

In an instant he was on his feet, his hand grasped my throat, and the cold muzzle of his Derringer pistol was at my forehead. It was an awfully big muzzle, like the mouth of a bottle.

I don't know when I lived so long as during the first minute that he held me thus.

"Rascal !" he said. "Do as much as breathe, and I'll pull the trigger."

I didn't breathe.

I had an accident insurance on my life. Would it hold good in a case like this? Or would Euphemia have to go back to her father?

He pushed me back into the little patch of moonlight.

"Oh ! is it you ?" he said, relaxing his grasp. "What do you want? A mustard plaster?"

He had a package of patent plasters in his room. You took one and dipped it in hot water, and it was all ready.

"No," said I, gasping a little. "Burglars."

"Oh !" he said, and he put down his pistol and put on his clothes.

"Come along," he said, and away we went over the deck.

When we reached the stairs all was dark and quiet below.

It was a matter of hesitancy as to going down. I started to go down first, but the boarder held me back.

"Let me go down," he said.