

The short cuts, as usual, proved disastrous. The first fence he climbed produced a neat rip in his overcoat. Sprinting across a railway yard he forgot about the rails until suddenly his foot caught on one and the ground seemed to rise up and smite him on the forehead. Dazed but dauntless he pressed on. After negotiating another fence he landed at full length in an ash-pile. While going at top speed to escape the too cordial attentions of a business-like dog, a clothes-line catching under his chin deposited him neatly on his back. Nevertheless in spite of these checks he reached the address with a few minutes to spare.

Rushing madly up the steps he rang the doorbell furiously. His summons was answered by a rather prepossessing young lady ("quite fit to be the heroine of such an adventure," was his inward comment) who was somewhat startled at the sight of the dishevelled being who stood panting before her. And well she might, for a large bruise, from which blood was trickling, adorned his brow. His face was streaked with a mixture of blood, perspiration, melted snow and ashes. He was hatless, his collar was loose and his coat was disfigured by a large rent. He, however, had few thoughts of his appearance as he burst forth.

"Are you Miss Irene Greaves?"

"Yes, but what . . . ?"

"Thank God I'm in time," he gasped, "you are in danger." And forthwith he plunged into his tale and poured into her frightened ears the story of the dastardly plot against her which he had unearthed. As he finished he handed over for her inspection the bag and its contents. As she examined them, the look of fear and consternation passed from her face and in her eyes (beautiful eyes, he thought) a look of comprehension dawned and he was dumb-founded to see her burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. After several attempts to speak she conquered her mirth sufficiently to explain its reason.

"You must pardon my rudeness," she said, "but it is all so funny (here she nearly went off again.) It all comes of asking a man to do anything. You jumped at a wrong conclusion. You see this is my purse which I asked my brother this morning to take to the jeweler's to be mended. I also asked him to get some cards engraved for me according to this sample and to get me a few ounces of chloroform to clean my gloves. He seems to have bought the chloroform all right and forgotten the other messages and ended with losing all three articles. He has done that before. That is his writing on the back of the card, though what it means I don't