

EDNA THE PRETTY TYPEWRITER



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EDNA, THE PRETTY TYPEWRITER.

A THRILLING STORY

Founded Upon the Play of the Same Name.

BY

GRACE MILLER WHITE,

Author of "The Warning Bell," "Driven From Home,"
"Joe Welch the Peddler," "No Wedding Bells for Her,"
"Sky Farm," "A Midnight Marriage," "Souvenir
Book of 'Way Down East'," "Why Women
Sin," "Human Hearts," "Deserted at the
Altar," "From Rags to Riches," "A
Ragged Hero," "The Holy City,"
Etc., Etc.

Robert Howard Woods

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NEW YORK :
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EDITH BROWNING as "EDNA."

Edna, the Pretty Typewriter.

CHAPTER I.

"YOU'VE got to do it, that's all!"

The speaker was a man about forty years of age, with a powerful face and figure. He towered over the woman to whom he was speaking, and the passionate dark face made her shudder.

"You haven't got much money," she grumbled, looking into his eyes as if she was afraid.

"That's true," was the reply, "but I will have a lot. You know a fellow doesn't work the way I do without getting something from it."

"But how will we live?"

She who asked this question was truly a beautiful woman, with light, fluffy hair, and a well-made figure. She was toying nervously with the handle of a copper pot that rested on the table near her.

Kate Burnette had come to this mountain region of Mexico, thinking that she could find a rich husband, and every turn she made she seemed to be more and more entangled with men who were the reverse of what she sought.

She scowled as she thought of her ill success, and her dark eyes had a somber expression.

"What are you going to decide?" asked the man.

"That I won't marry you."

"Then you shall never live to marry another!" was the reply.

"Would you kill me?" cried the woman, starting back with affright.

"Yes!"

"What if I should tell you that I am already married——"

Before she could finish the sentence the man had wound his fingers about her throat and bent the beautiful head back against his breast.

"Don't! You hurt me!" cried the woman.

"I mean to hurt you! I love to hurt you. That's what makes you more dear to me, because I cannot get you."

"Listen, Tom," said the woman, wrenching herself free from the man's grasp. "Listen! If I marry you, and you make a strike, will you be good to me? Will you leave the whole claim to me?"

Thoughtfully the man looked into the lovely eyes. Never had any human being possessed such power over him for good or evil as this woman, and never had he wished to do more for anyone. But there swept through his mind a vision of a faint little figure, that of a girl whom he had once loved, and whose memory he had treasured as the one good influence of his life. He was thinking of her now, and the frown grew deeper upon the face below him.

"Will you agree?" asked the woman impatiently.

"I can't quite do that," he replied with a sigh, as

if he had been relieved of a great load. You know that I have Edna."

"I know that, but you have not seen her in years, and besides, she is earning her own living, isn't she?"

"Yes."

"Then why worry about her. She is capable of taking care of herself."

"Because she is my daughter, and I should help her. I don't like to think of her working for a living, when she has a father to look after her. What would she think of me, Kate, if I should make such an agreement with you? I've not said much about her, but she is constantly in my thoughts, and my mind has been made up for a long time that just as soon as I could I'd make her a lady. I've already given you all the money I've dug up."

For a moment the blue eyes of the man looked keenly into the dark ones.

The woman realized that she must overcome the influence of the daughter if she wished to accomplish her plans.

"Then how can you expect me to marry you?" she asked.

"You will marry me!"

"Not unless you give me the right to that mining property you are holding. I know that some day it will win, and I'm not going to stay here in this miserable place and grind my life out to help you, and when you make a good strike turn it over to that girl!"

"You would be my wife, Kate," said the man softly.

"That wouldn't make any difference," argued the

woman. "Many a man leaves a woman for a better-looking one, and that's what you would do with me."

The miner laughed a little at this, for he knew she was fishing for a compliment.

"If I should run over this whole world with a fine-toothed comb," said he, "I could not find another woman like you. Nor do I want one. I ask you to be my wife because it is the highest honor I can pay you. So there."

The woman straightened a little, with half-closed eyes. There was something about this man that fascinated her. She would have liked to have refuted his statement, to tell him that he was not capable of holding her love, but she knew differently. Although she did not love him, she felt the force of his will, and was greatly influenced thereby. It might have made some difference to her because he had the best cabin, the best household utensils, but that she did not analyze. She only knew that he had said she should be his, and his she would be. The obstacles that came in his path were nothing to him she knew.

If she desired to do a thing, she did it, and yet——

She stood looking at him. She could not marry him, simply could not. But how masterful, how commanding he was even in his prospector's dress.

"Tom, will you come to-morrow and get my answer. I cannot marry you without considering the matter carefully."

"You could marry me to-night."

"Do you want me to be happy?"

How pliant, how soulfully sweet she was, as she

bent toward him. Did he want her to be happy? Did he desire her welfare? More than anything else on earth.

If she would be happier for waiting, he would wait. He did not voice this thought for several moments, as he looked steadily at her with his whole soul in his eyes.

And she, knowing her power, answered his look with one as steady.

"I will wait," he said at last, "and to-morrow you will go with me over the mountain, and there I will take you for my own. I might as well be honest—I cannot live without you."

Tom Boynton was in the woman's small cabin, which she had fitted up in the mining camp to which she had come to play upon the hearts of men. She wanted to marry the man with the most money. Tom Boynton was a newcomer in the camp, and yet he dared any man to take the woman from him. He had killed one man because of her, and this was known to the others. So one by one the woman lost the friends that she had made before the advent of Boynton on the scene, and the big miner was now persuading her to be his wife.

"I suppose I'll have to stand that girl if she should come out here?" asked Kate, in a reflective manner.

"You mean Edna?"

"Yes."

"She is my daughter. She will never come to this camp. I want you because I love you, and for no other reason. You have no money, neither have I, but that does not necessarily mean that we

won't have. I want you for my wife, and if the day comes when I am a rich man, you shall go back with me to New York and there take your proper place in that society where your charms will make you conspicuous above all other women."

After this long sentence, which pleased Kate, the big miner took up his cap and rose to depart.

"You are to think it over between now and to-morrow?" said he.

"Yes."

"And when I come at five o'clock you will have decided?"

"Yes."

"Then kiss me good-night and I will go. In placing your confidence in me you are doing a good thing, for I would work my fingers to the bone for you."

The woman knew this, and as she looked after him out through the small window she was thinking seriously of what he had said.

Kate Burnette would have liked the security of being this man's wife, although she had come out to the barren camp with higher notions than to be the wife of a miner.

Just as the clock struck ten she was aroused by a knock. It was dark night, but the sound was familiar to her.

She slipped to the door and opening it a little, whispered:

"Is that you, Pete?"

"Yes."

"Then come in. He has been here the whole evening, and I was afraid that you might get here before he went away."

"I would have waited until he had gone," answered the new-comer.

"He was more than anxious to-night to make me his wife."

"What did you tell him?"

"Nothing about you," replied the woman. "I did not dare, because he was in such a dangerous mood."

"I believe he knows that I come to see you," said Pete.

"No, he doesn't, for he said that he had such confidence in me that when he went back to New York he would take me with him."

The man laughed at this, and with a smile still on his lips he seated himself with an air of proprietorship and watched the woman light the candles.

She took several from the package and stood them side by side in the tall pot.

"I like plenty of light," she said, as she touched a match to the wicks.

"What if Boynton should come back to-night?" asked the man suddenly.

"He won't," answered Kate, "for unlike the most of you, he is a hard worker, and has to go to bed early."

The man frowned at this, and laying his hand on the woman's arm, demanded:

"Do you love him better than you do me?"

"Don't be a fool, Pete. You know that as long as I live no other man shall take your place in my heart. But you know also that you are lazy, and that I must have money. If I thought he would ever make good——"

"What would you do?" asked the man, leaning

forward and gazing intently into the woman's face, as if seeking to read her thoughts.

"I hardly know."

"Marry him?"

"I couldn't, could I?" asked the woman, looking at Pete questioningly.

"There are plenty of ways of fooling men. I would like the pile he is going to make out of that mine, but he works like a horse."

"That's a fact, and someone else will enjoy his money. I will, for one—but not if you don't play your cards well, Pete. You can only do it through me, and you must be extra good to me, or I sha'n't get it for you."

She said this playfully as she brushed the curls from his brow and smoothed the hair from his high temples.

It is strange that a woman born for the refinements of life should love devotedly such a man as Red Pete, for he fell far behind the man who had gone before. There was little of refinement about him, little of the pleasant manner that was so attractive in Tom Boynton, yet there was a satisfied expression on Kate Burnette's face that had been absent when with Tom.

"I wish I never had to think of anyone but you," she said, after a moment's silence.

"I wish so, too," replied the man.

"I wouldn't if you would work."

"To hard, my dear."

"But think what it means to give up your wife to another man even for money!"

"I've thought it all over, girl," said the gambler, "and it only means this—if you don't get a bunch

of money somewhere we can't carry out some of our plans, and you know what the world is without money."

The woman nodded.

"And if you can make this chap disgorge——"

"But he has no money now."

"That's all right, old girl, but he will have. He's on the road to wealth, and there isn't another man in this county who wouldn't like to stand in his shoes. Where does he get the money now to do what he does?"

"Takes it out of the earth. But that's an expensive dig, and the supply is limited."

"That's true, too, but I am confident that inside of a few months he will have enough for both of us, and if he has I wouldn't hesitate to put him out of the way."

"You mean——"

"I mean that if you can keep from him our true relationship—that we are man and wife—then marry him, and after a while I can get rid of him forever."

"You couldn't do it, Pete," replied the woman, glancing at him lovingly, "if you come face to face with him. He has the strength of an ox. He pulled my head back against him to-day, and I thought I was gone. If I had not been cool I tell you I would have been killed. He insists upon marrying me."

"What did you tell him?"

"That I would think it over. He said that while he would give me until to-morrow he would not take 'no' for an answer."

"He's got his brass with him."

"So I thought. But it rests with you, Pete. If

you have a place for me to go to, I'll stay with you until I die. I have no other wish in all the world. But if you cannot look out for me, then I say— Well, what shall I do?" ended the woman abruptly. "Marry Tom Boynton, and after a bit I will free you."

For some time there was silence in the cabin, and all that could be heard was the sobbing of the wind through the pine trees. It was pitiful to see such a woman, possessed of so much evident refinement, living a life of deceit. But she had grown callous, and it did not affect her as it once did.

Her one hope was that she would some day have a home with the husband of her soul, the one man she loved, lazy and bad as he was, and that they should go away together without feeling that she was obliged to get the money to enable them to live from day to day.

She half turned from him as the thought went through her mind that he was making her marry a man whom she could not love, when she was his own lawful wife. It gave her a feeling of horror when she contemplated the future.

She saw him so seldom that she did not wish to quarrel with him, so she said, changing the subject somewhat:

"One thing I hate about Boynton is that he hopes some day to have that girl of his with him. I hate her. The other day she sent him a picture of herself, and she's a pretty little beggar."

"Will he leave everything to you and the girl if the time comes that he makes a will?"

"He says he will leave everything to her if I do not do as he wants me to."

"Then do it."

"What! Marry him to-morrow, and live with him in the cabin?"

"Yes."

"And when shall I ever see you?"

"Any time you wish. You can get out and go across the mountain to the shack of Bill Thompson, and I will be there. Now I'm going. It's raining like the devil, and I hate to tread that path alone, I can tell you."

"And I hate to have you, dear," said the woman, lovingly pressing his arm. "And to-morrow you may think of me as——"

"Not as his wife," interrupted Pete, "for you're married to me already. This will be but a marriage of convenience. Good-night."

He clasped the woman to his breast with a fierce embrace and kissed her again and again upon her full red lips. Then pushing her roughly from him he left the cabin.

After he had gone the woman sat with a dejected look upon her face. She desired to help the man she loved, but to live with a man she did not and could not love was distasteful to her. Yet she felt Boynton's influence when in his presence.

Suddenly, as if she had decided on her course of action, the woman rose to her feet and proceed to disrobe. After extinguishing the candles, which were now but mere bits of tallow, she crept into bed, and the moaning of the wind through the branches which projected over the roof of the cabin soon lulled her to sleep.

CHAPTER II.

THE next day Tom Boynton dressed in his Sunday suit, which set off his splendid figure to good advantage.

He was seeking the woman whom he was going to make his wife. He found her ready and expectant, and as he entered the cabin she smiled in welcome.

"You're going with me?" asked Tom, the love-light shining in his eyes.

"Yes."

"Then you do love me a little, don't you, Kate? You are not going simply because you are afraid of me?"

"No, indeed. I would not marry any man living if it did not please me to do so. I will marry you because I love you, Tom."

"Then why didn't you say so last night?" demanded Tom.

"I don't know. I suppose it was nothing but a woman's perverseness. I don't think it could have been anything else."

The man was supremely happy. He would make enough money to give this woman the comforts—yes, even more than that. She should have all the luxuries that money could buy.

Suddenly he thought of the child in New York,

and he spoke of her quite naturally as they walked along.

Woman's raiment was scarce in that part of Mexico, but in some manner Kate Burnette always managed to secure the pretty little trifles that add to a woman's charms.

To-day she had some small red ribbons tucked in the blonde hair that contrasted well with her dark eyes.

Boynton looked down upon her, devouring her face with his eyes.

"Lucky in money and lucky in love," he whispered to himself, and Kate asked him what it was he had said.

"I was only thinking how very lucky I am to have won you for my wife. It means everything to a man to have a woman like you, Kate."

She wondered what the man would do if he knew she was already the wife of Red Pete. She knew that Boynton hated the gambler, for once he had detected him cheating at cards, and ever since that time he detested him.

But he should never know the truth if she could help it, and as for Pete, he knew too well that it meant a future with money galore, and he would not utter a word.

Then Kate's mind went back to the time when she was a child, such as this man was speaking of.

"Edna has dark eyes," said Tom, "and I know by this picture that she is a very pretty girl."

Kate did not want to talk of the daughter in New York, so she said:

"I think I was a pretty child."

Tom Boynton laughed aloud as he turned and

looked into the woman's face. Pretty when she was a child? For a moment he forgot the child whom he loved better than anything else on earth save this woman.

"I believe," he said presently, after studying her face, "I believe you were the sweetest and loveliest child in the world the same as you are a woman."

This pleased Kate, and she said in a sweeter tone than before:

"Do you think you will ever bring your daughter here?"

"No."

"Don't you want her to see me?"

"Yes."

"Then why don't you have her come?"

There was then born in the woman's mind a plot so fiendish, so unlike a woman, that one would not have believed that she could have conceived it.

She would bring the girl to Mexico, and if there was money she would have Pete put both the girl and her father out of the way.

She wanted to go back to the husband she loved, but he had commanded her, and his will was law to her. But of the two men she feared Boynton most.

"I may some time," replied the miner, "but not until you and I have had a beautiful honeymoon. I want to be with you alone."

"I thought the girl might be company for me," replied the woman. "I shall be lonely in the daytime, when you are away."

"You see," replied the miner, "she is in New York with a rich cousin of mine. He employs her as a typewriter. I wish she did not have to work, but

I am sure that Clifford will be good to her. We went to school together, but he has made a lot of money. I wish I could have been as successful as he is."

"And the girl is with him? How long since you have seen her?"

"Not since she was seven years old. She was very pretty then."

By this time they had reached the small cabin which did service as the only church in the camp, and it was but a few minutes before Tom Boynton had promised that he would love Kate Burnette and care for her till the last day of her life.

Winter had set in, and Kate Burnette did not have many opportunities to see the husband she loved so devotedly while yet she was married to another. Only once during that winter did Pete venture to come to Tom Boynton's home, and it was through a mistake of Kate's that the two men met.

She had sent word to Pete by a miner saying that Boynton would be in the mine until four o'clock in the morning, as the snow had melted and water was rapidly filling the workings. So toward dusk the Mexican gambler sneaked into the camp.

Kate was pale and nervous at first. She seemed now almost the wife of Boynton, yet in her heart she loved Pete.

"Is he likely to come in?" Pete asked, looking about the cosy cabin with a sigh of appreciation. It was so cleanly, so much superior to all in the camp that few could look upon it without a sigh of envy. Pete would have liked a home like it.

He was willing to let the woman get it for him, but have it he must.

"No," replied the woman. "He will not return before daylight."

"But I don't dare stay too long. He might happen to come——"

Hardly had the words left his lips when the sound of footsteps was heard outside. Kate recognized them as those of Boynton. With a hasty hand, as Tom stopped on the step to stamp the snow from his boots, she placed a bowl of milk and a piece of bread in front of Pete, and when the miner entered the Mexican was eating of the food set before him.

A frown settled on Boynton's face as he saw who his visitor was, but it quickly disappeared as the other man rose to his feet saying:

"It was a good act of your woman to give me something to eat. I needed it mighty bad."

There was nothing in the tone to arouse suspicion, and Boynton, glancing at Kate with a smile, replied:

"My woman is always good to the hungry. She can give a fellow the best grub this side of New York. I haven't seen you for a long time."

"No. I don't live in this ere camp, but back of the mountain. I find I get more pickings there than here. Everybody ain't as lucky as you are."

Tom smiled indulgently. He could well afford to do it, for had he not the finest silver mine in Mexico, and the best-looking wife?

"I'm lucky in love and in money," he said. "It isn't every man that's got lots of both."

"That's so," said Pete, with a significant glance

at Kate. "As I said before, every fellow isn't as lucky as you."

Boynton then explained that he had left the men to pump the water from the mine and make a trough for the water from the melting snow to flow into.

"That's why I hate winter, pard," he said, looking directly at Pete, who shifted his gaze. "You can't tell what's coming."

The gambler went away shortly after this, and after they had gone to bed, if Tom had listened he could have heard suspicious noises, like sobbing, from the beautiful woman lying beside him.

Month after month went by, and still the ore lay deep in the hard earth. The months passed into a year, and the woman who was waiting was growing impatient for the husband on the other side of the mountain. She was an excellent actress, and Tom Boynton had not the least suspicion that her heart was given to another. She was his wife. He would never love another woman, and would never need to, for as long as they lived they would be as happy as they were now.

A year passed away and Kate had seen Pete but twice during that time. The last time he had impatiently asked her as to the condition of the mine from which they were to get their fortune.

Once she had answered him almost with impetuous anger:

"If you would only get to work I'd come with you this day and live on a crust. I am not his wife, that you know, and if it were found out that I have two husbands you know that I would be arrested."

"Who is going to tell?"

"I never know," replied Kate. She hoped by speaking in this way to arouse the man's ambition and make him a better provider. "You know it's pretty well known in California, where we come from, that you and I are married."

"California ain't here," replied Pete, "and I know by the talk I hear in the mines that Boynton's is coming out first of all. Now let us think of how happy we'll be when he is out of the way."

"But there's the girl," said Kate. "I've gotten so I hate her worse every day I live. If Tom didn't get his own mail he'd never see one of her letters, you may be sure of that."

"Does he ever speak about going there or her coming here?"

"Once in a while, when he finds an unusually big nugget, or a better piece of ore than usual, he is always going to fly for the East and see the girl, but when it all settles down he forgets about it. Wait till I read you one of her letters."

Going over to a desk that stood in a corner of the room Kate opened a drawer and took a letter from among several others she found there. She extracted the letter from its envelope and read:

"FATHER DARLING:

"Your letter did me so much good. I love to get them. That piece of gold you sent me is beautiful. I sha'n't do as you said with it and buy a dress, for I want it to look at and remind me of you. I always long so to have my mother and you, and I shed the bitterest tears when I think of you both. I wish you would make enough money to come home and take me for your housekeeper, for Cousin Clifford

does not like me very¹ much. He treats me worse than anyone else in the office, and often says that he could get someone to do better than I do, although I work very hard for him. I come early and stay late. He would be glad if I were to go.

"But there, dear father, I don't want you to be unhappy, and I know that you think very often of me, and that you love me dearly. Won't you be surprised to see your girl almost as tall as you are? Of course I don't know about that, for I cannot remember how tall you were, but it seemed to me then that you were almost as tall as the sky. You will always keep in mind that I love you and that I want a home with you. Remember also my poor little dead mother.

"Your own loving
"EDNA."

The woman read the letter through without any comments, and when she had finished it she put it away with the others in the drawer.

"Isn't that a lot of rot?" she asked after a short silence.

"I'd like to choke her windpipe," said the man, with a grunt. "You've got to be careful of that sly little devil, or she will be coming in at the head of the race."

"No, she won't," said Kate, her face darkening. "She doesn't know about me, and if she did I'd get ahead of her."

"She don't know her father's married again?" asked the gambler.

"No."

"You don't talk against her to him?"

"You should give me credit for having better sense."

"Then see that you don't arouse his suspicions, for in a few months, at the latest, we will realize our dreams."

Then Pete went away. He knew that there was no danger of Kate falling in love with Boynton. He had the usual conceit of men, believing that the woman would always love him.

That night when Boynton came home his face was dark with anger, and all the sweet words that Kate could say to him did not seem to send the shadow away. After the evening meal was over the woman went up to Boynton and laid her hand upon his shoulder caressingly as she gazed into his face.

"What is the matter, Tom, dear?"

"Why was that Mexican here to-day?" he asked suddenly, looking at her suspiciously.

Kate was taken completely by surprise.

"He wasn't," she said, without stopping to think. Then, seeing that she was caught in her lie, went on hurriedly: "He was only here a minute. He wanted to see you."

"He must have wanted to see me," replied Tom bitterly. "I'm not quite a fool. If he was so anxious to see me why didn't he come down to the mine?"

"He thought you might be here."

"He had another think coming," said the miner, and then lapsed into silence.

For a time the woman also remained silent. Then she said, leaning forward to scan the face of the man before her:

"Don't make me unhappy by keeping anything back. Just tell me what you think."

"I think I have been a fool," said the man savagely.

"Why."

"For placing all my faith in a woman."

She noticed that he placed much emphasis upon the "all," and hated him the more for it.

"What do you mean?" she asked, with flashing eyes.

The miner turned upon her fiercely.

"Every time that Mexican has been here I've been told of it. Why does he come here? Do you love him?"

"No."

"Are you lying to me?"

"No."

Kate's face was calm and impassive. She was facing a great situation that meant much to her — and Pete.

After having lived in Purgatory so long would her suffering have been in vain?

Putting her arms around the miner's neck, her face pressed close to his, she asked tremulously:

"Tom, dear, have you lost your faith in me?"

"I would rather die than have that happen," answered the miner moodily, without offering to return her caress. "But it seems strange that you should have a man like Red Pete hanging about here while I am away. He hates me and I him, and it isn't likely that I would be pleased to have him coming here, is it?"

"Of course not, dear, and he will not come here again. To be truthful with you, Tom, at one time

he asked me to marry him. In fact, I could have had him instead of you, and he has a shack almost the size of this. So don't be foolish, dear. Won't you kiss me?"

But Tom was deaf to her endearments.

That night the woman sought the little loft alone, and after she had reached the sleeping-room she looked down through the ladder opening upon the miner, rocking to and fro in the pine chair he had made for her, and with a malignant expression on her face she hissed :

"So I can't have him hanging around, eh? There will come a time, though, when he will be with me all the time, and I don't know where you will be."

CHAPTER III.

IN the city of New York, one afternoon, a young girl was hurrying along Broadway after leaving the elevated train. Her face was pale and showed signs of weeping. If it had not been for the emotion expressed upon her sweet countenance, Edna Boynton would have been considered one of the most beautiful girls ever seen. But something or somebody had made her suffer, and the evidences were plainly to be seen.

She turned into a tenement house on one of the side streets, and making her way up to her room she threw herself down on the bed and burst into tears.

"Father, dear, if you would only take me with you! I cannot stand it much longer. My heart is breaking. If mother were only here!"

The sound of the dinner bell caused her to dry her tears, and removing all traces of her recent weeping she went down stairs to the plain but substantial dinner that was awaiting her.

Edna Boynton was loved by all who knew her. She was employed by her cousin on lower Broadway, and it was he who made the girl's life miserable.

"You're late, Miss Boynton," said the landlady severely. "I was just about to order the cook to

clear the table. There's nothing like washing up on time, and servants ain't going to stay in all night. Where have you been now?"

"I was kept by my employer," replied the girl in a choking voice. "I would have lost my position if I had not done as he wished me to."

"And you're working for your cousin! Well, it's just as I said, let me work for strangers every time."

Edna remained silent. She choked down the little dinner that was left for her and then started to return to her room.

The landlady met her in the hall.

"Did you get your letter?" she asked.

"No," replied Edna eagerly.

"It is on the hall stand. From your father, I think."

Edna went to the front of the hall, and sure enough there was a letter for her. Hurrying up to her room she broke open the envelope, and read:

MY PRECIOUS LITTLE DAUGHTER:

I have looked longingly for a letter from you to tell me if your cousin Clifford is treating you better than he was. It hurts me to think that you are not happy, and that he is so unkind to you. I have a little secret which I know will please you. One thing is sure, my mine will make us wealthy, and you will never have to work after I come East, which I hope will be very soon.

Remember that I love you,
YOUR FATHER.

Edna read and reread this letter from beginning

to end, and then, after putting out the light, she got up again to glance over it once more. Then her father had another secret other than the mine? She wondered what it could be, whether it was something to do——”

Her thoughts ended abruptly as sleep overcame her. She could not remember in the morning just what her thoughts were before going to sleep, but she knew that a great load had been lifted off her heart as she went to the elevated and took her way downtown.

The mountains were amber-colored from the rising sun, and the leaves changed from gray to their natural green. Higher and higher grew the mountains in the air as the drab of early morning lifted to let in the day. Many huts were placed side by side, and as yet their occupants were not astir.

Here and there a miner could be seen, with his dinner-pail slung to his shoulder with a strap, and a lantern in his hand.

Then each would disappear into some hole in the mountain side to work the claim he had staked out.

From the chimney of one of the cabins a little more substantial-looking than the rest, a tiny curl of smoke floated on the morning air. Within, Kate Burnette, or, as she was called, Kate Boynton, was standing over a large stove with a sullen expression on her face.

“Of course, now it’s a hit,” said the woman under her breath, “now it’s a hit,” and she repeated this with more vehemence than at first, “he has to think of that brat in New York. I would like to see her

get half of that claim! I would rather give it to the veriest beggar!"

Leaving the stove, she peered into the other room.

"Drunk again! Well, that can't last long. Here you, Tom!" she called, as she shook the sleeping man, "are you going to sleep all day?"

"No," said Tom drowsily. "What time is it?"

"Six o'clock, and breakfast is ready."

Tom Boynton turned over with a sigh. He had celebrated his great luck all the night before, and was now suffering from the effects of his numerous libations.

"We're rich," he said exultantly as he sat up. "I tell you it pays for a fellow to work hard when he does work, and then play when playtime comes. I tell you, Kate, there won't be no more stunning-looking woman in the world than you will be."

If the woman had any heart she would have been thankful to the man for the love he had bestowed upon her. As at first, she feared him and did his will, while her heart lay at the feet of the Mexican gambler.

But they were rich now, and it would be only a short time before——

She turned and looked at the miner. He certainly was strong and handsome. If it had not been for Pete and the girl in New York she could have forgotten the past and lived the life that was open to her. It was now well known in the camp that Boynton had struck it rich and that in a few weeks he would be an immensely wealthy man.

After breakfast that morning Boynton, with a thoughtful expression upon his face, said to Kate:

"Has the Mexican been around here lately?"

"He came to see you yesterday, but I told him never to come here again; that if he had any business with you to go to the mine."

"That's right, Kate," replied the miner. It gives people something to talk about to have a man like that coming around when I'm absent from home. I'd have to kill a few slanderers for you, if he did, and maybe him."

"Don't be a fool, Tom! Don't talk like that!" said the woman, looking anxiously into the miner's face.

"Just as I said," went on Tom. "He comes over to this camp too much. He was here every day last week."

The woman started as if he had struck her, and then ejaculated:

"He didn't come here *every* day!"

The emphasis on the word "every" brought the miner to his feet. His anger was something awful when overcome by jealousy. He brought his fist down on the table, making the dishes rattle.

"How many times was he here?"

"Oh, I don't know. He seemed to have something to see you about."

Like a cloud over a clear sky came the revelation to the miner.

"You mean he stopped here several times last week?"

"Yes."

"Did he come right in?"

"Folks don't stop to rap much in this country," replied the woman, and the beautiful face looked cold and hard. If she had only dared to tell him what she would do if he were not silent.

But Tom Boynton owned a rich mine and was a millionaire, while Pete was poor and lazy.

"I'll put a bullet in that loafer if I ever catch him about here!" said Boynton angrily. "Remember, woman, I won't have any trifling with my home!"

Janming his hat on his head, the miner strode out of the house.

Kate watched him through the window, and various and complex were her emotions.

Just as she was clearing away the table she heard a footstep, and opening the door came face to face with a very good-looking young man, and she knew immediately that he was the stranger who had come to the camp not long before.

"Is Mr. Boynton in?" questioned he.

"No. He has gone to the mine."

The two looked long at each other, as if they had a premonition that their lives would intermingle in a game of cross purposes. The woman dropped her eyes first, because the gray ones of the young stranger were so keenly alive, and Kate felt that he could read her thoughts.

"Do you know whether he will return at mid-day?"

"No, I think not. He has to go back of the mountain to hire more men."

"Yes. I heard that he had made a rich strike. I am glad for you both."

Dave Fairfax would have liked to believe well of this woman of whom he had heard so much. Truly, even in her coarse dress, she was handsome. Her dark eyes blazed with health and youth, her tall, straight, athletic figure showed signs of beauty, and he thought if she were only dressed in the latest

New York fashion what a handsome woman she would be.

She was standing with her hands upon her hips, and even in this ungraceful attitude the man realized that she was beautiful. The red glint in her eyes gave him the impression that she would be a formidable foe if there were enmity in her heart.

He turned away. He would follow Boynton to the mine, for he had important business with him.

As he walked along the narrow path toward the mine in the mountain he could hear the click of picks and could see the men wheeling the ore out and throwing it on the heap.

Boynton was a lucky chap. He had certainly struck it rich, but the wife—well, it was none of his business, and with this thought he forgot the woman and concentrated his mind on the business he had in hand.

He spied the miner standing looking off into the west, which he would soon leave and go back to civilization.

Tom held out his hand as the newcomer came up and greeted him with a smile.

"Congratulations in order?" asked Dave Fairfax. "I believe you are one of the lucky few."

"I know I am," replied Tom, with an exultant tone in his voice. "I have worked for years on this little claim, knowing that it would bring me the stuff after a while. But it has been no light job, let me tell you."

"I should say not," and the younger man cast his eyes over the heaps of dirt that were piled about them.

"I am going to New York," he said after a mo-

ment of silence on both sides. "You asked to see me before I left."

"Yes."

"I wanted to get some little things for the journey, and wondered if you could tell me now what you desired me to do for you in the city."

"Well, I think I will have to go back to the house first. Come with me, will you?"

"Certainly. And then you can tell me about the claim. Do you mean that the ore is quite in sight?"

"There are thousands of dollars' worth right on the surface, now that we are down far enough, but it means a lot of work to get it out. But with what I have in view it is encouraging to a fellow to work."

"I should say so."

The miner took a paper from his pocket, saying as he turned to his companion:

"I carry this about with me until I can file it somewhere so that it will be safe. It is a Mexican grant, and the claim is in my name. My little girl will be rich."

The young man wondered why he did not speak of his wife, but before he could come to any opinion as to the reason the miner had commenced speaking again.

"I have a daughter in New York."

"Yes?"

"Yes. Edna is the prettiest and sweetest girl in all the world."

As he spoke he drew from his pocket a picture of a very young and sweet-looking girl, and handed it to his companion.



"NO! THIS PAPER BELONGS TO ME."

"She is pretty!" exclaimed the younger man. "Where did you say she was?"

"In New York. She has been typewriting all these weary months in the office of my sister's son, Clifford Marlow. He is a shipowner. I suppose the child has had a hard life, but she won't have it any more. She is going to be a lady."

Dave turned curiously toward the miner.

"You said that I could be of service to you when I went to New York. Is it something about your daughter?"

"Yes. You are a gentleman, and I can trust you. That is more than can be said of a whole lot of fellows around here. From the very first day my eyes lighted on you I said to myself, 'there's a man who can be trusted.' I want you to be kind to my little girl."

Dave Fairfax colored with pleasure.

It was good to hear such honest words. Then, too, there was a feeling of romance in his heart as he thought that the rich father had told him to be a friend to the daughter he loved and yet had not seen for so many years.

"You are returning to New York?" he asked as they drew near the cabin.

"No, not just at present. Then, too, there are reasons why Edna should not come here that are hard for me to speak of before strangers. But as I feel that you are one of my good friends, I will tell you. I couldn't have her come here and live in this camp."

"That's so. But you have your wife here," said the young man, looking at the miner questioningly. The other man shook his head.

"I was going to speak of that, but it goes against the grain. When a fellow gets a bee in his bonnet he can't think of much else. That's the way I was. That woman's been my bee."

"I see," replied Dave.

"I've just had my eyes opened," went on the miner. "I married her because I loved her, and I love her yet. I suppose there's plenty about this camp that knows more than I do, but I don't meet trouble half way. Have you been about this camp as long as you have and not heard anything about us?"

"I do not believe all I hear," answered Dave gravely.

"Neither do I," replied the miner. "If I did, there would be some dead ones about here. I want to take that woman away from this place as soon as I can, but I can't bring the two, Edna and my wife, together for long, you see."

"If you feel that way," said Dave, "why don't you take your daughter and father her, give the woman money——"

"Hush!" said the miner. "I have no power to do that. As bad as I know her to be, she is my fate, and I hold to her. I would give all the world could buy with my money if she'd take a sharp tack."

He seemed lost in thought for a moment, then, as if suddenly remembering his reason for wishing to see the young man, he said:

"What I wanted you to do for me, is to see that my girl gets the money I send her. I want you to make arrangements with the bank for her."

"Why not send it to your cousin Clifford? He could do it just as well as I."

The miner shook his head.

"I do not trust him," was the reply. He has not been kind to the child, and I haven't much use for him on that account."

Just then they came to the cabin, and as they passed the window something impelled the miner to look in, when he beheld the figure of his beautiful wife in the arms of the Mexican gambler.

CHAPTER IV.

DAVE FAIRFAX saw it, too, and with his hand on the miner's arm he tried to detain him.

"Don't go in just yet."

"Let me go!" cried the miner as he broke away from his companion, and Fairfax would not have known whose voice it was that spoke.

The pair on the inside had no idea that they were observed by such a glance of hate.

"I am going in and kill him!" exclaimed the enraged man. "There is not room enough in this camp for both of us!"

As the sound of her husband's footsteps came upon Kate's ear she shoved the gambler into the back room. Then she turned to face her husband.

Kate's face showed the signs of liquor.

With a desperate effort the miner controlled himself enough to say:

"You've been drinking again!"

"That's none of your business! You had a good bun on yourself last night!"

"With a man it is different," replied the miner, glancing quickly about the room.

Dave Fairfax was surprised at the coolness of the man, although he shivered with apprehension as he saw the relentless expression in the keen eyes.

"Did you drink alone? You had had nothing when I left home."

How strange that Kate had sent the young engineer to her husband, happy in the thought that Pete could stay long enough for a drink and something to eat. For the other would be in the mines for hours. But here they were back again, and she was caught like a rat in a trap.

"I drank alone," she replied sullenly. "Am I not allowed to make myself happy in this God forsaken hole?"

The miner glared fiercely at her.

"I would not care a copper how much you drank alone, but I know there's been a man drinking with you!"

"You lie!" shouted the woman.

"Then show me who is in that back room."

As Boynton spoke he pointed to the kitchen.

Kate stood with her back to the door. She wondered if he had heard the words spoken by Pete before his effort to leave.

Boynton brushed the woman roughly aside and tried to open the door, but it was locked. He ran madly around to the rear of the cabin to look in the kitchen window.

The woman knew that he understood, and like a flash had opened the door and the gambler was out of the room and away before Tom could come back.

When Boynton arrived at the window he saw that the room was empty.

Dave Fairfax had been a silent witness of the terrible scene.

As the gambler disappeared the woman gave the

engineer a look which he understood, and then murmured:

"To save a human life be silent!"

When Boynton came back from the rear of the cabin he strode over to Fairfax and demanded:

"Did you see a man come out of that room?"

"No," replied Dave.

A look of relief passed over the woman's face. The stranger had stood by her and she would win.

"You are telling me the truth? No one came out of that room?" asked the miner, looking at Fairfax suspiciously.

"No."

"Then I——"

"You are drunk," said Kate sneeringly. "It is a wonder to me that I live with you at all. I could well divorce——"

Boynton turned upon the woman like an animal at bay and grasped her in his arms.

"Will you swear on your life that you were not in the embrace of that Mexican?"

"I swear!" cried the woman, pale with fear.

"And that he was not here this morning?"

"I swear!"

The miner released her and turned away with a groan.

"I've known for a long time that you saw him, but I did not believe you were wholly bad. I want to take you away, Kate, to a place where you will not—— Oh, Kate, do not deceive me!"

The cry was from a heart that was hurt, and the engineer took the miner by the hand. Here was a man who would soon be a power in the great world of finance falling down before a bad woman, and

it was his duty to save the father for the girl far away in the East.

"Come with me," said Fairfax.

The woman, knowing that she had won the day, said sneeringly:

"Yes, get him to go with you, Mr. Fairfax, and let him tell you about the daughter he has in New York—his dear little Edna, who is too good to come here and live with me!"

She saw them disappear in the direction of the mine, and then went out to look for the man who had so recently escaped a righteous vengeance.

She found him crouched beside a large water barrel, and as she drew him into the house she said cautiously:

"That was a close shave for you, Pete. While I don't go much on him, I know there isn't a man who could stand up against him if it came to a fight. I want to talk to you now for good, for you've got to keep away from here."

For some distance the miner and the engineer walked on without a word. Then suddenly Boynton turned toward Dave.

"I could have sworn on my life that I saw her in that Mexican's arms."

"It was your imagination, probably. We had just been talking about her."

"Yes, but not of such a thing as that. I have never wanted to believe that she was not a good woman."

"I should believe that she was," replied the engineer.

The miner gazed at him intently.

"I wonder if you would."

Dave could not tell whether the miner had taken his word in the matter, but he hoped so; but in another moment he knew that he had not, for Tom suddenly stopped in the middle of the path as he said:

"I am going back. If he was there then he is there now!"

In spite of his efforts to restrain him, the miner started back toward the cabin.

If the young man could only have prevented him from going he would have averted a fearful tragedy. But Boynton was a man of quick decision, and Dave could do nothing but trail after him back to the cabin.

"And that is the woman I have made my wife," said Tom, stopping for a moment. "Do you wonder I do not want my child to be with her?"

Nothing more was said until they reached the door of the cabin. Then, with a very white face the miner held up his hand, and this is the conversation that the two men heard:

"Which way did he go?"

"To the Divide with that young chap. It was right down nice of him——"

Here the sound of kisses was heard, and the miner closed his eyes.

Dave threw his arm across the broad shoulders of the man with a sympathetic movement.

"Say, Kate," were the next words, in a man's voice, "I'm tired of fooling with that man of yours. It's getting nearly quitting time."

"You've got to wait, Pete," replied the voice of

the woman. "He ain't a man you can fool with. If he knew the truth he would kill us both!"

"Him?" laughed the gambler. "Him? What chance would he have against me? But every geezer in this section is down on me, and I'd better skip out while I've got the chance."

"It would be better for you to go," replied Kate, looking into the moody face with a questioning look in her eyes.

What was there in the man to make her love him? What did she find in that lazy Mexican to hold to when, if she worked her cards well, she could be an honorable wife, and have a position in the world?"

He seemed to read her thoughts, for he brought his fist down fiercely upon the table as he cried:

"Don't fool with me, woman, or I'll tell every man in this camp that I married you a year before he did, and that you're my wife, and not his!"

After a moment's silence the gambler went on:

"I can't go without money. You'll have to get me some."

"I can't get you any more, Pete. I've fooled him all I dare to."

Boynton would have given much to know their relative positions. Was she close to him——

"He won't give me any more," Tom heard her say.

"Then I'll stop his game. You say he is mad about you. He'll settle, or I'll tell the crowd——"

"Hush, Pete! You're drunk now. You go away and leave him to me, and I'll get his money and we'll spend it together."

Boynton groaned in anguish.

"All of it? Or will the girl in New York get half?"

"All," said Kate, bringing her teeth together with a snap. "He loves me and I can do what I please with him. If he knew the truth he would love me still. He would kill you, but would forgive me."

Just then the miner, unable to endure more, rushed into the room, followed by the engineer.

Dave covered the gambler with his cocked revolver.

Boynton would probably have received a bullet in his heart if it had not been for the precaution of Dave.

He stood facing the woman, who was white with terror. The end had come and there was nothing to do but face it.

If she ever needed diplomacy in her life it was now.

"Tom," said Kate, in a trembling voice, "you wouldn't shoot me, would you?"

The woman saw that he was taking out his gun.

"I'm going to kill that Mexican, and settle with you later. So I have had no wife all this time? I have been harboring a serpent in my bosom. Never mind, it is as well." Then turning to the gambler: "I'm going to kill you, Pete, but I'm going to do it fair. I've got a right to kill you like a snake, but I'm going to give you a chance. I'll fight you at your own game."

Saying this he took the two ends of the red tablecloth Kate had spread upon the table after clearing away the dishes and threw one to the Mexican.

"Take that," ordered the miner.

Pete could still see the gun of the engineer raised

in the air. Evidently there was going to be fair play in the matter. His head began to whirl. He was a scoundrel, and like all such was a coward.

"Now draw your gun!" said the miner, drawing his own weapon.

"There isn't anyone to give the signal," said Pete, as he turned toward Dave.

The miner laughed wickedly as a thought came into his mind.

"No? Let the woman who has caused it all give it. Kate!"

"Well?"

She had risen with a woful face from the divan where she had dropped to keep the horrid sight from burning into her brain.

"Take your gun," ordered the miner, "go outside, take ten steps toward the bank, then fire your gun, and we will fire at the same time."

"I—I——"

She looked ready to faint. How many times she had planned to get rid of the miner, and there was a chance now, but her heart quailed as she heard his words.

"Go on!"

She was counting: "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine," and then—"ten!"

The report of her gun was followed by two more inside the cabin, and Dave Fairfax stepped into the kitchen. He knew that the gambler was dead, and he did not want to witness the meeting between the survivor and the woman who had counted the soul of her husband into eternity.

"He is dead!" said Tom, as he stooped over the body of the gambler. Then he turned to face his

wife, or the woman he had supposed occupied that position.

But her eyes were bent upon the dead. She knelt down beside the body as she murmured his name again and again.

The miner gazed at her contemptuously. He had not supposed that it was quite so bad, and yet he should have known, as it seemed that everyone else in the camp did.

"And I ruined my life for her," he said aloud. "I left my little child alone in the great city of New York when I knew she was unhappy. The Mexican law will call this murder, and I am a lost man, but Edna shall have all I have in the world."

Still Kate lay moaning over the gambler, for all those days came back to her when her life and love were fresh and untainted. Before she knew that men were so wicked. She would have gone with him for the sake of that once great love if it had been possible, and so little did she care for the heart-ache of the man before her that she did not even glance at him as he was speaking. She only dreaded his power over her, and now that would be gone.

Fairfax, waiting outside the cabin, glanced in the window. Kate was still upon her knees, while the miner was at the table writing.

Then suddenly Boynton rose to his feet with a laugh that was almost fiendish. Going over to the kneeling woman he read what he had written :

"To Edna Boynton, care Clifford Marlow, 24 Broadway, New York, U. S. A.

"MY DAUGHTER :

I have no legal wife. The mine is yours alone.

I enclose the Mexican mine grant. They cannot take it from you. Good-bye. God bless you.

“YOUR FATHER.”

He had scarcely concluded before the woman, realizing what he had done, screamed with rage, and raising her revolver, sent a shot through the man's body. Then she dropped the gun and was bending over the body of the gambler as the engineer ran into the room.

“Oh, Edna—child—forgive——”

These were the last words that ever came from Tom Boynton's lips.

Dave Fairfax was not sure whether it was murder or suicide. He knew that the miner had been hard pressed, and with this thought he did not censure the woman nor speak to her at all.

A miner who had been attracted by the shot, entered the room.

“They fought Mexican fashion,” said Kate, looking from one to the other, “and they have killed each other.”

“Dead! They are both dead!” said Dave, looking keenly at the woman.

Dave, knowing the woman knew he had seen the death of the gambler, wondered if she was shielding herself or the miner.

“Yes, they are both dead,” said Kate, “both dead! What a tragedy! I was his wife,” she said to the newcomer, pointing to the body of Boynton, and looking defiantly at the engineer. “All he has in the world is mine.”

She looked about furtively for the package that the miner must have had before he dropped to the

floor. In that envelope was the letter proclaiming her not his wife, and the grant for the property that would make her a wealthy woman.

The engineer knew the woman was lying when she said she was Boynton's wife, and he knew also that there was a letter, for he had heard the miner read it before the fatal shot had been fired.

He moved toward the body simultaneously with the woman, and picking up the package, he said slowly:

"This is for his daughter, Edna Boynton, and I will see that she gets it."

"I am his wife," said the woman defiantly. "I will take it to her."

"No, you are not his wife," replied Dave, meaning to let Kate know that he knew. "You will never have the grant in your hands unless it is put there by the little girl that owns it."

CHAPTER V.

IN the office of Clifford Marlow & Co. the cleaners and clerks were getting the offices ready for the day's work. The clerk who had always more to say than any of the rest was Moses Lotto, and he made use of his tongue just now when no one was in the office save the little scrubwoman.

"You are a beautiful scrubber," said he, standing with a pile of books in his arms, and looking down upon the red head of Mrs. McCune.

"That ain't what I'm fitted for," replied the scrubwoman, jerking her rag about with an angry twist. "I was made for a good wife, but my husbands always die."

The clerk went on with his work in silence for some time. He had been thinking lately that he wanted to get married, and the woman before him quite struck his fancy. She was good, whole-souled, and kind to everyone who needed her.

Suddenly she began to sing, and the Jew, placing his hands to his ears, said:

"Please don't sing, Mrs. McCune. It spoils your voice."

"What's the matter wid me voice?" asked the woman as she trilled a little more.

"It's an all right voice," soothed the witty Jew, "but it's one of them voices that ain't done. It

might be a good dream, but it's time to wake up, if that's what you call it."

Mrs. McCune sniffed. She was used to this man and his jokes, and because she knew that it was but foolishness with him, she allowed him to go on.

"Just as you say," replied the woman, "it's an all right voice, and I ought to be in the opry house."

"They don't pay no more money there than they does in this scrubbin' business. I ain't had no money from here for I don't know how long."

"Well, I gets my dough," answered Mrs. McCune. "If I didn't, I'd go to the union and make a big fuss. We've got a scrublady's union all right."

"I don't find anything very attractive about this hole," grumbled the clerk, "and I can tell you that the first chance I get to go to another place I'm going to 'twenty-three,' that's what I'm going to do. You wouldn't like to go, too, would you, Mrs. McCune?"

"I can't, 'cause there's poor little Miss Edna. She'd be all alone here if it weren't for me, an' I ain't goin' to leave the child in the hands of such folks."

"Mr. Marlow is her own cousin," replied the man. "He ought to be good to her."

"But he ain't, all right, all right. He tries to see just how nasty——"

Just then the sound of footsteps stopped the conversation.

The master of the office came in and looked about sniffingly.

He was a tall, good-looking man, with clear, cold

blue eyes, and a red mouth that was prominent because of the full red lips.

He was one of those men who believed that everyone was trying to cheat him. Having heard voices before he entered he said:

"What were you people doing? I hired you to work, didn't I?"

"Yes, sir," answered the clerk humbly.

"I want my money's worth out of you, don't I?"

"Yes, sir," replied the clerk again, with a wink at the scrubwoman, who just then felt a violent fit of coughing coming on.

"And I'm not a fool, am I?" demanded Marlow.

In the sweetest voice imaginable the clerk answered:

"Yes, sir."

"What!" exclaimed Marlow.

"Excuse me, sir. That was a slip of the tongue," replied the Jew.

"If I thought you had brains enough to know what you were saying," put in the master, "I would send you out of here for good. But one can't get any but fools to work nowadays. In fact," he went on, "I believe I shall let you go at the end of the week. I don't want you about."

Then turning to the scrubwoman, who was industriously working, he said:

"If I have to speak to you again, madam, out you go!"

Moses who now that he was discharged did not care what he said, put in:

"You needn't discharge her. She's an honest woman, and couldn't help laughing, for she saw you coming."

Marlow glared at the speaker, but did not address his next speech especially to him.

"After this I'm going to have more system about this office. There's Edna. She need not think she can presume upon our relationship. I, for one, believe that when blood relations work for you they ought to do more than any other laborer."

"That's what you must believe, sir," replied the Jew, "the way Miss Edna works."

Not noticing the remark of the clerk, Marlow asked:

"Where is she now, I wonder? It's time she was here. Late again! Well, it's time I was getting rid of her. She is several minutes late! Where is she? Do either of you know?"

Marlow was working himself into a state of rage over the absence of his cousin.

"I know where she is," answered Mrs. McCune. "She is comin' down the street, and she ain't but two minutes late. She looks pale, sir."

There was a sympathetic tone in the woman's voice. She was appealing to the man not to scold the girl for her tardiness.

The master looked into the street.

"She is coming," he said, gazing at the slender figure that was tripping along. There was satisfaction in his voice as he called "Edna!" as the girl came in.

He was busying himself at his desk, and did not look up as she came to his side.

"Yes, sir. I am here."

Still he kept her standing there waiting for his command. The small white face looked more wan and pale by the morning light than it had on that

evening when she had wept so bitterly over her father's letter.

Thinking he had not heard her, she said:

"You called me, Clifford?"

"I think I have told you, my dear," answered the man in clear, cutting tones, "that I did not desire you to call me by my first name. You must not presume upon our relationship."

This was the first time that he had said exactly these words to her, and the tears rushed into her eyes.

"You are late again!" snapped Marlow, as he wheeled about in his chair.

"I couldn't help it," said she slowly. "There was a poor old woman very ill in the room next to mine, and I waited on her. As it is, I am only three minutes behind time."

"That three minutes belongs to me," replied her cousin, "and I expect you to be beforehand rather than late. Remember that in the future."

"Yes, sir."

It was a timid little voice that replied, and the shipowner was about to let her go when he thought of something else.

"You finished those invoices last night?"

"No, sir. I did all I could, but they were too long."

"I told you to finish them before leaving the office."

"It was impossible. I did all I could."

"You did not wish to please me," went on the shipowner. "The best you can do is not enough for me. Your month is up to-day, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

The slender body swayed as if in mortal terror. Was she going to lose her position? Was this cousin, who had worked her almost to death, to discharge her just as she was receiving enough to exist upon?

"Go to Mr. Norton and give him this slip and get your money. You are not competent."

The blow she dreaded had fallen. If she had only known, there were hundreds of positions in the big city that she could have filled, but she was afraid to venture, afraid of the big world, upon which her childish eyes gazed with inward terror, common to very young and very lovely girls.

"You mean that you are going to discharge me?"

"Yes."

The man did not look at her as he spoke. She was not worth his notice. He went on pulling papers out of his desk.

"I—I—— It is so very sudden!" exclaimed Edna, with a sickening dread in her heart. "I had not counted on leaving. I have pledged all the money I have coming for my board, and I know of no place to go."

Then the master looked up. His small eyes were searching the pale little face.

"I don't wonder you have no place to go," said he, "but that isn't my affair. I gave you a position out of charity, but I am not compelled to keep you forever. Get your good-for-nothing tramp of a father to support you."

So white was the girl's face when she heard these words that she looked almost like death.

She loved her father, and would not even allow her own good sense to say that he had neglected her in any way. If she had only known just then that

the eyes she loved were closed forever, that the hands and arms that had carried her through babyhood would never clasp her again, the tender heart would have broken, for the girl had no friends, and did not know how to make them.

Then her spirit rose and she turned upon her cousin.

"Stop!" said she, loud enough for everybody in the office to hear. "You have never given me one thing from charity. I have done more work for less pay than any girl in New York. I have been forced because of my poverty to stand a lot of abuse from you, but you have gone too far. You have insulted my father, and I tell you that I would not work for you again if you begged me on your knees!"

With flaming eyes and the blood mantling the sweet young face, which added the beauty of the rose to the paleness of the lily, the girl rushed out. She would go home. She hated the life she lived, and would rather die than be forced to live it any longer. Her cousin was not worthy her obedience and respect.

Marlow turned toward the scrubwoman, who had ceased her labor and stood looking after the girl.

"Go after her, and tell her that I said for her to get her money and not come back here again, and to be out of this place in half an hour."

Nora McCune looked deliberately into Marlow's face for fully half a minute.

"I will tell her, mister," she said, "and for fear that she will lose her way I will go with her."

She commenced to roll down her sleeves, and the man started from his seat.

"You will stay here and clean my office," said

he slowly. "You are not supposed to be the keeper of that girl. My office needs a cleaning badly, for it is very dirty."

"It is no dirtier than you are," replied the scrub-woman, "and I hate to work for you so that if you was a-rollin' in the mire I wouldn't pick you out, so there!"

She went out of the room, taking her pail and scrubbing brushes with her.

"Moses," said the master, "I want you to advertise for another stenographer, so she will be here to-morrow morning. Do you hear?"

"Sure."

"Hold on! Do you know what to say—just how to write the ad?"

"Sure I do," replied the impertinent Jew. "I say, mister, I'll write that a girl is wanted who will be willin' to work for twenty hours a day. She must expect to be insulted fifty times an hour and not answer back. Wages are very small, and she don't get them."

Marlow made a step toward him with an angry frown upon his face.

"I'll pay you for your insolence!" he said loudly.

"I wish you would pay me for my work," replied the Jew.

"Saturday was pay day," answered the shipowner coldly, getting back his composure.

"So it was," said the Jew, "but I didn't get my money."

The Jew left the office, well satisfied with himself and his efforts at getting even.

Marlow was harsher than usual that day, for everything was going wrong. The firm was in a

very bad state, and he scarcely knew where to turn for money.

"If my luck doesn't change soon," said he aloud, "I shall be forced into bankruptcy."

Just as he was speaking a man entered the office hurriedly.

The master had an idea that something was wrong, for there was a twitching about Paul Norton's mouth that was unusual, and he hung up his hat and coat without a word.

Then he turned upon his employer.

"Mr. Marlow, I have some news for you."

The two men looked at each other for an instant, the shipowner fearing to hear what the other had to tell.

"I have been waiting for you, Norton," he said, giving himself more time to bear any shock that might be in store for him.

"I am a little late, sir," said the confidential man, "but it was on your account. I have stumbled across a bit of news that might be very valuable to you."

"I hope it is nothing bad," answered Marlow, sinking back in his chair. "You know as well as I do, that if we don't get some money right away I shall go to the wall. And I don't know where the money is to come from."

"I think I do, sir," replied the clerk, as he arose and closed the door, first making sure that there were no prying ears about to hear. "I think I do. Where is Edna?"

"Gone to get her wages. I discharged her this morning."

"Then you have ruined everything," said he in dismay.

"What?"

"She is your cousin?"

"Yes."

"Her father was named Tom Boynton, and when you last heard from him he was in the mountains of Mexico?"

"Yes."

"Well, read that," and the clerk stooped over and placed a slip of paper on the desk before the eyes of the astonished shipowner.

CHAPTER VI.

MARLOW took the paper with trembling hands. This is what he read :

A Mountain Tragedy.—Red Pete, the famous gambler and desperado, was found in a cabin in the Sierra Madre Mountains to-day, shot through the heart. On the floor beside him lay the body of a miner by the name of Tom Boynton. The cause of this double tragedy was supposed to be a quarrel over a woman. Boynton is the prospector who recently discovered and proved his claim to be one of the richest silver and gold mines in this part of Mexico.

Paul Norton looked keenly at his employer.

“One of the greatest mines—and he is dead!” he said hoarsely.

“Well, it’s a fortune, but I don’t know how to go to work to get it,” and Marlow laid the paper down on the desk.

Get it through the girl, his daughter: Keep the news of her father’s death from her, and when you win her confidence you can make her your wife.”

“That’s a great scheme,” replied the shipowner, “and one that I am able to carry out. I have discharged her, but it will be easy enough to get her

back again. She begged me not to send her away, but I would not listen to her then. I'll have that girl head over heels in love with me before she is many weeks older by the kindness I will show her."

Just then Edna came into the office and walked directly toward her hat and coat that hung near the toilet rack.

"Good-morning, Edna," said Paul Norton, smiling pleasantly.

"Good-morning, Mr. Norton."

"If you will come to my office presently," said Norton, with a significant look at his employer, "I will arrange a more convenient desk for you."

Edna smiled a little.

"Thank you very much, sir," replied she, "but I am leaving the office for good, and I am not coming back. You can give the place to the next girl that comes. She will need it as much as I have."

There was no sarcasm intended. She was sorry for any girl who should be compelled to work for her cousin, and very sorry for herself, so sorry, indeed, that tears welled up in her eyes and fell upon the light jacket she had slipped over the white shirt-waist.

Then Edna heard words that made her open her eyes.

It was Marlow's voice.

"You may go, Norton," said the master. "I wish to speak with my cousin about resuming her duties. I have reconsidered my dismissal of you, Edna."

When they were alone he said softly:

"Edna, my business affairs have been troubling me greatly, and I dare say that I have been unkind

to you sometimes, but I have not meant to be, and I hope you will forgive me."

Edna had not looked for this, and the unexpected kindness of his tone made the tears fall faster than ever.

"You have made it very hard for me," said she between her sobs, "and I have tried to overlook the insulting way you spoke of my father. I have not heard from him for over a month; and I am half sick with anxiety, and instead of sympathizing with me you—my own cousin—have turned—me—into the street."

The girl broke down entirely and her slender form shook convulsively as she tried in vain to suppress her emotion.

Marlow took the slender fingers that had done so much for him in his own as he said soothingly:

"Dear Edna, I have done wrong, I know. Your father is my uncle, and whatever I have said I am very fond of him. If you only knew how much I think of you, you would be surprised."

He tried to place his arm about her waist, but the girl timidly drew away.

"I cannot help but ask myself," said she, drying her eyes, "what has caused this remarkable change."

"When I thought of you going away from me this morning," and he leaned forward and looked into her face as he spoke, "I realized that I loved you, that I loved you with my whole heart."

Edna rose to her feet, her face expressive of various emotions.

"I do not believe one word of it," she said slowly.

"Then let me prove to you that I am telling the truth," said he. "I want you to stay until the

time comes when you can trust me and have confidence in me."

For a moment the girl thought it over in her mind before replying.

"I will return to work for you, but I do it only because I am compelled to do so."

"Then I will teach you that I have not been less your friend because I have sometimes been harsh with you. I will raise your wages and make your work as pleasant as I can. Then you will see that I trust and love you."

Edna put up her hand entreatingly.

"I do not want you to speak to me of love," she said. I will enter your office again, but I want you to know how I feel about the matter. I will not listen to words of love from such a man as you."

With this she went out of the office, her head held high. She knew that there must be some reason for her cousin's complete change of manner. What was it? This she could not tell, but with her mind filled with a multitude of thoughts the girl went back to her desk and tried to think out the reason for Marlow's sudden interest.

Norton came to her during the morning with a smile upon his lips.

Edna thought it an evil smile, but when the man spoke so kindly to her she could not be ungrateful, for she had had such hardship all her life she could not afford to make enemies.

"If there is anything that I can do for you," he said as he bent over her, "I will cheerfully do it."

"Thank you."

"I think I heard you say you would like a quiet place in which to do your work, and I have made

arrangements to have you take possession of that small room back of mine."

"I am obliged to you, I am sure," replied Edna, "and I will move my things in there as soon as I have finished this."

She was sitting at her machine putting through some difficult work, and only raised her eyes for a moment to show her gratitude to the man who had it in his power to be kind to her if he wished.

Moses and the other clerks looked on with satisfaction depicted on their faces, and wished they might be treated as well.

"Mister," said Moses, "you can raise my wages if you want to."

"You are not worth the money you get now, so go along about your business!" replied Norton sternly.

"I ain't had no money——"

"If you're afraid you won't get it," said Norton angrily, "go and get it now and consider yourself discharged!"

"I'll do it!" cried the Jew. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bushes."

"How much is coming to you?" asked the confidential clerk.

"Twenty-seven dollars. Six dollars a week for three weeks."

Paul's pen hung suspended over the paper.

"Hold on! Three times six isn't twenty-seven!"

"Well, there ain't much difference, and you can let it go," replied the Jew.

"You'll get what's coming to you, and not one cent more," said the clerk, "and I don't want any

more fooling about here. This is a business office, not a vaudeville show."

Once outside the office the Jew suddenly thought it queer about the change that had come over the head men toward the pretty little typewriter. Moses, or Moe, as he was called by those whom he liked, was suspicious, and when he saw Paul Norton place a sign outside the door with the words "Man Wanted," printed on it, he marched in again and stood before the head clerk.

"Excuse me, mister."

Norton looked up with a frown on his face.

"What do you want now?" he asked impatiently.

"I have no time to fool away on a fellow like you, so get out!"

"The sign outside says that you want a man. How much do you pay?"

"Six dollars."

"I think I'll take the job," grinned the Jew.

"But you just left."

"Well I had to get my money somehow, and now that I have it I'll come back to work."

Just then Marlow entered the room and asked Norton for the address of a man by the name of Lane.

"You know where he resides, don't you, Norton?" asked the shipowner.

"Yes, sir."

"Then send for him to come to me immediately. I want to see him. Don't wait for a messenger—send that fellow," and the master waved his hand toward Moe.

Moe was glad to get his position back, for he

felt that it would be necessary to watch over the little typewriter, as she was surrounded by villains, and when he came back he was going to tell her just what kind of men they were and what her own flesh and blood was.

In the private office of Paul Norton, Marlow was talking in low tones.

"I've been down to the mining exchange," said he, "and they say that that Mexican mine is a great thing, the biggest find in silver in years. This girl has come into a fortune, and by all that's good or bad we have got to get it."

"Is that why you sent for Dan Lane?" asked the clerk. "You had better be careful, sir. He is a desperate man, an escaped convict and a murderer."

Outside they could hear the clicking of Edna's machine, but it did not stir any thoughts of goodness in the heart of either man.

Suddenly Marlow looked up and said :

"I am going to force that girl to marry me. If she refuses there is only one thing to do. Her father was my uncle. I would inherit every dollar of his fortune if she should die."

Paul turned around upon him suddenly :

"Don't talk like that! You wouldn't do such a terrible thing?"

"Don't be a fool!" replied Marlow. "We are going to have that money. Your share will be a large one, if you have sense enough to listen to me. I, too, am a desperate man, and if she refuses, as I told you before——"

"Well?"

"Dan Lane would think no more of putting her

out of the way than he would of mangling a bird. When he comes in I want to see him."

"Yes, but——"

They were interrupted by Edna entering with a sheet of paper and a copybook in her hand.

Marlow's manner changed immediately, as he said smilingly:

"Sit down, Edna. I can't allow you to stand. I am so glad that you have consented to stay with me, and I cannot forgive myself for being so cross with you. But never mind——"

"I have forgotten it," interrupted the girl. "I only want a chance to earn my living until my father sends for me. Have you any letters to dictate?"

"Yes, I think I have, but I think it would be well if you went into my private office."

"The Irishwoman is in there," interjected Paul, "and as I am going out, you will be quite alone here."

"Shall we begin, sir?" asked Edna, after a long silence.

"Yes, go ahead," replied Marlow, as he lighted a cigar and settled back in his chair.

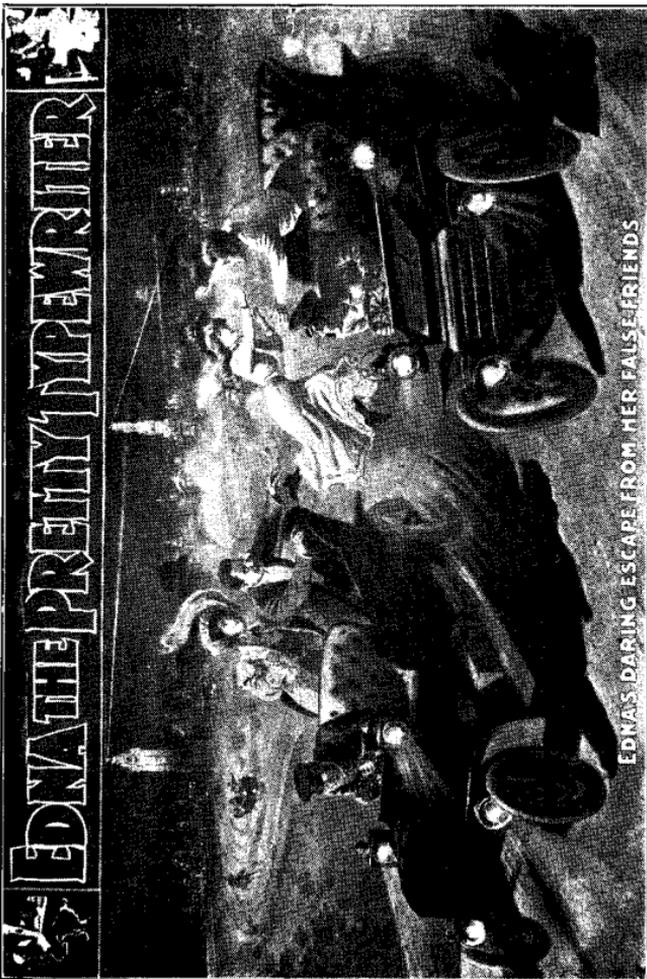
"I am ready," said Edna.

To Clint and Jackson, 24 Madison Street, Chicago.
Gentlemen:

Yours of the second at hand——

The shipowner stopped suddenly and looked at his pretty cousin.

"I say, Edna, will you go out with me to supper to-night?"



EDNA THE PRETTY IMPERIER

EDNA DARING ESCAPE FROM HER FALSE FRIENDS

"No, thank you," replied the girl, dropping her eyes before the man's eager gaze, "I don't think I will. Shall we go on?"

"But I can't let you lead such a stupid life any longer. I am your cousin, and I want you to go out a little with me."

"Thank you again," replied Edna, "but it is impossible. There are two reasons why I cannot go. One is that I could not go with you after what has happened, and the other is that I have no suitable clothes."

Her small pencil was still on the last word of the letter she was taking down, and she settled herself for further dictation.

"Pretty dresses are very easy to get," said the man slowly. "I know of nothing easier. You say the word, and you shall have all the pretty dresses you want."

Edna's face flushed crimson.

"That might be all right for some girls," she said presently, "but not for me. I could not wear what I had not earned."

"Why not, if I give them to you—I am your relative."

"Because things like that cannot be had for nothing. Even cousins have to pay a big price for them. I like pretty things, and I would buy them if I had the money, but I haven't. So there!"

The shipowner leant over and took the girl's hands in his.

"Edna, will you not believe me when I say that I love you?"

Before she could answer a knock was heard on the door.

"Come in!" commanded the shipowner.

A clerk entered and handed a card to Marlow, who ordered that the lady be shown in.

"You need not go," said Marlow to Edna, "for I——"

"I wish to see you alone," said the woman who was now standing in the doorway, "and I would rather have your stenographer leave."

Edna knew the rules of all offices, and with a bow to her cousin and to the woman, who had given her a keen, penetrating look, more so than was necessary, so Edna thought, she left the room.

"Who is that girl?" asked the woman as the door closed behind Edna.

"My stenographer."

"And her name?"

"Edna Boynton."

"Good!" ejaculated the woman.

CHAPTER VII.

"I HAVE come three thousand miles to see you," said the woman, as she sat down in the chair the shipowner placed for her.

"I consider myself honored," said he with a smile.

"Can the girl hear?"

"No."

"Her father was killed a short time ago, down in Mexico."

"I am aware of that fact," replied Marlow, keeping his gaze upon the woman's face, while he wondered what was coming.

"You know?"

"Yes; and also that the girl does not yet know it, and that she is worth at least a hundred million dollars!"

"Not if I know it," replied the woman coolly, sitting back in her chair. "She is his daughter, to be sure, but I was his wife. I don't want her to have one cent of it if I can help it, and as I have had the Pinkerton men look up your record, Clifford Marlow, I think I can induce you to split the money with me."

The man had sunk back in his chair and was watching her out of the corner of his eye. Surely she was very beautiful, dressed as the dead man had often imagined she would be when he was happy in the cabin with her.

"You were his wife?" said he presently. "I don't see how you can get more than a third of the estate, at most."

He had thrown down the gauntlet to her in that speech, and she, with the coolness of her kind, took it up.

"Before he died," she went on, not noticing what he had said, or at least paying no attention to it, "he sent that girl a letter, and that is what I want. We can't get any of the money until I get my fingers upon that letter and the grant, which he sent at the same time."

"Did he send the letter by mail?" asked Marlow, bending forward eagerly.

"No, in care of a young New Yorker. He arrived in the city this morning, and is coming here to-day. He has that precious letter in a bag he wears about his neck. He does not know what is in it himself. You get that letter, unread by either of them, and you will never want for money again as long as you live."

"There is money enough for us all," said Marlow. "I will try to get the letter and grant, and if we fail in that I shall ask her to be my wife."

"And if she refuses?"

"There is another way. The old man was my uncle, and if she dies I am his heir. The money would then come to me."

"Good! One way or another, we will win. But first we must get that letter."

If the thought went through Marlow's mind that the woman was rather anxious to get the letter he did not mention the fact.

"This Dave Fairfax has the letter with him," con-

tinued the woman, "and when he comes after the girl you must tell him that she is at my hotel with me; that I am an old friend of her father's. We can get her there all right, I think, by a little diplomacy."

So the plan was laid that if the grant and letter could be obtained they would not trouble about disposing of the girl.

Then Kate asked that Edna be sent for.

The moment Kate looked into the eyes so like the miner's she conceived a greater hatred for the girl than ever. She wanted her out of the way, for she felt that there was not enough room on the earth for both of them.

"I know your father very well," she said, slowly tilting the girl's chin. "I promised him that the moment I arrived in New York I would take you with me to my home as my own daughter."

Edna looked first at Kate, then at her cousin, as she asked:

"Is he well?"

"Oh, yes, quite well. He has often spoken of you to me."

"Please tell me about him!"

"If Mr. Marlow will excuse you I will take you home with me this moment."

"Yes, of course. Go with Mrs. Burnette. She is your good kind friend, and if I were not just such a good fellow as I am I should be jealous of her."

Edna wondered if she would not soon awake and find it all a dream.

"Get your hat and coat and come right away,"

said Kate, patting the bright curls, which she would much rather have pulled.

Kate went with Edna to get her wraps and as they left the room Paul Norton entered with Dan Lane. The brutal face of Lane bore out the character Marlow had given him—that he would not hesitate to kill a child any more than he would refrain from mangling a bird.

The three villains talked over their plans.

Lane was assured that he would receive a goodly amount of money if he would follow out the orders he received.

Edna, radiant with happiness that she was going to hear of her father, took Kate Burnette's hand as she said:

"I am ready to go with you."

"Come along, then," responded the woman, with a glance at Marlow which, if the girl could have interpreted it, would have deterred her from going with the woman.

It is the unexpected that always happens.

Just as they were about to go out of the office to take the carriage waiting at the door, they came face to face with Dave Fairfax.

As if some guardian angel had told him to stay proceedings, he said loudly:

"I want to see Miss Edna Boynton!"

The girl dropped the woman's hand and went toward him.

"I am Edna Boynton."

For a moment the young people gazed into each other's faces, and then the woman, noticing that she was recognized by the young man, whispered in the girl's ear:

"Edna, come with me. This man is one of your father's worst enemies."

Edna looked into the woman's face with a bewildered expression.

"You and I are strangers," said Dave Fairfax, addressing himself to Edna, and not noticing the woman, "but way down in the mountains of Mexico I promised your father that I would be your friend. This woman here was the evil spirit of his life, and I am not going to let her harm you."

Marlow stepped forward at this juncture, his eyes blazing with wrath.

"How dare you insult this lady, sir?"

"Hold on!" cried Dave. "Is this any business of yours? If it isn't, I would advise you to keep out of it."

"I am her cousin and her employer," replied the shipowner.

This gentleman says that he is my father's friend, and I shall gladly listen to him," said Edna.

"And I can prove that the words I speak to you, Miss Edna, are true. Do you know your father's handwriting?"

"Yes! Oh, yes!"

She looked eagerly at the paper he held out to her, and there upon it, in her father's handwriting, was her own name.

Marlow whispered to Dan Lane, who had been lurking in the back of the room, and the villain sprang forward and wrenched the letter from the girl's hand.

Affairs assumed a threatening aspect, for everyone seemed to be against the young typewriter and her gallant friend.

But Dave was more than a match for them. He pulled his gun from his pocket quicker than any of his opponents could theirs, and aimed it at the villains.

"When I shoot," said he, "I shoot to kill! I don't go armed, as a usual thing, but I have just returned from Mexico, where they have to carry guns, and where I learned to use it."

Marlow came forward as far as he dared and said to his cousin:

"Edna, send this man away. Send him about his business. He is an adventurer."

"His business just now seems to be in helping me," said the girl, with a smile into the keen eyes of her champion. "I shall ask him to take me to a place of safety."

As she said this she held out her hand to the young stranger, and he was about to lead her away when two rough-looking men belonging to Dan Lane's gang entered, and the brave boy from Mexico would have had a serious time of it if it had not been for good Nora, who flourished Marlow's revolver in the air so carelessly that the men turned and ran. Dave and Edna were left alone in the outer office, but they could not escape, for some of Dan Lane's gang were in the hall, and Dave was too clever to take the girl he had promised to protect into danger.

"Are you hurt?" asked Edna, looking shyly at her new friend.

"No, and I have your letter safe," was the answer of the young man as he held aloft the long envelope. Nora came back into the office laughing.

"Wouldn't that make your grandmother turn

over in her coffin?" said she, "that one poor little Irishwoman could chase a lot of devils that ain't worth the feedin'?"

Edna was too worried to smile, although she appreciated what a friend Nora was.

"Why were they so anxious to get my father's letter from me?" she asked Dave.

"I am not sure, but I think that in that envelope you will find papers of value. It was the last thing your father wrote before he died."

Edna turned pale, and for a moment seemed about to faint.

She staggered, and would have fallen, but for the supporting arm of Dave.

"He is not dead!" she gasped faintly.

"Yes. I thought you knew."

"No. They did not tell me."

Dave helped her to a chair, for the pale face had grown paler still, and the beautiful eyes were filled with tears. If there is anything that will stir a young man's heart just at the right age it is the sight of a woman weeping, especially if she is young and pretty.

"He blamed himself a whole lot," said Dave, after the girl had recovered her composure somewhat, "for not coming for you, or doing more. He was poor all his life, but he died a millionaire."

"What? My father!" and Edna sat up. She was too innocent to think what such a vast amount of money meant to her at her age. She could only gasp at the thought that her father had attained, that for which he had worked so hard during his lifetime.

"Who is this woman?"

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"She calls herself your father's widow, and I think you will find some mention of her in that letter, if you will read it. I am going to fight your battles for you, for I know you need a friend. I only wish we were out of this office and out on the street among people, that's all I'd care for. But I feel that every minute we stay they are concocting some way to murder me. I am sure that is what they want, for they can't get the money——"

Edna had opened the latter, and after reading a portion of it ejaculated:

"My father says he has no legal wife!"

And Dave replied as vehemently:

"Good! Now we will fight. No wonder she was anxious to get hold of that letter! And there are the grant deeds. You must guard them as you would your life," went on the young man, "for those give you title to the mine."

"Then I want you to take care of them for me. Do you think you could do that?"

"Sure, if you have confidence enough in me to entrust me with such valuable papers."

"You have saved my life," replied the girl simply, "and that is of more value to me than all the money in the world."

Dave had placed the paper in his pocket, and was about to insist that they should go, when a shot was fired through one of the windows in the area-way, and Dave Fairfax dropped beside the girl with a bullet in his neck.

But the villains little thought of the strength of the girl.

When they rushed into the office, sure now of

"

their prey, they were confronted by the determined girl, with Dave's revolver in her hand.

"Stop!" cried Edna, leveling the revolver. "Stop, or I shall shoot to kill!"

And stop every one of them`did.

How agonized the girl was when she saw her young friend, who had come all the way from Mexico to help her, lying almost dead upon the floor.

Menacing the villains with her revolver, Edna drove them from the building, and then summoning Moses and Nora, carried the wounded man to the street, where a carriage was obtained, and Dave conveyed to his hotel, accompanied by Edna.

Nora was installed as his nurse until she could get someone else to look after him.

If Edna had been questioned the morning before these dreadful happenings she would have shuddered at the thought of having to go through them; in fact, she would have said that it was impossible. Her little head was filled with ideas. Her father had left her a fortune, and Dave had the grants for it. She believed implicitly in what this young man had told her, because were not his words borne out by her father's letter?

She was hurrying along now toward her boarding place, for she had promised Dave she would come back and stay with him while Nora went home to her little ones.

Through the streets at a great pace the girl made her way. Something new had come into her young life.

But just what it was she was too inexperienced to realize. Any way, she had conceived a great re-

spect for the brave young engineer who had been so good to her.

He had stood up before her enemies and beaten them back when they were trying to take away her fortune. She did not think of the time that she, too, had stood over the dear body of Dave and threatened to kill anyone who might come near him. Now she knew why her cousin had changed toward her.

Running into the house she hastened through her dinner and repaired to her room to make herself look as pretty as possible, for was she not going back to Dave?

Oh, the vainness of a great woman. How tenderly she will twist some flying curl with her fingers when going to meet the man she loves, but how soon she forgets afterward that there is a curl!

CHAPTER VIII.

NORA sat by the bed looking down into the young face. There were lines of pain on the white brow, and ever and anon the feverish tongue licked the hot lips.

"Take your medicine now, sir," said she.

Dave did as he was bidden.

"But I'm all right, am I not, Mrs. McCune? What's the use of making such a fuss over me? But good gracious! how I do love to be made a fuss over."

He smiled as he said this, and the woman smiled too as she put the medicine back on the table.

"You ain't all right yet, my hearty," said Nora, "and it will be some time before you can get up. Here, take this drink of water and praise God that you're a-livin'."

"Bah! but that's disagreeable stuff to take!" exclaimed Dave.

"You're lucky to be here to take it," said the Irishwoman. "Now keep quiet and go to sleep. A rest will do you lots of good."

"Mrs. McCune," said Dave after a short silence, "do you think Miss Edna will be here to-night?"

"You couldn't keep her away with a ten-foot pole. Wasn't it defendin' her that you was hurt? She's a good little girl, and grateful."

"Grateful! Now look here, Mrs. McCune, you can look daggers at me all you want to, and it won't make the least bit of difference, 'cause you know her father left her to my protection, and I've got to get up and protect her. See?"

"Whist! You lie there, you silly boy! It's a lot of protectin' you'll be a-doin' if you don't keep still. That girl will be a-protectin' you're grave with daisies, thats what she will. And then, too, I don't think it's just the right thing. You're a fine young saint to be left to protect an orphan girl. You're a bold-spirited young divil, and you can fight like an Irishman, but you're a darn poor protector for a pretty girl."

"Well, I can be her brother, can't I?"

"Yes, if pigs can fly, you can. Now you turn over there and take this straight from me. I love that little girl. I'm only a scrubwoman, but if I thought you didn't mean what was right by her I'd let you bleed to death before the girl got here."

"Mrs. McCune, you do not understand," said Dave, raising himself on one elbow. "I gave her father my oath when he was dying that I would care for her, and I would rather die than have harm come to her."

Edna took considerable pains with her toilet that evening, and when finally she was satisfied with her appearance went back to Dave's hotel. Nora was still with him, and Moses had just come in. The scrubwoman had to be home by nine o'clock, so she hurried away after leaving instructions about administering the medicine.

Good Mrs. McCune had never been quite so im-

portant in her life, and she gave the little McCunes that evening a slap or two just to show her authority.

Edna busied herself about her patient with loving care. She wanted him to be silent, but the young man refused.

"Then, too," he said, when Edna chided him for being so restless, "you know it's hard for a fellow to be waited on when he would like to be up and around."

"Yes, but you are ill. Now, when your nurse comes, you must ask her for everything just like you do me."

Then Edna confessed that that night she had seen following her two suspicious-looking men, and upon getting a good look at them found they were the same ones who were in the office that day.

"My cousin is determined that he will have that paper. Oh, I wish we had the money, and did not have to worry about it!"

Dave echoed this in his heart, but he dared not arouse the girl's terror by saying that she was in danger. So when Edna told him that Nora had asked her to go to her home instead of the boarding-house, he begged her to go with the Irishwoman, saying she would be safer there than where she lived.

"You see," said the young man, "they mean to take some action against you, and you must not return there at all until I can either protect you or the matter is settled."

Edna sent him a glowing glance.

It was there on the sick bed that the girl had something shown to her of Dave's character.

She had begged him to tell her of her father, saying, with the bright tears shining in her eyes, that she could not remember him much, but that she had always loved him.

"He was a rover before he finally settled down in the camp here he made his strike," said Dave, "and he talked to me about you a great deal."

The girl listened with eager interest.

"I will show you what he gave me," said Dave, "if you will give me my pocketbook. It is in the inside pocket of my coat."

The girl went to the closet and obtained the pocketbook.

"Here it is," said the young engineer, as he extracted the tiny picture which Boynton had given him.

"Why, it's my picture!" cried Edna. "Why did he think so much of that one? I sent him a larger one."

"Yes, I know. I saw that one, too, but he cared most for this. I took it that I might recognize you readily."

"Then I may have it back——"

"Oh, no! He gave it to me," replied Dave, with a mischievous smile, "and I value it for other reasons."

A flood of color flamed into Edna's face, as she said hastily:

"You mustn't talk any more now. You must get some sleep if you would get well."

Dave allowed her to cover him with a blanket as he gave a happy little laugh. But although he had been bidden to lie quiet he was not to be suppressed. He turned suddenly and said:

"Little girl, although I do not want you to think me presumptuous, yet I would like to tell you that from the moment I saw you I knew that my heart had told me rightly. I—I——"

Just then the telephone rang.

"Oh, dear! Didn't that telephone have bad manners to break in when we were talking?"

"Well, what is it?" asked Edna, as she took up the receiver.

"Well, send her right up."

Edna turned toward her patient with a look of disappointment on her face.

"It's the nurse coming, and that means that I must go. But I may come again to-morrow?"

"Certainly," said Dave, looking lovingly at the girl. "I shall wait impatiently for your coming."

Edna opened the door in answer to the nurse's knock.

The woman entered, and calmly bore the scrutinizing glance of both Dave and Edna.

She went in the other room, on being directed by Edna, took off her outside wraps, and started immediately on her duties.

Edna watched her as she straightened the bottles and glasses on the table, and wondered just how she looked under the large goggles that she kept shifting to and fro on her shapely nose, as if she was unused to them.

When Edna was ready to go, Dave took her hand and said:

"You know, little girl, that I have your birth-right here in my heart, and no one can get it from me."

"Take good care of him," whispered Edna to the nurse, as she opened the door.

"I will do my best," replied the woman, as she busied herself about the room.

For some time after Edna had gone the woman continued her work, then as the heavy breathing of the wounded man indicated that he was sound asleep she suddenly snatched the glasses from her face and the shining black wig from her head, and stood revealed as Kate Burnette. The expression on her face was almost diabolical.

If Dave had been awake he would have seen before him his greatest enemy, the woman who had taken her oath so many miles away that she would ruin him and bring his proud head to the dust, if it lay in her power.

Now that sleep had fallen upon him, she knew that she held the trump card. Kate Burnette had hardly been able to control herself when she saw the daughter of Tom Boynton so calmly talking to Dave, as she was afraid the girl would penetrate her disguise. But now she need fear no longer.

Hastily taking a bottle from her pocket, she poured part of its contents on a piece of cloth, which she pressed softly down on the face of the sleeping man. Dave made a desperate effort to free himself, as the pressure on his face awakened him, but the fumes of the drug act quickly, and, held down by the woman, in a few moments he was unconscious.

Making sure that she had done her work well, the woman then went to the door and opened it to admit two men.

"You haven't killed him?" whispered the hand-somer of the two.

"No."

"Did you get the paper?"

Kate shook her head.

The man bent over the unconscious form of the young engineer and took a package of papers from a pocket in his shirt.

Kate snatched it from him.

"It's here all right. We have it at last. But what shall we do with him?"

"There is only one safe thing to do," said Marlow, as he drew a large knife from his pocket and went toward the bed.

Paul Norton caught him by the arm.

"I won't stand for anything like that!"

"You're a miserable coward! exclaimed Marlow. "With him out of the way, Edna will be friendless. He's got to die!"

"Yes, but not with that knife," replied Kate, as she clutched the hand of Marlow. "There's enough chloroform left in the bottle to kill a dozen men. It's up to you to give him the rest," handing the remainder of the drug to Marlow as she spoke.

"You take the papers with you," said the villain, as he poured the drug on the cloth, "and so there won't be any slip about it go to Lane's place and stay there until I come."

As Kate left the room Marlow turned to Paul Norton.

"She's a remarkable woman. If she doesn't land that money it will be because her good luck fails her. She certainly has a generous share of brains."

"Must you kill him?" asked Norton, shaking as if with palsy.

"Yes, I've got to kill him, and what's more, you've got to help me!"

There was menace in the tone of Marlow's voice, and Norton whitened to the lips. He had never intended to go to the extent of murder.

Just then there came a sound at the door, and Edna's voice was heard, crying:

"Mr. Fairfax! Open the door! Open the door!"

Dave moved, as if the sound of her voice had penetrated his very brain.

"He's coming to his senses," said Marlow, springing to the side of the bed as he noticed the movement of the unconscious man.

Again the voice of Edna was heard:

"Mr. Fairfax! There is a woman here who says that she is your nurse and that she has come from your doctor!"

When Edna reached the ground floor of the hotel she remembered that she wanted to write a letter to a girl who had been her chum in the boarding-house, and as she was not going back to the house she must let her friend know.

The clerk directed her to a desk, and she was writing to her friend when she heard a woman dressed in the uniform of a nurse ask for Mr. Fairfax's room.

She stopped writing and looked at the woman. If this was the nurse, then who was the woman there with Dave already? Feeling that she had the right to know, she went up to the nurse and inquired if the doctor had sent another in the early part of the evening. Upon receiving an answer in

the negative a great fear went through the girl's heart.

With flying feet she reached the elevator and in a moment was at the door of Dave's room.

The sound of a man's voice within caused her to believe that Dave was talking to his nurse.

Edna knocked on the door.

"Come in here," ordered Marlow, pulling his clerk into an alcove. "Wait! She will go away."

But Edna did not intend to go. She knew that there must be a woman in that room, and she did not mean to leave until she had found out who she was!

"Why don't you open the door?" cried Edna, getting impatient.

The sound of approaching footsteps made her turn, and Moses was coming toward her, almost as if in answer to her prayer.

"There is something dreadful going on in that room," said she in a whisper. "I believe that Mr. Fairfax is being murdered!"

Meanwhile the effects of the drug had been passing away, and at this juncture Dave opened his eyes. The fresh air from the open window helped to restore him to his senses, and as he gazed about the room in a dazed manner he saw that he was alone. Although weak and faint he attempted to get out of bed.

Moses had drawn himself up to the transom, and was looking into the room. He could see Dave struggling to get out of bed, while from behind the curtains the form of his employer emerged and bent over the sick man.

"Lay down," said Marlow, pushing Dave back upon the bed, "or I will put a bullet through you!"

"Touch him, and I will put two bullets in you!" cried Moses, as he leveled his pistol through the transom.

CHAPTER IX.

As Kate Burnette was hurrying away from the hotel she thought over the facts. How happy she would be. There would be nothing in the way of her being a wealthy woman. Once she shivered as she thought of Pete, saying to herself:

"It was a good thing for me that he died. If he had not he would have dragged me down with him, and I would be as low as he was."

It was for the money and for freedom that she wanted Edna out of the way, but it was for revenge that she had dealt so harshly with the wounded man. She would have liked to have killed him with her own hands, but she wanted to implicate the others so that they could not lay all the blame upon her.

She boarded a car at the corner of Thirteenth Street, and got out at the number marked upon the paper she held tightly in her hand.

Dan Lane opened the door himself, and seeing who his visitor was, said:

"Oh, it's you!"

"Yes, and I've got the papers safe and the man is out of the way."

"Where are the others?"

"They will be here shortly," replied Kate. "I left them with Fairfax to finish the job. I had him almost dead myself."

Dan Lane laughed loudly:

"If the boss is on to his job," said he, "he will give it to that guy once and for all. He'll be too easy if he has that Norton with him."

"Trust Marlow for doing the right thing," answered the woman.

She looked about the room that Dan had led her into. She could see that it was a resort for desperate men, men who would not hesitate to commit murder to gain their ends.

She heard children at play on the other side of the hall, and inquired:

"Is it on this side of your house that the scrub-woman lives?"

"Yes."

"And she keeps all her young ones there?"

"Don't you think she does by the sound?" said Dan.

Just at this moment there came another sound at the door, and Dan went to investigate. He opened the door a little and Marlow shoved into the room.

"Let us in quick!" said Marlow. "for I know that we have been followed."

Then turning to Norton:

"You're such a coward, I'd like to know why you entered this thing if you didn't want to end it. Did you imagine for a moment that you could get part of the money by looking on and seeing other people do the work?"

"I don't like the idea of murder," said Norton, as he looked at Dan.

"None of us do," said Dan. "Tis not a nice job, but it's necessary sometimes."

"As for me, I'd like to chuck it," replied the clerk.

"Don't try it, old man," said Dan with a leer. "If you do, you'll get a chuck!"

"I know that," answered Paul moodily, "but if you fellows would trust me to keep still, I'd go home and go to bed this minute."

"We won't trust you," was Dan's reply.

"Did you do it?" asked Kate.

"No," growled Marlow. "The girl Edna came back before we had a chance."

"You bungled it. I was a fool to trust either of you with that man. He was the one I wanted out of the way."

"I'll get him yet," replied the shipowner. "But we have the land grant, and with that we won't go wrong if they both live. They can't get that mine without the paper."

"That's so," replied Kate, "but let me tell you, in spite of all you say we are not safe as long as that girl lives, and Fairfax would hound us to the earth. Yet I know that with the grant in our possession we have a better show to get the mine than they have without it."

They were sitting in the small parlor. It was one of the many places Lane had about the town. His place at Coney Island had been raided twice by the police, but the man was too clever to be caught like a rat in a trap.

He was in this thing with Marlow for the big reward that had been promised him. As he sat looking into the street he uttered an ejaculation and rose to his feet.

"I told you, Marlow," said he, turning to the shipowner, "that the woman who did your scrubbing lived next door?"

"Yes. I believe it was you who sent her to me."

"It was, and she isn't a bad sort. She has a lot of kids, but let me tell you right now, that if my eyes don't deceive me, Edna, your pretty typewriter, is coming to stay all night with her. Isn't that her on the other side of the street, looking at the numbers?"

Marlow went to the window. He saw Edna, and a man with her, searching the houses for the figures above the door.

"It is she," said Kate, as she looked over Marlow's shoulder. "If she ever gets away from that house, or from this part of the town to-night then I will call you all fools."

But the couple did not do as Kate expected they would, and as Moe read out "Twenty-four," he said:

"That's the house over there," pointing at the one out of which looked the evil faces of her enemies.

Edna saw Nora's rosy face come to the window of the house next door, and she ran lightly up the steps.

"Oh, Nora, I'm so glad to get here. Why, those people made another attempt upon Mr. Fairfax's life. They failed in that, but they've got a paper out of which I was to make a great deal of money."

"That's bad," said Nora, "but you've always got the chance of gettin' it back again, so cheer up, honey, and I'll get you a bite to eat. I've kept it hot for you on the back of the stove."

"I will not let that woman get the money," said Edna, "although I would rather lose it than have Dave Fairfax killed. But we will have to get it back again."

Moses was looking at the pretty scrubwoman

with a silly little grin on his face. He turned at this and said to Edna:

"I would like to help you on this job. Can I?"

"Yes, indeed; but we can do nothing until Mr. Fairfax is better. You see what he went through to-night has retarded his recovery, and I fear fever may set in."

"Why not call in the police?" asked Nora.

"We cannot do that," replied Edna with a shake of her head, "for they would destroy the paper, and then we would lose the mine."

"Never you mind to-night," said Nora. "You go up and sit with the children now that you have finished your dinner. I am going to take Moses with me to the store to get some tea. Will you go with me, Moe?"

"Will I go?" said the Jew. "I should think I would go. I shall just be tickled to death! I wish I could afford to get married," he added, as they walked along.

"Mebbe you could if the woman you married would be a willin' helper. Could you, Moe?"

"But you' had two husbands already, haven't you, Nora?"

"I've told you a million times that I had two and they're both dead."

"You didn't say whether you killed them or not,"

"Well, if you haven't got a nerve, to be a-thinkin' that I killed my husbands. They killed themselves, they did."

"Both of them?"

"Yes. Why not? They were tired of livin'."

Moe thought seriously of this. He did not want to follow in the footsteps of the other two, yet he

really liked the little scrubwoman. She was so jolly and good-natured. Moe could not forget that Nora had taken in the homeless Edna and had always stood by the girl when she needed a friend.

"They do be sayin'," broke in Nora as they turned the corner and went toward the grocery store, "that a married man don't spend no more money than a single one."

"That's right," replied Moses with a grin. "He don't get a chance. His wife spends it for him."

Nora hardly knew whether this was a sling at her or not, and so she kept silent, and being angry at several of the things Moses had said she walked along in a hurry. And fortunate was it for our heroine that she did.

Edna, waiting impatiently for the return of Mrs. McCune, could contain herself no longer and went in search of her.

As she passed the house next door she was seized from behind, a rough hand was placed over her mouth, and she was carried into the presence of her enemies.

The frightened girl with a desperate effort, managed to remove the hand from her mouth, and gave a terrible scream, which was heard by the returning Nora.

In a flash the scrubwoman realized that Edna was in danger.

She knew that the house next door bore a bad reputation, but as far as she knew Dan Lane was not so bad, and many a time he had thrown pennies to her children, and so she did not tell all she knew. But that he had been hired to get rid of Edna had not entered her mind.

Running up the steps of the house occupied by Dan Lane the scrubwoman banged on the door with her clenched fist.

"Open this door! Let me in!" she cried.

Her repeated knockings met with no response. The house was dark and silent. After Moses had tried to gain admission, but with no better success, the two reluctantly went away.

In a room dimly lighted by a red lamp that cast its shadows on the ceiling in ghostly figures, Edna, the beautiful typewriter, was being tortured by her enemies.

She was securely tied in a large armchair, and had a gag in her mouth.

"I suppose you would like to have that off?" said Kate, looking at the girl with a malicious smile.

Edna nodded.

"Don't take it off!" put in Marlow. "There is no telling who is about, and if she screams she might be heard. Be sensible, Kate, and let her alone!"

"I want to hear her beg for mercy," said Kate, beginning to untie the cloth that was binding the beautiful lips. "It would be the sweetest of all sounds in my ears to hear her implore me to cease hurting her."

The woman took hold of the shell-like ear of the poor girl and twisted it, at the same time tearing the cloth away from the twitching mouth.

"You hurt me!" exclaimed Edna, as the gag was removed.

"That's what I want to do," said the woman.

"What I do to you doesn't hurt me, and I don't know how you are going to help it."

The woman laughed wickedly as she said this, and there is no telling to what lengths she would have gone if just then a knock had not been heard on the door.

Kate looked at Marlow and he stepped into the passageway that led to the secret room into which they had dragged Edna, and stood face to face with Norton.

"The Jew got in," said Paul, "and I thought it best to let him look around a little. He had to give up the search, because he could not find this door."

Marlow gave a low whistle. Then their enemies knew that the girl was somewhere in the house.

"They must not know that she is here," said Marlow. "Go and get Dan and stand outside and watch. There has got to be something done to-night, I can tell you that much!"

"You can depend upon me," said Paul faintly, and in so unusual a tone that Marlow turned and looked at him.

"Don't make any mistake, Norton," said he. "You are one with us. You know that Lane's gang is a desperate one, but with all the murders they have committed not one has been discovered."

Paul Norton knew this, and with a doleful shake of his head he went away with the instructions he had for Dan.

Marlow went back to the secret room and sat down, looking into the face of the unfortunate Edna, which was now bathed with tears.

The rope sank deeply into the tender flesh, and the sweet mouth had drooped at the corners.

"You will not be tortured further, said the villain, "if you will be a good girl. It all depends upon yourself, my sweet cousin. If you will do as I wish, you will have me for an everlasting friend."

Kate was listening, and Edna, in spite of her terror, could not but notice the startling beauty of the woman. She was the fiend incarnate who had killed her father, or who had been responsible for his death, the girl did not quite know which. But Edna thought as she sat watching Kate that if she had seen this woman under other circumstances she would have placed complete confidence in her, for surely there was much to believe in. But then Edna did not know about Red Pete, who had died by her own father's hand, or she might have felt a spark of pity in her throbbing breast for the woman before her.

She turned her gaze upon her cousin, who was waiting for her to speak.

"What do you wish me to do?" asked she in a low tone.

"I will tell you," said Kate before Marlow could reply. "There is but one way for you to get off with your life. Before you leave this room you must become his wife!"

They both waited for her to answer, but she kept silent. Then, after a time, she said:

"I think you must be mad. I would rather die than marry you!"

She looked at Marlow as she replied, her eyes blazing with anger.

CHAPTER X.

"You know," went on Kate, "that we have the grants for the mine in Mexico, and as that old fool of a father of yours left no will it is in your power to claim it. It is a lot of money, and we are not taking any chances. Marlow is going to marry you to make sure that you will cause us no further trouble."

"Yes," said Marlow. "Dan Lane has a friend in his gang who was once a minister, and he is going to have him here to tie the knot. It will be as well done as if he were a minister from Fifth Avenue."

Edna shuddered. These villains were going to take her chance of happiness from her.

"He may come here with the wretched creature who has disgraced the noble calling of his cloth. He can have the services read in my presence, and he may even use his brutal force to put a ring upon my finger, but he cannot force from my lips the words that would make me this man's wife. He is not strong enough for that!"

"If you love your life, you will not defy him to-night," said Kate with a darkening face.

"I shall defy him with my last breath," answered Edna, keeping her eyes upon the woman. "I do not love my life so much that I cannot love my honor more!"

Kate Burnette leaned over the girl.

EDNA THE PRETTY TYPEWRITER



- EDNA'S ESCAPE FROM HER EMPLOYERS OFFICE -

"So," she said insultingly, "you are a chip off the old block? You are just like your father, stubborn and wilful. But I will show you, as I showed him, that you are no match for me. I will fool you just as I always fooled him!"

"Perhaps you did not fool him quite as much as you thought you did, for I have a letter which tells me that you never were his wife!"

Edna saw that the woman was furious. The beautiful face which but a few moments before looked almost peaceful was distorted with rage, and Edna shivered with apprehension. She knew that if Marlow still desired to marry her he would not let Kate kill her, but it was a question in her mind which was the worse fate.

"Where is that letter?" demanded Kate.

"That is none of your business," replied Edna.

It would have been well had Marlow heard this conversation, but he had gone to get the minister.

Kate seized the girl roughly by her hair.

"I've had enough of this," she said angrily. "I am going to teach you a lesson you will never forget. You're a proud-spirited beggar, but I'll tame you if I have to kill you to do it. I'll break your spirit, if I have to break every bone in that proud body of yours!"

Saying this she lifted the girl up as far as she could and then brought her down with terrible force so that for a moment Edna's vision was obscured.

"Now I think you know what kind of a woman I am," said she.

"Yes, I know," replied Edna weakly.

Kate, in her anger, raised a large knife that Marlow had dropped, and was about to plunge it into

the unfortunate girl, when the door opened and Moe stood upon the threshold with a revolver in his hand.

"You had better be careful," said he with a laugh. "Drop that knife, or I might get careless with this, and something would drop."

"How did you find your way in here?" demanded Kate, wheeling upon the Jew, as the knife dropped to the floor with a clang.

"I didn't until you began to yell so loud at Miss Edna here, and then I just followed your pretty voice."

"Cut the ropes, won't you, Moe?" said Edna, and to the chagrin of Kate, who did not dare to raise her voice to call for help, Edna was soon freed of her bonds.

Moses was just about to rise to his feet after cutting the rope that bound Edna's feet, when Marlow rushed into the room and struck him a terrible blow on the head with a club.

Norton and Dan followed close on the heels of the shipowner.

"I guess he's done for," said the clerk as the Jew rolled over on the floor.

His whining voice made Dan turn upon him angrily.

"Yes, we've killed him, but you're in it as well as the rest of us, so shut up!"

Edna nearly fainted with terror as she saw the blood flowing from the wound in Moe's head.

She did not know but what she would be dealt with in the same way.

"Throw him out of here. You see this house is just even with the elevated, and if——"

All present knew his thoughts, and Edna pleaded that Moses be given a chance.

"You don't want any of your friends to live," said Marlow with a sneer, "for you constantly refuse to help them."

Kate spoke up.

"I have some things that I want to say to this young lady here," and she pointed toward Edna. "If you will get rid of that carcass we will get to work."

Marlow looked at the woman suspiciously as he said:

"You shall not hurt that girl, and if you try anything like that my men here will see that you do not pass to the light of day."

It had not taken Nora long to inform Dave Fairfax how matters stood, and that brave young man immediately felt the fever leave him. He dressed, and in spite of the orders of his nurse, left the house. Hailing a cab, he was soon on his way to rescue the girl he loved. His wound bothered him a good deal, but the doctor had said that the only danger was that something might get into the opening. The bullet had made a surface wound.

Nora led Dave to the roof of her own house. She knew that they could get from there to the next one where the girl had been taken.

Dave commenced to search the roof, trying to effect an entrance.

Suddenly he heard a noise like that of a person groaning. Some human being was near him, that he knew. But it was too dark now for him to see. He made his way to the chimney, and as he did so could hear the roar of the elevated train as it shot

by. He remembered afterward, with a thrill, that he had had the desire to touch it, and run with it a short distance, as he had often done when he was a boy.

Just then his foot came in contact with something soft and yielding, and throwing the light of his lantern upon it, saw Moses trying to struggle to his feet.

"Edna—there!" said the wounded man, pointing to the doorway at the head of the steps leading down from the roof to the hall.

As he reached the hall, Dave heard the sound of voices, and turning in the direction whence the sound proceeded, saw an open door at the other end of the hallway.

Walking on tiptoe, the young engineer reached the doorway and looked in. Marlow and Edna were the only occupants. The shipowner was saying:

"You will marry me or die!"

"Not this time!" cried Dave, rushing into the room. "Make your escape by the roof, Edna!" he shouted to the girl, who lost no time in obeying the command.

The two men grappled with each other, but the struggle was short, for Dave managed to free his right hand, and dealt the shipowner a blow on the jaw which sent him to the floor.

Not waiting to see the effect of his blow, Dave darted into the hall and up the stairs to the roof.

As Dave made his escape the rest of the band rushed into the room he had just left in time to see Marlow struggling to his feet.

Marlow shouted to them to follow him, and led the way to the roof.

Edna was upon the roof running wildly about. She could find no place in the dark to get out of the way of her enemies.

"I've got you," said a low voice, and Marlow was close upon her.

Just then Dave shouted something, and the girl understood.

She saw the means of escape, and when the elevated train passed by, she gave a spring like a deer and landed upon the roof of the last car. She was thrown down by the impact, but falling across the raised portion of the roof on her hands and knees, was soon enabled to assume a safe position.

The villains did not know what to do. They had begun to look upon Dave Fairfax as a man with nine lives.

Suddenly it dawned upon Marlow that it would be the proper thing to go back to his office and there wait. Dave Fairfax would certainly come after them for the grants of the Mexican mine. When they reached the office Marlow said:

"Now, all we have to do is to wait, and if he shows up here the first man seeing him drops him before he has time to pray."

Dave was too clever to come alone this time. He had several policemen waiting for him outside the office door, where, strange to say, he believed the villains were in wait for him.

Edna, who had been relieved of her trying position on top of the car by a kind-hearted conductor, had telephoned to Dave's hotel, and that young man, thinking that such would be the case, went home, to find waiting for him in the corridor a pale,

tired little girl, who smiled at him through her tears.

Dave, after Edna had recovered her composure, started for the office of Marlow, taking the girl along with him for the purpose of identifying the mining grants.

As they neared the office of the shipowner they found Moe waiting on the corner and took him along with them.

When they entered the office, Marlow asked that he be allowed to talk in private with the engineer, and Dave consented.

Before entering the private office, Dave called Moe to one side and said: You watch over that girl, and if anything happens just give a blast from this whistle, and you will summon every policeman this side of the Bronx."

As the young engineer was about to enter the private office Kate said to him:

"I am the widow of that girl's father, and I tell you I shall have my thirds out of that estate."

Dave gave a low laugh.

"Boynton said before he died," he answered, "that you nor no other living woman was his wife!"

"Yes," broke in Edna, with tears in her eyes, "my father was a very unfortunate man, but he was spared the shame of having you for his wife," and she turned upon the woman with blazing eyes. Her father might have been alive now if it had not been for Kate, and who can blame the girl if she hated the adventuress?

As Paul, Dan, and Kate were waiting for the conference to end in the other room, the woman set

her brains to work to alter the situation. She whispered something to Dan.

Moe was watching them, and knowing that he had not only the police whistle but a good revolver, he kept up his talk with Edna.

Suddenly the telephone rang, and Kate, who was nearest to it, picked up the receiver.

"Yes, he is here," said she.

"Who is it?" asked Moe.

"Mr. Fairfax from the inner office," said Kate. "He says that everything is fixed up all right and for you to go in there to witness a paper."

Her voice and manner were so natural that the Jew was deceived.

"He has returned the grants, then?" asked Edna, knowing that Dave would be satisfied with nothing less.

"Yes."

"Shall I go in there, Miss Edna?" asked Moses.

"Yes."

"And if they send for you, come quick."

"I will."

Moses had not been gone an instant before Kate had her handkerchief stuffed into Edna's mouth as a gag.

The girl saw her mistake when it was too late, and she realized that her friends inside stood very little chance for life.

"Fairfax will see the trick as soon as Moses gets in there," said Kate, "and I'll put on Edna's cloak. Then when he asks where she has gone to say outside, do you hear?"

Dan smiled as he nodded assent.

Edna was placed in a closet and the door locked

upon her. She wondered what Dave would do when he discovered that she was in the closet or he could not find her. The walls were so thick that she could not hear a word.

Dave did just as the woman thought he would.

When the Jew appeared he was telling Marlow that there was but one way out of the difficulty.

"Give the girl her own," said he.

The entrance of the Jew caused him to stop, and springing to his feet he sprang along the passage-way to the outer office.

Just as he came into the room he saw, as he supposed, Edna disappearing round the corner of the door. She shut it forcibly in his face, and when the young man was outside he tore down the stairs, for he thought that Edna for some reason had taken the elevator.

"What's the matter?" asked Marlow in a whisper, turning to Dan.

"Kate's gone and fooled the engineer," replied his confederate in the same low tone.

"Where is the girl?"

"In the closet."

"Then follow her, and help her, if you can, and I will stay here and settle with the girl," said the shipowner, with a malicious grin.

CHAPTER XI.

EDNA thought as she lay gagged in the closet of all the times she had been rescued from just such terror as this. She remembered the perilous ride on the car, and all the other things that Dave had saved her from. Would he come to her this time, or had fate ceased being kind? Her heart beat rapidly as she heard the sound of footsteps. Were they Dave's, or——

The closet door flew open and she was looking into the evil eyes of her cousin.

"So you thought to escape from me, did you?" asked the man in such a harsh voice that Edna shuddered.

She could not answer because her mouth was stuffed with a gag.

The shipowner dragged her from the closet, saying as he unbound her hands:

"Sit down here and write what I tell you."

Obediently Edna seated herself. She listened, her small white teeth shut together over the silent tongue. Her lips felt sore from the pressure of the gag, which Marlow had removed. She lifted her hands up and pressed them to her head. Had any girl been so tried in a few hours as she had?

"Write," ordered the shipowner, "that I, Edna Boynton, for a valuable consideration, transfer all

rights in my father's estate and property. Write, I say!"

He was bending over her with a scowl on his face.

"You know," he went on, "that if you should die I will be your heir. You have no other relative on earth but me. I will shoot you if you do not do as I tell you!"

"I will not do it," replied the girl.

"Then prepare to die!"

How terrible his face looked as she glanced up!

"You may kill me, if you will, but if you fire a shot you are liable to bring the police here, and also Mr. Fairfax. It is strange how that gentleman has balked you at every turn."

"So he has until now," said Marlow, "but he has played his last card, and that was you. You are in my power, and as there is a good deal of truth in what you say, I will place you in this large safe of mine, where you will live but twenty minutes. When I can do so without fear of detection I will have your body removed."

Edna shuddered. She knew that her cousin was capable of such a deed, that he would not hesitate to kill her if he desired her out of the way.

Seizing her in his arms, he carried her to the vault, thrust her inside, and turned the hands of the clock to twelve hours later. Then with a mighty slam the outer door was closed, amid the cries and groans of Edna, and she was in darkness.

Just at that moment Dave Fairfax came to the door and demanded admittance.

When he was refused he gave orders that the door be broken in by the policemen who were with him.

The door gave way with a crash before the united efforts of the policemen and Dave, and as he crossed the threshold, the young engineer cried excitedly :

"Where is Edna?"

"She is not here," replied the villain.

"You lie, Marlow!" cried the engineer, "and if you don't tell me where she is I will kill you! Where is she?"

"I don't know where she is."

It only took the young man a moment to look about the place. He knew then that Marlow had hidden his beloved.

"You won't find her," said the shipowner, sitting with his watch in his hand. He was watching the minutes go that meant life to the poor girl inside the vault.

Then suddenly Dave Fairfax spied a tiny bit of cloth sticking out of the safe at the edge of the door. Edna was in that place, where she could live but a few moments at the longest!

Then a slight sound came from within the vault.

Dave turned upon Marlow with his gun pointed in the man's face.

"Open that safe!" shouted he.

"I can't!"

"Open it, if you wish to live!"

"It is out of the power of any man to do that," said Marlow, "for I have set it twelve hours ahead!"

For one moment the two men glared at each other, in tense silence.

Then Dave said fiercely :

"I will give you just five seconds to open that safe!"

"It is impossible!"

"They say you are a clever man, Marlow," replied Dave, "and I tell you that unless Edna is here safe and sound in five minutes from now I shall shoot you as I would a dog! Have you any nitro-glycerine?"

"Yes," answered Marlow.

"Get it!"

Marlow obeyed.

"Now, if you wish to live, do as I have told you!"

Marlow, knowing that upon his efforts depended his own life as well as the girl's, went to work with a will. Between them they wedged the lock a bit, and Dave ordered the man to place the explosive in the safe. That having been done, Marlow knew just what else to do.

Almost before they could think, a great blinding flash came, and the door of the safe was thrown open. There was such a cloud of smoke, and the men having been somewhat stunned by the explosion, it was several minutes before they could make any move.

Then as Dave reached the vault, he heard a voice whisper:

"Dave!"

The young engineer clasped her in his arms as he cried:

"Edna! My darling!"

Edna's enemies, undeterred by the poor success of their previous efforts, laid new plans to get her into their power.

Kate could not get over her hatred for Dave Fairfax, and Marlow shared her enmity for the young engineer. This brave young man always frustrated

their plans. With him out of the way there would be some chance for the journey to Mexico, where the conspirators meant to go as soon as Edna and Dave were dead.

Moses and Nora were together, going toward Coney Island on a street car.

"They sent us on ahead, you know," said the Irishwoman, liking the sound of her own tongue better than anything else in the world, "and Miss Edna and Mr. Fairfax are coming down in an automobile. Say, Moe, I bet when we get married—you know you said you would marry me—that Miss Edna will let us take a ride in her automobile."

"She ain't got one," replied the practical Moe, "and the paper ain't in her hands yet what she needs to get her money."

"But she's goin' to get it," replied Nora, "and if you say she ain't then there ain't no marryin' fer us."

"I don't want to marry if I have to lie alongside the other two."

"Don't be a fool! Didn't I tell you they got tired livin'? If you got the same way then you ought to die."

Just as they arrived at the entrance to Luna Park they saw advancing toward them Kate Burnette and Marlow.

They slipped out of sight and waited until Marlow and Kate had passed by, when Nora said:

"Those people have more brains in one minute than you and me has in a year, so come along, old man, and don't be a-wastin' time."

Paul Norton was with Kate and Marlow. His

face had grown strangely white, and if the truth was known, he heartily wished himself out of the plot.

"Where do we go from here?" asked Kate, after silencing Paul's fear that they would be seen.

"To Dan's place, two miles from here."

"Will he let us stay there, if we want to?"

"Yes, and I think I have a very good card to play. I have secured a warrant for the arrest of Edna Boynton, and if they have followed us we will fix them all right. I will take the girl away with the aid of the police."

"That's a great scheme."

"I told the judge that Edna was my cousin, and that she was wilful; that she kept the company of bad men, and he gave me this," and Marlow drew a paper partly from his pocket. "Can't you imagine her surprise when I take her away from that chap?"

"I should think so," laughed Kate.

"I am her natural guardian," said Marlow, "and when I accused her of a love affair with the wealthy Mr. Fairfax the judge gave me the summons to make her appear before him immediately."

"You wouldn't dare to take that girl into court?" said Kate.

"No, that's true, and I don't want to. But at any time and place I can simply show this order to a policeman and he will help me take the girl, don't you see?"

"Yes, that sounds all right, but I want to warn you that if you don't get her this time you might as well give up. Have you the mining grant safe?"

Marlow nodded. He pulled an official-looking document from his pocket and showed it to Kate.

Just then, Edna Boynton came out of Luna Park. She had been inside, waiting for Dave, although Nora did not know that they had yet arrived. The young engineer had gone to a policeman, asking for information about a certain man by the name of Lane. Dave knew that the police would know of the den.

As Edna reached the sidewalk she noticed the group almost directly in front of her, and saw the paper as Marlow handed it to Kate. She recognized it instantly as the document which had grown so familiar to her sight during the last few days, and determined to obtain it. Stepping up behind the woman, she reached over and snatched the paper from her hands. Placing it behind her she cried:

"It's mine, and I will keep it!"

Consternation was written upon the faces of the man and woman. When he had realized what had happened, Marlow said:

"You give that back to me!"

"I will not! It belongs to me!"

"Then we will take it from you!"

Nora and Moses had been watching, and ran to their darling's aid.

"You'd better guess again!" cried Moe.

"Why don't you get it?" cried Kate, turning to Marlow.

"You try it, you female crook!" cried Nora. "You put your hands on that girl and I'll throttle you!"

A crowd had begun to gather, which attracted the attention of an officer, who worked his way through to see the cause of the trouble.

"What's the matter?" said the policeman.

"You are just in time, officer," replied Marlow.

"I have been robbed, and I want you to arrest that woman."

Moses shoved himself close to the officer.

"Don't you believe him," cried the Jew. "He's a liar!"

"I did take a paper from that woman's hand," said Edna, "but it was my own. That man dares to accuse me of robbing him when he himself is a thief!"

"That's right," put in the scrubwoman.

Then Marlow thought of the court order he had in his pocket. Turning to the policeman, he said:

"Officer, here is a warrant for the arrest of that woman!" said he, pointing to Edna.

He handed the warrant to the policeman. That official looked at the paper and turned to Edna.

"Is your name Boynton—Edna Boynton?"

"Yes."

"This is a warrant for your arrest. You are to be taken before a city magistrate to show cause why you should not give up your wayward life and return home with me, your guardian."

It was Marlow who was speaking, and all eyes were upon him.

"It's legal, isn't it, officer?" asked Marlow, turning to the policeman.

"Yes."

The officer then arrested Edna and taking the mining grant from her handed it to Marlow.

"Is that your property?"

"Yes," replied Marlow, "but I don't care so much for that as I do for the custody of my cousin. She is wild, and I must save her."

He took the paper, however, and placed it in his pocket.

"I do not ask for her arrest," went on Marlow, "for I know that if I can get her before the judge she will promise to be better after a while. I want her kept away from some of the people she keeps company with."

"I would rather be arrested," said Edna, laying her hand upon the arm of the policeman.

"Well, I don't know," replied that official. "You see—"

He was looking down into the lovely face of the girl and wondering if she could be such a bad lot after all. She looked as pure and good as an angel.

"Don't you dare touch me!" she said to Marlow, and this decided the officer.

"Go along with your cousin, and be a good girl," said the officer, not unkindly.

Edna was bundled into an automobile, and her face had grown so white that the policeman was sorry for a moment that he had not gone with her. But he could see that there was a family resemblance between Marlow and Edna, and he quieted his conscience with the thought that Edna was too young to be running about Coney Island, and that if he had a daughter he would not allow it.

Just at that moment Dave appeared upon the scene, looking for his darling, and when Moses told him of the occurrence he went quickly to his own machine.

Paul Norton knew that his accomplices were going to be followed, so he explained it to the policeman who was standing near, and that official

ordered Dave to go home and mind his own business, and leave the girl alone with her friends.

"I am minding my own business," said Dave, as he whirled his machine about and sent it flying away, and the policeman could hear the last words as Dave disappeared: "Is there anything more a man's business than to save the girl he loves?"

CHAPTER XII.

TO DESCRIBE the race between the two automobiles would be more than a pen could do. But Dave, in his desire to get his beloved paid no heed to the warnings that were shouted to him as he flew past. He could see the great machine ahead, in which Edna was a prisoner, and he put on every ounce of power.

The thought of the mining grant went out of his mind. He wanted his darling, his Edna, and if she had been as poor as the veriest beggar on the street the machine would have puffed as hard as it was now doing under the pressure of the vigorous young man.

Rapidly he gained on the machine in front, until after about a mile of fast driving he drew up alongside. He wheeled his machine so close to the other one that Marlow turned pale with fright, momentarily expecting a collision.

Edna was fighting hard with Kate. She was on her feet now, and with one great jump landed in Dave's automobile, with that young man's arms about her.

For a moment the great machine went like a great snake about the street, but in a few seconds after he had caught Edna he had the machine under control, and turned around to see what had become

of the other motor car. Nothing was to be seen but a cloud of dust going in the direction of Coney Island.

Dave turned on the power to the limit and headed for New York, which he reached safely without any further adventure.

To tell of how happy Edna was and how she thanked the young engineer for his goodness to her would take too long.

It is enough to know that the morning after the adventure just narrated they sat looking into each other's eyes, and Dave laughed softly as he said:

"After all our trouble, we are without that paper yet. Those people will not go away without knowing what we are doing, and we can't go to Mexico without the grant. I suppose that by this time the story is published, but I, for one, intend to get you that claim."

"No, Dave," replied Edna gravely, "I will not allow you ever again to place yourself in such danger. I would rather go without the money."

"That won't do. Your father placed that valuable paper in my care, and I intend to get it back for you. It was stolen from me, and I am responsible for its return."

He spoke as if he felt himself to blame for all the trouble the girl had had.

That morning Dave went to the chief of police and told him the whole story.

The officer had read about the affair in the paper and was familiar with a good portion of what Dave had to tell him.

"We will help you all we can, Mr. Fairfax," said

the chief, "but we have a lot of desperate men to work against. You see, even this newspaper knows of Lane's place."

"But you think it possible to effect an entrance, do you not?"

"Oh, yes, but we will have to use the greatest discretion."

Dan Lane had his beer garden open, and he was behind the bar. There were but few customers at that early hour, and he stood leaning his elbows on the counter.

He had had an all night session with Marlow, and the mistakes that were continually being made were not to his liking. If he had his way he would have killed the girl before there had been any notoriety about it; also the engineer. With their bodies in the river the others would have been safe and could have gone to Mexico and claimed the mine. It was the largest stake the man had ever played for, and he was not going to quit now.

Just at this moment a rough-looking fellow came in, and walking up to the bar asked for a drink of whiskey.

If Edna had been there she would certainly have recognized the bum, who was reeling about as if he were well loaded with liquor before he came in, as none other than her gallant young defender.

The man reeled from side to side, seemingly unable to keep his balance, and Dan ordered him to get out.

As he went he caught a glimpse of a woman coming down the stairway from an upper room, whom he recognized as Kate Burnette.

After a minute or two the bum reeled into the barroom again, and sank down in a chair. Resting his arms on the table in front of him, he was soon to all appearances sound asleep. But if his eyes were closed, his ears were open, listening to every word that passed between Dan and the woman.

Arrangements had been made, the woman said, to start that night for Mexico, whether they got the man and girl, or not. Marlow had seen a lawyer, who had told him that possession was nine points of the law, and that the people in the camp where the mine was had known Kate as the wife of Boynton, and with the grants in her possession she could demand her rights. Marlow, being the cousin of Boynton, would have the rest.

Dave drank in every word of the conversation. He knew that there would be help for him in a little while, and his heart beat high with happiness as he thought of the moment to come when he could hand back to the sweet girl he loved the grant he had brought her from Mexico.

Kate went back upstairs. The time had come to act. She would be on her way to Mexico before anyone could stop her, and, as the lawyer had told Marlow, possession was nine points of the law. She was sorry they had not killed the girl and the engineer, but that did not matter so long as they secured the vast wealth left by the miner.

Hardly had Kate left the room than Moe and Nora entered, disguised in such a manner that the man behind the bar did not recognize them. Dan looked at them suspiciously, but then he was suspicious of every one who came in unless they were known to him.

Seating themselves at the table next to the one at which Dave sat, Moe and Nora ordered some whiskey. The scrubwoman was happy when in the company of the Jew, for he was soon to be her partner in her third matrimonial venture.

Edna now appeared upon the scene, and by some unknown manner the denkeeper got word to the man above.

Her bitterest enemy was waiting to carry her to the room in which surely she would meet her end.

"I will go outside and warn the detectives, and tell them the people are here," said Edna, as she stopped by the table where the scrubwoman and the Jew were seated. "I do not want you to do it, Moe, for I want the credit of getting those papers. I wish I could hear from Dave," she added anxiously.

If she could have recognized her young gallant just at that moment she would have smiled at him. But she had not the least idea that the man apparently in a drunken sleep at the next table was the young engineer.

Dan walked over to the disguised Dave and shaking him roughly by the shoulder, ordered him to go upstairs to sleep, and gave him into the charge of one of the cleaners who took the young fellow to a room and pushed him over on the bed to sleep off his jag.

"Don't you want something to eat, Nora?" asked Moe. "There's not even a sandwich in this shanty. Let's go to a restaurant."

"All right," answered the scrubwoman.

Dan watched them with satisfaction as they entered one of the small eating-houses across the way.

He then called the ship owner down from an upper room.

Edna stepped back into the beer hall to call her friends.

"Nora!" she said softly.

Dan answered, saying that the couple were eating in another room.

"Then I will remain outside while you tell them that I want to see them," replied the girl.

"You ain't afraid to come in, are you, miss?" said Dan.

"Yes."

"But they're just in the next room, and they told me to tell you that you were to come in."

Oh, that precious paper! She had to have it, that's all there was about it.

Suddenly, without any warning, Dan placed his arm about the waist of Edna, and carried her into an inner room, locking the door behind him.

"I have you!" said he with a leer.

"You had better let me go," answered Edna, "for the police know that I am here."

Marlow came downstairs with Kate. There was a look of satisfaction on their faces as they saw the girl.

Edna was firmly tied in a chair, and Marlow, turning upon Paul Norton, who just then entered the room, said with a sneer:

"You've been slinking long enough. Now, look here, I insist that you kill this girl!"

The coward whitened to the lips as he saw the threatening looks of the three conspirators.

"I can't do it, Marlow," replied the clerk with a shudder.

"You must!" replied the shipowner, glancing at him menacingly. "Come! Here is the gun!"

This certainly was her last chance, thought Edna, if the police did not come soon.

"You must do it," repeated Marlow, as he handed Norton the revolver.

Paul Norton went over his whole life, the awful influence that Marlow had had upon him. He hated the crime before him, he would rather——

The man's face was ghastly in its paleness, and he seemed to be undergoing some terrible emotion. Suddenly his eyes blazed with demoniac fury, and raising his weapon, he shouted:

"Yes, yes! I will kill—you!"

With a horrible laugh he sent a bullet through the heart of Marlow. The man fell forward on the floor, dead.

There was the sound of banging doors, and Dan was surprised to see running into the room the bum he had so lately put to bed.

As Dave entered the room he saw Norton striding up and down the room, muttering incoherently, and waving the smoking revolver wildly in the air. Looking about the room, he saw Edna tied in a chair, and going to her side in a few moments had released her from her bonds.

As soon as he had freed Edna, Dave searched the pockets of the dead man and obtained the grant to the mine, which he gave to Edna.

Kate and Dan were arrested, tried, and sentenced to several years in prison.

Paul Norton spent the rest of his days in an asylum, a raving lunatic.

So at last the mine came into possession of its

rightful owner, and when Dave and his wife were speeding southward the young husband said lovingly:

“Since I last rode over this route much has happened to make me see life in a different aspect, but I am thankful to heaven that good has triumphed over evil, and that I had the chance to save for myself and for the world, ‘Edna, the Pretty Typewriter.’”

THE END.

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I'm having a corking good time.
Am on a flying trip.
Arrived safe.
Am too busy to write.
Am having a large time.
Am expecting to have my hands full.
Can you come over soon?
Coming in with the tide (tied.)
I would be better off.
I expect to make a hit soon.
I am being detained.

I'm having a rousing time.
I'm all to the Mary.
I'm taking a month off.
I'm feeling down in the mouth.
I am on the jump.
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