

## Almost a Hero



HARLEY STANLEY was a prosaic young man, who went to his office every day and did his best to earn a modest salary. He also worked harder to make his salary cover the expenses of his modest (?) mode of living, as is the custom of many young men. But underneath his commonplace exterior, there lay, unsuspected by his friends, (who were many) a love of romance. One of the effects of this was to make him, in his hours of ease, imagine himself the hero of innumerable gallant exploits, generally having to do with the rescue from danger of some fair damsel. As is also the custom of many young men.

One Christmas Eve he was returning home after an evening spent with some friends. He was at peace with the world, as he walked along thinking with satisfaction of all the clever remarks he had made, and with regret of many which he had thought of too late to be of any use. Suddenly a bright object, half buried in the snow by the sidewalk, caught his eye. Stooping he picked it up. It proved to be a lady's silver mesh bag with its chain broken. In hopes of finding a clue to its ownership he opened it. It contained a small phial and a lady's visiting card. Stepping under a nearby arc-light he read the following words scribbled hastily on the back of the card: "Have found the girl at above address. She will need to be silenced. The jewels are in the safe in the library. Eleven o'clock!" Somewhat startled and puzzled at the meaning of this strange message he turned over the card and saw engraved thereon Miss Irene Greaves, 139 Maple Ave. Instantly the significance of the pencilled words flashed upon his brain. That very morning he had been reading of a number of operations of a gang of burglars in that very vicinity. He had evidently stumbled upon their latest plot. The owner of the purse, no doubt, was a female member of the band, used perhaps as a go-between. Examining the phial his suspicions were confirmed. It contained *Chloroform!*

Here was his chance! If he could reach there in time he would save the girl! Glancing at his watch he saw that he had half an hour in which to act before the criminals would start their nefarious work. Ordinarily it was an hour's walk from where he was to Maple Ave. But by using short cuts he thought he could reach there in the time at his disposal.