

cle of his intentions, to return, sealed the letter and started to go to the lower door to mail it, when he paused.

"It is room 77," he heard a tremulous feminine voice say.

"This is it, miss," was the reply, evidently by the floorboy.

There came a timid knock at the door. Rodney opened it. A beautiful young girl, accompanied by an anxious-faced lady of middle age, stood there. Both directed quick, agitated glances at Rodney.

"You are Mr. West," fluttered the girl, and her evident distress, even fright, almost pained Rodney, it was so intense. "We received your note and if you will call at our home tomorrow morning we will have the money for you, provided you deliver the papers."

"Yes, here is the address," fluttered the other lady, and then her words ended in a sharp cry. She had placed a card with writing on it upon the table. As she did so her eye fell upon the letter Rodney had just addressed. She turned white and faint. She seized the arm of her companion, swaying weakly, as though about to faint.

"Oh, Ethel," she gasped, "some new mystery! Quick! get me away from here."

"I am not—" began Rodney in disclaimer, but the two visitors had hastened from the room. He was at a loss to understand the motive of the strange call. The fact that the superscription on the envelope on the table had caused the elder woman a distress was palpable. He tried to study it out as he placed the letter in his pocket. Then he hurried into the hall intent on overtaking the two women, but they had evidently left the floor on the elevator.

The incident gave him food for thought. There was a curtained alcove at a bay window at one angle of the room. Turning off the light, Rodney seated himself there and looked down at the street. Perhaps

he might see the two women leave the hotel. The face of the younger one had impressed itself indelibly upon his memory. Suddenly he was aroused. Two men had entered the room. The electric light was switched on.

"No word at the office of the hotel," spoke one.

"Oh, well, we shall hear from them by morning," returned the other.

"Here are the papers," and he extended a package.

And then the men indulged in a brief, but enlightening conversation. Rodney Blair had led a quiet, uneventful life. The disclosure of the two men fairly horrified him. They were professional blackmailers. They had discovered some scandal against the dead husband of the elderly woman who had called with her niece. They had come to the town to demand all the poor woman had for a return of the incriminating documents.

It was then that Rodney realized that he had been shown to the wrong room by the bellboy. The villainy of the two conspirators stirred him up intensely. They parted without discovering him. One of the men placed the package and some other belongings under a pillow of the bed, put out the light and retired for the night.

It was a breathless experience that Rodney Blair went through before midnight, so foreign to the usual humdrum system of his life that he was burglar, fugitive and hero, all in one, according to story-book process. He was resolute to protect a defenseless woman, however. He regained his own room, the precious packet in his possession, grandly exultant.

More so, when he sought out Mrs. Mary Winslow the next day and gave her the papers that prevented a blot being placed upon the name of one dead, who had not been to her a good husband, but whose name she felt it disloyal not to protect.