

"You can't afford to—to rat Uncle Henry," says he.

"No," says I, "I can't."

"Now you talk sense, Robert. Do you suppose you can manage the estate like it ought to be managed?—with me to help you, mind you; with me watching the servants and looking out that you ain't cheated and seeing where the money goes."

"You mean you're not going to take it back?" says I.

"I mean nothing. I'm asking you a question."

"Yes; I could do it," says I.

"I've been thinking of it for some time," says he. "Me watching out for things and telling you, and you behaving yourself. We can raise that eight thousand pounds, Robert—you can raise it, me telling you how. We'll pay off your colonels and captains, and let them go."

"Do you mean," says I, "things are to go on just like they were before?"

"No, hardly that, Robert. No more cards, not much wine, you know. A little wine at dinner, a taste or two of brandy now and then, like a gentleman. No nights at taverns, no red faces, no shaky hands."

"And you?" says I.

"Just as before—watching out, seeing where things go; but now coming and telling you."

"Oh!" says I. "And the property?"

"Yours, Robert, so long as you do right. Yours, everybody will think."

"What if I say no?" asks I.

"Resurrection Day, Robert. Gabriel's trump—no; Uncle Henry's trump."

He made the sound of a horn again.

"By gad!" says I, "I'll do it."

"Right for you, Robert," says he.

"Now send for William."

"What?" says I.

"You call William," says he. "Tell him to take the brown mare—she ain't been out since Tuesday; she's the only one. Ho, ho, Robert, you didn't know that! There's the gray and the brown and the black, thinks you. But Thomas rides the gray last night and the black the night before, thinking no one will know. You'll have to get rid of Thomas."

"But what about William?" says I.

"You write a note to Colonel Simslee; tell 'em not to come; tell him you'll pay the money in town. Eight thousand pounds—good Lord, how many years it took me to save that! Write to him, Robert; write to him."

I hesitated.

"Listen to the trump, Robert," says he.

"I'll do it," says I.

The speech was still on my lips when we heard the sound of steps in the hall. In a flash Uncle Henry was on his feet, standing like any servant. It was Molly.

"That you, Molly?" says I.

"Yes, Robert."

She had come to make up.

"I was wrong, Robert," says she, "to refuse to entertain your friends."

"Perhaps you was, my girl," says I. "But if you don't want them, they shan't come. I'm not one to go counter to my wife."

"Oh, you *must* have them!" says she.

"You've asked them."

"I'll unask them, then," says I. "Let it go, let it go! They shan't come."

At that she begins to cry again.

"Tut, tut," says I. "Not before Matthew."

Then standing up, so as to get the floor under my feet and feel the better courage—

"Um, um," says I, clearing my throat. "Matthew, you may go now."

And out he went.

A CRIME OF THE WOODS.

A STURDY oak—its spreading branches filled
 An acre round where ages it had stood—
 The sinless monarch of this mighty wood
 Till one there came who with a vandal's power
 Sent crashing earthward in a single hour
 What God required three centuries to build.

Albert B. Paine.

Pro Patria.*

BY MAX PEMBERTON.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

ALFRED HILLIARD, who tells the story, is an English captain of hussars, who, after an ugly fall received while fox hunting, has come to France to recuperate. At Pau he meets Colonel Lepeletier, with whose daughter Agnes he speedily falls in love. When duty takes the colonel to Calais, the young Englishman goes also, and is here joined by his chum Harry Fordham, an English parson. At Calais Hilliard encounters Robert Jeffery, an old schoolfellow, who is masquerading as a Frenchman under the name Sadi Martel, and is employed as an engineer on some mysterious government works near by. Shortly afterwards, while Hilliard is visiting the colonel's house, the old Frenchman, who is aware of his affection for his daughter, warns him that Agnes can never be his, and beseeches him, for reasons which he cannot divulge, to leave Calais. Hilliard takes his departure, and when he returns to his lodgings he finds Jeffery there, who in conversation makes mysterious references to a scheme he has for revenging himself on certain Englishmen whom he regards as his enemies. The following day, while riding on his automobile towards Boulogne, Hilliard is caught in a sudden shower, and Jeffery, seeing his predicament, offers him shelter in the government works. Once inside, the engineer offers to show him what they are working on. He takes him into a long tunnel which Hilliard knows is pointed in the direction of England, and which already projects well under the channel. When far in, Jeffery, who is somewhat under the influence of liquor, offers Hilliard a drink of whisky from a flask he has with him, saying tauntingly that he is likely to get very little to drink where he is going to.

VI (Continued).

I DID not answer him, but listened to the pulsing machine which, at some great distance from us, as I knew it must be, was thrusting its steel tongue into the soft chalk of the channel's bed, and throwing tons of the earth behind it, as though to make a burrow for a mighty living animal which thus would cheat the seas. The tube of steel in which we had walked quivered at every thrust of the engine. Nevertheless, I knew that the work was far away; for I could hear no voices, could not even see the twinkling lamps of those who gave life to the tongue and controlled it. The very sense of distance appalled and fascinated in an appeal to the imagination surpassing any I had known.

"Jeffery," I said, asking him a plain question for the first time, "why did you bring me here?"

He answered me as plainly.

"To still your d—d tongue forever."

The words (and never did I hear six words which meant as much to me) were spoken in that half mocking, half serious key which ever characterized the man. To this hour I can see him squatting there upon the wooden bench, his

sallow face made sardonic in the aureole of dirty light, his thin, nervous fingers interlaced, his deep set eyes avoiding mine, but seeking, nevertheless, to watch me. And he had trapped me! My God, I tremble now when the pen recalls that hour for me! It was as though all the hope of my life left me in that instant. He had trapped me, brought me to that place, because he believed that I had his secret; the secret which France had kept so well from all the world. Fool, thrice fool, I was to follow him! As one blind, I had stumbled upon the mouth of the abyss; and now I could see the depths; could, in imagination, reel back from them terrified. He had trapped me; the words rang in my ears as a knell.

He uttered the threat, I say, but almost in the same breath began to question me as though the words had never been spoken. While twenty ideas sprang at once to my mind, while the peril quickened my heart and brought drops of sweat to my face, he pursued his purpose of interrogation relentlessly. Nay, for that I knew he had brought me to the place that I might carry from it to a French prison the knowledge of that which France wrought against my

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