

that's concerned. But if I had to run it half a second on south wind and spring poetry and chocolate creams," he added, with a glance at the fancy pasteboard box beside her, "instead of on steel billets and oak timber and hard cash, why I'd quit so quick it would make your head swim. I know you're charming as well as anybody else does. I know you're beautiful and generous," he went on, with a tight, savage little nod, ruthlessly ignoring her pink face. "But I've rapped your knuckles raw every time you've tried to stick a finger in the works—because sentiment don't go here for a two-cent postage stamp. I'll put on a cotton night-gown and get me a lyre and trot out in the street and sing for crackers when sentiment does go. And if I won't let sentiment go for you, do you think I will for that block-headed, thieving little wart Pershing? Do you suppose that grasshopper can steal me blind for eight years, and then get away with it by telling me a sentimental story about his domestic difficulties? He can't bump me over with a yarn. He's a thief, and he'll take the thief's medicine!"

Turning to the detective, Sara cried: "You see! He is a heartless brute!"

But, instead of any sympathetic response, the detective's heavy-lidded eyes regarded her with a peculiarly fishy look and he replied coolly:

"It would make no difference at all whether he was heartless or not. This is a case of counterfeiting—exactly as much as if Pershing had passed the money anywhere else. The United States Government takes charge of all cases of counterfeiting, and permits nobody on earth to interfere. You couldn't stop it, you know, to save your life."

**F**LASHING and dilating with indignation, and trembling a little, she retorted:

"I see! You deceived me, then! You just wanted to lead me on to talk!"

"Of course I wanted to find my man," he admitted impassively. "Your conversation convinces me Mr. Green's idea was right."

Looking at the president, he inquired: "Is the man you spoke of ready?"

Mr. Green pushed a button on his desk, and, when the young man reappeared at the door, asked, "Is the policeman there?"

"Yes, sir," said the young man. "Your car is waiting."

The Government agent rose, put on his hat, and took up his chewed cigar. Sara, who had been watching breathlessly with wide eyes, keyed tense with alarmed uncertainty, sprang to her feet, her lips part in an unuttered cry.

"Be sensible, now," the man advised her. "You can't possibly do any good."

And Jacob Green impatiently admonished her:

"Don't be foolish. You can't stop the government. You can only make a spectacle of yourself. Of course, Pershing ran right to you last night. I was sure of it. Your talk shows it. How else could he have told you his story? Every train has been watched. He hasn't left town. You've got him hidden in your house. This Government agent is going to get him. You can't stop it."

Whereupon Sara went quite wild. She gave a little cry and ran toward the door; she whirled about and ran back toward the table. And the treasurer sprang forward and blocked her way.

"It will do you no good to make a fuss about it, Miss Venner," he said sternly, frowning heavily at her. "It was clear to me from your story the man must be in your house. You'll only make yourself ridiculous if you try to interfere. This embezzlement happened in my office. I'm as much interested as anybody in seeing the man caught. I propose to go along and help search the house—I happen to be familiar with it. The only sensible thing for you to do is to sit right here quietly—out of the way—until it's all over with. Anything else will just get you into trouble uselessly."

Sara confronted the treasurer a mo-

ment, her eyebrows drawn together; then she gave up.

"I see! Three men against one woman! Have your own way, then; but, remember, I shall get Pershing from you yet!"

With that she turned her indignant back upon them and walked over to the window, where she stood looking out into the falling snow until the detective and the treasurer left the room, and for a minute afterward.

**D**URING the minute Jacob Green wheeled around to his desk.

"What can't be cured must be endured, Sara," he commented philosophically. "Make yourself at home and excuse me while I work."

"I'll telephone," she said, wheeling around.

"If he was there," said the treasurer, frowning, to Jacob Green, "he must have got away. We searched the house from cellar to garret without finding him."

"And where is the bulldog?" cried Sara eagerly.

"If you mean the detective," the treasurer replied, frowning heavily at her, "he has gone over to Pershing's house to see if he can find the counterfeit plates."

And at once Sara cried: "Oh, Joe! That was splendid! You've been splendid all through!"

She seemed as eager as ever, but in a quite different way—smiling so that dimples came in her cheeks, and bending a little toward the treasurer, shining with fond admiration.

The treasurer still frowned at her, but the frown looked merely foolish. He

told me. It took courage to do that—with you, Jacob Green, as ruthless as you are! His mind worked like lightning, too. There was poor little Pershing in Joe's office, and there you were, all ready to gobble him up. And, just on the spur of the moment, to tell Pershing to lock you and him in the vault and run to me—do you think I wouldn't be speaking to a man capable of doing that?"

Upon that, the paralyzed treasurer began stammering foolishly:

"Of course—of course—why, you see, I didn't expect her to let out like this."

He gave a hollow, idiotic sort of laugh and stammered on:

"Of course, you see—of course, I hated to throw you down, Mr. Green. But, you see—well, she had quarreled with me, you see. Of course, you see, that cut me all up. You see, I knew if I let Pershing be sent to jail she never would forgive me, you see. But—well, on the other hand, you see—you see, on the other hand, if I saved Pershing she'd give me credit for it. You see, it was a choice between Sara and you. Of course, nobody but a lunatic could hesitate, you see."

**S**ARA shamelessly patted his hand and laughed again, so the room rang with it.

"But I had him frightened to death last night," she declared with triumph. "I told him I'd get three thousand dollars in good money to put in place of the counterfeits, and he'd either got to fix a way for me to get hold of the counterfeits or just grab them himself. Worried you some, didn't it, Joe?" she demanded, laughing.

Jacob Green swung swiftly in his chair and looked down the long table.

"Oh, yes, we fooled you that time, Jacob Green!" Sara triumphed. "Of course, when he telephoned there was something in the office I wanted to see, I knew what he meant. Then he reminded me I could get money from the bank at ten o'clock and have it sent up here. He can think faster than you can, Jacob Green! And I was just on the point of spoiling it all by grabbing the notes in front of your eyes—I was that indignant and confused when you said you were going to my house. But he headed me off, you know. Hasn't he been splendid all through? And you misled them at the house so they couldn't find Pershing, didn't you, Joe?"

"Yes, I did," said the treasurer helplessly.

"And now it doesn't make any difference," Sara added radiantly. "They can get him whenever they like, for they haven't that much evidence against him."

To show how much "that much" was, she measured off a hair's breadth of pink fingernail.

**J**ACOB GREEN had been looking down the long table. Six bundles of bank-notes lay there, as before; also there was Sara's candy box, uncovered and empty. But, even at that distance, he knew the bank-notes that lay there were perfectly genuine ones, and that Sara's chauffeur had brought them up to her from the bank in the candy box. He had no need to examine the grate where Sara had stood for some time, occasionally poking the fire.

"Not that much evidence!" Sara crowed. "There's no embezzlement, for there's your three thousand dollars in good money. And there's no counterfeits. What do you say to that?"

The president twisted his beard and growled into it:

"I say you're a couple of young fools; and I'm an old one or I'd have suspected this."

He swung around to his desk and added:

"What can't be cured must be endured. Get along with you and let me work."

Sara stooped over his bowed back and whispered, bubbling:

"You know you'll come to the wedding, and be glad of it."



"There was a moment's silence; then Sara said convulsively: 'All the same, you're a brute.'"

"Not to your house," he replied without looking up. "I'll save you from getting yourself mixed up in this mess if I can."

After a moment he added: "I signaled Stillman to have the door here locked on the outside. It's better for you to stay in here awhile."

There was a moment's silence; then Sara said convulsively: "All the same, you're a brute."

Although his back was turned, the president was indefinitely aware of her at intervals in the next three quarters of an hour. He heard her walk to the table, and thought she got her box of candy. Then she moved softly about the room. By and by she was over at the grate, where she stood a long time, occasionally poking the fire.

But she was sitting at the table again when the treasurer entered, and she sprang up expectantly.

turned red in the face and stammered something inarticulately.

But she only laughed outright, clapped her hands together, and cried:

"I told you they couldn't get him away from us!"

With that she stepped swiftly nearer, caught his hand, patted it, and laughed brazenly up into his red face.

**T**HE president, who had observed these phenomena with astonishment and uneasiness, dug a hand into his beard and observed sarcastically:

"I thought you two were not speaking."

"Speaking!" Sara exclaimed, with a return to the indignant mood. "We did have a misunderstanding—but speaking now? After he saved poor little Pershing from you last night? Well, I should say we would be speaking after that! Of course, I sent for him as soon as Pershing