

occurred to them until minutes thereafter. Not until, panting, struggling for breath after the unusual effort, they had covered the intervening mile, and the heat of the already diminishing fire was on their faces, did they think of him at all. Even then it was not the first thought which occurred; for the moment they arrived O'Reilly, who was waiting, turned, facing them excitedly.

"Do you see that?" he queried, pointing to a black band that surrounded the building in a complete circle.

Parker nodded understandingly; but Mead, who was city bred, looked mystified. "What is it?" he returned.

"A firebreak," explained the Irishman. "Someone didn't want the blaze to spread and scattered earth clear around the place, with a spade." Leaning over he picked up a clod and thumbed it significantly. "It hasn't been done a half hour. The dirt isn't even dry."

Brief as the time had been, already the frail walls were settling to embers. There was nothing to do; and standing there the three men looked understandingly into each other's faces. The same thought stood clear on all; for all alike knew every detail of the story.

"The Indian, How Landor," suggested Mead adequately.

"Yes," corroborated Parker, "and I'm glad of it. I'm not squeamish, but the Lord knows I'd never have used the place myself."