

just the right way. Waving pistols and throwing fits—

"I was mad, I tell you," Hamilton broke in.

"Admitting that," resumed Monte. "I should think the best thing you could do would be to go away and sober up."

"Go away?"
"I would. I'd go a long way—to Japan or India."

The old mad light came back to Hamilton's eyes.

"Did she ask you to tell me that?"
"No," answered Monte; "it is my own idea. Because, you see, if you don't go she'll have to."

"What do you mean?"
"Steady, now," warned Monte. "I mean just what I say. She can't stay here and let you camp in her front hall. Even Madame Courcy won't stand for that. So—why don't you get out, quietly and without any confusion?"

"That's your own suggestion?" said Hamilton, tottering to his feet.

"Exactly."
"Then," said Hamilton, "I'll see you in hell first! It's no business of yours, I say."

"But it is," said Monte.

"Tell me how it is," growled Hamilton.

"Why, you see," said Monte quietly, "Miss Stockton and I are engaged."

"You lie!" choked Hamilton. "You—"
Monte heard a deafening report, and felt a biting pain in his right shoulder. As he staggered back he saw a pistol smoking in Hamilton's hand. Recovering, he threw himself forward on the man and bore him to the floor.

It was no very difficult matter for Monte to wrest the revolver from Hamilton's weak fingers even with one arm hanging limp; but it was quite a different proposition to quiet Madame Courcy and Marie, who were screaming hysterically in the hall. Marjory, to be sure, was splendid; but even she could do little with madame, who insisted that some one had been murdered, even when it was quite obvious, with both men alive, that this was a mistake. To make matters worse, she had called up the police on the telephone, and at least a dozen gendarmes were now on their way.

The pain in Monte's arm was acute, and it hung from his shoulder as limply as an empty sleeve; but, fortunately, it was not bleeding a great deal,—or at least it was not messing things up,—and he was able, therefore, by always keeping his good arm toward the ladies, to conceal from them this disagreeable consequence of Hamilton's rashness.

HAMILTON himself had staggered to his feet, and, leaning against the wall, was staring blankly at the confusion. Monte turned to Marjory.

"Hurry out and get a taxi," he said.

"We can't allow the man to be arrested."

"He tried to shoot—himself?" she asked.

"I don't believe he knows what he tried to do. Hurry, please."

As she went out, he turned to Marie.

"Help madame into her room," he ordered.

Madame did not want to go; but Monte impatiently grasped one arm and Marie the other, so madame went.

Then he came back to Hamilton.

"Madame has sent for the police. Do you understand?"

"Yes," Hamilton answered dully.

"And I have sent for a taxi. It depends on which gets here first whether you go to jail or not," said Monte.

Then he sat down in a chair.

Marjory was back in a minute, and when she came in Monte was on his feet again.

"It's at the door," she said.

At the sound of her voice Hamilton seemed to revive; but Monte had him instantly by the arm.

"Come on," he ordered.

He shoved the boy ahead a little as he passed Marjory, and turning drew the revolver from his pocket. He did not dare take it with him, because he knew that in five minutes he would be unable to use it. Hamilton, on the other hand,

might not be. He shoved it into her hand. "Take it upstairs and hide it," he said.

"You're coming back here?" she asked quickly.

She thought his cheeks were very white. "I can't tell," he answered. "But—don't worry."

He hurried Hamilton down the steps and pushed him into the car.

"To the Hotel Normandie," he ordered the driver, as he stumbled in himself.

THE bumping of the car hurt Monte's arm a good deal. In fact, with every bump he felt as if Hamilton were prodding his shoulder with a stiletto. Besides being unpleasant, this told rapidly on his strength, and that was dangerous. Above all things, he must remain conscious. Hamilton was quiet because he thought Monte still had the gun and was still able to use it; but let him sway, and matters would be reversed. So Monte gripped his jaws and bent his full energy to keeping control of himself until they crossed the Seine. It seemed like a full day's journey before he saw that the muddy waters were behind them. Then he ordered the driver to stop.

Hamilton's shifty eyes looked up.

"Hamilton," said Monte, "have you got it clear yet that—that Miss Stockton and I are engaged?"

"Yes," muttered Hamilton.

"Then," said Monte, "I want you to get hold of the next point: that from now on you're to let her alone. Get that?"

Hamilton's lips began to twitch.

"Because if you come around bothering her any more," explained Monte, "I'll be there myself; and, believe me, you'll go out the door. And if you try any more gun-play—the little fellows will nail you next time. Sure as preaching, they'll nail you. That would be too bad for every one—for you and for her."

"How for her?" demanded Hamilton hoarsely.

"The papers," answered Monte. "And for you because—"

"I don't care what they do to me," growled Hamilton.

"I believe that," nodded Monte. "Do you know that I'm the one person on earth who is inclined to believe what you say?"

He saw Hamilton crouch as if to spring. Monte placed his left hand in his empty pocket.

"Steady," he warned. "There are still four shots left in that gun."

Hamilton relaxed.

"You don't care what the little fellows do to you," said Monte. "But you don't want to queer yourself any further with her, do you? Now, listen. She thinks you tried to shoot yourself. By that much I have a hunch she thinks the better of you."

Hamilton groaned.

"And because I believe what you told me about her," he ran on, fighting for breath—"just because—because I believe the shooting fits into that, I'm glad to—have her think that little the better of you, Hamilton."

The interior of the cab was beginning to move slowly around in a circle. He leaned back his head a second to steady himself—his white lips pressed together.

"So—so—clear out," he whispered.

"You—you won't tell her?"

"No. But—clear out, quick."

Hamilton opened the cab door.

"Got any money?" inquired Monte.

"No."

Monte drew out his bill-book and handed it to Hamilton.

"Take what there is," he ordered.

Hamilton obeyed, and returned the empty purse.

"Remember," faltered Monte, his voice trailing off into an inaudible murmur, "we're engaged—Marjory and I—"

But Hamilton had disappeared. It was the driver who was peering in the door.

"Where next, m'sieur?" he was saying.

"Normandie," muttered Monte.

The windows began to revolve in a circle before his eyes—faster and faster, until suddenly he no longer was conscious of the pain in his shoulder.

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