

CHAPTER XXXVII

AN UPPER CHAMBER

THERE were officers in the vestibule, troops drawn up on the further side of the street, firemen by the hundred fighting with their freezing streams from the hydrants, their ladders, towers, and engines, lest the flames should spread from the doomed Clewston offices to Gault's huge marble palace of the *Avenger*. They did not know of the ventilator shaft, now a white-hot furnace opening into the rooms of the Cyclone Explosive Syndicate. Brand answered several officials who questioned him: "Yes, Gault had probably left." He knew of back stairs leading to a subway and thence to certain warehouses across the back lane; but of this he said nothing. No, he was not Gault's secretary, but his late Fighting Editor, at their service. On giving his private address he was allowed pass.

At the Broadway corner the cowboys reported, and shortly afterwards came the Colonel, Captain Baxterdale, Captain Browne, the master of the launch, and all their followers. With the officers he left directions that breakfast should be served to all hands, and appointed a rendezvous for paying off at the Club that day, lest after his arrest for last night's fighting his men should go penniless. The "boys" wanted to make a demonstration, but this he forbade, being unwilling to outrage the feelings of those for whom