

(Continued from Fourth page.)

air to buoy her up. I had not yet walked her length when I heard a knocking followed by faint shouts. The Captain came aboard to see what he could make of it, and was not long before we were satisfied that at least two men were imprisoned in the cabin. By lying down and placing our ears to the copper sheathing we could make out that they knew some one had boarded the bark, and they appealed to us to cut a hole through which they could escape. We had neither axe nor hatchet, but if we had been fully equipped the chances would have been against us. It was a spot where no one could stand upright to use an axe, and every fifth or sixth wave ran right over her.

We believed one of the imprisoned men to be Williams and the other the boatswain. We could catch their words pretty plainly, but they seemed unable to make out our replies. We could do nothing for them, but decided to remain by the wreck for a day or two in hopes of aid from some craft. At sunset the wind died away, and the night was without a zephyr. At sunrise next morning the first object our eyes lighted on was an English tramp steamer bound from New York to Japan, with coal oil, and close aboard of us. We looked for our wreck, but it had disappeared. The mainmast lay floating about, but the hull and its tangle and its prisoners had gone to the bottom.

THE MOB.

A man leaning against a lamp post on a street corner, sullen and moody and a dangerous look in his eyes. If one had but known his thoughts he would have compared him to the dull, red coal left behind in the hunter's camp fire, to be blown out into the dry grass by a gust of wind, and to start a conflagration which would sweep over miles of forest.

"The law! The law! Curse the law!" he growled as he slouched on, but halted a few rods away to greet another of his ilk.

"Who says we must wait for the law?"

"Let's lynch him!"

The second man is the flame starting the live coal. That flame could be trampled out by a hunter's foot now, but there is no one at hand to realize the danger.

"Law! Law! Why, the lawyers will juggle with the law, and he will go free! We are the law in the case of such wretches as he!"

The voice of the third man fans the flame, and it spreads out among the dry leaves. A hunter's blanket would cover it, but it is creeping with fearful rapidity.

"Away with the law and bring us a rope! Lynch law is what we want here!"

The flame is darting out a thousand tongues now as it races before the wind—a wave of flame which lengthens like a serpent stretching itself in the noon-day sun, and which lifts its crest higher and higher as it finds richer fuel. Not one man now, but ten, twenty, fifty.

They do not scatter to spread the news, but other men come to them. There is a strange magnetism about a crowd—a crowd which whispers and mutters and menaces. It draws out the householder, though he has heard nothing. It draws the vagabond from his bed in a box in the alley, though he has seen nothing. Men come to it through court and alley—from chambers above and cellars beneath.

"Move on to the jail!"

There are no shouting and hurrahing, no pushing and hurrying. There lies the menace. Men speak as they press on, but their words do not float up to the open chamber windows.

Now one has been selected to lead, but there is a leader. When he issued his first command, all obeyed without question. A something in his look and tone put him at the head of the mob. Turn to the left—turn to the right—straight on for two blocks, and the grim old jail looms up through the darkness. Half a dozen men detach themselves to knock at the jailer's door. The footsteps of a great mob at midnight made a sound like thunder afar off in the deep woods. Men do not wake up to turn over and slumber again, but to grow pale and peer from their windows.

"The keys and the murderer!"

The keys are handed over. If the mob were shouting and clamoring, the jailer might refuse, but it was a silent mob. Determined men utter no shouts. The half dozen disappear inside the building. The man they want is sleeping. He hears them at the door of his cell and is wide awake in an instant. He knows why they have come. His lips part to make an appeal, but as he looks into their faces his words are unspoken. They have come for his life. They utter no word, and the lines of their faces are hard set. Two by two they march out past the trembling jailer and into the street. There is a sound from the crowd—not a shout or hurrah, but a deep, vindictive chuckle—which reminds you of the wolf as he overtakes his prey and feels the taste of blood.

Down the street four blocks—turn to the right—and here is the tree. The prisoner looks about him as he walks, but does not speak. If there were shouting and hurrahing he might hope. It is a crowd where men whisper or mutter, and he is awed to despair. There is little waiting. A rope is thrown over a limb, the noose passed over his head, and the men fall back and leave him the pivot of a small circle. No one speaks to him, but he realizes what the action means. Standing there with his arms tied behind him and his chin on his breast, he is like a statue dimly seen through the midnight gloom. Perhaps he utters a prayer, though the blood of his victim still stains his clothing. There is silence all around him—silence so deep

that one passing the outskirts of the crowd a few feet away would not suspect its presence. The silence is broken by the footsteps of marching men. It is a platoon of police coming up to uphold the majesty of the law by rescuing the prisoner. Two hundred men fall out of the mob and march across the path. There are no shouts of defiance, no weapons drawn. They simply stand like a stone wall. The gray haired man in charge of the police has wisdom. It is a mob bent on one single act. It is determined, but not angry. Arouse its passions, and who can say where riot and lawlessness will end? An arm is raised, and the murderer is lifted off the ground. Some one murmurs his applause, but he is silenced. Three or four revolvers crack, and the dangling form suddenly straightens out. For five minutes he melts away, and left after a minute only the dead is left. It was like the swift and silent dissolving of frost before a morning sun. Men tipped away. No man spoke to another. No one looked into the face of his neighbor. When day comes the law will ask who has done this thing. There will be none to answer. The law has not been vindicated, but stronger than law a retribution when stern and silent men determine to mete it out.

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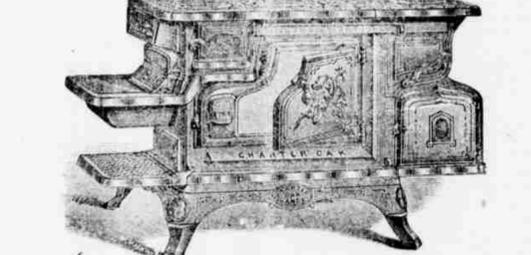
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