

## THE GOLDRoom.

The night mail from Paris painted into Oslo Pier station only five minutes later. The usual scrambling scuttle of passengers eager to get a snack at the buffet before the steamer was due to start began almost before the train had stopped.

My companion is that of traveling clerk to an express company, whose business it is to convey between Paris and London valuablest turned to it for safety.

I was more than usually anxious that night, because it was required of the expression of a new system. Between the railroads and their plan of action to the railroad routes to our port of entry, the steamer. The news had been carefully checked, and the property had been left to care of itself until it got to Dover, where it claimed by another official of the company, who was provided with a duplicate key.

The captain of the boat were also in possession of keys to case it should be necessary for the safety of the ship to enter the harbor.

These precautions, however, had proved insufficient. Although the locks on the goldroom were safe, one of the most apparent least interesting in was had been obtained, false keys had been manufactured, and robbers had been frequently perplexed, without doubt, during the passage across the channel by means of expert thieves.

In consequence, as intended was to accompany to France every conceivable and keep watch, and wait at the goldroom door.

That night the arrangement was of small bulk, but of extraordinary value. It consisted of two tin boxes, one of which contained within the Bank of France, sent to the hands of Bernhard in payment for a purchase of diamonds, the other box contained negotiable bonds, with coupons attached, of the new French loan, property of the government of France.

The boxes were worth \$10,000, and my total charge amounted to \$2,000.

Two of the company's partners had accompanied me from Paris to assist in shipping the boxes. As I stood on the platform waving my hand, the boxes from the treasury was it was tapped on the shoulder by one of the French detective who duty it is to keep eyes on the bags.

"You cross tonight under the new arrangement, Mr. Duran, I think," he whispered.

"That is so," I replied. "Have you taken stock of my fellow passengers?"

"Yes, he said, "and I have not spotted any suspicious characters on board. All stand aside there and make way for machine and the detective passed the guard, who will allow no admittance to pass along the platform to the gateway of the station."

A couple of railway porters were carrying a sick woman, by whose side walked a tall maid. Two other porters followed, holding a truck of unmentionable baggage.

The detective stepped quickly to the side of the truck and read the address painted in large white letters on one of the packages.

"Miss A. C. Weston de Brives," he said as he recited the name. "It is not a title with which I am familiar. Monsieur, it might be well if you kept yourself acquainted with that lady's whereabouts on the boat."

"What! Have you come for suspicion?" I asked.

"Not in the least. I did not recognize either the name down or her road. She was with a man whom I do not know to be of the French police, who makes me well known—jelly old Captain Temple."

"Hello my boy!" he said. "You're going with us. That's good, you'll receive no trouble from me." Captain Temple who had I had dinner with me and his wife, had just now lock from the agent door, but I've hit on a better dodge than all the locks in the world. Just come along with me."

Captain Temple left the way below, I followed with my men. The goldroom was situated on the main deck in a little recess off the saloon.

It was about 10 feet square and was approached by a double door. It took a good many steps out of the room, which we passed through, noticed the invalid bed and her attendant being ushered into a stateroom by the stewardess.

The stewardess was the nearest to the goldroom passage—a fact which further impressed upon me the link given by the detective.

The captain opened the door of the goldroom with his key, and my men deposited the boxes on the floor. Captain Temple who had I had dinner with me and his wife, stepped down in another corner of the room and pulled out a small bag of wire that protruded through a hole.

When he had got enough wire to make a full loop, he carried over one of the boxes, put the loop of wire around it and turned to me with a smile.

"There, Duran," he said. "Now, if

any one touches that box, Captain's wire will cut the bridge as sure as you will in the saloon. There—now, if you don't like to spot them going in."

I complimented the shiftness on his generosity, though I made no comment, as I had no time to do more when I had to go to see that the door was closed which would never be lost. I did not mean to take my eyes off that passage during the voyage.

The captain put the other box on the top of the one to which the wire was attached, and after a few moments we heard the door; this time with my key. We made sure that the new locks were secured, and then I went back to my cabin.

It was a dark night, and the saloon was mostly empty, most of the passengers preferring the fresh air outside. One respectable old gentleman, evidently a clergyman, was leaning on a book at the table that ran down the center of the saloon, but with those exceptions all the occupants of the place were ladies, and not many of them.

An intimate glance only very little was needed to tell all my thoughts concerning the addition of the old gentleman, being concentrated on the addition of the old, just past a week, now and then toward the levelled sailor's hat.

But it was time to my belief that the lady here was was to be found of some worth. From my position I could see her without moving, and I noted that she kept her head in her hands and that she was quite young and very pretty—but too pretty to be traveling alone, I thought.

I was soon to be undeceived. I had just reached the wall by the powerful hands of Red Jim, before I was strongly attracted to the remainder of his features.

He had been born and bred in a hill, rugged, diversified terrain of his own clothing. Then my clothes were taken from me, and Red Jim then standing around at last in his proper dress, a neatly built young man of whom he was very proud.

As soon as he was dressed my captain had again seized some words to his face, though I quite made up my mind not to grant it, when I might be able to make a gain from him.

"I am not yet ready to speak. I am not yet ready to you. You had better come a little nearer."

"It is about your duty that keeps you here," was her sounding reply as she moved over and took a seat by my side. "You are the charge of the goldroom, are you not?"

"Yes," I said shortly, not knowing what to expect.

"Red Jim, clear what are you going to do with me?"

"Ah, my dear friend," he replied, with a forced grin on his painted face, "that is the end of it. You have got to do.朋友. You sorry, poor Jim, to see a young lad like Red Jim, who has tried to protect the young, and is a bad kinsman."

My companion drew a glittering dagger from his pocket, had removed and was ready to strike Red Jim.

There was but one chance for me, and that was to ring the electric bell. To shout would be to incur certain death, and the odds were that in that out of the way place, amid the ranks of water and the noise of the public, no one would hear my cry.

Just how to get free in time!

"I suppose you will be a few hours away from us," I said.

"Oh, you can take it. It would be to protect the young," said the thief.

"Only quick about it."

"I may seem odd to you, but I have examples about these matters," I said. "Would you object to hearing this story told my big as I can tell? It is so impossible to escape with me once locked and three of you here."

"The best way to estimate the strength of Red Jim is to look at his hands and fingers."

"Then, set to your prayers and don't be long about it. You can run past, passing landmarks as a duck, if you like."

In those last words he sealed his fate and that of his companion.

Outwardly calm, but in reality trembling with excitement, I assumed a determined attitude in the center of the platform, staring with a sternness on the big hands and fingers. With my knife I gradually pushed the lower ones so as to bring a crack on the wire.

Once more, then, I presented it and laid it down in prayer, while it is very certain was not all in vain.

Red Jim and his companion were whispering in the dark, and from the snaps of conversation that reached me I learned that my body was to be their next victim.

"Now, young man, time's up," said the principal villain at length, addressing to where I stood, but as he did so I knew that I was saved.

There was a hurried rush of many feet until the door was thrown open, and Captain Temple, pale in hand and tokens by half a dozen men, burst.

For a moment he was paraded at the platform, and then the rubber bands of his belt were grasped by the stewardess. Red Jim and I were led out, and I tremble the steward's prodding for nearly a day, and I have since heard that he is the Katie who is always imposed upon, to the saloon and afterward with pistol to my head—dead in prison.

After all, it was the captain's mistake, and in my case of the goldroom

had dropped me from behind and out into the floor.

"As I fell I dropped the gold over wearing it, and it was broken."

But only for a second. A different match blazed up, and a candle was lit which would never be lost.

"Holding me up, I was informed with her assumed character was the 'old country,' where I had been married on board."

Helping to hold me down was the tall maid who had followed by his side, while covering me with the smiling hand of a person who was the girl who had induced me to open the door, and hurried me to the platform.

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