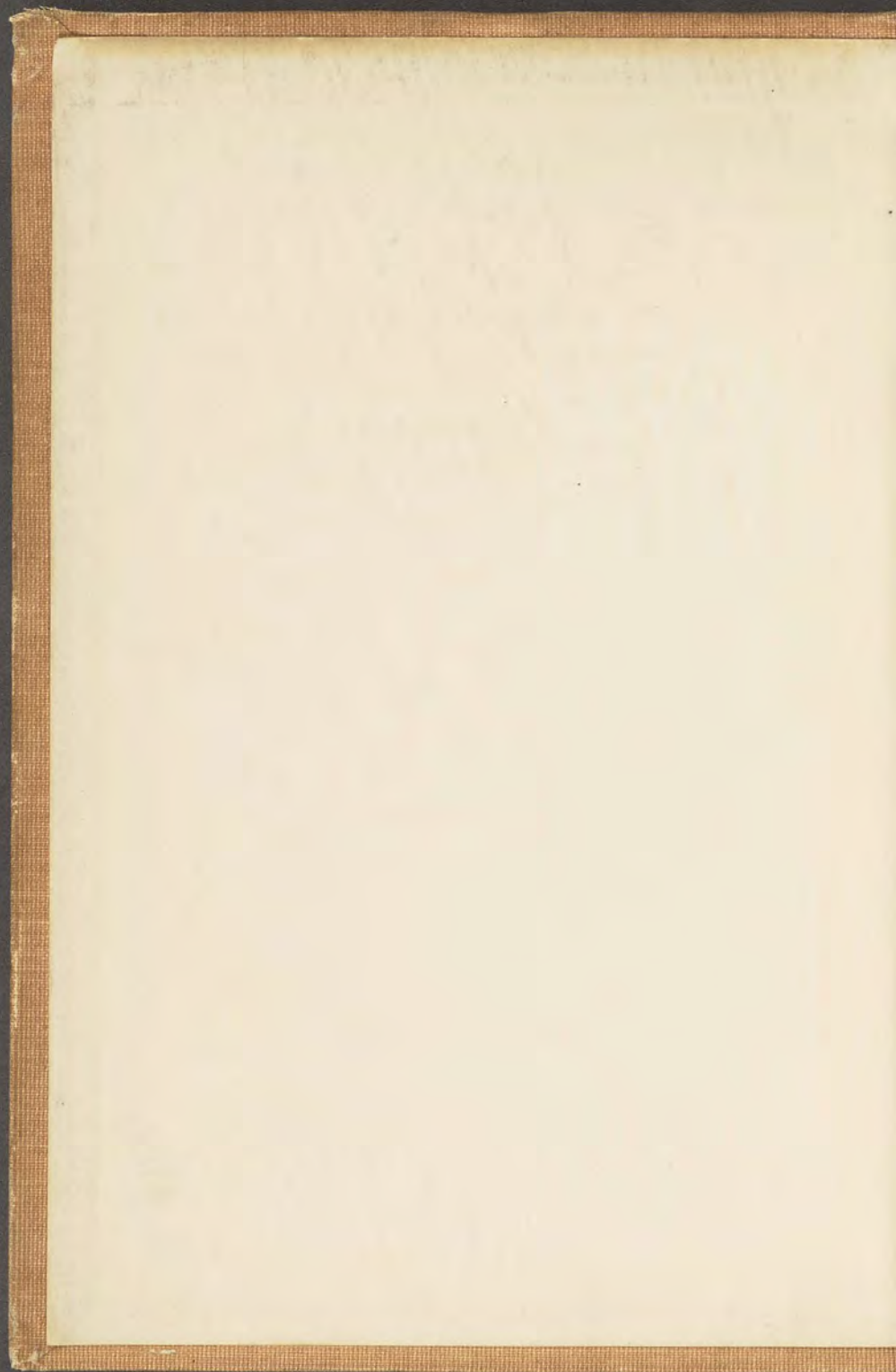
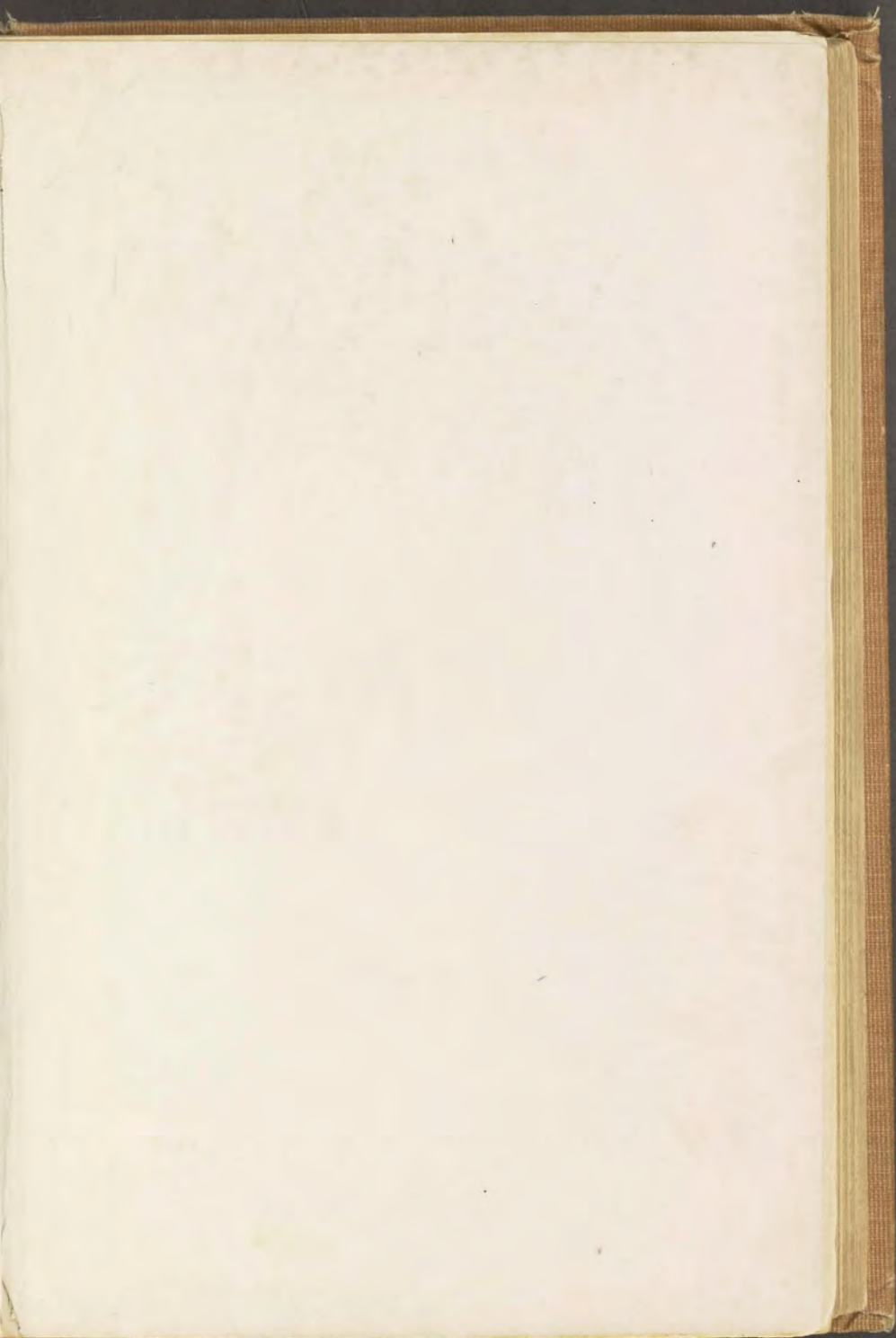


THE CASKET OF DIAMONDS



BY OLIVER OPTIC.







IN THE WOODY DALE HE SAW A MAN JOIN HER.

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The Casket of
Diamonds

OR

Hope Everton's Inheritance

By

OLIVER OPTIC

*Author of "Now or Never," "Try Again,"
"The Boat Club" Series, Etc.*



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THE CASKET OF DIAMONDS;
OR,
HOPE EVERTON'S INHERITANCE

CHAPTER I.

A KNIGHTLY YOUNG DEFENDER.

"Oh, but you are going to take my arm, anyway, Miss Hope?"

Thus spoke Rush Sinnerton, a swellish-looking gentleman of eighteen.

"I will not take your arm, Rush, and I don't wish you to go with me."

This was the reply made by Miss Hope Everton.

One might have looked the whole city of New York over without finding a more beautiful maiden of sixteen. She was prettily, though not elegantly dressed. Her form was simply perfect. Her features were regular, and an artist would have given half his fortune, if he had any, for the privilege of making her his model. But her beauty did not lie so much in the

union of fair form and features as in the lovely and innocent expression of her face when it was in repose.

She repelled the swellish-looking young gentleman who forced his attentions upon her; and the snap of her eye would assure any looker on, if there had been one, that she was in downright earnest.

Just now her lovely face was crimson with indignation. Rush Sinnerton had taken her hand, and was trying to draw it through the bend of his elbow.

It was about seven o'clock in the evening of a bright spring day, and the street, though quite near the principal thoroughfare of the great metropolis, was almost deserted.

"Let go my hand, Rush Sinnerton, or I will scream!" gasped the affrighted maiden, who was perhaps more alarmed than the occasion required.

"Don't make a row, Hope; I don't mean any harm," pleaded Rush, trying to conciliate the young lady.

"Then let go my hand, and leave me!"

"But I want to walk with you."

"I don't want you to walk with me."

"I won't hurt you."

The indignation of the maiden blazed stronger and stronger as the young man continued to maintain his hold upon her hand.

She struggled to release it from his grasp. Already

a couple of men on the other side of the street had halted, evidently to ascertain if the couple were in sport or in earnest.

Just at this moment a young fellow turned the corner of the street, and came within full view of the scene. He seemed to have no doubt on the question which the two men on the other side of the way were so far unable to determine, for he broke into a smart run as soon as he realized the situation.

“Oh, help me, Rowly!” cried Hope Everton, as soon as she discovered the newcomer.

“Don’t make a disturbance in the street, Hope!” urged Rush Sinnerton, though he did not release his hold upon the hand of the maiden.

“Let me alone, then!” gasped the prisoner. “I will not go with you, and I will never speak to you again!”

Again she renewed the struggle to escape from the grasp of the young man.

Rush plainly felt as though he was doing nothing out of the way, and he seemed to be greatly surprised at the resistance of the young lady. In fact he had become angry as the struggle proceeded, and he tightened his grasp on the fair hand within his own.

Rush had changed his position so that his back was towards the one to whom Hope appealed for help.

The youth whom she had called Rowly increased his speed when he fully realized the situation of the young lady, and doubtless he felt like the knight errant of old coming into the presence of beauty in distress.

At any rate, whatever he was thinking of, he made all possible haste to the rescue of the distressed maiden, and in a moment more he was on the spot.

Rowly was a young man of action rather than mere words, for he did not stop to argue the question with Rush. He was a stout built young fellow of sixteen, not quite as tall as the other actor in the scene.

His eyes blazed with indignation. Without even an announcement of his presence to the assailant of Miss Hope, he planted the heaviest blow he was capable of giving on the side of Rush's head.

The young swell released his grasp on the hand of his companion, reeled over and fell into the gutter. It was not yet time in the evening for stars, but Rush saw whole clusters of them as he went down, vanquished in the struggle.

Hope did not wait to ascertain whether he was hurt or not, but tripped down the street as lightly as a fairy in the everglades, though her bosom was bounding with emotion and terror.

Rowly had no further interest in the fallen swell, and he followed the maiden.

"What's the trouble, Hope?" asked he, as soon as he had secured a position at her side.

He was only sixteen, and of course he was not susceptible to any emotion beyond mere friendship. At least he was not conscious of any deeper and stronger feeling.

"Rush followed me out of the house, and insisted that I should take his arm, which was quite ridiculous," replied Hope, with a fresh blush on her beautiful face. "I would not take even my brother's arm at this time of day, if I had a brother."

"You told him you would not take his arm?" asked Rowly.

"Of course I did; and as flatly as I could speak. Then he seized my hand, and held it till you came."

"He let go quick enough when I hit him," added Rowly, with something of triumph in his tone.

"He has worried and persecuted me for the last three months; and I have begged mamma to let me go away into the country, so that I could get away from him. I don't have a moment's peace when he is in the house," said the pretty maiden, the tears beginning to flow from her bright eyes.

"What does he want of you?" inquired the unsophisticated youth.

“He doesn’t want anything of me except to be with me. He says he likes me ; but I don’t like him. I hate the sight of him ; and if mamma doesn’t send me away, I believe I shall run off,” added Hope, much agitated.

“Don’t do that, Hope. I am sure your mother will do something about it after what has happened to-day,” said Rowly, in soothing tones.

The fair girl had some doubts in regard to the ability of her mother to do anything which would relieve her of the disagreeable attentions of the young persecutor.

Mrs. Everton was a widow, and Hope was her only child, in whom all her earthly love and hope were concentrated.

Six years before her husband had died, leaving his business somewhat involved ; but when he bought the house in which they lived he had caused the deed to be given to her. With her own money she had furnished it.

The house and what it contained were all that was left to her after the settlement of her husband’s estate.

It was a large dwelling, and she had supported herself and her daughter by letting the chambers to respectable lodgers. But there was a mortgage on the house of eight thousand dollars.

This mortgage was held by Colonel Sinnerton, who lived in Hudson. The colonel had sent his son to New York City to fit for Columbia College, and had taken a room for him in Mrs. Everton's house.

Rush Sinnerton boarded at a neighboring restaurant. He was inclined to be a "gentleman," and already lived considerably faster than his father suspected.

He might have been excused for being deeply moved by the beauty, grace and bewitching glance of Hope; but not for his stupidity and brutality in approaching her.

He picked himself out of the gutter, stirred with wrath and the thirst for vengeance upon Hope's sturdy defender. He rushed with all his speed to overtake him. He struck another blow at him, and then he went into the gutter once more.

Before he could overtake them again, Rowly and the terrified girl had entered the house of Mrs. Parkway, the young man's mother. She had nearly fainted there; but kindness and care soon restored her.

After dark, leaving Hope with his mother, Rowly went to see Mrs. Everton, and told her what had happened.

CHAPTER II.

A RESOLUTE MOTHER.

HOPE EVERTON remained at the home of Mrs. Parkway for three days. This lady only occupied a floor in an apartment house, with three rooms; but Rush Sinnerton was not there, and the poor girl was happy.

So was Rowly happy, perhaps because Hope was so, perhaps only because she was under the same roof with him, though he did not attempt to analyze his feelings.

Rush remained in the street till long after dark, lying in wait for the return of Hope. He saw Rowly enter the house, with the message to her mother.

Rowly soon left, and when Rush was tired of waiting he went to his room.

Mrs. Everton occupied the lower floor of the house. The front parlor was open to all the lodgers; the large room in the rear of it was the landlady's chamber, while a small apartment next to it was assigned to Hope.

Rush was nervous and uneasy. Possibly he realized that he had been brutal and imprudent. At any rate after he had thought of the scene in the street for half an hour, he went down into the front parlor, which was seldom used by any of the lodgers.

If there was any one person on the face of the earth that he particularly hated at that moment, it was Rowly Parkway, whom he had often met at Mrs. Everton's house. But he was anxious to recover the ground he had lost with Hope and her mother.

He had not been in the room five minutes before the landlady joined him. She looked stern and cold, and Rush understood the moment he glanced at her face that he had created a tempest in the soul of the good woman.

"I notify you, Mr. Sinnerton, that you must vacate the room you occupy in this house immediately," said she, not angrily, but with the firmness of a rock.

"That is rather sudden," stammered Rush.

"I give you till to-morrow afternoon at five to leave the room," continued the landlady, with a heavy frown on her brow. "If you are not gone by that time I shall remove your things and take possession of the room."

"This is rather short notice," muttered Rush. "May I ask the reason for this hasty step on your part?"

“You know the reason for it as well as I do; and there is no occasion for any more words about it.”

“I hope I have not offended you, Mrs. Everton.”

“If you have common sense, or any of the sentiments of a gentleman, you know very well that you have not only offended, but insulted me, in the person of my daughter,” replied the lady, her face, which was still fair, taking on a slightly crimson hue.

“If I have offended or insulted you, or your daughter, it was unintentional, and I am ready to apologize,” added Rush, though one skilled in the ways of the world could have seen that his proposition was nothing but mockery, prompted by hypocrisy and deceit.

“If your apology were accepted, I would not allow you to remain in my house on any consideration,” added Mrs. Everton.

“If this is your decision, madam, of course I have nothing more to say,” continued Rush, with an attempt to put on a dignity, which was not in his nature.

“My decision is made, and it will not be revoked.”

“It will be necessary for me to notify my father at once of this step on your part, Mrs. Everton,” said Rush, looking earnestly into her face to detect the effect of this announcement.

He was wondering if she had thought of the overdue note, secured by a mortgage on the house, which his father held.

But the landlady did not quail or quiver, even if she thought of the mortgage. It did not seem to occur to her at that moment that real estate was under a cloud just then, and it might be difficult to negotiate a new loan on the property on reasonably favorable terms.

"That is a matter for you to settle, Mr. Sinnerton," she replied, without betraying the slightest uneasiness.

"I will telegraph to him at once, and I have no doubt he will be in New York to-morrow morning."

The lady made no reply, and did not appear to dread the coming of her creditor. If she had any fear she did not manifest it in the slightest degree.

"I may as well leave to-night as at any other time," added the young man, with a sort of bravado which was a part of his character.

"Do as you think best," replied the landlady.

"Of course you will allow me to see Miss Hope before I go?" suggested Rush.

"No, sir!"

"We have been friends for the year that I have been in this house, and I should like to say good-bye to her."

“You will have to dispense with that formality, Mr. Sinnerton. She will not come into my house again while you remain here,” added the lady, with no relaxation of her firmness.

“May I ask where she is?”

“That is a matter which does not concern you, sir.”

Mrs. Everton, having said all she had to say, turned with womanly dignity on her heel and left the front parlor.

Rush Sinnerton bit his lips, for he felt that he had been thoroughly beaten in the skirmish with the mother of the young lady whom he admired. I say “admired,” for admiration was the full extent of his feeling towards her. In fact he was incapable of any higher sentiment.

Even if Rush had been worthy of her daughter, Mrs. Everton would have frowned upon the attentions he was disposed to bestow upon her. She regarded Hope as a mere child, though she was sixteen, and such expressions of favor were altogether out of place with a girl of her age.

They had long disturbed, and even worried her, and she had hoped something would occur to take the young man out of her house. It had occurred, and the mother was not in a frame of mind to relent in the slightest degree.

Rush was not a fool, if he was a brutal swell. The visit of Rowly Parkway to the house, and the fact that Hope had gone with him after the scene in the street, assured him that the young lady was at the home of her defender's mother.

He left the house, and after he had sent a telegram to his father, he went to the residence of Mrs. Parkway. She occupied the third floor of the tenement, and he readily found it, though he had never been there before.

His knock at the door was answered by Mrs. Parkway. As she opened the door, a slight scream saluted his ear. It was called forth from Hope, who saw him in the open door.

But Rowly's mother was as resolute as her life-long friend had been an hour before. She refused to let Rush Sinnerton see Hope. He was angry at this denial, and soon attempted to push his way into the room where he had seen the object of his admiration.

Mrs. Parkway earned a support for her family by dressmaking, and her indoor occupation had somewhat impaired her health, so that she was not strong. Rush easily pushed her aside, and was about to come into the apartment, when Rowly hastened to the assistance of his mother.

"There is the stairway—go down!" exclaimed he as he placed himself in front of Rush.

The visitor was boiling over with wrath when he found himself again confronting the stout youth who twice before that evening had tipped him into the gutter. His rage got the better of his discretion, and he made a leap at the throat of Rowly.

Mrs. Parkway shouted for help, and Hope screamed.

The knightly defender of innocence did not care to close with Rush, who was considerably taller than he was, and he avoided the clinch of his furious opponent.

He did better; he used his hard fist again. He planted a blow between the two eyes of Rush Sinner-ton, and the visitor went over backwards falling at the head of the stairs.

As soon as this result was achieved, Mrs. Parkway, who had not "lost her head" in the excitement of the moment, drew her son back into the room and closed the door.

The occupants of the floors above and below, who had been called from their rooms by the screams, hastened to the scene. Their appearance brought Rush back to his senses, and he realized that he was getting himself into difficulty.

He picked himself up, and hastened down the stairs with all the speed he could command. When he was confronted by a stout man at the foot of the first

flight, he declared that he was going for a policeman, and was suffered to pass.

He returned to his room very much dissatisfied with himself and everybody else. But he could not see that he had been guilty of anything but indiscretion. In fact he felt as though he were the injured party, rather than the aggressor upon the domain of maidenly modesty and reserve.

Before nine o'clock the next morning Colonel Sinner-ton rang the bell at the house of Mrs. Everton. He was a choleric man, and demanded briskly when the landlady had ushered him into the front parlor, why his son had been turned out of his room.

Mrs. Everton entered upon a full explanation, which did not in the least degree appease the irate father of a spoiled son.

"Boys will be boys, and I can't see that Rush has done any harm," said he.

At that moment the culprit himself came into the room.

CHAPTER III.

A ROUGH-LOOKING STRANGER.

RUSH SINNERTON told his story in his own way. He admitted that he had taken Hope's hand, but he had had no intention to injure or insult her. It was all a mere pleasantry on his part; and he had offered, if he had done anything out of the way, to apologize for it.

"That's enough, madam!" exclaimed Colonel Sinnerton. "The boy is all right, and I knew he was even after I had listened only to your own account of the affair. Is my son to be driven from your house for a mere boyish pleasantry?"

"He has been a terror to my daughter for months, and she says she will never come into the house again while he is here," added Mrs. Everton, rather warmly.

"That is all nonsense, madam. Rush is a gentleman by nature as well as education; and he knows how to treat a lady. Is he to be sent out of your house just because he has been a little too familiar,

perhaps with your puckery daughter? Is he to be disgraced because he wanted your daughter to take his arm?" demanded the Colonel, indignantly.

It was quite impossible for the fond mother to state in what manner Rush had offended the delicacy of Hope in the house and elsewhere, for, aside, from the scene in the street, he had not been guilty of any overt act of violence, or even of speech.

But his whole manner to the young girl was a constant offense, while he rarely went beyond the bounds of propriety. His very look was almost an assault upon her, and she shrank with instinctive dread from his gaze, no often fastened upon her.

The devoted mother could not explain what she clearly saw in the manner of the young man that was offensive to her, and still more to Hope; and if she had been able to do so, the colonel had not the capacity, the fineness of character, to understand her.

"I can only say that Rush can no longer occupy a room in my house," said Mrs. Everton, firmly, but in rather a subdued tone, for though she felt strong in her position, she realized that she had not made it very clear to her creditor.

"Very well, madam; very well!" exclaimed the colonel, rising from his chair and pacing the room with long strides. "You have chosen for yourself

to disgrace my son, for of course this affair will be known to all his friends."

"I shall not make it known to them," added the landlady, meekly.

"Such things cannot be concealed, and this will be known," replied the angry father. "Of course you don't expect any more favors from me, madam."

"I do not; but when the happiness and even the safety of my only child is involved, I have no alternative, though I would do almost anything to avoid displeasing you, Colonel Sinnerton," answered Mrs. Everton, a few tears rising in her pretty eyes.

"All stuff, madam! The happiness and safety of your daughter indeed! That is all sheer bosh! I hold your note for eight thousand dollars, secured by mortgage on this house; and it was due five years ago," said the colonel, halting before her to note the effect of his declaration and what it suggested.

"What you say is all true; and I am well aware that, financially, I am in your power," added the poor woman, submissively.

"I have been very indulgent to you, and now I get my reward in the disgrace of my son."

The creditor tried to believe that he was a much injured man.

"The welfare of my daughter compels me to act as I do."

“That’s all nonsense, as I have before observed. I beg also to remind you that the interest of the note for the last half year has not yet been paid,” raved the colonel.

“I wrote you on the first of April, that my house had been robbed of two hundred and eighty dollars I had saved to pay the interest, besides other valuables, on the day before; and you must have read about it in the papers,” pleaded the distressed lady.

“I did read about it; but I did not read that you would turn my son out of your house in disgrace on a flimsy pretext, or I should not have written you that I would wait for my money. Will you allow my son to retain his room, and not inflict this disgrace upon him?”

“I will not,” replied the poor woman firmly, though her lips quivered, and she could not conceal her emotion.

“That is all I want to know!” gasped the colonel, darting away from her as though he had been stung by her answer. “Before the sun goes down again, I shall take possession of this house, and attach the furniture for the unpaid interest.”

“I cannot help it if you do,” added the poor mother.

“Do you consider what you are doing, madam? I doubt if the house will bring enough, when sold

for cash in these times, to more than pay the note. My son has been guilty of no offense worth naming, and you subject him to an unmerited disgrace. Rush is a gentleman, and——”

The remark was interrupted by the entrance of Rowly Parkway, who had the freedom of the house.

Rush sprang from his chair the moment he saw his late assailant, and stood in front of him, as full of rage as his father had been a moment before.

“What do you want, you meddlesome pup?” demanded he.

“I don’t want anything of you, and I hope you don’t want anything more of me,” replied Rowly in a good-natured tone, and with a cheerful smile on his manly face.

“Is anything the matter, Rowly?” asked Mrs. Everton, anxious still in regard to her daughter.

“Nothing at all, Aunt Myra,” replied the last comer, calling her by this familiar appellation, though they were not in any way related. “I only came over to say that Hope is all right this morning, and wishes to see you some time to-day.”

Rowly turned to leave the room, but found that Rush stood between him and the door.

“Do you think I am going to let you off without paying you for the raps you gave me last night?” demanded Rush, fanning his rage to a flame.

Again the fury of the young gentleman got the better of his discretion, and he forgot the lessons of the evening before. With an impetuous spring he attempted to hit the defender of innocence a blow with his clenched fist.

Rowly was not a pugilist, and had never even taken a single lesson in the art of self-defense, but nature had armed him with a resolute spirit, a quick eye, and abundant strength.

He warded off the blow, at the same time planting a fellow to the ones he had given the evening before on the head of his assailant, and Rush staggered towards his father.

“What do you mean by striking my son, you young rascal?” yelled the colonel, rushing furiously towards the defender.

“He began it, and I always defend myself,” replied Rowly, retreating towards the door. “That is the third time I have knocked that lobster out, and I am ready to do it again.”

“I will shake your head off for that!” foamed Colonel Sinnerton.

“I can hit hard, and I shall defend myself,” added Rowly, coolly.

“That fellow knocked me over twice last night, father, and I am bound to get even with him,” added Rush.

Mrs. Everton placed herself between Rowly and her wrathful visitor. Then the defender related what had occurred at his mother's home the night before.

"I don't think it is the part of a gentleman to force his way into a room he is forbidden to enter," added Mrs. Everton, mildly.

The colonel was rather staggered at the conduct of his son; but he soon recovered his assurance. Of course he censured Mrs. Parkway for not admitting him, and considered that Rush was blameless.

"I have said all I have to say, madam. Have you changed your mind?" asked the colonel.

"I have not; and what we have just heard ought to convince you that I am quite right in regard to your son," replied Mrs. Everton.

"It does not convince me. No more words are needed, and I shall do what I said I would do."

At that moment the door bell rang violently as though there was some one at the handle who "meant business." Rowly, who was near the front door, opened it, and a rather stout gentleman, with a rough exterior, entered without any special invitation.

"Does Mrs. Myra Everton, widow of William Everton, deceased, live here?" asked the stranger.

Rowly pointed to the door of the front parlor, and the man entered it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CASKET OF DIAMONDS.

THE stranger was dressed in a suit of blue and the garments were large and loose on his strongly knit frame. His heavy beard was tinged with gray, and he was evidently a man of five and forty years. His expression was good-natured, and a smile played on his sun-bronzed face. In taking him for a sailor, one would not have been far out of the way.

"This is Mrs. Everton," said Rowly, pointing to the landlady.

Colonel Sinnerton and his son had retired to one of the front windows, and were talking to each other in a low tone. But the father occasionally glanced at the stranger, and seemed to be inclined to know his business before he left the house.

Rowly had gone at ten o'clock the evening before to watch with one of the clerks in the jewelry establishment where he was employed. He was allowed to be off in the forenoon to obtain his sleep, but no

that morning he was too much interested in the affairs of Aunt Myra and Hope to sleep.

“My name is Israel Ringboom, at your service, ma’am, though folks commonly call me Captain Ringboom, for I command the ship Reindeer, which got in last night from the Cape of Good Hope,” said the stranger, as he laid a small wooden box on the table, and looked about him as if in search of something or somebody.

“You are welcome, Captain Ringboom, though I do not remember that I ever saw you before,” replied Mrs. Everton.

“I don’t think you ever did, ma’am ; but that don’t make any difference. To come to the point without stopping to wear round, this box contains about two hundred thousand dollars’ worth of diamonds, and they all belong to some of your folks, as sure as Israel Ringboom is an honest man.”

“Two hundred thousand dollars !” exclaimed the landlady, who had heard of such wealth, but had no other evidence of its existence.

“That’s about the figure, though it may be something more or a little less,” added the captain, looking around the room again.

“And to whom do you say this treasure belongs, Captain Ringboom ?” asked Mrs. Everton, amazed beyond measure at what she had heard.

“Well, ma'am, I don't want to have any mistake about it, and I must say bluntly that I don't think it belongs to you,” replied the captain, a little embarrassed, as though he felt that he had been going too fast with his revelations.

“I did not suppose it did belong to me,” replied the landlady, with a smile.

“I reckon this boy is not your son,” continued the shipmaster, nodding in the direction of Rowly, who had been an astounded listener to all that had been said.

“No, sir; he calls me aunt, but he is no blood relation of mine, though I love him as though he were my own nephew.”

“But I was told that you had one or more children,” added Captain Ringboom, opening his mouth rather wide in his interest in the case.

“I have one daughter, who is my only child,” replied the landlady.

“That settles it!” exclaimed the visitor, springing out of his chair in his excitement. “Her name is Hope, and she was sixteen years old on the first day of January last.”

“Quite true. The name was given to her by her Uncle Howell, who, I suppose, is dead, for we have heard nothing from him for ~~the~~ last ten years,” said Mrs. Everton.

“Yes, ma’am, he is dead ; but it is not three months since he passed away,” added the captain, impressively, as though the deceased had been his intimate friend.

“Then you knew him ?”

“Howell Everton and I went to school together, but I did not see anything of him for many years till I met him in the street in Cape Town, but so sick that he could hardly put one foot before the other.”

At this point in the conversation, Mrs. Everton remembered for the first time that Colonel Sinnerton and his son were listening to the conversation. She invited the visitor and Rowly to go into the next room.

But the colonel unwillingly took the hint, and he left the front parlor, followed by Rush. A few minutes later, the landlady heard the street door open and shut, and she had no doubt they had left the house.

“But where is the little girl? She was only six years old when Howell saw her for the last time,” asked Captain Ringboom, changing the topic after the departure of the lodger and his father.

“She is at the house of a friend of mine in the next street,” replied Mrs. Everton, who had suddenly given way to a flood of tears. “Howell Everton was my own brother and though he had fallen into a bad

way, he was always very kind to me, and he could hardly have loved Hope any more if he had been her own father."

"I know about that, for Howell told me all about it. He took to drinking and ruined himself," added the captain.

"He was intoxicated the last time he came to our house, and my husband ordered him to leave. They quarreled a year before that. Before he went out of the house my brother, intoxicated as he was, promised that he would never drink another drop of liquor as long as he lived," sobbed the poor woman.

"I don't believe he ever did!" protested the captain. "He put a plain gold ring on his niece's middle finger, and asked her to wear it in memory of him."

"And she wears it now on her little finger," added the mother.

"I must see her before I say anything more," said Captain Ringboom.

"Rowly will go for her, as Rush is gone."

Rowly was quite willing to do so. When he put his hand on the knob of the door, a slight noise was heard in the hall; but all were too much interested in the exciting event of the moment to take particular notice of it.

The messenger was gone but a few minutes, and

returned with Hope. She was presented to Captain Ringboom, who seemed to be almost stunned by her beauty.

He took a big pocket-book from the inside of his vest, and drew from it a soiled paper enclosing the photograph of a child.

"That's Hope as true as you live!" exclaimed the visitor, as he compared the picture with the living original.

"I have no doubt of that," added the mother, with a smile. "I gave that picture to my brother the last time I saw him."

"I am satisfied that this pretty girl is the niece of Howell Everton, and this box belongs to her. Hope is the Diamond Heiress," added the captain, as he took the box from the table. "Your brother went to the diamond mines of Africa. He made his fortune there, but he lost his health. My ship got knocked over in a typhoon in the Indian Ocean, and I went to Cape Town for repairs. I met Howell, as I said, and he told me his story.

"He died of the fever he had brought from the interior, and I closed his eyes. He had never written to you because he expected to return every month, and he wanted to surprise you with the change that had taken place in him. He gave me the casket which is nailed in this box, in trust for Hope Everton.

I have a sort of writing, perhaps it will pass for a will, in which he makes me the trustee of his wealth, with instructions to use it for her benefit and that of her mother ; but at least three-fourths of it must go to Hope when she is twenty-one years old."

The conversation continued all the forenoon. Mrs. Everton told the trustee all about her relations with Colonel Sinnerton and his son. The stout shipmaster threatened to cowhide the young swell, and would sell enough of the diamonds to pay off the entire debt.

From misery the little family had suddenly been raised to affluence. Hope's heart bounded when she realized that she was redeemed from the persecutions of Rush.

The landlady prepared a lunch in the basement, and Rowly was invited to partake of it before he went back to the store.

Captain Ringboom divided his time in gazing from the still handsome mother to the lovely daughter. The lunch was more than a cheerful occasion ; it was a feast of rejoicing.

Suddenly the stout captain sprang to his feet, and tipped his chair over behind.

"What in the world is the matter, Captain Ringboom?" asked the landlady, rising in her astonishment at the sudden movement of her guest.

“We have left that box on the table upstairs!” almost shouted he, as he rushed wildly from the room.

“Don’t be alarmed, captain ; it is safe enough,” said Mrs. Everton, as she followed him up the stairs.

“I have kept that box under my pillow every night since it came into my possession ; and I ought to be hung for letting it out of my sight a single minute !” gasped the trustee.

“I am sure there has been no one in the front parlor since we left it,” added the landlady.

Captain Ringboom said no more, but bolted into the parlor as though he had been shot from a gun.

When Mrs. Everton, followed by Hope and Rowly, entered the apartment, they found the captain tearing his hair in wild rage and dismay.

They glanced at the table where the box had been deposited. They looked on the floor near it ; they searched in every part of the room.

The treasure was not to be seen ; it had disappeared.

CHAPTER V.

A BIT OF EVIDENCE.

THE little family, suddenly elevated to the highest pinnacle of rejoicing, were as suddenly precipitated into the deepest depths of despair.

Captain Ringboom seemed to be the greatest sufferer; at least he was the most violent in his demonstrations.

He blamed himself solely for the loss of the treasure, though it was really no more his fault than that of the landlady.

"I have lived in vain, for the greatest mission of my lifetime has been a failure!" gasped he, his heavy chest heaving with emotion.

"It was no more your fault than it was mine, my friend," interposed Mrs. Everton, moved by the deep feeling of her guest. "Though the coming of the treasure made us all happy, I forgot all about it when we went down to lunch."

"I have watched over that box as though it had been my only child since it was committed to my

care by my friend ; and now my carelessness for a moment has deprived the only child of my friend of the fortune that belonged to her. I shall never forgive myself for this crime," groaned the captain.

"But I forgive you," added Mrs. Everton, taking the hand of the captain, and doing her best to try to comfort him.

"And I forgive you, Captain Ringboom," added Hope, with a smile that ought to have brought peace to his troubled spirit.

"I don't deserve your forgiveness, either of you," replied the shipmaster, apparently relieved for the moment.

"I don't see that anybody has been to blame, for all meant well. We were all careless," interposed Rowly. "But it is no use to groan over it. What is to be done about it? The diamonds may yet be recovered."

"We shall never see one of them again," sighed the captain, looking into the bright eyes of the young man in search of hope. "The widow Everton tells me that the mortgage on her house is to be foreclosed, and her furniture attached for the interest. I brought salvation to her as well as to Hope in ridding herself of this young puppy. Now all is lost!"

"I don't think so," protested Rowly.

"Perhaps not, for I will do all I can to stave off

the malice of this Colonel Sinnerton. I have saved up something of my own, and I will stand between the widow and any harm that may come to her."

This resolution seemed to comfort the honest man more than anything else, and he became calm.

"I think we shall get the diamonds again," said Rowly, who had kept up a tremendous thinking since the discovery of the loss.

"I don't believe there is one chance in a hundred of our ever seeing one of them again," added the captain. "It is a big haul for the thief, and he will take care to cover his tracks. He will leave for London or Paris, where there is a better market for such gems than on this side of the ocean."

"You don't suppose any ordinary thief has taken them, do you?" asked Rowly.

"Ordinary or uncommon, some one has taken them. The rascal must have come into the house while we were downstairs, and carried off the box. He may have followed me, believing I had something of great value in the box from the care I took of it."

"It was not taken by any such fellow," added Rowly, with so much decision that the captain and the landlady were startled by it.

"You seem to have an opinion of your own about it, my hearty," said Captain Ringboom.

"I have a very decided opinion," replied Rowly.

"Reel it off, my lad," continued the shipmaster, beginning to be a little excited over the question.

"I believe that Rush Sinnerton took the diamonds," said Rowly, in a very earnest tone.

"The young cub that insulted Hope?"

"Yes, sir."

"But he went away two hours ago," suggested Mrs. Everton. "The box was on the table half an hour ago."

"If Rush went away, he came back again," replied Rowly, warmly.

"What makes you think Rush took the box, my lad?" asked the captain.

"He and his father were in this room when you told what was in the box. They heard you; and they were the only persons who knew anything about the diamonds."

"But Colonel Sinnerton is a wealthy man, and his son could have no motive for stealing the treasure," suggested Mrs. Everton.

"I think he has a big motive," argued Rowly. "His father was going to drive you out of your house to punish you for making Rush give up his room. I think both father and son mean to ruin you if they can. The diamonds came in to block their

way to this revenge, and Rush decided to get them out of the way."

"But they left long ago."

"I heard a noise in the hall when I went out for Hope ; I did not think anything of it at the time, but it looks to me now just as though Rush might have been in the house all the time. He watched his opportunity till we went down into the dining-room, and then took the box."

"Then we ought to apply to the police at once," said the landlady.

Captain Ringboom volunteered to attend to the duty of informing the police of the robbery, and he left the house for this purpose. Rowly took his hat to go to the store, while Hope and her mother went to the back parlor.

A piece of white paper had been lying on the floor most of the forenoon, and Rowly picked it up after he was ready to go.

One side of it was soiled, but the other was entirely clean. It was the paper in which the captain had wrapped the photograph of the child Hope.

On it was very clearly impressed the print of the heel of a boot or shoe ; or at least it bore the semi-circular marks of the nails as arranged in the heel.

Without saying anything about it, Rowly put the paper into his pocket, and left the house. He was

not yet clear that the marks on the paper had any bearing on the robbery and he had no time to consider the subject.

It was time for him to go to the store, and he went there. He was busily employed all the afternoon ; but when he went home to supper the newspaper boys in the streets were crying the "Great Diamond Robbery."

He bought a paper, and read the account of the affair to his mother. The value of the treasure stolen was not given in figures, either because Captain Ringboom had not mentioned the amount, or because the officers doubted the truth of the statement made to them.

After supper he went to the house of Mrs. Everton before he took his evening nap, for he was to sleep at the store every night that week.

Captain Ringboom had taken the room vacated that afternoon by Rush Sinnerton. He seemed to be quite at home in the little family, and Hope was already on the best of terms with him.

Colonel Sinnerton had already executed his threats, and a keeper of the furniture had been put in charge of the property ; but the worthy shipmaster had given bonds for the payment of the debt, and the man had been sent away. He had also found one of his wealthy owners who was willing and even

glad to take the mortgage on the house the next day.

Rush had taken away his trunk and books without even saying good-bye to the landlady, for the captain had been in the house at the time, and he was an all-sufficient protector for Hope and her mother.

Rowly showed the paper he had found on the floor to the captain.

"I don't think that amounts to anything, my lad," he replied.

"Will you hold up the heel of one of your boots, if you please?" continued Rowly, as he dropped on his knees in front of the captain.

"The heel of my shoe is twice as big as that half circle," said he, laughing, as he complied with the request.

"You are right, sir; this mark was never made by the heel of your shoe," added Rowly, as he rose from the floor.

Seating himself by the side of the shipmaster, he compared the imprint with the heel of one of his own shoes. The nails came nowhere near fitting the holes in the paper.

"I found this paper close to the table where you dropped it," continued Rowly, somewhat excited by the argument he was using. "No one with such a heel to his boot or shoe but you and I went near the table while the box was on it. Both Rush and his

father left the parlor without going near the table."

"Well, what does all that prove?" asked the captain.

"It proves that the mark on the paper was made by some person who went to the table while we were at lunch."

"I should say you were right."

"And in my opinion this mark on the paper was made by the person who stole the diamonds," added Rowly, with more earnestness.

"And you believe that Rush Sinnerton was the one who stole them?" inquired the captain.

"That is my theory."

"I will see the detectives about it to-morrow morning," replied Captain Ringboom.

Rowly put the paper into his pocket, and took his leave.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OPERATOR ON THE LADDER.

ROWLY PARKWAY went home at about seven in the evening. He went to his little chamber over the hall, and, in spite of the excitement of the day, he was asleep in fifteen minutes.

The jewelry establishment of Messrs. Brilliant & Co. was one of the largest, if not the very largest, in the city of New York. The house bought and sold diamonds on a larger scale than any other.

The large force of clerks, porters, and others, were arranged so as to afford the fullest protection to the immense stock carried by the firm. Two of the employees were required to spend the night there, though one of them was allowed to sleep, while the other visited every part of the store and basement once in each half hour.

Patent registers, recording each visit of the one on watch, were placed in various parts of the premises

to inform the firm the next day if the vigil had been faithfully kept. Wires connected the store with the nearest precinct of the police, so that assistance could be instantly called.

But in spite of all these precautions, several attempts had been made to effect an entrance to the store. None but the most reliable of the employees of the establishment were intrusted with the duty of keeping the watch.

Though Rowly was the youngest person to whom this duty had been assigned, he had proved himself to be one of the most faithful and serviceable by his intelligence as well as his watchfulness. Fortune had favored him in his desire to make himself worthy of the confidence of his employers, and he had been the means of defeating an attempt to break into the store.

The head of the firm had declared that he would trust Rowly with the entire care of the property, so far as his honesty and good judgment were concerned.

Just before ten Mrs. Parkway called her son, and he left the house. In five minutes more he was at the store.

Two clerks remained till ten, when the two who were to spend the night there relieved them.

The clock had not yet struck ten when he arrived, and he thought he would take a look at the rear of

the premises, from which a door opened upon a narrow street.

In this place he had prevented a break on a former occasion. Two pairs of heavy doors, armed with iron plates, protected the only entrance from the street. But at least ten feet above the ground were four windows, not more than three feet high, by which the back part of the store was lighted.

When Rowly came in sight of the back of the store, he was not a little startled to see a ladder resting against the wall under one of these windows.

He stopped short, and retreated close to the wall, so that he could not be seen if there was anybody there to see him. He was sure the ladder had not been there when he went home to supper, for he had left by the back door.

Against the blank wall, on either side of the double door, were piles of boxes and cases, in which goods had been brought to the store. Keeping close to this row of cases, Rowly made his way in the darkness to the foot of the ladder. Then he discovered that there was a man on the ladder who appeared to be at work on the sash of the window.

At the foot of the ladder he stumbled over what proved on examination to be a pair of congress boots. He picked them up, and tossed them into a box near him.

The man on the ladder heard the slight noise he made, and suspended operations. It was so dark in the gloom of the narrow street—for there was no lamp near the spot—that the observer could not make out what the man was doing.

Rowly retreated noiselessly a few paces, and secured a position where he could best see what the fellow was about. While he was trying to peer through the deep darkness, he heard footsteps in the back street. He crawled into a box which had been placed with the open side out, though most of them had covers.

The sound of the steps came nearer to him, and he almost held his breath so that he should not reveal his presence.

“All right, Silky,” said a voice near him; and Rowly knew that it was the passer-by who had spoken. “No one anywhere near us.”

“I don’t believe I can get this sash out,” added the man on the ladder.

Rowly did not believe he could, either, for it was strongly fastened in its place on the inside.

“You must hurry up, for we should go in when they change the watch at ten o’clock,” replied the one on the ground. “Can’t you cut out the glass?”

“That is what I am trying to do now; but my diamond don’t work well, and makes a noise.”

"Is the pane big enough to let you in if you get the glass out?" asked the man below.

"Plenty big enough, or for you either," answered the one on the ladder. "Don't stop there any longer, Blooks."

Blooks, as the listener understood the name, resumed his walk, and passed the box where Rowly was concealed.

If the young clerk had had any doubt before he had none now in regard to the intention of the operator.

Leaving his hiding-place, he crept for some distance in the opposite direction from that taken by the "pall," and then changed his mode of operations.

"We won't go home till morning," he sang, in a boozy tone, though not loud enough to be heard at any great distance. He reeled so that it took the whole width of the street for his passage, and when he came to the ladder, he staggered against it with force enough to knock it over.

The man upon it tumbled over the boxes, and came to the pavement, his fall making noise enough to attract the attention of the clerks in the store.

Silky, as Blooks had called him, picked himself up, and Rowly reeled off a short distance away.

He saw that the fellow was feeling about on the pavement for his boots. He did not find them, and

the noise made by the men inside of the store, as they began to unbar the back doors, alarmed him, and he suddenly took to flight in his stocking feet.

Rowly heard the steps of the pal, and he did not care to meet him. The operator on the ladder had gone the other way, and he followed him at the top of his speed.

In fact, he wanted to make the acquaintance of Mr. Silky.

The robber was a nimble fellow in the use of his feet, and he gave his pursuer all he wanted to do to keep in sight of him, to say nothing of overtaking him.

But Silky evidently realized that his rapid movements subjected him to suspicion in Broadway, where he led his pursuer, and he turned into another street.

His feet plainly suffered for the want of his boots, and he relaxed his speed, so that the pursuer had no trouble, in keeping near him. He seemed to have hurt himself, for he favored his right leg.

Rowly was so intent on watching the fellow that he paid little attention to the route he had taken.

Suddenly the robber halted and looked around him and behind him. Then he rushed into a dwelling house, and disappeared from the sight of his pursuer.

Possibly he opened the door with a night key,

though he had scarcely paused long enough to do so ; at any rate, he left it ajar when he entered.

Perhaps Rowly was imprudent, but when he saw that the door was not fastened, he entered the house.

It had been a princely mansion in its better days, and it was very large. It now appeared to have degenerated into a lodging-house.

Rowly did not stop a moment in the lower hall, but followed his man to the third floor. Just before he reached this part of the building, he heard voices above him, and he halted to listen.

In one of the speakers he recognized the voice of Rush Sinnerton, and went up a few steps higher.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEELS OF RUSH SINNERTON'S BOOTS.

"Is that you, Gunnywood?" asked Rush, as he approached the man Rowly had followed.

The pursuer thought it was not Gunnywood, but Silky; but he knew that such people had as many names as a Spanish prince.

"You here, Rush?" returned Silky, rather coldly, as though he did not care to be interviewed at that moment.

"Of course I am here; I moved into the next room to yours this afternoon," replied Rush, who seemed to be more rejoiced to see his friend than his friend did to see him. "I have been looking for you ever since four o'clock."

"I have been out of town all the evening," added Silky.

This statement was what the listener termed a lie, though such skips of the truth are not always called by such a harsh term.

The lie was not particularly astonishing; but Rowly was not a little surprised to learn that the student preparing for Columbia College was intimate with such characters as Silky.

"I thought you must be away. I haven't seen you for nearly a week, and I came over to look for you last evening," added Rush.

"I was at a party last night till midnight," replied Silky, opening the door of his room. "I am tired out now, and I will see you in the morning."

"But I have to go to the academy before you get up in the morning; and I want to see you for five minutes to-night," persisted Rush, as he followed his friend into his chamber.

Rowly had ascended the stairs so that his head was on a level with the floor above him, and he could see that the student wore a pair of slippers and had left the door of his own room open.

He was very anxious to know the subject of the conversation in Silky's room; but he was even more interested just then in the heels of Rush's shoes or boots, whichever he wore.

He ascended to the entry, from which the doors of four rooms opened. That of Rush was in the rear, and next to it was Silky's.

As the door of the student's room was wide open, there was nothing to prevent him from taking a more

particular look inside of it. Without considering the peril he incurred, though he was usually very prudent in his movements, he entered the apartment.

The chamber was lighted, and a gas burner blazed freely above a table on which was an open book. On the hearth, in front of the grate, was a pair of button boots, and a pair of low cut shoes ; and these were exactly what Rowly was eager to examine.

He took from his pocket the paper on which were imprinted the marks of the heel.

Perhaps Rowly had not a judicial mind, which decides the case only after examining the evidence ; for he had been convinced from the beginning that Rush had stolen the diamonds, either with or without the knowledge and consent of his father.

He felt perfectly sure that he should find a heel on his boots that would exactly fit the impression on the paper.

He had considered what he should do when his belief was fully confirmed by the evidence now within his reach ; it might be stealing, but he had decided to carry the boot off with him, and have Captain Ringboom present it to the police, with the paper on which the heel had stamped itself.

Rowly tried to keep entirely cool as he picked up the pair of boots, and carried them to the table for examination ; but it is not easy to keep under per-

fect control when one reaches the solution of an important and difficult problem.

He was perfectly satisfied that he was about to obtain proofs that would convict Rush of the theft of the treasure, and that the diamonds would be recovered, so that Hope Everton would no longer be a Diamond Heiress without any diamonds.

He even thought that she would be very grateful to him for the service ; and he even pictured to himself the smile with which she would always greet him in the future.

He placed the paper on the table where the gas-light illuminated it to the best advantage. Then he gave a careful scrutiny to the marks on the paper.

The impression was made with long nails, which projected from wear a considerable distance out of the leather, and they were rather large nails, larger than usual, he thought. Between the third and fourth, and the sixth and seventh nail, the space was half as large again as in other places.

These two broad spaces were on the right hand side of the imprint, nearest to the square part of the heel ; and they should appear on the left hand side of the boot as it was reversed in his hands. The other nails were as regular in their distances apart as though they had been spaced off by an unerring machine.

Rowly was entirely confident that he should find the two wide spaces in the heel of one of the button boots he had taken from the hearth; and he did not consider the possible chance of a failure to find them.

Though he had done a great deal of rapid thinking since he came into the room, he had not yet been there more than half a minute, for he fully realized that he had no time to spare, and Rush might come in at any minute.

With his handsome eyes almost starting from their sockets, so excited had he become over the examination, he transferred his gaze from the paper to the heel of one of the boots, placing the other on the table. The wide space between the nails was the first point of comparison he had chosen; and he looked for this in the nails of the boot.

He did not find it. The boots were made by Gustave Jenny, and there was nothing in the slightest degree irregular in the placing of the nails.

Before he turned his attention to the other boot, he could not help observing that the nails in the heel of the boot were not half as large as those imprinted on the paper. But this fact did not discourage him, for the paper had received the impression while lying on a thin carpet, so that the marks would be larger than the nails that made them.

Still confining his attention to the two wide spaces, he took up the other boot.

The nails in this were arranged as regularly as the one he had just examined. No wide space could be found between them.

He applied the boot heel to the paper ; but the nails did not coincide in the least degree with the marks. Beyond the possibility of a doubt, the impression was not made by either of the button boots.

But the low cut shoes on the hearth still left the matter an open question in the mind of the examiner.

Rowly returned the boots to the place where he had found them, and carried the shoes to the table. The nails in the heels of them were even smaller than those of the boots. The card of the same maker was in them, and in neither could he find the two broad spaces between the nails.

For the first time he began to think that he had been mistaken, and that Rush Sinnerton had not stolen the diamonds, after all. He applied the heels of both shoes to the paper ; but it was only to convince himself that the marks had been made by some other heel.

Returning the shoes to the place where he had found them, he crept softly out of the room, and stationed himself in the front of the entry, where the stairs to the next floor partly concealed him.

It appeared now that he had no particular business with Rush, though he was both astounded and disappointed at the result of his investigation, for he had felt absolutely sure that the boot would confirm his theory. But he had particular business with Silky or Gunnywood, whatever his name might be.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT.

OF course, under ordinary circumstances, it is base, belittling, and ungentlemanly to act the part of the listener, for a person's privacy is as much a part of his right and privilege as the possession of his money. But necessity and common sense would excuse the listener in the case of a criminal. Rowly felt so, at any rate when he placed his ear at the key-hole of Silky's door.

This man was a burglar, though it did not appear that he had anything to do with the robbery of the treasure at the house of Mrs. Everton. Dealing with him in this capacity, Rowly felt that he had a duty to perform.

"I don't think I can do a thing to help you, Rush," said Silky. "The girl don't like you, and you have played a stupid game with her."

"I don't care whether she likes me or not, I like her," answered Rush.

"That's nothing to the point," replied Silky, very sensibly. "You were a blockhead, to be so rough with her. I don't blame the young fellow for knocking you over when you made a scene in the street."

"I thought you were a friend of mine, and I counted on you for assistance," said Rush, apparently much disturbed by the plain talk of the other.

"It is the part of a friend to speak plainly," answered Silky, whose tones indicated that he was bored by the conversation. He was probably disconcerted by his failure to effect an entrance to the store of Brilliyant & Co.

"I think she will come down off the high horse she rides," continued Rush. "I believe she will be willing to take my arm when I offer it to her again."

"What makes you think so?" asked Silky languidly, as though he did not care a straw about the matter.

In reply to this question Rush related all that had occurred that forenoon at the residence of Mrs. Everton, including the legal steps which had been taken by his father.

"Just as the governor and I came to the conclusion that we should have it all our own way," continued Rush, "an uncle of the girl died in South Africa, and

sent her a fortune in diamonds. It looked as though we were euchred then ; but I read in the evening papers that Mrs. Everton's house had been robbed of a box of diamonds, said to be worth two hundred thousand dollars, or some other large sum, for I don't know whether I got this figure from the paper or from what I heard at the house."

"You got your first news of the robbery from the newspaper did you?" asked Silky, whose tones now indicated that he was becoming more interested in the conversation.

"That's what I said and what I meant," replied Rush.

"Tell that to a dead mule, and he would kick your brains out!" exclaimed the cheerful burglar.

"What do you mean by that, Gunnywood?" demanded the student.

"What have you done with the diamonds, Rush? I hope you will not be so stupid and give yourself away, as you did with the girl and her mother."

"What have I done with the diamonds?" asked Rush, who seemed to be stupefied by the implied charge of his friend.

"That's the conundrum I put to you. Did you put the box in your room? I'll bet a wooden quarter you did; and the detectives will be here by the time you

have eaten your breakfast to-morrow morning," said Silky, rattling off his sentences quite glibly.

"You are all off, Gunnywood; I did not take the box, and I know no more about it than you do," answered Rush who seemed to be slightly hurt by the raillery of his companion. "I wouldn't do such a thing as that."

"I'll bet another wooden quarter that you would and did."

"But I did not! I am not a thief?"

"Not exactly; it was not the diamonds that you wanted so much as to place the landlady in such a strait that she would have to give in to your father and invite you to return to your room in Blankteeth Street."

"I did not take the diamonds for any reason, not even with the intention of returning them when our point was carried."

"Do you think you could persuade a shrewd detective, who has heard the whole story about your father's persecution of Mrs. Everton, that you or he knew nothing about that box of diamonds? Not much! I'll bet a cast-iron shekel that the police are looking up your present lodging about this time," said Silky, earnestly.

"Do you think my father would take the diamonds?" demanded Rush, in an angry tone.

"I don't think he would be half as likely to take the box as you would ; but I know you better than your father does," added Silky, in the lightest of tones.

"Neither of us would or did do such a thing."

"Come, come, my darling, you are nothing but a little lamb !" chuckled the festive burglar. "How much were the diamonds worth, did you say ?"

"The old sword-fish that brought the box to the house said they were worth two hundred thousand dollars, and that's all I know about it."

"I congratulate you, my dear little lamb ! You might have dug your way into the vault of a bank without getting half as much as that. It was a magnificent haul !" rattled Silky, heedless of the protests and denials of the other.

"It was no haul at all. Won't you believe me when I tell you that I did not take the box ?" demanded Rush, who seemed to be deeply grieved at the incredulity of his companion.

"Believe you? Not a bit of it ! You don't expect me to believe you, Rush," said Silky, in a more serious tone than he had used for some time.

As he uttered this remark he was close to the door, and Rowly retired from his position, for he feared the burglar intended to open it. But he was too much interested in the conversation to lose any of it

and he immediately returned to the keyhole of the door.

"I speak the simple truth, whether you believe me or not," said Rush.

"Now tell me all about it again, and then I shall be able to understand it," replied Silky; and Rowly judged by the direction from which his voice came that he had seated himself, or lain down on a lounge.

Rush repeated his former statement, which was substantially correct.

"Now, while the old shark that brought the box was standing at the table, where were you and your father?" asked Silky.

"We went over to the window, and the governor told me I might find a room anywhere I pleased. When the marine monster had told about the diamonds in the box, Mrs. Everton invited him to go into the back parlor. Then the governor went out into the hall, and I followed him."

"But you heard all that the man said about the diamonds?"

"All he said in the first of it; and he blowed the whole thing out all in a heap, so that we got the main facts of the matter."

"Of course you did. But is your governor still in the hall of that house?"

"Of course he isn't; what an absurd question!"

"Why don't you tell what he did then?"

"He told me to pack up my things, and then left the house to go to his lawyer's."

"Did you pack your things?" asked Silky, sharply.

"After a while I did."

"But you looked in and listened at the keyhole," added Silky. "That is a villainous thing to do; and if I caught a fellow doing that at my door, I think I should shoot him without benefit of clergy," said the immaculate Silky. Rowly thought the man could swallow a camel, though he did object to straining at a gnat.

The listener hoped that the burglar had no revolver at hand in case any accident happened to him.

"I did spend some time in the hall, and I even looked through and listened at the keyhole of the parlor door," continued Rush; and he related what he had heard.

"Now, my dear little lamb, you make a great mistake in trying to conceal this thing from me, and I am afraid you will give yourself away, and lose the fortune you have secured," Silky proceeded. "Don't take the next steamer to Europe, or if you do, don't take the gems with you. Remember the Atlantic cable, and——"

Rowly was leaning rather too hard against the door, and suddenly it flew open, cutting off the remark of the speaker. The listener measured his length on the floor, to the intense astonishment of the occupants of the room.

CHAPTER IX.

AN INTERVIEW WITH SILKY.

THE sudden opening of the door, which probably had not been securely latched, caused Rowly Parkway to fall on the floor at full length.

But he did not lie there even the fraction of a second. Both Silky and Rush Sinnerton were startled at the unexpected invasion of the apartment, and involuntarily retreated to the rear of the room.

Rowly sprang to his feet again as soon as he had struck the floor, and walked forward to the middle of the room, for he knew very well that if he attempted to escape he would be pursued.

On the table under the gas burner lay a very handsomely mounted revolver, which the burglar had doubtless taken from his pocket when he came in. Rowly picked up the weapon, for he thought it had better be in his possession, under the present circumstances, than in that of the owner.

Though the appearances were all against him, he felt that he was engaged in a good cause, and he was not at all abashed at the situation upon which the accident at the door had thrown him. He had no little natural dignity of character, and with the pistol in his hand he felt quite equal to the emergency.

Folding his arms he stood erect, with the weapon under his left shoulder, looking as though he owned the house and all that was in it, rather than like an intruder in the apartment.

“Who are you?” demanded Silky, when he had in some measure recovered from his astonishment.

“I am an innocent young man of sixteen, seeking his fortune on the stage of life,” replied Rowly, promptly, borrowing his reply in part from a story he had read.

“Then you are an actor, are you?” asked the occupant of the room.

“Just now I am, though I don’t follow that calling for my bread and butter.”

“What are you going to do with that revolver?”

“I am a creature of circumstances at the present moment, and I have not the least idea what I shall do with it.”

“What is your business here?”

“I hardly think I have any business here, and my call upon you was altogether an accident.”

“You take things very coolly.”

“Do you allude to my taking this handsome revolver?”

“It was rather cool for you to take possession of my property as you did, and thus set me at defiance in my own apartment.”

“I thought it would be safer for me to have it; and as I have no particular business with you at the present moment, I may as well take my leave of you.”

“Don't be in a hurry, my dear fellow,” interposed Silky, who had by this time recovered his self-possession.

“You are very kind; I did not expect to be admitted to the hospitality of your room after my unceremonious entrance.”

“Perhaps you will be willing to explain how you happened to tumble in at the door as you did,” suggested Silky, in the blandest of tones.

“I followed a gentleman into this house, and I suppose I leaned harder against your door than I intended; but the door could not have been latched or it would not have opened so easily.”

“Possibly you will oblige me by giving me your card.”

“I don't happen to have any cards with me; but I refer you to your friend, who has been too bashful to say anything about me so far.”

Silky looked at Rush with an interrogation point in his expression.

“This is the fellow I was telling you about—the one that knocked me over in the street,” replied Rush rather sheepishly.

“Oh! Indeed? And what did you say his name was, Rush?”

“Rowland Parkway, I believe; but everybody calls him Rowly.”

“Thanks, Rush. I am very happy to know you, Rowly. You did a good thing in defending Miss Hope, and I honor you for it. I should have done the same thing myself if I had been there; and I said as much as that to Rush himself.”

“Thank you for your kind approval of my conduct. It is getting late, and I must bid you good-evening,” replied Rowly, resuming his backward march to the door.

“Not yet, my dear fellow. We shall be friends for life, and we cannot part yet. It occurs to me that you must have been listening at the door when it flew open,” continued Silky, moving towards the intruder.

Rowly unfolded his arms, and brought the revolver into a more convenient position for use.

“Of course you have a perfect right to adopt your own conclusions,” he said; “but if you will excuse me, I will say nothing on the subject.”



ROWLEY LIFTED THE WEAPON TO A MORE CONVENIENT POSITION.



“Your coming and your overhearing what was passing in confidence between my friend and myself places him in an embarrassing position, for you must have learned that he had been engaged in a diamond venture——”

“I have been engaged in no diamond venture!” protested Rush, springing to his feet. “I have told you I had nothing to do with the matter.”

“Don’t get excited, Rush.”

“I know all about the diamond venture,” added Rowly, still retreating step by step to the door.

“Of course you do, and you know that Rush was the only person in the world that had the least interest in taking them; but he had no more idea of stealing the box than I have. When his little scheme has succeeded or failed, he will return the gems to the lady,” said Silky, in the most plausible tone.

“If he has the diamonds, very likely he will return them,” added Rowly, though he appeared to be quite indifferent about the matter.

He had reached the door, and standing with his back to it for a moment, he felt the key in the lock.

It suggested something to him, and he drew the key from its place, and then suddenly slipped out of the room.

“Don’t go yet, Rowly, my dear fellow,” called Silky.

But the intruder paid no attention to him. He closed the door behind him, and held it fast till he inserted the key and turned it in the lock, making his late friends prisoners in the apartment.

“Follow him, Rush!” cried Silky in a loud tone. “Don’t let him get away from you! I will be with you as soon as I can put my boots on.”

“He has locked us in!” exclaimed Rush, in a tone of dismay.

Rowly did not wait to hear any more, but putting the revolver in his pocket, he walked leisurely down the stairs, and out into the street without being challenged by any person.

He knew that Silky was a burglar, and he did not know what else he might be; but he concluded that it would not take him long to open the door. He had located one of the men who had attempted to break into the store; but he was not quite contented with the amount of information he had gained.

Walking down the street a few steps, he watched the entrance of the lodging-house; and in a few minutes he saw Silky come out alone.

Rowly had placed himself near a pile of boxes on the edge of the sidewalk in front of a store, and he dodged behind it as soon as he saw the burglar come down the steps.

Silky paused in front of the house, and then looked

up and down the street, which was nearly deserted at this hour. Then he walked down the street; but the observer circled around the pile of boxes, keeping out of sight all the time.

Silky went but a short distance, and then returned; but Rowly did not allow himself to be seen, and was satisfied that Silky had lost all hope of finding him.

Rush's friend then walked up towards Broadway. As soon as it was prudent to do so, Rowly followed him.

The gentlemanly "breaker" led him in the direction of Brilliant & Co.'s store, and he concluded that he had come to look for Blooks.

Silky walked through the narrow street in the rear of the store; and seemed to be looking about in the darkness for something. Probably he wanted his boots, not for their money value, but because they might betray him if picked up; but he did not find them where he had left them.

He did not remain long on the spot, and Rowly followed him, though he took pains to hide his form by dodging behind the piles of cases and rubbish in the street.

The ladder was lying just where it had fallen, and the boots were in the box where he had put them. Taking possession of the latter, he continued his watch over the movements of the burglar.

CHAPTER X.

THE SISTER OF THE JUNIOR PARTNER.

Rowly went to the end of the short, narrow street ; but he had lost sight of Silky, who had either concealed himself, or had passed out into the next street.

But it was nearly eleven o'clock, and he felt the necessity of reporting to the clerk in charge of the store, and when he had returned to Broadway, he gave the private signal at the door of the store.

The door was opened very carefully a little crack, and the clerk in charge asked who was there.

"Rowly, 4963," replied the applicant for admission.

This number was the pass for the night, and had been given only to the clerks who were to be on the watch.

"This is a pretty time to come, Rowly," growled Amlock, as he opened the door a little more to as-

sure himself that the applicant had the right to come in.

“I came here before ten,” replied Rowly.

“Come in,” continued the clerk, who was a man of forty, in anything but a pleasant tone.

Rowly availed himself of the permission, and entered the store.

“What do you mean by saying that you came here before? It is almost eleven,” snarled the testy Amlock, as he glanced at the regulator in the watch department.

“I took a look at the back of the store when I came first, and I found a man at work on one of the windows,” replied Rowly, trying not to make too much of the incident of the evening.

Amlock was more pliable then, and Rowly told him his adventure, and exhibited the boots as the evidence of the truth of his story.

He did not consider it necessary to say anything about the diamonds, for they had no connection with the attempted robbery of the store.

“And you say the fellow who was on the ladder came back to the rear of the store, do you, Rowly?” asked Amlock, when he had heard the narrative.

“He did; but I lost sight of him there,” replied the junior clerk. “There were two of them, and very likely he was looking for the other.”

"They may try again at a later hour, for they went to work at a very early hour. I think I will walk around to the back door."

"I don't believe they will try it again to-night," added Rowly.

"But I must satisfy myself," replied the senior, as he took a revolver from a drawer under the counter. "Keep a sharp lookout while I am gone."

Rowly let him out of the store at the front door, and then secured all the locks again.

He walked to the rear of the store, and took a careful survey of the lofty windows. Under the one where the burglar had been at work, he found a ladder, used for moving goods on the upper shelves of the back store, and it looked as though it had been placed there for the convenience of the robber after he had effected a break in the window.

Rowly wondered if Silky had a friend among the employees of the firm who had put the ladder where it "would do the most good," and he determined to call the attention of Mr. Amlock to the fact. Then he walked to the front of the store, where he could hear the signal of his associate for the night when he returned.

On his way he saw the boots he had brought in where he had put them, and he picked up one of them.

Inasmuch as he had failed to find that rush Sinner-ton's boots had made the marks on the paper in his pocket, he was inclined to examine all the boots that came in his way. He had about come to the conclusion that Rush had not taken the box containing the diamonds, for he had great faith in the bit of evidence in his possession. He could not understand why Silky, his friend, insisted, or pretended to insist, that Rush had stolen the diamonds.

As he thought of the matter he turned over the boot in his hand, and looked at the heel of it.

Before he completed even his first glance at the position of the nails, a sharp scream, in the tones of a female voice, startled him, at the very door of the store.

He rushed to the door, wondering if some tragedy was not in progress on the sidewalk, for women did not scream in the street for nothing.

By placing his ear at the glass in the door, he could hear that a conversation between a man and a terrified woman was going on in the entrance. After he had listened a moment, he was satisfied that the male voice was that of Mr. Amlock.

He could not distinguish a word that was said, for there were still vehicles enough in the street to make a noise.

In a few minutes more he heard the "double

three" knock on the glass, which was given out to the watch for the night with the pass number. Rowly had no doubt that it was given by Mr. Amlock, for he had heard his voice near the door.

"Who's there?" he asked, as he opened the door as far as the heavy chain would permit.

"Amlock, 4963," replied the senior.

"All right," added the junior, as he opened the door wide enough to admit his associate.

Mr. Amlock came in, leading a neatly dressed, and very good-looking woman of apparently about thirty years of age.

It was contrary to the orders of the firm to admit any person whatever between the hours of ten and seven, and Rowly wondered that his senior should do such a thing, though the scream he had heard would explain his conduct.

"Now if you will tell me what has happened, I will assist you if I can," said Mr. Amlock, as he placed a chair for the lady near one of the gas lights which were kept burning all night.

The junior was securing the door while the older clerk was doing the agreeable to the lady; but he soon came within seeing and hearing distance.

"I hoped to find my brother here," said the lady, who was so agitated that she could hardly speak.

"You say that Mr. Van Zandt is your brother," added Mr. Amlock.

"He is; and I have been here enough for you to know me," gasped the lady.

"I do not remember you, certainly," replied the senior, who had the reputation of being an old beau; and when he saw the pretty face of the lady, he softened down to the polite man of the world.

"I expected to find my brother here," added the lady.

"He is the junior member of the firm now, and he is not required to keep watch as the rest of us are," Mr. Amlock explained.

"I don't see much of my brother now, since he was married, but I think he told me that he slept at the store some of the time."

"Not now; and never since the first day of the year, when he became a partner. I hope you have not been injured, Miss Van Zandt, for I heard you scream just as I came to the store door."

"I am not injured, but I have been frightened almost out of my senses," replied the sister of the junior partner, who had so far recovered her self-possession that she bestowed a very bewitching smile upon the ancient clerk.

Mr. Amlock smiled in response to her, and he gazed so intently upon the handsome face of the fair

visitor that Rowly was afraid he had forgotten the duty which required him to be at the store at this late hour.

Miss Van Zandt wiped her face with an embroidered handkerchief, drew several long breaths, and then evidently felt better, for she bestowed another fascinating smile upon the beau of forty.

"I think you screamed just as I came up to you, Miss Van Zandt, or was I mistaken?" asked Mr. Amlock, as he took a chair in front of the lady.

"I did scream, and I was very much alarmed. But I did not scream for nothing," she replied, so sweetly that it was plain she had forgotten the cause of her terror.

"Of course something terrible happened, though I saw no one very near when I joined you."

"I work in an insurance office, next door, and I stayed to do some writing needed in the morning. When I got into the street, a man stopped in front of me, and I went to this store door to find my brother. The man put his hand on me, and then I screamed, just as you came up."

"I wish I had seen the villain!" said the ancient beau, chivalrously.

Just then Rowly thought he heard a noise in the rear of the store.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PLOT THICKENS.

ROWLY walked to the end of the store, and looked all about him ; but he could see nothing to indicate anything wrong. Just then, as he saw the ladder standing under the window, he thought he would remove it.

Before he had time to do so, Mr. Amlock called him, and he hastened back to the front store, where he found that the senior had put on his hat as though he intended to leave.

“I shall not be gone many minutes, Rowly,” said Mr. Amlock, as he conducted the lady towards the front door. “Let me out, please.”

If Mr. Amlock had not been forty years old and Rowly only sixteen, the latter would have remonstrated with the other ; and as it was, he felt obliged to shake his head when the former looked at him.

“What is the matter, Rowly?” asked the senior.

"Nothing, sir ; but I heard some kind of noise on the back street, and we may have a break yet before morning."

"I don't think there is any danger at present," replied the older clerk. "I shall not be gone more than fifteen minutes."

"I ought not to take you away from the store, Mr. Amlock, and I would not if I had not been so terribly frightened," interposed Miss Van Zandt, with another of her bewitching smiles.

"I think there can be no harm in my leaving you for a few minutes," added the ancient beau. "You are not afraid to remain alone, are you, Rowly?"

"I don't know that I am afraid to stay alone, but I don't think it is just the thing to leave the store at this time of night ; and it is contrary to orders," replied Rowly, who could not resist the temptation to say as much as this.

"You can keep your opinion to yourself," added Mr. Amlock, angrily. "I feel called upon to protect the sister of the junior partner, and I will be responsible for what I do without comments from you."

Rowly said no more, and opened the front door, as he had been told to do. The lady took the old clerk's arm when he had passed out of the door, and bestowed a shower of smiles upon him.

The remaining guardian of the firm's immense property went back to the counter where he had left the burglar's boots, and took up one of them, though he was not especially interested in what he was doing.

He put his hand in his pocket for the paper on which was the print of the boot heel; but before he could draw it out, he heard another noise in the rear of the store.

He tossed the boots over the counter, and hastened to the scene of the alarm. Before he had gone half the distance to the rear of the store, he discovered a man in the act of descending the ladder he had neglected to remove. Then, more than at the time he had thought of it before, it was forced home to his mind that some one in the employ of the firm was a confederate of the burglars.

Very likely this traitor to his employers had taken away, or loosened, the heavy stops which secured the sash in its place, for it seemed impossible to the young clerk that the operator could have removed them from the outside.

It was plain now that Silky had resumed the work on which he was engaged when the ladder was upset. Almost at the moment he discovered the first man descending the ladder, Rowly saw another working his way through the opening made by the

removal of the sash, which had probably been handed down on the outside.

Silky had found Blooks, and they had decided not to postpone the "break." The entrance of the two men almost at the moment of Mr. Amlock's departure made it appear as though they had expected him to leave.

It was a stunning suggestion, but Rowly could not help asking himself if the beautiful woman was not also a confederate of the burglars.

He was bewildered by the thoughts that crowded upon him; but he did not forget that he was the guardian of his employers' property; and the fact that he was alone in the presence of two burglars did not overwhelm him.

"Stop where you are!" he shouted to the man who was on the ladder. The other had not yet secured a footing upon it.

"Dry up, my innocent little lamb!" replied Silky, whose voice he recognized at once, as he reached the floor of the store. "Don't make a noise, or I shall be obliged to bore a hole through those vigorous lungs of yours."

Rowly had taken the pistol he had brought from Silky's room from his pocket and put it in the drawer, where they kept a couple of these useful but dangerous implements. He wanted it at this moment.

But he thought of the electric bell which rang at the precinct office, and he moved towards it; but Silky's position cut him off from reaching the button by which it was operated.

Very likely the confederate who placed the ladder where it would be serviceable to the cracksman had given them full information in regard to the alarm bell.

When Rowly realized that his movement in this direction was intercepted, he hastened to the drawer containing the revolvers, from which he took the one he had placed there and another.

"Never mind him, Blooks; go to work at once and gather up the stuff. That fellow will come back soon, and he will make a row when he finds he cannot get in," said Silky.

"But the watches and diamonds are in the safe, and it may take us hours to get into it. The spoony will not come back yet awhile, for Mag will take good care of it," replied Blooks, as he walked towards the safe.

At the same time Silky rushed upon Rowly, evidently considering him of no consequence after he had failed to discharge the revolver he supposed was still in his pocket.

The gentlemanly burglar appeared to be about twenty-five years old, but he was of slender form,

though considerably taller than Rowly. The young clerk had not the least idea of being upset without a struggle, and he grappled vigorously with his opponent.

If Silky had another revolver about him, he did not deem it prudent to use it, lest the report should create an alarm. He attempted to take Rowly by the throat; but the clerk resorted to the use of his fists, and hit so hard that the burglar called upon Blooks for assistance.

Warding off some of his blows, Silky contrived to get his arms around the shoulders of his opponent; but Rowly had almost shaken him off, when Blooks turned the tide of battle in favor of the wrong side. Blooks was a strong man, much heavier than his companion in crime, and taking the clerk in his arms, he placed him on the floor.

“Help! Help! Murder! Robbery!” shouted Rowly, as loud as his half breathless lungs would permit.

“Plug his mouth!” said Silky, sharply, as he applied his handkerchief, and forced it half way to the throat of the prostrate young man.

“Don’t do that again, my tender lamb! If you do, I will choke the life out of you!” added Silky, as he took a couple of straps from his pocket. “Make him fast, Blooks. Put one of those on his wrists and one

on his ankles. He is a venomous little snake, but these will hold him."

With the assistance of Silky, Blooks put the straps on as indicated, and Rowly found himself in a helpless condition, with no power to do anything but think.

He felt that he had done his best to protect his employers' property; but he keenly realized that he had utterly failed, and could do nothing more. Mr. Amlock had fallen into the trap set for him, and had been led away by a siren, who might be the wife, sister, or friend of one of the operators.

Rowly did an immense amount of thinking in a very short time, and he came to the conclusion that "in the bright vocabulary of youth there is no such word as fail." He had been overcome, but his spirit had not yet been vanquished, and as he lay on the floor, bound hand and foot, he considered what he should do next.

It was a difficult problem to consider to one in his situation. His wrists were strapped behind him, but he found that he could move on the floor, and hitched along by using both his hands, hardly more than an inch at a time, till he came to a counter in the rear store where heavy bundles were done up.

He had formed an ingenious plan to effect his release, and a few minutes more would prove whether or not it was a practicable one.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE STORE.

WHILE Rowly was taking the steps to secure his freedom from the straps that bound him, the two burglars were busily at work at the safe, which was on one side, near the middle of the long store. They were so engrossed in their occupation that they did not give a thought to the prisoner they had secured, for no one could have suspected that Rowly had any chance against the strong straps that bound him hand and foot.

Set in the top of the low counter where the bundles were tied up was a knife blade, with which the twine was cut off. The young clerk thought of it because he had been required to sharpen it in the afternoon. The blade was fixed perpendicularly on the top board of the counter, and quite near the edge of it.

With his hand fastened behind him, it was not an

easy thing for the prisoner to get upon his feet, which it was necessary to do in order to put his plan in execution. He had crawled on his back, like a snake, by hitching along on the floor, making only a few inches at each movement, but he reached his destination after long and hard work.

After resting himself for a few minutes, for he was quite out of breath from his exertions, he placed the back of his head against the frame of the counter, working as he had before, though in an upright direction.

Every few minutes he paused to get his breath, and to assure himself that the burglars were not observing him ; but they still confined their attention to the safe, and he could hear a sound as of a drill working into iron or steel.

As soon as he could get his fettered hands on the top of the counter, his task became easier, and he was soon on his feet, with his back to the knife.

He was facing the operators at the safe then, but they had put out the gas light nearest to them, so that no curious policeman, if he looked in at the glass door, could see them, and the prisoner could only distinguish their dark forms.

Rowly felt the knife with his hands ; but he found it a very difficult matter to insert the blade between his wrist and the strap without cutting himself.

By changing the position of his body several times, he at last accomplished his purpose, and then began to move his hands up and down, so that the knife would sever the leather. When the blade was in the right position to do its work, the rest was easily accomplished, for he had done his work faithfully in the afternoon, and the blade was as keen on the edge as a mechanic's tool.

With a feeling of exultation which almost drew an exclamation from him, he felt the strap loosen on his wrists, and realized that he again had the use of his hands.

But Rowly was a prudent young man, as we have before declared, and he avoided any injudicious action, but settled down on the floor again so that the lights near him should not reveal his position to the burglars.

Naturally his next movement was to remove the strap from his ankles, and then he shook his legs to overcome the numbness his close confinement had produced in them.

Thus far he had confined his reflections to the subject of freeing himself from his bonds, for he could do nothing without the use of his hands and feet. But he was free now, and he began to consider what he should do next. He wondered that Mr. Amlock did not return, for the time to which he had limited

his absence had expired at least an hour before, and perhaps it was two hours.

Rowly knew that the safe was an old-fashioned one, and that the firm did not rely so much upon it for the safety of their property as they did upon the watch they kept up in the store, with the connection by wire with the precinct office. He did not believe that the operators would find it a very difficult job to get to the interior of the safe, though he could not see in what manner they intended to effect their object.

He felt that the safety of hundreds of thousands of dollars of property depended upon him alone, for Mr. Amlock had been faithless to his trust as Rowly viewed the matter. He was very sure that he would not have left the store even if Mr. Brillyant's wife or daughter had required him to do so; and he judged the ancient clerk by his own standard of duty.

If the burglars discovered that he had removed the straps, they would do their work better next time, and secure him so that he could not move, if they did not take his life, as they certainly would do if their own safety demanded such an act.

It did not take Rowly long to mature his plan of action, and the first thing he did was to remove his shoes so that he could carry out his plan without noise. His scheme was not an elaborate one, and it

did not include meddling with the operators at the safe himself, for he was not in favor of doing "a big thing" at the risk of his own safety.

He had considered the idea of getting possession of the two revolvers in the drawer, and blazing away at the burglars ; but he was not skilled in the use of the weapon, and Blooks might be armed, if Silky was not. A failure in this brilliant method of settling the problem, brought about by being shot in his attempt to shoot the burglars, would leave him nothing to hope for, and place the vast property in the store at the mercy of the operators.

He preferred the less brilliant means of resorting to the electric bell ; but even then the officers could not get into the store except by breaking down the front door, which would give the burglars time to escape, unless the policeman had the forethought to go to the back street, and come in by the opening Silky and his associate had made at the window.

On his hands and knees, he commenced his progress towards the electric bell, which was located about opposite the safe where the burglars were at work. He moved as noiselessly as though he was gliding through the air, and the gloom the villains had created in this part of store favored him.

He reached his destination without being observed, and reaching up, he pressed the button, keeping his

finger on it for a considerable time, so as to produce a continuous clatter of the bell at the police precinct for at least a full minute.

The pressure made no noise in the store, and the men at the safe were not disturbed in their occupation. Rowly looked and listened with all his might, but they did not intermit their labor.

The next step of the guardian of the store was to reach a position near the front door, so that he could unlock it for the admission of the officers.

As he reached the vicinity of the safe, he moved in greater safety, hurrying as much as he dared, for he feared the officers would reach the door, and make a noise which would cause the burglars to retreat and retire by the window in the rear.

It was a difficult matter to unlock the door and shove back the big bolts without making any noise. Rowly worked as though his life depended upon his skill and discretion, as perhaps it did.

Taking off his coat, he pressed the garment against the enormous lock as he slowly and anxiously turned the key. He found that the muffling of the lock was a decided success, for he heard but a slight snap when the great bolts went back from the socket on the door post.

Another lock was then disposed of in the same way, and so were the two huge bolts ; but the officers had

not yet arrived, or if they had, they had gone to the back door which was the most likely place for a break. The door was unfastened, and there was nothing to prevent the guardians of the night from coming in as soon as they arrived.

But the young watchman did not feel quite safe, for the burglars might take it into their heads to make a tour of the store to satisfy themselves that they were not likely to be interrupted when they came to the finish of the job.

Crawling to the drawer, near the front of the store, he took one of the revolvers and placed it in his hip pocket. Thus prepared for the worst, he returned to the front door to await the arrival of help.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HIGH WINDOW IN THE REAR.

WHILE he stood with his hand on the Broadway door, Rowly felt perfectly safe, for he could rush out into the street on the appearance of danger.

The guardian of the store thought he had waited half an hour for the coming of the officers, though the time was really hardly more than five minutes, for seconds of anxiety lengthen themselves out into minutes.

Then in his impatience he began to wonder if the electric wire was in working order, for it had been recently put in, and had never been tested by actual use in any emergency.

His heart seemed to come up into his throat when he thought of the possibility that the confederate traitor in the employ of the firm had disabled this means of calling in assistance.

It was time something was done, for the operators

at the safe might finish their work at any minute, and secure their booty before the appearance of the officers.

But there were policemen in the street, and one had been known to be in the place where he was most needed. It was a risky step to take, but Rowly decided to open the door and go in search of assistance.

With the same care that he had used in moving the bolts and unlocking the door, he opened it just wide enough to admit the passage of his body, and slipped out. Closing the door as carefully as he had opened it, he stood in the doorway a moment to decide what he should do next.

At this moment he saw a man alight from a horse car in the street, and move with uncertain step towards him; and by the light of a neighboring street lamp he recognized Mr. Amlock. But what was the matter with him? Was he intoxicated? He certainly reeled, though he did not act altogether like a man who was tipsy. When he came upon the sidewalk he seemed to stiffen up his frame, and walked to the door, where he immediately discovered his associate.

"Is that you, Rowly?" he asked, in a feeble, rather than a maudlin tone.

"Of course it is; and that's you, Mr. Amlock," replied Rowly. "What is the matter with you? Have you been drinking?"

“Drinking? You know that I never drink, Rowly,” replied the senior, trying to brace himself up so as to appear like a man, though he was not one at that moment.

“What makes you reel, then?”

“I don’t know; something ails me, but I don’t know what it is. I feel very sleepy, and I can hardly keep my eyes open,” stammered Mr. Amlock. “I will go into the store and lie down.”

“Not yet if you please,” interposed Rowly, as he placed himself firmly against the door.

“Why not?” asked the senior, in a tone and with a manner which indicated that he was more than half stupefied.

“Because the burglars are at work in the store, and I am waiting for assistance to come from the precinct office,” replied Rowly. “I think you had better go home, for you don’t know what you are about, whatever may be the cause of it.”

“Burglars in the store! Then I am ruined!” groaned the unhappy man, rousing himself from his lethargy.

“I shouldn’t wonder,” added the faithful guardian of the store, who hardly pitied his associate after his neglect of duty. “But here are my men; and I never was more glad to see my mother.”

Two stout officers presented themselves at this

moment ; but they were not out of breath, and did not seem to have hurried themselves to answer the summons of the bell.

“What is the row here ?” asked one of them, in a matter of fact tone, not at all in keeping with the inner excitement of Rowly.

“Matter enough, I should say. I thought you were never coming,” added Rowly.

“We had to get up and dress ourselves, and it isn’t more than five minutes since the alarm was given at the office,” replied one of them.

“Why don’t you tell us at once what the trouble is ?” said the other, who did not seem to be pleased with the young man’s implied criticism.

“There are two burglars in the store at work on the safe, and they must have a hole in it by this time,” replied Rowly, in a rather excited tone.

“Show us where they are,” said one of the officers, taking the matter very coolly.

“The door is unfastened, and the safe where they are at work is on the right of the store, about half way to the rear. But I wish you would wait a few minutes before you go in, for I want to go to the rear and prevent them from coming out, as they will try to as soon as they see you.”

“You are nothing but a chicken, and do you expect

to head them off?" asked Stiles, the good-natured officer.

"I think I can fix things there so that they cannot get out the way they got in," replied Rowly, confidently.

"I will go to the rear door, and go in that way while you go in at this door, Stiles," said Snawly, the ill-natured officer. "I don't want any fooling with a boy."

"Then they will get out at the front door," suggested Rowly, as inoffensively as he could.

"I think the boy is right," added Stiles. "How did the breakers get in, my lad?"

"By a ladder in a window near the ceiling."

"Then they left the ladder within reach, so that they could use it to get out with; and the boy can take it out of the way as well as a man that weighs two hundred," reasoned Stiles; and Snawly yielded to the argument.

As Rowly abandoned his place with his back to the door, Mr. Amlock, who did not seem to comprehend what had been said, made a move to go in at the door.

"Don't let him go in if you please," interposed the faithful guardian. "He doesn't know what he is about and he will be in your way."

Stiles shoved him one side and put his broad back

against the door. The senior clerk seemed more overcome than on his arrival, and he seated himself on the doorstep, apparently unconscious of the presence of Rowly and the officers.

"I think you can slip in at the door, as I came out, without disturbing the burglars," suggested Rowly, as he hurried around to the back street.

When he reached the rear door, he found the ladder lying on the narrow sidewalk, where it could be of no possible use to the burglars up twelve feet or more above it.

It looked as though Blooks, who had been the last to enter at the window, had thrown it down that it might not attract the attention of the possible passer-by.

As the young clerk was about to raise it, he put his hand on a small cord, which he found led up to the window ; and then he understood the precaution which Blooks had taken. The other end of the cord was made fast to the window, so that the ladder could be raised when it should be wanted.

There was as yet nothing to indicate that the officers had moved on the robbers, and they seemed to be giving them a long time to perform their part of the work.

Rowly was too curious and anxious to wait long without a sight of the interior of the store, and he

raised the ladder to the former position. He ascended to the window, and found that all was still within. He could not see the officers or the burglars. Then, reaching down, he got hold of the ladder on the inside of the store, and very carefully drew it up, dropping the end of it on the sidewalk in the rear street.

Still the officers did not pounce on their prey, and Rowly devoted himself to an examination of the window. There was light enough for him to see that the screws must have been removed from the stops which held the window sash in place. The pieces of wood were all there, and it was simply impossible for a person on the outside to take them out, as the glass in the sash had not been cut or broken.

The report of a pistol assured him the officers had advanced on the burglars.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

ROWLY saw the flash of the pistol in the comparative gloom of the middle of the store, and he judged that the shot was fired by one of the burglars. A moment later he saw the two operators leap over the counter, and rush towards the window by which they had entered. The observer was glad that he had removed the ladder.

The officers had gone behind the counter in their approach to the scene of operations, and both of them were too heavy to follow the rapid movements of Silky and his companion.

"The ladder is gone!" exclaimed the former in his dismay. "Make for the front door, Blooks."

Silky led the way, and dodged in behind the short counter on the other side of the store. Rowly wondered if Stiles, who seemed to be the leading man of the pair of officers, had secured the door when he entered.

Rowly did not wait to observe the proceedings any farther ; but he thought he could have managed the arrest of the burglars much better than it had been done.

He descended the ladder with all possible haste, removing it from the open window, and rushing with all his might around to the front of the store. He reached his destination just in season to see both of the burglars issue from the door, and dart off at top speed.

“Stop thief! Stop thief!” he shouted with all his might, as he gave chase to the two men.

The burglars turned into the first side street they came to, and Rowly followed, shouting his warning notes as he proceeded.

“Stop thief! Stop thief!” cried Silky, taking up the refrain, and his example was imitated by Blooks.

Suddenly both of the burglars wheeled about, and began to run towards Rowly, who was rather startled at this movement on their part, for he concluded that they intended to assault him.

As we have several times suggested before, Rowly was a prudent young man, and he did not at all like this phase in the drama, for it was now nearly or quite midnight, and there were very few people in the street.

He could not hope to contend successfully against

two full-grown men, and he could do nothing but run away. Coming about he started off in the direction he had come at his best speed ; and the villains followed him.

Before he could reach Broadway again, a man stepped out of a doorway where he had evidently laid in wait for him, and seized him by the collar. The victim of Silky's trick could not tell whether his captor was a policeman or not, but he handled him very roughly.

"What are you about?" demanded Rowly, indignantly. "Let me alone!"

"That's the fellow ; are you a policeman?" asked Silky, coming up at this stage of the proceedings.

"No ; I'm a private watchman," replied the man, still clutching his victim.

"Hold on to him, and don't let him go, and we will send an officer in a couple of minutes," added Silky, as he resumed his hurried flight.

"Those men are the ones who broke into Brillyant & Co's store," gasped Rowly, as soon as he could recover his breath from the shaking the man gave him.

"But they say you are a thief," replied the private watchman, puzzled over the conflicting stories.

"If you don't believe me, take me to the store, for there are two officers there that I called in,"

pleaded the young clerk, who was almost upset by the turning of the tables upon him by the burglar.

“That is an easy thing to do, for the store is close by,” added the man, as he led his prisoner in that direction.

“That was an ugly trick they played on me, for I was chasing them, and first cried out ‘Stop thief,’” added Rowly.

“We shall soon know all about it,” said the watchman. “What is your name?”

“Rowland Parkway; and I am a clerk in the store of Brillyant & Co.”

“Is that so?” But the man did not relax his hold on his prisoner.

A walk of a few minutes more brought them to the store, where they found the two officers standing at the door.

“What’s the matter, my spring chicken?” demanded Snawly who was the first to recognize the clerk.

“Where have you been, my lad?” asked Stiles, almost in the same breath. “We wanted you to look out for the store so that we could run down the burglars.”

“Then you know this young fellow!” added the private watchman, releasing his hold on his prisoner.

“We found him in this store, and he let us in from

the inside, so that I suppose he belongs here," replied Stiles; and Rowly found himself set right at once. The watchman told his story, and laughed at the trick Silky had put upon him.

"I am sorry you did not take one of the two men," added Stiles. "It looks as though we had lost them now. We will go in and see what they have done."

The watchman made a mild apology for the mistake he had made, and went his way to look out for the property in his charge. Stiles led the way into the store, and Rowly secured all the locks as soon as they were inside.

Mr. Amlock had seated himself in a chair near the door, and he had gone to sleep in the most uncomfortable position into which he could twist himself.

"Who is this man?" asked Stiles. "You let him into the store as though he belonged here."

"He does belong here, and he is the senior clerk in the establishment," replied Rowly. "He and I were on watch for the night."

"What is the matter with him? Has he been drinking?" inquired Snawly, as he gave the sleeper a rude shake which would have roused any one from an ordinary slumber.

"He said he had drunk nothing, and it is understood in the store that he never drinks anything. A

woman screamed just outside of the door, and he let her in when he did me."

"What did she scream for?"

"She said a man had caught hold of her as she came out of the office where she works. Then she said she was the sister of Mr. Van Zandt, the junior partner of the firm, and Mr. Amlock went to see her home; but I know from what I heard one of the burglars say, that it was all a trick to get him out of the store while they committed the robbery."

"How old should you think the woman was?" asked Stiles.

"About thirty, I should say," answered Rowly, who had formed this opinion before, though a woman's age is a rather uncertain thing to estimate."

"Was she good-looking?"

"I thought she was, but perhaps I am not a good judge," replied the clerk with a laugh.

"I'll bet all my old boots that Kidd Ashbank had a finger in this pie!" exclaimed Stiles. "That woman is his wife, and she helps him out with his breaks, as she did in this instance. She lives like a lady, and I have no doubt she took this sleepy fellow into her parlor, and gave him a glass of lemonade, with a dose of morphine, or something of that sort; and that is what is the matter with him just now."

Rowly asked some questions about the husband

of the siren, and came to the conclusion that it was Blooks, for Silky did not fit the description of him at all.

Stiles and the other officer carried the ancient clerk to the bed under the counter provided for the watch, and left him in a more comfortable position than he had chosen for himself.

Then they examined the store, and especially the safe where the burglars had been at work for a couple of hours. They had bored a hole through the door of the safe, ready for an explosion, when they were interrupted by the advance of the officers.

The officers remained in the store till morning, and when all was quiet, Rowly brought out the boots he had found in the back street, and compared the nails in the heels with the impression on the paper.

He had not expected to make such a discovery, but the positions of the nails corresponded exactly in every respect with the paper.

CHAPTER XV.

A VACATION OF TWO WEEKS.

THE two officers in the store smoked their pipes near the rear door, the smoke passing out at the window the burglars had left open, and Rowly was not disturbed in his investigation of the diamond mystery.

He had so much confidence in the evidence afforded by the comparison that he felt morally sure that Silky had stolen the box containing the casket. Though his theory that Rush Sinnerton had been the thief was upset by this evidence, he could not resist the conclusion forced upon him, and he clung to the newly discovered facts rather than to his previous theory, unlike many seekers after the truth.

He began to yawn and gape, in spite of the mighty discovery he had made, and he walked the floor to rouse himself. The conversation between Rush and Gunnywood, or Silky, whatever his name might be, crowded itself into his mind. The former denied that

he had taken the diamonds, while the latter insisted that he had done so. It looked as though the burglar meant to save himself, if he could, at the expense of his friend.

At the usual hour the clerks and porters came to the store. Mr. Van Zandt appeared earlier than usual. Rowly had hardly finished relating to the latter the incidents of the night before Mr. Brillyant came, and he was obliged to go over it all again.

An unsuccessful effort was made to rouse Amlock to his senses, but his stupefied condition was abundant evidence of the truth of the junior clerk's statement. The officers had gone when the clerks came, but the hole in the safe door and the open window in the rear sufficiently revealed what had been going on in the store during the night.

"Should you know either of the burglars again if you saw them?" asked Mr. Brillyant.

"I am sure I should know both of them," replied Rowly; and he was on the point of saying where he could find one of them when the evidence he had obtained from the boots checked his utterance, though he could not have explained why he was silent.

It was nine o'clock before the investigation was completed, for a couple of police detectives had put in an appearance; but they could discover nothing

which afforded them any clew to the perpetrators of the break.

"The lady who came to the store was Mr. Van Zandt's sister, you say, Rowly," said Mr. Brillyant.

"She said she was his sister," added the clerk.

"I have no sister," interposed the junior partner.

"The officers who came here in the night said they thought she was the wife of one of the burglars; and her story about the assault upon her was invented to get Mr. Amlock out of the store."

"Mr. Amlock made the greatest blunder of his lifetime," continued the senior partner.

Rowly thought so, too, but he was prudent enough to make no remark.

"Young man, it is plain enough that you have saved the store from plunder; and you have conducted yourself with courage and discretion. If you do not object, Van Zandt, we will double his wages from the first day of this month, and give him ten dollars a week," the senior partner proceeded.

"I heartily approve this action," replied the junior, who was not in the habit of disagreeing with his superior in the firm.

"I thank you very much, Mr. Brillyant," answered Rowly, with his heart in his mouth. "I tried to do my duty, and did not think at all of my wages.

You are very kind to me, and I feel that I don't deserve what you have done."

"All that, and more too; and if you continue to do as well as you have done in the past, we shall advance you as rapidly as we can. But you have been up all night, and your eyes look very heavy. You had better go home now, and sleep off your fatigue. If there is anything we can do for you, don't hesitate to mention it."

This investigation recalled what Rowly had been thinking about before the partners came; that he wished he had time to investigate the diamond robbery and the burglary, both of which appeared to have been committed by the same operators; at least one of them had a hand in both transactions.

"There is one thing I should like to ask as a great favor," said Rowly, with no little embarrassment, for he hardly liked to ask for the favor he had in his mind.

"Don't be bashful, my lad," added Mr. Brilleyant, with an encouraging smile. "I am confident you have saved a vast amount of our property, and you have a right to ask anything of us."

"Perhaps it is a bad time to ask for it, but I should like a vacation of a week or two," stammered Rowly, almost overwhelmed by the kindness of his employers.

“Granted, Rowly!” exclaimed the senior partner, with a laugh. “That is not much to ask for one who has done as much for us as you have. Take a month if you wish, though the store may be cleaned out by robbers in your absence. Are you going into the country?”

“I don’t know just where I shall go,” replied the clerk, who was fully determined to keep his affairs to himself.

“Wherever you go, you will want some money to pay your bills. Give him a hundred dollars, Van Zandt,” continued Mr. Brilliant, rubbing his hands as though he felt that he was doing about the right thing by his faithful employee.

“I don’t ask for any money, sir,” added the modest clerk.

“No matter whether you ask for it or not; you can’t enjoy your vacation without money. I hope you will have a good time; and when you come back, I may want to make you chief watchman to the establishment, for I think you have a decided talent for dealing with rogues.”

“I am very grateful to you for your kindness, sir; and I shall always do my best to deserve all you have done for me,” said Rowly, who had never seen a happier moment, exhausted and sleepy as he was.

Mr. Van Zandt opened the safe, and took a hundred

dollars from it. Rowly, who had never had so much money of his own in his possession before, felt like a rich man. This large sum would enable him to prosecute the investigation of which he had been thinking all the morning, and he felt just as though he had embarked in a new undertaking.

Doing up Silky's boots in a bundle, he left the store, with the best wishes of the partners for the enjoyment of his vacation.

The exhilaration of the hour almost made a new being of him, and he forgot that he had been up all night, though his hollow eyes revealed his condition to his mother as soon as he came into her presence.

"Where have you been, Rowly? I have been worried about you, for you always come home before eight o'clock to your breakfast," said Mrs. Parkway, after she had carefully scrutinized the appearance of her son.

"I have been busy at the store, for we had a circus there last night," replied Rowly, as he seated himself at the waiting table.

He and his mother were devotedly attached to each other. Neither had any secrets from the other, and he told her all that had happened since he left the house the night before; as well as about the money he had received, and the vacation which had been granted to him.

“But what are you going to do now?” she asked, when he had finished his breakfast.

“I am going to sleep now, for I think Mr. Silky and the other fellow have done the same thing before this time,” replied Rowly, who could hardly keep his eyes open after the hearty meal he had taken. “I shall be awake and ready for them when they begin to move.”

“I am afraid you will get hurt if you try to deal with such characters as those burglars,” added his mother, anxiously.

“I am not afraid of them,” replied Rowly, as he drew the elegant revolver belonging to Silky, which he had taken from the drawer at the store, from his hip pocket. “I think I can take care of myself with this thing within reach of my hand.”

“But you must be very careful,” pleaded the frightened mother. “Promise me that you will not run any risks.”

“I will promise not to take any risk if I can help it,” replied Rowly, as he went to his room.

In two minutes more he was sound asleep, and did not wake till one o'clock, when his mother called him, as he had requested her to do; and though he had slept but three hours, he felt as fresh as though he had had a full night's rest.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN INTERVIEW IN CENTRAL PARK.

In spite of the tremendous mission he had imposed upon himself, Rowly was as cool and self-possessed as though nothing had occurred to disturb the ordinary current of his existence. He finished his dinner as though he was to return to the store as usual. He had given the money to his mother, though he told her that he should have occasion to use some of it in the work before him.

He left his home with the earnest adjurations of his mother to be very prudent, which he promised to observe, and hastened to the house of Mrs. Everton. But he had not walked half the distance before his attention was attracted by a lady he saw getting into a street car. He was confident it was the woman who had passed herself off as Miss Van Zandt, though she had changed her dress, and wore a different bonnet.

Forgetting all about "Aunt Myra," as he called her, and Captain Ringboom, whom he expected to

find at the house, as the captain had taken a room there, he rushed to the car, and got on the platform.

His first care was to scrutinize the lady more attentively than he had been able to do before. She was a beautiful woman, beyond the possibility of cavil, and all the gentlemen on the opposite side of the car cast frequent glances at her, though they did not seem to disturb the serenity of her countenance. She was richly dressed, and one might have easily mistaken her for one of "the first families" of the metropolis.

Rowly kept his place on the rear platform of the car, and soon completed his examination of the lady, though he was careful not to stare at her, and not to let her see his face.

Beyond the possibility of a doubt, she was the "Miss Van Zandt" of the night before, and the officers believed she was the wife of the notorious burglar Kidd Ashbank, otherwise known as Blooks.

When the car stopped in front of Central Park, the lady got out, and went into the inclosure at the principal entrance on that side.

Mrs. Ashbank, if Ashbank was the right name of Blooks, whose wife she was, took one of the side avenues of the park which was little frequented, and walked till she came to one of the most retired places she could find.

Rowly was satisfied that she was not doing all this for the sake of the walk, pleasant as the day and beautiful as the park were in the months of spring, and he determined not to lose sight of her. But it was early in the afternoon, and it was not easy, when so few people were there, to avoid being observed, though Rowly took a parallel path to the one chosen by the lady.

He kept at a considerable distance from her, but he did not lose sight of her for more than a minute at a time, in the shade of the foliage.

When she reached a sort of wooded dell, where it was difficult for the observer to keep her in sight, he discovered a well-dressed gentleman approaching her. She stopped short as soon as she saw the newcomer; and they soon came together, and seated themselves on a rustic bench, after both of them had looked all about them, as if afraid of an interruption.

Rowly had placed himself behind a bush of dense foliage where he could see without being seen; but he might as well have been down on the Battery, so far as hearing anything that was said. Nor had he been able to see the face of the gentleman, though the form was that of Blooks, rather short and somewhat stout.

By a series of gradual approaches, he placed him-

self nearer to the couple on the rustic bench ; and as there was no other person in sight, he dropped on the ground, and began to crawl, like a snake in the grass, towards the seat.

Rowly soon obtained a position near enough to obtain a fair view of the gentleman's face and part of his form. The man was well dressed, and everything about him, including his whiskers and mustache, was nicely adjusted.

He rose from his place, and looked along the path by which the lady had come, as though he heard footsteps ; and then Rowly saw that it was Blooks, though he had greatly changed his appearance since the night before. Dropping on the ground again, the young clerk continued to "snake it" to a better position, which he soon secured.

"I tell you it was a failure, Maggy, and we got nothing at all," said Blooks, evidently alluding to the break of the night before. "It is impossible for us to leave New York, for want of money."

"I don't see how you could have failed to do the job, for there was nobody but a boy in your way. for I am sure the man I cared for could not have done anything," added the lady.

It looked to the listener as though the couple had met for the first time since the attempt to commit the robbery, and that Blooks had been telling his confed-

erate of the ill success of the venture, which they were now discussing more in detail.

"The man did not come back till after the officers had taken possession of the store; and we were lucky to get off as we did," added the man.

"But you say you tied the boy, hand and foot."

"We did; and how he got loose, it puzzled me to find out; but he did so, and must have touched the button of the electric bell at the precinct office," Blooks explained. "But we lost the game, and it doesn't matter much how it was done."

"Have you seen Gunny since?" asked the lady.

"I have not; I went to his room at the risk of my safety, but he was not there, and it did not look as though he had been there."

"I am vexed at your failure, for I have spent the last dollar I had, and had hardly change enough to pay my car fare," said the lady, very sorrowfully.

"I am not in much better condition myself, though I can give you a few dollars," added Blooks, in whose tones there was abundant sympathy. "We can't go to Europe this month; and we have nothing to dispose of if we do."

"I cannot even pay my board," continued the lady.

"You must not be so extravagant, Maggy."

"Sometimes you are rich, and sometimes you are

poor, so that I don't know how to regulate my expenses, though I live just as you wished."

"I am not blaming you, Maggy; but something must be done at once to replenish our purses," replied the burglar. "I am afraid Gunny is playing me false, for he said he was going in the next steamer, whether we got anything last night or not. He acts rather strangely."

"What makes you think he is false to you?" asked Maggy, with interest.

"Perhaps he is not exactly false; but he is up to something I do not understand. Though he will not explain, I feel sure that he has money, or something that will bring money. He thought also that we had better separate after last night's break."

"You think he has engaged in some operation without your knowledge, do you, Kidd?" asked the wife.

"I can't explain his conduct in any other way. We agreed to divide all we got, whether we worked together or not. Now, I can't find him, though I have been looking for him all day."

"I cannot believe that Gunny is a traitor to you, Kidd?"

"I hope not, but he looks that way."

The conference did not seem to amount to anything, as between the couple, though Rowly felt that

he was the wiser for what he had heard, especially in relation to Silky, who intended to go to Europe. Perhaps that intelligent worthy intended to dispose of two hundred thousand dollars' worth of diamonds on the other side of the ocean, and live in Paris on the proceeds.

Kidd and his wife rose from the seat, and after some conversation which the anxious listener could not hear, they parted, and each went the way he had come.

Kidd Ashbank evidently did not wish to connect his wife with himself publicly, possibly to screen her if he should be arrested. Rowly wanted to "shadow" both of them; but this was not a convenient operation; and as Amlock probably knew where to find the woman, he decided to follow the burglar.

But he also decided to make short work with him, for he was satisfied now that he had no hand in stealing the diamonds.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ARREST OF ASHBANK.

Blooks sauntered leisurely about the park for a time, and then left it by the lower entrance, taking one of the avenues down town, with Rowly on the other side of the street.

The volunteer "shadow" was determined not to lose sight of the burglar and not to postpone decided action a moment longer than was necessary.

By great good fortune, Rowly discovered two policemen together near the Grand Central Station, and he immediately introduced himself to them.

"An attempt was made last night to rob the store of Brillyant & Co., in Broadway," said he, opening the subject at once to the officers. "That well-dressed man on the other side of the street is one of the burglars."

"How do you know?" demanded the policeman to whom he addressed the information.

"I am a clerk in the store ; I was on watch last night, and I saw him," replied Rowly, confidently, as he moved on so as not to lose sight of his intended victim.

"Here ! Stop a minute, and tell us about it," called the man addressed, as he followed Rowly.

"I don't mean to stop and lose sight of the fellow," replied the young shadow.

"We are not going to arrest a gentlemanly looking person like the one you point out on the mere statement of a boy," said the speaking officer.

"All right ; but I shall not take my eye off him till he is arrested, if I follow him to the end of the world," replied Rowly, resolutely.

"You say you are a clerk in the store of Brillyant & Co. ?" continued the officer, keeping at the side of Rowly.

"I am ; and I was one of the two who were on watch last night. I used the electric wire, two officers came, and that is the reason why the store was not robbed," replied the shadow, with his eyes still fixed on Blooks.

"I heard about the attempt to rob the store ; and they say that Kidd Ashbank was the cracksman that did it," said the policeman, apparently more impressed than he had been with the statement of his informant.

"And that fellow that looks like a gentleman ahead of us, on the other side of the street, is Kidd Ashbank," persisted Rowly.

"It is said that his wife had a hand in the robbery," added the officer.

"She deceived Mr. Amlock, who was on watch with me, and got him to go with her somewhere, I don't know where ; and when he was out of the way, Kidd and Silky went into the store through a back window."

"That's just the way I heard it, and I reckon you are telling the truth, young man," replied the officer, with a searching glance into the face of Rowly.

"I know I am just as well as I know I am alive," protested he, suddenly breaking into a run as he saw Kidd turn into a cross street.

Both of the officers followed him, for the second one had kept close behind the other, and the affair was at least beginning to look more real to them.

Rowly reached the corner of the cross street first, but only to find that his intended victim had disappeared in some mysterious way.

It was possible that he had a room in this street, and had entered the house in which it was located ; but it was impossible to tell which one it was. The volunteer shadow was terribly disconcerted, and felt that he had done no better than the officers at the

store the night before. But he resolved to stay in that locality till Kidd came out, if he remained there a week.

"I am afraid you have lost your man, sonny," said the policeman who had done all the talking.

"If I have it was only because you did not do your duty when I told you who and what the fellow was," replied Rowly, sharply, for he felt indignant as well as disconcerted at the result of the chase.

"I don't arrest any good-looking man when a boy tells me he is a cracksman ; that wouldn't do," replied the officer, who appeared to be quite as much annoyed as his companion, and perhaps felt that he had been remiss in the discharge of his duty. "But we won't give him up yet. He can't be a great way off ; and perhaps he rooms in one of these houses. We will look about here."

The trio did look at all the dwelling houses in the neighborhood ; but they could see nothing to indicate the presence of the burglar.

At the corner, with the entrance on the cross street, was a liquor saloon, and it occurred to Rowly to look into it, though he had never entered such a place in his life. There was a kind of screen at the end of the bar, which shielded the drinkers from the observation of passers-by in the street ; and as soon as the young shadow reached a point where he could see

the space at the front of the bar, he discovered Blooks, in the act of swallowing a decoction which it must have taken some time to prepare, or perhaps he had been obliged to wait for the bar-keeper, for there were several persons in the saloon.

Rowly retreated as soon as he saw his man, and returned to the street, where he beckoned to the two officers, who could not help seeing from the kindling looks of the young man that he had found what he was looking for.

“I am satisfied now ; and we had better take him in this saloon, and keep out of a crowd,” replied the leading officer. “Just have your wristers ready, Barnagin, for these fellows are not young kittens.”

“I have them within reach, Flint, and two of us ought not to have any trouble with any single fellow,” replied the other.

Rowly looked upon Blooks as a desperate character, for he had everything to lose and nothing to gain if arrested.

The burglar had swallowed his potion, paid for it, and was on the way out of the saloon when he encountered Rowly and the officers as they approached the screen.

“Sorry to trouble you, sir,” Flint began, in an apologetic tone, “but we have a little business with you.”

"Business with me? What is it, if you please, for I am in somewhat of a hurry," replied Blooks, seemingly not at all disconcerted by the words of the policeman.

"I am sorry to do it, but I shall be obliged to arrest you, and ask you to go to the precinct office with me," continued Flint, as politely as the occasion required, for it was still possible that there was some mistake concerning the identity of the man.

"Arrest me!" exclaimed the immaculate Blooks. "You don't know me."

"On the contrary, I think we do; and that is where the trouble comes in," added Flint, rather jocosely.

"May I be allowed to ask on what charge you propose to arrest me?" demanded Blooks, as though he regarded the whole affair as a joke or a blunder.

"On the charge of breaking and entering the store of Brilliant & Co. last night," replied Flint, bluntly.

"There is some mistake; you have got hold of the wrong person," added the burglar.

"That will have to be proven on further examination; and if you don't object, we will slip a pair of bracelets on your wrists, just for ornament, you know."

"But I do object! I would rather die than be

dragged through the streets in irons!" protested the prisoner.

"We won't drag you if you don't make a fuss; and no one can see the bracelets under your coat sleeves."

"But this is all a mistake."

"It may be that it is; and that is what we want to find out. Here is the principal witness, and he knows better about this business than I do. Are you positive this is your man, sonny?"

"I am positively sure of it; and I can swear to him in any court in the city," replied Rowly, confidently.

"I never saw that boy before in my life. But I will go with you if you will let me write a note to my wife," said Blooks.

"Don't let him do it!" protested Rowly, earnestly. "His wife is one of them, and had a hand in the business."

"No notes to anybody," replied Flint.

At that moment, Blooks made a rush at Barnagin, upset him, and bolted for the door, though Flint succeeded in getting hold of the skirt of his coat.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MISS VAN ZANDT COVERS HER TRACKS.

Rowly was standing a little apart from the officers when Blooks made his strike for liberty, and Barnagin had been thrown down, so that he was behind the prisoner when he reached the door of the saloon.

The young clerk had no idea of permitting the burglar to escape, even if the officers would consent to it, and he threw himself on the back of the robber, while Flint held him by the skirt of his coat.

Blooks was fully in earnest, and he began a violent struggle for his freedom ; but Rowly held on, and so did Flint. Barnagin picked himself up, and, to do him justice, he was not half so sleepy as he had appeared to be, for he tackled Blooks in a very decided manner, and brought him to the floor in spite of his struggles.

Both of the officers lay down on him, while Rowly placed a stool over his feet in such a way that he could not move them ; or at least, he could not move

hand or foot. The handcuffs were placed on his wrists, and he was shoved into a corner, for he was still inclined to be turbulent.

“Now, sonny, if you will go and get a carriage, we will soon have him in a safe place,” said Flint.

By this time there was a considerable crowd gathered in front of the saloon, and among the vehicles that had stopped was a carriage, the driver of which was standing at the door.

The hack was drawn up in front of the saloon, and Blooks tumbled into it, though he was still disposed to resist, while the two officers disposed of themselves in such a way that they could easily handle him with his hands manacled.

The carriage was driven rapidly to the precinct in which the store of Brillyant & Co. was located, and Blooks was promptly identified as Kidd Ashbank. Rowly was questioned for a long time by the superior officer in charge, and the news of the arrest was sent to the store; and it soon brought the two partners, with Mr. Amlock, to the police office. The ancient clerk had in some measure recovered from the dose which had been administered to him, though he was rather stupid and nervous in his manner.

“Mr. Brillyant, is this young man in your employ?” asked the chief officer, pointing to Rowly.

"He is, and has been for the last year," replied the head of the firm.

"Is he in the habit of telling the truth?"

"He is the most truthful young man I ever knew, and I have entire confidence in him," said Mr. Brillyant.

"What is your name, young man?" continued the examiner, turning to the young clerk again.

"Rowland Parkway, sir."

The officer then questioned him at great length in regard to the robbery, and he told the same story as before, positively identifying Ashbank as one of the men who had captured and bound him. Rowly had seen the burglar's face plainly, for there was a gas burner quite near the spot; and he recognized him as well by his voice as by his face and form.

Stiles and Snawley, who had been at the store a part of the night, put in an appearance about this time; but they had not seen the faces of either of the robbers, though the form of one of them was exactly that of the prisoner.

Amlock was then called upon to tell what he knew of the affair; but about all he could remember related to what had occurred before he left the store with the lady. She called herself Miss Van Zandt, and he believed she was the sister of the junior partner, or he would not have left the store to see her

home. They had taken a street car, and gone to Thirtieth Street, where they got off, and he had been conducted to what the lady said was her boarding place. She had offered him a glass of wine, but he never drank anything intoxicating, so she insisted very earnestly that he should take a glass of lemonade, which he had accepted.

The lady was talking about her brother all the time, and in spite of Amlock's best efforts to get away, she retained him for some time; but she was perfectly discreet and ladylike.

He soon began to feel strangely, though he did not attribute the novel condition of his head to the glass of lemonade, or to anything that might have been put into it. She permitted him to depart at last. When he reached the street, he found it almost impossible to stand on his feet, he was so strangely dizzy.

In answer to a question, he said he had never taken any morphine, so far as he could remember, and he had no personal knowledge of its effects. He had not seen the robbers, or either of them, and he could not identify the prisoner, though the officer in charge was satisfied, and ordered Ashbank to be taken without further delay to a cell.

Amlock was confident that he could find the house to which he had been taken, and a detective in

plain clothes was sent with him and Rowly to find it.

Ashbank was surly and obstinate, and refused to say a word about the attempted robbery, or in relation to his companion, declining to admit anything that was charged against him.

The ancient clerk, who had come to the house in Thirtieth Street while in the full possession of his faculties, readily found the place. They were admitted by a servant, though the lady had entered with a night key, and shown to the parlor.

"I was taken to the apartment over this one," said Amlock, when the girl had gone to tell the landlady, for there was a sign at the door, "Furnished Rooms and Board" to indicate the character of the establishment.

"Did you see the landlady or any other person?" asked the officer.

"I did not; the lady opened the door herself, and seemed to be entirely at home here," replied the ancient clerk.

At this point the landlady appeared, and she looked as good-natured as though she expected to obtain three new boarders.

"We called to make some inquiries about the lady who occupies the room over this one," said the officer, after he had risen from his chair and saluted the landlady.

“If you know anything about her, I should like to make some inquiries of you on that subject,” replied the lady, laughing more than the occasion seemed to require, perhaps from habit rather than because there was anything to amuse her.

“My object is to obtain information, and not to give it,” answered Mr. Wringer, for that was the name by which he was called at the office. “Your boarder is under suspicion.”

“So she is here ; but I don’t know anything about her,” added the landlady, with the same unflinching good nature.

“When did she come to your house ?”

“About four o’clock yesterday afternoon ; she engaged the room over this one, without board, and paid for a week in advance. She said she had just come from Boston, and there had been some mistake about her two trunks. She had been unable to find them, for she had sent them by express, as she had to stop in New Haven on her way.

“About six o’clock she paid me a quarter for a night key, and said she was going to the express office to look for her trunks, which she was sure would come by the half-past ten train. I went to the theater last night, and that was the last I have seen of her. She has not been near the house to-day, so far as I know, though I generally see who comes in

and who goes out at the front door. That is all I know about her."

"I am very much obliged to you for your information, and I have no doubt it is quite correct," replied the officer, as he rose and moved toward the door.

"But what is she under suspicion for?" asked the landlady. "I don't have any suspicious characters in my house if I know it."

"You must excuse me for saying nothing about the lady; but so far as I am aware, your house is entirely above suspicion," added the officer, leaving the room and the house, followed by the two clerks.

"Miss Van Zandt" had effectually covered her tracks.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN ALTERCATION.

By this time it was four in the afternoon, and Rowly could do nothing more at present to assist in finding the wife of Ashbank, though it was plain enough from the statement of Amlock, as indeed it would have been without it, that she was a confederate in the attempted robbery.

One of the burglars had been arrested, and until he was taken into court there was nothing more for Rowly to do in connection with him. He left the carriage in the vicinity of his home, and hastened to the house of Mrs. Everton, which he had intended to visit before.

He was admitted by Hope, who looked very pale and troubled. But the door was hardly opened before the visitor heard the voice of Colonel Sinnerton in loud and angry speech, supplemented by the more feeble and sorrowful tones of Mrs. Everton.

"I am so glad you have come, Rowly! exclaimed Hope, as soon as she saw him.

"What is the matter, Hope?" asked he, deeply interested in anything that concerned the fair maiden or her mother.

"Colonel Sinnerton is here, and he is very angry; and he has put a man in the house to see that none of our things are carried off, for he has attached them."

"I am afraid I cannot do anything to help you, Hope, in a case like this," replied Rowly, very sadly, as he looked at the woebegone face of the young lady. "Has he been here long?"

"He has just come, and Rush is with him. Do come in, for they are very insulting to my poor mother," pleaded the distressed daughter.

"Where is Captain Ringboom?" Rowly inquired.

"He left the house this forenoon, and said he would raise the money to pay the mortgage note and the interest for us to-day, and we have not seen him since."

"What is the matter with Colonel Sinnerton now?"

"He says that some officers have visited his son's room, and searched it, though they would not say of what crime he was suspected."

"All right; I understand it now," added Rowly as he followed Hope into the front parlor.

Mrs. Everton sat in a rocking-chair, very much excited, it was plain to see, though she was quiet in her manner, and her eyes were filled with tears.

Colonel Sinnerton was pacing up and down the room, as furious as though the fair widow had spat in his face, while Rush stood at the window, and seemed to be ill at ease.

“I insist that you tell me with what crime my son is charged, madam!” stormed the colonel in excited tones.

“I say again that I have charged him with no crime, and that I know nothing at all about it, nor even that his room has been visited by officers,” replied Mrs. Everton, wiping the tears from her eyes.

This was quite true, for Captain Ringboom and Rowly had kept their intentions to themselves.

“This is an evasion, madam!” almost shouted the irate capitalist. “You lost some diamonds, or pretended you did, and you have charged my son with stealing them.”

“I have charged him with nothing, sir.”

“Perhaps I know——” Rowly began to say, when the rich man turned to him, as though he had not before been aware of his presence, for he had paused in front of the lady with his back to the door when the visitor entered.

“Who are you! What brought you here, you

young cub?" demanded the colonel, marching up to him as though he intended to annihilate him with a glance, if not with his fist.

"I was going to say that perhaps I know more about this matter than Mrs. Everton, though I was not aware that your son had been accused of any crime, and I have had no hand in the business," answered Rowly mildly.

"What do you know about it?" asked the colonel, a trifle more gently.

"You were in this house yesterday forenoon when Captain Ringboom called, were you not, if you please, sir?" asked the young clerk, in the softest of tones.

"I was here when he called. What has that to do with it?"

"You heard him say that he had brought a casket of diamonds to Mrs. Everton, sent by her brother who died in Africa, for Miss Hope Everton," continued Rowly, in the same mild tone.

"I heard him say something like that; but I did not believe a word of it, and I don't now. That rough-looking fellow was brought in to help stave off the debt the landlady owes me. It was all a trick, invented to deceive me. The man was in the house, and was sent into this room at the right time. I am not to be deceived by anything of that sort; and I

mean to collect the debt and interest with no more delay."

"You must have read in the papers, or heard, that these diamonds had been stolen from that table," continued Rowly, pointing to the place where the box had been deposited.

"I did hear about it. Of course they were stolen. That was a part of the trick," vociferated the colonel, his anger kindling up again.

"Though I did not see the diamonds myself, I believe they were in the box you saw on the table, and I am confident they were stolen, for I was here all the time. I think we had better talk the matter over calmly."

"Calmly, you young whelp, when this woman insults my son and me, and charges the boy with a heinous crime?"

"She has not charged your son with a crime, heinous or otherwise, for she knew nothing at all about what was said by Captain Ringboom and myself, or what was done; and I did not even know till now that the captain had done anything."

"Then you are the villain who has insulted my son!" exclaimed the colonel, taking a step nearer to the young man.

"I told you I had done nothing at all about charging him with stealing the diamonds, though I did

believe that he took them ; and last night one of his intimate friends appeared to be of the same opinion."

At this point, Rowly discovered that Rush, who stood behind his father, was shaking his head, and making very emphatic gestures to him.

But Rush could not have known that his friend Silky, or Gunnywood, as he called him, was concerned in the attempted robbery on Broadway, though he seemed to be greatly disturbed by the allusion to his "intimate friend."

It seemed to Rowly that the rapid young gentleman was aware that his neighbor in the adjoining room at his new home was somewhat "off color in the nature of his occupations.

"Tell me what you know about this business ; and do it quick, or I shall shake half the life out of you !" stormed the enraged father.

"I think we had better be calm, and use soft words, Colonel Sinnerton," said Rowly, as he retreated a couple of steps before the advance of the angry father.

"Answer me at once ! Tell me what you know, you young rascal !" continued the colonel, more violently than ever if possible.

"I am not in the habit of hearing myself called a villain, a rascal, or a young whelp ; and I object to

such names as applied to me," added Rowly, holding up his head as though he had been a capitalist himself, instead of a poor boy.

"You are a young puppy? Why don't you do as I told you to do, and tell me all about this business at once?" raved the colonel.

"Not a word about it while you use this abusive language," added the young man, firmly.

"You won't tell me? We will see if you won't!"

The irate capitalist raised his right hand, and rushed upon Rowly as though he intended to seize him by the throat.

The young clerk retreated rapidly to the wall of the room, and whisked the beautiful revolver from his hip pocket, elevating it till it covered the colonel.

The angry man halted at the sight of the weapon, and even stepped back a few feet.

"Do you mean to shoot me, you young ruffian?" demanded Colonel Sinnerton, aghast at the sight of the revolver, for he believed that such things ought not to be pointed at capitalists like himself, even when their conduct became unendurable.

"Not unless you compel me to do so.

CHAPTER XX.

AN OPPORTUNE ARRIVAL.

COLONEL SINNERTON evidently gave Rowly the credit of being a very resolute young fellow, for he dropped into a chair as though his strength was all gone, and he had lost the battle.

The moment he retreated from his dangerous proximity to him, the young clerk returned the elegant revolver to his hip pocket, which appeared to be the proper place for such a dangerous instrument.

The colonel seemed to be completely overcome, and his chest heaved as though he was suffering physical pain, a shortness of breath, or a violent emotion.

He had been violent enough to bring on an attack of heart complaint, if he was subject to anything of the kind, and his flushed face indicated that he was.

"I hope you are not sick, sir," said the forgiving widow, hastening to his assistance in spite of his bad treatment of her.

"I am better now," he replied.

But he did not seem to be any better, and he was permitted in silence to recover from the effects of his violent passion, which had been so suddenly cooled by the appearance of the pretty weapon.

Rush did not offer to go near his father and kept his eye on Rowly all the time, till the widow went to the assistance of the sufferer.

Then he stole up to the spot where the defender of innocence stood.

"Don't say a word to my father about last night, and I am your friend for life," said he, in an energetic whisper.

"I shall tell him the truth if I tell him anything," replied Rowly.

"Don't tell him anything then. I will give you ten dollars if you will keep still," added Rush, as he slipped a bill of the denomination indicated into his hand.

The rapid young man spoke in a whisper, but he was very earnest in his manner, though he took the bill when Rowly refused to retain it.

Colonel Sinnerton shook and quivered for a time, and then he suddenly recovered his self-possession.

"You are a dangerous character, young man," said he in a mild tone, as he fixed a rather uncertain gaze upon the possessor of the beautiful revolver.

"I think that is a mistake on your part, sir," replied Rowly. "You rush upon me with uplifted arm to strike me down, and because I propose to defend myself from your assaults, you call me a dangerous character. If you will excuse me, sir, I think you are the dangerous character, for you were the first to resort to force."

"I did not draw a deadly weapon upon you," growled the colonel.

"The pistol makes me your equal in power; that is all. You intended to beat me down, but this play-thing brought you to your senses," continued Rowly, as he seated himself near Mrs. Everton.

"You charge my son with stealing these diamonds, if there were any diamonds to steal, of which I have some grave doubts," said the colonel, with the evident intention of opening the subject anew.

"If you will excuse me for contradicting you, I didn't charge your son with stealing the diamonds; on the contrary, I said I had done nothing of the kind," Rowly explained, as gently as he could.

"But Rush's room was searched this morning by detectives," replied the father, beginning to wax indignant again.

"I did think at one time that he took the box containing the diamonds; but I do not think so now."

“What made you think he took the box?” demanded the colonel.

“He was in the house when Captain Ringboom brought the box here; and so far as we know he was the only person who remained in the house after you left. Then, too, he had a strong motive for taking them.”

“What motive?” asked the irate father.

“You have determined to crush Mrs. Everton, and deprive her of her property, because she will not allow her daughter to be insulted by your son. The diamonds came in time to save her, and Rush wanted to get them out of the way, whether he took them or not,” answered Rowly, warmly.

“I intend to collect what is due me at once; but I am not responsible for the non-payment of the note and the interest,” added the colonel, doggedly.

“You are doing all this for revenge because this lady made your son go to another lodging-house.”

“What my motives are is no business of yours, or of this lady either. Though you say you had nothing to do with charging my son with this crime, you know all about it, and I have asked you to tell me what you know.”

“I suppose Captain Ringboom caused the investigation to be made at the room of your son, though I

know nothing at all about it, for I have not seen him to-day."

At this point Rush began to shake his head again and wriggle about like a worm disturbed in his resting-place."

Rowly had carried on his share of the conversation with the colonel, but he was doing a great deal of thinking at the same time.

He had a very distinct purpose in his mind, which was to find Silky, and bring him to justice, for he was not only the chief operator in the attempt to rob the premises of Brillyant & Co., but he was confident that he had stolen the diamonds. The impression of Silky's heel upon the paper in his pocket was abundant evidence that he had been in the room.

But Rowly had come to the conclusion that he had better keep his own counsel, for he was not at all satisfied with the manner of the officers, and not much better pleased with what the energetic captain had done.

As he thought of the matter while he was talking with the colonel, he decided not to say anything about Rush's intimacy with the burglar, for it was safer to be silent than it was to speak at the present stage of the proceedings.

It was not out of regard for Rush, or even to shield him from the reproaches of his father, that he de-

cided not to expose him. The great purpose of the young clerk's being now was to recover the diamonds, for the sake of Hope Everton, if not for her mother.

"Will you tell me what you know of this business, or shall I be obliged to compel you to do so?" demanded the colonel, rising from his chair, and approaching the young man.

"I have told you all I know in regard to your son's connection with the diamonds; and I have nothing more to say, sir," replied Rowly, quite as gently as though the father of Rush had not again worked himself up into a passion.

"Are you ready to move out of this house, madam?" asked Colonel Sinnerton, turning to the frightened landlady in a savage manner.

Mrs. Everton began to weep, for she knew little about the working of the law, and she seemed to think that her landlord could turn her out of her house on the moment.

"Captain Ringboom promised to assist me in this matter, and I expect he will return soon, for he has been gone nearly all day," pleaded the poor widow.

"I don't know anything about Captain Ringboom, and I care less. Pay me my money, or I shall take the house and sell the furniture. If you dare to remove a single article, it will be felony, madam."

Hope threw her arms around her mother's neck and began to weep with her.

“Don’t be alarmed, Mrs. Everton,” said Rowly, placing himself between the landlady and her hard and revengeful creditor. “He cannot harm you or take the house and furniture now, and it will all come out right.”

“What is the row here now?” demanded Captain Ringboom, suddenly rushing into the parlor, for he had a key to the outer door, having taken a room in the house.

He had evidently heard the voice of the colonel while in the hall, and the harsh tones had excited his indignation.

“I am so glad you have come, Captain Ringboom!” exclaimed the landlady, drying her tears.”

The stalwart master mariner walked straight up to the colonel, threw his shoulders back as if to give his big heart room to expand, and looked him full in the face.

“Who are you?” demanded Colonel Sinnerton, somewhat staggered by the bold front of the ship-master.

“I am Captain Israel Ringboom, and you are a mean, miserable, contemptible, overgrown puppy; and if I don’t wring your nose for you, it will be because you improve your manners!” replied the captain.

Then he glanced at Mrs. Everton.

CHAPTER XXI.

A LIST OF THE DIAMONDS.

COLONEL SINNERTON did not like the looks of the stalwart shipmaster, and he retreated a few steps before him, for like all tyrannical and overbearing men, the colonel was a bully and a coward.

“I don't know that I have any business with you, sir,” said he, in a very moderate tone for him.

“I have business with you if you come here to bully and insult a lady,” replied Captain Ringboom, following up the retreating capitalist. “If the door is big enough for you to go out, you had better go!”

“This lady, as you call her——”

“As I call her, you villain! Take that back, or I will shake it out of your worthless carcass!” continued the captain, in a low and determined tone, which had its effect upon the coward.

“This lady owes me a good deal of money; and that is all I want of her,” stammered the colonel in mortal terror.

“ You shall have your money, every penny she owes you ; but if you don't treat her with perfect respect, I will show you what it is to fall into the grip of an honest old sailor.”

Captain Ringboom pulled a plethoric pocket-book from his inside vest pocket, and laid it on the table. Bank bills and papers protruded from the ends of it, and its appearance indicated that the captain had improved the time of his long absence.

“ I have the money to pay both principal and interest of the mortgage note, and the sooner the business is done the sooner will this house be rid of a nuisance that I should throw to the sharks if I had you in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean,” added the captain, as he seated himself at the table and opened the pocket-book.

The sight of the pile of bank bills which the shipmaster placed on the table was almost as overpowering as a blow would have been to the capitalist, for it was revenge rather than money that he sought. He was overmatched and defeated at his own mean game, and he was obliged to give up the contest.

Colonel Sinnerton was sullen and dissatisfied ; but he went to his lawyer's office with the captain, where the mortgage was canceled, and the note and interest paid.

“ I could not find the man I wanted to see, and I

have been running after him nearly the whole day," said Captain Ringboom, when he returned to the house with the papers in his hand, and gave them to the landlady. "No one can molest you or make you afraid now, Mrs. Everton."

"How good you are! I am sure my poor brother would not have done any more for me if he had been here," replied the widow, as she gave her hand to the shipmaster.

"I don't believe he would have been willing to do any more for you than I am, at any rate," replied the captain, retaining the hand in his own, as though he had some stronger motive than friendship for the lady's deceased brother.

"But I owe you all this money in the same manner that I owed it to Colonel Sinnerton, and I shall give you a mortgage on the house at once," added the grateful landlady.

"Never mind that now. If you are willing, I will take a mortgage on you instead of on the house," added the captain, laughing; and Rowly and Hope both wondered what he meant by such a queer expression.

The fair widow blushed and looked on the carpet as though she understood the nature of the security, if the young people did not.

Rush Sinnerton had left the house with his father,

and all present hoped they should not see him again.

“The detectives looked that boy’s room over this morning, but they could not find a thing like a diamond, or the box I left on that table,” said the captain. “I am afraid we shall never see Howell Everton’s diamonds again.”

“I don’t give them up yet,” added Rowly. “I hope you will be able to give a full description of them.”

“I have a full and complete list of them on board of the ship ; but I have been so busy raising this money to pay off that land shark, I have not had time to go for it. But I am going on board now, and the detectives shall have it to-night.”

“I should like a copy of it,” suggested Rowly.

“You? What do you want of a copy?” asked the captain, laughing, for he certainly did not suppose the young clerk could do anything to assist in the recovery of the diamonds. “But you shall have a copy if you will go on board of the ship and make it out yourself.”

“I shall be glad to do that. You know I am a clerk in the largest jewelry establishment in this city and one which does the largest business in diamonds of any house in the country ; and it would be a good thing to have a copy of the list there.”

“That is not a bad idea, my lad,” added the cap-

tain, nodding his head with approval. "Since it appears that Rush Sinnerton did not take the box, we have not the least idea whether it went up into the blue sky, or sank down into the depths of the earth. I can't tell how, when or where it went; and the officers don't seem to be any wiser than I am."

Rowly had a very distinct theory of his own as to the manner in which the gems had taken to themselves wings, but in accordance with his resolution, he kept his own counsel. But he realized that he took upon himself a tremendous responsibility in keeping to himself the item of information he had obtained, though the evidence of the bit of paper in his possession had been treated rather contemptuously both by the captain and by the officers.

Captain Ringboom took the hand of the landlady again, and promised to return to his room in the house as soon as he had been on board of his ship.

"I don't think Rush Sinnerton will trouble you any more," said Rowly, as he walked over to the chair of the beautiful maiden.

"I am sure I hope he will not, for I am positively afraid of him," replied Hope. "What a dear, good man Captain Ringboom is!"

"So he is; and I am sure he feels the loss of the diamonds a great deal more than he would if they had been his own. They would have made you rich

enough to buy a dozen houses like your mother's, Hope ; and if they are found you will be a great lady so rich that you will not look at a poor boy like me," added Rowly, laughing.

" I am sure that all the money in the world could not make me forget so good a friend as you have been to my mother and me," she replied, earnestly. " But the diamonds are gone, and I don't believe we shall ever see them again, so that you need not worry about my friendship."

The captain was ready to leave, and Rowly followed him out of the house ; but they had gone but a few steps before Rush Sinnerton joined them. He had returned to the house as soon as his father started for the train to his home, and had been waiting for Rowly to come out.

" The less you have to do with that young sculpin, the better it will be for you, and the worse it will be for him," said Captain Ringboom, when he saw the rapid young man approaching them from the other side of the street.

" I agree with you, sir ; but I think he has something to say to me, and we will walk along behind you, if you don't object," added Rowly.

" I don't object, but keep your weather eye open, my lad," replied the shipmaster, as Rush came up with them.

“ I should like to see you, Rowly,” said Rush, as the young clerk fell back from his companion.

“ If you want to pick another quarrel with me, I am not the fellow you want to see,” replied Rowly, coldly.

“ I don’t want to quarrel with you ; I want you to be my friend now,” added Rush.

“ You must mend your manners and improve the company you keep before you and I can be friends.”

“ I am very sorry I had any trouble with you, Rowly ; but Hope Everton was so stiff with me that she made me mad. I will not trouble or annoy her again.”

“ That’s very good so far.”

“ And I am very much obliged to you for not saying a word to my father about Gunnywood,” continued Rush, approaching nearer to the subject on his mind.

“ Who is Gunnywood ?” asked Rowly, sharply.

“ He is a friend of mine, and used to come to see me at Mrs. Everton’s house.”

“ Was he there yesterday forenoon ?” Rowly inquired, rather indifferently.

“ No ; he was not ; he told me he was not, though he has a key to the street door,” answered Rush, with apparent frankness.

Rowly opened his eyes wide. A key to the street door !

CHAPTER XXII.

A CANDIDATE FOR CAPTAIN'S CLERK.

Rowly felt that he was getting ahead a little when he discovered that Silky had a key to Mrs. Everton's front door, and the fact did a great deal to assure him that the burglar and the diamond thief were one and the same person.

"Gunnywood used to be a machinist, and when I showed him my key, he made one like it that would fit the lock, just to save the folks the trouble of going to the door, you know," continued Rush, as Rowly looked at him without making any reply.

"Then he used to go up to your room when you were not there?" suggested the young clerk.

"I suppose he did, though he knew what hours I used to be in my room."

"Is Mr. Gunnywood in any kind of business, Rush?"

"He left the place where he had been at work; but he is going to another soon. You heard what he said about the diamonds last night?"

I did, every word of it ; and he seemed to be of the opinion that you took them ; at any rate he said so."

"But I did not take them ; and I know no more about them than you do," protested Rush, earnestly.

"Who do you suppose could have taken them?" asked Rowly, though he knew that it was a superfluous question.

"I haven't the least idea. I left the house, and went off to find another room. I went down and looked at one near Union Square, but it did not suit me. As I was coming up Fourth Avenue, I met Gunnywood coming down."

"Do you happen to know where he was coming from?" asked Rowly, with more interest than he cared to manifest.

"I do happen to know, for he told me. He had a bundle, done up in newspaper, under his arm. He said he had been to the shop where he used to work after a box of fine tools he wanted to use at his room in mending the lock on his trunk."

Rowly asked some questions as to the time Rush had met his friend, with the bundle, and was very sure it was not fifteen minutes after the box had disappeared from the front parlor of Mrs. Everton's house.

He was afraid to ask any very definite questions

in regard to the size of the bundle ; but he was satisfied that it contained the missing diamonds.

“When did you see Gunnywood last, Rush?” he inquired.

“I haven’t seen him since he left his room last night to follow you downstairs. I never see him in the morning, for he never gets up till nearly noon, and I went to the academy ; and I have been busy all day with my father until he took the train.”

“Where do you suppose Gunnywood is now ?” asked Rowly.

“I don’t know, but very likely he is in his room.”

“Do you think I could find him there in an hour or two, for I want to see him?” asked Rowly, as Captain Ringboom stopped, and looked back at him.

“Do you know Gunnywood? What do you want of him?” demanded Rush, who seemed to be suspicious for the first time.

“I don’t know him ; I never saw him in my life till last night.”

“But how happened you to be at the door of his room last night, Rowly?”

“I happened to be there for the same reason that I may be there in an hour or two from now. I want to see him. He is a skillful machinist, and I have invented a machine for cutting the faces of diamonds, and polishing them ; and I believe it will do the work

better than it is done in Amsterdam. It will make me a rich man, and it will do the same for Gunnywood, if he will make the model of the machine, and take half interest in the enterprise. By the way, has he any money to invest, Rush?"

"He always seems to have plenty of money, though I don't know whether he has any to put in such a scheme as yours," replied Rush, who appeared to be satisfied with the explanation.

"Besides, I want to return his revolver to him, for I thought it would be safer in my pocket than in his, after I had tumbled into his room the way I did."

"Why didn't you knock and come in like a Christian?"

"Because I heard him talking with some one, and I knew he had company. I wanted to see him alone, for the particulars of the machine must be a profound secret till we are ready to get a patent on it."

"I am going to take a car here," interposed Captain Ringboom, after he waited some time for his companion to finish his conversation.

"You won't say a word to my father about Gunnywood, will you, Rowly?" said Rush, returning to the business he had with the young clerk.

"I am not likely to see your father again, now that he has no further business with Mrs. Everton,"

replied Rowly evasively. "I will call and see you if I can when I get back."

The captain had stepped on the platform of the car by this time, and Rowly followed him without wasting any compliments on Rush.

He went on board of the ship, and made a copy of the descriptive list of the diamonds; and after the captain had attended to some business, they were ready to return to the shore, for the ship was moored in the bay.

"I am glad to find you, Captain Ringboom," said a gentleman, entering the cabin as they were about to leave it.

"How are you, Captain Wellfleet?" replied Rowly's companion, extending his honest hand to the visitor.

"I have been on board of the Reindeer twice before to-day to see you, and I am lucky to find you the third time," added Captain Wellfleet.

"I have been very busy to-day, and had to go up to Tarrytown to find the man I wanted to see. Can I do anything for you?"

"Perhaps you can, Ringboom," replied the master of the Ganymede, for that was the name of his ship, anchored not far from the Reindeer, as he looked over the captain's young companion with more interest than the circumstances seemed to warrant.

Captain Wellfleet was what might well be called an "ocean swell," for unlike his friend of the Reindeer, he was finely dressed. His garments were of navy blue, cut in the most jaunty of sailor fashions. His shirt was of immaculate whiteness, and a diamond sparkled in the ring that held his black silk necktie, while everything about him was as neat as though he had just stepped out of a locker in his state-room.

The dandy captain continued to look at Rowly for some time, as the latter, unconscious of the scrutiny to which he was subjected was looking over the list of diamonds he had just written out.

"I want a young man of fair education, who writes a good hand and is quick at figures, not exactly a supercargo, but as a captain's clerk, for I find that this voyage to London is going to give me more clerical work than I care to do, and my owners have agreed to furnish me such an assistant as I need," replied Captain Wellfleet, still scanning the features and general appearance of the young clerk.

"You can't walk through Broadway for half an hour without knocking over twenty just such young fellows as you want, Wellfleet," answered Captain Ringboom.

"But I want a confidential clerk, a fellow that I can trust. I shipped a young man to-day that I thought would do; but I don't exactly like the cut of his jib.

He is smart enough, but there is something about his eye that I can't quite take in," added Captain Wellfleet. "You are well acquainted in New York, and perhaps you know of just the young man I want; one who would like to take a voyage and not be gone over sixty days, for the *Ganymede* is a racer, you know."

"I don't think of any one now; but I am going ashore, and I will do what I can to find the person you want. Do you know of any young fellow who wants to have a vacation of *coupa le* of months on the salt water, Rowly?"

"Though I don't think of any one now, I am sure I could find a dozen who would like just such a place at this season of the year," replied Rowly.

"Perhaps the young man I shipped this morning will answer my purpose, and I should like to have you look at him, Ringboom; for everybody says you can tell whether a man is honest or not by the length of his nose," continued the ocean swell, laughing. "He has been to sea, and won't get seasick. That is one thing in his favor. He is a good-looking fellow, and pulls an oar in my gig."

They went on deck where the gig's crew was waiting their captain. The candidate for the position of captain's clerk was pointed out. He had a full black beard, and his face was very brown. Rowly did not

recognize him, though something in his appearance startled the young clerk, and assured him that he had seen the man before.

The black-bearded candidate for the place of captain's clerk was looking at a passing steamer very intently, and he did not notice the trio that came out of the cabin of the Reindeer. Rowly could not have told why he did it, but he stepped behind the mizzen mast, so that the candidate could not see him; and perhaps it was merely instinct which told him that he had business with him.

Captain Wellfleet said something to the young man, and while he was talking with him, Captain Ringboom looked him over, and studied the expression on his face. The young clerk did the same, though without the knowledge of the subject of his scrutiny, for his examiner kept him busy.

Rowly was very sure that he had seen that face before, and he cudgelled his brains to determine when and where. The black beard and the brown face were unfamiliar to him; but the expression was like that of one whom he had often seen.

When the two captains had completed their examination, they returned to the cabin, though not till the master of the Ganymede had ordered his boat's crew to take their places in the boat. Rowly followed them, though the features and expression of the gig's

man were indelibly fixed in his mind, so that he could not help seeing them if he tried.

“What do you think of him, Ringboom?” asked Captain Wellfleet.

“I wouldn’t trust him with a quarter at the bottom of a barrel of water,” replied Mrs. Everton’s friend, promptly and decidedly.

“That is just my own impression of him, and your opinion confirms my own,” replied the swell captain. “There is something about his eye that means mischief.”

“He may be a good hand before the mast, but I should not want him in the cabin with me,” added Captain Ringboom. “When do you sail, Wellfleet?”

“On the ebb to-morrow; but I must find the clerk I want before that time.”

Rowly promised to do the best he could to find a candidate for the waiting position, and he was requested to send him to the counting-room of the owner by ten the next day.

Captain Ringboom and his young companion followed the master of the *Ganymede* to the gangway.

“That young fellow wants leave of absence till noon to-morrow,” said Captain Wellfleet, as he was about to descend the accommodation steps. “As he doesn’t seem to drink at all, and wants to go up to some place on the Hudson to see his mother, I

have granted his request, for I like to see a young man look out for his mother. It is a good sign, though I don't like the looks of Gibbs any better than you do."

Rowly had his doubts about Gibbs, whose name had just been mentioned for the first time.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TRACKING MR. GIBBS.

CAPTAIN RINGBOOM and Rowly stood by the gangway while Captain Wellfleet stepped down from the Reindeer's deck to the boat which was waiting to take him to his own vessel.

The gig pulled away, and Rowly left the ship with Captain Ringboom, though they parted as soon as they reached the shore, for the shipmaster wished to call upon his owners.

The young clerk had not removed his gaze from the Ganymede since he left the Reindeer, though from an instinct of prudence rather than any defined reason, he had not permitted Gibbs to see his face.

He stood upon the wharf watching the ship, though he could not help wondering why he did so, for he had not been able to connect the black-bearded sailor with his mission.

He had not waited more than half an hour before

a boat containing, two men put off from the ship, and one of the men in it landed on the next pier.

Rowly rushed to the street, and to the head of the next pier, where he soon saw Gibbs make his appearance, and as he had entirely changed his clothes, he felt that no one was likely to know him.

The sailor did not even look at him, and seemed to be intent on his own affairs.

Rowly followed him; and when he found that Gibbs was conducting him to the house in which both Silky and Rush had rooms, the mystery began to look thinner to him, and Gibbs, Silky and Gunnywood, like a composite photograph, looked as though they were to materialize in one and the same person.

With the information obtained when the sailor turned into the street in which the lodging-house was located, the whole truth was forced to the depth of his mind.

The expression he had recognized, while the features, mostly covered with a long beard, and browned with ocher instead of a southern sun, was that of the chief of the two burglars, one of whom was already behind the bars.

So suddenly did the truth flash upon him at last, that he halted in the street, and gazed with wonder at the retreating form of the man he was "shadowing."

The height and stature of the man were identical with those of Silky, though the loose sailor's garb made him look a little stouter ; and no other man in the world could have had just that expression on his face.

What were the burglar's intentions, a hint of which had come to him by an accident that was almost miraculous ?

It appeared that he had shipped in a vessel bound to London, as though it were no longer prudent for him to remain in New York, or to reach his destination by any of the steamers bound to England.

His fellow sinner had been caught, and the city was getting too hot for him ; and Rowly thought he was not far out of the way in his calculations in respect to his own safety.

But Rowly did not lose sight of his man in his reflections, and in the darkness which was gathering over the great city ; and he realized that Silky was acting with extreme caution in approaching the house in which his room was located.

He stopped several times, looked up and down the street, and seemed to scan every person in sight.

At last he entered the house, and his shadow halted in front of it to consider what he should do next.

The disguise which Silky wore suggested an idea to Rowly, which he adopted on the instant, and he

hastened up the street to his own home, thinking with all his might all the way.

A society to which Rowly belonged had amused its members by engaging in private theatricals, and had done the leading part in the "The Jolly Brigands."

In a long haired, curly black wig, a fierce mustache of the same hue, and an olive complexion, his own mother had not recognized him, though he wore an English dress.

The costume was still in his chamber, and in less than half an hour he was again the chief of the "Jolly Brigands," though in the absence of the Spanish garb he looked more like the proprietor of a cigar store.

His mother was not at home, but he left a note for her, saying that he could not tell when he should return.

On the stairs he met two men who lived in the house, but neither seemed to have any suspicion who he was, and in the street those who knew him well took no notice of him.

He had come to the conclusion that Silky would be employed for some time in making his preparations to leave the country the next day, and he was confident he should find him in his chamber.

When he tried the front door of the house he found

it was locked, but he rang the bell as confidently as though he had been on an ordinary errand.

"I think Mr. Gunnywood is in his room, for I just met a sailor going up to see him," replied the landlady, in answer to his inquiry. "I don't see how he got in, and I just locked the door. You can go up if you know where his room is."

"I sell him cigars, and I know where his room is," replied Rowly, giving a foreign accent to his tones.

He ascended to the proper floor, and heard voices in Silky's room, which were those of the burglar and Rush Sinnerton, the door of whose chamber was open, and he entered it.

He had hardly crossed the threshold before he heard the door of Silky's room open, and feeling that he was in peril, he instantly crawled under the bed.

Silky and Rush came into the room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE EMPTY BOX UNDER THE BED.

THE floor of Rush Sinnerton's room was carpeted, so that Rowly had no difficulty in getting a position next to the wall without making any noise. As he was working himself into this place, he put one of his hands on something that felt like a wooden box; but he only pushed it out of his way, and made sure that he concealed himself as well as he could.

The side of the bed, as well as one end, was close against the wall; and when Rowly found himself well placed, the wooden box was within reach of his hand.

There was light enough under the bed for him to see that it was made of ordinary boards, though it was not more than eight inches square. The cover had been removed from it, and was partly in the box. Whatever it had contained had been removed, and there was nothing to give any clew to the use to which it had been applied.

But anything in the shape of a box, especially in this locality, was of interest to Rowly, for the casket of diamonds had been inclosed in one. He had seen it on the table of Mrs. Everton's front parlor; and, to the best of his knowledge and belief, this box was just the same size. He proceeded to examine it as well as he could in the dim light, with the aid of his fingers.

Silky and Rush were talking of matters in which he took no interest, though neither of them was very free of speech. It appeared that the capitalist's son had merely asked his friend to come to his room for a cigar.

Rowly felt the boards, and felt the nails in the box, the latter of which were peculiar in their make, as he remembered that those in the case at Mrs. Everton's had been.

The size and the nails gave him a reasonable assurance that this box had contained the casket of diamonds; and it was significant that he had found it under Rush's bed.

"I have been looking for you, Gunnywood," said Rush, after both of them had talked for a while about matters that plainly did not interest either of them.

"What did you want of me?" asked Silky, indifferently.

"Do you remember that fellow who was here last

night, who was listening at the door?" asked Rush, coming nearer to what was in his mind.

"Of course I do; and I would give something worth having to get hold of him."

"You damaged me more than you knew by joking about the lost diamonds."

"I didn't joke about them," replied Silky, in a very serious tone.

"Yes, you did. Didn't you let on and talk just as though I had stolen the box, and didn't Rowly Parkway hear every word you said?" demanded Rush, earnestly, and with a little indignation in his tones, as though this was the subject on which he wished to talk with his friend.

"I didn't know that fellow was hearing me, but I wasn't joking," added Silky, seriously. "I don't see that any one but you could have taken the box, for you say you stayed at the house after your father left."

"That's too bad, Gunnywood!" exclaimed Rush, very much grieved, as well as indignant, at the words of his companion. "If you know anything about the robbery, you know that I did not take them; and I wouldn't do such a thing."

"That's all very well, Rush," replied Silky, in sneering tones. "Of course I expect you to deny

it, though I don't see why you should do so to me, for I will not squeal on you."

"What makes you think that I took the box of diamonds?" asked Rush, who was inclined to argue the point when he found that simple denials accomplished nothing.

"Last night I believed you and your father were the only ones that had any interest in doing so, and for that reason that you took them, whether your father told you to do so or not."

"My father did not tell me to do so."

"Then you took them without his knowledge."

"You wrong me, Gunnywood!"

"Nonsense! Nothing of the kind! You brought the box here, and you were a simpleton that you didn't burn it after you had taken the casket out of it. Now, I want to make a trade with you, Rush. You are a good fellow, though you are stupid in a business matter like this one."

"I don't know anything about the box or the diamonds," protested Rush, with more vehemence than he had used before.

"Keep it up if you think best; but I have been looking into this matter in my own interest, since you are such a fool as to deny everything to me," said Silky, quietly. "To make a short story of it, I am going to London and Paris, and if you will make a

reasonable division with me, I will take you with me, sell the gems there and elsewhere, and we can live like a pair of lords till we have our fill of the good things of this life."

"That is all very nice ; but I haven't the box——"

"It is under your bed at this moment," interposed Silky, in his assumed quiet way.

"Under my bed !" exclaimed Rush.

"That is what I said ;" and Rowly heard him rise from his chair and move towards the bed.

The shadow thought this was rather a dangerous movement for him, and he took the precaution to shove the box as near as he could to the front of the bed.

"I told you that I had been looking into this matter in my own interest," continued Silky, pausing long enough to enable Rowly to secure his position next to the wall.

"I don't understand you at all, Gunnywood, and I am sure there is no box here," added Rush.

Silky dropped on one knee and raised the overhanging coverlet so that he could see the box in the convenient place where Rowly had put it. Reaching under the bed, he drew forth the box, without any suspicion of the presence of the "Chief of the Jolly Brigands."

“What do you call this, Rush?” demanded Silky, as he produced the box.

“I don’t know anything about it,” replied Rush. “I never saw it before, and did not know that it was there.”

“Then you intend to keep up the farce in spite of the overwhelming evidence against you, do you?” asked Silky, who was, or pretended to be, disgusted at the conduct of his friend.

“I speak the truth when I say that I never saw that box before,” protested Rush, and the “brigand” under the bed believed what he said.

“Were you not in the front parlor of Mrs. Everton’s house when the box was put on the table?” demanded Silky, raising his voice in the heat of the argument.

“I saw that box on the table; but I mean that I have not seen the box since I saw it then,” Rush explained; and he seemed to be not a little cast down by the evidence.

“Here is the box, and this bit of board is the cover of it; and I find on it the name of Captain Israel Ringboom, ship Reindeer. Is that the name of the captain that called on Mrs. Everton?”

“That was his name,” answered Rush.

A brief silence followed, during which Rowly judged that Rush was examining the box, and per-

haps wondering how it came under his bed, though probably the brigand was better able than he to explain its presence there.

At the same time Rowly had an opportunity to do a little thinking ; and all that he had heard confirmed the evidence he had derived from the paper with the imprint of the burglar's heel upon it.

He felt that he had made real progress in the investigation, and, if he had been in a favorable position for a demonstration, he would have been inclined to crow over the measure of success that he had won.

"Then it is the identical box in which the diamonds were carried to Mrs. Everton's house!" exclaimed Silky, in a tone of pretended triumph, as though he had unearthed the iniquity of his friend.

"It certainly looks like it," added Rush, apparently overwhelmed by the evidence against him.

"It is just as clear as the ears on a jackass. This is the box, and it was found in your room, Rush."

"That is all very true, but I know no more about the diamonds than you do," added Rush.

"You can trust me ; I will not squeal on you," protested Silky.

Rowly wondered what the burglar was driving at.

CHAPTER XXV.

A VISIT TO A GRANDMOTHER.

WITHOUT heeding Rush Sinnerton's denials of all knowledge of the diamonds, Silky spent some time in explaining his plan of going to Europe, where the gems were to be sold.

Rowly was convinced that he intended to go in the *Ganymede* as a sailor before the mast; and he had evidently chosen this method of transporting the treasure to the other side of the Atlantic because it was safer than taking passage in a steamer.

But he could not even conjecture why the burglar wished to take Rush with him, for he could certainly be of no use to him, and must be a burden, especially if he was to receive a share of the proceeds of the diamonds when they were sold.

"I should like to go with you very much," said Rush, whose imagination seemed to be excited by the pleasant picture of life in Paris, Baden Baden, and Homburg, which Silky elaborated to him. "But

if you still believe I have the casket of diamonds, you may search my room, and I will help you as well as I know how."

"I will take the risk of your producing the diamonds as soon as we need them," replied Silky, lightly. "I haven't even suggested that you keep them in this room, for that would be almost as stupid as leaving the box here under your bed. Of course you would not keep them here, and I suppose you have a drawer in some safe deposit company's vaults."

"I haven't the diamonds here or anywhere else," added Rush, with something like resignation in his tones.

"That is getting a little monotonous, and you needn't say it any more. I will take the chances of your trotting them out when we are ready for them," continued Silky, as glibly as ever. "Now how shall we divide them? The papers say they were worth two hundred thousand dollars, and you made a good haul, Rush. If I had done that I should say I had done a big stroke of business."

"I should say you had," replied Rush, in a sickly tone.

"But I am to have all the risk and trouble of disposing of the gems, and of getting them and you to the other side of the ocean. I should say that three fourths of the value of them ought to belong to me."

“Divide them as you like,” added Rush, with proper resignation.

“That’s a good fellow, and I knew you would not be unreasonable,” said Silky.

“But when do we start for the other side?”

“To-morrow, my dear fellow ; but we don’t go in a steamer, and both of us will have to work our passage across the Atlantic.”

“But I am no sailor ; I don’t know anything more about a ship than I do about the Cherokee language.”

“I do, for I was in the navy three years. I have already shipped and signed the articles on board of the *Ganymede*, bound to London. The captain is a sea dandy, and his ship is fitted up like a crack yacht, and the ocean swell in command wants a young fellow to act as captain’s clerk, and you are just the one he wants. I shall be before the mast, but you will be in the cabin, and you can stow away the diamonds in a safe place.”

“If I have them I can,” added Rush, very mildly.

“You will have them by the time you get on board of the *Ganymede*. But you must look out for this place to-night, or some other fellow not half as handsome as you are will get it.”

“All right ; I will do that ; but I will not warrant that the diamonds will be forthcoming when you want them.”

"I will warrant that they shall be forthcoming when I want them, which will not be till we get to London."

"If you are satisfied, I shall not complain now or when we get to London."

"I am satisfied now, and I shall be then," answered Silky; and Rowly had reason to believe he spoke the truth.

It was not even yet evident for what purpose Rush was taken into the scheme, unless it was to have the diamonds in the cabin rather than in the forecabin of the *Ganymede*.

"But there is a little difficulty in the way," continued Silky after a pause of some length. "The diamonds are sure to bring us a big pile of money, not less than two hundred thousand dollars, and perhaps more."

Rowly thought that Silky spoke like a man that knew what he was talking about, and it was plain that he had examined the gems as an expert in their value.

"I don't see any difficulty in that. If they bring in the money, that is all we want," suggested Rush.

"But we may not be able to sell them at once, and in case of any suspicion, we may not care to

sell them for a few months or a year—till the excitement about them has died out.”

“We can’t live on air.”

“That’s the truest word you ever spoke, Rush. I expected to get a pile of money from my grandmother last night when I went to see her; but the old lady was in a bad humor, and would not do a thing for me.”

“I didn’t know you had a grandmother,” said Rush, when his companion paused, perhaps thinking of the events of the preceding night.

“I have, and her name is Fortune.”

“Is she an old maid?”

“Hardly, for old maids are not usually grandmothers.”

“Not Miss Fortune then?”

“No; Mrs. Fortune. But I have another grandmother, and I’m going to see her to-night.”

“You have a good supply of grandmothers.”

“I have four more besides the two I have mentioned, and they are all rich, or I should not go to see them.”

“Four more!” ejaculated Rush.

“Never mind now about it; I will explain another time how I happen to have so many of them, for we must talk business now,” replied Silky in a hurried tone. “You must go with me to-night to see this

particular grandmother, and we must make her hand over at least twenty thousand dollars, which will keep us a couple of years if we don't sell the diamonds. You shall have one fourth of whatever we get, if you do as I tell you."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE STATEROOM OF THE CAPTAIN'S CLERK.

ROWLY listened with considerable interest and curiosity to Silky's curious references to his numerous grandmothers, and to his offer to give Rush Sinnerton one fourth of all that he could obtain from one of these mysterious personages.

"That's liberal, and I will do just as you tell me," replied Rush.

"All right ; then come into my room then, and we will go on board of the *Ganymede* at once," added Silky, as he led the way out of the room.

Rowly waited till he heard the door of the adjoining chamber closed, and then he crawled out of his hiding-place.

The first thing he saw was the box which had served the burglar as evidence, lying on the floor where it had been dropped. The shadow picked it up, and crept out of the room like a cat.

In his former visit he had learned something about the house, and he passed up the stairs to the floor above, where he found the door of a hall chamber open, and he entered it.

The window looking down into the street was open and Rowly saw that it was nearly deserted.

After watching a favorable moment, he threw the box out of the window, satisfied that it was so strongly made that it would not break, and he could recover it at his own pleasure.

Returning to the staircase, he descended to the floor below, keeping out of sight all the time, though he had to wait but a few minutes before Silky and Rush came out, dressed for the street.

The visit to the ship was to be made, and Rowly followed the precious couple down the stairs, and into the street. He was so sure that neither of them would recognize him that he took no pains to conceal himself.

He knew just where they were going, and he decided to reach their destination before they did; and this he accomplished by means of the elevated railroad, while Silky and Rush, for reasons of their own, chose to walk. Before they reached the pier, he had hired a boat, and stood with one of the oars in his hand waiting for them when they arrived.

“Want a boat, gentlemen?” he asked as confi-

dently as though he had been in the boating business all his life.

They did want a boat, for they could not reach the Ganymede without one, and they engaged the Chief of the Jolly Brigands at his own price, and without asking any questions.

“We want to go to the ship Ganymede; do you know where to find her?” asked Silky, looking out into the bay rather than at the boatman.

“I know just where she is,” replied Rowly as he bent to his oars. “I have been on board of the Reindeer to-day, and the Ganymede is anchored near her.”

Rush Sinnerton seemed to be very nervous, and twisted about in his seat in the stern sheets as though the silence had given him his first opportunity to consider the step he was taking. But he was not allowed a long time for reflection, for the boat soon came alongside of the ship, and the two passengers went on deck.

It was rather a late hour to make a call; but the “ocean swell” was planking the deck, smoking his cigar, and seemed to be in a very happy frame of mind. Rowly was too much interested in the proceedings to remain in the boat, and he went on board, placing himself where he could hear all that passed between his passengers and the captain.

“I beg your pardon for disturbing you, Captain

Wellfleet," Silky began very politely. He did not appear in his sailor rig and beard, and it was quite impossible for the shipmaster to recognize him.

"What is your business with me?" demanded Captain Wellfleet, in a tone which indicated that he did not care to be disturbed in his evening meditations.

"I heard that you wanted to engage a captain's clerk, sir; and I have brought off a young man that would like to obtain the position," answered Silky.

"Where did you hear that?" asked the captain.

"I heard a gentleman that looked like a sea captain say so; I don't know his name."

"Was it Ringboom?"

"Yes, sir; that was his name," interposed Rush.

"I heard the man he was talking to call him so."

"Then Captain Ringboom did not send you to me, did he?"

"No, sir; he did not; and I came on board to-night so as to make sure of the place, if you think my friend will do," replied Silky, promptly, for he did not care to have Rush do any of the talking.

But Rush had to do the whole of it for some time then, for Captain Wellfleet proceeded to question him in regard to his qualifications for the place of captain's clerk.

The son of the capitalist had been well educated, and even had a smattering of French, which he could

talk with no little fluency, to a person who did **not** understand the language. The ocean swell appeared to be satisfied with the oral examination of the candidate, and then asked him into the cabin for a more practical inquiry into his ability to fill the place.

If Rowly was modest and retiring under ordinary circumstances, he permitted the side of his face to swell out on the present occasion, and boldly followed the trio into the cabin. Rush was directed to a seat at the table, on which were pen, ink, and paper, with which the captain told him to make out a written application for the position he wanted.

The candidate wrote the paper without any hesitation, and did it in a very creditable manner, for he was skilled in penmanship and composition. Captain Wellfleet so far descended from his lofty position as to praise the effort of the young man; and then gave him a column of figures to add, which was done almost in the twinkling of an eye. Examples in percentage, interest, mensuration, and book-keeping were given him, and he acquitted himself with great credit, as he ought to have done, with all the care which had been bestowed upon his education.

"You will do, youngster," said the captain, indicating that the examination was finished. "Your name is Robert Saunders?" he added, referring to the written application on the table.

“Yes, sir ; that is my name.”

“Who is your father, Robert?”

“I have no father ; my mother is still a widow, and lives at Albany. She has an income of twelve hundred dollars a year. My health is not very good, and the doctor said I had better take a sea voyage. I have some letters from my mother ; but I left them in my room. If you wish to see them, I will bring them down in the morning.”

“You will be likely to bring them when you come on board, and I will look at them then. You may go now,” replied the captain.

“I beg your pardon, Captain Wellfleet, but Mrs. Saunders wished me to see how her son was situated,” Silky interposed. “If you will be kind enough to tell me where Bob is to sleep, I shall be able to set her mind at rest on that point.”

The captain, in reply to this question, led Silky to a kind of vestibule at the entrance of the cabin, on each side of which was a door. Opening the one on the port side, he said that it was the doctor’s room when they carried passengers, but Robert would occupy it in the coming voyage.

The captain then called Bings, the cabin steward, and told him to light the lamp in the room ; and then he resumed his walk and his meditations on deck. The lamp, which swung on gimbals, was lighted, and

Silky took a deep interest in the stateroom, apparently in order that he might give the widowed mother of his charge full particulars in regard to her son's new home on the sea.

Rowly was quite as much interested as the burglar and his dupe, but he stood at the door whistling, manifesting none of the interest he felt in the examination.

Silky looked into every corner and crevice in the room with as much care as though he was going to occupy the room himself. In the corner of the little apartment was a washbowl, set in a stand, with a door under it, which he investigated with the utmost care. He opened the door under it, and found that the bowl rested on a shelf not more than half as wide as the depth of the washstand. There was, therefore, considerable space on each side of the bowl, which could only be reached from the back side of the closet.

"I mus' sharge you for anoder hour, you keep me here mush long," said Rowly in his mongrel dialect, and in an impatient manner.

"I will pay you for another hour ; but we are going in a few minutes," replied Silky. "Go to the gangway, and get your boat ready."

The burglar turned his attention away from the washstand, and began to examine other parts of the

room. Rowly left the door and his whistle, and went out on deck, as the burglar told his companion to go forward and take a look at the ship. The young clerk did not go far, however ; in fact, he only stepped around the corner of the poop, and placed himself at the window of Rush's stateroom.

Rogues are very apt to make some mistake in their operations, and Silky neglected to draw the curtain of the window ; and without being seen himself in the darkness on deck, Rowly could observe all that was done inside of the little apartment.

The first thing the burglar did after he had closed the door of the room was to unbutton his frock coat ; and the shadow saw for the first time that he seemed to be very protuberant on the chest.

The opening of the coat showed that he had several small packages secured inside of his coat, which he took one at a time from their place and put them on the washstand. Then he dropped on the floor, and, drawing his head and shoulders into the closet under the bowl, he proceeded to place the packages on the shelf above him, crowding them in as far as he could reach.

This was the work of only a couple of minutes after he had arranged his plan ; and he was satisfied, when he had finished, that no one, not even Rush Sinnerton, knew where he had deposited the packages.

Rowly had no doubt that these parcels contained the handsome fortune of the Diamond Heiress. They were on board of a ship which was to sail for London the next day ; and there was not the slightest probability that anyone, either by accident or design, would discover the hiding-place of the treasure. Rowly was so well satisfied that the diamonds would be safe where the burglar had put them that he did not even think of taking them away that night, for he felt that he was powerless to do anything.

When Rush returned to the cabin door, Silky was ready to go ashore, and so was Rowly. Nothing was said on the trip to the pier, for Silky believed that he was very discreet. The shadow followed them in the city for two hours, till they halted before a large house up town.

“ One of my six grandmothers lives here,” said Silky.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LADY ON THE WATCH.

THERE was some myth about Silky's six grandmothers which Rush could not comprehend, unless the father or mother of his friend had been married five times, and all the grandmothers were still living.

But he regarded the half dozen ancient ladies as a mere pleasantry, which it was useless to attempt to explain.

"How much money do you expect to obtain of this grandmother?" asked Rush, loud enough to be heard by Rowly, who had crawled behind a lofty flight of front steps.

"I told her I must have twenty thousand dollars at least; and she said she would have it ready to give me to-night," replied Silky, as seriously as though he had been telling the truth.

Then she is willing to give you the money, is she?"

"Of course she made some fuss about it, but she came to terms in the end."

"What is her name?" asked Rush.

"You will see it on the front door when we go in. On the whole, I think I shall go in the back way, for she will not open the door for me at this time of night," replied Silky, as he started across the street, followed by his companion.

If Rush was deceived in regard to the intentions of Silky, Rowly was not; and he waited till he saw the precious couple enter an archway, which appeared to lead to the rear entrance of the two adjoining houses. Then he crossed the street some distance above the house; and as it was eleven o'clock by this time, there was hardly a person in the streets off the main avenues.

Removing the full beard he wore in the character of the "Chief of the Jolly Brigands," Rowly put it in the pocket of his coat, which he took off, and slung on his arm.

This change in his appearance made, he suddenly became more jolly than ever; and it took the entire sidewalk for his zigzag walk down the street again.

At the archway where the burglar had led in his companion, he halted and listened for a moment, and then followed them, resuming his drunken hilarity.

The moment his voice sounded in the archway, Silky made his appearance, and demanded what he meant by disturbing honest people at that time of the night.

"I ton't tisturb no honest peoples," replied the tippler, with a laugh; and yet there was truth in his speech.

"What do you want, anyway?" growled Silky, who was in no humor to be disturbed by a brawler.

"I ton't see nobodies in der street, as I see two men come in dis place. I gets mixed up mit der beer, and I ton't can't find wot was de road. I goes mit der place wot dey calls Broadway," said Rowly, struggling heavily with his speech.

"Show him the way to Broadway, Bob," remarked Silky, testily.

Rowly had learned all he wanted to know, for Silky had already opened a door which led to the back area of the house on the left of the passage, and he took kindly to the directions which Rush gave him; and the burglar's assistant hastened back to join his principal.

The shadow did not go far on the way indicated, but returned, ascending the front steps till he could read the name of "Morgan Dykes" on the door plate. By the light of a street lamp he wrote the name and number of the house on a piece of paper;

and at the corner of the block, he paused to think what he should do next.

He did not consider himself competent to secure the arrest of the burglar himself, in spite of the self-confidence he had manifested so far in his operations. The proper thing for him to do was to go to the nearest precinct office, and inform the police what was going on in the house of Mr. Morgan Dykes ; but the officers had been so reluctant to believe him before that he was not very willing to proceed in this manner.

Besides, this would subject Rush Sinnerton to the same treatment and penalty as the accomplished rogue whose lead he was following without knowing it ; and he thought this would be a very great injustice. If he were found in the house with Silky, he could hardly plead that he was innocent ; and even the wealth and influence of his father might be powerless to save him.

Doubtless it was entirely wrong for Rowly Parkway to think of such a thing as correcting then the working of the law ; but though Rush was not his friend, he was perfectly willing to have justice done to him.

Fortunately or unfortunately for him, circumstances prevented him from settling this important question

even in his own mind, for just then the movements of a lady attracted his attention.

But he had got far enough to conclude that, whatever he did or left undone, he would know on the following day just where to look for the burglar and the plunder, if any was obtained in the house of Morgan Dykes, and he could put his hand on both when the occasion should require. More than this, he had made up his mind that Rush Sinnerton, who was really innocent of any crime, badly as he had behaved in relation to Hope Everton, should not be found on board of the *Ganymede* when Silky was taken from her.

The lady who had excited the interest of Rowly was on the other side of the street, and had paused opposite the house at which the burglar had entered. She seemed to be nervous and uneasy, and walked up and down the street for a short distance, with her gaze always fixed upon Mr. Dykes's mansion, as though she expected some friend to come out of it.

Rowly forgot all about the great moral question which had engaged his attention, for the woman was well dressed, and so far as her movements could indicate she was a lady. The shadow crossed the street, and decided to meet her if she did not run away from him; and he started at a brisk pace as

soon as she was headed in the same direction as he was going.

He walked as rapidly as he could, and soon overtook her, just under a street light, which enabled him to see her face, which he was very anxious to do, for he had already formed a theory in his mind in regard to her identity. He slackened his pace when he came up with the lady, and this caused her to look at him, though she did not act as though she was at all frightened.

His theory was correct ; the lady was the one who had visited the store and had taken Mr. Amlock out of the way, and for whom the police were on the lookout. Her height, form and movements, with the fact that she was observing the house which Silky was engaged in entering at that moment, suggested the idea that it was "Miss Van Zandt," and he had proved it to his own satisfaction.

He passed the lady without saying anything, and without bestowing a second glance upon her ; but he did not go beyond the next corner. Then he saw that she turned about and was retracing her steps up the street.

The volunteer shadow had no intention of losing sight of the woman, for she was as much one of the burglars as though she had applied her fair hands to the brace with which the drill had been turned in the

door of the safe. But what was she doing here? Why was she watching that house in which the robbery was in progress? Had she a grandmother there? The question suggested answers, whether they were correct or not.

She had no interest in Silky, except as the "pal" of her husband. She had no part to play in the robbery, as on the preceding night; and it looked to Rowly as though she was there as an inquirer rather than an actor.

Her husband had been arrested that day; but it was possible that she did not know of the misfortune that had befallen him, and that looked like a reasonable explanation of her conduct in the street. This was only the shadow's theory; but her presence in the vicinity of Mr. Morgan Dykes's house, and her close scrutiny of the mansion, proved that she knew this particular crib was to be cracked at this particular time. She evidently believed that her husband was engaged in the robbery, and she was waiting for him to come out of the house; and as she was short of money, very likely she expected a full supply from the proceeds of the work.

Rowly decided to speak to the lady, and get her out of the way.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN INTERVIEW IN THE STREET.

At the time of the arrest of Blooks, or Kidd Ashbank, the officers had refused to allow him to write, or even send a message to his wife ; and it was therefore probable that she had not heard of the capture of her husband.

Her connection with the attempted robbery of Brilyant & Co. rendered it necessary that she should keep out of the way, and she might even have her residence out of the city.

It was plain that the robbery of the house on the other side of the street had been planned between the confederates at some previous period, and that the date of its commission had been arranged ; and it was clear enough that Mrs. Ashbank knew all about it.

Rowly was satisfied that she would wait till the robbers came out of the house, and he feared that she would derange all his plans ; and as soon as he

saw her start on her return up the street he followed her at a brisk pace.

As soon as she heard his step behind her, she quickened her pace, and did not seem to be willing that he should come up with her. But as she approached the avenue which bounded the end of the block, she reduced her speed, and seemed to desire to let him pass her.

Rowly was not inclined to do this, and "slowed down." This action on his part seemed to trouble and perplex her, and in a short time she halted and planted herself on the curbstone of the sidewalk, as though she intended to pass the night there.

The shadow did the same thing not more than a couple of rods from her; and this appeared to satisfy her that the stranger was directing his movements in accordance with hers.

Rowly was willing to believe, from her associations, that she was a bold and daring woman, and he had heard an officer say that she was a faithful wife, wholly devoted to her husband.

He had put on his coat and resumed his heavy beard, for the lady had seen him in the store, and might recognize him as the one who had defeated the attempt to rob the jewelry store.

She stood there like one statue, and Rowly like another, both of them looking at the buildings on

the other side of the street, and neither willing to bestow any noticeable attention on the other. But the impatience of the lady did not permit her to retain her position more than five minutes, and then she began to move slowly towards her tormentor.

The shadow was in doubt for a couple of minutes, till the woman had come within six feet of him ; and then, believing that she had pluck enough even to attack him in the street, he decided to "take the bull by the horns."

"Good-evening, Mrs. Ashbank," said he, in the blandest tones he could command.

He observed the start which this salutation produced upon her, for he had fixed his gaze upon her in readiness to repel any possible attack upon for him he suspected that a woman of her desperate fortunes did not go unarmed about the streets at this hour of the night.

"Do you know me, sir?" she demanded, rather sharply.

"I have seen you in a street car, and I was told that you were the wife of Mr. Ashbank," replied Rowly at a venture.

"Then you know my husband?" she asked.

"I have seen him, but I have no personal acquaintance with him."

"May I ask why you are devoting so much of

your attention to me, sir?" she inquired, with something like severity in her manner. "You followed me down the street, and then up the street, stopping when I did."

"You were alone and unprotected, and I have kept near you in order to render you any assistance in case you needed it, for ladies are not entirely safe in this part of the city at this hour."

"You are very kind, sir, and I am under obligations to you. Possibly you are aware that my husband has rooms in that house on the other side of the street? Our rooms are on the third floor."

"I was not aware of it. Which house is it?"

The lady indicated the one on the front door of which was the name of Mr. Morgan Dykes, which had the appearance of being one of those old residences which the owner still retained as his home in spite of the advance of business and the altered character of the locality.

"My husband and I have been to a concert this evening, and he stopped in the avenue for a few minutes to see a sick friend, leaving me to go the rest of the way home alone," continued Mrs. Ashbank, as plausibly as though she was telling the simple truth.

"Does the sick friend live far from here?" asked Rowly.

"About five blocks down the avenue. I found I

had left my night key in the house when I got here, and it was too far for me to return to my husband," she added.

"With your permission, I will go over and ring the bell of the house," suggested Rowly.

"By no means! I would remain here all night rather than disturb the people of the house, for they are very peculiar," protested the lady, with a good deal of energy.

"Probably Mr. Ashbank has found his friend much worse than he expected, or he would not leave his wife in the street all this time," continued Rowly.

"He must be here very soon. I am not at all afraid, and I need not trouble you to remain with me any longer; though I am very much obliged to you for your kind intentions," said Mrs. Ashbank.

"Oh, it will be a very great pleasure for me to stay till Mr. Ashbank comes," persisted Rowly. "I could not think of leaving a respectable lady alone in the street at this hour."

"I really do not need your services, and for reasons of my own, I prefer that you should leave," said the lady, in a decided tone, which seemed to make it necessary to close the interview.

"As you please, Mrs. Ashbank; but before I go, I will look into that arch adjoining the house, and see if I can discover any way to get into the house," added Rowly, starting to cross the street.

"I beg you will do nothing of the kind," called the lady.

But Rowly gave no heed to her, and quickening his pace to a run, he entered the arch, taking off his beard and wig as he did so.

He was confident that Silky was too expert an operator to take Rush Sinnerton into the house with him; and as he expected he found him in the back yard, where he had doubtless been posted as a sentinel to warn his principal of the approach of any one who might interfere with his job.

"Who are you?" demanded Rush, retreating from him, as if to give the warning required of him.

"I am Rowly Parkway," replied the shadow taking him by the collar of his coat. "If you make a sound, it will be all up with you! You do not know what you are here for, but I do. Come with me!"

Rowly talked and acted in the imperative mood, and by this time Rush knew him well enough not to offer any serious opposition.

"I can't leave; my friend is making a call here," he replied, as Rush dragged him from the back yard.

"Your friend is committing a robbery here! If you stay you will spend the next ten years in prison at Sing Sing," added Rowly, impressively.

Rush offered no further objection to going with him, and the shadow relaxed his hold upon him; and

before he reached the street, he halted in the arch.

“Gunnywood’s six grandmothers simply mean **plunder**, and you are running as fast as you can **go into** the State prison, Rush. His pal is Kidd Ashbank, whose wife is waiting in the street for him to **come out of the house**. I want you to tell her that her husband is not in the house, and that she will hear from him to-morrow, Rush. Will you do it?”

“How do you know he is going to rob the **house**?” asked Rush, who was actually shaking with **terror at the very idea**.

“I can’t stop to talk about it now; but I know all about your affairs with Gunnywood. You are going to sail for London to-morrow in the ship **Ganymede**; you cannot produce the diamonds when you get to England, but your friend will do so,” added Rowly.

Rush did not want to say a word, and what was revealed to him assured him that his companion **knew** what he was talking about.

“I will do just as you say, Rowly, if you will **get me out of this scrape**,” stammered Rush.

“Go and tell the woman what I said then,” Rush replied.

Rush left the arch, crossed the street to the **spot** where Mrs. Ashbank was still standing, and she **did not retreat at his coming**.

He delivered his message without **hesitation**.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AN INNOCENT ACCOMPLICE.

WHETHER Mrs. Ashbank believed what Rush had told her or not, she evidently thought it would not be prudent for her to remain any longer in front of the house which was in process of being plundered. She did not even question the messenger who had come to her, but turning on her heel, she walked up the street.

Just then the shadow felt that he had his hands full, for he had undertaken to follow up Silky; the wife of the arrested burglar had put in an appearance on the scene, and he deemed it his duty to look after her movements also.

When he wanted Silky, he knew just where to look for him; but he might never see the woman again, and she was quite as dangerous as either of the male robbers.

Leaving the arch, he met Rush as he recrossed the

street, and told him to come with him. Hurrying up the street, he saw the lady after she had turned the corner. She walked along slowly as though she had perfect confidence in her ability to take care of herself under any possible circumstances.

"Where are you going now, Rowly?" asked Rush, who was still in a terrified condition.

"After that woman; her husband was the pal of your friend Gunnywood, though he has been arrested. You are a simpleton, and you have allowed the grandson of the six grandmothers to make the biggest kind of a fool of you, Rush. I know you are innocent of all knowledge of the robbery in which you were taking part as sentinel for your principal, but your innocence could hardly have been proved. You have been led away."

"I can hardly believe it," replied Rush.

"Don't you believe you were going to run away from your father, in the *Ganymede*, and receive a quarter of the proceeds of the sale of Hope Everton's diamonds?" demanded Rowly, severely.

"Who told you all this, Rowly?" asked Rush, confounded to find that all his secrets were in possession of another.

"That's nothing to the point. You can judge for yourself whether or not I am speaking the truth. If you want to follow Gunnywood, of course you can

do so, though you will not follow him a great while before you are brought up with a round turn."

"I didn't know he was a robber," pleaded Rush.

"Didn't you know he had the diamonds?"

"I am sure I did not."

"But you knew you hadn't them yourself, didn't you?"

"Of course I knew that."

"Didn't you agree to divide what they would bring on the other side of the ocean with him, he taking three parts to your one?"

"Who told you all that, Rowly?" asked the astonished young man.

"I ask questions, but I don't answer them," replied the shadow, sharply. "Answer my question."

"I did agree to divide with him."

"If you knew that you had not the diamonds yourself, though he insisted that you had, how did you suppose they were to be produced when you got to London?" asked Rowly, forcing his question vigorously upon the other.

"That was what I could not understand."

"You could not!" sneered Rowly, not quite willing to believe that his companion was as simple as he appeared to be.

"I knew nothing about the diamonds; how could I understand it?"

"Couldn't you see that if you did not produce the diamonds, he would produce them? and how could he do that if he did not have them?"

"I begin to have some idea about this business," exclaimed Rush, rather sheepishly.

"I should think you might!"

"But where are the diamonds now?" asked Rush.

"They are not in your trousers pocket, anyhow, Rush."

"I know that."

"Do you, indeed? I didn't know but you had an idea that you had them somewhere about you. Gunnywood will be arrested within a couple of days; if you wish to go back and take a hand with him, of course you can do so. I might have called the officers to take him while he was in that house; and of course they would have taken you with him," continued Rowly, impressively.

"I am glad you didn't."

"Is that so?"

"Of course I don't want to do anything to disgrace my father."

"I shouldn't think you did. And that is the reason you were going to run away with a notorious burglar and housebreaker!"

"I didn't know he was a burglar, or anything of that sort," replied Rush, in a very subdued tone.

“You might have known it if you had only opened your eyes. How do you suppose the box that had contained the diamonds happened to be under your bed?”

“I haven’t the remotest idea.”

“Then you are a good deal weaker in your upper story than I ever supposed you were,” said Rowly, bluntly.

“Who told you the box was under my bed?”

“Your particular friend Gunnywood told me so.”

“Then you know him?”

“He and I are not bosom friends, but he has told a number of things in my hearing which I understood better than you did. That woman ahead of us is the wife of Gunnywood’s pal, and her husband has just been arrested; but she doesn’t know it yet. The two burglars had agreed to plunder the house where you were to-night, and the woman knew about it and went there to see her husband, who must have failed to keep some appointment he had made with her. Now you know enough to understand your own situation.”

“I came very near falling into the trap they set for me,” remarked Rush.

“Very near it! You did fall into it; and you were in it when I pulled you out! I don’t owe you

anything, but I did not want to have you sent to Sing Sing for nothing."

"You have done me a good turn, and I shall never forget it. I will not trouble Hope Everton any more."

"You can do as you like about that; but you had better not!"

"What am I to do now? If I go back to my room, Gunnywood will find me there."

"You will not go back there. You will stay with me as long as I want you, and help me procure the arrest of this woman, for she took part in the attempt to rob Brillyant & Co., of which you read in the papers to-day. Your friend Gunnywood and the husband of this woman were the burglars."

"I will do anything you say, Rowly; and I am very much obliged to you for getting me out of this scrape. My father is a proud man, and it would have killed him if I had done anything criminal," said Rush, for the terrors of his situation had evidently roused him to a sincere repentance.

"You must go home to your father at once, and thus get out of the way; but before you go, I want you to write a letter to Captain Wellfleet, saying that you were suddenly called home, and that you sent Rowland Parkway to take your place on board of the *Ganymede*."

"I will do just as you say with the greatest pleasure," replied Rush.

"If we get separated to-night, go to the St. James Hotel, and wait on the sidewalk till I join you, if it is not till morning."

"I will do it."

By this time Rowly and his companion had followed Mrs. Ashbank as far as Forty-Second Street, into which she turned.

The shadow had kept at a considerable distance from her, and managed the pursuit with the utmost care and discretion, so that she could have had no suspicion that her steps were dogged. She went into the Grand Central Station, bought a ticket, and took the train which was to leave at half-past eleven; and Rowly procured tickets at a venture, and took a place in the car where he could see without being seen. At Yonkers the lady left the train, and of course her interested friend followed her.

"Go to that hotel, write the letter I want, and wait for me," said Rowly as they saw several passengers enter a public house.

He did not lose sight of the lady, but followed her by the light of the moon for a considerable distance.

CHAPTER XXX.

AT YONKERS.

MRS. ASHBANK did not seem to be at all wary in her movements, and could have had no suspicion that a shadow was on her track, as she was fifteen miles from the city of New York, where her husband operated at his profession. On the very outskirts of the town, she entered the front gate of a small, but very neat and pretty cottage, which her follower concluded was her home, for she applied a night key, and went into the house as though she belonged there.

Yonkers is quite a large place, and indulges in the luxury of a police force, though it is not as large as that of the metropolis of the New World.

Rowly soon had occasion to realize that its members were more vigilant and inquisitive than those of the great city, for when he halted in front of the cottage to take a more careful survey of the premises, he discovered that he was observed by one of the guardians of the night.

As the volunteer shadow was engaged in rather delicate business, he was not especially gratified at

the watchfulness of the member of the force, who kept both eyes fixed on him; but as Rowly was honest in his intentions, he had no fear of the policeman. On the contrary, the man might render him some assistance in the matter of information if nothing more.

He crossed the street, and walked slowly in the direction of the hotel, thinking over the plan he had in his head, till he came to the position of the vigilant policeman, who could not help thinking that his movements, half an hour after midnight, were suspicious to say the least.

"You are out late," said the guardian of the night, stepping out from the post in front of him, for rogues have a fashion of running away when confronted by an officer of the night.

Rowly did not try to run away; but he stopped in his path, and was willing to explain as far as he thought proper.

"You are young to be out so late," added the supervisor of the public safety in Yonkers.

"I am not so young as I was a year ago," laughed Rowly. "On the other hand, for it is always well to look on both sides of the question, I am not as old as I shall be, if I live, in a year from now."

"You are too smart; you will die young," added the officer, rather testily.

"No, I shall not; for you would have died twenty-five years ago if being smart were a fatal malady," replied Rowly with the same abundant good-nature.

"I reckon you don't belong in Yonkers, young man," continued the policeman, coming back to business.

"I do not reside in Yonkers, though I belong here for the present," answered the New Yorker.

"Where do you reside, if it is a fair question?"

"Perfectly fair, my Christian friend. I reside in New York City, No. 42 Blankteeth Street, up two flights. I live with my mother, who is a widow, and my name is Rowland Parkway; my mother's name is also Parkway, as you might possibly suspect, for she never married a second time, as some very good women do. Shall I write it down for you, Mr.—I forget your name?"

"My name is Halburn," replied the officer, laughing, apparently in spite of himself.

"Happy to know you, Mr. Halburn; and I trust we shall be good friends till one of us dies of over smartness."

"You never will die, Rowland. But what are you doing in Yonkers at this time of night?" asked Mr. Halburn, coming back to business again. "You came in that last train."

"Right you are; but I paid my fare, and you have nothing against me on that account."

"But what are you doing in Yonkers after midnight?"

"Talking with a very accomplished patrolman of the police force of the place; and if the gentleman doesn't object, I will move on towards the Peabody House, where I propose to pass the rest of the night."

"But you don't explain your business here."

"Does everybody who comes here have to do that?" asked Rowly.

"Some of them do when they come after midnight, and instead of going to any house, walk to the other side of the town without anything to do."

"Then you followed me from the station?"

"Of course I did."

"Did you notice a lady that came up this way ahead of me?"

"Of course I did; but as I know all about her, I looked after you, and not after her."

"Then you know Mrs. Ashbank?"

"No, I don't."

"You said you knew all about her."

"The lady wasn't Mrs. Ashbank; that was Mrs. Ganfield, one of the nicest women in the place. She had been to the city to go to some missionary meeting."

"Mrs. Ganfield; I thought it was Mrs. Ashbank," replied Rowly, though he was sorry a moment later

that he had mentioned the name, for the officer might tell her of his mistake, and give her warning that she was known.

"She is an awful good-looking woman, and I know half a dozen gentlemen of good property that would like to marry her; but she won't look at any of them. Who did you think it was?"

"Mrs. Dashman," answered Rowly, glad of a chance to undo his own work.

"Dashman; that ain't her name, anyhow," added the policeman. "Do *you* want to marry her, that you follow her about at this time of night?"

"My mother will not let me get married before I am seventeen, and I was not after her for any such purpose. Now can you tell me where the telegraph office is?"

Mr. Halburn did not insist upon knowing his business after this request, and conducted Rowly to the telegraph office. After some inquiry about trains, he sent a message to the precinct where he was known: "Send officers to arrest Mrs. Ashbank by four thirty-five train morning, to Yonkers."

Then the shadow went to the hotel, and was soon asleep in his room.

On the arrival of the early train from New York, Rowly was at the station, and promptly recognized Stiles, the detective, when he stepped from the car.

"Well, my lad, where is this lady?" asked the officer, as soon as he put his eye on the hero of the preceding night in the great city.

"She lives in a cottage on the other side of the town, and I can take you there."

"Perhaps I had better take a Yonkers officer with me," added Stiles.

"There is Mr. Halburn coming this way. He is a patrolman, and knows all about the lady. She is a saint here," said Rowly, as he introduced the two officers.

"You don't say you mean to arrest Mrs. Ganfield!" exclaimed the policeman.

"Not at all; I mean to arrest Mrs. Ashbank, wife of the burglar of that name, if I can find her," replied Stiles.

"I know Mrs. Ganfield very well; and I am quite sure this young gentleman from New York is mistaken in regard to her," Halburn insisted.

"Perhaps he is; I don't know; but I have seen the woman, and I think I should know her," added the detective.

"I know her as well as I should know my own mother; and I am sure I saw her go into that cottage last night, a little after twelve," added Rowly, very earnestly. "I saw her in the store of Brilliant & Co. for some time, and there is no mistake about her."

"You followed her up here, did you, my lad?" asked Stiles.

"That is just what I did."

"And where did you come across her in New York?"

"I saw her in the street," replied the amateur, naming the place.

"Ah, indeed! A house was broken into in that street, and very likely she had something to do with it," said the detective.

"Were the burglars taken that robbed the house last night?" asked Rowly.

"They were not. Morgan Dykes, who lived in the house, is an old miser afraid of banks, and even of the treasury of the United States, for he had over fifty thousand dollars in the house, in gold and bills," said Stiles. "The breakers got away with about thirty thousand, according to the old man's statement. He had concealed his money in different places."

"Have you any idea who the robbers were?" asked Rowly, breathless with interest.

"Not the slightest in the world, for the breakers left no mark behind them."

"Then I think I can give you an idea," added the amateur.

"Unless you have been taking a hand with these

breakers, I don't understand how you should know so much about their affairs," continued Stiles, who did not take kindly to an amateur who appeared to be usurping the functions of his profession.

"If you want to get up a quarrel with me, Mr. Stiles, I will stop where I am; and you can arrest me if you like," said Rowly, halting on the sidewalk, for they had been walking all this time towards the cottage.

"I haven't said anything about arresting you, my lad," replied the detective. "I only say it looks strange; that's all. A person don't know all about the movements of burglars without going among them," retorted Stiles.

"All right; you may go your way, and I will go mine. If you see fit to arrest this woman, do so; if you choose to let her go, it is none of my business. I have done my duty," replied Rowly, his pride deeply wounded by the suspicions of the officer.

He did not wait to hear, or to say, anything more, but turning on his heel, he walked rapidly back towards the hotel, where he had left Rush Sinnerton asleep in the double room.

"Where are you going? Here! Stop!" shouted Stiles.

But Rowly did not stop, and he was very much vexed at the treatment he had received, much more

than he would have been if he had been ten years older.

The detective and the patrolman followed him for a short distance ; but as the amateur took no notice of the professional, the latter halted ; and as Halburn knew where Mrs. Ganfield lived, he decided to pay her a visit at that early hour.

Stiles could not identify the wife of the burglar, and he was obliged to act solely on the information given by the amateur ; and it went against his grain, though he did not dare to let pass the opportunity to secure the woman, whose exploits had been too notorious to be overlooked.

When Rowly reached the hotel, he found that Rush was up and dressed. He gave the innocent accomplice such information as he chose to impart, and having obtained from him the letter to Captain Wellfleet, he told his companion to take the next train for his home, which he promised to do.

The active shadow advised Rush to tell his father the whole truth, and to remain at home for the present, for it was hardly safe for him to return to New York.

Rowly went to the train after he had taken an early breakfast ; and he had hardly reached the station before Stiles appeared with his prisoner, attended by Halburn.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN UNPLEASANT CHANGE IN THE SITUATION.

THE patrolman had procured a carriage in which the prisoner had been brought to the station. Mrs. Ashbank still held her head up, and did not seem to be at all cast down by her misfortune. She had insisted with all her might that she was not Mrs. Ashbank, that she had never heard the name before; and she wanted to have her neighbors called in to testify that she was an entirely respectable woman. Stiles had his doubts when he considered the small basis on which the arrest had been made, and was afraid he had made a blunder, as Halburn contended that he had.

He was not sorry to see Rowly on the platform when he conducted the lady to the waiting-room, though he feared that he would be too obstinate to say anything on the subject that troubled him.

"I was rather too fast in what I said to you this morning, my lad," said he. "I take it all back and apologize for it."

"I think you were rather too fast, but I accept the

apology," replied the amateur. "One does not like to be suspected of being mixed up with burglars in a guilty way. It is all right now."

"You sent the telegram about this woman to New York?"

"This lady!" interposed the prisoner, proudly.

"No doubt of that."

"And you say she is the wife of Kidd Ashbank?" continued the detective, anxiously.

"I don't say so, for I don't know anything about that. Some of the officers said she must be the wife of Kidd Ashbank, and called her Maggie; but I can say nothing about it of my own knowledge," replied Rowly, who was inclined to be very careful in his statements, as every one ought to be.

"Is it on the mere hearsay of a boy that I am taken from my house at this time in the morning, and carried off to New York?" demanded the lady, indignantly.

Rowly had followed the party into the ladies' waiting-room and when she stopped, he tried to see her face; but she wore a thick veil in spite of her protests.

"Is this the lady?" asked Stiles, whose doubts had not been removed.

"I cannot see her face, and I cannot tell," replied the amateur.

"May I trouble you to raise your veil, madam?" continued the professional, as politely as the occasion required.

"I refuse to raise my veil, sir," she replied firmly.

"Then you must pardon me for doing it for you," interposed the officer, suiting the action to the words.

"Good-morning, Miss Van Zandt!" exclaimed Rowly, as soon as he saw the face of the lady.

The prisoner made no reply, but she had no doubt recognized in Rowly the clerk she had seen in the store of Brillyant & Co., and the remark seemed to be a set back to her, for she lost some of her dignity and self-possession.

"What do you mean by calling her Miss Van Zandt, my lad?" asked Stiles, who had not failed to notice the effect of the remark on his prisoner.

"You remember that she called herself the sister of Mr. Van Zandt, our junior partner. She is the woman that took part in the burglary beyond the possibility of a doubt; and I am ready to swear to her identity. Mr. Amlock, whom she induced to leave the store on the plea of seeing her home, will know her certainly, and will swear that she is the right woman."

"I am satisfied now," added Stiles.

"I'll bet ten minutes' pay there is some mistake

about it," said the incredulous Halburn. "She is one of the nicest women in the place, and I don't take any stock in this business."

"You are quite right, Mr. Halburn; it is all a mistake, and some one must suffer for it," said Mrs. Ashbank.

"I think you will be the only sufferer, madam," replied Stiles, confidently, for he had had time to consider the high recommendations given by Mr. Brillyant to his clerk who had defeated the attempt to rob the store. "Of course you will not object to joining your husband, who was arrested yesterday."

"Arrested!" she exclaimed, with a start that would have been creditable to a tragic actress; and at the same time she turned pale, her face bearing an expression of agony. But she wore this expression for only an instant; and then a scornful smile took its place, as though she had recovered from the shock of the detective's news.

"Who was arrested yesterday?" she demanded.

"Kidd Ashbank, your husband."

"My husband is in his grave," she replied with dramatic force.

On the arrival of the train in New York, Rowly called a carriage, and the prisoner was taken to the precinct in which the store of Brillyant & Co. was

located, where she was fully identified by Mr. Am-lock as soon as his attendance could be procured.

It was still early in the morning, and Rowly hastened to the street in which Silky lodged, not to see him, but to obtain the box he had thrown into the street from the window, with which he went to his home.

His mother had been very anxious about him, and greeted him with all the affection in her nature ; and he did not deem it necessary to conceal what he had been doing any longer.

“ And you will get back the diamonds for Hope Everton ? ” she asked, her face radiant with joy.

“ I am sure of it now, mother ! ” exclaimed Rowly. “ Of the two men and a woman who were engaged in the robbery of the store, or the attempt to rob it, two have been arrested, and I shall put my hand on the third at the right time when it comes.”

“ But I am afraid you will get hurt, my son. What are you going to do now ? ” asked the anxious parent.

“ I am going to take Rush’s place on board of the Ganymede.”

“ And go off on a sea voyage ? ”

“ I don’t believe I shall go far ? ” laughed Rowly. “ I am going to see Captain Ringboom now, and I shall arrange the whole thing with him.”

"You will be very careful, won't you, my dear boy?"

"I am always very careful, mother."

After changing his clothes, and putting all his money in a safe place on his person, and taking the box in his hand, he left the house and ran all the way to Aunt Myra's, fearful that the captain might leave the house before he saw him; but the shipmaster was at his breakfast on his arrival.

"Have you heard anything from the diamonds, Rowly?" asked Captain Ringboom, after the shadow had greeted those at the table.

"Yes, sir; I know just where they are, and as soon as I am ready, I can put my hand upon them," replied Rowly, with affected coolness, as he glanced at the pretty face of Hope.

The captain leaped from his seat at the table as though a charge from an electric battery had gone through him; and the others sprang to their feet in a less demonstrative manner.

"You know where they are!" yelled the old sailor.

"I do; and I have the box in which you brought them here," replied the amateur, rushing up to the hall to obtain it.

He returned in a moment, and placed the box on the table in front of the captain, who declared

that it was the right one as soon as his eye rested upon it.

"You can put your hand on the diamonds as soon as you are ready! But are you not almost ready to do it?" demanded the captain.

Rowly and the captain talked together for two hours, and at the end of that time the plan for the recovery of the diamonds was completed.

The shipmaster had a way of his own usually; but in the present instance he was entirely willing to accept his young companion's plan.

"But I have a young fellow to be Wellfleet's clerk; and you say you want this berth."

"We will go on board of the *Ganymede* and arrange everything."

Before noon there was a conference between the two captains and Rowly in the cabin of the *Ganymede*; but Captain Wellfleet was not willing to believe the "yarn" of the amateur, as he called it.

"Is Gibbs on board, sir?" asked Rowly.

"He is; he came on board with another fellow, whom I shipped as a green hand," replied Captain Wellfleet.

"Then it is all right," replied the shadow, fearful that Silky might have taken the gems away, after Rush deserted him the night before.

They went to the stateroom of the captain's clerk,

and Rowly began his search for the packages containing the diamonds. He could not find them. They were not in the closet under the washstand.

Rowly was overwhelmed, but Captain Wellfleet laughed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ANOTHER EMPLOYEE OF BRILLYANT & CO.

THOUGH Rowly was overwhelmed with grief and astonishment at his failure to find the diamonds where he supposed they were, he was not in despair after he had had a few minutes for reflection.

It did not take him long to realize that, in detaching Rush Sinnerton from his chosen friend engaged in the robbery of Morgan Dykes's house, he had roused the suspicions of Silky, and he had taken the precaution to remove the diamonds from their place of concealment.

"You don't find the glassware ; and I did not suppose you would ;" said Captain Wellfleet, still laughing at the confusion of the clerk's substitute.

"I do not ; but I believe the glassware, as you call it, is somewhere on board of this ship," replied Rowly, beginning to gather up his powers after the shock which his failure to find the packages had given him.

"What makes you think so, my hearty?" asked the captain, with a broad grin on his face.

"I feel very sure that the packages which I saw Gibbs put into the closet under the washbowl contained the diamonds," answered Rowly, looking the ocean swell full in the face as though he meant every word he said. "It would take me too long to tell you the reason why I feel certain of what I say."

"Rowly knows what he is about every time, Wellfleet, and I believe every word he says," interposed Captain Ringboom. "If you are willing to help him out, I am sure we shall find the diamonds."

"Oh, I am willing to do anything you want, or that this youngster wants, for that matter, whether I believe his story or not," added Captain Wellfleet. "If I don't believe in him, I do believe in you, old friend. I don't forget when I had the yellow fever in Havana, and you took care of me; and anything I can do, without injury to the other owners of the *Ganymede*, I will do with the greatest pleasure in life."

"That's hearty, Wellfleet; and if you will let Rowly have his own way, I will see him through," said Captain Ringboom. "What time do you get under way?"

"I shall go down on the ebb tide if there is wind

enough to keep the ship from going on shore ; but there don't seem to be a puff now."

"The tide turns at about three this afternoon," continued Captain Ringboom. "I must have a talk with Rowly, for the situation seems to be decidedly changed from what it was yesterday."

"I should say it was," replied the master of the *Ganymede*, with a cynical smile. "But you shall have your own way."

"I am anxious to have you go at the time fixed for sailing, for I am afraid Gibbs may take it into his head to make the voyage in some other vessel if there is any delay," said Captain Ringboom, who seemed to be suffering from great anxiety.

The shock produced in the mind of the worthy captain when nothing was found in the closet was even greater than that experienced by the young shadow, for he felt personally responsible to the diamond heiress for the delivery to her of the fortune placed in his charge by her uncle.

His confidence in Rowly had not been in the least degree impaired by the failure to find the treasure where it had been placed, for the recovery of the box which had contained the casket assured him that the young man had spoken the truth.

"Has Gibbs been on shore since he first came on board to-day?" asked Rowly.

“Not he ; and I shall not allow him to go on shore again before we sail,” replied Captain Wellfleet.

“Then I am sure the diamonds are on board of the ship, and I almost sure I can find them,” said Rowly. “Gibbs is going to London with you, and he thought it prudent to find another hiding-place for his treasure after his friend deserted him.”

“All right ; then our business is on board of this ship, or rather Rowly has something to do here, for I think I had better not be seen on board of the *Ganymede* after she gets under way,” added Captain Ringboom, who had put on his “thinking cap,” and seemed to be pondering deeply.

“I think you had better keep out of sight ; and the fellow will recognize this youngster,” suggested the dandy captain.

“I shall have to go on shore and provide against anything of that sort,” answered Rowly. “If he sees me as I am now, he will certainly know me, and that may interfere with our success. I wonder if Gibbs expects Rush Sinnerton to come on board and take the place of captain’s clerk.”

“I don’t know what he expects ; but I can easily call him to the mainmast, and find out what he thinks about it,” replied the captain of the ship.

“I should like to hear what he says,” the shadow hinted.

“Just step into that stateroom, and partly close the door, then,” continued Captain Wellfleet, pointing to the room in which the treasure had been concealed.

Captain Ringboom and Rowly went into the little apartment, and the latter used his time in making a further examination of the room, though he found nothing to reward him for the search.

“Pass the word for Gibbs,” said Captain Wellfleet, shouting to a hand in the waist; and a minute later Silky came aft, where he confronted the commander, who had the letter Rush had written at Yonkers in his hand.

Rowly looked through the crack in the door, and obtained a good view of the burglar, who was dressed precisely as he had been the day before, and the color of his skin was the same, while his white hands were daubed with paint and tar.

He realized that he was playing a part, for he put on a great deal of marine swagger, and threw his shoulders forward so that his fine form did not show to the best advantage.

“What does all this mean, Gibbs?” demanded the captain, in stern and angry tones, used for the occasion, and he held up the letter in his hand. “The fellow you brought off to act as my clerk has sent me a letter to say that he can’t go with me.”

“I am sure I don’t know anything at all about it,

sir," replied Gibbs in subdued tones. "I haven't seen him to-day, and I supposed he was coming on board as he agreed to do."

"When did you see him last?"

"We parted on the wharf, sir, and I went home to see my mother. I have not seen or heard from him since."

"I examined Robert very carefully to see if he was the right person, and was quite satisfied with him. Now he says he can't go; but if I could get hold of him I would make him go," said the captain, savagely.

"I am sorry he went back on you, sir; but I did not know a thing about it till now, and I will do anything I can. I am willing to take his place, if you want me to," added Gibbs.

"He has provided a substitute himself; but I don't know whether he will suit me or not."

"Where is the substitute, sir? I wonder if I know him. If you will let me see him, sir, perhaps I may know something about him," continued Gibbs, betraying more interest than the occasion seemed to warrant.

Rowly was to take the place of the absent clerk for a time, till he had accomplished his mission, and was afraid that the ocean swell would make some mistake in managing the matter, for he was a skeptic.

"You can't see him yet, for he has not yet come on board," replied the captain. "That is what vexes me. He will come on board an hour or two before we sail, and I shall have no time to examine him. I may have to take him whether he suits me or not."

"I am sorry it happened so, sir; but it isn't my fault," added Gibbs, bowing meekly.

"No matter whose fault it is; I don't like it at all. Did you break out those two casks, as I ordered you?"

"I was doing it, sir, when I was called to the mainmast."

"Who was helping you?"

"Gaulbert, sir."

"Who is Gaulbert? I never heard the name before."

"He is the green hand that I brought off this morning, sir."

"He signed his name Gullbert. Call him, Gibbs."

Rowley had expressed a desire to see this man for reasons which he did not explain.

"You have heard what he has to say," said Captain Wellfleet, going to the door. "Anything more you want?"

Nothing more was wanted, and Gibbs soon returned with Gaulbert. He was a young man, and Rowley recognized him as an under porter in the store of Brilliant & Co.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SHADOW WITH A NEW FACE.

A SINGLE glance at the green hand Gibbs had brought off was enough to assure Rowly that Gaulbert, whose real name was Bronker, had been the confederate of Silky and Blooks in the attempted robbery of the store.

He had removed the stops from the sash so that it could be easily taken out, though Silky had found some difficulty in doing so; and he had placed the step ladder under the window to enable the burglars to descend to the floor.

Of course he was as guilty as though he had taken part in the operations outside of the store, and Rowly was very glad to see him, and to know that he was where the officers could put their hands upon him at the right time.

Ashbank, otherwise Blooks, had been arrested the day before, and the woman was now in a safe place; and doubtless Bronker, when he heard of the arrest

of the first, was alarmed for his own safety, and had applied to Silky for assistance, for it might come out that the robbers had a confederate inside of the store.

Captain Wellfleet asked Bronker some unimportant questions in regard to his name, and then dismissed the two men, joining the observer in the stateroom.

“Gaulbert’s name is Bronker, and he took part in the attempt to rob the store of Brillyant & Co.,” said Rowly.

“Then you will catch one more of the party to that enterprise,” replied Captain Ringboom.

“I think we shall, if everything works right.”

“Everything must work right; we must make it work right, for in this business there is no such word as fail. I shall have to commit suicide if I don’t get back those diamonds for Hope Everton,” added Captain Ringboom. “Wellfleet, I am not as poor as a church mouse, or as rich as my friend Vanderbilt; and I wouldn’t be as badly off as he is if he would give me all his money and stocks.”

“You are well enough off to quit the sea, Ringboom.”

“And that is what I shall do if I find the diamonds. If I don’t find them, my property will pay their value to the diamond heiress as far as it will go,” added the captain of the Reindeer decidedly. “This is a big business to me, you will see, Wellfleet, and I am

willing to put out some money to get that glassware."

"There isn't the least need of your putting out any money, old fellow ; for if the glassware is on board of this ship, you shall find it, if I have to heave the vessel down and take everything out of her," protested the hearty ocean swell.

"Thank you, Wellfleet; but you did not think of taking a steam tug to work you out of the bay as far as Sandy Hook?"

"No, I did not ; but I can do it."

"I don't ask you to do it, for I mean to do that myself."

"Tow my ship to sea? Not if I know it!"

"But Rowly and I have arranged that matter. We are getting a breeze of wind, and I want the tug for my own use, if you will let her make fast to the Ganymede."

The ocean swell objected for some time, but the arguments of his friend prevailed in the end, and Ringboom was permitted to have his own way, for he wanted to be on board of the tug himself with a couple of officers, and he wanted the craft to take the prisoners on shore when Rowly had accomplished his mission, as he was confident it would be accomplished.

It was only eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and Captain Ringboom and Rowly went on shore to make

their preparations for the afternoon, which would require some time for the former, though he had already spoken for the tug.

Seeing Gibbs and Bronker on deck, it was necessary for the captain of the *Ganymede* to send them below so that the shadow should not be seen by either of them, for he was in his usual dress and could easily be recognized.

As soon as they landed, the captain went to complete his arrangement for the tug, while Rowly went home to prepare himself for his difficult duty.

At the house he found Mrs. Everton and her daughter; and for some reason not apparent on the face of things, or on the face of the beautiful maiden, she blushed like a new blown rose.

She knew that Rowly had been at work to find the fortune that belonged to her, and the last news she heard was very encouraging, so that she no doubt felt under some obligations to the young fellow; and gratitude is often the forerunner of a warmer sentiment.

"I did not expect you back, Rowly," said Mrs. Parkway, anxiously. "I hope nothing has gone wrong in the work in which you are engaged."

"I am sorry to say something has gone wrong, for I could not find the glassware."

"Glassware?"

"That is what Captain Wellfleet calls the diamonds," laughed the shadow, as though he was not greatly depressed by the situation.

"And you have lost track of them?" asked Mrs. Parkway, with breathless interest.

"That is just what I have lost; but I shall get on the track soon. I am sure they are on board the *Ganymede*," replied Rowly, who had told Mrs. Fverton the situation the last time he saw her. "I have no time to spare, but you shall yet be the diamond heiress, Hope."

"I am afraid you will not be able to find the diamonds, Rowly; but I shall be just as grateful to you for all you have done as though you do find them," replied the maiden blushing again; and it was evident that she did not set an extravagant value on the lost gems.

The shadow told his mother he might not be back for several days, or he might return that night; and it was even possible that he might have to cross the Atlantic before he accomplished his mission, though he was sure to succeed sooner or later.

He asked his mother for all his money, for he did not know what might happen to him, and then went to his room, where he soon prepared himself for the part he was to play in the comedy or tragedy, whichever it might be.

He colored his face and hands, leaving out the olive tint of the Spaniard he had used the day before, and made himself look as different as he could from his former appearance.

He added a false mustache to his face, which, with the other change he had made in his looks, gave him an entirely new aspect, with which he was quite satisfied as he surveyed himself in the glass.

Putting another costume, as well as his toilet materials, into a leather bag, he went into the room where he had left his mother and her visitors.

Mrs. Parkway sprang to her feet as soon as she saw him, and looked at him as though he had been a first class tramp, invading her apartment for suspicious purposes.

"What do you want here?" she demanded in the severest tones she could muster.

"Would ye give me some cold victuals? I'm hungry, for I haven't had a mouthful to eat since breakfast this morning," replied Rowly, in an assume^d voice.

"Poor fellow! Not since breakfast! Couldn't you wait till dinner time?" replied his mother, indignantly. "You must be in a suffering condition! How did you get into my rooms?"

"I came in, ma'am."

"Then you will go just as quick as you can, or I will send for a policeman."

"I will go for one," Hope volunteered, rising and going towards the door.

"Then I will go with you, miss, if you please," added Rowly.

"Don't you let him go near you, Hope!" interposed Mrs. Parkway. "Now leave this room this instant!"

"You don't want more than one policeman, do you, mother?" asked the shadow, in his natural voice.

"Who are you?" demanded the lady.

"My name is Rowland Parkway; and my mother's name is Hester, and her name used to be Warner, but is Parkway like mine now; and she is afraid of tramps."

"Rowly!" exclaimed his mother, "what foolery is this?"

"Why, Rowly! I didn't know it was you," said Hope.

"I knew it was all the time. I am fixed up for my part on board of the *Ganymede* this afternoon. If you are satisfied that I don't mean to steal your cold victuals now, I will go; and I hope I shall be able to restore her own to the diamond heiress."

At the pier designated, the shadow found the steamer the captain had provided.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A PRISONER BETWEEN DECKS.

It was not a mere tug which Captain Ringboom had procured, but a steamer considerably larger, and more capable of a long trip to sea than a harbor craft.

The shipmaster was already on board of her, and by his side was a young man of sixteen or eighteen, whom Rowly concluded was the person who was to take the place of Rush Sinnerton as captain's clerk.

"No one allowed on board, young man," said Captain Ringboom, as the shadow was walking on the gangway to the deck ; and Rowly concluded that his disguise must be perfect, since it had deceived his mother and her guests, and now his worthy friend did not penetrate the paint on his face.

"Can't I go on board, sir?" asked Rowly, not a little amused at the conduct of his friend.

"No, you can't ; we are ready to cast off the fasts as soon as the young fellow I am waiting for comes

on board," replied the captain, hardly deigning to bestow a second glance upon the supposed intruder.

"I am the young fellow, sir," added the shadow.

"You? Don't come any further, or I shall have to send a hand to whirl you about."

"But I have business on board; this steamer is going to tow out the Ganymede."

"I know she is; but I have chartered this steamer, and I don't want any passengers," persisted the captain, in a petulant tone, as he looked up the pier for the person for whom he was waiting. "If you want to go on board of the Ganymede, take a boat."

"I suppose I might do that," replied Rowly, looking about to assure himself that no one was within earshot of him. "There is a small lot of diamonds on board of that ship that I want to find, and I have to be a little careful how I show myself, for they might recognize me."

"Who are you?" demanded the captain, astounded at the reply of the would-be passenger.

"I am yours truly, and I want to find a fellow by the name of Gibbs, alias Silky, alias Gunnywood," added Rowly, looking at the astonished captain with all his might.

"What do you mean, youngster?"

"You see this Gibbs, with two or three aliases, was mixed up in an attempt to rob the store of Brill-

yant & Co. ; and I believe he stole two hundred thousand dollars' worth of diamonds from a friend of mine, and I want to get them if I can ; and I think I can."

"Who is your friend that you speak of?" demanded the shipmaster, looking with all his eyes at the disguised shadow.

"His name is Israel Ringboom, commanding the ship Reindeer."

"But that is my name," added the puzzled captain.

"I know it ; and both of us want to get the glassware for the diamond heiress, Hope Everton, whose uncle, Howell Everton, sent them to her from Africa."

"What is your name, youngster?" asked the captain, with a heavy frown on his bronzed face.

"Rowland Parkway, commonly called Rowly, for short, at your service."

"Rowly!" exclaimed Captain Ringboom, scrutinizing him from head to foot. "I declare I never should have known you."

"I knew it was I all the time," laughed Rowly.

"Is that so? Then why didn't you tell me?"

"I did ; I gave you my name, and told you my business on board of the Ganymede."

"Nobody will ever know you as you are fixed up now, Rowly," added the captain, looking at him with curiosity and interest.

“My mother did not know me; and I don't think anybody else will find me out.”

“It is after two now, and it will take some time to bend on the hawser, and it is time to cast off; but I had no suspicion that you were the fellow I was waiting for.”

Captain Ringboom told the captain of the steamer that he was ready, and the vessel was soon standing out into the bay.

“I am to go into that stateroom, and act as captain's clerk in the first of it,” said Rowly, as the *Medusa*, which was the name of the steamer, approached the *Ganymede*. “But I want to get up a scare of some sort as soon as the ship is in motion.”

“A scare?” interrogated the captain. “What is that for?”

The shadow explained what it was for, and asked his friend to arrange the affair with Captain Wellfleet.

The *Medusa* went alongside of the ship, and the two captains passed into the cabin together, the master of the *Reindeer* taking care not to show himself to any of the crew of the *Ganymede*.

The master of the ship was willing to do anything to oblige his friend, and the scare was readily contrived between the two old sailors, and they separated, each to play the part assigned to him.

Rowly was consulted in the matter, and everything was arranged to his satisfaction ; and then Captain Ringboom returned to the Medusa, which by this time had sent her heavy hawsers to the deck of the Ganymede, where they were made fast at the bitts.

The shadow, after his experience with his mother and his seafaring friend, did not scruple to go forward and allow himself to be seen by the crew, much the greater portion of whom had just been brought off by the shipping agent, and not a few of them were too much intoxicated to know whether they stood on their feet or on their heads.

Gibbs and Gaulbert were entirely sober, and for this reason they were kept busily employed all the time, though the wind was so light that it was not deemed advisable even to shake out the topsails.

Rowly had nothing to do but to attend to his important mission on board, for as he was not to retain the position of captain's clerk, it was not worth while for him to learn the duties.

The substitute had come on board of the Ganymede, and the captain had subjected him to an examination, which had happily proved him to be even more satisfactory than Rush Sinnerton ; he was then sent back to the steamer.

The first time Rowly went forward, he was con-

scious that the gaze of Gibbs was fixed upon him ; and he was satisfied that the burglar spoke to Gaultbert about him.

After the trial to which his disguise had been subjected, he felt perfect confidence that neither of the confederates could identify him and he took no precautions to escape their observation.

The steamer was towing the ship astern of her, and not by making fast alongside of her, and as the waters of the bay were entirely smooth, the hatches had not yet been put on, for there was considerable to be done in stowing away various articles and bales of freight between decks.

The forward deck house was assigned to the men before the mast ; and it was a vastly more comfortable place than is often provided for them.

The shadow looked it through, seeking for any places which might conceal the several packages in which the diamonds had been divided ; but he found no openings which he regarded as peculiarly adapted to the purpose.

The spare space under the bunks and elsewhere was filled with the bags, boxes, and trunks of the sailors, and Rowly concluded that Gibbs must be provided with something to hold his clothes.

Among them was a small trunk which appeared to be entirely new, and it was the only thing that could

properly be called a trunk in the miscellaneous collection.

To the shadow it was more than probable that this trunk belonged to Gibbs, for it was new, and his higher style of living would lead him to provide better for himself than the ordinary sailor would consider it necessary to do.

He was looking at the outside of this trunk, in order to find any mark by which he could identify it as the property of the burglar ; and while he was doing so, he discovered the assumed owner standing at the door, watching him.

Gibbs remained but a moment, and then Rowly followed him below ; but he had not taken ten steps before he was thrown down from behind and a handkerchief was stuffed into his mouth so that he could not cry out.

CHAPTER XXX7.

A MYSTERIOUS STRANGER AT HAND.

ROWLY was not a little astonished to find himself a gagged prisoner at the very moment when he thought his mission was progressing to a happy conclusion.

Neither his mother nor Captain Ringboom had been on the lookout for him in any other than his own proper character, while Gibbs was certainly on the watch for anything that was suspicious. He had seen enough of Rowly, both at the store and in his own room, to know him well, and he had every inducement to exercise the utmost vigilance.

The shadow realized when it was too late that the visit to the quarters of the crew, and his close examination of the trunk, were bad mistakes, and that they were the cause of his present misfortune. Perhaps the burglar had not suspected him till he saw him looking at his trunk.

It was light enough for the prisoner to see that his

captors were Gibbs and Gaulbert ; and as he had seen the former ahead of him a moment before, he understood that the latter had thrown him down by stealing up behind him.

Gibbs was the principal actor after the first blow had been struck, and it was he who applied the gag : and then, seizing the shadow by the collar of his coat, he dragged him forward, while his companion held his feet, of which the prisoner was disposed to make use, for he was not inclined to submit to the discipline to which he was subjected.

Only the main hatch was open, and they dragged their victim to the forward part of the ship, where there was very little light, and where the "between decks" was more closely filled with freight.

"Did you bring a piece of small line with you, Gaulbert?" asked Gibbs, as he halted when he could go no farther.

"No, I didn't ; you did not say anything about any small line," replied the assistant.

"How do you suppose we are going to fasten him without a line?" demanded the burglar, impatiently. "Go and find one as quick as you can."

Gibbs put his hand on Rowly's throat, and if he moved, he choked him till he was glad to desist.

"Keep still, or you will compel me to put a pistol ball through your head!" said Gibbs in a low

but savage tone ; and it was evident enough that he would not scruple to commit any act to insure his own safety, and that of the treasure he was bearing to a safer clime.

Gaulbert was gone a long time, but at last he returned with the line ; Rowly was bound hand and foot, and the handkerchief which served as a gag was tied into his mouth with a string fastened on the back of his neck. When this was done, his captors left him, and returned to the work in which they had been engaged near the after hatch, which was stowing freight.

So far as the prisoner could ascertain, Gibbs had done his work better than in the store of Brilliant & Co., for he found it impossible to move his wrists at all, they were so tightly bound.

His ankles were not less securely fastened ; and in addition to the bonds which held him hand and foot, he found that he was tied to a ring in the ceiling of the vessel, which he could see when he had become accustomed to the semi-darkness of the place.

For some time he struggled in the attempt to loosen the line that bound him, but without making any perceptible impression upon it. He tried to use his voice, but he was almost choked by the gag, and he could not make an audible sound, or at least one

that could be heard twenty feet from the spot where he lay.

Rowly had been hopeful that something would transpire to release him from his bonds ; that the mate would inspect the between decks, or that Captain Wellfleet would miss him ; but no one came near him, and he could hear nothing but the tramp of footsteps on the deck above him, and the ripple of the water against the side of the ship.

The situation looked worse and worse as he contemplated it, and he could not imagine any avenue of escape, for Captain Ringboom was on board of the *Medusa*, and could not notice his disappearance. Gibbs and Gaulbert were still at their work, like two dragons who guarded the entrance to some dungeon where he was confined, and there seemed to be no hope in the future, still less in the present. Hope Everton would never receive the fortune sent to her by her deceased uncle, and if he ever returned to his home, it would only be after the lapse of weeks, if not of months.

The more he looked at the hopeless condition to which he had been reduced by his great enemy, the more deep was his despair, and at last he gave way to the violence of his emotions, and wept bitterly, sobbing and choking in the depths of his grief and agony.

“What is the matter with you?” said a voice quite near him, but in a low and guarded tone.

This sound of a human voice so near him, which was not that of either of his enemies, roused him from the stupor of his grievous situation, and inspired him with a renewed hope.

Who could it be that spoke to him out of the gloom of the place? He raised his head; but he could see no one, and he could not make an articulate sound in reply to what he judged was a friendly inquiry.

Rowly moaned again, and he tried to make the sounds convey some meaning to his prudent friend, as he took him to be.

“Why don’t you speak, and tell me what the matter is?” added the dark stranger, rather impatiently, though not in an unfriendly tone.

Rowly moaned again, and then whined in the supplicating tones of a dog, which, without any words, clearly indicate that the poor brute wants something.

“I am afraid to come out of my hole, and if I should be seen they would send me back to New York; and I would rather be thrown into the sea than be returned to my former misery.”

The prostrate shadow did the best he could to make his inarticulate sounds intelligible; and he felt from what the stranger had said that he had assured him he was not an enemy.

"I am stealing my passage on board of this ship to my home in England, but I will pay for it, if I ever reach my home," continued the unknown. "I should think you might speak, and tell me what has happened to you. I am no man's enemy, and I should be glad to serve you if you would tell me what to do."

It was wholly impossible for Rowly to tell him what to do, and he could only moan and whine as he had done before.

The stranger seemed to feel that he was powerless, and he was silent for a time waiting for some new development of the situation of the sufferer, as he could not help knowing that he was.

The unhappy shadow rolled over on the deck with some difficulty, and tried to rub the handkerchief which oppressed him out of his mouth; but all his efforts in this direction were useless, and he resumed the making of such sounds as his condition permitted.

Presently he heard a slight sound on the deck beside him, which was that of a cautious step, as if the mysterious stranger, though he was nothing but a stowaway, was approaching him, and this consciousness inspired him with a stronger hope.

Rowly lay upon his back, as the most comfortable position he could obtain after he had tried several, and he could see all about him. In an aperture in the

freight he discovered a head in the direction from which the sound had come; and it was then apparent to him that the stranger had spoken to him from behind a bale of goods.

The head continued to advance into the dim light of the place, and was followed by the shoulders and the rest of the body, till only the legs were concealed from him, when the stranger raised his head, looked about him and listened for any sound that might be heard.

Rowly waited his further movements with the most intense interest.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE MELANCHOLY STORY OF THE STOWAWAY.

THE mysterious stranger had sufficiently explained himself to enable Rowly to know what he was, and that he was not an enemy, so that he had no fears of him in his helpless condition. He feared that he would do nothing rather than that he would act to his disadvantage, and he did all that his limited means permitted to encourage the stowaway to assist him in his dire extremity.

The unknown, after he had looked all about him, and listened for unfriendly sounds, crawled entirely out of the hole, which doubtless conducted to some larger space where he had remained concealed.

He did not venture to raise himself to the full stature of a man, but crawled on his hands and knees towards the extended form of the shadow, acting all the time with extreme care, and frequently stopping to listen for distant sounds. He had but a few feet to move, and when close to Rowly, he raised himself

on his knees, and again looked about him ; and when he discovered the two men at work at the open hatch, he seemed to be disposed to beat a hasty retreat.

A low moan and whine from Rowly then attracted his attention, for he had been so startled by the sight of the men that he had hardly glanced at the prisoner.

“What ails you?” he asked, and his tones indicated that he was moved by sympathy for the sufferer, and he bent over him as he spoke.

Then, for the first time, he noticed the gag, fastened into the mouth of the prisoner ; and he appeared to understand why he had been unable to get a word out of him up to the present time.

“You are gagged and cannot speak,” said he, as he placed his hand on the handkerchief. Rowly nodded and moaned again, to assure his companion that he appreciated the interest he manifested in his situation. “I will untie the string that binds the handkerchief ; but don’t make a bit of noise, or you will betray and ruin me.”

The shadow raised his head, and then turned partly over on his side so that his new friend could untie the string, which the stranger accomplished without any difficulty, and removed the gag from his mouth.

“Now you can speak, and will tell me what ails you,” said the stowaway.

"Nothing ails me," replied Rowly, though his tongue felt as though it were twice its natural size. "You can see that I am bound hand and foot so that I cannot move."

"Are you a criminal, arrested for breaking the law?" asked the stranger, suspiciously, as he retreated a step from the prisoner.

"No, I am not; I was engaged in taking those who had broken the law, and they turned upon me, leaving me as you found me."

"Who are the men?"

"The two you see at work near the hatch. They tried to rob the store of Brillyant & Co., in Broadway; and one of them committed two other robberies. They are now trying to get out of this country, and have shipped for London. They have their plunder on board of this vessel, and I was trying to find it, when one of them took me in the rear, and brought me down. That is the whole story."

"I think you are telling the truth, and though I am stealing my passage to London, I am an honest young man, and shall pay for it as soon as I get home," said the stranger. "My name is Ernest Balfour, and I belong to a good family, and my father has a large fortune. I was——"

"If you will unfasten the line that binds my hands and feet, I shall be able to hear and understand your

story better," Rowly interposed. "The cord is bound so tight that it hurts me, and I am suffering great pain from it."

"Shall I do right if I release you?" asked Ernest Balfour, doubtfully.

"You will do just right, for I have told you the exact truth," replied Rowly, in an earnest whisper. "If you do not believe me, go on deck, and tell the captain I am here, and he will release me in the twinkling of an eye."

"Go on deck! Tell the captain! Either of these steps will ruin me; so it is perfectly safe for you to tell me to do such things," said Ernest, in a sickly tone, and with a sickly smile, which the shadow could just discern in the gloom between decks.

"You have nothing to fear; and if you will release me, I will guarantee your passage to London."

"I don't know; I have suffered so much, and have been so often kicked from pillar to post, that I can trust no one, and I am very suspicious," pleaded Ernest, in a sort of piteous tone, which assured the prisoner that he was sincere.

Just then Rowly remembered that he had a note in his pocket from his employers. He had thought it possible the day before that he might even have to go to London in the *Ganymede* in carrying out his mission, and he had written for an extension of his

leave of absence in case he should find it necessary to prolong it.

He had found the note at the house when he went to change his dress, and had put it in his pocket; and it was likely now to be of essential service to him.

"Put your hand into my coat pocket, Mr. Balfour, and take out a letter you will find there," said he to his timid and broken down companion. "I hope it will satisfy you that I have told you nothing but the truth."

"I will do so," he replied, suiting the action to the word.

"Now open and read it. Brillyant & Co, is one of the largest jewelry houses in New York," said Rowly, hopefully.

"I know it; I once applied there for employment, though I did not obtain it," replied Ernest, as he took the note from the envelope.

He turned it to the light and read it; and as Mr. Brillyant, who had written it, alluded to his valuable services in saving the store from being plundered as a reason for granting the favor asked, it contained just the information the Englishman needed to convince him.

"But I don't know that you are the person alluded to in this letter," said the stowaway, when he had

finished reading it, greatly to the annoyance of the expectant shadow.

"Do you suppose I stole the letter?" demanded Rowly, indignantly.

"Perhaps not; it is dated to-day," mused Ernest.

"Open my vest, and look at my shirt, under the bosom," added Rowly, hardly able to control his impatience.

The stranger complied with this request, and read the name of the wearer of the shirt, in his mother's handwriting.

"Do you think I stole my shirt too?" he inquired.

"Not so loud, if you please," said Ernest, raising his hand in a deprecatory gesture, as he glanced at the two men near the hatch. "I am satisfied now."

Ernest Balfour proceeded to untie the line which bound together the wrists of the prisoner, and then released his ankles from bondage.

"I thank you for what you have done, and you shall certainly lose nothing for it, for I will guarantee you a free passage to London; and I assure you I have the power to do so," added Rowly, taking the hand of the stowaway, and pressing it warmly.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A PANIC ON THE GANYMEDE.

THE stowaway on board of the *Ganymede* had rendered Rowly a most important service ; but so great was his timidity that he turned away to conceal himself again in his hiding-place among the vessel's cargo.

"You need not go back to your hole, my good friend ; there is no longer any need for you to conceal yourself," Rowly interposed.

"I should be afraid to allow myself to be seen," replied Balfour.

"You need be afraid of nothing now, unless it be of those two men, and even they have no desire to harm you," continued the shadow.

"If you knew what I have suffered, you would not blame me for my timidity," sighed Ernest. "My people are rich ; I loved a dear, good girl who worked in a shop, and they would not let me marry her. I ran away with her to America ; but we were ship-

wrecked on the coast of Long Island. We were both saved, but poor Marie caught a cold, had the pneumonia, and died. My money was gone; I could not get employment, for no one knew me. I suffered from cold and hunger. I was too proud to write to my father, though he told me if I would leave poor Marie he would take me back to our home. I have left her in a sandy grave on Long Island, and am stealing my passage home." And he wept bitterly.

"We will talk about that another time," added Rowly, too much absorbed in his mission to think of anything else. "I want you to go on deck for me, and speak to the captain."

"If you want to tell him something, why don't you go yourself?" asked Ernest, terrified at the idea proposed to him.

"In the first place, those men you see by the open hatch would fall upon me, and perhaps kill me, if I should show myself to them," replied Rowly.

"Perhaps they will fall upon me and kill me," suggested the timid man, as he glanced in the direction of the hatch.

"No, they will not; they don't know you, and have nothing to fear from you. In the second place, I want to carry out my plan to recover the stolen property, and it is necessary for me to keep those men in sight all the time."

"Then the captain knows that you are here, doesn't he?"

"He knows that I am on board of the ship."

"Then why didn't he come down here and let you loose after they had gagged and bound you?" asked the suspicious Briton.

"He did not know that anything had happened to me," replied Rowly, impatient under the avalanche of questions put to him. "I will tell you what I will do: I will pay your passage to London. I will give you the money now, and you can go to the captain, and offer to pay him for a cabin passage."

This idea seemed to please the stowaway, and his looks indicated that he was inclined to consent to the arrangement.

"Suppose those men should attack me?" suggested he.

"Then I will go to your assistance," answered Rowly, taking the handsome revolver from his hip pocket, where he had carried it most of the time since it came into his possession. "But they will not meddle with you."

"If they speak to me what shall I say?" asked Balfour.

"Don't say anything; don't take any notice of them, and go on deck as fast as you can. If they meddle with you, cry out as loud as you can for help,"

replied Rowly, as he took Mr. Brillyant's letter from his pocket, and began to write on the blank side of the sheet.

He stated that he had been captured by Gibbs and Gaulbert, and had been released by his friend, the bearer of the letter. He asked the captain not to call the two men from the place where they were at work, and to signal Captain Ringboom to have the "scare" come off as soon as possible, for he judged by the motion of the ship that she had passed through the Narrows.

He folded the note as it had been before, and placed it in the same envelope, writing the captain's name on it after crossing off his own.

"Put this letter in your pocket, and don't let those men see it," said the shadow. "Don't take any notice of them, and if they meddle with you, sing out as loud as you can."

"I will do everything just as you tell me," replied Balfour, as he buttoned his seedy coat, the better to protect the letter. "I am not a coward, and I am only timid of doing anything wrong. Now that I have the money to pay my passage, I am not afraid of anything; but I should die in despair if I were sent back to New York to suffer again what I have endured."

"Good! I am glad to hear you say so. You

shall not be sent back ; or if you are I will pay your passage on the next steamer that sails for England," said Rowly, pleased with his new friend now that he had stiffened up his back.

"That isn't all : if those men attack me, I shall give a good account of myself, and you will see that I am not a simpleton, though I have behaved like one in my terror," replied Balfour, as he started with a firm step towards the after part of the ship.

The shadow retained the revolver in his hand ready for instant use, for he was confident that he should need it before his mission was fully accomplished, as he knew that the "scare" he had organized would render active operations necessary.

Noticing that the backs of Gibbs and Gaulbert were turned towards him, he crept silently and rapidly to a pile of goods stowed about thirty feet nearer the open hatch than the spot where he had been captured by the burglar and his confederate.

From this point he could see much better what transpired as Balfour went on deck ; and he could hear what was said if they spoke to him.

"Who are you?" demanded Gibbs, as he discovered the approach of the stowaway.

Balfour did not make any reply, or even look at the speaker who had addressed him, and Gibbs made a

movement as though he intended to dispute his farther progress.

But the bearer of the letter to the captain leaped lightly on a bale of goods and passed without meeting him face to face, hastening to the notched stanchion which formed a sort of ladder abaft the hatch.

"Who is that fellow, Gaulbert?" asked Gibbs, evidently disturbed by the appearance of the stranger between decks.

"I don't know; I never set eyes on him before," answered the other.

"The forward hatch is not off, and he could not have come below that way," continued Gibbs. "He must have been here when we upset Rowly, and perhaps he knows all about it."

"I don't believe he does, for that was done over half an hour ago, and he would have let on before this time if he had known anything."

"I don't know about that; perhaps he has let the young duck loose. We must see to this. Go forward, Gaulbert, and see if he is where we left him," said Gibbs, evidently greatly disturbed by the suspicion which had entered his mind.

Gaulbert started to obey his superior in burglary, though he did not appear to be at all alarmed at the prospect before him.

"Here, you freshwater lobster, where are you

going?" demanded the mate, appearing at the hatch at this moment. He had been sent by the captain as soon as he had read the first part of the penciled note to see that the shadow's request was complied with. "Put your shoulder to that bale, and stow it on the plankshear."

Gaulbert halted, for he was afraid of the mate.

"I was only going for my coat, sir," replied he, as he returned to the vicinity of the hatch.

"Now, take hold of that bale, lively, and turn it over. You will freeze to death if you don't wake up. Do you think a ship bound out is the place for idlers?" shouted the mate in a loud voice from the deck above.

Rowly had crawled behind a bale which had not yet been properly stowed, and listened while the mate reeled off his orders, most of which were unintelligible to the green hand; but his mind was filled with expectation and anxiety, for the moment, for very decided action was close at hand, and there would be a tremendous excitement on board of both vessels in the course of a few minutes, and perhaps in a few seconds.

He grasped the revolver in his right hand, and did all he could to prepare himself for the scene he anticipated, and which he had planned himself.

Balfour had reached the deck without any difficulty,

and found the captain standing near the cabin door; and without saying a word, had handed him the letter, which the captain opened without any remark, though he did look rather sharply at the bearer of it.

When he had read the beginning of the letter he sent the mate to keep Gibbs and Gaulbert where they were; then he read on, and a moment later he waved his handkerchief in the direction of the *Medusa*.

The steamer immediately stopped her screw, and as she lost her headway, fell back against the ship.

There was some heavy bumping after it, and the *Ganymede* was shaken and jarred as though she had struck upon a rock.

"The ship is lost! She is on a rock, and she will go to the bottom in two minutes!" yelled Captain Ringboom, as he leaped from the rail of the *Medusa* to that of the ship.

"Stand by to lower the boats!" shouted Captain Wellfleet. "The ship will be under water in two minutes! Let every man keep his weather eye open!"

The two captains and the mates of the ship yelled at the top of their lungs, assisted by the officers of the steamer. Of course there was a terrible panic on board the *Ganymede*.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ROWLY'S PLOT SUCCEEDS.

THOUGH the situation was hardly a dangerous one, with so many vessels at hand, and so near the shore, there was a tremendous excitement, and there seemed to be no order or system on board, for all were yelling, and even the captain did not exhibit the coolness and self-possession which might be expected of the commander in a trying time.

The sailors lost their heads entirely, as they might be excused for doing when the officers set such an exceedingly bad example for them, and they bolted for the Medusa, giving no heed to the order, repeated by the mate, to stand by and lower the boats.

Captain Ringboom belied the old saying that rats leave a sinking ship, for he leaped on board of the Ganymede in the moment of her peril, and just as it was announced by the captain that she would go to the bottom in two minutes.

He yelled and roared like a mad bull, and no

reasonable owner would have given him a ship on the recommendation of his wild conduct on the present occasion. The redeeming feature of his conduct was that he did not regard any merely personal peril, and whatever else he was, he demonstrated that he was a brave man, and did not fear to go where the danger was the greatest.

But he did more than merely to go on board of the *Ganymede*, for he did not stop on the deck. He rushed to the open hatch of the ship, looked down, and then began his descent by the notched stanchion, though there was no evidence in what he saw that there was a single person in the hold or between decks.

But he had scarcely reached the lower deck before he heard the report of a pistol in the forward part of the ship, and heedless of the imminent peril in which the vessel was said to be, he hastened in the direction from which the sound came.

Ernest Balfour remained on deck after he had delivered the letter to Captain Wellfleet, for Rowly had given him no instructions in regard to his conduct after he had done the duty assigned to him, and very likely he regarded his chances of reaching London in the *Ganymede* as very few and remote.

Rowly had watched the progress of his messenger to the captain with the most intense interest, for, as

before indicated, he expected an extraordinary excitement would soon prevail on board of the ship. It did not come any sooner than he anticipated, and he was ready for the event as soon as the commotion on deck announced its approach.

He was completely sheltered from observation in his retreat behind the bales of merchandise, and he was not at all startled by the terrible cry that the ship was going to the bottom in two minutes.

He was extremely anxious in that momentous instant of peril ; but he did not feel the slightest impulse to escape from the interior of the vessel, which the cry indicated must soon be overwhelmed with the raging waters. On the contrary, he placed himself in a position to observe the movements of the two men, Gibbs and Gaulbert, near the open hatch, and he was completely absorbed by the intensity with which he watched them.

The moment the uproar on deck began, the doughty mate, who had been directing and stimulating the movements of the two men at work, abandoned his position, and the sailors were left to escape in whatever manner they thought best.

It is "every man for himself" after the ship is doomed, and the mate appeared to act on this theory, though he evidently knew what he was about and understood his duty thoroughly.

"The ship has struck on a rock!" exclaimed Gibbs, suspending his work on the bales, and gazing out at the open hatch.

"She is going to the bottom in two minutes!" gasped Gaulbert; and it was evident to Rowland, who could plainly hear every word they said, and even distinguish the expression on their faces, that they were duly and properly impressed by the imminence of the impending calamity.

"We must save the swag!" almost shouted Gibbs, in his excitement, as he threw up his arms, and indulged in a series of tragic gestures, and a string of profanity that might have shocked the roughest seaman sleeping off his debauch in the fore-castle.

"We have no time," cried Gaulbert. "We shall be drowned if we stay here a minute longer;" and Rowly fancied the green hand could hear the roar of the rushing waters as they poured in through the hole in the bottom of the *Ganymede*.

"I would rather die than lose the treasure!" added Gibbs, speaking as though he meant what he said. "It will not take half a minute to get it, and you must help me!"

Gaulbert seemed to be the slave of the adroit burglar, and doubtless he had pictured the delights of a promised share of the booty in a foreign land, where he would have no one to molest or make him afraid,

and he offered no objection in words to the proposition of his comrade in iniquity.

Gibbs started at a furious speed for the forward part of the ship, closely followed by his associate, and Rowly drew back to escape observation as they passed. They were too intent on saving their ill-gotten treasure to heed him, even if he had taken no pains to conceal himself.

Rowly understood the situation better than the two men, and he followed them more leisurely, taking care not to be seen by them, though they must be too busy to bestow much attention upon him. Carefully concealing himself behind the bales of goods, he succeeded in reaching the foremast without being seen, and the great size of it enabled him to secure a safe position in its shadow.

"Lively, Gaulbert!" shouted Gibbs, abandoning all precautions in his haste to secure the treasure, which, by the shadow, was supposed to consist of the diamonds, the money taken from the house of Morgan Dykes, and such other plunder as they happened to have on hand.

Gibbs seemed to be on such intimate terms with his comrade that Rowly could not help asking himself whether the latter was really a burglar, rather than a simple confederate for a particular job, as he had at first supposed.

Bronker, which was the name by which he had been known in the store, had been in the employ of the firm about three months ; and it was not improbable that he had secured the place for the purpose of assisting in the robbery at the favorable time for the undertaking. Without any information on the subject, it was reasonable to conclude that he was to receive some share of the plunder when it was disposed of on the other side of the Atlantic ; otherwise he would not have been willing to risk his life to save the "swag" concealed in the forward part of the Ganymede.

As he endeavored to inspire his companion with renewed zeal in recovering the treasure, Gibbs laid hold of a wooden case of merchandise, and expended all his strength in an effort to move it alone, in which he failed.

"Take hold here, Gaulbert!" he shouted with a heavy oath, which seemed to be out of place in his mouth, for he had always talked like a gentleman in what the shadow had seen of him.

"Give me a chance, and I will," replied the assistant ; and he bent his back to the task before him.

The box came out of its place in the twinkling of an eye, and was shoved out of the way by Gaulbert, who was much stronger than his principal. Smaller boxes, bales and packages were tumbled in hot haste

from their places where they had been stowed for the voyage, and pitched indiscriminately in every direction. It was plain that Gibbs and his companion had built a fortress of merchandise over and around the treasure.

Suddenly the heavy work ceased, and the principal leaped over the pile that surrounded him, and dived down to the bottom of the pile of freight, and was lost for a moment to the sight of the observer behind the foremast.

"Here it is!" shouted Gibbs, as he emerged from the litter of boxes and packages with a bag made of bed ticking on his shoulder.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A CRITICAL MOMENT.

THE bag which Gibbs bore on his shoulder was not a large one, and only a small portion of its available space appeared to be filled ; but even two hundred thousand dollars' worth of diamonds, and the money and securities stolen from Morgan Dykes, would not make a very bulky package.

The din on deck continued, or rather it had but just begun, for the burglar had rushed to the forward part of the ship at the very first alarm, and before Captain Ringboom had leaped to the rail of the doomed ship.

If Rowly had looked at his watch before and after the movements of Gibbs and Gaulbert, he would have seen that less than two minutes was occupied in securing the bag, though the time to him seemed more like half an hour.

Up to this moment he had been on duty as a sentinel rather than an actor in the scene ; but now the

moment for decisive operations had come, for he had already decided that the plunder must not be carried on the upper deck.

Doubtless the officers which the master of the Reindeer had placed on board of the Medusa had already come on board of the ship ; and if Gibbs realized that he was defeated and was to be arrested, he would not hesitate to throw the treasure overboard so that it should not bear witness against him.

Rowly had decided that he must not be allowed to do such a disastrous thing to the interests of the diamond heiress, and he was willing to take the chances of a shot or two from the burglar's revolver, for he was confident he carried such a weapon about him, rather than reduce Hope Everton to poverty again.

"I don't hear any rush of water in the hold," said Gibbs, as he paused near the foremast to catch his breath, which he had been expending at a fearful rate in getting access to the ticking bag on his shoulder.

"But they are keeping up the racket on deck," replied Gaulbert, who was also panting from his exertions. "We have no time to lose."

"I don't mean to lose any time that we need ; but I don't want to get on deck till the last minute, for some one may want to know what is in this bag,"

retorted Gibbs, who recovered his self-possession before his wind.

“Well, don’t stay here, so far from the hole to get out of this place. We will wait till you get ready where we were at work ; and then we can get out in a second when the right time comes.”

“All right,” replied Gibbs, to whom this sounded like prudent advice, as he looked about him in the darkness.

“It will be all up with that young duck, Rowly, in about two minutes more,” said Gaulbert, when he divined what his principal was looking for as he gazed in the direction where they had left the young shadow, bound hand and foot.

“He will certainly be drowned when the ship goes down, and I don’t half like the idea,” remarked Gibbs, as he moved aft a few steps, as if to improve his view of the surroundings.

“It will be one witness against you out of the way, for dead men tell no tales,” said Gaulbert, with something like a chuckle. “Perhaps they cannot find you guilty without his evidence.”

“The contents of this bag would be enough to convict me without the evidence of this young cub,” replied the principal. “But I don’t mean that the bag and what is in it shall be used against me, for if I get into a tight place I shall just toss it overboard.”

“Then Rowly’s evidence would convict you without the bag and what is in it,” suggested the assistant.

“I wouldn’t kill the young cub unless I was obliged to do so ; and if he is drowned in this scrape it will make it all the worse for me if I am arrested,” reasoned Gibbs. “There is the place where we left him ; but I don’t see anything of him.”

“Oh, well, he must be there.”

“I don’t believe it was possible for him to get loose, as he did in the store, for I put good knots and enough of them into the line with which I tied him.”

Gibbs moved aft till he came to the place where Rowly had been attacked and defeated, the shadow moving around the mast as he passed it.

“He is not here !” exclaimed Gibbs ; and his tones indicated that he was not a little disturbed by the discovery of his absence.

“He can’t have gone any distance, tied hand and foot as he was,” said Gaulbert, proceeding to search for their late prisoner. “This explains it !”

As he spoke he picked up the line with which Rowly had been bound, as it had been left where it happened to drop when the stowaway removed it from the shadow’s limbs.

“He couldn’t have taken that rope off himself, I

know," continued Gibbs. "He has had some assistance."

"It must have been the fellow that passed us and went on deck just before the ship struck on the rock," suggested the assistant.

"That fellow could not have been between decks when we tipped the young cub over. We have been below all the afternoon, and no one came down," Gibbs argued.

"I don't know how he got down here, but he must be the fellow that released the young lobster," said the assistant.

"And by this time he has told the captain and others all about the affair," continued the principal. "No; he could not have said anything, or they would have been down after Rowly before this time, and there was too much of a row on deck for him to say anything."

"And if this fellow let him loose he would have gone on deck before this time," said Gaulbert. "Perhaps he got out of here while we were digging out the bag."

Gibbs made no reply; and having recovered his breath in the brief period he had been inquiring into the situation of Rowly, he resumed his walk towards the open hatch.

"I didn't go on deck; I have been waiting for

you," shouted the shadow, coming out from behind the mast, ready for the desperate scene which he expected would follow.

"Lay hold of him, Gaulbert! Knock the breath out of his body as quick as you can!" cried Gibbs; but he did not drop the bag, for he appeared to think his associate needed no help in handling a mere boy.

But Rowly was not disposed to allow the breath to be knocked out of his body by such a ruffian as Gaulbert, and he realized that his chance would be small in a hand-to-hand encounter with the late assistant porter in the store.

"Down with him, quick, Gaulbert!" shouted Gibbs, who did not seem to fear interference from any source, and had abandoned all precautions. "Kill him! Use your knife!"

This speech indicated that the affair was to be fully as desperate as Rowly had anticipated, and he decided not to allow the ruffian to lay his hand on him. There was only one thing he could do, and he did it.

Raising the handsome revolver he carried in his hand, he aimed as well as the necessity for extreme haste would permit, and fired, retreating a few steps as he did so, to escape a blow directed at his head.

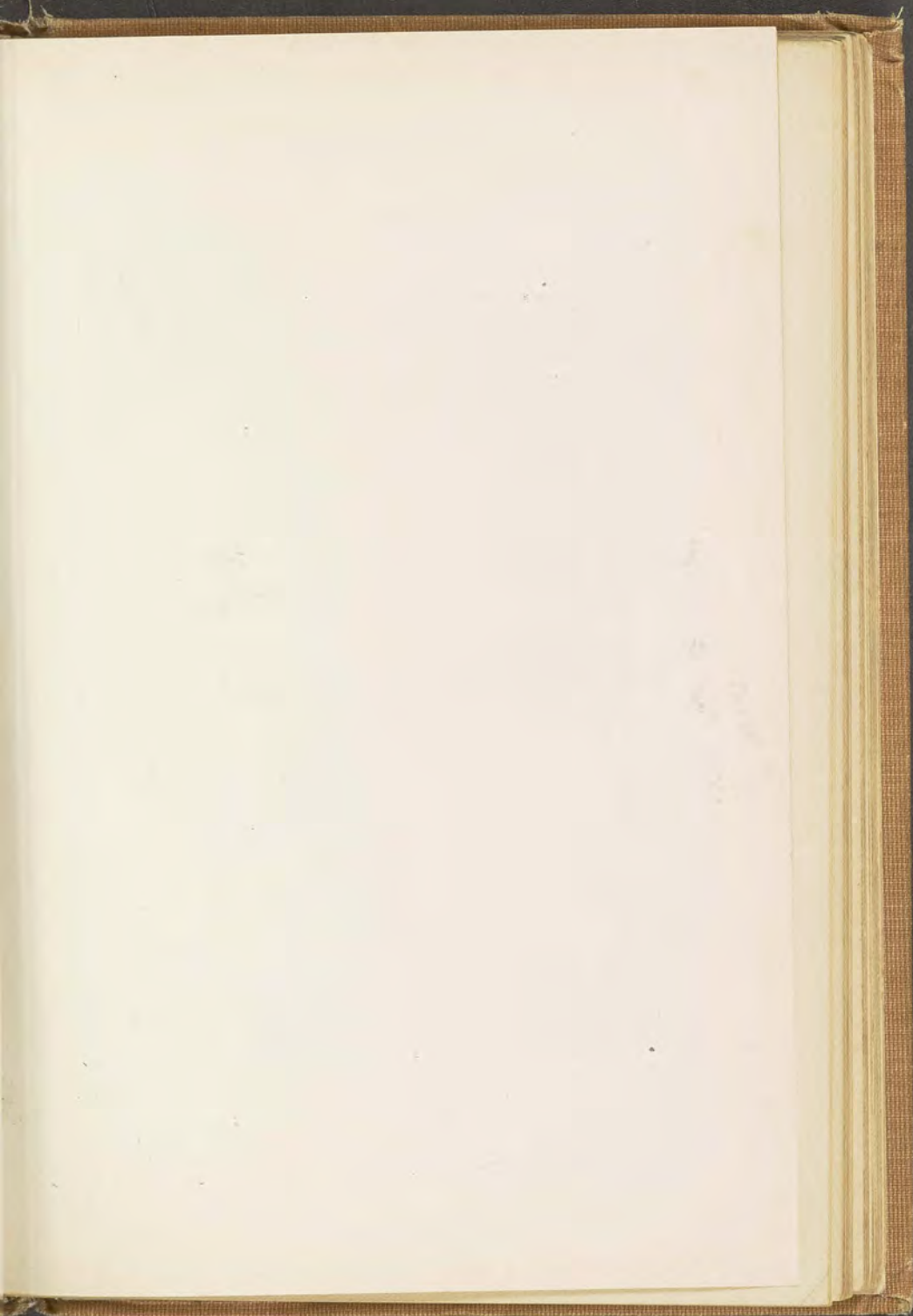
Gaulbert dropped his uplifted arm, and uttered a groan, falling to the deck as he did so; but he was

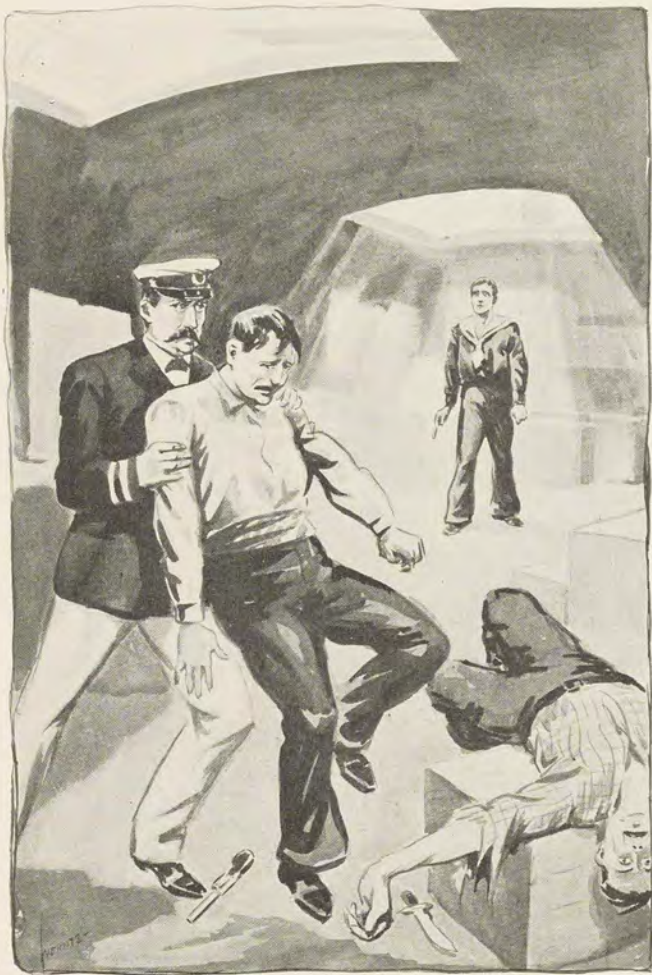
not killed, for he instantly raised himself, and seemed to be feeling with his left hand for a weapon.

Gibbs laid his bag on a bale of goods, and rushed towards the shadow as though he intended to do what his accomplice had failed to do; but Rowly was able to retreat a few steps more, when he raised his revolver and discharged it a second time.

The principal let fall the hand he was raising with a pistol in it, and it was certain that he had been hit in the arm or shoulder.

By this time Gaulbert had succeeded in taking a long sheath knife from his pocket with his left hand, and was advancing upon Rowly, when a new actor appeared on the scene of operations.





GIBBS WAS NOTHING BUT AN INFANT IN THE HANDS OF CAPTAIN RINGBOOM.

CHAPTER XL.

THE PACKAGE OF GLASS-WARE.

THE newcomer was Captain Ringboom, who had heard the report of the revolver the first time, and did not lose an instant in placing himself at the side of his young friend.

Before he could do so, he encountered the wounded assistant; but he made short work with him. Being unarmed except with the weapons with which nature had provided him, he seized the ruffian by the collar of his coat, and hurled him as though he had been a pigmy upon a pile of merchandise.

The villain fell with a heavy groan, indicating that he had been severely hurt, and the captain threw himself on the principal.

Gibbs was nothing but an infant in the hands of Captain Ringboom, besides the fact that all the advantage was on the captain's side, for he approached the burglar, intent on overcoming the young shadow in the rear. The shipmaster merely put his hands

on the shoulders of Gibbs, gave him a twirl, and pitched him down on the deck, putting his foot on him to keep him in his place.

By this time the noise of the affray between decks was heard on the spar deck, and two men in blue clothes descended hastily to the scene of action. They were the officers who had been instructed to follow the captain from the deck of the steamer, and they did not let the grass grow under their feet, if grass could have grown on the lower deck.

The moment the two ruffians had been overturned on the deck, Rowly rushed for the bag, and took possession of it, for the battle had been fought for that, and he was not inclined to lose the fruits of the victory.

He had no little curiosity to examine its contents, but this could not be done at present, and he had to content himself with feeling for what he most desired to find ; and he was satisfied that it contained several packages, corresponding in size with those he had seen in the stateroom of the captain's clerk.

The two officers took charge of the two prisoners, and conducted them to the hatch, where they met Captain Wellfleet, who wished to ascertain what was going on between decks.

The mate was standing on the deck where he could be seen from below, and he was laughing heartily, as

were several others near him, for the captain had now announced to those who did not know it that the striking of the ship on a rock was all a fiction, a trick played on the two prisoners.

"Well, my lad, how did you come out!" asked the commander of Rowly, who was hugging the bag as though it were the best friend he had on earth.

"These fellows showed me where this bag was, and dug it out of its hiding-place for me, sir," replied the young shadow. "I knew they would go for it as soon as they knew that the ship was going to the bottom."

"That's nothing but a bag, and it may contain nothing but shavings or hay," remarked the captain, laughing.

"Two fellows like these don't risk their lives to save a bag of shavings or hay from going to the bottom," said Rowly, with a knowing shake of the head.

"You may be right, youngster, and I will believe you are when I see what is in the bag," continued the commander, turning his attention to the two prisoners.

"I will open the bag in the cabin, sir, as soon as you are ready to look into the matter."

"Well, Gibbs, you seem to be in a tight place," said the captain of the *Ganymede*.

"Perhaps I am ; but I have been in a tighter one," replied Silky in a surly tone.

"Indeed? What, was that? In the Penitentiary?"

"No, sir ; I lived in a gallon jug for six months once," replied the burglar, with a sneer.

"You lived on the whisky in it you mean, and had it filled every week. I suppose you have concluded not to make a voyage in the Ganymede," said the captain.

"This fellow seems to be badly wounded," said one of the officers, in charge of Gaulbert.

"Put him on the deck, and I will look him over," replied Captain Wellfleet, whose experience as a shipmaster had given him some knowledge of medicine and surgery.

The assistant was laid on the deck, and the commander looked at his wounds, one in his right arm, and the other in his side ; but neither of them was dangerous.

Captain Ringboom was called in consultation, and agreed with his professional brother ; and he assisted in binding up the wounds of the burglar's assistant. Silky had been hit in the arm, and it was only a flesh wound, though it had been severe enough to make the cracksman drop his hand when he was about to do Rowly mischief.

The officers conducted their prisoners to the upper

deck, and were obliged to assist them both on account of their injuries, and they were immediately taken on board of the *Medusa*.

"Then the ship is not going to the bottom just yet," said Silky, bestowing a hateful look on the ocean swell.

"Not this time; in fact the *Ganymede* had no notion of going to the bottom at all," replied the captain laughing.

"You made racket enough to sink a dozen ships, and no vessel was ever handled any worse when she was in a tight place," added Silky, as a Parthian arrow shot at the dandy commander.

"She hasn't been in a tight place at all, my hearty. There is no rock anywhere near the vessel, and the commotion was only a trick of your very dear friend, Rowly, to make you show him where you had put the plunder you got last night at the house of Morgan Dykes, as well as the diamonds you stole from another house," replied the captain. Silky could not fail to realize that the young clerk in the store of Brillyant & Co. had vanquished him yet again.

Silky did not care to win anything more, and he only cast a look of hatred at Rowly, and no doubt he regretted the failure to take the life of the young clerk.

Captain Wellfleet led the way into the cabin, fol-

lowed by Rowly, Captain Ringboom, and Earnest Balfour, who had been greatly astonished at the proceedings which had followed his delivery of the letter to the commander.

“What am I to do now?” asked Balfour, when they reached the vestibule of the cabin, where he pulled Rowly’s coat to attract his attention.

“Do nothing at all, my good friend,” replied Rowly, in the kindest of tones. “You have rendered a service which was worth enough to pay your passage across the Atlantic a dozen times.”

“I don’t ask anything like a reward, and you have given me the money to pay my passage in this ship,” added Balfour.

“I will speak to the captain and arrange it all for you.”

“Then take this money, please, and pay him, for I really want nothing but my passage, and I will accept nothing more, for my father is rich and I shall need nothing if I once get to London,” continued Balfour as he thrust the bank bills into the hands of the shadow.

The stowaway was satisfied, and Rowly, anxious to investigate the contents of the bag, hastened to the cabin table where the others were already seated. Cutting the string of the bag, he poured its contents out on the table; and found that they consisted of

various packages, one of which was much larger than the others.

Selecting one of the smaller packages, he removed the wrapper from it, and found a small pasteboard box, from which he took off the cover.

"This is glassware, Captain Wellfleet," said the shadow with a triumphant smile on his face.

"Glassware, as sure as you live?" exclaimed the ocean swell, as he took the box and gazed at the sparkling gems it contained. "I give it up now, and you were all right, my hearty, while I was all wrong. But I gave you every chance to work out your plan, and it has been a decided success.

At this moment, the cabin steward announced that a steam tug had just come alongside, putting a man on board who wanted to see the captain. He was invited to the cabin.

This man was Blooks, alias Ashbank.

Rowly immediately recognized him, though he said nothing.

CHAPTER XLI

SOMETHING ABOUT A MODEL YOUNG MAN.

THE last that Rowly Parkway had heard of Ashbank was that he was a prisoner in the Tombs, and the young clerk could not imagine how he happened to be at liberty, and a passenger in the tug on a trip down the bay. He had not been tried, or even examined, on the charge for which he had been committed, and the only explanation which the shadow could suggest was that he had succeeded in making his escape from the prison where he was confined, though he could hardly understand how such an event was possible.

He was dressed precisely as he was when he had been arrested in the saloon, and it was hardly twenty-four hours since he had been taken ; but Rowly had seen enough of him to be satisfied that the man was the identical burglar that had entered the store of Brillyant & Co.

It was clear that his finances had been recruited in some manner since the interview with his wife in Central Park, or he would not be able to pay the bills

for an excursion down the harbor in a steamer, for he had been "dead broke" at the time of his capture.

Rowly had gathered up the packages, and returned them to the bag as soon as the captain told the steward to send the stranger into the cabin, and he put the sack under the table where the visitor could not see it.

The moment he recognized Ashbank, he was disposed to follow the bag under the table, for he did not care to have that worthy identify him as a clerk in the store he had attempted to rob; but on second thought he realized that he had changed his color and general appearance, so that the visitor was not likely to know him, and he permitted events to take their course in his presence.

"I understand that you are bound to London, captain," said Ashbank, after a hasty glance at the three persons around the cabin table.

"The *Ganymede* is bound to London," replied Captain Wellfleet.

"I am informed that this ship is one of the finest that sails out of New York," continued the burglar, in an insinuating tone, as though he had a point to gain in his visit to the vessel.

"That is a matter of opinion, though I quite agree with you," replied the ocean swell.

"From the hasty glance I have had at her, I am of the same opinion," added Ashbank.

"If you will excuse me, sir, I am only waiting for the steamer to cast off, and I am losing my time," said the captain, politely.

"Pardon me for detaining you, and I will state my business at once," answered the burglar, as politely as the dandy commander. "I am a person of sedentary habits, and my physician has insisted that I take an ocean voyage in a sailing ship, for he says a trip in a steamer amounts to nothing. He mentioned the *Ganymede* to me, and said she was to sail to-day or to-morrow, and advised me to go in her."

"Who is your physician, sir?" asked the captain.

"Dr. Reddyside," answered the applicant for a passage, promptly; but no one present had ever heard the name before. "I think he is acquainted with your owners."

"Do you happen to know who my owners are?"

"The doctor mentioned the name of the firm, but really I have forgotten it," replied Ashbank, who appeared to be trying to recall the name.

"Was it Peterson Brothers?" asked Captain Wellfleet, with a shrewd look on his fine face.

"That was it!" exclaimed Ashbank. "I wonder how I could forget so common a name."

Rowly knew that the captain himself owned half

of the vessel, and that the other half was owned by Larkin & Son, for Captain Ringboom had told him all about the ship ; and he saw that the commander was skirmishing with the applicant, and did not mean to take him as a passenger.

The shadow was not pleased with the situation, for he was confident that Ashbank had not left the Tombs by fair means, and that he must be a fugitive from justice ; so he took a piece of paper, and wrote with his pencil, "Take him, if you please ; I know him."

The captain took the paper when it was passed to him, read it, and glanced at Rowly, in whom he now had unbounded confidence, though he was satisfied that all was not right in regard to the visitor, even while he had no suspicion what was wrong about him.

"Did you apply to Peterson Brothers for a passage in the Ganymede?" asked the captain, as if to prepare the way for granting the application of the visitor.

"I did not, for I had no time ; a friend of mine had told me that the ship was to sail this afternoon at three, and I chartered a tug to overtake the ship before she got out to sea," replied Ashbank.

"What was your friend's name?" asked the inquisitive captain.

"His name is Gunnywood; and his business requires him to keep posted in regard to the movements of vessels. He informed me also that a mutual friend of ours, who had lost all his money in speculation, and had been reduced to extremities, had shipped in the *Ganymede* as a common sailor, which was an additional reason why I wished to sail in this ship."

"Precisely so; and what is the name of this unfortunate friend of Mr. Gunnywood and yourself, who is a sailor on board of the *Ganymede*?" asked Captain Wellfleet, glancing at Rowly.

"He shipped under the name of Gibbs, but that is not his real name, for he did not wish to have his family know what had become of him for a while."

"Do you mean his wife?"

"No, sir; he had no wife; his father, for his mother is dead."

"Ah, indeed! I gave him leave of absence to go and see his mother yesterday afternoon till this forenoon, for I always encourage young men to see their mothers as often as they can; and Gibbs must have known of my weakness about mothers, and lied to me," said the captain, with a significant smile.

"I think you must have misunderstood him, captain," added Ashbank, with a winning smile in response to that of the commander. "He must have

said his father, for I know that he has no mother."

"Very likely I mistook what he said, for I take no stock in fathers, and I should not have let him go. I understand that he has several grandmothers; in fact, rather more of them than the law allows," added the ocean swell, with a twinkle of the eye as he looked at Rowly.

The cheeky burglar seemed to be embarrassed by this last allusion, and it was evident that Silky was in the habit of calling a professional operation a "grandmother."

"We will send for your friend Mr. Gibbs," added the commander, rising from his seat.

CHAPTER XLII.

CAPTAIN WELFLEET MIXES HUMOR WITH BUSINESS.

MR. ASHBANK was evidently a good deal embarrassed at the position in which he found himself, and did not like Captain Wellfleet's strange behavior, or the reference to Silky's grandmothers. But the protuberances on the side of his face soon manifested themselves again, and he smiled as blandly and serenely as ever.

“ ‘Grandmothers’ is the term my friend always applied to his operations in stocks, and when he expected to realize a profit from any venture, he spoke of it as a gift of one of his grandmothers, for he has as many of them as he had enterprises on foot in the exchange,” Ashbank explained, as plausibly as though he were telling the simple truth; but no doubt he wondered how the captain knew anything about the peculiar phraseology of Silky.

“ I understand it perfectly now; but I am very sorry Gibbs lied to me, for it impairs my confidence

in him ; and I had some thought of taking him into the cabin with me as a clerk."

"I am very sure, captain, that he did not intend to tell you a falsehood, for he is a high-toned young man, member of a Baptist church, and very strict in the discharge of his religious duties. He would not tell a lie any more than he would steal your diamonds, if you had any in his way," protested Ashbank, quite warmly. "He has always been considered a model young man, and those who know more of the world than he does, say that the only reason why he lost all his money was because he was too honest to deal in stocks."

"After what you say of him I am willing to believe that Gibbs would as readily steal my diamonds, or any other man's diamonds, as he would tell a falsehood ; and, as he is altogether too good a man for this world, he will die young, and his time on earth is short. Do I understand that you wish to ship as a common sailor, so that you can be in the fore-castle with your honest and truthful friend, who has so many grandmothers that he don't know what to do with them?" asked the captain, as he rose from his seat at the table.

"Well, no, sir ; I am no sailor, as Gibbs is, and I should be of no use before the mast. Besides, I am able to pay my passage, and I am willing to

pay his, if his pride will let him accept such an offer."

"We will see about his pride, and I will send for him;" and the commander went to the door.

Captain Wellfleet passed out of the cabin to the deck of the ship, where he saw that the tug had come alongside on the port hand, while the *Medusa* was on the starboard side of the *Ganymede*; and it was evident that the applicant for passage had not seen his friend Gibbs, as the officers had taken him into the cabin of the towboat.

Bronker's clothes had been taken off, and he had been put to bed in one of the berths, so that his wounds could be properly dressed, for he was suffering considerable pain, while Silky had been ironed, and sat on a divan.

Rowly wanted to tell the captain who the applicant for passage was, and he left the cabin to follow him, though not till he had written on a bit of paper that the stranger was Ashbank, and passed it to Captain Ringboom.

"You seem to know that man in the cabin, Captain Wellfleet," said the shadow, when he joined the captain in the waist.

"I don't know him; but there is a screw loose in him somewhere, and I suspect that he is a bank clerk, or something of that sort, running away with

money that don't belong to him," replied the commander. "He has excited my curiosity, and I am going to call in Gibbs for the sake of having the officers take a look at him."

"I can save you all that trouble, for I know him perfectly," added Rowly. "He is a noted burglar, and the husband of the woman I have told you about. He was Silky's pal in the attempt to rob the store of Brilliant & Co., and was arrested yesterday, as I told you before."

"Whew!" whistled the captain. "He is bigger game than I supposed he was, and we shall have the pleasure of sending him back with the other two. If you are sure of the man, all we want is the officers; and I will send the mate and a couple of men to take care of the prisoners while they perform this new duty," continued the captain.

The mate and the men were sent on board of the *Medusa*, and Rowly went with them to explain the situation to the detectives, who made no difficulty in leaving their charge; but the captain of the *Ganymede* changed his mind, his curiosity and love of a stirring incident prompting him to bring the two burglars together in order to witness their confusion.

"Ashbank can have no suspicion of the real state of things on board of the ship and the steamer, can he?" inquired the captain, stopping short and look-

ing back at the shadow, as the officer returned for the prisoner.

“Certainly not; if he had he would not come on board of the *Ganymede*,” replied Rowly confidently. “How should he know anything about what has been going on since the ship left her anchorage?”

“I give it up; but these fellows know more than the constitution permits, and why should this worthy invalid take all this trouble to get on board of the *Ganymede*?”

“Because he knew that his pal had shipped for this voyage! The two burglars were together no longer ago than yesterday morning.”

The appearance of the officers with their prisoner interrupted the explanations, and the party proceeded to the cabin, the captain and the shadow leading the way.

Ashbank had taken a seat after the captain left, but he rose to his feet as soon as the captain appeared at the door, and kept his eyes fixed upon him as he went to his usual place at the head of the table.

Rowly fastened his gaze on the applicant for passage in order to observe the effect upon him when he discovered his associate; but Ashbank did not remove his gaze from the captain, and did not see the officers or their prisoner, for his back was turned toward them.

“I have had Gibbs brought in to see if he wishes to change his quarters from the forecabin to the cabin,” the captain began, as he dropped into his chair.

The burglar at liberty turned his head to see the burglar in bonds; but as Silky was ironed with his hands behind him, he could not discover the manacles upon him.

But he saw him, and Rowly observed a slight start in his frame, though he was too well trained to difficult situations to betray himself to any greater extent.

“Ah, Gunnywood—I beg your pardon, but I forgot that you were Gibbs on board of this ship,” said Ashbank, extending his hand to his pal, which for obvious reasons the latter declined to take. “I am glad to see you again, and I mean to take this voyage with you, if the captain will allow me to do so.”

“If you wish to make the voyage together, and your business is such that you can leave, I shall be glad to take both of you in the cabin,” interposed the ocean swell, as blandly as though he had been ignorant of the character of the men before him.

“Won’t you shake hands with me, Gibbs?” pleaded the applicant for passage.

“He has his hands behind him, and he must be scratching his back,” interjected the mischievous

commander. "I think you will have to dispense with that ceremony, Mr. —"

"Are you a fool, Maudleton?" demanded Silky, indignantly.

"Mr. Maudleton!" exclaimed the captain. "The gentleman did not favor us with his name; but now we know it. How is your wife, Mr. Maudleton? I don't like to be too familiar with a gentleman who honors me by selecting the Ganymede for his voyage to London, or I should say, 'How is Maggie?'"

Ashbank was so upset by these questions that he started back, and gazed at the captain with a lowering brow.

"I have no wife, sir," replied he, as he began to recover his self-possession. "If I did not believe it was impossible in a gentleman of your standing and dignity, I should suppose you were amusing yourself at my expense."

"It's no use, Maudleton! Don't you see that I am in irons, that I have been arrested?" demanded Silky, as he moved a step nearer to his late associate.

"Arrested!" exclaimed Ashbank, starting back again till he came within reach of the officers.

"It is time you were put in the same box with him," said one of them, as he slipped the irons on his wrists, when the other drew them behind the prisoner.

"I don't understand this," said Ashbank, fixing his gaze on the smiling captain.

"It is all up with us!" said Silky.

"Your friend speaks the truth this time, though, in spite of his church relations, and his high moral character, he is not in the habit of doing so. I suppose he would even deny that he stole two hundred thousand dollars' worth of diamonds, and would no more tell a lie than he would do such a thing," said the captain, rising from his seat.

The diamonds were a new revelation to Ashbank. He now understood why his pal had deserted him.

CHAPTER XLIII.

AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION.

"I know nothing of any diamonds," replied Ashbank, really puzzled by the allusion.

"That is quite true; he is entirely ignorant that his associate stole the casket of diamonds, and intended to dispose of them in London or on the continent; but it was done before their failure to secure any plunder at the store of Brillyant & Co., interposed Rowly, who was better posted in regard to the intentions and movements of the burglars than any other person.

"Is that so, Gunnywood?" demanded Ashbank, elevating himself to the dignity of one who feels that he has been wronged.

"I have nothing to say about it, Maudleton." It was difficult to tell what their names were, so many different ones were applied to them.

"I knew there was treachery on your part, Gunnywood," snarled Ashbank.

"The pot need not call the kettle black," replied Silky, who appeared to be resigned to the situation, at least for the time being.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Maudleton, or Mr. Ashbank, as the case may be, but I supposed you were safely lodged in the Tombs, and it is rather a surprise to see you on the wave at this distance from the city," said Rowly, though he hardly expected the burglar would give him any information to gratify his curiosity. "I did the best I could to procure your arrest."

"You did!" exclaimed Ashbank, looking at him with interest for the first time. "What did you do?"

"I pointed you out to the two officers that arrested you; and that was all I could do, or I would have done more," returned Rowly, warmly.

"Do you know me?"

"I shall answer that question by asking you the same one, do you know me?"

"I do not; I never saw you before in my life," replied the shadow.

"I think you are laboring under a mistake, for I saw you when you were in the store of Brillyant & Co., where I worked."

"That is the young cub that we bound in the store," growled Silky, who was already pleading

guilty, for he knew just how strong the evidence against him would foot up when the day of trial came. "But he has daubed his face, and put on a false mustache."

"Just as you have daubed your face and put on a false beard," retorted the young shadow, as he removed his unnatural hair, and, walking up to the burglar, snatched the false beard from his face. "It took me some time to determine who you were, though I knew I had seen you before."

"Then I am indebted to you for falling into the hands of the police," continued Ashbank.

"I think you are, since I pointed you out to two of them who happened to be together. I am happy to say that I rendered the same service to your wife early this morning in her cottage at Yonkers," continued Rowly.

"Maggie arrested!" exclaimed Ashbank, giving himself away as readily as his pal had done. "On what possible charge can my wife have been taken up, for she never took part in any of my operations?"

The burglar was deeply moved by the news of his wife, for he had not heard it before. Whatever his character, it was plain that he was wholly devoted to her, perhaps not alone because she clung to his doubtful fortunes, but because she was a very at-

tractive woman, as the shadow and all who had seen her, including the widowers at Yonkers, were very willing to admit.

"Didn't your wife assist you at the break into our store?" asked Rowly.

"She was not with us, and did not lift a finger to do anything with us," protested the burglar.

"But she enticed Mr. Amlock out of the store on the pretense that she was a sister of the junior partner; she gave him a dose of morphine, and stupefied him so that he did not know whether he stood on his head or his heels. If she did not lift a finger to help you, she did as much to aid you as though she had come into the store and held the senior clerk by the throat while you did your burglarious work," argued Rowly, with a good deal of enthusiasm.

"That is sound doctrine," said the captain of the *Ganymede*, laughing and clapping his hands at the vigor and earnestness of the young shadow. "But interested as I am in this case I must take my ship to sea."

"I did not finish examining the contents of the bag when Mr. Maudleton applied for passage. Perhaps you would like to know what else the bag holds, captain," suggested Rowly. "You did not take any stock in my story about the glassware."

"I will be with you in a minute," replied the com-

mander, as he went to the door and called the mate, whom he directed to shake out the topsails.

"We are two hands short, and the rest of the crew are hardly sober enough to do any work," replied the mate. "We have been drifting in shore for the last hour."

"Then let go the anchor, and I will send up town for more men," said the captain, as he returned to his place at the cabin table. "Now show up the plunder, Rowly."

The packages were all opened, and an inventory taken of those containing the diamonds, which was compared with the list the shadow had made, and not a single gem was missing.

A larger package was then opened, and was found to contain a portfolio, such as is used by bank officers and others for bank bills and papers; and it was stuffed as full as it could be with money and bonds.

"Morgan Dykes," continued Rowly, reading the name on the inside of the portfolio. "That informs us where this money and bonds come from. But Mr. Maudleton, Mr. Ashbank, or Mr. Blocks had no hand in the robbery of which this is the plunder."

"How is that?" asked Captain Ringboom.

"This break took place last night, while the gentleman who wants a passage to London was locked up in the Tombs," replied Rowly. "His wife was pres-

ent, but she only waited in the street to see her husband."

"How did you know all this, my boy?" asked Ashbank in a patronizing tone.

"I will make a trade with you, if you like, and swap off some of my information for some of yours," said Rowly, laughing.

"Silky has been a traitor to me and to my wife, and that will explain it all," added Ashbank, bitterly, as he bestowed sundry scowls upon his associate in crime. "He must have told you these things, or you never would have known them."

"I never told him a thing," protested Silky.

"Not too fast, Mr. Gunnywood," interposed the shadow. "If you will answer a question of mine, I will answer the one you have put to me."

"What is the question?" inquired Ashbank, apparently more anxious to convict his associate of treachery than he was to save himself.

"How did you get out of the Tombs?" asked Rowly.

The burglar knitted his brow, and seemed to be considering the matter for some time before he could decide what to do.

"By an arrangement months ago with a friend for the emergency; either of us was to serve the other in case of need," replied Ashbank at last. "I wanted

a priest, and I sent for Father Benderly, giving his residence. He was no priest, but he was my friend, and gave me his clerical dress, which I put on in the cell, and plenty of money. Then I went out without even being challenged. Silky had told me he intended to ship in the *Ganymede*, if he made a good haul at the jewelry store and leave the country forever. This was the day she was to sail, and I rushed to the pier, and chartered the tug. My friend is still in the Tombs, I suppose, but aiding a prisoner to escape is not a burglary, and I hope he will get off easy."

"In return for your information, I can only say I obtained my knowledge of your plans from Silky, while concealed under the bed, or listening at the door of his room," replied Rowly, giving all the details.

The party went on board of the *Medusa*, and Captain Ringboom was deputed to send down the sailors by a tug.

"But where is my clerk you were to bring down in the steamer, Ringboom?" demanded Captain Wellfleet.

Diligent search was made, but the captain's clerk could not be found.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE STOWAWAY.

CAPTAIN RINGBOOM had certainly brought down a young man who was to act as captain's clerk, and, after his examination, he had been instructed to remain on board of the *Medusa* until he was directed to report on board of the ship.

Some time was given to a search for him, and at last he was found stowed away in the stateroom of the engineer, of whose berth he had taken full possession, and his appearance indicated that he was not in a pleasant frame of mind.

"What is the matter with you?" demanded Captain Ringboom, who had been called as soon as the delinquent was found.

"I am sick; oh, sir, I am very sick! I am afraid I shall never live to see the blessed land again," groaned the sufferer, and he looked as though he had passed through a fever, he was so pale, and wore such a distressed expression.

“How came you in this room? Who told you you might turn in here?”

“No one, sir; ask them to excuse me if I have done wrong,” pleaded the sick clerk. “I was very ill on the forward part of the steamer, and I tried to go back where you were; but I thought I should faint away, and came into this room when I saw the door open. I did not shut the door; it was the motion of the steamer that did that.”

The usual signs of sea-sickness were apparent, though the *Medusa* had been subjected to very little of the ocean swell.

“It is nothing but sea-sickness, my man,” said the master of the *Reindeer*, in kinder tones than he had used before.

“Do you think I shall live to see the shore, sir?” asked the victim of the long rollers.

“The shore, my hearty! You will not see the land again for a month,” said the captain. “But you must turn out and go on board of the *Ganymede*, for the captain is waiting for you, and wants you to do some writing.”

“I cannot get up, sir; I shall faint away if I try to do so,” groaned the invalid.

It looked as though the captain's clerk was a decided and outspoken failure; and all the threats and persuasions of Captain Ringboom had no effect upon

him. It did not look as though he could be of any service on board of the *Ganymede*, if he were carried to her cabin, and the disgusted old salt concluded to report the situation to his friend.

"I am sorry for Wellfleet, for he has an avalanche of writing which has just fallen on him, and he is not disposed to do it himself," said the captain, as he encountered Rowly on his way to the deck of the ship. "Do you know of another young fellow that I can send down by the tug that brings the seamen? Perhaps Rush Sinnerton will be willing to make the voyage now that Silky is not to be his shipmate."

"Rush has gone home, and his father would not let him go to sea on any account; but I think I can manage the matter, and give Captain Wellfleet a clerk without any delay," replied Rowly, as they went on board of the ship.

"How is that?" asked the captain, curiously.

"I haven't told you how I got loose after the burglars had knocked me down, and tied me hand and foot between decks," continued Rowly.

"I did not even know that you had been knocked down and tied," said Captain Ringboom, halting in his interest and astonishment.

"Well, Ringboom, have you found my clerk? I want him right off," interposed he of the *Ganymede*, as they came on board of the ship.

"I have found him, but he will be as useless to you as a case of freight," replied he of the Reindeer, as he explained the condition of the clerk.

"That is bad ; that is very bad, for I have left all my writing for my clerk."

"Were you aware that Rowly had a battle below with the burglars at least an hour before the scare came off, Wellfleet?" asked the master of the Reindeer.

"Never heard a word of it ; we were too busy after the ship struck on the rock to talk over the news of the day," replied the commander of the ship, looking at the young shadow.

Rowly told the story of his encounter with the burglars, or rather explained in what manner he had been thrown down and made a prisoner, for he had no opportunity to defend himself, and then told the story of Ernest Balfour, who so opportunely released him from his confinement.

"Then he was the one who brought the letter to me," added Captain Wellfleet.

"He was ; and I wrote the letter as soon as I saw that things were in condition for the commotion we had arranged."

"I hardly looked at him, though his face was new to me, and I concluded that he was some one that belonged on board of the steamer."

“Ernest Balfour saved the battle to us,” continued Rowly; and if it had not been for him my plan would have been a failure.”

“And he was nothing but a stowaway,” added the commander, with something like contempt in his tones and manner.

“That is just what he was; but he intended to pay his passage when the ship arrived at London. He tried to steal his passage, but he meant to pay for it in the end; and it was the luckiest thing in the world that he happened to stow himself away on board of your ship,” said Rowly, very warmly. “I feel under very great obligations to him, and I have agreed to see that he is carried to London, even if I have to pay his passage in a steamer, which I am willing to do, and have money enough for the purpose.”

“Fasten up your purse strings, for I will give him a berth to London without money and without price,” laughed the commander, enthused by the earnestness of the young shadow.

“But I have another idea in my head, Captain Wellfleet. Balfour is well educated, and I have thought he could do duty as captain’s clerk.”

CHAPTER XLV.

ROWLY'S MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

CAPTAIN WELLFLEET was delighted with Rowly's suggestion that Ernest Balfour might take the place of the sick clerk.

"Excellent, my lad! I will even pay him wages in addition to giving him his passage," said the captain. "Where is he? Trot him out, and let us see what he is made of."

"If he does not suit you, I think I can find you another clerk before the next tide," added Rowly, as he left the cabin, where the party had resumed their seats at the table, to find the stowaway.

The shadow soon found him seated in the forward part of the deck, looking as melancholy as though he had lost all hope of every seeing his father again in this world.

"You are wanted in the cabin, Mr. Balfour," said Rowly.

"The captain wants to send me back to New York

in that steamer, does he not? No one has taken any notice of me since this extraordinary commotion began, and I wonder the ship did not go to the bottom in the midst of such direful confusion," replied Balfour, in a sad tone.

"The commotion, and the cry that the ship was sinking, were nothing but a farce; and the object was to frighten the two burglars who bound me between decks, to save their plunder, and thus enable me to find it," Rowly explained. "This was my plan, and it has been a perfect success, for we have recovered over two hundred thousand dollars' worth of property, stolen in New York. If you had not released me as you did, the scheme would have been a failure; and you ought to be able to understand that we are all your friends for life, Mr. Balfour. My friend Captain Ringboom is willing to reward you——"

"Hush up, if you please; I ask no reward but my passage, and I will pay for that as soon as I reach London. I can accept nothing; my father would cast me out if I should touch money for what was a mere accident."

"If you will go to the cabin with me, I think it can be arranged so that you will be sure of your passage to London, and without sacrificing your self-respect," added Rowly, as he led the way aft.

“Your hand, Mr. Balfour,” said Captain Ringboom, and he offered his own as they entered the cabin.

“And mine ; and I give you a hearty welcome on board of the *Ganymede*,” added Captain Wellfleet.

Rowly’s plan was explained to him, and he was found to be both competent and willing to take the vacant position, without pay, for the employment would be a pleasure to him ; and he took possession of the stateroom where the diamonds had been first concealed.

“My lad, I thought you were a sort of juvenile humbug when you came on board, and talked so glibly about two hundred thousand dollars’ worth of diamonds,” said Captain Wellfleet, as he took the hand of Rowly Parkway when he was about to go on board of the *Medusa* to return to New York. “I was quite sure that my friend Ringboom had lost his head, and that you would flat out like a land-locked bay in a calm when the test came in ; but I have changed my mind, and I find that Ringboom’s head was level, while you are surely a juvenile giant, and you don’t need anything but a few more years to make a tall man of you ; and I wish you were to sail in the same ship with me.”

“Thank you, captain ; you are very kind, and I shall always remember you with pleasure and with gratitude, for you allowed me to have my own way,

even when you did not believe in me," replied Rowly, as much delighted with the commander of the *Ganymede* as the latter was with him.

"I did that for Ringboom's sake, and he has both justified himself and the confidence he had in you. When I come back, I want you to dine with me," added the captain.

"I shall be very happy to do so," replied the young shadow, as the commander wrung his hand at parting.

Captain Ringboom expressed his obligations in the warmest terms to his friends, and Balfour, looking quite contented and happy now, took a friendly leave of his newly made friends.

The steamer cast off her fasts, and began her return trip to the city. Rowly felt that his mission was now fully accomplished, for every villain connected with the robbery of Brillyan & Co., the theft of the diamonds, and the break at the house of Morgan Dykes, had been secured, and the plunder wholly recovered.

Captain Ringboom took charge of the bag containing the treasure which had been recovered, and he would not permit it to pass out of his hands for an instant.

Silky and Blooks, to use the names by which Rowly had first known them, were seated on the locker that surrounded the cabin below the berths, and the two

officers had placed themselves one on each side of them, for they understood their charges were desperate men, who would scorn any risk in order to be free.

"I suppose the world, and especially the fellow's friends, will say that I led Rush Sinnerton away from the path of rectitude ; but the simple truth is that he has been the ruin of me," said Silky, as Rowly seated himself on a stool in front of him.

"I don't think he profited at all morally from his acquaintance with you," replied the shadow. "It looks as though he would have run away from his home, and shared your lot, if I had not opened his eyes while he was waiting for you at the house of Morgan Dykes."

"Then it was you who induced him to leave me, was it? You are a young bloodsucker!" exclaimed Silky, finding he had been spotted almost from the beginning of his late operations.

"If I suck nobody's blood but yours, I am sure I shall be poisoned," added Rowly. "But I did not feel so much interest in the Dykes robbery as I did in the diamonds."

"I believe you are a favorite of the pretty girl for whom they were intended," said Silky, with a savage sneer.

"Miss Hope Everton is certainly a friend of mine,

and I desired to recover her property for her," added the shadow, blushing, though he could not have told why his face crimsoned.

"Rush Sinnerton has no chance now, for the young cub who saves a girl's life or her diamonds is sure of his reward. I suppose you were hid behind the door when I went into the house, and saw me take the box. You seem to have been always in the place where you could do the most good."

"I was not hidden behind the door, and I did not see you take the box," replied Rowly, decidedly.

"I had a key to the house which I had made so that I could get to Rush's room without ringing. I went in, and I heard that old lobster telling, loud enough to be heard across the street, what was in the box, and all about it. Rush and his father were in the house at the time, for I saw one go out, and the other go up the stairs. I was not so anxious to see Rush as I was when I went in, and I concealed myself in the hall till you all went down to lunch. Then I lost no time, made a bundle of the box, and took my leave of the house. That is the whole of it, and you must have seen me there."

"But I did not. I got at my facts in another way," replied the shadow, taking out the paper with the nail prints upon it. "This is what betrayed you to me. I was sure Rush had stolen the box. I went to his

room to examine the heels of his shoes ; and that was the occasion of my first visit to your lodgings. His shoes were not the right ones."

"And you tried mine?"

"When you went up to the ladder to get into the window of the store, you took off your half boots, and left them in the back street, where I found them. I put the boots in a safe place, though I did not suspect then that the one who had worn them stole the diamonds. When I compared the boots with this paper, I discovered to my surprise that you were the diamond robber, and that doubled my interest in you, and I have hardly lost sight of you since. I was under the bed in Rush's room when you took out the box, and arranged your plans for operations on the other side of the Atlantic. You were to give him one fourth of the value of your plunder."

"I liked Rush, and I wanted him as companion ; and you made a blunder in nipping me in the bud, for I intended to be an honest man for the rest of my days."

"And leave Hope Everton a beggar, to say nothing of Dykes ! It will be better for you to become an honest man at your own expense rather than at the cost of others," added the shadow, dryly.

The conversation was continued till the Medusa reached her pier, and the party landed, the officers

conducting their prisoners to the precinct office, from which they were sent to the Tombs, where Bronker became an occupant of the hospital.

Captain Ringboom took a hack, and, clinging to the bag like a drowning man to a plank, was driven to the Stuyvesant Safe Deposit Company's vaults, where the treasure was placed for safekeeping.

Rowly was with him, and they next went to the store of Brillyant & Co., where the young clerk received a hearty welcome.

"But I did not expect to see you for a month or two, after the application for an extended leave of absence," said Mr. Brillyant, after the first salutations.

"I didn't know but I might have to go to London before we finished the business; but we have captured all concerned in the attempt on the store," replied Rowly.

"Come to Delmonico's and dine with me, both of you, and tell me all about it," said the senior partner, somewhat excited.

They went.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE NEW FIRM OF BRILLYANT & CO. AND OTHER PART-
NERSHIPS.

It was nine o'clock in the evening when Captain Ringboom and Rowly Parkway arrived at the house of Mrs. Everton, for the dinner had been a good one, and the story was longer than the dinner.

The shadow found that his mother had been lonesome and anxious in her own home, and she was spending the evening with her friend; and she gave her son an unusually kind greeting, for she had been worrying a great deal about his safety in the perilous work in which he was engaged.

Both the captain and the shadow were elated by the success which had attended their operations, and their faces correctly expressed their feelings; and their pleasant looks were so contagious that the ladies could not help discovering that affairs had taken a favorable turn.

Mrs. Parkway hugged and kissed her boy, though

she was not generally so gushing with him when he had been absent not much more than half a day ; and the subject of her demonstration had some difficulty in detaching himself from her embrace, for Hope, with a blush on her pretty face, was watching him.

Rowly blushed too when he turned from his mother to the diamond heiress, who extended her hand to him, though she had never done such a thing before.

He grasped the hand eagerly, and possibly, in the excitement of his triumph, won in her cause, he pressed it just a little. The beautiful maiden colored more deeply than before as she felt the gentle pressure. Of course it was all wrong, but somehow he could not help it, and she did not make faces at him for what he had done, if he had done anything.

“You are no longer the diamond heiress without any diamonds, for we have every one of them,” said Rowly, giving Hope the first information imparted in regard to the success of the expedition down the bay.

“Oh, I am so glad ! Not that I care so much about the diamonds, but I am so glad you were so successful in your work, for you have been busy night and day,” said the maiden, still blushing as she looked at the young shadow.

“Did you say you had got the diamonds back, Rowly ?” interposed his mother, who had caught his words.

“Every one of them, mother; and Captain Ringboom has put them in a safe deposit vault, so that he can find them when he wants them. Neither of us thinks now that it is exactly safe to leave so much glassware on the table,” replied Rowly.

“I am sure I did not think we should ever see anything of them again,” said Mrs. Everton, who was even happier than if every one of them had been her own.

“I don’t believe we ever should have found them if it hadn’t been for Rowly, for he has managed the business as though he had been a detective for forty years,” said Captain Ringboom. “He has stuck to the job like a major, and we have not only got the diamonds, but we have bagged the man that stole them.”

“I suppose you haven’t been to supper; and after you have had something to eat, we shall be glad to hear the whole story of the capture of the robbers, for I know it must be very interesting,” said Mrs. Everton, as she moved towards the hall door.

“We have just got up from the table at Delmonico’s, where we had a meal fit for the Queen of England,” replied the captain; “and we are ready to spin the yarn at once.”

“Before you begin I want to say that Colonel Sinnerton has been here with Rush, and wanted very

much to see Rowly," continued the landlady. "He said he should call again to-night."

"I think we can get along very well without him," said Captain Ringboom.

"But he apologized with all his might for what he had done; and I am sure he meant all he said, and felt very bad about Rush," added Mrs. Everton.

"If he has repented, let him come and hear the news, and then he will know what a narrow escape his son had from being mixed up with a precious villain. And he would certainly have gone to Jericho or Sing Sing if Rowly had not been a Christian, and returned good for evil," replied the captain, with all his energy.

"The colonel fully appreciates what Rowly has done for Rush, and he is very grateful to him," answered Mrs. Everton. "He is very sorry that he worried me about the payments, and declared that he would gladly take the mortgage again at four per cent., which is less than I have been paying him."

"But the mortgage has been paid off, and so has the interest, and you have nothing more to do with him in money matters," protested the shipmaster, with a very cheerful smile on his bronzed face.

"But I have not yet given you a mortgage on the estate, and I owe you the money, which——"

"I have a mortgage on you, and that is all the

one I want," said the son of Neptune, looking as frisky as a young lamb.

The widow of William Everton blushed almost as deeply as her daughter had done, and it was evident that she knew what the old salt meant if the others did not; and it is even probable that they had discussed the subject before.

"What in the world does he mean by saying he has a mortgage on your mother, Hope?" asked Rowly, mystified by the strange expression.

"I am sure I don't know, though mother told me this afternoon that no papers had been passed," replied Hope, as innocently as a dove.

Before this knotty problem could be settled, the door bell rang, and Colonel Sinnerton and Rush were admitted to the front parlor. Both of them looked as though they had just been baptized into a new life and a new way of looking upon those whom they had regarded as their social inferiors.

The moment Rowly saw Rush, he sprang forward and extended his hand to him, for he was not one of those who believe in hanging back till the other party has made the first approaches.

"I am glad to see you again, Rush," said he, in generous tones. "I am sure we shall not get into another fight."

"Never, Rowly! And I hope Miss Everton will

accept my humble apology and accept my promise never again to offend her in any manner. It was all my fault that we had any trouble, and Rowly served me right when he knocked me down," said Rush.

"In the presence of all of you, I apologize as earnestly as my son has done on his own account for my own conduct in this house," said the capitalist, when Rush had finished. "I confess that I was actuated by unworthy motives, and I am very sorry for the oppression and rudeness of which I have been guilty. I hope I shall be permitted to make all the reparation in my power, first by returning the money paid me for interest, and second by taking a new mortgage on the house at four per cent."

"I accept your apology, Colonel Sinnerton, and here is my hand in token of my present good feeling towards you," added the widow, and the rich man took the offered hand.

"That was handsome in you, colonel, and here is my flipper. When I give it to a man, I haven't anything against him, and I will do all in my power to serve him," said Captain Ringboom.

"Thank you, captain; and I am confident we shall be good friends after this," replied Colonel Sinnerton, bowing with stately grace to the shipmaster. "Now about the mortgage, Mrs. Everton?"

"You will excuse me, colonel; but Captain Ringboom raised the money to pay off my indebtedness, and I shall leave this business matter entirely to him."

"The fact is, colonel, I have already taken a mortgage, and I am so well pleased with it that I can't give it up. But if I have occasion to borrow ten thousand dollars at any time, I will go to you for it," interposed Captain Ringboom; and the widow blushed again.

"But I must return the interest money, and I have brought it with me for that purpose," continued the rich man.

"Not a penny of it, colonel! The money was righteously yours, and my wife—I mean Mrs. Everton, will insist on paying every dollar of her just debts."

But before the captain could finish his sentence, the whole company burst out in a loud fit of laughter, and the good-looking widow covered her face with both hands to hide her blushes.

What the worthy seaman meant by a mortgage on her mother was then understood by Hope, and Rowly was not a particle more obtuse; but it was a long time before the landlady could recover her self-possession, though the captain did all in his power to atone for his slip of the tongue.

It was midnight before Rowly finished his narrative of his operations in arresting the robbers, but no one was tired of listening to it. Colonel Sinnerton was even more grateful for the safety of his only son after he had heard all the particulars of the movements of his friend Silky, and when he left the house, it was with a promise to see the shadow again soon.

It was hardly a month before Mrs. Everton gave her daughter a stepfather, and Hope loved him almost as much as though he had been really her father.

Rush Sinnerton never came to the house again, for he had found out that his presence was actually disagreeable to Hope, though she never made faces at Rowly Parkway.

Though nobody knows anything at all about it, not even Rowly and Hope themselves, yet everybody, including both mothers and the stepfather, believes that Hope will be called Mrs. Parkway some time in the future.

The burglars pleaded guilty, and were sentenced to long terms, Silky getting the longest; but Mrs. Ashbank stood her trial, and though she was convicted, she escaped with a short sentence.

Rowly was rapidly promoted at the store, and before he was of age, it was unnecessary for his mother to do any work other than the care of the house; and when he was twenty-one, Colonel Sinnerton

insisted on supplying all the capital needed to make him a partner in place of Mr. Van Zandt, who had retired to go into business alone.

When Hope was twenty-one, she became actually **the owner of THE CASKET OF DIAMONDS.**

