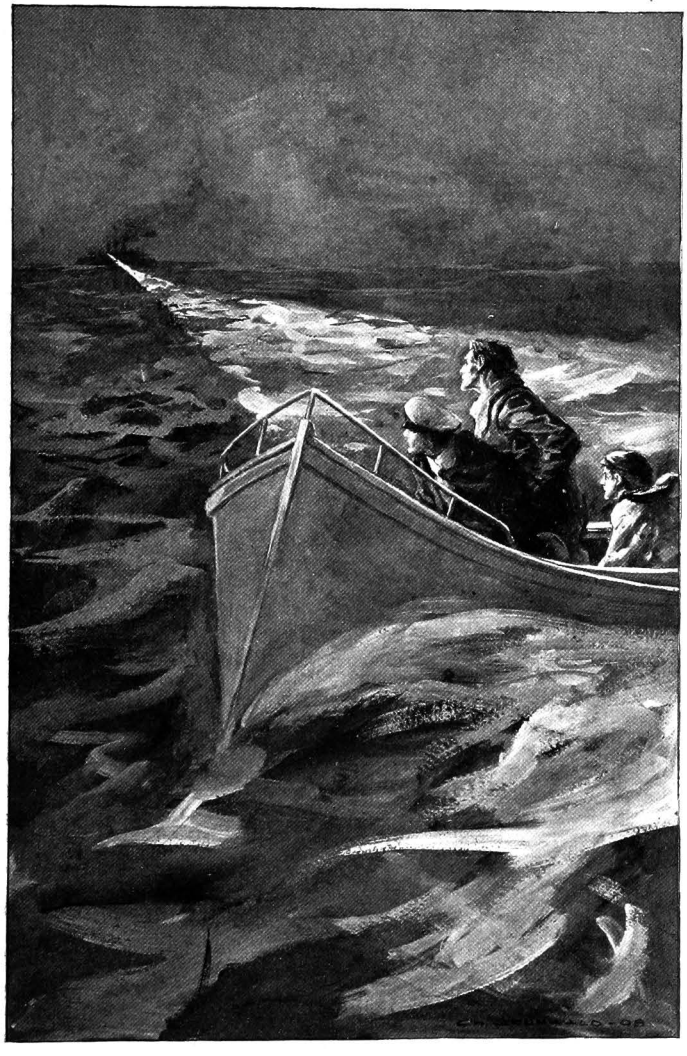
maneuver. Turned to the left, and did the same. No sign. Apparently the depths had remained untouched since the Royal George had been cleared from the harbor, back about 1840. Returned from my last trip, I turned off my lantern, to save its current, and stood in the darkness pondering. I did not want to go backward from the place where I was. Such a step would put me to leeward of the boat, and the lad had warned me against such a move, saying that it might be hard for me to make progress against the tide. There was nothing to be done save to try a further cast of fortune, so I pushed on twenty paces forward and started to count twenty more. Just as I was reaching the limit, the lantern gleam showed a shadow ahead of me. I hurried on till the object came into the full light. There, peacefully as if sleeping in his quiet bed at home, lay a midshipman in his blue uniform. He could not have been fifteen years of age. His golden hair, that a mother might often have kissed and caressed, swayed with the slight movement of the waters. His arm lay naturally beneath his head. As I knelt beside this childish victim of a dread mission, a wave of bitter rebellion passed over me. I cried out in very intensity of feeling. The sound reverberating through the helmet to my ears seemed a mighty roar, and, surprised into realization, I braced myself to my work and looked more closely. There

was something strange about the uniform, something different from that on the youngsters I had seen about German harbors. I studied the form before me for a minute before I saw what it was. At last I placed it. The buttons, the brass buttons were gone. I looked more narrowly. Not a glint of metal showed. Rising, I passed on, and entered on a city of the dead beneath the waves. Officer and sailor, steward and electrician lay in quiet rest. They lay all around me, as if sleeping on a battlefield, ready for the struggle of the morning. I had paced many steps before I reached the end. A thousand men lay there. Not one had even a shadow of surprise, of premonition of death, upon his brow. All lay as if ready for the reveille, the reveille which would not sound for them. It seemed no thing of earth. Rather a scene from some unearthly vision where I, a disembodied spirit, walked among the forgotten shells of other souls. I wakened with a start, as I came sharp up against a mass which gave way at my approach. I flashed my lamp upon it. A heap of crockery, broken and shattered, met my eye. One plate in ornate gold showed the double eagle and below "Kaiserin Luisa." That heap of broken crockery and this city of the dead were all that remained of as fine a battleship, of as magnificent a result of human ingenuity and skill, as ever sailed the seas. I must not linger, though,

I had work enough to do, to find all I could of the reasons for the catastrophe, and give place to Tom before the dawn could come. Just beside me lay an officer. I could not tell his rank, for all insignia had disappeared. I stooped to look for metal, when suddenly I felt myself rising steadily. I was being drawn to the surface, though I had given no signal. Indignantly I jerked the rope twice again and again. The men above paid no heed to my commands, and I mounted steadily upwards.

As I rose the same pains attacked me as when I descended, but the space through which they endured seemed far shorter. In reality but a brief interval elapsed before I was clambering up the little ladder, to find myself in the full glare of a powerful search-light, while the boat started off at full speed. I had no time to look around till the boy helped me to loosen the bull's-eye in the front of my helmet. Then I surveyed the scene.

The boat was going at her top speed, while Tom ran her straight out towards the Isle of Wight. The search-light of a warship a mile or more away was playing constantly on us as we sped along, and I could see a spot of darkness, probably a launch, leaving her side and starting in our direction. As I gazed, I breathed in long breaths of fresh air. I felt as if I had never known how good air, just plain air, was, before.



THE SEARCH - LIGHT OF A WARSHIP WAS PLAYING CONSTANTLY ON US.

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"Take off Mr. Orrington's armor, boy," ordered Tom sharply. "You all right, Jim?"

"Sure," I answered. "What are we in for?"

"I don't know yet," replied Tom, "but we'll know pretty soon. We can't get away in this old boat. We'll run as long as we can, though. Luckily they sent a launch, not a torpedo boat or a destroyer. The battleship landed us with their searchlight just a few minutes ago, and once they fixed it on us, I pulled you up. Get anything?"

"Yes," I replied, and fell back into silence, while the lad valeted me out of my diving suit. The launch was coming swiftly. It seemed to be moving two feet to our one.

"It's going to be a pretty close shave," I remarked, as I stood beside Tom, who had given the wheel to the boy.

"Yes, but I'm going to head straight for Ryder, and trust to luck," he said. We were well towards the shores of the Isle as the launch came near enough to hail.

"Stop or we shoot," came hurtling at us.

"No go," said Tom resignedly, as he stopped the engine, "and there's the shore not five hundred yards away."

Just as he spoke, the light vanished. The searchlight had gone out; something must have happened to the current. We could hear the

officer swear vigorously, as the launch came up.

Tom seized my arm. "To the dingy," he whispered. "Lad, if you keep your mouth shut, I'll straighten everything out," he murmured to the boy, as we scrambled to the stern.

"Roight, sor," said the boy briefly, as he sat phlegmatically beside the engine.

Tumbling into the dingy, I seized the oars and pulled swiftly towards the shore, as the launch came up on the opposite side. We could hear the hail as the officer came aboard, and his angry raging "Where are the other men?"

"Don't know," answered the boy.

The officer ran to the stern.

"They have the boat, follow them," he cried, but just as the launch turned, we struck the shore, and before the panting sailors could reach us, were off the beach and sheltered in a deep doorway. We heard their steps running by, as we stood crouched against the wall, but we dared not venture out till we had heard them returning after a futile chase. Once they were by, we started off into the country at a brisk pace.

The morning was well on as we came into Seaview, whence we had planned to come back to Portsmouth. I had finished my story, and Tom had meditated on it for an hour, while we strode sturdily on. As we stopped by a wayside brook to freshen our toilet, he spoke. "No metal?"

"Not a bit," I answered.

"Dorothy was right," said Tom. "The man who is trying to stop all war must have some terrific power which utterly destroys metal, causing it to change completely into some other form, and instantly disappear. How horrible to have that man at large. Jim, we've got to find him. That little middy you told me of would fire my purpose ten times over, if it were not ablaze already. There's one thing though, — do you suppose the British government knows what we know?"

"I have very little doubt they do," I answered, "I fully believe that somebody had been there before us. Everything points that way; the closing of all diving operations by the authorities, the chase of our boat and their persistent effort to capture us."

"You must be right, Jim," said Tom soberly. "They wouldn't want any one to know any more about conditions than they could help. You can't tell what little thing will start the fire of war just now. I guess we'd better keep this to ourselves for the present."

"Right you are," I answered, as we walked into Seaview.

We reached our rooms without the slightest difficulty, and went to bed after a hearty breakfast. We were awakened about twelve by a knock

at the door, and the call of a familiar voice. It was our friend Thompson, the manager. He closed the door carefully, as I admitted him. Then he turned and shook hands with me.

"Mr. Orrington," he said, "you're a great man, and a lucky one. J. Miggs and his boy came to see me this morning."

"Then they didn't keep them?" I cried.

"No," said Thompson laughing. "J. Miggs got out of prison, and his boy never got there. The lad waked up for once. The launch with all its crew went chasing you and, by the time they got back, the youngster was safe at the dock at Portsmouth, and the suits were stored. You'd better not see either of them though. They may be watched. If you'll give me the money, I'll pay him and it will be all right."

I paid the money, and we parted.

The moment Thompson closed the door, I rushed into Tom's room.

"Get up," I said energetically. "J. Miggs and his boy are both free; I've left the money for them, and it's time now for us to get out immediately. This town is none too healthy a location for us, now that business is out of the way."

Tom's loquaciousness had a habit of utterly disappearing, when a new scientific conception entered his head. As we drove to the station, he stopped the cab at a bookseller's, dashed in,

and returned with a package of books and papers. Once settled in the train, "Don't speak to me till I get through, if you don't mind," he said, "I've got something here I want to work out." He opened his new package, spread the books on the seat, and took up a block and his fountain pen. I scanned the titles of his books casually. "New Insulators for High Currents," "Control and Insulation of Radio-active Apparatus," "Yacht Construction," "Theory of Wood Working," "Caema, What It Has Done for Electricity," "Types of Sailing Vessels for the Past Twenty Years." "Queer mixture," I said to myself idly, and then I turned my attention to the scenery.

Tom was busy with his pocket rule, measuring and laying off diagrams, for three hours, until the outer edges of London began to appear. Looking up suddenly, he spoke, "Almost in, aren't we? Well, I'll put my work away, and we'll discuss our future plans for a few minutes."

As we rolled into Waterloo station, our discussion ended. "We'll go down somewhere on the Channel," said Tom, "set up the wave-measuring machine, and see what we can do with that. It's our best card, and we'll work there till Dorothy comes. We've got to hang round here till she arrives, anyway."

"We certainly have," said I, and my heart leaped exultantly at the thought of her coming.

CHAPTER X

ONCE more I sought the booking office at Euston.

"The Express has left Prince's Stage at Liverpool, sir. Will be here in about three hours now, sir," was the response to my question.

I turned away, dismissed my cab, and started out through the great pillars of the entrance. Three hours more and Dorothy would be here. Tom and I, with the wave-measuring machine, had taken the first boat, which happily left the evening after our interview with Ordway. Dorothy, following a week later, had arrived at Liverpool and was speeding to London. It had been hard to wait the week, filled as it had been with work, but it seemed as if these last hours would never go. Three hours to wait! I had paced the platform of Euston for two already, and I walked out now towards Bloomsbury, passing slowly through its pleasant squares, and watching the foliage behind their guarding railings. Before I knew it, I was in front of the British Museum, and I glanced at my watch. "As good a place to wait as any," I said to myself, and I crossed the courtyard and

started up the steps. Just then a man, hurrying out, slipped at the top of the stone steps and fell heavily, striking his head and lying unconscious where he fell. As it chanced, I was the only spectator, save for a single policeman, and, as I hurried forward, I noticed a Theta Sigma Rho fraternity pin on the waistcoat of the fallen man. I reached him first, the policeman coming up a second later, and together we raised the unconscious form and carried the man to an office, where we placed him on a lounge. I read the name on the reverse of his pin. "E. S. Hamerly." As he lay there, breathing heavily, I watched him with that interest which a fellow countryman, and far more than that, a member of one's own fraternity, in distress in a foreign land inspires. He was a clean-cut young fellow, neatly but very simply clad, and I noticed a red acid stain on his sleeve. I had time for no more, for the doctor came hurrying in.

"Only a scalp wound," he said, as he made his brief examination. "I can bring him round in a minute."

A vigorous application of cold water, an aromatic to his nose, and the patient sneezed and opened his eyes. As he gazed around I stepped forward.

"Mr. Hamerly," I said, "I'm Orrington of Columbia. I'm a Theta Sigma Rho man, myself,

as I see you are. You've had a nasty fall, but you're coming out all right. I'm going to see you home."

Hamerly smiled rather wanly. "I don't feel very energetic," he said. "I'd be mighty glad to have you. I'm in lodgings up on Half-Moon Street."

The doctor broke in. "That's enough talking for the present. Let me fix up your head and you can go all right."

While the doctor bandaged Hamerly's head, I signalled a hansom, and in a few minutes we were speeding off to Half-Moon Street.

Too much shaken up by his fall for conversation, Hamerly lay back against the cushions till we reached his lodgings, but he arrived there without seeming any worse for the trip. I saw him safely to bed, promised him an early visit, and left a call for a near-by doctor. Then I looked at my watch. Barely time to reach Dorothy's train. "To Euston. Rush!" I cried to the cabby, and away we sped. Just as the train came puffing in, I reached the platform, and there was Dorothy's dear head leaning from the window of her car. The black old station was transformed as she stepped lightly to the platform, followed by her maid. She came towards me with both hands outstretched. "Oh, Jim, it's good to see you. Where's Tom?"

"Down at Folkestone," I answered. "We'll join him there as soon as you've had a night's sleep."

"Why wait for that?" asked Dorothy energetically. "It's only twelve now. We can run down there after lunch. Where are our rooms?"

"At the Savoy," I said. "Suppose you send your maid up there with the luggage, and we go up in a hansom."

It took scarcely ten minutes to load the maid and the luggage in a four-wheeler and join Dorothy. As we swung out through the gates, she spoke with a long breath. "It seems good to be back in London again, even with war so near and with so much ahead of us. Now, tell me everything that's happened since you came over to London from Portsmouth. I got your letter at Queenstown telling about your experiences on the bottom of the sea. How I wish I could have been there. But never mind that now. Tell me all you've done in the last four days."

I settled down to my task. "Tom and I came over safely, as you already know, from our wire at Queenstown. We decided that 'the man' would be working in the Channel and, after some discussion, settled on Folkestone as the base from which to work the wave-measuring machine. We took the apparatus down there three days ago, got a big room and set it up. I chartered a yacht."

"What did you do that for?" interrupted Dorothy.

"So we could run down 'the man' if he was on the sea. We decided, coming over, that he was more likely to do his experimenting on water than on land, and Tom thinks he can get him from his experimental waves."

"I see," said Dorothy. "Go ahead."

"After chartering the yacht, I helped Tom all I could till last night, when I came up to London to meet you. Tom expects to get the machine set up to-day. That's about all."

"How is the war progressing?" asked Dorothy. "Everybody on board the liner was greatly afraid it would begin before we got across, and that we might be captured, but we reached Liverpool all right."

"Nothing's happened yet," I answered. "But I think it's coming, may come any minute. They say that the Emperor has refused to see visitors, since the Kaiserin Luisa went down, and I think the government expects war immediately. They're mobilizing rapidly on both sides."

"Then there certainly isn't a minute to lose in reaching Folkestone," said Dorothy decisively. "We'll just stop for lunch and go right down."

It was a day of wonders. Since the night when we had searched for Joslinn, Dorothy and I had never been alone together. The ride from the

station to the Savoy was a glorified pilgrimage; the lunch, as we sat looking out on the embankment bathed in sunshine, was a celestial repast, even the time of waiting in the hotel for Dorothy to condense her luggage, and make ready for the coming trip, was a delight. But best of all was the trip down to Folkestone. The guard smiled widely at the golden sovereign which saved the compartment for us, and the porter heaped attentions on us for his tip, but the value which they purchased was priceless. Two hours of speeding through the lovely English country in a tête-à-tête with my lady.

All too soon came Folkestone, and there beside the train was Tom. "I've got him," he whispered excitedly. "Hurry up, it's just time to take another reading."

As we bowled along through the old streets, Tom hurriedly told us of his experience. "He's experimenting constantly now," he said. "He sent off some waves yesterday afternoon about four o'clock, just after I got the apparatus going; sent off some more about ten, and some this morning, a little after nine. They're all from some place out in the Channel, over towards the French coast. They're from practically the same spot, so I got everything ready for an instant departure on our little boat, and the moment we hear from him again, we'll start straight for him."

Dorothy's eyes sparkled with excitement. "I'm so glad I got here. I wouldn't miss the end for anything."

"But you're not going with us on the yacht?" I said anxiously.

"Of course she's not," said Tom gruffly.

"Well, I am," said Dorothy, "and that's all there is about it."

Tom and I broke out in a jumble of incoherent objections, which Dorothy met with smiling assurance.

"You think 'the man' may be desperate if we find him," she said. "Well, I don't for a minute believe he will be. He's doing too big a thing to have anything against ordinary people, and if something did happen, you'd need me to protect you."

Ten minutes more of the drive brought ten minutes more of heated discussion, but it brought us no victory, and the end of the debate came when Tom gave in with the brotherly remark: "Well, go your own confounded, obstinate way then." To which Dorothy, as calm and smiling as a summer morn, responded simply, "I shall."

"Here's our place," said Tom, as we rattled up to a house which displayed on the stairs to the second story a sign, "Dancing Academy." "This was the only room we could get that had incandescent wiring, and that was long enough to hold the

scale of the Denckel apparatus," he explained to Dorothy, as we crossed the bare floor to the apparatus, standing in front of the chairs whereon was wont to repose the beauty and chivalry of Folkestone, at the " assemblies " advertised below.

" The machine is working beautifully. Look at this." He threw the switch, lighted the lamp, and lowered the green shade. The belt of metal had revolved scarcely a minute, and Tom was pulling down the last shade, as the beam fluttered and the machine stopped. " Just in time," said Dorothy delighted. " Hurry up, Tom." The old inherent passion of the chase was on us all, and in less than twenty minutes, the last figures made, Tom and Dorothy compared their work.

" Just there," said Tom, making a cross with his pencil on a point on the French coast some ten miles up from Boulogne. " Come on, don't waste a minute. It's practically a straight run across the channel."

Ten minutes brought us aboard the little yacht and ten minutes more saw us steaming out of the harbor. Dorothy was with us. Further discussion had been useless.

" Not much like the Black Arrow," I said, as we came out rather slowly into the Channel.

" You wait till she gets speeded up," said Tom. " She can go. I proved that yesterday."

He was right. Once out into the Channel, our

speed gradually increased, till we were making good progress. In an hour we sighted the French coast from the little bridge, and Tom, beside the skipper, was making for the cross on the chart.

"We'll sight her, if she hasn't gone directly away from us, inside of fifteen minutes," Tom said. Dorothy stood beside the wheel, ranging the whole horizon with her binoculars. She had thrown aside her hat, and a loosened tress of her hair flew lightly across my face as I stood beside her.

"Two sails off that point," she announced, in a few moments. "They look more like those tubs of French fishing-boats than a yacht," she said shortly. "Look at them, Jim."

She handed her glasses to me. The horizon, for five miles in any direction from the point where we were heading, showed but the two sails she had mentioned, and we headed directly for them. As we neared them, we saw that Dorothy's eyes had proved true. They were wide, clumsy, fishing craft, such as sail from the harbor of Boulogne, or hang in miniature as votive offerings before the altars of the cathedral. Undecked and open, they could hold no complicated apparatus. Their crews were sturdy, jerseyed fishermen, who stared in open-mouthed wonder, as our yacht came up alongside the first, and a volley of ques-

tions came in rapid French from the beautiful girl on the bridge.

With instinctive courtesy, every sailor on either boat removed his cap as she spoke, and the skipper gave answer in slow, deeply considered words. "No, we have seen no yacht except your own. Hein! is it not so?" he turned to the sailors.

A chorus of affirmatives came back. There had been no other vessel off this point save the Virginie of their own town, (an expressive thumb pointed to the other boat,) for four, five hours. They would surely have seen it if there had been. Tom consulted his chart and consulted our own skipper. It was the very spot. With knitted brow, he ordered the boat headed for the other fishermen. I pulled a half sovereign from my pocket.

"Buvez avec moi, mes garçons," I cried, and flung the coin into the fishing boat. A chorus of "Merci's" followed our path.

The other boat gave no better results. Its sailors had seen nothing, and we ran back to the point whence the waves had come, for a brief consultation. As we gazed on the quiet water just tinged with the last of the sunset, I spoke.

"There's only one explanation, if the wave-measuring machine is correct. He's down on the bottom in a submarine, or he was there when he sent off those waves."

"I'm afraid that's right, Jim," said Tom. "If I could only see down there. I wonder how deep it is." He called to the captain. "Take a sounding here, will you please?"

We hurried forward and watched the line overboard. Fathom after fathom disappeared up to the very end. "It's more than a hundred twenty fathom, sir," reported the captain.

"No use, then," said Tom. "Go right back to Folkestone. We'll have a couple more tries tomorrow," he went on. "But, frankly, I'm afraid it won't do any good. To find a submarine in these waters would be worse than finding a needle in a haystack."

It was a rather gloomy little party that landed at Folkestone that night. We had seemed so near success. Yet there was one alleviation. I had dreaded bringing Dorothy into danger, and I had had a most uneasy feeling as to the possible result of the meeting with a man inspired with so fixed and fearful a purpose as he whom we sought. Much as I desired the completion of my search, I could not therefore feel too complete a sense of regret at the two failures which we encountered on the Channel the next day. The man was in the Channel sea. He was experimenting with his apparatus daily under its waves. We could be sure of that, but he could not be reached, so we finally gave in and returned to London.

All the way up in the train, Dorothy sat in deep thought, but no result came from her meditations, and we returned to the Savoy without a ray of light as to our next move.

The next morning I woke with fresh courage. We had gained so much and so unexpectedly, that I felt convinced we must gain more. I found a table in the dining-room, and waited there for Tom and Dorothy, who shortly appeared. We breakfasted gaily. The morning sun shone brightly on the little park below the window and on the Thames, flowing slowly beyond. The peaceful scene looked little like war, but the papers before us were full of dire forebodings. The German Emperor still sulked. Movements of army corps and of battleships were the main part of their story. Despite the columns filled with martial things, every newspaper had at least one reference to the man who was trying to stop all war, and in more than one of them was a word as to the double danger of the fleets, who faced not only a foreign foe, but annihilation at the hands of this unseen destroyer. As we finished breakfast, Dorothy asked, "What are you boys going to do this morning?"

"I must go down to the city to get some money," I replied.

"I think I'll do the same," remarked Tom.

"We'll all go together, then," said Dorothy.

As we passed out into the courtyard, I raised my stick for a cab, but Dorothy stopped me. "Let's go down on top of a bus. I haven't been on one since I landed, and we're in no hurry."

Up the winding stair we climbed, and Tom and Dorothy found a seat beside the driver, while I was just behind. Down the Strand into Fleet Street we passed, through the crowds before the bulletins, watching anxiously for the message which should spell "War." At the top of Ludgate Hill, just by St. Paul's, came a block, one of those hopeless tangles which so completely ties up London traffic. Another bus stood just ahead, and I read off the big advertisements which lined its top. "Alhambra Radium Ballet," I read. "There's a scientific scheme for you people. What is a radium ballet, anyway?"

"Oh, they cover the girls' dresses with phosphorescent paint, and turn out the lights," said Tom. "It's an old idea. They had them ten years ago."

Dorothy turned suddenly. "That's what we want. It's the very thing we've been hunting for, the new clue. We've never run that down, at all."

Tom and I followed slowly her quick intuition. "What new clue?" I asked.

"The phosphorescent paint clue," answered Dorothy energetically. "'The man' wrote his first message with a peculiar type of phosphores-

cent ink. He must have been working with it for some time. If we can only find anybody that knows about that kind of paint, we might find out something more definite about him. It's the best clue we have, anyway."

"But how will you get hold of the people who know about phosphorescent paint?" said Tom. "I think you're in the blindest alley yet."

CHAPTER XI

As the horses started up, Dorothy refuted Tom's statement indignantly. " It isn't a blind alley. It's a good clue. We've run down practically every other line, and now we may as well try this. Everything points to the belief that 'the man' is a scientist of no slight ability. Whether he or some one else discovered his high power radio-active force, he must be a good man, or he wouldn't be able to use it. Now, it seems probable to me that he was working with phosphorescent ink simply because it was the nearest at hand. A man engaged in research like that would be likely to have at least one assistant. I propose to find that assistant."

" I'd like to see you do it," said Tom doubtingly. " How would you go to work ? "

" I'd advertise," said Dorothy.

" Advertise," remarked Tom. " Here's the way to do it, — ' Wanted, the assistant of the man who is trying to stop all war.' "

" Of course not, stupid," said Dorothy impatiently. " We'll advertise for a man who has had some experience in making phosphorescent ink.

That's the line to work on. Don't you see that since phosphorescent paint acts best with such energy as is given by radio-active substances, that he's likely to have been using it. There's such a close relation between phosphorescence and radio-activity, that a man might be working with both."

" But where will you advertise ? " I said. " How can you tell where the man has worked ? How can you tell his nationality ? I think he is an American, but no one can tell."

" If you mean Dick Regnier," exclaimed Dorothy, her eyes flashing, " you're wrong. I've known him for years, and I know he is not the man. It takes just a touch of insanity that Dick never had, to do what ' the man ' is doing. ' The man ' must be practically a monomaniac on the subject."

The bus stopped just as the Bank came in sight. Dorothy turned squarely in her seat and faced me. The seats around us happened to be empty. She looked at my somewhat guilty face and spoke emphatically.

" Jim Orrington, you don't believe me, but it isn't Dick Regnier."

" Now, Dorothy," I said, " look here. How did the letter get changed, unless it was done by Regnier that night at your cousin's ? "

" I don't know," she answered.

" Oh, come now," said Tom. " Drop it. Here's where we get off."

We had drawn our money and had started away, when I suddenly thought of the mail. I turned back to the little window and asked if there were any letters for us which had not been forwarded. A few moments brought a big package, among them three or four bulky envelopes from the office. Hailing a cab, we read busily as we drove back to the Savoy. One long typewritten report I read with especial care, and handed over to Dorothy when she had finished her mail. She looked at me reproachfully, as she read the title. "And you never mentioned this at all."

"I forgot all about it," I answered. "I started that inquiry the day I was in prison. The night I got out, the Denckel letter came, and we've been so busy ever since that I completely forgot this."

"Let's hear it," said Tom.

"Just read the condensed paragraph at the top," I said. "That tells the whole story. You can read the rest at your leisure." Dorothy began in her clear voice.

"Report on Mr. Richard Regnier. Richard Regnier is the son of the late Colonel Arthur Regnier of Savannah, Georgia. He was educated at private schools, and at Princeton. His residence is Savannah, but he has spent much time in England. He specialized in chemistry when in college, and published one paper after graduation on some rare chemical compounds. He has no regular

occupation, has an independent income, and spends most of his time in various philanthropic works. Is a member of several organizations, such as the Peace Society, the Tuberculosis League, etc., and of four clubs. Complete details given below. Every effort has been made to obtain his present address, but not even his bankers know it. The only fact concerning this which could be obtained was that he sailed for Europe on the Hamburg-American line, the last of June, this present year. For details of this part of the investigation, see below."

"Well, he didn't do it; he isn't doing it," said Dorothy emphatically.

"He's got the training for it," said Tom reflectively.

"I am sure," began Dorothy, but I broke in.

"What's the use of discussing it now. We can't get hold of Regnier, anyway, and your phosphorescent ink scheme seems the next scheme to try. Here we are at the Temple. Let's go to one of my friends who is a solicitor here, and see if we can use his office as headquarters to see the applicants." So the discussion ended.

A brief interview with my friend, and a short debate on the best method of procedure, brought us to certain conclusions. It was really just as possible that the man had worked in London as anywhere else, and we decided to advertise in six of

the morning papers for three days, asking for a man who had had some experience with phosphorescent inks, and who was capable of assisting in a scientific examination with regard to them. Applicants were to meet at the office of my friend in the Middle Temple at three o'clock on the afternoon of the third day.

For two days and a half I spent my time watching the preparations for war, and urging forward the search for Regnier. He had completely dropped out of sight. No information of his whereabouts could be obtained, and when we met at the Temple on the afternoon of the third day, we were no further ahead.

At three o'clock the waiting room of the office was full, and a long line of men extended down the stairs. The crowd bore striking witness to the horde of unemployed seeking for even the slightest chance of employment. My friend's clerks were in despair, but somehow they managed to evolve something like order from the mass, and one by one the applicants were admitted. After the first half dozen, we saw that they could be divided into three classes, — the men who knew nothing about science and nothing about any kind of ink, the men who knew something about ink but nothing about phosphorescent ink, and the men who had been laboratory assistants to various research followers. We divided them rapidly on this basis, and in an

hour had dismissed all the members of classes one and two. There were left some ten others who had been assistants in research laboratories. One by one we examined these. They had worked in various lines; the first five in chemical researches; the last five in various physical and engineering lines. Try as we might, we could get no information from any of them with regard to phosphorescent ink, or with regard to any unusual work with radio-active energy.

The last man had been dismissed and we had sat down to afternoon tea with my friend, when we heard words in the outer office. The door opened and a clerk entered. "There's one man more, sir," he said, "I told him he was too late, but he's quite insistent, sir. Will you care to see him?"

"Surely," I said, and we all went out into the outer office. A tall, bent man with drooping mustache stood by the window. His gaunt face and threadbare clothes, neatly brushed though they were, showed an evident lack of prosperity.

"I ventured to insist, sir," he said, addressing me, "as I have had quite a little experience in phosphorescent ink. It was only a year ago that I served in a laboratory where they were working with it, and while I was simply working under the direction of other people, I think I could work well along that line. I should try to do my best. I need a place."

This looked more like the real thing. I waved towards Tom. He could run this end of the inquiry better than I.

"What's your name?"

"George Swenton."

"Where did you have your experience?" questioned Tom.

"With Doctor Heidenmuller, in his private research laboratory," answered the man.

"What training have you had?"

"Not much. Only a few courses at the University of London. I was only the second assistant. I worked with Doctor Heidenmuller for four years, until he died six months ago. I have had no place since, sir."

"Did your employer do anything with radioactive work?"

"Yes, sir. He died that way. He was killed, paralysed, you might say, while working with something in a locked room. He always did that work in a locked room."

"What were the circumstances of his death?" asked Tom. The man hesitated and looked up somewhat fearfully.

"I don't see what that has to do with phosphorescent ink," he said. "The police went all into the matter of his death, and they said it was just death by paralysis." He stopped and shut his mouth hard. Dorothy broke in.

"Mr. Swenton, here is the state of affairs. I don't think my brother has made it quite plain. We are more interested in Dr. Heidenmuller's radio-active work than in his phosphorescent paint. We have no question of you at all. We do not want to know anything which is not entirely right for us to know, but we do want to know all you feel you can rightly tell us of his work. I feel sure that my brother will be ready to employ you, if you can show that you have done this, and that you can do what he wants."

The man's face cleared. Dorothy's words were more convincing than evidence. He reached into his pockets and drew forth a bunch of papers, which he gave to Tom, who rapidly ran through them.

"They're all right," he said, handing them back. "Now, if I give you twenty pounds a month for two months, will that be all right?"

A dull red rose in the man's face as his eyes lighted. "It will mean everything to me, sir," he said. "I've got a wife and a boy."

Tom drew out his purse. "Here's ten pounds to clinch the bargain," and he handed him two five pound notes.

"I appreciate that more than I can say," said the man, the tears welling up into his eyes with emotion. "Now, what did you want to know?"

"First about Dr. Heidenmuller's apparatus, and then about his death."

" I'm afraid I can't tell you much of the apparatus. I never even saw it. It was in an inner room to which the doctor had the only key. I never was in the room till the day we broke down the door and took him out dead. There was no apparatus there then. It must have been removed."

" How did the room look ? " asked Dorothy.

" It was all bare. Nothing in it at all, except the wooden chair where he sat and a wooden table."

" How about the walls and ceiling ? "

" They were all of wood."

" How about the locks on the door and windows ? "

" That was a funny thing. They were of wood, too, though he had an iron key."

" What did the doctor have in his pockets ? "

" Four five-pound notes, no change, and his watch was gone. There was nothing in his watch pocket except a watch crystal. His keys were gone, too, and only the ribbon of his watch was left lying on the floor."

" What did the doctors say about his death ? "

" Straight paralysis, they said. I had been away for three days. He was around the laboratory for one day after I left, and the day after that he must have died. They said death was instantaneous."

" Did the doctor leave any family ? "

" None."

" What became of his papers ? "

" Nobody knows. He had scarcely any friends. His property went to a niece in Germany, and she came over to hunt for papers, but she found none."

" What became of the other assistant ? "

" He went back to Germany. He knew nothing more than I did, however."

" Did the doctor have any friends who came to see him ? "

" Very few. There was one American who came to see him now and then. I never knew his name or where he came from, nor did I know the name of the two or three German friends he had."

" Anything else you think of ? " asked Tom.

" Nothing else, I'm afraid," answered Swenton.

Tom rose from his chair and paced up and down the room, his hands in his trousers pockets, his coat flung back. As he walked, Swenton, watching him, uttered an exclamation.

" I can tell you one thing about the American," he said. " He wore a peculiar shaped pin on his waistcoat, such as you wear on your fob."

Tom pulled up his fob with its Theta Sigma Rho pin. " There's a good clue, anyway," he said. " He must be a Theta Sigma Rho man."

We could get nothing more from Swenton and, after directing him to call at the Savoy the next morning, we sent him away happy. As we came down the narrow stairs and out of the old arched

passages of the Temple, Dorothy said, "Let's walk up the embankment to the hotel. We can think better that way."

We had gone half the distance, when she stopped. "Suppose we talk it over here," and we stopped beside the parapet to discuss the matter.

"As I make it out," said Tom, "Heidenmuller was the man who discovered the secret power which has been destroying the battleships, but he can't be 'the man,' because he died before the first ship went down. Therefore he must have passed it on to some one else who is using it, possibly the American who was his friend, or one of the Germans. It strikes me that the next thing to do is to find an American in London who wears a Theta Sigma Rho pin."

Instantly I startled the peaceful calm of the embankment, and made myself an object of suspicion to the neighboring bobby, by leaping in the air and clapping my hands together.

"Hamerly, by all that's holy!" I cried. "You remember that fellow I took home that night you arrived, Dorothy?"

She nodded, her eyes gleaming with interest.

"He's one of our men, and he had an acid stain on his coat. I'll wager you he's the American. I know where he lives and I've been up to see him once, but he was out. I'll go up there right after dinner."

"Do you think he's 'the man'?" asked Tom in excitement.

"I don't see how he could be," I said slowly. "'The man' was working in the Channel, when he was in the British Museum. But he's surely the next man to interview."

By eight I was in a hansom speeding towards Half-Moon Street. "Was Mr. Hamerly in?" He was, and met me half way down the stairs. "This is very good of you, Orrington," he said. "I was very sorry to miss your last call."

For some time we talked of various things, of college days, and of affairs at home. He had come over as a Rhodes scholar and, having a little money left him while at Oxford, had gone on in London after graduation, leading a life of quiet study. As we talked, I sized my companion up. "A trifle grave but, after all, a sane, sterling fellow," I decided, and I put my errand directly to him.

"You knew Dr. Heidenmuller," I said abruptly.

"Yes, poor old chap," he said calmly. "How did you happen to run across him?"

"I didn't know him personally," I said, "but I knew a man who did know him. One of our own men, Tom Haldane of Columbia, who is very greatly interested in the radio-active work which Dr. Heidenmuller was carrying on before his death, is here with me."

Hamerly's face filled with eagerness. His whole

attitude changed. "Did Haldane know what he was doing?" he asked breathlessly.

"Not exactly," I said.

"Well if he knows anything about it, I believe he knows one of the greatest things in modern science. The Doctor never told me anything about it, but I went into that room the day he was taken out dead, and ever since that time I've felt that he had found a force greater than anything yet obtained, and that that force killed him." He paused. "I've never said that to anybody else, but Haldane is the man of all others to know it, and you might tell him that from me. He may be able to use it somehow. I can't. I tried my best to get hold of some clue concerning it after Heidenmuller's death, but it was absolutely useless. Do you think that Haldane has enough data to work it out?"

"Frankly, I don't know," I said.

"Except for two things, I should have said the secret died with him," said Hamerly slowly.

I bent forward hanging on every word.

"I've never spoken of either, but," — he paused, "you know this man who is trying to stop all war?"

I nodded.

"Well, from the way Heidenmuller's room looked, and the way the things in his pockets were left, I've wondered if the man had not his secrets. Do you know," he said, leaning forward, "there

were no eyelets in his shoes when he was found. The crimps were in the leather of the strings, but the metal ends were gone. The lenses of his spectacles, without any mounting, were lying on the floor. The very filling of his teeth had gone. Why couldn't a battleship disappear into its elemental parts the same way, all its living contents paralyzed by the shock, dying instantly and sinking below the waves. I've wondered more than once if the government sent down divers in Portsmouth harbor and if they did, what they found."

There was just one thing to do. He held as much as we did of the secret. Perhaps he knew more. From beginning to end, I told the whole story of our search. As I went on, he grew more and more excited. As I paused towards the end, he broke in.

"The second thing fits in here, the reason why I believe the secret might not be lost. One day as I went into the laboratory, the Doctor's assistant told me that he was in the inner room, but had left word for me to wait. I was extremely curious for no one had ever entered that inner room to my knowledge. The door opened at last, and a tall, dark man, an American I should say, came out of that closed room with the doctor. I never saw him before or since. Now, is he the man who got the secret, and with it is trying to stop all war?"

I was out of my seat with excitement. "I be-

lieve he is. Would you know him if you saw his photograph? "

"Surely," said Hamerly.

I rose to go.

"Hold on," exclaimed Hamerly, "I haven't told you half yet."

"Go on," I said eagerly, seating myself once more.

"That first day, after I had made a rough examination, I started to go over the inner room inch by inch. At first I thought it was perfectly insulated by wood. There wasn't a piece of metal nor even a piece of glass in it. Where the incandescent light came down, hung a bit of twisted cord, without a scrap of metal remaining. There was a length of insulating cloth, minus the wire it covered, lying on the floor. I went round and round, hunting for metal, but I could find none. There was a wooden shutter over the window, and no glass. I closed the door and walked over every inch of the room, trying to find any break whatsoever in the insulation. The only thing I could find was a faint glimmer, where the wooden window shutter did not quite join. I went outside and studied the place from the street. There was no appearance of anything unusual on the wall of the laboratory, excepting that the boarded window of the wooden room looked out like a rectangular unseeing eye. I crossed to the sidewalk

just before the laboratory, and looked up and down the opposite wall. There was nothing unusual on that side, save two square places, side by side on the painted wall, which looked fresher than the wall around. I examined them more carefully, crossed and recrossed. The two spots were almost exactly opposite the lower end of the shuttered window where I had seen a slight chink of light, the only place where the insulation of wood was broken. I went up the stairs of the house opposite. It was a little tea shop. A wooden sign leaned against the wall beside the door. I picked it up. The screw holes and the whiter paint where the hinges had lain showed clear, but there was no metal about it. The proprietress bustled up to take my order and, as she saw me looking at the sign, broke into voluble explanation. 'I should have put the sign back in its place, sir, but fairly didn't dare to. It was a week come Tuesday when it fell. It's God's own mercy there wasn't somebody killed, sir. And the strangest thing, too. I couldn't find sight nor smell of the hinges and the rod where it hung. It must have pulled out of the wall, and somebody have picked up the iron, before I could get down, sir. Now isn't that strange, sir?'

"It had fallen the day that Heidenmuller died.

"I went back into the laboratory and hunted over every square inch of it, but I found nothing.

I stood there puzzling. If there had been some power that had killed Heidenmuller, there must have been some material substance in which it was kept. I had made the most careful inquiries about the things on his person and in the room. No one could tell me anything. Swenton and Griegen, the two assistants, were neither of them there, but the first one who had entered the room when the doctor's body was found was a sharp-faced lad who acted as janitor. I had questioned him thoroughly, as I thought, but I resolved to see if he did not know more. I went to him again, and a lucky inspiration came to me. Holding a sovereign in my hand I remarked casually, 'If there is any little personal memento of the doctor left, I should like very much to have it.' The narrow eyes of the lad gleamed. He thrust his hand into his pocket, and drew out what was apparently a leather cigarette case, snatched the sovereign, and handed me the case. 'Found h'it h'on the floor, h'after we took 'im h'out,' he mumbled. 'H'it's the h'only think was there.'"

Hamerly rose as he spoke and walked to his desk. I followed, my heart pulsating with great leaps. He took from a drawer what seemed to be a pigskin cigarette case, cut in half. Hamerly held the two sections out on his hand. At the top was a queerly constructed valve, — the case was lined with a black substance that looked like rubber.

" I believe," said Hamerly gravely, " that in this case there was some terrifically powerful substance, which killed Heidenmuller and destroyed all the metal in the wooden room, by escaping through the accidentally opened valve. I believe the man who is trying to stop all war uses the same dread agent. I believe, once the substance escapes and does its work, that it turns to a harmless gas, as hydrogen, once it has been exploded with oxygen, forms harmless water, or as the carbon of coal, which has blazed when united with the oxygen of the air becomes, after that union, inert carbon dioxide. You know, now, all I know. I've done all I could with it," he ended, " Take it to Haldane."

Dazed with the story, I could only thank him and take the case. We parted with a word of good will, and assurance of secrecy on his side.

CHAPTER XII

I THREW up my curtain next morning to find London settling down into a sea of fog. Already the Thames was wholly hidden, and the water side of the embankment showed only faint, twinkling lights, just on the point of complete extinguishment. The caped policeman, the hurrying butcher's boy, the laborers and the charwomen passing through the garden below, had all completely lost their individuality and became, in place of common London types, misty twentieth century Niobes. But dismal though it was without, my spirits were cheerful enough within as I started down to meet Tom and Dorothy.

We were half through breakfast when Hamerly's card was brought in, to be followed a few moments later by the man himself. I looked with delighted interest at the involuntary start that he gave when he met Dorothy. How I wish I might rightly describe her as she stood there, lighting by her very presence the gray interior of the dining-room, shrouded as it was by the "London particular." Everything else was gloom, save in the circle where Dorothy gave the radiance of her presence.

Hamerly's silent tribute was no more than she exacted from all who met her. Again and again I marvelled at my audacity in believing I might have this incarnation of youth, of power, and beauty for my own.

Such thoughts raced through my head as I sat watching the swift interchange of question and answer between Tom, Dorothy and Hamerly. In response to their inquiries, Hamerly related the story he had told me the day before, and as he ended, asked, " What are you going to do next? How are you planning to use your man Swenton? "

Dorothy answered for Tom and myself. " We are going straight to Dr. Heidenmuller's laboratory, taking Swenton along. I want to have the whole scene before my eyes to see what can be made out of it. We should be very glad to have you come with us, Mr. Hamerly."

Tom bent towards me with a look of mock anguish on his brow. " How I had hoped for a peaceful Sunday morning," he said, in a low aside, " and now we've got to plunge out into a nasty fog, and chase all over this benighted city. Never mind, I might have known. I never can have my own way."

Despite his plaint, Tom was the first one ready, as, clothed in raincoat and slouch hat, our little party gathered under the shelter of the glass awning inside the court.

The massive dignity of the carriage porter, shrouded in a white glistening rubber coat, loomed bulkier than ever, as, with an elephantine grace, he whistled shrilly twice. Out of a dim background two hansoms dashed into the circle of light where the arcs of the entrance fought bravely against the encroaching fog.

"I'm going with Mr. Hamerly," said Tom. "You take Dorothy in the other hansom, Jim, and drive straight. We'll pick up Swenton on the way. Give the address, will you, Hamerly?"

"Old Jewry, third alley, this side of Gresham Street," said Hamerly, and the cabbies nodded.

Dorothy stepped lightly in before I could lend my aid. I followed, the porter closed the curtaining doors, pulled up the window, and we were off, embarked on a sea of fog. As I looked out, I thought I saw Tom speaking to our driver, but I could not be sure.

"Old Jewry," said Dorothy dreamily. "How delightfully Dickensonian. I haven't an idea where it can be, and I don't want to know. It's much more fun plunging off into an unknown world of adventure in the good ship Hansom Cab."

I happened to have a strong idea where the Old Jewry was, but some guardian angel kept me from speaking. Never before had I possessed all that was precious to me in life in the small capacity of a hansom cab. Outside passed slowly by a dim

neutral city, into which street lamps cast pointed lines of light in a vain endeavor to pierce the gloom, where ghosts, appearing suddenly under our horses feet, disappeared quite as suddenly into the blanketing darkness, and where now and then a motor bus came looming past us, like some high-pooped caravel of Spain. Now and again we stopped. Now and again we crept at a foot pace through what seemed at one and the same time an eternity of joy and a fleeting moment of happiness. Dorothy lay back against the cushioned corner, taking in the experience to the utmost. We spoke but seldom. I proffered no suggestions. It was enough for me to sit beside her, to know the rough cloth of her tweed ulster touched my hand, to feel through every inmost fibre of my being her dear and sweet proximity. On and on we travelled, till at length I came to the sudden realization that, according to all my impressions, we should have been at our destination long before. I looked out carefully for the first time. The fog was as dense as ever. I knew nothing of my whereabouts. Saying no word to Dorothy, I kept on trying to pierce the wall of cloud, as a hundred questions began to spring up in my brain. Was there something queer in this? Was the driver lost, or was he purposely taking us in some dangerous direction? It did not matter, anyway. As I looked at Dorothy, I knew I could protect her against a thousand

perils, and I felt a warm glow of power, of courage springing within my soul. Just then I saw some arc lights ahead, and I peered yet more carefully. Under them the fog seemed less dense, and when a brass plate showed I scanned it eagerly. "Charterhouse." I could read no more, but that told me where I was. In Charterhouse Square, beyond Smithfield, almost to Clerkenwell Road. We had gone far out of our way, while I had been dreaming. I threw up the driver's door. "You must be out of your way," I cried.

"H'I couldn't do better, sir," came the answer. "I 'ad to come round, I'm 'eaded straight for the h'old Jewry, sir."

Perhaps there was a note of laughter in the man's voice, certainly there was nothing sinister. I recalled the glimpse I had caught of Tom beside the cab at the Savoy, and, my qualms ceasing, I inwardly blessed that mischievous spirit.

Dorothy looked up as I spoke. "Is it all right, Jim?" she asked.

"It is perfectly all right," I answered, and she fell back into her happy meditation, while I inwardly made still more remarks on her ingenious brother. Silent and happy we went on, my mind quite at rest now, and not in the least anxious to come to the end. The cab stopped and the little door at the top opened with a click.

"This is the place, sir."

I jumped out and looked around. No cab in sight. "Well," I said to Dorothy, "here's a pretty go. Nobody in sight, and I don't know which is the house."

Without a word, Dorothy leaned forward and whistled a single bar. Out of the fog came the notes repeated, and a moment later across the street came Tom.

"Oh, you've reached here finally, have you?" said he, a trace sarcastically. "I thought you'd never arrive; I couldn't imagine what kept you."

As he spoke, I heard a sort of choked gasp from the top of the hansom, but fortunately Dorothy's suspicions were not aroused.

"It hasn't seemed so very long," she answered simply, to which Tom responded, "Oh, really, hasn't it?" as he took her arm to lead her across the street. He called back to our cabby as we left, "Drive forward a little, and you'll find a sort of shelter where you can wait. The other cab's there."

"Right, sir," came the reply, and we heard the slow movement of his disappearing wheels, as we three were left in the ocean of fog.

"Swenton's hunting up the caretaker," said Tom. "Hamerly and I have been waiting for him to come back. The old rooms are locked up tight."

We found Hamerly in a vestibule where a single gas lamp flickered, and, as we waited, we fell to

talking in low tones. The mist seemed to bring our voices to a minor key. Perhaps ten minutes had passed, when the door opened, and Swenton entered, accompanied by a man in a coarse ticking apron.

"This is the caretaker, sir," he began, bowing to Dorothy and me. "He refused to let me in to get my things. Says the laboratory was left after Dr. Heidenmuller's death to another chemist, a gentlemen who bought all the doctor's stuff from the heirs. He was there, off and on, for a little while, but he went away quite a long time ago, — went one night suddenly and never came back. This man says the agents won't allow anybody in. I brought him here, so you could talk to him if you wished."

The caretaker stood silent and sullen as Swenton spoke, his hands deep in the front pockets of his apron.

"I do want to speak with him," said Tom briefly. "Come here," and he led the way apart, the caretaker following. A moment's conversation was broken only by a golden clink, accompanied by the jingle of keys, after which the caretaker disappeared, and Tom turned back to us.

"I have here," he said mysteriously, "a bunch of keys which I strangely found on the floor in the rear of this hall. Suppose we ascend to the top floor and see if they will work there."

Dorothy's face was clouded as Tom came up to the spot where we were standing a little apart, Hamerly and Swenton had already started up the stairs. "I'm not sure that you are doing right in this, Tom," said Dorothy swiftly, in a low voice. "I don't like to bribe a servant to let us into a place where we don't belong."

Tom's face became serious in a minute. "I don't like it either, Dorothy," he answered gravely, "but I'm going to do it. Do you remember the little German middy lying down at the bottom? As long as the man who is trying to stop all war is at large there are thousands of men in hourly peril. I honestly believe we are the only ones who can run the man down. I am convinced we shall be wholly justified in such action."

Dorothy stood for a moment in silent thought. "I think you are right, Tom," she said quietly. "In this case I hope and believe the end will justify the means. We must find 'the man.' Go ahead."

Stumbling through the darkness, we reached the top, where the flame of a match showed a strong oak door with two Yale locks upon it. Tom had the keys in immediately and threw the door open. Once within, Swenton passed with accustomed step to the wall, turned a switch, and incandescents lighted the whole place.

We were in a sort of anteroom, with desks and chairs. "The outer office," said Swenton briefly.

We passed through an inner door. "The main laboratory," remarked Swenton. This was similar to any other laboratory. A good sized motor generator in one corner, covered by a rubber sheet, a couple of tile-topped tables, a set of shelves on one side, filled with labelled reagent bottles, a set of glass cases, supported on a base filled with drawers, on the other. In the cabinets were glass ware and apparatus of various sorts. Tom started for the case, but Dorothy laid a restraining hand on his arm.

"Wait till we have seen it all. Then we'll go over the whole, piece by piece."

Tom nodded, and we went on. There were three doors on the opposite side of the wall. Swenton passed to the first and opened it. "The storeroom," he explained. Within were wooden cases of glassware, large carboys of acid, glass tubing on racks and wire on spools. In one corner was apparently a hospital for broken or disused pieces of apparatus. We turned from this to the second door. "The balance room," said Swenton, as he threw open the portal. Three balances in polished wood and shining glass met our eyes. There was nothing else in the room. Swenton opened a third door. "The spectroscope room," he said. "Beyond is the doctor's private laboratory." A big piece of apparatus on the table was covered with a green cloth. Beyond was a wooden door. Despite

myself, I felt a queer, nervous tremor pass over my frame, as I looked at the commonplace wooden panels, behind which Dr. Heidenmuller had sat dead, killed by the same mysterious power which had slain the men I had seen lying quietly at the bottom of Porstmouth Harbor. Tom and Hamerly were as keen as hounds on a scent, Swenton interested but more indifferent, Dorothy pale, her eyes glittering with excitement. Hamerly reached the door first, tried it and it swung back. The incandescent had not been turned on in the spectroscope room, and the only light which entered was the golden lane, which came through from the main laboratory. It seemed like a stage setting. The light fell on a heavy wooden table and a couple of Windsor chairs. The rest was but faintly outlined.

A moment's pause on the threshold, as if we expected to meet some horror, we knew not what, and then we rushed in together. There was nothing to be seen. Wood panelled walls; windows sealed by wooden shutters; the wooden table and the two wooden chairs; that was all. We stood there silent, until Tom broke the quiet.

"Nothing to do but to Sherlock Holmes it," he said. "We have all day to run this thing down. Swenton, there's a piece of apparatus here that I need. The doctor may never have had it outside his room as a whole, yet we may find traces of it in

the laboratory or the storeroom. Are you willing to help us hunt?"

"I should be the most ungrateful man living, sir, if I were not," said Swenton earnestly. "I owe my wife's life to you and Miss Haldane." He glanced at Dorothy.

"So that's where you have been the last two mornings," I whispered to her, as Tom went on.

"I found them just coming out of great distress," she answered simply; "I am so glad I was able to help."

"Now," cried Tom, "let's sit down to another counsel of war. Come out into the outer laboratory and we'll talk it all over."

The drawn shades, the bright gleam of the laboratory lamps reflected back from polished tile and cabinet door, gave a distinctly cheerful aspect to the scene as we settled down.

"I have been thinking this matter over carefully for some time," began Hamerly, in his rather careful tones, once we were seated, "and if you do not object I should like to present my theories."

"Go right ahead," said Tom.

Hamerly went on somewhat thoughtfully. "I think you are wrong in saying we ought to follow the methods of Sherlock Holmes. We ought rather to follow Dupin, Poe's detective, the man who preceded Sherlock Holmes. Try to reason out what the doctor would have on hand with regard to

the power, and where he would have it. Try to analyze the action of his brain, rather than hunt for minute data. Let's see what we know about Dr. Heidenmuller. He was a German of the most typical student type. That means he would never do anything without putting it down on paper. He had every desire to keep what he was doing from those around him. That is evident from the fact that Swenton never knew anything about the interior of this room. If the doctor made notes, as I believe he must have done, he would have wanted them within reach. So he must have had them in this room. He was a brilliant scientist, therefore he would not by preference have used any of the ordinary methods of concealment. His notes and apparatus were likely to take up a comparatively large amount of space, so that we are impelled to the definite conclusion that there is a concealed closet somewhere in that inner chamber. If we could take the time to remove the whole of the walls, and could get permission to do so, we could, I believe, find the hiding place, but that would involve time, expense, and running down the people who at present control the place and own the apparatus. I strongly question whether that would be worth while."

"No," said Tom, "I don't believe it would. If there were any chance of the man who has hired this place being the man we are after, I'd say go for

him at any cost, but I don't believe there's one chance in a thousand that it is. He's too sharp to stay around where Dr. Heidenmuller died under such peculiar circumstances."

"I agree to that," said Hamerly.

"And I, too," I chimed in.

Dorothy said nothing, but as I watched her, I saw the rose of her cheeks growing deeper, and that peculiar change in her eye that showed she had already leaped beyond the reasoning of the others and grasped the answer by intuition. "One question first," she began, "Mr. Swenton, did the doctor leave the door to the spectroscope room open when he went into his private room?"

"No," answered Swenton slowly, "he would go into the spectroscope room, lock that door, and then you could hear the inner door open and shut. Sometimes he would not come out again, but I have often heard him come out into the anteroom about three or four minutes after he went in, stay there for a minute or two, then go in again and come out once more. After that he would be shut up there for hours together."

"That settles it," cried Dorothy. "I'm sure I know how he opened his secret closet or closets. You remember the insulated wire covering they found, when they came in after the doctor's death."

We nodded eagerly.

"That was the winding of an electro-magnet. He attached it to the long flexible cord of that incandescent light socket in the anteroom, took it in, opened his closets, brought it out again, and went back. See if you can find an electro-magnet in the cases or the storeroom, and we'll open things up."

Scarcely were the words out of her mouth, before Swenton had hurried to a drawer, and pulled out three small electro-magnets, all of the same size.

"Here are the only ones I know of, in the laboratory," he exclaimed. "I can connect one of them with the flexible cord in a minute. We shall want more light, though. If one of you gentlemen will get another connector and fix it to a socket, I'll fit the magnet. You'll find some connectors for that size socket in the storeroom, I'm sure."

With four practised hands at work, it was scarce ten minutes before an incandescent stood on the table in the inner room, while we had an electric magnet connected to a long flexible cord which brought current from an incandescent light socket in the next room. Dorothy stood in the centre, once more in command.

"I believe it's under one of those pegs," she said. "See what's under them."

Round and round the room we went, pulling at every peg that joined the sealed walls. Under each was a nail. Tom picked up one of the pegs as we drew it forth.

"Humph!" he cried. "Insulated by caema. That explains why the nails were left. What a careful job this was, anyway."

Hamerly and Swenton nodded. I started to ask what caema was, but I was pulling on a particularly refractory peg just then and let it go. The word stuck fast in my memory, however. It was the same one I had seen in Tom's book on our journey up from Portsmouth. As each peg came out, the little electro-magnet was brought up to the hole and its action watched. Not a nail stirred. We had gone around three sides of the room, when Tom called out, "This peg came easily. Bring over the magnet."

Before I could bring the magnet within an inch of the hole, the nail within sprang out and attached itself to the magnet, just as a needle springs up and clings to the horseshoe magnet of a child. As it sprung, the whole panel, four feet high and three feet across, opened on easy hinges and swung outward, showing a small inner door. Tom gave a long, low whistle. "Right again, sister," he remarked. "What should we do without you?"

The stout oak door, strong as it was, proved no obstacle to our attack, and readily swung outward. Stooping, we peered within. Empty shelves on one side. A row of drawers on the other. One by one we drew the drawers from their places. Every one was empty. From top

to bottom of the recess we searched, but without avail. Finally we straightened up with blank faces.

"There must have been something there," said Dorothy slowly.

"Hang it," ejaculated Tom, "I know there was. If you want to know my real opinion, there has been somebody here ahead of us. I don't believe we'll find a thing."

We did not, and the last inspection over, we were ready to take our leave, when Tom broke in.

"One last thing," he said; "I want to see how that incandescent light in the ceiling can be connected without outside metal. That reflector, by the way, looks like clear glass, but it must have some reflecting power."

He jumped lightly to a chair, thence to the table, and turned to look through the clear glass of the big hemispherical shade, which had guarded the incandescent in the ceiling.

"Oh, I say," he exclaimed, "here's a most extraordinary thing. Everything seen through this is bent double. Here's the biggest refraction I ever saw. Can it be the glass, or something inside of it? This thing is hermetically sealed above. Do you know, I believe we've got one solution of the mystery here."

We all stood looking eagerly up at him, as he gazed through the globe.

CHAPTER XIII

WITH a quick spring, Dorothy was first on a chair, and then on the table beside her brother. She bent to inspect the crystal hemisphere, looked at it from various points, and then both of them began examining the construction of the lamp shade.

"It's hermetically sealed above?" said Tom finally, a note of inquiry in his voice.

"It seems to be," answered Dorothy briefly. "Tom, jump down, will you, and let Mr. Hamerly come up here. Jim, will you and Mr. Swenton see if you can find another lamp shade like this in the storeroom."

We returned from our errand, bearing a duplicate of the shade which we had found on a shelf. Dorothy, who by this time had come down from the table where Hamerly and Tom still stood, took the shade from my hands and held it to the light.

"This shade is nothing but ordinary glass. There's nothing unusual about it," she exclaimed. "The effect of the shade up there must be due to a gas inside."

As Tom and Hamerly leaped from the table to

inspect the shade, I seized the opportunity to ascend, and mounting, gazed through the hemispherical glass. A strange world met my eyes. Everything seen through the glass was bent around at extraordinary angles. Tom's legs, seen below the shade, were perfectly natural and upright, but his torso, seen through the shade, was bent like the body of a Japanese contortionist engaged in extremest posturing. The straight line of the door casing beyond was broken short off where the line of the shade intersected it, and the top of the casing appeared in a wholly different place. As I gazed, I struggled to think what common everyday thing acted in much the same way. Eureka, I had it.

"Why, whatever is inside this globe bends everything seen through it, something as a spoon is bent in a glass of water or an oar in a pond," I cried.

Hamerly looked up. "That's about right, Orrington. Or better yet, you could say it bends the things you see, as the hot gases rising from a chimney bend everything behind them into wavy lines. Haven't you ever watched the queer waviness that shows in a wintry atmosphere above chimneys, when you look over them?"

"Many a time," I replied.

"Well, that's just the same type of thing we have here. When you look across a chimney, where hot

gases from a fire are coming off, you are looking from air through lighter gases (for such hot gases are lighter than cold air) to cold air again. That extreme bending of light rays that we call refraction is the reason why we hope we have a new gas."

"If we can test the gas to find out what it is, it ought to be a big lift in finding out what really happened," I said, as I descended from the table.

"That won't be hard at all," interrupted Dorothy. "We'll test it with the spectroscope in the next room. Here comes Tom now, with the apparatus to catch and confine the gas."

With glass tubes and air pumps, with platinum and flame, they strove for half an hour, Tom, Hamerly, and Swenton together. Dorothy threw in a quiet word of suggestion now and then, but the most of the time she stood back with me. This was a matter for experts, and left nothing for me to do. As we waited, I asked Dorothy two questions. "Where do you think the gas came from? Has it been here since Heidenmuller's death?"

"I think it must have been," answered Dorothy. "If, as I imagine, we have an unknown gas here, it is probably one of the products left behind from the metal destroyed by the terrific force used by the man. When the substance that gave the force, energy, or whatever you call it, escaped through the broken valve of the cigarette case, this gas was formed from the changed metal and, as it was

lighter than the air, some of it rose and filled the shade, the rest floated upward and out through some crevice. When the man destroyed the Alaska or any of the other vessels, the same thing probably occurred — the metal of the ship changed to a gas which floated up into the air with extreme rapidity. The gas must be to air as oil is to water, that is, it can't diffuse or mix with it, any more than oil can mix with water Otherwise it wouldn't have stayed all these months in the lamp shade."

Just then Tom came towards us with a glass tube, a foot long and an inch or two wide, in his hand. In each end was sealed a bit of silvery metal.

" Platinum," I said, as I looked at them.

" Yes," said Tom laughing, " Mrs. Rosnosky taught you to know platinum when you see it. Just look through this."

He held the tube before us, and the same magic bending of the lines showed as we gazed. The tube was filled with the gas that I had seen in the shade above.

" That's as pretty a piece of work as I ever did," said Tom approvingly. " Transferred it without allowing practically a particle of air to get in. Now we're ready to try the current on it, and then the spectroscope."

Rembrandt might well have painted the picture that I beheld, to hang beside the " Lesson in

Anatomy" that dominates the old Museum at the Hague. A striking group of four bent above the shining tubes and polished mountings of the spectroscope. Tom, eager, with his fine lean face showing the highest power of receptivity to new ideas, mouth mobile but firm, with an ever present tendency towards an upward lift of the corners; Hamerly, careful thoughtful scholar, in our college slang "a little on the grind type," extremely bald, his glasses perched judicially on his rather prominent nose, his face showing the lines of deep and strong thought; Swenton, faithful and efficient follower, a man who would always be led, would never spring by any conceivable chance from the narrow channels where his lot had chained him; Dorothy, Maxima et Optima, now commanding by reason of her swift flying intellect, now yielding to her dreams as she had an hour or two ago in the hansom cab, and, when yielding, most womanly, most thoroughly feminine of her sex. Faceted like a diamond, she shone upon the world through every facet, and every line, plane and angle showed a new beauty, a new grace.

The four stood eagerly intent upon the little tube before them, as they connected it with a huge coil which stood near. That done, everything was ready to throw the switch which would send the electric current leaping from one platinum pole to another, penetrating the gas in the tube, heating it,

changing its action, forcing it to submit to the current's tremendous force.

"All ready?" asked Tom, as he straightened up from the last adjustment. "Swenton, you turn off the lights and I'll put on the current here."

As the lights went out, and we heard the sound of the throwing of the switch, Dorothy stepped back by me. A low buzz grew swiftly in intensity, and then a simultaneous cry broke from us all. Within the tube a soft blue came slowly from out the dark, the blue of early dawn on quiet waters, as we gazed it turned darker, more brilliant; now it was the deep, steel blue of the biting autumn day, now the deep, blue black of velvet tropic night. Every change, every hue was lighted by the rarest and most exquisite effulgence man could conceive. No glory bound to earth it seemed, rather an unearthly brilliancy, perhaps such radiance as led the three kings, Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar, to the manger where the young child lay. It awed us all.

"That is beyond anything I ever saw," said Hamerly at length, breaking the silence. "I have observed every known gas under the influence of current, but never anything like this."

"Nor I," said Tom. "But there may be no time to spare. Let's try it with the spectroscope."

As Tom and Dorothy bent over the instrument, I asked Hamerly, "What do you expect to find from the spectroscope? What does it do?"

"It breaks down light," answered Hamerly, "by means of a prism, as a prismatic chandelier or a prismatic glass thermometer throws the spectrum of a sunbeam on the floor, breaking the white light of the sun into a shifting mass of color that changes from red, through orange and green to violet. Every different glowing gas gives off a slightly different light. We can tell by the spectroscope whether the light from this gas is the same as any we have known before, or whether it is different. If the light waves sent out are unlike any recognized before, we can be sure we have a new gas."

Tom was turning a screw, with his eye glued to a small telescope. "Change that tube a bit to the right, Hamerly," he said, and it was changed. "Now a bit higher. No, not so high, a bit lower now. There you are."

He gazed long and intently, then rose, motioning Hamerly in silence to take his place. Dorothy followed Hamerly, and Swenton followed her. I ended, but I could distinguish nothing save some lines crossing a scale placed within the tube. As I rose from the stool, Tom reached up to throw on the lights. As he faced around, Hamerly met him with outstretched hand.

"It is only given to a handful of scientists in a century," he said, "to find a new element, to discover one of those units from which the world is made. I believe you have done it this afternoon."

"It is a new, elementary gas," said Dorothy. "You found it, Tom, when you climbed that table."

"Much good it will do me, so far as that goes," remarked Tom. "So far as we know, all there is of it in the world is in this tube. I don't know how to produce any more, and I can't publish anything about it, for it would interfere with our search for the man."

"You have no right to say that it's no use," said Dorothy. "Again and again as we have gone on, the slightest unexpected things have come to mean the most. I believe this tube of unknown gas may be a most important link in the chain."

"All right," said Tom. "Just as you say. You can be sure I wasn't going to throw it into the waste basket."

While Swenton cleared away, the rest of us went into the wooden room. Hamerly passed across and opened one of the wooden shutters. "The fog is lifting," he said.

We looked out and saw that the other side of the street was gradually becoming visible. Dorothy seated herself by the window, and we joined her.

"I don't know that there could be a better time," I began, "than right here and now, to find out just where we are. For my part, I want to understand the relation between the new gas and all that has gone before. If we bring all our information to-

gether, won't there be a better chance to get a line on our next move?"

"We have two things in our hands," said Tom thoughtfully. "This tube of gas here and the cigarette case. We know that the ships really disappeared, because Jim has been to the bottom of Portsmouth Harbor and seen the men that lie there. We know by the same token that this force kills, by a sort of paralysis, every man whom it attacks. Oh, that reminds me," he exclaimed, checking himself. "Let me see that cigarette case again, if you will, Hamerly?" The case once in his hand, he looked it over with minute care. "Insulated within the paraffin by caema, don't you think?" he asked Dorothy.

After a brief inspection she also nodded. "That's caema, all right."

"Never mind caema, now, whatever it is," I said. "Let's go on with the business. What else do we know?"

Hamerly took up the tale. "We know to a reasonable certainty that Dr. Heidenmuller was the first man who found the source of this power, and that he died when it accidentally was let loose. We know that some of this substance, probably in powder form like radium, was kept in the leather cigarette case, insulated by paraffin and caema." He paused.

"We know," went on Dorothy, "that when the

man who is trying to stop all war uses this force, a tremendous amount of radio-active energy is generated, enough to affect reflectoscopes half around the world."

"We know there is something which is even more than all those things," I broke in. "We know there is a man who is slaughtering men by the hundreds, in pursuit of his ideal, and that it is our business, in more ways than one, to run him down. How will the data we have on hand enable us to do that?"

As I spoke, Dorothy was sitting looking meditatively out of the window. The fog had lifted a little more. Hamerly straightened in his chair.

"Miss Haldane," he said, "if you will look straight across the street from where you are sitting, you can see the spot from which the sign fell on the day that Dr. Heidenmuller died."

Dorothy turned in her chair, and we all crowded about her. Hamerly pointed across the road. There, against the brick wall of an old house, blackened by the smoke of many sooty years, two small rectangles showed in light relief against the surrounding darkness. The sight of those spots, where the supports to the sign had once stood, brought the whole horror of it home to me more forcibly than anything else. The very smallness, the homeliness of the thing drove it in. The accumulated effects of the charged electroscopes,

of the wave-measuring machine, of the bodies on the ocean's floor, of Dr. Heidenmuller's death, and of the gas we had just found, rose to their very crest in those small, light gray spots, less sullied than the rest of the wall.

"And there is where the wooden sign fell down, and its iron supports disappeared," said Tom reflectively. "Jove, I'd like to have seen it happen. If anybody had seen it, though, he wouldn't have believed his eyes."

We were still standing, peering out through the rising mist, when Dorothy spoke out excitedly. "That's the next clue, there's nothing else that will do so well, — the hunt for disappearing iron."

"What good will that do?" said Tom. "We know where iron has disappeared, and we've run everything down as far as we could. It isn't likely that Heidenmuller or the man went around shooting off signs for fun."

"Of course not," answered Dorothy impatiently. "But don't you see the man must have had a laboratory, or lodgings, anyway, somewhere in London, if he got his data and his power from Dr. Heidenmuller here. When Dr. Heidenmuller let his discovery get away from him, it killed him, and caused all the metal which it reached to disappear. Now, the man hasn't been killed by his weapon, unless it happened very recently, but it's perfectly possible that he might have allowed some of his

magic substance to escape without injury to himself. If that happened, it would destroy any metal at hand. If we could find some place where iron disappeared, we might get a direct clue to the whereabouts of the man. It's worth trying, anyway."

"I'm sure it is," I cried. "Tom, you old doubter, speak up and admit Dorothy knows twice as much about it as you and I put together."

"I guess not," said Tom firmly. "There may be something in this, if we could get track of everything that bore on disappearing iron, London over; but," he went on, "talk about a needle in a hay stack. You went up against a hard enough proposition in running down Heidenmuller's laboratory here, but this new deal is far worse. You can't advertise."

"No, I don't see how you can," remarked Dorothy, a trifle discouraged.

"Oh, this thing's easy enough," I broke in. "I wish everything was as simple. Inside of two days, I'll have all the information that London holds with regard to disappearing iron."

"How can you get it?" cried the three in unison.

CHAPTER XIV

"By using the device which ministers at the same time to the vanity and the necessity of man, the clipping bureau," I replied. "We will subscribe to that distributer of special information, and get every clipping for the last six months that bears upon falling blinds, signs lost, or stolen iron. They can ransack the files for us, and send us the result of their labor."

"Just the trick," cried Tom enthusiastically. "We'll go straight to work on it. Now let's get out of here."

Bearing our precious tube of gas, we started back, leaving Swenton to close the laboratory and follow later. No such delightful wandering was provided for our return as for our coming. All too soon we were back at the Savoy with our day's labor over, ready to follow the new trail wherever it might lead us.

Two mornings after the eventful day in Heidenmuller's laboratory, I knocked at Dorothy's door, and entered to find the broad table of her sunny parlor covered with piles of neat clippings, each with a docketed slip at the top. The clipping

bureau had exceeded my best hopes, and had turned in the information in quantities. Tom and Dorothy were bending over the piles sorting them, as the maid ushered me in.

"If you hadn't told them to sort these things at their office, we should have been swamped beyond all hope of salvation," grumbled Tom, as he stood with a bundle of clippings between every finger of both hands. "Where are the Westminster shutters, Dorothy?"

"Here they are," said Dorothy. "Now I want the Chelsea signs. It's just like solitaire. The signs are my cards. The blinds go to Tom, and you can take stolen iron. That's stolen iron, that heap of packets over on the other side of the table."

I sat down to my task. Hour after hour passed, and we sorted, read, and rejected. Now and then a clipping would go aside for further reference. Occasionally a packet or a single slip would pass from one to another. Lunch took an hour, but after lunch we turned again to our labors, and afternoon tea time came and went before we were done. At length Tom rose and gave a mighty yawn. "Eight that look good," he remarked.

"Eight from me," I echoed.

"Ten," chimed in Dorothy.

"That's not half bad," said Tom reflectively. "There were hundreds of clippings there, and

we've brought them down pretty low, all things considered."

We three dined alone that night, and when the coffee came on, Tom reached into his pocket and pulled out a long envelope with the twenty-six clippings. "Which comes first?" he asked, "Signs or blinds or stolen iron?"

"Match you to decide," I answered, and I pulled out a sovereign. "I'll take signs, you take shutters." Tom won.

"Shutters against stolen iron then," cried Dorothy.

"I'll match you this time," said Tom. We matched again, and again Tom won.

"Then one of my eight shutters is the trump card," exclaimed Tom. "I'll number them one to eight, and then pass the bunch around so we can each pick the two that look like winners. Then I'll pass the signs to pick a second choice."

Dorothy, in her gray gown of shimmering silk, her face flushed with the excitement of the decision, pored over the little list carefully for some minutes before she returned them to Tom, who passed them on to me, remarking briefly, "I made up my mind when I picked the eight out of the bunch." Three times over I read the list which told of blinds dropping on still days and injuring passers-by. Tom had eliminated the accounts which told of signs and shutters blown off in gales. It might

easily happen that a gale and the escape of the destructive power would occur simultaneously, but the unusual was the thing we were after; there, most of all, would lie the clue we sought. At last I came to a decision and looked up. "One in the first lot and three in the second," I said.

"One and three," echoed Dorothy.

"The same," said Tom. "Great thing to be unanimous. Read 'em aloud, Jim." I obeyed.

"'A shutter which fell from a house on Gower Street, just off Tottenham Court Road, struck a passing laborer yesterday morning, and inflicted injuries of so grave a character that he was immediately removed in an unconscious condition to the hospital. His identity has not yet been established.' That's number one."

"'A large sign which fell from a second story at Chelsea yesterday broke in pieces on the sidewalk beneath, but fortunately inflicted no serious injury.' That's number three. Which do we choose?"

"Both of those look rather good to me," answered Tom. "But I think the one near Tottenham Court Road looks best. The chances of finding the man's laboratory would be greater in Bloomsbury than farther out." Dorothy nodded her approval.

"All right," I said, as we rose. "The corps will move upon Bloomsbury at dawn, under command of General Dorothy Haldane."

" Dawn being interpreted nine thirty, we will," answered Dorothy laughing.

The next morning found us bowling along towards our destination, discussing meanwhile the method of attack. " Leave it to inspiration," I said, as we drew up at the door. " Let me play a lone hand on this."

Luck was with me. There was a sign of " Lodgings " in the window. Leaping out I walked up the steps and rang the bell, while the cab went on down the street. The maid who opened the door was trimmer than I had expected to find. The mistress of the lodging house, when she appeared, though a perfect mountain of flesh, gave signs of a very considerable intelligence. " Yes, there were lodgings. A second and fourth floor front." Up the stairs panted and wheezed the stout landlady, while I followed in her train. On the fourth floor we halted and entered the small hall bedroom at the top of the stairs. I threw the window open and leaned out, and looked up and down the street.

" Bad thing if a shutter fell from here," I said. " Wasn't it in one of the houses near this that the shutter fell and injured a laborer a couple of months ago ? "

The landlady seized my lead instantly. " It was the right hand shutter," she said, " in the very window you're looking out of now."

I bent eagerly to look at the hinges. They were

brand new, while those on the other side were strained and worn through years of exposure to wind and sun and rain.

"You don't say," I replied. "Most interesting. I suppose the hinges rusted and broke."

"No," said the landlady, "that was one of the queerest things about it. After the whole thing was over, and I came to look at the place where the shutter fell, there was no trace of a hinge. It must have pulled right out of the brick, and when I went next day to look at the shutters in the kitchen, the hinges, screws, and everything were gone, and I never saw the least trace of them from that day to this. We had the new shutter put up a week later."

"What luck!" I thought to myself, as I looked around over the adjoining housetops. "Hit it first time trying. Somewhere, behind those roofs, lies the laboratory of the man who is trying to stop all war." I parted with the landlady, promising an early decision, and went in search of Tom and Dorothy.

They left the carriage as I approached and hurried towards me. "The iron of the shutter disappeared," I said significantly.

Tom gave the long, low whistle which always typified interest and surprise to him.

"You think the man's laboratory is somewhere near here, then," asked Dorothy excitedly.

"Judging by Hamerly's experience with the sign opposite Dr. Heidenmuller's laboratory, I certainly do," I answered seriously. "This probably happened just as that did."

"Then," said Tom, "it's probably up to us to make a house to house canvass of the neighborhood. It looks to me as if the chances were better in one of the buildings on Tottenham Court Road than in any of the houses round here."

"That's right," I answered briefly. "Tell you what we'll do. We'll ask at every shop if they know of any chemical laboratory. Tell 'em we're hunting for a man who works in such a laboratory. Lay it on thick and give 'em plenty of detail. That's the way to get the information you want."

"I'll wait for you in the carriage round the corner," Dorothy called after us, as we started away.

From bakeshop to dairy, from furniture store to shoe shop, I travelled, searching for some news of my poor Cousin George, who had worked in a laboratory somewhere near the corner of Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street, and who had disappeared. Persistently diplomatic, I forced my way on, under rebuff after rebuff, leaving no store until I had a pretty vivid idea of the various occupations which made their home on every floor of its building. As I left after receiving one particularly stinging answer, I caught sight of Tom across the street, beckoning. I followed him at a little dis-

tance until he turned a sharp corner into a little alley. He appeared slightly dishevelled as he turned around.

" See here," he said abruptly, " I'm afraid we'll be run in if we keep this up much longer. I've been in one row already. Had to knock a man down who made caustic remarks about sneak thieves. What have you got hold of, anyway ? "

" Haven't got hold of a thing," I responded.

" Well, then," said Tom, " let's cast back and take another look at the topography, just where the shutter fell."

Back we went over the ground once more, and stopped to examine cautiously the window with its green blind.

" That's a fourth story corner room," said Tom reflectively, " and the house next to it is only three stories. Why, you blind man," he went on suddenly, " only one side of the shutter fell, so the attack couldn't have come from the front. It must have come from the back of the house. Let's go round and see what is just behind this."

Round the square we circumnavigated, landing finally at a building some five stories high, whose first story showed the shelves and cluttered window of a second-hand book shop. Beside the shop a flight of stairs led to the upper stories. No sign gave evidence of any business carried on above the first.

"Here goes for the book shop," said Tom, and we marched in.

A tall, stooping youth of exaggerated height, with lank and flaming red moustache, came wearily forward, stifling a cavernous yawn as he came. We repeated our stock inquiry to him. We were Colonials from Australia seeking our Cousin George, who worked in a laboratory. Did our friend with the red moustache know of any laboratory near? A gleam of interest lighted the slightly watery eyes.

"H'I don't rightly know w'ether h'it's h'a laboritory h'or not," he began, "but there's some sort h'of a bloomin' show h'occupies h'our 'ole fifth. H'I've never been h'ible to see h'inside h'it yet. You might try h'a shot h'at h'it 'owever."

We received the volley of misplaced aspirates with joyous hearts, noting the gleam of avid curiosity in the watery eyes, as the clerk thought of the mysterious laboratory on the top floor. All he could tell was that the top floor had been let a few months before to a tall man. With the usual vagueness of his type of mind, that was as far as he could go. Over and over again he repeated the same indefinite phrase, a tall man. When the man moved in, a couple of vans had brought strange furnishings, a small furnace, glassware and instrument cases. A little while ago an assistant had appeared, a foreigner who knew no English, or

at least refused to understand the language. The two, the man and his assistant, often worked together till late at night. Sometimes, the clerk believed, they worked all night. As for him, he would have repeated the thing to the police. He didn't believe in having mysteries like that around, but his master, the proprietor of the book shop, refused to part with regular paying tenants. Yes, sir, he'd tried again and again to see what they were doing, but there was a curtain over the door, and you couldn't see anything through the keyhole. The door was always locked, so that the adventurous spirit of the clerk had to be content with imagining the horrible crimes perpetrated behind the curtained door.

This certainly looked good. With anxious hearts, Tom and I started up the stairs in search once more of our Cousin George, halting, however, at the second story, once the clerk was left safely behind.

" It certainly looks like queer street, anyway," remarked Tom reflectively. " It may be the man, or it may be some bunch of counterfeiters or other criminals. I'm not going to back down for a minute, but I think one of us had better hunt up Dorothy, tell her where we are, and have her put the police on the trail, if we shouldn't happen to turn up to-night. Strikes me that that would be only an elementary precaution."

"I'll do it," I said. "You watch here."

Before Tom could object, I was half way down the stairs and out on the street. On Tottenham Court Road, I found Dorothy driving up and down. She leaned forward questioningly as I jumped in. I nodded in answer, "Yes. We've got the place, but we need your help now." Warned by experience as to its necessity, I had mapped out my line of argument carefully, as I hurried along. "We have the very place, but we want you to stay outside and send us help, if we should get into trouble."

Dorothy's face fell. "I want to go with you the worst way," she said. "Yet I don't like the idea of you two going into danger without any outside assistance. What have you found out?"

It was no easy matter to convince her, yet when Dorothy saw the condition of affairs, there was really nothing she could do but give in. For us to explore that unknown territory, without some line on the outside to protect us in case of peril, was manifestly unwise. Certainly it was not possible for us to let so plain a clue go by.

At my command, the cabman drove past the old book store, up the street, and round the square. Back on the main thoroughfare again, I made ready to return and join Tom.

"You've got the place fixed clearly in mind?" I asked, looking up at her from the sidewalk.

To my surprise, Dorothy's eyes were filled with tears, and her voice came pleadingly. "I wish you did not feel you had to go. I don't know why I feel so strangely about your going, but I do. Isn't there some other way out?"

I felt my resolution waning, as an almost overmastering desire to seize her in my arms, in the face of shocked and respectable Bloomsbury, swept over me.

"We've got to follow the trail to the end, Dorothy," I answered. "Everything's going to be all right, don't worry."

As I turned away, I felt a light touch, almost like a caress, on my coat sleeve. Accident or not, no knight ever went into battle more inspired by his lady's gage than I, bearing that accolade, strode towards the old book shop and the mysterious laboratory on the fifth floor.

Tom greeted me eagerly as I reached the second story. "Not a sound from the laboratory," he began. "And, luck of lucks, there's an open, empty room opposite, where we can wait. Come on up."

Up the stairs and into the empty room we passed, pausing briefly to examine the blank and heavy door of the mysterious workers fastened by heavy locks. Our waiting place proved nothing more than a bare attic chamber, with a constricted view of roofs and chimney pots.

"Not exactly the abode of luxury," I said,

glancing around critically, " but then it's all in the day's work. I've waited in worse places for a lot smaller stakes."

Folding his great coat for a cushion, Tom seated himself back against the wall. He had left the door a trace ajar. " I'm practically sure that there's no one in there now, and we'll wait here till they arrive. We shall be sure to hear them when they come up the stairs. By Jove, never thought of it. Not a thing to read with us. There's the book shop downstairs; I wonder if I dare to try a sortie." He thought a moment. " No, not yet, anyway. Tell you what I'll do. Here's a sporting proposition for you." He pulled out his penknife and opened it. " Here's a bully bare floor. I'll play you a game of stick knife to while away the time."

Nobody but an eternal boy like Tom would have conceived of a game of stick knife to while away the time of waiting before the mystery hidden by the blank face of the oaken door across the passage. Nobody but an eternal boy would have won so exasperatingly. Expert in all intricacies of the art, Tom had far outdistanced me as a knife juggler and I was lagging far in the rear, when we heard the quiet closing of the door five stories below. In an instant we were on our feet, waiting for the ascending heavy footsteps. Tom's mobile face stiffened into rigid lines as he crouched, poised

beside the door, while I stood ready to swing the door open, and spring if necessary on the man who came. As the footsteps halted on the landing before us, Tom bent towards me.

"The assistant," he whispered, "let him unlock the door and we'll push our way in with him."

Everything happened in the twinkling of an eye. The jingle of keys, the slight creak of the opening door, then a sudden bound and we were across the hall and in an anteroom facing a bewildered man, evidently a Norwegian, whose blond face was framed in flaxen hair and spade-shaped flaxen beard, and whose somewhat cowlike eyes peered out from spectacles of massive frame. He was clothed in a queer, straight-fronted, long, blue sack coat with voluminous, almost sailor-like trousers. As he saw us standing on either side of him, he started back for a moment, but then stopped short, his keys still dangling from his hand.

"Pardon this somewhat sudden entrance," I said, in my politest tone, "but we are inspectors to visit the laboratory."

A flood of unintelligible gutturals followed my statement. This was accompanied by vehement pointings at the door by which we had entered, and which was now closed, with Tom before it. I sat on the table swinging my legs till the torrent passed. Then, as it died away, I walked boldly to one of the two doors on the opposite side to that

which we entered, tried it, and then tried the other. Both were locked. Carefully watching the assistant's face, I pointed first at the keys still dangling forgotten in his hand, and then pointed at the first door I had tried, going to it and shaking the lock. To our surprise, the indignation in the man's countenance suddenly ceased. A mild acquiescence shone from behind his glasses and, going forward, he unlocked the door, opened to a twilight behind and went in. We stumbled in to the half light, Tom closing the door behind us. As we entered, I tripped over a chair and fell headlong, throwing Tom, who was following. As I scrambled to my feet, a guttural laugh rang in my ears and a door slammed. There was a sound of bolts run home as I dashed forward, only to come headlong against a closed door. I rushed back to the door through which we had entered, and shook it in vain, hearing, to my bitter mortification, a bolt running into its slide as I shook, a sound followed by another outburst of Northern Teutonic glee. Foiled on both sides, I wheeled to look about me, and saw Tom already making a rapid investigation of the premises.

We were in a small room, perhaps ten by twelve, surrounded by blank walls, save for openings made by the two doors on opposite sides. The only passage to the outer air was through an iron plate, perhaps nine inches by three feet, placed in the

flat roof. In this were set small glass bull's-eyes, of the same type as those used to light basements from sidewalks. A couple of wooden stools made the only furnishings of the room. Tom turned to me at the end of his inspection and shook his head.

"I've made many a bad break in my life," he said regretfully, "but coming in here after you and closing that door is the worst yet. That assistant, with his fool face, tricked me completely."

"Same here," I answered, "but there's no use in wasting time talking about it. If there's any possible way to do it, we must be out of here before the man can notify the master."

"Right," said Tom. "Let's try smashing our way out, first, by aid of these stools."

In the pause that followed this proposal, we heard the heavy, slow step of the assistant cross the anteroom, heard the opening and the closing of the outer door. We were left alone.

"Good," said Tom, "Now we can make all the noise we want to."

Suiting the action to the word, he gave a mighty blow to the door with the wooden stool. The door stood like a rock, but the stool flew to pieces, the fragments of its seat narrowly missing me as they flew by.

"A well-made door," said Tom reflectively. "They don't have doors like that in most modern houses."

As he spoke, he crossed the room to examine the door on the opposite side. "Same staunch build," he remarked judicially. "We couldn't be caged better, outside a prison. I'm rather lighter than you, Jim," he went on, "let me get up on your shoulders and try this small roof window."

He climbed up, and in a minute or two came down again. "Padlocked with an iron bar and staple from the outside," he said briefly. "There's just one thing left. To dig our way out with our knives through that solid oak door. I don't know, of course, whether we can do it or not, but I think it's the only alternative."

"That's one way, but not the only one," I said. "One thing we can do first, put a signal out for Dorothy."

"How can you signal Dorothy?" asked Tom.

"Break a hole in one of those glass bull's-eyes up there," I answered, "and put a rung of the broken stool up through, with my handkerchief tied on it."

"Good work," said Tom. "Just the ticket."

In two minutes our flag of distress was waving on the roof.

"Now for the door," I cried, and we both set to work on the hard oak about the lock. British oak is proverbially tough, but that oak was the toughest that ever came out of Britain's primeval forests, I verily believe. When we had worked on it for what seemed an endless time, we had but a slight

furrow on either side of the lock, and two broken blades to show for our labors. Still we kept doggedly on, chiseling and cutting, little by little, till some impression really began to be made. At length Tom straightened up painfully.

"That's backbreaking work, all right," he remarked, with a groan. "I never knew how much I sympathized with escaping prisoners till now."

As we leaned against the wall, I heard a slight movement outside. "Hush," I muttered, "there's a sound."

The noise grew louder. It was a key turning in the inside door. Then not one, but three or four persons, came hurriedly across the floor towards the door by which we had entered. Tom seized the whole stool and poised it ready to rush out, while I gripped a rung of the broken one. The bolt shot back, the key turned, the door swung open, and there in the rectangle stood Dorothy, Hamerly, the assistant who had imprisoned us and an unknown elderly man. In a moment Dorothy was in Tom's arms, but her hand groped for mine as she clung to him. She sobbed only for a moment, recovering herself almost as swiftly as she had broken down.

"Good work, old girl," said Tom, patting her. "I don't think, frankly, that I was ever so glad to see you in all my life."

As Dorothy, still with a slightly tremulous smile,

turned towards me, Tom gave his hand to Hamerly.

"How in blazes did Dorothy do this trick, anyway?" he asked.

"I saw your signal of distress from the other side of the street," broke in Dorothy, "and I drove straight to the Museum for one of our friends there. I didn't want to bother with police if I could help it. I met Mr. Hamerly just where you met him before, on the steps. And just think, this good man here is the book shop man. We met him as we came down to the door after trying the place."

"So you and Hamerly charged the lion's den alone, did you?" I interrupted.

"Why, of course," said Dorothy.

"It's all due to her," said Hamerly.

"No, it's due to the assistant's getting frightened," said Dorothy. "Isn't it, Mr. Elder?"

"If you'd not been here, Miss Haldane," said the book store proprietor, "I never should have known what he was after. I couldn't make out at all."

"What kind of laboratory is this?" I asked, determined not to be thrown off the scent.

The old man laughed. "I fancy my clerk must have been telling you some queer things. I've never told him all I knew. I don't mind keeping him wondering. This is my brother's laboratory, and as to what he does, look here!"

He threw open the second door and we gazed in. Sets on sets of false teeth, boxes of dentist's supplies and dental machinery met our view. I suddenly began to laugh. Tom looked at me for a moment and burst into peal on peal of laughter, while the whole crowd, even the assistant, who had been gazing anxiously at us meanwhile, finally joined in. At last, weak with laughter, I asked, "Why did the assistant shut us up?"

"He thought you were burglars," explained the book shop man, "and as my brother is out of town, he ran for me. My brother is a little careful whom he lets in, as he does his main business in another place, and this is a side affair."

And so the incident of the false teeth laboratory closed.

The outer air had never seemed so good to me save twice before, — when I left the New York prison in Tom's motor car headed for Dorothy, and when I came up from the bottom of Portsmouth Harbor. I took in long breaths of it, as we walked towards the carriage and as we drove towards the hotel. Dorothy sat silent beside Tom, but every now and then I met her eyes, and they fell. The old look seemed gone. There was a change, a new and very sweet timidity.

As we entered the hotel, Tom drew a long breath. "A good night's sleep," he said, "and we'll tackle clipping number three."

" Agreed," said I.

" Agreed," chimed in Dorothy, " provided you'll take me with you. But I won't go through another afternoon like this for anybody."

CHAPTER XV

I WAS just dropping off to sleep that night when I heard a sharp rap at my door. Jumping up, I opened it, and Tom rushed in.

"I've just thought of something, Jim. The hinges did disappear from that blind. We struck the wrong house to-day, but we mustn't give up on that account. Suppose you go back again to the lodging house in the morning, and see if you can get any more light."

"Sure thing," I answered. "But now, for heaven's sake, let me go to sleep."

"Of course," said Tom, in an aggrieved tone. "But I thought you'd want to hear about that as soon as I struck it."

"Sure thing," I repeated again. "Only, now I know about it, go to bed, and let me do the same." My head touched the pillow as I heard the sound of the closing door, and then I slept the clock around.

The next morning I started straight for Bloomsbury, to my destination of the morning before, the lodging house. My stout friend the landlady was out, so the maid informed me, but I could see the

room again if I wished. Once on the top story, I flung open the window and gazed about me. The wilderness of brick was broken only by the waving boughs that keep this part of London from being quite the dreary waste that most modern cities are fast becoming, or have long since become. As I stood there striving to pierce the mystery, the maid stood at a shambling attention in the doorway. Finally, I turned.

"I was very much interested in the story your mistress told me of the falling shutter," I said, slipping a half crown into her ready fingers. "I should very much like to know if any part of the old shutter is by any chance in existence."

The maid's eyes glistened, as she glanced surreptitiously at the coin in her hand. "Wreck's down in t' wash'oose," she said.

"You're from the Coal-pits or the Mines," I said, smiling as I heard her dialect.

A dim flush showed in her sallow cheek. "I'm fra about there, sir. Hast ever been there? There's none like it."

"I've been there," I answered, smiling again. "There's some fine men there."

Her eyes lighted once more. "Happen thou might like to see wreck? Canst, if thou wish."

"Just what I would like," I answered, and the maid turned and clattered down the stairs. Down in the basement, leaning against the wall beside

some tubs, was the wrecked shutter. I brought it out to light. The hinges were gone. Not a bit of iron showed upon it. I turned to the silent maid.

" Queer thing where the hinges went? " I said questioningly.

" Noa," she replied. " See t'wood-box there? "

" Yes," I answered.

" Thot had t'hinges; Michael took them t'day t' shutter fell."

Eagerly I bent over the rude wood-box and examined the hinges carefully, measuring them with my handkerchief, and comparing the size with the lighter spots on the shutter, which showed where the hinges had been. There could be little doubt that what the girl said was true. One doubt remained.

" Why did not your mistress know what became of the hinges? " I asked.

" T' mistress is rarely fogged, and doan't know many a thing goes on," the maid explained. " But to a man thot knows t' Coal-pits — " She did not finish, but I understood, and a second half crown lighter in purse, I walked away.

All the way home the ludicrousness of our twenty-four hour comedy of errors kept growing on me, and I startled more than one passer-by with a sudden chuckle. Tom and Dorothy sprung up in alarm as I entered and leaned against the wall, weak with laughter.

"Are you hurt, Jim?" cried Dorothy, anxiously turning towards me.

"No! No!" I gasped. "But the disappearing iron hinge of the blind belongs in the same class as the dentist's laboratory. 'Michael put them on t' wood-box in t' washoose.' That's where they disappeared to."

The full beauty of the situation suddenly dawned upon Tom's mind, and he broke into inextinguishable laughter while Dorothy, her face lighting with glee, joined in, a moment later, in silvery accord. The adventure of the two young men and the young woman who hunted the disappearing shutter of Bloomsbury ended with our mirth.

Directly after lunch we started off towards Chelsea. Up the embankment, past the Houses of Parliament and the Tate Gallery, by the broad stretches of Chelsea Hospital where a few old pensioners were sunning themselves on the trim walks, our motor car carried us to the very edges of the quaint old suburb. Our chauffeur had never heard of the street named in the clipping, and it was only after diligent search that we found the little back street, a mews, where stables and kennels alternated with houses of stablemen and farriers, where trig grooms in leggings the chrysalides, and pompous coachmen in severe livery the full grown moths, met on equal terms.

At the end of the little street stood a small public

house for the benefit of the Jehus who congregated in the neighborhood. As we passed it, Tom stopped the chauffeur.

" I'll run in here," he said, " and see what I can find." In ten minutes he was back.

" Have you found anything ? " queried Dorothy, leaning forward.

Tom nodded. " We'll leave the car here," he said laconically. " Come on with me."

Down the little street and through an inner court Tom led the way. At length he entered a gate whose rounding arch supported a quaint carved horse's head, that might well have seen the equipages of a century or more ago lumbering beneath. Within, was a square paved courtyard; straight ahead, a boarded stable; on the right, an old farrier's shop, whose disused bellows and forge showed through a dusty window; on the left, a slatternly dwelling. A sign on the stable and the shop stated the whole premises were to let. " Inquire on the left of the yard."

" They told me in the pub that the sign hung over the gateway with the carved horse's head," said Tom. " It was called the sign of the three horses. I'm going to see if they know anything about it at the house."

Dorothy and I waited by the gateway, while Tom crossed the yard. As he advanced, the door opened and a tall, rectangular woman came out,

clothespin in mouth and a piece of washing in her hands. A somewhat one-sided conversation followed.

" I want to see the stable for rent," said Tom.

" Um um um um," responded the woman, from her half closed mouth.

" I beg your pardon," said Tom, " but I don't quite understand."

Another mumble followed, as the woman right about faced and walked into the house. Tom cast a comical look at us.

" That's what comes of not learning the language of the country you're going into," he called, in a loud aside. " I can talk German, French or Italian, read Latin and make a try at Greek, but I never studied a word of Clothespin."

As he ended, the woman reappeared, still grasping the garment for the line, but holding out as well two ponderous iron keys. Tom took them and turned to us, simply remarking, " We'll look the place over."

Loft, stalls and cellar of the stable offered us nothing, nor did we get more from the windows with their view of littered yards. The old farrier's shop looked better. Tom thrust the ponderous key into the lock and threw back the heavy door. Right where the sun cast its gleam down the dusty floor lay a little pile of painted boards. I sprang forward.

"Sliced animals," I called to the others, as I brought the six or seven old boards forward and began fitting them into place. I had them sorted and arranged in a trice. Bruised as they were by their fall, the three horses' heads on the sign board still showed clear, though the dimming effect of time had dulled the flaring tints of the rude artist.

"Not a nail in it or a bit of iron, though there were six nail holes to every board. This can't be another wood-box hinge case," I remarked.

As we all bent eagerly over the sign, a voice broke in on us. "That sign nearly cost us a pretty penny."

We straightened up quickly. In the doorway stood a stout, red-whiskered man.

"I'm the agent for the property," he said, "I heard you were looking it over, so I came across. We're ready to put it in good shape for any desirable tenant. There's few better stable properties in the Chelsea mews."

"Really," said Tom, "I'm not sure whether this will meet my needs or not. We've just been looking things over and came upon this sign. It must have received a pretty severe blow, for every screw is out of it."

"Well, sir," said the agent eagerly, "that's the very strangest thing I ever saw. I saw the sign go down, — I was just across the yard here in that corner, and I happened to be looking out through

the archway. There was no wind, not a breath of air stirring, and yet, all of a sudden, the old sign tumbled. A man had gone by not a minute before. It might just as well hit him as not, or hit me, for that matter. And the pole that held it, and the nails and hinges and everything must have flown out of it when it struck. Least, I don't see what else could have happened to 'em. They weren't there when I came along, and they were good iron, too. I looked that sign over, myself, inside of two months, to make sure things were all right."

Our voluble friend stopped for breath. As Tom addressed him, I spoke in an aside to Dorothy.

" I always supposed years ago that the English were the most silent race on earth, but I'm finding out my mistake now. It's the upper classes that are silent and the country people. Your Londoner can talk a blue streak, once he gets going."

Tom had stepped out into the yard with the agent to give us a further chance to look over the sign, and we were just about to make another examination of the nail holes, when Tom sung out to us, " Come out here, will you ? "

Out we came, to see the agent hurrying away and Tom, with key in hand, ready to lock up.

" I really believe we've got something, this time," he said, in a low voice. " It seems this chap is an understrapper of the agent of the Duke of Moir, who owns all this property about here. He tells

me that he let three rooms to a man named Cragent, who occupied them as a workshop or a laboratory off and on for some months, and left about two days ago. Sometimes he'd be gone for months at a time. The man's gone off for the keys now. He's going to let us go through the place. He tells me that Cragent probably made some changes, though he hasn't been inside the place yet."

Tom ended, the agent returned with the keys, and we followed on. Just beyond the mews on the adjoining street, the agent mounted some stairs beside a little bakeshop.

The red-whiskered man slipped a key in the lock and threw open the door. Eagerly we pressed in. The bare rooms showed some slight litter left by their former occupant, wrapping paper, broken bits of insulated wire, a shelf which showed behind it heavy disconnected wires which must have led to a motor generator, a sink with high goose neck tap.

" It was a laboratory, all right," I said to Dorothy, who nodded and passed by into the third room. She crossed directly to the rear window.

" Look here, Jim," she called softly.

Tom and the agent were left behind in the large centre room. I followed Dorothy's pointing finger with my eyes, as I reached her side. There, between the buildings, showed a narrow, open strip, which ended in the shadow of a dark arch,

crowned by a rudely carved horse's head. It was the arch where the sign of the "Three Horses" had hung.

"If this was the man's laboratory, his destructive power could have escaped from this window," murmured Dorothy, "gone straight through, and attacked that sign, without meeting iron anywhere else on the way. Oh, Jim, do you suppose this room corresponded to Dr. Heidenmuller's wooden room? The man might have wooden panels to the windows and a double door, and taken them down when he left."

I shook my head. "If enough of that deadly stuff got away to destroy the iron of the sign, it would destroy every nail inside the room, and here are iron nails holding the window casing together."

"That's right," said Dorothy, as she inspected the nail heads. "Those do look like iron nails." Then she broke square off. "Got your knife in your pocket, Jim?"

Silently I produced and opened it.

"Now try to pry out that nail," she commanded, pointing to one on the window casing.

I obeyed, with the full expectation of breaking my knife short off. To my utter surprise, the blade cut straight through the nail, with less resistance than the wood around it offered. The nail head was shorn away. Dorothy and I sprang at the same moment to pick it up, and we met in a

sudden collision. Only by the extraordinary presence of mind which I showed in clasping Dorothy closely in my arms was a complete spill averted. A soft tendril of the sweet spring woods swept my cheek, the velvet petal of a flower brushed by my lips, and my whole body was aflame. Scarcely the fraction of a second was Dorothy in my arms, yet it seemed as if eons of life had passed. As we scrambled to our feet, I could feel my face blazing. I looked at Dorothy. Her face was as suffused as mine felt. Just then Tom entered and stood gazing at us with a quizzical smile. "Head on collision," he exclaimed, in mock alarm. "Another big accident." Not a word did Dorothy reply to his badinage. She walked in an especially stately fashion to the window and stood gazing out, while I busied myself energetically in hunting once more for the end of the nail which my knife had shorn off. It was lying just by my side, and as I picked it up, it crumbled.

"Why, these nail heads are putty," I cried in amazement. "They're simply imitations of nails."

In a minute Tom's knife was in his hand, and, quite forgetting everything else, he was hacking away at a point where another nail head showed.

"Putty on top to represent an old nail head, and wooden peg doing the business below," he ejaculated. "I don't believe there's a bit of iron in the place."

Tom dug at nail head after nail head, and each flew off. "Dorothy, it's a wooden room," he cried.

"Oh, really," said Dorothy, in an entirely lifeless monotone.

"And there is the horse's head out of that window. You must have been blind not to have seen it before."

"We did see it," I said testily. "But you're so confoundedly impetuous you rush ahead before anybody can tell you anything."

Tom paid but slight attention to my remarks. He was up on a window sill, prying with his knife. "I've got it," he exclaimed finally in triumph. "Here's the place where they hung the wooden shutters on with wooden pegs, and they painted and puttied them over when they took the panels down."

He leaped down and started towards the other room. "I'm going to find out what the agent knows," he called back over his shoulder.

Dorothy still stood by the window, the later afternoon sun making a golden halo of her somewhat rumpled hair. As I watched her, there seemed to be something a trace less energetic in her posture. She was leaning against the window and gazing fixedly outward. She did not notice me at all. For ten minutes we remained in a silence broken only when Tom returned, waving a dirty piece of paper triumphantly.

"The agent didn't know where the chap had gone," he cried, "but I've got a line on him, anyway. Here's the address of a dealer in electrical supplies, left in a corner on a scrap of paper. We'll drive straight to the city and look him up."

Down the embankment the way we came, past the Savoy and the Temple, through Queen Victoria Street, and by the Bank to Bishopsgate Street we ran. Dorothy sat beside me on the rear seat of the car, Tom next the driver. All the way in, she gave me hardly a word, scarcely replied to Tom's occasional chatter. I had never seen her tongue so strangely silent, her cheek so blushed with morning crimson, nor had I ever seen her eyes more deeply thoughtful, more softly beautiful.

We drew up before the supply store and Tom hurried in, followed by Dorothy and myself. He wanted some wire of the same type as that last ordered by Mr. Cragent. Could they look up the order and let him have it. Certainly. No difficulty at all. The clerk went back to examine the order book, and I followed by his side. In the little dingy office at the rear stood a high desk, with the tall books above in an ordered row. Down came C. "Cragent, Page 116," said the index. As the clerk turned to the page, I glanced over his shoulder. "Mr. H. Cragent." The Chelsea address was crossed out with a line; written below were the words, "9 Cheapside." That was all I

wanted. I nodded to Tom, as he gave a hurried order for the wire, and we were free for the new address.

"This is the right one," said Dorothy quietly, as we left the shop.

"How do you know?" asked Tom. "It looks good, I'll admit, but I don't see how you can tell."

"I don't know how I can tell," answered Dorothy, in low tones, "but I feel sure, this time, as I haven't before."

In ten minutes we were at the corner nearest to the new address, had left the car, and were walking up the busy street.

The sign above the door at 9 Cheapside proclaimed a haberdasher's shop within. The second story showed a dealer in notions, and the third and fourth held no signs.

"There are leads from the power circuit running into the fourth story," said Tom, as we passed. "Here's the door. No business cards for anything above the second. Come on, let's try next door."

Up the stairs by a milliner's shop, past the third story, to the fourth, we climbed. A wing ran back, with a gallery that opened on one side. At the rear was a short flight of steps, with a scuttle at the top, which opened out on the roof. By good fortune, this was unlocked, and we climbed through, out on the flat roof, into the maze of chimneys. Tom was a little ahead and reached the parapet

on the side of Number 9, while we were still at the scuttle. As he turned to the edge, he wheeled and beckoned to us expressively. We hurried forward. Below, on the fourth story, three shuttered windows faced us. In the centre one, the wind had blown half the blind open. Behind it, we gazed on a solid wooden panel, which filled the window from top to bottom, from side to side, behind the glass.

"An exact duplicate of the window panels of Heidenmuller's wooden room," I whispered. Tom and Dorothy nodded silently.

CHAPTER XVI

QUIETLY we drew back from the parapet and, closing the scuttle behind us, started down the narrow stairs. At their base, Dorothy stopped suddenly. As Tom came up, he noticed her delay and paused with his hand on the latch. "What is it, girl?" he asked, almost tenderly.

"You think we ought to go on, do you?" asked Dorothy hesitatingly.

"Of course we're going on," said Tom. "There's no question about it. That's what we're here for. What's the matter, anyway?"

"Frankly, I don't know," said Dorothy slowly. "If we come through this all right, I'll try never to say a word again, but somehow, — somehow —" She broke off without finishing.

"Cheer up, old girl," comforted Tom, putting his arm about her waist. "What should we do without your valiant spirit?"

I stood there mute. This was a new Dorothy, a silent, questioning woman different from the one I knew, and yet like her. I could not seem to collect my scattered wits enough to be of any service.

With an effort, Dorothy squared her shoulders. "Come on," she said firmly, and we started out for the door, Tom and I a couple of steps behind.

"Good for you," I whispered, as we turned in beside the haberdasher's shop and started up the stairs, at whose top we were forced to believe stood the laboratory of the man we sought, the workshop of the man who was trying to stop all war.

As we reached the second landing, Tom turned to me. "This is the queerest mixture of fireproof and firetrap I ever heard of," he ejaculated. "Iron stairs and wooden landings, with two doors on each side. Wonder if it keeps on like this all the way up?" It did; iron stairs and wooden landings succeeded each other, till the fourth story showed two doors, one on either side of a landing dimly illuminated by a skylight.

"It's one of the two," whispered Tom.

He tried one door softly, — locked. Tried the other. To my surprise it opened, and a bare room much like that where Tom and I had waited through the weary hours in Bloomsbury met our view. Just at that moment we heard a footstep clang on the iron stair below, and around the bend the handle of a broom came into sight, followed by an arm clad in the sleeve of a coarse jumper. The janitor halted in amazement as he saw our phalanx of three standing in the empty room. Before he could open his mouth, I addressed him.

"I want to rent this room," I said. "It suits me in many ways. What's the rent?"

"Four pund a month, sir, thank you," came the answer.

"Anybody else on this same story?" I asked.

"Just a Mr. Cragent, thank you, sir, who has a workshop across the way. He's out for good today, but he's been in and out quite a bit the few days he's been there, thank you, sir. I think he'll make you no trouble, sir."

I looked at Tom and Dorothy, who signed affirmatively. "I'll take it," I said. "Shall I have to see the agent?"

"No, sir, thank you," answered the man, "I'm the acting agent for this one building."

"Very well, then. Here you are." I handed over four pounds for the first month's rent, and turned back to survey my new found quarters more carefully. It was evidently one of two front rooms looking out on the street. The other front room with the rooms in the wing which stretched back must belong to the mysterious Cragent. Sullied with fog and smoke, our place was a typical London office, whose gray marble mantel and grate was the only relief to the naked walls.

The janitor, without a sign of wonder at our sudden invasion of his premises, turned with his broom and clanged down the iron stairs. Tom, Dorothy and I went inside and nearly closed the

door, leaving it open a crack for the purpose of observation.

"As long as we may have to be here off and on for a week or more, we may just as well be comfortable about it," said Tom, in a low tone. "Two of us can stay here, while the other one goes and gets some chairs and a little coal. You and Dorothy keep on the lookout, while I get enough furnishings to make us comfortable for a few hours."

"Sure thing," I said, my heart leaping up at the chance of a short tête-à-tête with Dorothy.

"I'm going with you, Tom," said Dorothy. "Jim can watch alone, all right," and she started out on the landing ahead of her brother.

Tom threw one glance at me. "See you shortly," he said, and followed. I resumed my place of watching.

Half an hour passed, and Tom and Dorothy were back with porters carrying a table, chairs and coal. In ten minutes after their arrival, there was a brisk fire in the grate, we were comfortably disposed about it, and the porters had departed. Dorothy sat gazing into the fire with that same dreamy quiet which had so characterized her appearance for the last few days. I sat watching Dorothy, and Tom was busy lighting his pipe. Suddenly I heard a slight and repeated noise. With a sign to Tom, I rose and tiptoed to the door. There was no one coming up. I went to the land-

ing and listened. No more result. Yet I had surely heard footsteps. I went back into the room and closed the door. Tom was beside me in a moment, pipe in hand, but, as I cast a hurried glance about me, I saw that Dorothy had not stirred. She still sat, her head on her hand, gazing into the glowing coals. The footsteps were louder now, and I went to one boundary wall and then to another. There was some one pacing up and down in Cragent's rooms. Tom was beside me as I bent to listen, his face the picture of eagerness.

"There must have been some one in there all the time," I whispered. "But if there was, I should have thought he would have been disturbed by our moving in and would have come out."

"The janitor told me that Cragent had not come in, and that there was no one working with him," muttered Tom. "I don't see through it."

Back and forth went the steps. Tom put his pipe in his mouth and began smoking with long regular puffs.

"I believe there's another entrance to these rooms," he said finally. "I'm going out to reconnoitre." Silently and carefully he tiptoed out, without Dorothy's knowing of his departure. I brought my chair over nearer the wall and sat down to wait.

A hush followed, broken only by the incessant low roar of the city, that roar which to the attentive

ear in its deep, firm bass is wholly differentiated from the shrill staccato of New York, the lower, swifter tones of Paris, or the middle-toned, ordered hum of Berlin. On the other side of the wall the steps went on, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, turn, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, turn. On and on, with unvarying regularity, marched the heavy, thrusting step that reverberated over the old floor. Dorothy sat motionless, her eyes still fixed upon the fire, oblivious to the world, her soft hair contrasting with the rich fur of her coat lying draped over the back of an old chair. I heard the slow creak of an opening door, and went softly toward a beckoning arm in gray.

"I won't come in," whispered Tom excitedly, "I've got the trick. There's another entrance to his rooms. We'll cage him between us and get a good look at him, anyway. There's a little office corresponding to this on the other side, where I can wait. You stay by the bay window and watch for me. If he comes my way, wave to me. If he comes yours, I'll wave to you. Gee! I haven't had more fun for an age."

Off Tom travelled, down the stairs, walking with an exaggerated caution, and I turned in, smiling. Dorothy had not roused at the interruption. I began to worry a bit about this strange abstracted-

ness. Could she be quite well? No, that was quite foolish, for she seemed the picture of health. Then the footsteps took my attention for a moment, — one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, turn, and repeat. It was like the trampling of feet in the "Tale of Two Cities." The single footstep seemed to swell into a roar of charging troops. Was this walker the man who was trying to stop all war? Were the footsteps above and around those of the thousands he had slain or that he was to slay? Were we marching among the ghostly shades of the future? Were we in that crowding throng? What dreadful mystery lay behind the wooden panels of those windows? I fell to speculating on the appearance of the stranger behind the wall, and always the form of the man who was trying to stop all war took on the slight graceful form of a Southerner, and the face was the clear swarthy face of Regnier. Try as I might, I could not give the shadowy man we pursued any other face or form. The footsteps went on and on.

Dorothy aroused. "Where's Tom?" she said, looking around.

"He's away for a moment," I said, slightly mendaciously. "He'll be back shortly."

"He ought to have told me he was going," she said, a little impatiently, but her reverie proved too strong for her to escape, and she sank back into

her dreamy abstraction. The twilight began to come down as we sat watching and as I listened. As it fell, the fire's rose played yet more softly on Dorothy's beautiful hands lying on the arm of her chair, showed a bit of rounded cheek and a translucent shell-like ear. Gradually I forgot my whole mission. The man became a ghost and faded silently away. Tom waiting on tiptoe in the office next door was quite forgotten. Dorothy and I and the fire. This new Dorothy, dreamy, quiet, almost clinging, with those new depths in her eyes, was carrying me quite beyond myself.

"Dorothy," I said, in a low voice, "Dorothy."

She turned. "What is it, Jim?" she said.

I tried to speak but I could not. The rushing words overwhelmed me. I could not make myself intelligible, and I sat there shivering with the intensity of my feeling, and yet unable to say what I wished. I found my voice again. "Dorothy," I began, "I want to tell you."

Dorothy's eyes met mine for a moment, and then her long lashes fell. "I've been thinking," she stammered — "thinking — thinking" — I bent forward eagerly — "of our old home on Long Island Sound." The words came with a rush, as if she had just seized them from the air. "You never went down there, but it is the loveliest place," she went on hurriedly. "The sea, in a great crescent bay, paved with the whitest sand, and an

old colonial house on a little rise." She was talking at top speed now.

"But, Dorothy," I broke in, "I want you to know—"

She gave me no chance to finish. "Tom has a laboratory that he has fitted up down by the shore," she went on, still more swiftly, the words fairly tumbling over each other, "and we work there when we're not off on the Black Arrow. When we get back, I'm going straight down; I want to see the place so badly."

"Dorothy," I began again.

"Oh, and did you see the account of the reception at the Ambassador's," said Dorothy, as hastily as before. "They had the whole thing twisted upside down; names all tangled up. They got Tom's name as Professor Thomas Orrington, and you as James." She stopped short.

"How did they get yours?" I asked eagerly.

"Did you see that they are tearing up the embankment down by the obelisk?" was the extremely pertinent reply. As all three of us had spent a quarter of an hour a day or two before, watching those same operations, it seemed probable that I had seen them.

"But, Dorothy," I pleaded. "Just a minute, I want to—"

Dorothy sprung from her chair and started for the door. "I'm going to find Tom," she said.

"Stop," I called in a low voice. "'The man' is on the other side of the partition walking up and down. Listen!"

Dorothy stood still for a moment in the very poise of flight, and we both listened intently. The roar of the city was the only sound. The measured footsteps had ceased. When they had stopped I had no idea. I had proved an unfaithful watcher.

"Then, for heaven's sake, where's Tom?" I cried, as I rushed to the window.

Dorothy, surprised from her attitude, followed me. I gazed from the window up and down the house fronts and street. Tom was nowhere in sight. Dorothy leaned forward beside me to look out and in the intoxication of her immediate presence every idea beside my wish to tell her of my love was swept away. I seized her hand.

"Dorothy," I exclaimed, "you must and shall hear what I am going to say."

Her hand, at first fluttering and striving to escape, gave up its struggle, and she stood silent, listening, with averted head.

"Dorothy," I began again.

At that very moment the door flew open and Tom, red and breathless, dashed into the room. Dorothy sprang towards him like a startled fawn, and I was left with outstretched hand, the modern Tantalus of London. Tom was too excited to notice our positions.

"Well, I must say you are a pretty pair," he exclaimed. "All this work and trouble gone for nothing, because you wouldn't take a little bit of care at the end. You call yourself a newspaper man. There's only one department you could handle and that's the Obituary column."

"What's the matter?" I asked, coming down to earth.

"Matter," cried Tom disgustedly, "the whole thing's up so far as this clue is concerned, and we've got to start in all over again. I've seen 'the man,' and if you had been even reasonably alert you'd have seen him too, and we would have him trapped."

"You've seen 'the man.' Are you sure?" asked Dorothy breathlessly.

Tom nodded gravely. "I have, and I think for some reason that he knew me," he answered more slowly. "When I left you I went over to the office on the other side and waited. I sat just where I could see if any one opened on my side. I had been there perhaps half an hour when the door opened, and a man in a slouch hat, whose face was hidden in the dim twilight of the hall, stepped out. Just as he caught sight of me, he jumped back and locked the door. 'That's the time for Jim,' I said to myself, and ran to the window and waved. I could have waved my arm off, I believe, and you would never have known it, so when I realized that,

I hurried down and over to these stairs. On the third flight, I heard steps coming down the fourth. I came up very softly and there, just descending, was the man in the slouch hat. When he saw me, he threw up his arm across his face, said what sounded to me like 'You again,' and backed away into the darkness of the corner. I followed, but before I could reach him, a door behind him flew open and he dashed through, slamming it in my face. I flew against the door and it gave. By the time I was in the room he was across it and out the other door. I followed him down the stairs but lost him in the street. If you people had been half decently on the watch, we'd have had something, but now he knows we're after him and he'll simply disappear from here. But I believe I've seen that chap somewhere, before. There was a queer familiarity about him, and what did he mean by, 'You again?' It's barely possible that your old theory may be right, Jim, or it may be that you have driven Regnier so into my head that I looked to find him in a man I don't know at all."

"Well, I know," said Dorothy, with a sudden reversion to her old independent spirit. "It isn't. But how did the man happen to have keys in his hand for those doors on the story below. I don't understand that."

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Tom. "I was in too much of a hurry to get at the chap to pay any

attention to the way he unlocked the doors. Of course there is a bare chance that the fellow may be a harmless citizen who mistook me for either a highwayman or a lunatic."

"Not with the wooden panels on the windows," said Dorothy. "Let's go down and look at the doors."

Regretfully I locked the door and left the bright fire and bare-walled room where Dorothy had come so near to listening to me. I was disappointed, — of course I was disappointed at my carelessness in losing the man I sought, but — Dorothy's hand had lain in mine without struggling that last instant of time before Tom came in. There was some balm in Gilead. Yet delays are dangerous, and I felt I must not lose time in following up any advantage gained.

As I turned the corner of the stairs, I heard a low exclamation from Dorothy and Tom's expressive whistle. They were bending over an open door, examining the lock with a match, which Tom held shielded between his palms. As I joined them, Tom pointed without comment at the place where the lock had been. Its bare wood showed lighter surfaces, as the signs had showed the marks of the handiwork of "the man," and nail holes that told of disappearing metal.

"How's that for a pick lock," said Tom. "The other one was opened in just the same way.

Cragent is the man and I saw him, but couldn't reach him. What a control be must have over his instrument to be able to destroy a battleship and open the lock of a door by means of disappearing metal."

Dorothy shuddered. "It's dark here and cold. I want to go back to the hotel," she said a little tremulously. "I'll be all right in the morning, and I'll go with you after 'the man,' but now I'm tired — tired."

I think the horror of the thing shadowed us all a bit in that gloomy old London house. The darkness of the corners, the man who had slain so many of his fellow men separated from us by a single partition seemed gruesome and deadening. Those footsteps pacing up and down, did they mean more slaughter, new inventions? Was the mysterious man whom we had sought, the familiar figure Tom had imagined; and dominating thought of all, did Dorothy's hand rest in mine without struggling that last moment? There was enough to keep my thoughts at work on the way home, even though Dorothy persistently gazed from the window of the four-wheeler and uttered never a word.

As we left the carriage, Tom broke silence. "If you feel like it, Jim, I think it wouldn't be a bad plan to look up Hamerly to-night, and see what he says to all this."

"A good idea," I said. "I'll get a hasty bite and run up there. No use in wasting time."

"All right," said Tom, and Dorothy, as we parted, gave me one shy glance that sent me away in a golden maze of joy and hope.

Hamerly was out when I arrived at his lodgings, called away suddenly for a couple of days, the maid reported. On my way back, however, I came to one very definite conclusion. Hamerly must have seen the man face to face in Dr. Heidenmuller's laboratory. He could settle one vexed question anyway. I was going to find a picture of Regnier if there was one to be had.

I reached the Savoy to find word from Tom that he and Dorothy had gone over to the Cecil to see some friends. I followed, leaving word at the office that I had gone. As I stood in the corridor waiting, a page came by, calling my name for the telephone. I took up the receiver with a deep thrill of anticipation. "Orrington?"

"Yes." It was one of our correspondents.

"War just declared between England and Germany. I have inside information that the fleets will meet in the Channel, to-morrow, off Dover. I suppose you'll hunt your man there?"

"I'm off for the scene of battle by the first train," I answered. "Much obliged," and I hung up the receiver.

As I stepped out under the great awning at the

head of the courtyard, the gayety and life of the full tide of evening was sweeping through. Beautifully dressed women, gallant men, life and youth and pleasure, — and to-morrow — what? Would a single one of those mighty ships, would one of those brave sailors return? As I stood there, a hush came. The news which I had heard had just been received. Then came a mighty roar, "War, War, War." Then, as it died away, out burst a great increasing wave of song, the whole multitude joining in one mighty chorus, "God save the King." I saw Dorothy hastening towards me, her lips quivering.

"Jim, have you got to go to sea?" she said stammering. "I'm so afraid no boat will ever return," and she ended with a sob. I could wait no longer.

"Dear love," I said, "I must, but I love you, dear, and if I die to-morrow or fifty years off, I love you and you alone," and there, as the last bars of the song rang forth in the full tide of exaltation, as the clamor of the crowded street outside rose to its height, Dorothy and I came to our own.

CHAPTER XVII

As we stood there in the hush that followed the last bars of the song, Tom came towards us. Dorothy turned to him, starry eyed, and he looked quickly at me. I nodded. Tom smiled widely, as he stretched out his hand.

"Nobody else in the world I'd as soon would have her, old man," he said, as he nearly wrung my hand off. Then turning to his sister, "Well, little girl, so you've waked up at last to the real state of things." Dorothy clung to his arm.

"Tom, dear, I have, and I am very happy, but — " her voice broke. "It may only be for to-night. Jim leaves at once for the fleet. He is going out to watch the battle, and if the man sends out his waves to sink those ships, I am afraid he'll sink every other boat anywhere near."

"This, my children," said Tom, with a flowing gesture, "is where your old uncle Thomas steps in as the benevolent fairy who saves the handsome lover of the beautiful young princess."

Dorothy looked at him, her whole soul in her eyes. "Tom, don't joke. Have you any way by which Jim can go and be safe? I can't ask him to stay behind for me, when he ought to go."

"Dorothy," said Tom seriously, "I think Jim can go and be perfectly safe. I thought this whole business out, coming over in the boat. Not being completely and totally blind, I foresaw the inevitable occurrence which has inevitably occurred, and I didn't want to lose Jim for my own sake, as well as my sister's. I've had this on my mind ever since we left Portsmouth. I knew he'd think he ought to go; so as soon as I reached Folkestone I had a little yacht built, a sloop with an auxiliary motor, which hasn't a nail in her. She's all wood, rubber and canvas, except the engine, and if the engine disappears there's a set of rubber valves that instantly closes the shaft hole. 'The man' can come right up alongside, stand up and throw waves at her, and she can't sink. I had a wire from there to-night that she was done. They've been working on her twenty-four hours a day since I started her, and she's a mighty nice little boat. The crew is engaged, and all Jim has to do is take possession."

"That ought to save the boat," said Dorothy, shaking her head sadly, "but how can you save Jim from the fate of Dr. Heidenmuller, or of the men on the battleships who died as he did?"

"You never did have much opinion of my brains, Dorothy," said Tom. "Don't you suppose I thought of the effect those waves would have? You know none of the other ships in Portsmouth

harbor were injured, when the German ship disappeared. That proves that the man has some way of directing his waves. So he may not hurt Jim at all. But I didn't take any chances on that. I've had a cage of caema built over the cockpit, and everything is arranged so that the boat can be run without going outside that cage."

Dorothy heaved a sigh of relief. She bent forward and kissed Tom in the full face of the assembly.

"Tom, you're the finest, best man in the world, except one."

"That's it," said Tom with a grin. "Second place for old uncle Thomas now."

"But Tom," I said, "I follow the boat construction all right, but for Heaven's sake what is this caema that I've heard so much about, and what's the use of the cage?"

"Oh, I forgot you might not understand that," said Tom. "You know, or you ought to know, it's in every school physics, that if you put a cage of a conductor like copper around any instrument which is easily affected by any electrical discharge, the electrical waves spread out, follow the surface of the cage, and don't penetrate the interior. The instrument is wholly unaffected. Well, caema is the newest organic conductor. It acts the same way with any radio-active waves. They spread out all over it, and can't get through. I've had a

cage built of it to insulate you and everything else that's inside."

"Why wouldn't it work around the battleships then?" I asked.

"Because the battleships are made of steel; and if you put a cage like that around them, they could hardly move. It only worked on your boat because it's wood outside."

"Tom," I said gravely, "I imagine your forethought and knowledge will save my life."

"I know it will," said Tom cheerfully. "Now, what time do you leave?"

"In fifty-five minutes, from Charing Cross, on the Channel Express," I said.

"We'll go with you to Folkestone," said Tom.

"Of course," said Dorothy.

A few minutes at the Savoy, a brief ride down the lighted Strand in the midst of the noisy crowds, a moment in the rush of the station, and a long ride in the darkness, in a full compartment, brought us back to Folkestone.

All the way down I held Dorothy's hand in my own. All the way down her warm body was close to mine. Despite all Tom's precautions, something might go wrong, but, if it ended to-night, we had this, and hope persisted that it would not end to-night, that, on the other hand, this was the beginning of many happy years.

The crew of three was on board the little yacht,

which looked no different in the dark from any other boat, though, as we came alongside in the skiff, I could just see a cage of some dark substance above the cockpit. We entered through a latticed door toward the bow, and Tom for half an hour examined every part of the boat with a lantern, the caema screen most vigilantly of all. Dorothy and I sat close together, watching the lights and their reflection in the water. All about the pier was hurry and movement. Three tugs, bearing correspondents, passed us as we lay at anchor, and half a dozen despatch boats and cutters. Tom came up to us at last.

"Jim, if you keep the door of the cage fastened, nothing can happen to you."

"Don't be foolhardy, though, for my sake," said Dorothy.

"Come, Dorothy, we must go. It's time for Jim to start," said Tom gently, and I strained Dorothy to my heart and felt her wet cheek against mine.

"I'll be back safely, dear love," I whispered, as I helped her into the waiting boat.

Tom wrung my hand as he left. "Jim, I'd go with you, but I think I ought to stay with Dorothy."

"I know you ought," I replied, and they cast off.

As we started off into the blackness, Dorothy's clear "Till we meet again, dear," were the last words that reached me.

Our London office had been able to obtain pretty definite information as regards the whereabouts of the fleet, and our little boat was a marvel of swiftness. So it was with no great surprise that, as the morning dawned, I saw far ahead of me, off the port bow, the rear ships of the squadron going slowly ahead, and shortly after came in sight of the whole fleet. My binoculars showed the greatest spectacle I had ever beheld. From East and West, from North and South had come the hurrying ships to guard the coasts of the great island empire from attack. I counted forty mighty ships as I gazed. In regular formation they went onward, slowly, disdainfully, proudly. Somewhere to the north, beyond that gray line which bordered my view on every side, another fleet was coming. At best, it was to be the greatest trial of naval strength the world had ever seen. All other naval battles would sink into obscurity before this, in which were met the utmost resources of Germany and England. At worst, it would be a series of dumb, helpless disasters, as the fleet, stricken by an unseen, unknown foe, would perish. Near me were two of the boats bearing men from the papers. The men on them jeered as they saw our dark cage, and passed uncomplimentary remarks on the appearance of my boat. I kept silence, watching the line of sky and sea. Out on the farthest point, at last I saw a dot, then half a dozen

more, then more, and I counted up to thirty. Over on my right a great splash of water rose, and a dull reverberation sounded. Germany had fired the first shot. The flagship of the English admiral was nearest me, on the extreme left of the line. As I watched, I saw the great ship turn slightly, and I knew by the sound that they had fired in return. Sight availed nothing in telling whence came the shot, for the newest smokeless powder left no trace. The ship swung back on her course, the great flag of the Empire hanging at her stern, scarce lifted by the breeze. I could see figures, through my powerful glasses, hurrying about the decks, and three or four officers on the bridge peering through their glasses at the enemy. I had focussed wholly on the British flagship, and watched intently for her next move. Suddenly my lenses grew blank, and I was staring at sea and sky. The gray waves, rising and falling, filled the field. The battleship had disappeared. I dropped my glasses in utter amaze. I found myself once more repeating the words of Joslinn concerning the Alaska. "Vanished like a bursting soap-bubble." I looked to right and left. I raised my glasses. Of all that company of men, of all those implements of war and of destruction, not one thing remained. Yes, there was a dark spot on a lifting wave. Eagerly I trained my lenses on it. Now it came up on a higher wave. A gleam of color. It was like cloth.

I FOUND MYSELF COUNTING ALOUD.

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Again it rose. It was the flag of England. Alone it had survived.

"The man" was at work. Where would he strike next? The rest of the fleet went on, as if no blow had come. Not by a sign did they show what had come upon them. I glanced at my wire screen, and at my crew who stood in a huddled group. The correspondents, in the boats nearby, were standing with white faces, peering ahead. I turned my glasses on the German fleet. The leading ship was coming forward, under full steam. A shot struck just to my right, and I realized that peril might come from other sources than from the man who was trying, no, who *was* stopping all war. But it was all in the game of life. My part in the game just then was to be at that very place, and I thrust back the thought of parting with Dorothy that, despite myself, arose.

Through my glasses, I gazed fixedly at the German ship as she came on. Then, as before, came the utter blankness, the gray sky and the waves rising and falling. One English ship and one German. Where would he strike next? As I asked the question, another English ship disappeared more swiftly than a cloud of light smoke scattered by the wind. I found myself counting aloud. In a state of utter unconsciousness as to anything else, I gazed fixedly to see which would go next. "Four," I counted, as a German cruiser off on the

right went down. "Five! six!" They were going at the rate of one every two or three minutes now. "'The man' must be in one spot, and he has the range now," I said to myself, as two more ships disappeared. Those ships that remained were firing rapidly. Now and again a shot would hit, and a cloud of steel fly out from a turret, or a big hole appear in a side. Their brothers were dying an awful death, the sister ships of the fleet were disappearing before their eyes, but the men who directed those gray bull dogs of war kept on. In a perfect frenzy of excitement, I cheered aloud. "Oh plucky, plucky!" I cried, as the squadrons, closing their thinned ranks, bore down on each other. Twenty had gone from eighty-two, destroyed by this wonder-worker. Ten of the rest were in sore straits. Shots were falling on every side of me, but, in the mad excitement of the moment, I heeded them no more than if they had been paper pellets. Then the death-dealing machine seemed suddenly to accelerate its action. "Twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight," I counted slowly. The fleets never changed a point of their course. Not by a gun was the fire slackened, save in the few ships disabled by the enemy. The fortieth ship had disappeared for ten minutes. Then, as by a common understanding, the fire of each side slackened for a moment as the ships, closing up their ranks, maneuvered for new

positions. In the lessening din, I could hear the chug-chug of the little motor of our boat. That sound always carried me back to the night when Dorothy and I sought the man who saw the Alaska go down. The dark Jersey shore, the little launch, and Dorothy beside me suddenly rose before my eyes, and I was there, and not in the midst of this awful carnage. But it was only for a moment. The pause in the work of destruction ended almost as it began. One after another, twenty-two ships more went down, and the antagonists, who had started with eighty-two of the proudest ships that any empire ever sent forth, were reduced to a shattered remnant of twenty. Then suddenly they gave way. Flesh and blood could stand no more. Slowly, but proudly as ever, and with no haste of flight, the Germans drew off to the north, the English to the south. As they parted, another ship and yet another disappeared. I groaned in impotent agony. "Spare them, spare the rest?" I cried wildly. "Can't you see they have given up the fight."

Remorseless in his purpose, the man went on. Again and again, with measured blows, he struck the retreating fleet. One by one, their existence ended, and the now sunlit ripples of the Channel rose and fell, where a moment before had sailed these massive hulks.

I veiled my eyes at the close, but opened them

as I felt a touch on my shoulder. "Are we to be killed too, sir?" said my skipper, with twitching lips and corded brow, where the cold sweat stood in great drops. "Can we go now, sir?"

I nodded numbly, and we started. The only boats in sight were two boats of the newspapers, that had lain in apathy near us. As they saw us start, their skippers started, too. The correspondents on their decks sat in stricken attitudes. Not one was writing. They crouched, huddled together, like men dying from cold. The three boats ran towards shore, side by side. With fixed gaze I followed the one on the right. Suddenly, she also disappeared, and I fell into a wild rage. "You fool, you fool," I cried, shaking my fists. "Don't you know a non-combatant?"

The men on the boat to the left rose in an agony of alarm, shouted incoherently, waved handkerchiefs. My fury suddenly became extinct, and I watched them apathetically. It would be their turn next, or ours. I had lost all faith in Tom's protective schemes. One thing ran back and forth in my brain. "If I had only married Dorothy before I came, she could have worn black. Now, as it was, would she or wouldn't she?" That was the only thing which distressed me. They say a man awaiting instant death thinks over all his past life. I didn't, I only worried as to whether Dorothy would or would not wear black.

I looked up wearily. The sea was blank. The other boat had gone. "So you went first," I said, calmly enough now. "I've always wondered what the next world was like. Now, I'm going to know."

Ceaselessly went the chug, chug of the engine. Back and forth into the shuttle of my thought went the Jersey coast, and the problem of whether or not Dorothy would wear black.

The noise ceased in an instant, and I wondered at it dully. The crew sat heavily in the stern, the skipper holding the wheel. I could see his brown, knotted hands white with the anguished grip with which he clasped its rim. We lay in the long swell of the Channel in utter silence. Of all those thousands, we were left alone, rising and falling on the billows, absolutely without energy and without the slightest desire to act. The motor stopped, we could hoist the main sail from the cage, but we thought of no such thing. For minutes, which seemed like hours, we lay there while I gazed indifferently at the water. A hoarse cry from the skipper aroused me.

"Lookee there!" he shouted. I turned at the command and started. Scarce a hundred yards away was the conning tower of a submarine above the waves. Its top was open and a man's head, the face masked with huge goggles, faced us. As I gazed with open mouth, the head disappeared,

the top closed, and the conning tower sunk beneath the waves. I had seen " the man."

The sight somehow galvanized me into energy. Now I had seen that the antagonist was a human being, and not a superhuman power, I would fight for my life. I ordered the sail raised through the cage, taking great care not to disturb it, and we started slowly back to Folkestone. Hours later, as we came up towards the harbor, I saw a yacht approaching. On the bridge were three figures. There was the flutter of a white dress beside the man at the wheel. As they came nearer, I saw it was the yacht I had chartered for our hunt in the Channel. The man and the girl on the bridge were Tom and Dorothy. As they came alongside, Tom called.

" What happened ? "

I raised my head. " We four are all that are left," I said sadly.

CHAPTER XVIII

As I came over the side of the yacht, Dorothy was at the rail and in a moment was in my arms. "Thank God! Thank God! you are back," she murmured. "You are back and the awful waiting is over, but how many wives and sweethearts will wait all the rest of their lives!"

Tom was but a moment behind his sister. "Do you mean to say that every boat, without exception, has gone?" he questioned.

"Every one within my range of vision. Between eighty and ninety in all," I answered.

"Good God! What a catastrophe," said Tom dazedly. "I can't realize it."

My little yacht was still alongside, and the skipper now hailed us. "Mr. Orrington, sir, could somebody else take our boat in, and could we go with you? I think, sir, we'd feel easier, if we could go with you."

There was something to do. In a few minutes an exchange had been made, and my crew was on the larger yacht. As they came over the rail, Tom met them with a low request to keep their mouths shut.

"Don't fear us," said my skipper. "We're alive, that's all we ask for. We don't have any call or wish to talk about it. Do we, mates?" The other men shook their heads dumbly, and went slowly to their places.

"What became of your propeller?" asked Tom, coming back towards us.

"Disappeared. Your rubber valves closed the hole."

"Then he tried to sink you."

"Undoubtedly," I answered. "It was your wooden boat and cage of caema which saved me."

As we made for Folkestone, we met other boats hurrying out on the Channel. Tom had ventured out farther than any one else. One by one, they hailed us, but our captain gave them no news and made on.

"I wish I knew what to do," I said wearily. "I can't write this thing. I feel stunned and broken. I'm not sure what I ought to do, anyway. Any ordinary or even extraordinary thing is proper journalistic stuff, but this is too big, somehow, for individual use. Yet the one thing that ought to be done is to get the news to the world as soon as possible."

"I don't know what to tell you," said Dorothy hesitatingly. "Isn't your London correspondent to be in Folkestone waiting for you?"

"Yes," I said.

"Well, ask him. You and I will go ashore, and Tom can put out with the yacht. Then there will be no chance of the sailors' telling anything."

"All right," I answered. "I don't seem to care what happens."

Folkestone Pier was a black mass of people looking out to sea as we came in, and a surging crowd came towards us, as Dorothy and I landed, while our boat, with Tom in the stern, shot back towards the yacht. Had it not been for three or four policemen, we could not have forced our way through the jam, but by their aid we managed to struggle through, shaking our heads in response to the thousand questions. As the human tide ebbed back towards the end of the pier, I heard my name and turned. It was Maxwell, our London correspondent.

"What news?" he asked eagerly, when he reached me.

"I'll tell you, if you'll get us out of this crowd," I answered.

"I've got a motor here. Come on," he said, and we made our way out, boarded the motor and started slowly off. I looked at the chauffeur.

"Run out to a quiet place where we can be alone, will you?" I said to Maxwell.

In a few moments we had cleared the town, and were on the bluff above the sea. There was no one around. "This will do," I said.

As we descended, Maxwell looked questioningly at Dorothy.

"This is my fiancée, Miss Haldane," I explained. "I forgot to introduce you. She knows the whole story."

Just where we paused, an iron seat faced the wide expanse of blue and shining water, and for a moment I gazed out over the Channel and breathed a silent prayer of thankgiving for my escape, of remembrance for the men who lay beneath that flood. Then I turned, and began my story. Ere I had spoken a dozen words, Maxwell had his note book out, writing rapidly. Throughout, he wrote without a question, without a word. As I ended, he closed his note book slowly.

"What we want to know, Mr. Maxwell," said Dorothy anxiously, "is the right thing to do. Should this go straight to the paper, or ought it to go first to the English government? You see there's probably no living man who saw this except Jim and his sailors, and we want to do right. We want to do right by the men that died, and the people that remain."

Wise, able, thoughtful, a scholar and a gentleman, a great journalist, a man who counted among his friends the greatest men of two countries, — no man could be found who could decide such a question better than Maxwell. He looked at Dorothy.

"That was the very question in my mind, Miss

Haldane," he answered. "But I think there's only one answer. I believe we should take this straight to the King. He is at Buckingham Palace, and I believe we should go directly to him with the story. I have met him a number of times, and I know we can get an audience immediately."

"I'm very glad you think so," I said. "How about the trains?"

"We can do it better in my car," he replied.

Ten minutes for gasolene, and we started off. Through quiet villages where red farmhouses stood framed in vivid green, by tower and manor house embowered in ancient oaks, through hedge-rowed land and city street we sped, till the rows of villas, each modelled from a single type, showed the outskirts of London. Then, at a slower pace, we passed through a smoky fog, across the river, by the Abbey, to the long front of Buckingham Palace. All the way we sat silent under the heavy burden of the news that brought the end of those long centuries of unconquerable British power. No enemy who could be conquered had they met. The day had come for peace, and Britain and Germany had been the greatest sufferers in the change of epochs.

Past the red-coated sentry, to the door of the palace we drove. A few words on a card brought a secretary with a startled face, and scarce five minutes had elapsed before Maxwell was ushered

in. Dorothy and I remained in the car. As Maxwell left, he remarked, " Orrington, under any ordinary circumstances, I'd ask for an audience for you, but now there's no time to be lost. I can get an immediate interview alone, where I could not get one with you."

" That's all right," I said apathetically, " I'm glad not to be obliged to move."

We waited before the palace the better part of an hour before the door opened and Maxwell emerged. As he came towards us, I could see that he was blowing his nose vigorously, and that his eyes were moist. He got into the car without a word, but as we swung over the bridge into the Park, Maxwell made his first remark, staring off into vacancy, " I always thought the King was about the finest man that England held. Now I know it."

That was all I ever learned of the interview, but, as we came by the Abbey, I heard a newsboy crying, " Destruction of the fleets," and I looked inquiringly at Maxwell. He nodded in reply, " We published it first. I telephoned the news from the palace."

Weary and sad as I was, broken with the horror of the day, my purpose had become stronger than ever before. As we ran slowly through Whitehall and around to the Savoy, the thoughts of the past were disappearing in cogitations as to the effect

this would have upon our search for "the man." Though every battleship in the world was sunk, my purpose held good. I would find the destroyer.

The next morning came a startling announcement. The King of England, the President of the United States, the President of the French Republic, the Mikado of Japan, and the Czar of Russia issued an immediate call for representatives of all nations to assemble at The Hague to consider the question of disarmament. That, in itself, differed but little from the other summonses which had resulted in academic discussions, but the paragraph which succeeded the call was one of the most extraordinary the world had ever seen. The five rulers who issued this invitation each pledged himself to do everything in his power to bring about complete disarmament, and to end war in the whole world. In view of the urgency of the situation, the meeting was to be held in a month at The Hague.

It was soon learned that the initiative in this step had come from the King of England, that the four other rulers had gladly joined with him in the action, when asked concerning it by wireless, and that the Emperor of Germany had been invited to make one of the number, but had refused. That seemed to leave Germany as the stumbling-block in the way. Complete disarmament was wholly possible if every nation were to agree. If a single

powerful nation refused to disarm, it became practically an impossibility, — for no nation would give up her defenses, with a powerful armored foe at her gates.

I had scarcely finished reading the account in the morning paper, as a waiter approached with a wireless message from the office. "Take three weeks' vacation, and then go to Hague as special correspondent for peace conference."

"Confound it!" I ejaculated, as I read the missive. "Look at this," and I passed the paper over to Tom and Dorothy. Tom's face fell.

"Of course it's a good thing in a way," said Tom, "but it takes you right off the track of 'the man.'"

"I refuse to go off the track," I said warmly. "I'm going to wire them back refusing this."

"Oh, I wouldn't do that," interrupted Dorothy eagerly. "You stand almost, or quite as much of a chance to get news of 'the man' at the peace conference, as elsewhere. We can take the wave-measuring machine right over to The Hague, and work from there. Besides, I want the three weeks' vacation."

"Better take the vacation, and put it in with me down at Cambridge," remarked Tom. "They're doing some work in one of the colleges that might help me with the Denckel machine. I'd like to watch it awhile, and see its bearing on the case.

Dorothy would have enjoyed it once, but now she's hopeless. You two can come down, though, and roam round for three weeks there, as well as anywhere else. It's a jolly country, and we'll have a good time."

"Well, if you feel convinced it's the thing to do, I'll do it," I said resignedly. "But I want to put in three weeks here in London, getting things together. We've never run down that Cragent clue yet."

"You are neither of you going to do any such thing," remarked Dorothy firmly. "I'll tell you what you are going to do for the next three weeks. You're going to Paris with me."

"Oh, pshaw!" said Tom disgustedly. "Paris is a hole. I want to go to Cambridge. Do you like Paris, Jim?"

"Not particularly," I said, with some hesitation, "but then —"

"We're going," said Dorothy.

"What for?" said Tom argumentatively.

"Well, if you must know," said Dorothy blushing, "I want to shop."

Tom burst into a roar of laughter, and I looked at him in bewilderment. He leaned over towards me.

"Got the cards engraved yet, Jim?"

Dorothy blushed still more. I saw a sudden light.

"Of course we go to Paris," I said enthusiastically. "It's the place of places."

"And you'll sit round for hours, waiting in a dinky little cab or in a motor car on the Boulevard Haussmann, while Dorothy spends her patrimony inside. Is there a special duty on trousseaux, Dorothy?" he asked, with an affectation of seriousness.

"I wish you'd stop," said Dorothy emphatically.

"All right," said Tom. "Only I thought I'd better wire my banker to see if my balance would leave us anything to go home on."

Three weeks in Paris, hours when I sat and smoked outside big shops and little shops, afternoons in the Bois, little "diners à trois" at great restaurants, life, and light, and joy. Three weeks with Dorothy, then the day express to The Hague, and a week of watching the arrival of the envoys, while Tom, who had run across an old assistant of Carl Denckel's, set up the wave-measuring machine, and spent his days working over it, in an attempt to widen its scope and bring it nearer to its ever present mission. It still remained our chief reliance for our search.

Anxious as I was to return to the quest of "the man," the work at The Hague proved fascinating in the extreme. My daily report told of the coming of representatives from almost every nation, and, best of all, told of the free and full powers given

them to agree to complete disarmament, provided it could be universal. Day after day, in the month which intervened between the calling of the convention and the opening of the meeting, had come reports of parliaments and congresses hastily gathered together to consider the question, and of their eager passing of favorable votes. One by one they came, till every nation had joined in consent, save one. Germany still held aloof. Since the disappearance of the fleets, the German emperor had made no movement to advance the war, but kept his armies gathered, his transports riding at anchor in the ports. The Reichstag met, and discussed most favorably the call to The Hague, waiting anxiously for some sign from its imperial master, but none came. In absolute seclusion, in a lone castle in the depths of the Black Forest, he sulked like Achilles in his tent.

The first day of meeting came with every power represented save Germany. The second and third passed with no sign from Berlin. On the fourth, I began to see signs of difficulty. It was evident that the consent of the German empire was a *sine qua non*. Delegate after delegate arose and expressed the eager desire of his country to disarm and bring about universal peace, provided (and the provided was emphatic) all other nations did the same. On the evening of the fourth day, an American delegate rose, and by a powerful

speech so roused the assembly that a delegation was appointed to meet the German Emperor and ask him, in the name of the conference, to join with the other nations. After the delegation was named, the meeting adjourned for three days, until they could return.

On the night when the delegates were to return, I was in my place in the correspondents' section of the hall of the conference. The meeting came to order, the preliminary business was finished, and the presiding officer arose to say that the delegates had been delayed in returning, but had telegraphed that they would be there within an hour. He had scarcely finished speaking, when a door opened, and a marshal announced "The delegation sent to His Majesty the Emperor of Germany."

Travel-worn and weary, the five men walked up the aisle to the space at the front. "Gentlemen, are you ready to report?" said the presiding officer.

"We are," said the head of the delegation. "The Emperor of Germany refused absolutely to see us, pleading an indisposition. We were unable to obtain any satisfaction."

The grave assembly rose like the sea. Shouts, cries, requests for recognition, came in one clamorous volume, and the president sounded his gavel fiercely. The excitable Latins were shouting recriminations. It looked as if the seething mass

would break up in utter disorder, and the great conference would end without result. Far off by the door, I could see a marshal forcing his way through the crowded aisles, imploring, struggling, fighting. He reached the rostrum, mounted it, and spoke in the president's ear. With a tremendous effort, he shouted, " Silence for important news." Little by little, the crowd stilled. In a resonant voice came the words, " An envoy from the Emperor of Germany desires to address the conference in person."

A hush came over the assembly, a hush so sudden, so profound, that I could hear the scratching of the fountain pen with which the secretary before the president wrote the words. The aisles cleared, and the ordered assembly sat silently in their seats. The great door opened and, preceded by a corps of marshals, the envoy from the great Hohenzollern entered. The stiff, unbending figure, the haughty head, the piercing eyes and high, upturned moustache of the field marshal envoy showed his imitation of his master, the war lord. Proudly, as on parade, he paced to the space where the president, who had descended to the floor to greet him, stood. He bowed coldly and turned.

" My master has sent me here," he said abruptly, " to address your conference. These are his words, ' I have believed that war, that armies made for the best good of my state; I believe it still. I do

not believe in peace. But I cannot expose my navy to destruction, my sailors and my soldiers to death. I therefore agree to peace. My armies shall disband, my fortifications be torn down, my battleships sunk or turned to peaceful ends. My Reichstag will have confirmed my words ere now.'"

As one man, the assembly arose and cheered. Never, in his own city or from his own troops, came heartier greetings than that which rung out for the last ruler to take up the cause of peace. The field marshal stood there, while the tumult raged, his hands resting on the hilt of his sword, erect as ever, impassive as ever. As the cheering ended, he bowed to the assembly. Turning, he bowed to the president, and then, with martial step, he slowly withdrew. The delegates from Germany arrived the next day with power to disarm, and the business of signing the agreements and plans of disarmament went on so rapidly that the conference was able to adjourn in but a few days' time.

The day the conference closed, I rushed back from the telegraph office the moment I had sent off the last word of my final despatch. I found Tom and Dorothy in the laboratory. "There, thank goodness," I cried exultantly, "that's over. Now I can go back to the hunt for 'the man' with an easy conscience. What do you think that next move ought to be?"

"Hold on, till we finish this," said Tom. "We'll talk things over as soon as I get this screw set."

I watched him idly as he worked. "What is he trying to do now?" I asked Dorothy.

Just as I spoke, Tom moved his hand, the low buzz of a Ruhmkoff coil broke in on the silence of the room, and the glorious beauty of the tube of unknown gas that we had found in Heidenmuller's laboratory illumined the place.

"Why, there's the gas tube," I cried in amazement.

"Yes," said Dorothy. "From that tube has come a marvellous development of the Denckel apparatus. Tom has been able to receive with it right along, but never send. One day he thought of placing that tube of gas in the circuit, and now he can send, as well as receive. Tom has done a big thing. He can reverse the action of the machine, not only receive a message from any place, but shoot a wireless back across space, and have it strike exactly where he wishes. It's really a wonderful development, but I don't see how it's going to help us find 'the man,' and I don't want to give up. There, Tom is finishing. We'll talk things over now."

"If 'the man's' crusade were not over, it might be even more effective," I remarked reflectively. "It would have been strange enough if we had found him by means of the gas released from metal destroyed by his terrific power."

" It would have been," answered Dorothy.

I stood watching Tom, as, pipe in mouth, he set the revolving belt in motion and watched the moving cylinders.

" To what strength of wave is it adjusted ? " I asked.

" I've put it on the high," said Tom. " It's fixed for ' the man's ' waves. I've got one new dodge, though, among others. I have it arranged so I could have told at any time whether ' the man ' was sinking a ship or just experimenting. It's so delicate that when his waves strike a ship, the machine can tell it by the slight loss in power. See here," he turned on the switch in its revolution, " it's this." Flash went the beam.

A groan burst from Dorothy's lips. " He's at it again. There's a ship gone down."

Tom's face was ghastly. " That's right," he said. " Where is he ? "

Five minute's calculation brought it.

" He's in Tokio," said Dorothy.

Tom nodded. " What a fiend to have loose in the world. Here his mission is accomplished and war is over, and he keeps on."

Dorothy sprang from her chair. " No, it isn't that. I'm sure of it. He doesn't know that war is over. It must be that. We must tell him of it."

CHAPTER XIX

"WHAT is your idea, Dorothy?" asked Tom gravely. This last catastrophe, coming when all danger from the man who had stopped all war seemed past, had sobered us all.

"You said there was a mast with wires beside the conning tower of the submarine, that time you saw 'the man,' didn't you, Jim?" she asked.

I nodded.

"Well, that mast was the aerial of a wireless. I don't know what he uses it for, but apparently he has one. Now that we have the Denckel apparatus fixed to send waves to any given point, we can send off waves of all kinds to Tokio, calling him and recalling him, until we get a wave which his receiver will take. Then we can set up a straight, wireless receiving station here to take his answer."

"What will you say to him?" Tom asked.

"I'll just say, — 'To the man who stopped all war. War is over. All nations are disarming. Reply to us.'"

"It's worth trying, anyway," said Tom, with an air of finality. "I'll go right to work setting up a receiving plant. I can do that, all right, but I can't send Morse through our machine."

"If you'll look out for the construction end of it, I can send Morse over an ordinary key," I suggested.

"Then that's settled," said Tom. "I can set up a wireless that will receive any waves sent from Japan, and I can set up a duplicate of the wave-measuring machine that will send messages straight to Tokio, by means of an ordinary Morse key. Where had we better run our aerial?"

"Down by the shore," said Dorothy. "We want to avoid the interfering action of the currents that are loose in and around the city."

"There's one thing you've forgotten," I interposed. "If 'the man' is in a submarine, your message may not reach him under water."

"He'll spend most of his time on the surface," said Tom. "With a first-class submarine he could spend two months under water at a time, but he wouldn't want to."

"Don't spend any more time in discussion, boys," interrupted Dorothy. "We must reach him the first moment possible, before any other ship goes down. Meanwhile, Jim, you want to get this to the paper, don't you?"

"I surely do," I responded, and I hurried off to wire the London office. I sent my telegram over our private line, and waited for the answer. In five minutes it came back.

"Too late, this time, my boy. Japanese first-

class battleship disappeared in broad daylight in the harbor of Tokio. They sent it on here immediately, and we have had it for some minutes. Rest on your laurels." Signed, Maxwell.

"Well," I thought to myself, as I returned, "I can afford to rest on my laurels. There's not a country in the civilized world where my name is not known to-day." My mail was full of requests for interviews, for magazine articles, for lecture tours. I was a made man, and as I mused on these things I walked on somewhat more proudly than my wont, but as I thought over the experiences of the last months, saw in what an extraordinary fashion fortune had played into my hands, saw how Tom Haldane had saved my life by his shrewd foresight and scientific knowledge, and saw, most of all, how I had profited by my dear girl's quick wit, I became far more humble. Most of all, I had not yet accomplished the one thing I set out to do. I had not found the man who was stopping all war. He still eluded me, and still was carrying on his dread work. I reached our hotel feeling that I was really a very ordinary mortal, after all.

While I had been gone, events had been moving swiftly. Some miles out from The Hague, there was a little inn on the shore among the dunes over beyond Scheveningen to which we had twice motored down during the conference. Thoroughly comfortable, a favorite meeting place in summer

for the artist colony about the watering place, it was now almost wholly deserted, because of the lateness of the season. We felt it would make ideal headquarters for our work, and soon established ourselves there. Tom was never more in his element than when assembling apparatus, or when controlling men. Here was his chance to do both. Like magic, the tall mast reared its height among the dunes, while coils, wires, and instruments fell swiftly into place. Acting chiefly as a burden bearer, I ran to and fro, while Tom and Dorothy, with their assistants, brought things to completion. As I came in from a final staying of the aerial, Tom turned to me, wiping the sweat of honest toil from his face.

"All ready, Jim," he said. "If you'll start a message over that wire, we'll send it through the ether by means of Denckel's machine, and drop it straight on Tokio. Hold on a minute, though. Let me call up my assistant on the wave-measuring machine, and see if he has heard anything."

A rapid conversation over the telephone we had installed, resulted. Tom turned back to me.

"As yet, I'm thankful to say, nothing happened. 'The man' has evidently been experimenting this morning, and was experimenting this afternoon. He's right off Tokio, still. Go ahead."

I pressed the key and the vibrant discharge rattled from pole to pole. Over and over again

I gave the call. "To the man who has stopped all war." Over and over again I hurled my message out across half a world. For an hour I repeated the call, my eyes and ears waiting for some response from the sounder at my left.

"Let's shift the wave strength," said Tom, and they made a hurried series of adjustments. Once more I took up my task, and at five minute intervals for three hours sent out my call. Again and again we changed the strength of the wave. We struggled with the insensate metal till our heads reeled. At last, about ten o'clock, we gave up for the day. Dorothy and Tom both were worn out, and both went to their rooms. My head felt too feverish to sleep, so I wandered out for a final pipe along the shore, struggling with the old problem which had been the theme of my thoughts for so long, — who was "the man," and how could I find him? Again and again Regnier came to my mind, as I debated the pros and cons of the ever vexing question. Along the sand, beside the black water, over dune, and through the long wiry grass of the hollows I tramped, till the lights of Scheveningen were just ahead. Neither moon nor stars shone forth, and my feet fell noiselessly on the yielding sand. As I crossed the summit of a dune, I stumbled on the prostrate body of a man lying there looking out to sea. I hastened to utter apologies in French, English and German, but

the unknown simply bowed courteously, and started back in the direction from which I had come. "Some smuggler, I presume," I said to myself. "For want of anything better to do, I may as well dog his steps." On and on in the blackness went my stranger, his head bowed as if in deep thought. By beach and road I followed, till, to my surprise, as we came up to the door of the inn, the man ahead entered without once turning round. I hurried after him, but the only occupant of the wide hall was the proprietor. Mustering my best French, I asked news of the man who had entered.

"An Englishman," said my host, "mad, a little touched here;" he laid an expressive finger beside his head. "He has been with me for two months. He eats and stays all day in his room. He goes at night and looks at the sea."

An Englishman! Strange he had not replied to me. But weightier matters oppressed me, and I went to bed, only to pass a troubled night, haunted strangely by my chance acquaintance. Throughout the night he led me in a mad chase, always seeming about to turn into some one I knew and wished to see, but always at the moment of recognition, when I was about to cry his name, he faded, changing into a gigantic, cloudy, unfamiliar form.

The morning brought a messenger from the

city with our mail, and we each found a package of letters beside our plate at breakfast. One postmarked London and addressed to me in my own handwriting, I seized and opened eagerly. It was from Hamerly. I had sent him a photograph of Regnier, which I had received only a week before.

"Dorothy," I said, "here is a letter from Hamerly about Regnier. As you know, I sent him that picture."

"Read it, please," requested Dorothy.

I obeyed.

"HALF MOON STREET,
"LONDON, Nov. 2d, 19—.

"DEAR ORRINGTON: — The man who came out of Dr. Heidenmuller's locked room is not the man of your picture. Both are tall and dark, but there the resemblance ends. No allowance for the changes of a year could make them the same. I am sorry that the clue from which you hoped so much should have ended in a *cul de sac*. I see by the papers that the possessor of this dread power has not ceased his awful work. The country here is in a state of wild excitement and fear over the sinking of the Japanese battleship. I sincerely trust that you may soon be successful in your quest.

"Yours fraternally,
"EDGAR HAMERLY."

"I knew it," said Dorothy, with conviction. "I've told you he wasn't 'the man,' from the very first."

"Well," ejaculated Tom, stirring his chocolate viciously, "I wish to blazes he was, or at least that we could find out who it is, and make him understand that he's a blamed fool." Drinking his chocolate, Tom rose with the remark, "Now I'm going to find out whether the Denckel apparatus has recorded anything new during the night." A few minutes later he returned, with a negative shake of his head. Nothing," he said. "Let's get to work."

That day passed as had the preceding afternoon and evening. Twelve times an hour I sent forth the call. As each hour struck, Tom changed the strength of the wave. The morning passed, the long afternoon waned, and the early night came on. Monotonously, as I pressed the key, my thoughts would range outward into space, peering, searching, striving to find some way to reach the man. My only occupation was the watching of the clock, for Tom and Dorothy were working hard in the next room on plans for altering the wave-measuring machine in such a way as to make it even more effective.

Directly beneath the clock on the wall, a window looked out to sea. As the evening wore on towards night, a storm rose, and the fierce wind of late

autumn drove the breakers with a resounding roar on the long beach. I marked the hour, as the storm reached its height, — 9.05. I sent my message, 9.10. I sent it again, and as I raised my eyes from my key I looked at the window. There, pressed against the pane, was the face of a man we had long sought. I leaped to my feet.

"There's Regnier!" I cried, pointing at the window. The face disappeared as I spoke, and Tom and Dorothy, springing from their chairs, looked out through the panes at the storm. In the hush of the night the sound of breakers bore in on us insistently.

"Wild as a loon," said Tom, shaking his head mournfully in my direction.

"Where was he?" asked Dorothy.

"Right outside that window!" I shouted. "Come, we must find him."

We all started for the outer air, but before we could leave the room, the door opened and Richard Regnier entered. Mental trouble showed in his unquiet look and in his hesitating hand.

"Why, Dick," began Tom, but Dorothy, with an emphatic gesture, commanded silence.

"I beg your pardon," said Regnier slowly, and with evident difficulty. "I saw you through the window, and I thought somehow I might have known you once, and that you could tell me who I am."

Her eyes shining with pity, Dorothy spoke gently. "I'm so glad to see you, Richard. Don't you remember you are Richard Regnier, and that I am Dorothy Haldane? You know Tom, here, my brother, well, and this is Jim Orrington whom you met one night in Washington."

At Dorothy's low voice, the clouded brow cleared. The curtain rolled from the darkened eyes, and the bent form straightened. "Thank God. I am Richard Regnier. But where am I, and how did I get here?" he asked.

"You are on the coast of Holland, near The Hague," responded Dorothy quietly. "I don't know how you got here."

"How did you come to be here?" asked Regnier eagerly.

"We came to The Hague to the Peace Congress, and we came down here to try to find the man who has stopped all war," answered Dorothy.

"The man who destroyed the Alaska and the Dreadnought Number 8?" queried Regnier, in great excitement. "I have known nothing since that time. Has he done anything since?"

"Many things," said Dorothy sadly. "He is doing great harm now, and that is why we are trying to reach him. We ought not to lose a minute more, Jim. If you and Tom will go to work again, I will sit down and tell Richard about the happenings of the last two months."

Back we went to our tasks and, as I pounded out the message, waited five minutes and pounded it out again, I thought of the strange suspicion under which Regnier had lain. I had believed him the man who had sunk every battleship on that fatal day. I had felt convinced that he was the man for whom we had searched so diligently for weeks. And while we searched, he had been wandering along the sands of the Holland coast.

Regnier and Dorothy had sat for perhaps half an hour in earnest conversation, when they rose and came over to us.

"Tom," said Dorothy, "Dick has had more experience with wireless apparatus than you have. Suppose you let him look over the whole business."

"Glad enough to have him," answered Tom. "It's always possible there may be an error somewhere."

Step by step, Regnier examined the transmitting end of the apparatus, passed from the house to the aerial, came back, and went over the receiving end in every part. As he ended, he straightened up.

"If you don't mind, Tom, I'd like to change that coherer a little. I should judge that your transmitter was all right, but I question if you could get a reply from Tokio through the coherer, as it now stands connected with that sounder."

"Go ahead," said Tom, and I rose from my seat and went over beside Dorothy, while Regnier

worked at the powdery mass in the glass tube. He took up the tube at last and held it to the light.

"There, let's try that," he said, and placed the tube in its supports, screwing up the terminals. Scarcely had he made the last turn when the sounder broke forth. Clickety clack, clack, clack, clack. Dots and dashes came with the rapidity of a practised sender. Swiftly I read them off, as they came to my telephone receiver.

"I am the man who is trying to stop all war. Is your news true? What do you want of me? Why don't you answer?"

I jumped to my seat beside the key, and sent the answer out into the ether about us.

"We have only just got your answer through the receiver. Our news is true. All the nations are disarming. Why do you not cease sinking battleships? Your purpose is accomplished."

I had scarcely ended when the reply came back.

"When did the nations agree on peace? Who are you?"

"The nations agreed on peace and made a solemn covenant that all would disarm ten days ago. The four sending this message are Professor Thomas Haldane and Miss Dorothy Haldane of New York, Richard Regnier of Savannah and James Orrington of New York."

There was a perceptible pause this time, before the sounder resumed its motion. Then it began.

" I believe what you say. Are the nations living up to their agreements as to disarmament? "

" Completely," I replied. " Every one of the nations is living up to the agreement in spirit and in truth. The greatest anxiety which the world feels at present is with regard to your sinking the Japanese battleship, and from fear of your future action."

There was a long pause, and then the words came slowly.

" How can I allay that fear? "

I had been rapidly reading my sendings and my answers to the other three who sat looking eagerly at the sounder. As I read off that last question, Dorothy spoke up eagerly.

" If he can communicate with us by wireless, why can he not send a message in the same way to all countries? "

I passed on the suggestion, and slowly this answer came back.

" I will send this message to the ruler of every country. I send it to you first, for you have saved me from causing death unnecessarily. ' The man who has stopped all war now declares unto you that since peace has come, since every nation is now disarming, he will cease his labors. The ships of the nations may now sail the seas without harm from him. The sailors shall be safe from his hand. This will he do, if peace be sure and disarmament

be complete. But, on the day that any nation violates its solemn oath and arms its citizens, on that day will he rise, and no ship, be it battleship or peaceful merchantman, bearing that country's flag, shall be safe from destruction.' "

The sounder ceased its clamor. Tom spoke in a low voice, as if he feared to be overheard.

" How can we tell he is the man and not some one else, who is simply playing with us? We can't afford to take risks. Ask him, Jim, how we can know that he is really the man who has stopped all war."

I turned to my key and sent off the question. Back came the answer.

" By the first letter which I erased and which was found, you shall know me."

" That settles it in my mind," I said. " That's known to not more than a dozen people, and none of them would be sending this."

Tom, meanwhile, had stepped into the next room, and was talking quietly to his assistant. He spoke to me. " Keep him going a minute, Jim. I want to get a message from him."

" Is there anything more you wish to know? " I asked the man by wireless.

" Nothing," he replied. " Do you wish to say anything to me? "

I could hear Tom's excited voice.

" Got it? "

" Just once more, Jim," he said.

" There is nothing more," went out from the aerial.

" Then I thank you for telling me of this. You have spared me and spared others much by your wisdom. Good-bye."

" Good-bye," I ended, as Tom stepped from the 'phone, his face beaming.

" Quickest thing on record, that. I got my man to set the machine for the wireless waves ' the man ' is using, and got two records, both from Tokio. That settles it, once for all."

The storm was still at its height. The house rocked with the wind, but the wild moan of the breakers, forgotten while we talked with the man on the other side of the world, now made their presence manifest. The single light within shone on blackened beam and rough hewn settle, into dim but spotless corners, on glistening tile and dark polished floor. Our little group in modern costume, standing about the table where the instruments were placed, seemed an anachronism. We should have been garbed like Rembrandt's models, and in place of key, relay and coherer, there should have been simply one massive oaken table.

Tom turned to Regnier. " Do you know, Dick, what happened to your head ? "

" Sh," said Dorothy, looking quickly at Regnier.

Regnier smiled as he saw her movement. " You

needn't worry, Dorothy. I shall be very glad to tell you all I can." He turned to Tom. "I think the injury to my head came from the man who stopped all war."

CHAPTER XX

"You don't mean that literally," exclaimed Tom.

Regnier nodded quietly. "I mean that I believe my memory was deliberately taken from me by the man who stopped all war, when he found I was on the track of his secret. But it's rather a long story, and it's well on towards morning. Shall we have it now, or put off the tale till to-morrow?"

"To-night, by all means," answered Tom. "That is, providing you feel up to it."

"I feel perfectly fit now," said Regnier, "so if you all want to hear it, I'll go back to the very beginning and tell it all."

We settled down to listen. Tom threw some coal, with a lavish hand, into the small firepot of the great Dutch stove.

"Now this is cosy. Go ahead, Dick, with your yarn."

Dorothy beside me on the big settle gave my hand one squeeze, and echoed Tom's words. "Go ahead, Dick."

All the lights had been lowered, save for a single bracket lamp, which shone on Regnier's melan-

choly but expressive face. As he began, the storm changed its key, and came in steady, driving force rather than in great gusts.

" It really began that night at Mrs. Hartnell's," he said reflectively. " I was tremendously impressed by that second letter which came out from beneath the visible one and, try as I would, I could not shake off a feeling that the message was true; that the man who wrote possessed some strange and awful power, which would make it possible for him to do what he threatened. When I left you that night, I could not sleep. I looked at the problem from every side, and finally analyzed it down to this. If ' the man ' is to do this, he must either be a great scientist himself, or have obtained his secret from some great scientist. I went further. I made up my mind that the most probable line of work to produce such a destroying agent would be along the lines of radio-active experiments. In consequence, I went directly to work, and with the help of two assistants, I reviewed all the literature of radio-active matter which had appeared in the last five years, and made a digest of the papers, their subjects and their authors. Then came my time of sailing for abroad, and I took the digest with me. I spent most of my time on the way over in a systematic sorting out of the men who had made the greatest advances, and who would be the most likely to obtain some great result. I finally

narrowed my choice down to five. One of the five was Heidenmuller. He had published his last paper in the *Zeitschrift fur Physicalische Chemie* in April, 19—, and had published nothing since. As soon as I landed I hastened to get a file of the magazine, and found that in a somewhat deeply technical paper he had spoken of the possibility that a radio-active agent, powerful enough to give an ultimate resolution of any metal, might be obtained. That was enough for me; I started straight for London and Heidenmuller. As you know, I found him dead, but I heard the story of his death and I knew by that time that if he had possessed the secret, he must have passed it on to some one else. So I went to work. I did not look up Swenton because I found that Heidenmuller's first assistant, Griegen, had gone as wireless operator on one of the big yachts then at Cowes. So I went down there, chartered a small yacht, and spent a week hunting for Griegen. I think I wrote you from there," he said to Dorothy.

"You did," she replied.

Regnier went on. "Well, to cut that short, I hired Griegen to come back to London with me, to make a thorough search of Heidenmuller's laboratories, which I had hired just as they stood. We hunted for two days without avail when, one afternoon, I went down to the city to do some errands. I came back to my lodgings to find Griegen there

greatly excited. He had found the secret panel in the inner locked room which you found empty, but when he discovered it the drawers held pamphlets and manuscripts. He had not examined them, as I had given him strict orders not to do so, and his training in the German army had made him ready to obey the orders of his superiors absolutely. I felt that I was on the road to victory, and I wished to read those papers alone, so I told Griegen I should go up there at once, and that he might be free for the evening. After dinner, I was delayed for an hour or two, and reached the laboratory only as darkness was setting in. In my excitement, I must have forgotten to lock the door after me. I went at once to the inner room, turned on the incandescents, which I had had installed, found the panel easily, pressed the spring, opened the little door whose lock Griegen had already broken, and saw before me a set of four drawers. They were filled with manuscripts. I began at the top and read the titles one by one. Through three drawers filled with the record of various researches in radio-active matter and energy I passed. I opened the fourth. There was what I sought. Written in crabbed German script, on the top first page of the series, was the title. Translated, it read thus: 'A determination of a new type of radio-active energy which effects the ultimate decomposition of matter.' I seized the papers eagerly and, as I knelt there,

began the preamble. I had hardly read a dozen words, when the lights suddenly went out. I started up, the manuscript in my hands, but, as I rose, I was struck down and half stunned by a blow in the head. To my dazed brain a giant seemed towering far above me, as the room opened to immeasurable distances, and I heard what seemed a sonorous voice, but what was probably the low tones of the man who stopped all war. 'It is not safe to have the secret in other hands than mine. For this mission was I doomed,' and I smelt a strange odor, faintly recalling some of the anaesthetics which belong to the higher orders of the methane series. Then I knew no more.

"I woke here in Holland, without memory of my name, without the slightest knowledge of where I was. Here I have remained, till you came to bring me back to life and to my senses once more."

He ended, and as fitting climax to his strange tale, the lamp flickered out, and the continuous long roll of the storm surged in once more in the fierce tattoo of its full fury.

We sat silent for some time, our only light the red ends of our cigars. Then Tom spoke.

"Anyway, I devoutly trust it's all over now. The end has been accomplished, and the world will be the better for it in the end. Yet it has been at a fearful cost."

"Yes," said Regnier, "but a single great war

would have meant the death of many thousands more."

"One thing I should like to know," said Tom reflectively, "How do you account for your loss of memory?"

"I'm not sure," answered Regnier, "but, if you remember, there was a paper published by some Germans a while ago, which discussed the properties of an anaesthetic which produced a loss of memory. It was one of the hydrocarbon compounds, and from the odor which came to me, I think my loss of memory may have come that way."

"That's a possible solution," said Tom. "At least it will do, unless we strike a better. But, confound it all, we haven't got 'the man' who has been at the bottom of all this."

"Well, the search isn't over yet," interrupted Dorothy. "We can go on with it, now."

"We will go on with it," I broke in. "But I think we can do it much better from New York for a while."

Tom laughed. "Yes," he said. "There is no question that as long as Dorothy has made up her mind to be married in New York, New York is the one place from which to conduct the search for the present. Anyway, I'm not going to Tokio. I imagine 'the man' will come right back home now."

"The Denckel apparatus was the means that

stopped 'the man,' after all," I said musingly. "It has done so much, that I hope it will do the final thing of all, and discover 'the man.'"

Dorothy rose. "I hope it will," she remarked. "But, anyway, we've sat long enough. Now the thing I want to know is what our host has to say of the way Dick came here."

That was the question of the next morning, but the innkeeper could tell us little. Regnier had arrived in the company of an Englishman who had paid his board for three months, had told them to take especial care of the patient, and had left a package for him. That was all he knew. Regnier seized the package given him, and opened it eagerly. Two inner envelopes came next, and from the innermost he drew a package of five pound notes. He counted them.

"'The man' didn't intend to have me starve," he said. "Here's two hundred pounds. He must have given them to me, for I didn't have five pounds in my pocket that night."

When the messenger came from the city with the morning papers, we read them with avidity. 'The man' had kept his word. Every government had received a wireless message couched in practically the same words as that which he had sent us. The world might rest easy, as long as peace reigned. We met in the wireless room after breakfast.

"May as well go to work taking this thing down," said Tom.

Our work at The Hague was over, and we hastened to pack our belongings and made ready to return to London by the Hook of Holland.

To the Savoy we went, a company of four. Regnier wished to get back into the world and to learn of the state of his affairs. We were anxious to get back to New York by the first steamer we could reach. I was especially anxious, for Dorothy had agreed, after much urging, to marry me a month after we reached New York. There were no relatives to hinder, and Tom, good old chap, seemed almost as glad of our approaching marriage as ourselves. I wanted to get back for another reason, too. I had been too long out of the writing game, and I felt that I could not afford to lose the momentum which my work with regard to the man who stopped all war had given me. So we secured passage on a boat leaving Liverpool three days after we reached London.

The day before we sailed, I found a letter in my mail with the royal arms. It was an invitation to James Orrington, Esq., to be present at the mustering out of the last regiments of the British army in Hyde Park that morning.

"We'll go," said Dorothy.

As she spoke, a waiter came to my side. "Gentleman to see you, sir."

I smiled as I rose. "That's not so thrilling a message now, sweetheart, as it has been any time these last months." Outside in the corridor was a gentleman of rather distinguished appearance, whom I had not seen before.

"Mr. James Orrington?" he said inquiringly.

I responded affirmatively.

"I am Sir Arthur Braithwaite, one of the King's equerries," he said. "He sent you this by me," and he handed me a package and withdrew. I turned away to find Tom and Dorothy just passing. I showed them the package.

"Come up to my rooms," said Dorothy eagerly. "We'll open it there. This is just like getting Christmas presents."

The outer layers off showed a square white box. I pressed the spring. Within lay a golden cigarette case. Its top held an inscription in exquisitely carved letters. "To James Orrington, Esquire. He served the State before Himself." I lifted the case from its bed. Below was a brief note in the King's own hand. Beside the address and signature, it bore these words: "I have never forgotten the service you did to England, to the world, and to me."

I looked up. Dorothy's eyes were veiled in a mist of tears. She came to me and kissed me. "Dear, I'm so glad, so proud of every bit of recognition. You deserve all of it," and Tom wrung

my hand with his old numbing grip, crying, "Bully for you, old man. That's the first bit of furniture for the new house."

There was just time for us to reach Hyde Park before the review, and we all three crowded into a hansom and sped away. Thousands surrounded the reviewing field, and it was only with difficulty that we found our way through. Our card of invitation worked wonders, however, and with that marvellous command of crowds which the London police possess, we finally came through and found ourselves at the reviewing stand, just as the band announced the coming of the troops. The Foot Guards first, with that strange downthrust of the foot, relic of the marching step of many decades ago, then the Scots, and then regiment after regiment, till the whole field was covered with the pride of Britain's troops in their most gorgeous panoply of war. The King, in field marshal's uniform, stood at the centre. What thoughts must have racked his brain as he stood there silent, erect, immobile! What visions of the long line of English sovereigns! What memories of the thousands of reviews of centuries past, when Britain's soldiers left for wars of conquest, or returned, bearing new laurels, offering new lands to the great island empire! The music ceased. As if by one accord, the ensigns of the regiments, bearing the old flags, torn by shot and shell, revealing in

golden scroll the record of British prowess, came to the front and centre. Then, in one long line, forward came the colors. The King saluted, and they turned and formed a compact mass of brilliant color on the right. I heard a whispered question and answer.

"What is to be done with the colors?"

"They are to go to the Abbey for a chapel of the flags."

I watched the pageant, breathless. A hoarse command and the troops stacked arms; another and the music started up. Proudly, defiantly, in perfect formation, the troops wheeled and started the march past, their empty hands swaying at their sides. As they passed, the King saluted with raised hand, the officers' swords rising and falling with regular rhythm. As they passed the gleaming mass of color where stood the flags, they saluted once more. I could see the tears streaming from the rugged cheeks of many a war-worn veteran, and my own throat contracted at the spectacle. The King stood motionless at the salute. As they formed after the march, and stood for the last time in those ranks which had so often faced the foe, the general commanding turned and raised his sword. Cheer upon cheer broke forth for the King, and I found myself with Tom, good Americans as we were, cheering wildly, though with dry throats. The King raised his hand and the sound ceased.

He said but a single sentence. "Soldiers of the British Empire! My soldiers, farewell!" Once more the cheering broke forth, but through the sound came music, and troop by troop, they wheeled and marched away. Not till the last man had gone did the King move, and when he turned I could see his face white and drawn with the agony of the hour. He walked heavily to his carriage and drove away, lifting his hat mechanically in response to the salutation of the crowd.

That night Regnier dined with us. I had never seen him so gay, so brilliant. He was full of his plans for an expedition to the Ural Mountains in search of some new deposits of platinum, for which he had obtained a grant from the Russian government. He was the life of our party, and we parted from him with regret. As he left, I walked out into the courtyard with him. He turned suddenly.

"Orrington," he said, "you've got the finest girl in the world to be your wife. You're not good enough for her. Nobody is, but I'm sure you'll make her happy. I've loved her for five years. I knew from the very first I had no chance. Good-bye, and God bless you both."

I stood and watched him till he passed through the arch and was lost in the roaring tide of the Strand.

"Poor chap," I said musingly, as I turned away. "Poor chap."

The voyage home was uneventful. The month before the wedding we spent chiefly in making plans for our new home, which was to be a country home. Slowly dragged the days before the wedding, twenty days, fifteen, ten, five. At last it came.

As Tom and I came up to the church on the wedding day, the snow was lying on the narrow lawn, crusting the roof and eaves with glittering crystals, and turning the ivy to a soft, clinging cloud. The flooding sunlight, transmitted through the two great windows of the tower, threw strange hues on the white tapestry and carpet of late winter. From within sounded the full diapason of the organ, breaking into rivers and floods of melody as the organist practised his prelude to the wedding march.

We swung back the door to find ourselves in the midst of a group of ushers, who fell upon me with one last volley of cheering and jeering remarks as I hurried through. I hastened by them, laughing, and passed with Tom to the tiny room beside the organ, where we were to wait till the moment that Dorothy came. After much discussion, it had been determined that Dorothy's uncle should give her away, while Tom acted as best man.

"It gives me rather more of a share in the proceedings," he said, — "I always like to have something doing."

The body of the church was hidden from our sight, but just before us rose the altar, lit by brazen candelabra which rested upon the altar cloth, hanging in heavy folds, and reached to the great mullioned window overhead, from which the Christ looks down in silent benediction. As we sat waiting, I breathed a silent prayer that I might be worthy, that our life together might be consecrated to loving service, that we might — Tom's voice broke in on my half formulated thoughts.

"See the Alpha and Omega embroidered on the altar cloth?"

I nodded.

"And the Alpha of the whole thing came that day in Washington when you read the letter from 'the man.' Here's a part of the Omega. The beginning and the end. How little you could dream of all that has come when you left your office to look up some stupid transports, — or Dorothy imagine it when she went down to standardize that radium. But the end will never be complete till we find 'the man.' While he roams the earth with his secret the world is never wholly safe."

So the thread that had bound Dorothy and me together wove into our wedding hour. Our conversation ended there however, for at that moment a low bell tinkled, the first bars of the march began, and I started forward to meet my bride.

Quietly, reverently, happily, Dorothy and I took

up our life together. Dorothy was never more beautiful, never more womanly and sweet than when she said "I do" in her low voice, and turned towards me with a look of loving confidence.

We had two weeks in the South, and then came back by special request to the Haldane house on the Long Island shore, where Tom had set up the wave-measuring machine in a laboratory which he had built on a bluff just above the beach and in which he was still at work on new ideas.

The morning after we arrived, Dorothy and I went out after breakfast to find Tom, who was bending over an inner cylinder of the machine, while the belt of metal quietly revolved.

"Got the whole thing set up, just as we used to have it, haven't you?" I said.

"Yes," said Tom. "I'm always on the lookout for 'the man,' and then, too, I've got a notion that I can make some changes in the recording apparatus that will make computation easier."

"Has the man been experimenting at all lately with his high waves?" asked Dorothy.

"Yes," answered Tom. "I leave the machine adjusted for them every day, but I've only heard from him twice. I always keep two or three uncharged reflectoscopes on hand, as well. Some day he may go to experimenting where I can get hold of something."

I stood looking lazily out of the window. A large

yacht lay just offshore, her white sides glistening in the morning sun. There was a touch of spring in the winter air. Suddenly, before my horror-stricken eyes, the yacht changed to a confused mass of boards which rose and fell on the tide. I heard a cry from Tom and Dorothy. "The man!"

I turned. The golden ribbons of the reflectoscopes once more stood stiffly separate and the moving belt stood still. The beam of light was just fluttering to rest almost on the zero.

"Out there! Right out there!" I shouted. "Come!" and throwing open the door, I rushed towards the beach, followed by the others. I pointed to the mass of wreckage rising and falling on the tide. "There! there!" I shouted. "He just destroyed that yacht."

"There's a survivor," cried Tom, as we ran stumbling on over the rocks and sand towards a plank which bore a living man towards shore. Just as we came to him, he struck bottom and groped forward on his hands and knees through the waves. He reached the dry sand, rose and walked towards us. I looked at the man in amazement. I knew those features, yet they were so strangely drawn and fixed, so dominated by the dread-compelling power of the eyes that I paused. Then it came to me. "John King," I cried in amazement. King came steadily onward. A lightning flash illumined my brain.

"Are you the man who stopped all war?" I cried eagerly.

Dorothy reached my side and clung to me as John King advanced with hesitating steps.

"I am," he answered slowly.

"Then why — then why did you destroy the yacht?" shouted Tom, stammering in his excitement. "How — how have you lived when the others perished?"

"The time to end had come," said John, in muffled, solemn tones. "I alone am immune; I did not think I was." As he spoke a still more awful change began to pass over his features. He staggered, stopped, and put his hand to his brow. "I — am — the — last — victim," he went on falteringly. "I — pay — the — final — price." The last words came in a thick gasp, "My secret is safe."

As he said that, he fell, and when we reached him he lay dead. The expression of his face had changed again. The sombre, awful majesty which had illumined it was gone. He looked once more like the young lad I had known and loved in years gone by, whose face so well expressed his noble spirit, ever impatient of injustice and wrong. After the weary struggle, his soul was once more poised and at rest. The world and the man who stopped all war were both at peace.

THE END.