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Post-Office Bulletin.

Mails Close.

6:00 a m; D & C R R for Points North.
8:10 a m; Q A R R for Points West.
9:45 a m; Q A R R for Points East.
11:45 a m; Steamer for River Points.
1:00 p m; Stage for Preston.
1:00 p m. D & C R R for Points North.
3:35 p m; Q A R R for Points West.
6:20 p m. Q A R R for Points East.

Mails Arrive.

8:25 a m; Q A R R, from Points East.
10:10 a m; Q A R R, from Points West.
11:00 a m; Stage, from Preston.
11:30 a m; Steamer, from River Points.
11:45 m; D & C R R, from Points North.
3:35 p m; Q A R R, from Points East.
3:34 p m; Q A R R, from Points West.
7:45 p m; D & C R R, from Points North.

GENERAL DIRECTORY.

County Officials.

Judges of the Circuit Court—James A. Pearce, Chief Judge; Edwin H Brown and William R Martin, Associates Terms—jury, 1st Monday in April and October; non-jury, 2d Monday in January, 4th Monday in June.

Clerk of the Circuit Court—Charles W. Hobbs.

County Commissioners—James B. Wright, President; Wesley Jarrell and Daniel J. Zacharias.

Treasurer and Clerk to the Commissioners Charles H. Whitby.

Judges of the Orphans' Court—John A. Sigler, Chief Judge; Thomas L. Day and Jesse T. Dennis Associates.

Register of Wills, Robert J. Jump.

School Commissioners—Thomas W. Jones, President; Henry C. Fisher and Albert W. Sisk.

School Examiner and Secretary—W. S. Crouse.

State's Attorney—Albert G. Towers.

Sheriff—Isaac L. Dukes.

Professional and Business Cards.

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State's Attorney for Caroline County,
Denton, Md.

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A Knave of Conscience

By FRANCIS LYNDE.

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Griswold, a young man of New Orleans, with rank socialistic tendencies, has written a book on the subject and after many weeks of fruitless search for a publisher, has about given up. Downcast and hungry, he meets an old friend, Bainbridge, who offers him a loan. Griswold refuses it, although he frankly says he will turn to stealing if nothing turns up soon.

CHAPTER II.—Bainbridge tells Griffin, a detective and an old friend, the story of Griswold's life, theories and hard luck.

CHAPTER III.—Two days later Griswold boldly forces the president of the Bayou state bank to give him $100,000 upon pain of death.

CHAPTER IV.—He safely leaves the bank, disguises himself as a sailor and eludes capture.

CHAPTER V.—He decides to go to some small town to work among the people and pursue his sociological studies. He goes to the levee and changes places with a laborer on a boat about to leave on a trip up the river. Just as they are about to start, Miss Charlotte Farnham, of Wahaska, Minn., boards the boat. Griswold recognizes her as a young lady who was in the bank when he committed the robbery. Her beauty and evident strength of character greatly impress him and he decides to see and learn more of her by going to her home town.

CHAPTER VI.—Charlotte reads of the bank robbery and recognizes Griswold as the robber. She decides to write to the bank president, telling him of her discovery.

CHAPTER VII.—Griswold fears that he has been recognized and decides to leave the boat.

CHAPTER VIII.—Charlotte cannot bring herself to send the letter telling of her discovery, as she has become interested in Griswold.

CHAPTER IX.—Her conscience greatly troubles her and she is just about to mail the letter when a heroic deed of Griswold's stops her.

CHAPTER X.—Next day they accidentally meet. She tells him of her intentions and he says he does not believe he did wrong. He silently hopes she will inform the authorities to uphold his high opinion of her. She does so and sees him taken away by the police at St. Louis.

CHAPTER XI.—With the assistance of a little of his money he makes his escape.

CHAPTER XII.—He again disguises himself and goes to a hotel.

CHAPTER XIII.—He arranges to go to Wahaska, resume his proper name and settle down. He intends to meet Miss Farnham, with whom he has fallen in love, and prove his theories to her.

CHAPTER XIV.—Margery Grierson, a young and pretty miss, is leader of one faction of Wahaska society. Her father is one of the town's leading citizens. The Raymers and the Farnhams belong to the older and more exclusive set, and Margery is intent on making them recognize her leadership. Griswold becomes seriously sick immediately upon his arrival at Wahaska.

CHAPTER XV.—Margery, with the aid of her father, who is president of the bank, arranges a scheme to humble the Raymers.

CHAPTER XVI.—Griswold gradually recovers and meets many of the people of the town, among them the Raymers. He becomes very friendly with Edward Raymer, manager of the iron works. He learns that they stand on the same ground regarding the problem of master and man.

CHAPTER XVII.—One evening Raymer tells Griswold of a business trouble of his and of his need of money. Griswold agrees to furnish the money, if Raymer will take him in partnership.

CHAPTER XVIII.—Griswold becomes a silent partner and is invited, with the Raymers, to dine with the Farnhams one evening. He meets Charlotte but she does not recognize him. After dinner he goes in Grierson's launch pass on the lake near by and in it he recognizes Mr. Galbraith, the New Orleans banker whom he had robbed.

CHAPTER XIX.—Detective Griffin takes up the search for the robber. He suspects a woman in the case and for reasons finally traces Miss Farnham to her home.

CHAPTER XX.—He hears her story and believes the robber is in love with her, and thinking he may come to that town, decides to stay awhile. The Grierson-Raymer trouble has become very bitter; in addition to Raymer's troubles his men go out on a strike.

CHAPTER XXI.—Griswold, with Margery's assistance, prepares his book for publication.

CHAPTER XXII.—Griswold learns of a scheme of Grierson to sell Galbraith some practically worthless pine lands for $100,000, and his conscience prompts him to warn Galbraith.

CHAPTER XXIII.—Griffin and Griswold become well acquainted and the former tells Griswold that Grierson is behind the strike trouble.

CHAPTER XXIV.—Charlotte tells Griswold Griffin's mission in Wahaska, although she does not suspect him. He learns from her speech that she loved the robber she had met on the boat.

CHAPTER XXV.—Griswold saves Griffin from being killed by the strikers for witnessing an attempt of theirs to burn the iron works. They charge him with the crime.

CHAPTER XXVI.—Margery and Edward Raymer have become quite interested in each other and Margery asks her father to call off his war on Raymer.

CHAPTER XXVII.—Griswold warns Galbraith that he is about to be swindled in the land deal with Grierson.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—Margery tells Raymer her plans, which, with his assistance, will settle the strike.

CHAPTER XXIX.—Griffin completes his evidence against Griswold as the robber of the Bayou bank. One day Griswold is out sailing with Charlotte; Margery is out in her launch with a party, including Andrew Galbraith, when a storm suddenly comes up and the launch capsizes. Griswold goes to their rescue.

CHAPTER XXX.—Another boat also goes to the rescue but Griswold arrives just in time to save Galbraith's life. He has determined to ask Charlotte to become his wife but his great crime troubles him.

CHAPTER XXXI.

However much or little Griswold ever meant to say to Margery Grierson on any of his visits to Mereside, she never suffered him to follow out any programme of his own. She did not do it now; and when he would have spoken about the loss of the launch and her own narrow escape from drowning, she turned him aside with a word.

"It was an accident, and accidents are always happening," she said, lightly. "Nobody was drowned, and I hope nobody will be silly enough to take cold. That wasn't why I was hoping you would come."

"No?" he said, following her as she led the way to a wicker tete-a-tete in the hammock corner.

"No. Sit down and be prepared to give me what I have never had; a good, sound flogging of advice—a cool-headed man's advice. You'll do it if I can make you understand how much I need it."

His smile was self-depreciative.

"You have hit upon the worst possible man, I fear. I'm more in need of counsel myself than able to give it."

She regarded him with a curious little smile twitching at the corners of her piquant mouth. "Are there two of us?" she asked.

He saw beyond and behind the smile; saw troubled depths in the bright eyes, and was suddenly moved to pity, though why she should be pitied he could not guess. The pity was the first step on the way to other things, but this he did not suspect. He was conscious only of a certain pleasure in her nearness; flattered a little, too, as any man would be, by her implied promise to take help from him.

"I can't imagine your leaning on anyone," he said. "But if a broken reed will serve your purpose—"

"Hush!" she commanded. "That is conventional cant, and you know it. You are not living up to your pose here in Wahaska. You may think you are, but you are not."

"I don't know why you should say that."

"If I couldn't say it, I shouldn't be asking your advice," she retorted. "Not many people here know the real Kenneth Griswold, but I think I do."

Griswold smiled. "Describe him to me, and I may tell you if you are right."

There was a little pause, and though she was looking past him, there was a certain raptness in her eyes that was new to him.

"He is a very ruthless man at heart," she said, speaking slowly; "hard and unbending, and terribly self-centered, but with eyes that see through all shams but his own. He thinks thoughts and would do deeds that would shock conventionality into a state of coma; and yet conventionality is his god. Am I right?"

Griswold took time to think about it. "Perhaps you are," he said, at length.

"I am going to assume it," she went on, "and ask him—the real Kenneth Griswold, you know—to lend me those hard, unpitying, all-seeing eyes of his. May I?"

"If I say 'yes' it is without prejudice to the right of protest."

She waved the condition aside in a quick little gesture of impatience, and what she said seemed altogether irrelevant.

"In your opinion, Mr. Griswold, how far may a father go in demanding the loyalty of his child?"

The question was so totally unexpected that Griswold had once more to take time to think about it.

"If you mean in the ethical field, I should say his right stops this side of wrong-doing."

"Thank you. Now supposing that the father of a young woman pressed his demands beyond that point; would she be justified in open rebellion?"

"In refusing, to be sure."

"No, but in rebellion—in open reprisals, I mean?"

"I don't know; possibly the circumstances in some particular case might justify open rebellion. But I can hardly conceive the conditions."

"Can't you? Let me see if I can suppose them for you. Picture to yourself an unhappy marriage—the unhappiest of all in a world of unhappy marriages. Let the blame of it lie where it may fall, on either side, but remember that the man was brutal and the woman was weak. Suppose there was a child, who, instead of being a bond between them, was a bone of contention. Do you follow me?"

"Perfectly."

She was looking past him again, and there was a certain quality of hardness in her voice that spoke of unsuspected depths of bitterness. Yet she went on steadily.

"Suppose when this child grew up she was compelled to choose between the mother who needed her and the father who could gratify her ambitions. Suppose, if you can, that she made some sort of a compromise with the little speck of conscience she had and went with the father who, if he was brutal, was also strong."

She paused again; and he said: "Well?"

"I—I am afraid I am boring you." The eyes were downcast now.

"No, you are not. Go on."

"Well, let us say that after a time, this girl, who had some of her father's hardness and some of her mother's weakness, came to see that she had taken the winning side merely because it was the winning side; that she was helping her father to become harder and more pitiless than ever; that she was really helping him to—to ruin other people who couldn't fight as well. Then you are to imagine, if you find it possible, that her speck of a conscience rose up in rebellion; that the father tried to bribe her to be loyal, and that she took the bribe and afterward went about deliberately to upset all his plans for ruin—for getting the best of other people. Don't you think such a young woman would be an object of contempt to any really good man?"

There was not any of the hardness with which she had dowered him in her description in the eyes that met hers. In the room of it, there was something she did not understand.

"It would depend somewhat upon the man," he said, slowly; "and much more upon a thing quite extrinsic to all these conditions you have been supposing for me."

"Yes?" she said, and she could no longer meet his gaze fairly.

"Yes. If the man, knowing all these hard conditions, still loves you, Margery—"

She interrupted him with a sudden, fierce energy. "Oh, but he couldn't, Mr. Grisewold, indeed he couldn't!"

Her hand was on the low dividing rail of the tete-a-tete, and he covered it with his own.

"The man loves you with all his heart, Margery, and will always love you, no matter what you tell him about yourself or your past."

"Oh, Kenneth!—may I call you Kenneth?—If I could only be sure of that!"

"You may be sure of it now and always. But—but, Margery, dear, you must cherish that speck of a conscience, for I happen to know that this mythical man sets great store by conscience—will be very unhappy if it is lacking in the woman he loves."

She was standing before him now, and her eyes were alight from within. But what she would have said is not to be here written down. For at that moment there was a heavy step on the gravel and some one came to interrupt. It was Andrew Galbraith, calling with old-school punctilio to see if his hostess had suffered in the accident on the lake.

CHAPTER XXXII.

When Griswold took his leave of Miss Grierson, which he did as soon as he could after Mr. Galbraith's coming, he did not go to Dr. Farnham's. On the contrary, he went to his room at Mrs. Holbrook's, and spent the hour before dinner tramping up and down with his hands behind him and with a sharper trouble than he had ever known gnawing ruthlessly at his peace of mind.

All through the talk with Margery, and up to the very instant of interruption, he had made sure that her thinly veiled hypothesis revolved about one Edward Raymer. But at the last moment, this conviction had trembled upon its pedestal and tottered to its fall. He thought he had come to know Margery pretty well—well enough to be sure that she would not misunderstand anything that he might have said. But when he came to weigh those sayings of his in the light of a possible misconstruction he was moved to grind his teeth in a very manly agony of shame.

He had neither weighed nor measured them at the time—being so sure that Raymer was the man; but in that last little outburst of hers there was room for a most disquieting doubt; and since a man may be a knave of conscience and still be a gentleman, Griswold despised himself very heartily after the fact, going so far as to question his right to go to Charlotte until after this terrible doubt was drawn and quartered and decently buried out of sight and beyond the possibility of a resurrection.

It was during this ante-dinner interval of self-recrimination on Griswold's part that two men met behind a closed door in a first-floor chamber of the summer hotel on the Point. One of them was Mr. Andrew Galbraith, but now returned from his call on Miss Grierson. The other was a shrewd-faced man, as yet in the prime of life; a man with a square jaw and thin lips and ferretty eyes. Mr. Galbraith held a cigar between his fingers, but it had gone out. The other was smoking a Regalia, and its subtle fragrance filled the room.

"You think you are sure of your man this time, are you, Griffin?" said the banker.

The detective blew a smoke-cloud toward the ceiling and nodded slowly. "There isn't a shadow of doubt about his identity, now."

"Then, pardon me, Mr. Griffin, why do you come to me. Why don't you make your arrest and take the man to New Orleans? I'll be there to appear against him at the fall term of court."

"I don't rightly know why I have come to you." The detective's reply was as hesitant as his nod had been. "I've put the irons on some queer customers in my time, and I don't know as I ever hung back till now. But this fellow—"

"State your case," said the banker, briefly. "I can't conceive of anything which would come between you and your sworn duty."

"That's it; that's just it. Neither could I. But something has come between, this trip. First off, I get to know the fellow pretty well before I found out who he was, and—well, he sort of captured me, as you might say. He wasn't anybody's hold-up; he was just a nice, square, clean-cut gentleman, all open and above-board. Pretty soon after that, he did me a considerable of a good turn—took some trouble to do it. About that time I began to suspect who he was, and not to be owing him when it came to the handcuff act, I tried to even up on that good turn of his. That's where I fell down. Instead of squaring the thing, I got in deeper, and the cool-headed beggar saved my life, out and out. Now that's my hot-box, Mr. Galbraith. What would you do if the fellow saved your life?"

Andrew Galbraith answered offhand, as a man will when the supposition is only an hypothesis which can by no means be transmuted into facts personal.

"I should do my duty, of course. This would be an uncanny world to live in, Mr. Griffin, if we let personal considerations stand in the way of plain duty."

The detective rose and found his hat. "I don't know," he said. "Them little things have bothered me, sometimes. Good evening, Mr. Galbraith." And with that he left the closed room and the hotel and took his way townward, walking slowly, but steadily, as a man who has made up his mind to do a thing of moment, taking the consequence as a man may.

As for the banker, he threw away the extinct cigar—a bit of wastefulness so inharmonious with his character as to be in itself a mark of unusual perturbation—and went out to see if dinner were ready. It was not; and so he strolled on to the veranda, reaching it just as Dr. Farnham was handing himself into a buggy with a young lady. Andrew Galbraith looked again, and recognized in the young woman who was holding the reins one of his late rescuers. Whereupon he descended the steps to speak to her. Since the doctor was the house physician, the banker had met him; but this was his first intimation that Griswold's companion was Miss Farnham.

Thereupon followed the introduction in due form, with encomium enough on the part of the rescued one to make Charlotte blush, and the good doctor's eyes to grow conspicuously dim with fatherly pride.

"We must know more of you, Mr. Galbraith," he said, hospitably. "Can you save us to-morrow evening, and come to a quiet little family dinner?"

Andrew Galbraith said he would be delighted, and so they parted.

But many things were scheduled to come between the invitation and the quiet little family dinner at Lake Lodge.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

It was seven o'clock when Griswold had finally fought his way out of the turmoil of conflicting doubts and distractions, and had come to some definite conclusion touching his duty. In the light of a possible misconstruction of his words by Margery there was nothing for it but to go to her and have the doubt cleared away before he should speak to Charlotte. So much honor demanded; and Griswold was not the man to shirk where honor was involved.

But when he was closing Mrs. Holcomb's front door behind him, the Grierson footman opened the gate and came up the walk with a note. Griswold stepped within to read it by the hall light. It was from Margery, and while he could not help smiling at the courageous naivete of it, it freed him suddenly from the burden of doubt.

"You may think what you please of me," she wrote, "but you are my one real friend in all the world. You know what no one else this side of Colorado knows about my past; honestly, I told you the worst of it; but there is one other who should know—who must know. And, oh, I can't ever tell him! Won't you please do it for me? You needn't spare me in the least, you know."

"MARGERY."

Griswold ran up to his room, penciled his answer on the back of her note, reenclosing it in a fresh envelope, and hastened down to give it to the waiting footman. Then he walked quickly to the drug store at the corner and called up the iron works by telephone. Luckily Raymer was there.

"Going to stay a little while, Ned?" he asked.

The answer was in the affirmative, and Griswold added but a word: "All right, I'm coming over."

Fifteen minutes later Griswold dropped from a car at the railway crossing and made his way to the office of the iron works. Raymer was there, elbow-deep in his correspondence, but he swept the pile of letters aside when his partner entered.

"Good for you—come down to help me out, have you?" he said, but Griswold shook his head.

"Not on office work, you may be sure. I gave you fair warning before the fact that I was born lazy. But I have a thing or two to say which may help or hinder. Are you game for the very roughest bit of a talk-fight that you ever got into?"

"I guess so. Why?"

"Because, to do what I have to do, I've got to be brutally frank. Tell me, Ned, are you in love with Margery?"

The abrupt question was something of a clear-sky thunder clap to Raymer, but he met frankness with frankness.

"I am, Kenneth; and I—I guess I have been for a good while."

"So far, so good. Now, how much do you love her?"

Raymer's smile faded to a grimace.

"Oh, come off, old man; you mustn't toast me on a gridiron that way," he protested.

"Yet I must know," Griswold persisted. "If you can't stand the test, I'm done before I begin."

"All right; get out your crucibles and melt me down."

"Good again. Is it Margery herself, or Jasper Grierson's daughter that you are in love with?"

"If I thought you were really in doubt about that, I'd beat you," said Raymer.

"I wasn't, but I wanted to clear the way. That disposes of Jasper Grierson's million or so, and brings us down to Margery, the young woman. Now, then, supposing some one should come along and tell you that this charming young woman has nothing behind her in the way of lineage; nothing on the father's side, as everybody knows, and less than nothing on the mother's, as everybody has suspected. Suppose, in addition to this, that Margery herself confesses that she is lacking in all the things that Edward Raymer may demand of his wife, even to a well-equipped conscience. Would that make any difference."

Raymer was on his feet now, tramping up and down like a baited bull. It showed his athletic figure off to the best advantage; and there was something fiercely heroic in the way he wheeled and flung up his head at the question.

"Damn it, man! I tell you I love her—love her for what she is to me. What in God's name are you driving at, anyway?"

Griswold ignored the demand. "That is all I wanted to know. Now for a little friendly hint. She has broken with her father, and needs a good, stout man to lean on. It's half-past seven, and I should think you might reach Mereside by eight, if you hurry."

Now Edward Raymer was a man self-contained and deliberate on all ordinary occasions, but at this he broke with his traditions. In a moment he had snatched his hat and was gone, leaving Griswold to close the office and to follow at his leisure.

The town clock in the courthouse tower—a gift from Jasper Grierson—was striking eight when Griswold turned into the lake drive and let himself in at the Farnham gate. There were two figures on the veranda, but only two. Little Miss Gilman was always shy of the night air. It was Charlotte who came to the steps to welcome him; but the doctor added his word from the depths of the great wicker lounging-chair.

"Come in and be at home," he said. "I hope you had the good sense to take care of yourself after your wetting."

"I took a whisky bath—external—if that's what you mean," laughed the young man, who knew the doctor's crotchets.

"That is what I mean. Get a pipe or a cigar. You know where they are."

But Griswold said he did not care to smoke, and went to sit beside Charlotte's hammock. For a time the talk drifted aimlessly, as summer evening chat will, with three to carry it, when a boy came up the walk with a call for the doctor, and the elder man rose to obey it.

"You may thank your lucky stars that you didn't study medicine, my boy," he said to Griswold, by way of leave-taking; and so he went away and left them.

"Are you glad that you didn't study medicine?" said Charlotte, when the stillness of the night had swallowed up the sounds of her father's departure.

"I don't know. I think I am glad for everything that has happened to me."

"That is an odd thing to say."

"Why is it odd?"

"Because some of the happenings must have been disagreeable, at least."

"None the less I am thankful for everyone of them."

"Why?" she asked in turn.

"Because each one has been a wheel under the train to bring me here."

"Is that a compliment?"

"No, it's the simple truth." He leaned forward and took the hand on the hammock's edge in his own and held it firmly. "Charlotte, dear, I stand to-night at the parting of the ways—no, that is not a good figure, for one of the ways is closed and I may not walk in it. The path that I shall have to tread leads down into a valley of shadows; and yet I am glad for everything that has brought me to it, because I have found you."

She sat up at that, but she did not withdraw the imprisoned hand. "Tell me," she said, simply.

"Beyond the fact that I have loved and lost you, there is little to tell."

She was silent for a little space, and then she said, softly: "Why do you say 'lost'?"

"You will know when I tell you where we first met."

"Where was it?" There was a great misgiving in her heart, and she could feel her lips growing cold.

"It was in the Bayou State bank in New Orleans. You were getting a draft cashed, and I—

"Oh, don't!" was all she said, but after that she sat as one suddenly turned to stone.

He did not speak until she gave him leave, and then he rose and stood beside her.

"I came here to-night to tell you this, Charlotte; to tell you that I love you, and—and to bid you good-by; I know very well what I have done; that I have removed myself as far from you as if we lived on separate planets. But I had to tell you."

She looked up at him, and he could see that the glorious eyes were brimming.

"Once—on the boat, you remember—you said you could defend yourself," she faltered. "Can you do it yet?"

"That defense still stands for what it is worth—to me. But I know what you think about it—what you must think. So I have come to say good-by."

She slipped quietly out of the hammock and stood before him in all her beauty.

"You are keeping something back," she said. "Tell me what it is that you are going to do?"

"I am going to take the midnight train for New Orleans—to give myself up."

"Oh, no, no!" she cried; and her arms went about his neck as if that were the only way to hold him. "Oh, you mustn't, Kenneth, for I—I love you."

He drew her closer and kissed her twice, thrice. Then he put her from him gently and groaned in the bitterness of it.

"Now God forgive me, my darling, for I have slain my love! I understand now; I went down into the pit of sin that morning, and now I have dragged you in after me. Good-by, Charlotte. When I am gone you must go down on your knees and ask God to forgive you and give you back your conscience. Then you will despise me as I deserve." And with that he was gone.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Dr. Farnham, driving leisurely home after his evening call in the neighborhood of the iron works saw a thing that made him wonder if his eye-glasses were not quite as well-fitted as they might be. In a quiet street he saw a man whom he made sure was Griswold stumbling along like a homing roysterer, and just behind him, dodging from tree to tree and shadow to shadow, another man who was evidently following the stumbler.

The doctor drove on, thinking he must have been mistaken as to the drunken man's identity. But he was not. It was Griswold; and when he reached the office of the iron works he let himself in and turned on the incandescent light, did this and wheeled quickly to confront his pursuer on the threshold of the open door.

For a fleeting half-second Griswold was startled, as anyone might be. Then he saw that the incomer was Griffin. So he greeted him guardedly and waited to know what the late visit purported.

Griffin seemed in no hurry to explain. On the contrary, he closed the door carefully behind him, snapping the catch of the night-latch as he did it, though this Griswold did not know. Next he drew down the window shade and, wheeling out the chair from Griswold's desk, sat down to clip the end from a very large cigar.

Griswold had watched his movements, first in wonder and then with a chill frost of despair slowly freezing him. For one brief instant he glanced aside at the rifle hanging upon the wall, but he quickly looked away from it, and, to be the farther from temptation, dropped into Raymer's pivot-chair and covered his face with his hands. It had come.

"I guess you know what I'm here for," said the detective, finally, when the big cigar was well alight.

Griswold nodded.

Griffin smoked stolidly for a full minute before he added: "I've had a devil of a time finding you; never should have found you if you hadn't gone off your head and got girl-crazy."

This time Griswold made no sign. Once again his eyes were marking the exact distance of the rifle on the wall. A silence surcharged with the electricity of possibilities settled down upon the cramped little room; and when it became unbearable the detective broke it.

"Where's the swag?" he asked, briefly.

Then Griswold spoke for the first time. "It's here in this plant; the greater part of it."

"Humph! I supposed so." And then, after another silent interval: "Why the devil don't you say something?"

Griswold spread his hands. "There is nothing to say—nothing that I think of. You have run me down, and that's the end of it." But he glanced once more at the rifle.

Griffin smiled. "The gun sort o' tempts you, doesn't it? You're wondering in your mind if you could jump quick enough to get the drop on me. You can do it if you want to. I left my arsenal at the hotel and came here bare-handed."

Griswold's eyes began to grow steely. Pardon me, but that was a very foolish thing to do, Mr. Griffin."

"Reckon so?"

"Very foolish. You lose sight of the cost of this thing which you are here to do; the cost, not to me, but to others who are innocent."

Griffin smiled again. "Hundred-thousand-dollar hold-ups are pretty likely to be costly for somebody."

"Yes. There may have been a time when I should have given you the key to my safety deposit box, but that time is in the past. The money is no longer in the bank; it is here in this plant, and my arrest and conviction will bring ruin upon my friend."

"Well?" said the detective.

"I was just thinking," said Griswold, reflectively. "Perhaps you can help me to decide a point—you've had a good bit of experience, I take it. If a professional highwayman had robbed Mr. Galbraith last spring, would any considerable portion of the—the swag, as you term it, be recoverable now?"

WITH THE DETECTIVE UPPERMOST.

The detective gave an *ex parte* opinion. "Most likely not. It's easy come, easy go, with that lot."

"Precisely. Then I'll make you a proposal. Leave the recovery of the money out of the question, and I'll go with you peaceably and plead guilty."

Griffin laughed outright. "You're a cool one," he said. "What do you take me for?"

"For a wise man or a fool, as the event shall decide. Do you accept?"

"Not much I don't!"

"Then die!" yelled the man at bay, launching himself like a stone from a catapult on the detective.

The struggle was short and sharp, and the battle was not to the strong.

Griswold was the heavier man, and he had the strength of despair to help him; but the detective was lithe and wiry and able to match strength with a wily cunning born of many a fierce encounter with desperate men. Back and forth in the cramped office they reeled, locked in a death grip and swaying and stumbling as one man. But at the end of it Griffin broke his antagonist's hold, and there was a heavy fall, with the detective uppermost.

"Had enough?" he asked; and when Griswold gave over he rose and helped the beaten one to his feet.

Griswold set his teeth and held out his wrists for the manacles. Griffin swore gruffly and dashed the blood out of his eye. He had struck the corner of the desk in falling and the cut was bleeding freely.

"You be damned," he said. "You think you've got a lead-pipe cinch on all the soft-heartedness in this world, but you haven't. I've thrown up this job—threw it up before I came here to-night."

Griswold staggered back into a chair and covered his face with his hands.

"I—I don't understand."

"Don't you? Well, you ought to. Reckon I've forgot the night when you stood in that door and kept them strikers from killing me? I haven't and by —— if I choose to be a man first and an officer of the law afterward, it's nobody's business but mine."

Griswold rose unsteadily, went across to the standing desk in the corner and leaned upon it with his face hidden in the bend of the arm. When he looked up again he was alone.

CHAPTER XXXV.

For a long time after the detective had gone Griswold paced the floor of the small office, treading out the vinepress of humiliation and defeat, and trying, as a man may under such hard conditions, to decide upon a course of action which should be fair to all and decently fair for himself.

For a time it seemed impossible to draw any thread of sane procedure out of the revulsionary tangle in which Charlotte's confession had involved him. He told himself bitterly that she had failed him at the crucial moment; that she had stepped down from the pedestal of the ideal to become a woman of flesh and blood, loving, condoning and forgiving everything in the man to whom she had given her heart. But very quickly he was made to see the injustice of this; to see first that he had deliberately gone about to build a wall of personality around her judgment, and then, by his own confession of love, to apply a test too severe for any loving woman to withstand.

More than that, he saw that he had played the hypocrite with her even at the last moment. When he had gone to her, nothing had been farther from his thoughts than a confession of his guilt. The resolve to tell her all had come suddenly, and he had yielded to the impulse on the spur of the moment. None the less, he had let her believe that it was well considered; that he had determined beforehand upon the course he had outlined in the brief farewell.

Taking it all in all, he had an exceedingly bad half-hour after Griffin left him, and out of the fiery furnace of it emerged a man altogether different from the hot-hearted proletary who had robbed the Bayou bank. He had stood alone against the world's condemnation in that act, and had thought it defensible from an impregnable position fortified by the rights of man. But now he was made to see the act and its culpability through the magnifying glass of another's personality. He had called it a social necessity, and no sin; and yet the direct consequences of it had been to destroy his ideal of uprightness to make a pure, God-fearing woman his accomplice after the fact.

While Griswold was thus fighting his way blindly out of the darkness into the light, the net in which he had enmeshed himself was cut at the point where it was the strongest. When Dr. Farnham returned from a visit to the iron works neighborhood he found his daughter waiting for him at the gate.

"Please don't get out," she said. "I want you to take me over to the hotel on the Point. Will you?"

The father cut the buggy and gave her a hand to climb up beside him.

"What's gone wrong, Lottie?—Anything that I may know about?"

She shook her head. "Not now, poppa dear; but I must go."

She was silent and dry-eyed on the short drive; and when it was ended, and the good doctor had waited a long half-hour for her at the hotel, he drove her home and was no wiser than he had been. She had had him go in with her to send her card to Mr. Andrew Galbraith, but beyond the fact that she had been closeted for a half-hour with the white-haired banker, the father knew nothing—nor did he seek to know, having perfect confidence in his daughter.

What took place in Andrew Gal-

(Continued on Fourth Page.)

My Lungs

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