

a massive bolt, and that, evidently swinging back of its own accord after the men had passed through, now hung just ajar—to a long, narrow window, most tantalising of all because it was wide open, that was shoulder high, just above the stonework of the cellar and evidently on a level with the ground outside.

And then suddenly the Hawk's lids drooped—to hide a quick flash and gleam that lighted the dark eyes. MacVightie had stooped, and throwing back the bolt, had lifted up the trapdoor.

"Hello!" he ejaculated. "What's this? Here, Lanson! It looks like a passage of some sort." He was leaning down into the opening. "Yes, so help me, that's what it is!" He lowered himself hurriedly through the trapdoor, and his voice came back muffled into the cellar. "Come down here a minute, Lanson; they certainly had things worked out to a fine point!"

Lanson's back, as, following MacVightie, he lowered himself through the opening, was turned to the Hawk—and in a flash the Hawk's free hand had swept behind him under his coat to the concealed pocket in the back lining, and his eyes were thrust within an inch of the Ladybird's as he lowered his head.

"You understand?"—the Hawk's lips did not move, he was breathing his words, while a skeleton key worked swiftly at the handcuff on his wrist—"you understand? It's you or me! You make a sound to queer me, and I'll get you—*first!*"

The livid face was contorted, working with im-