

"Sic him, Towser," said Brown, through his teeth. "Fought—you?" said Finerty, with a laugh. "Back to yer crib. What I'd do to ye is lay ye acrost m' knee and belt the seat of your trousers off."

"Go on and do it! Go on and do it!" implored Plimmer, dancing about and making intimidating motions with his experienced fists. "You're afraid. You're afraid in your bloomin' 'eart."

"Yes, I'm afraid," said Finerty, measuredly, his face twitching. "An' whether this is a put-up job or not, fought I won't. Afraid I am, an' Gawd hilt the man, or the two men, or the three men, that makes me forgit that I am afraid. An' so I'm tellin' yese." And he stalked through the door-way un-mindful of following epithets.

"S'ELP me," said Plimmer, "and such a coward was made in the British Isles! 'E's a disgrace. 'E won't fight. You cawn't make 'im fight."

"If yeh think we're of that breed," spoke up McGonigal, mouthpiece of the five impeached patriots, "yeh come along down to th' back room of McKeown's place an' any wan of us will give yeh all the fight yeh can carry." His glance included Craig, Schmidt and even Brown. "Just come on—all of yeh," he pleaded, savagely, for his fellow countryman's exhibition had made him flaming for the honor of the crown and the harp.

"Rats," said Brown, inelegantly, but wisely. "We all know your records. There's no hard feelings. There's a black bean in every sack, and it seems we've got it." Brown had service stripes on his arm, and his words had weight as had his hand.

"'E oughter be showed up to the Old Man," said Plimmer. "'I'm 'aving the beat 'e 'as, and 'im as 'igh spirited as an old grandmother."

"There'll be no talkin' to the captain nor the sergeant," said Brown, looking at Plimmer. "We ain't kids, we're men. If Finerty's a coward he'll be shown up all right, for there's always trouble sooner or later down there." (The Hill is always called "down there.") "But there'll be no squealin', and the man that does will catch th' best beltin' he ever got in his life."

"I 'ope some colored gentleman 'll knock 'is bloomin' 'ead orf," said Plimmer, with great sincerity.

But Plimmer's hope did not materialize. The Hill was unusually quiet and orderly. Some said it was only taking Finerty's measure, as it took every new patrolman's, and that the lull was the deadly lull before the storm. But Finerty went stolidly about his duties as if nothing had ever happened or would happen. He met his fellow patrolmen's cold glances with indifference, and he never appeared to notice Plimmer's sotto voce remarks. Plimmer of all the men was the only one to show an active and personal resentment against Finerty's cowardice. Brute strength was his god, and to see it misused as Finerty had misused it was unpardonable.

"GUESS 'ow Finerty spends 'is days orf," he said one evening some weeks after his first unsuccessful baiting of the Irishman. "You know 'ow 'e flocks by 'imself. Well, to-day when I was on beat who did I see coming down the line but Finerty. And, say, 'e was shoving one of them wheel chairs before 'im like any bloomin' nussey maid. Ho, ho, it was a sight. There was a chap in the chair wot looked as if a traction engine had run all over 'im. 'E was all twisted out of shape. 'E was a 'orrible sight."

"I know," put in Craig. "I live in his neighborhood. Finerty and him rooms together. They're pals. They say Finerty waits on him hand and foot. There's something the matter with the lad's spine."

"Well, Finerty makes a fine nuss," laughed Plimmer. "When I saw 'im I ses: 'Lift yer petticoats, Lizzie, when you skip the gutter."

"An' what did he say?" chorused the men, grinning. Plimmer suddenly looked vindictive.

"'E told me to go to a place where they don't use

thermometers," he said, slowly. "The cowed. 'E knew I couldn't 'it 'im on patrol. But I'll 'it 'im. 'E cawn't tell me to go there. Ho, yuss, when 'e's orf duty I'll make 'im come to McKeown's place and I'll bingle the 'ead orf 'im. I'll show 'im up for the cowed 'e is."

The men laughed disbelievingly. You can't make a man fight—at least not a coward like Finerty. But Plimmer, a grim smile on his lips, held to the contrary and said so. He would "bingle" Finerty's head.

But the proving of John Finerty was not to be left to a Cockney-American patrolman nor the back room of McKeown's saloon. Fate decreed many actors and a large stage. On the following night a very good imitation of undiluted Hades broke out on San Juan Hill. No one could say how it started. No one ever can—or will. But Finerty, on the night shift, saw a man leaning against the lamp-post that stands on the corner of Sixty-second Street and Amsterdam Avenue. That in itself is strange in that neighborhood, for the corner saloon is the recognized prop. "Drunk," thought Finerty, as the man wobbled uncertainly. But the Hill holds its drink, and this man didn't. He commenced to cough slowly, thickly. The speckled flare of the lamp threw a fan of light into the gutter. And Finerty saw dark splotches that were not shadows. It was one o'clock. The avenue was deserted.

The man straightened up in jerks, wiped a hand vaguely across his lips, then, as Finerty laid hold of him, eased himself slowly through the official arms to the pavement. He twitched there in the circle



of light, his coat open and a great clot of blood on his left side. Finerty knew him for a leader of the "white trash" roustabouts.

"S'all right," gulped the man with a laugh that strangled in its birth. "I guess I've got mine. Been layin' f'r me. They carved me good and proper. S'all right, though. Th' boys 'll square dis, you bet."

"Who did this?" said Finerty, quickly.

The man waved a blood-smeared hand vaguely to the west.

"Down there, of course. That big coon—Williams—" He was going fast.

Finerty swung his nightstick against the pavement and the hollow raps of the locust went echoing down the avenue. Then he ran across the street to the nearest call box and sent in a hurry call to Roosevelt. Half a dozen men, spewed from the corner saloon, were now cursing loudly about the dying man. They had been attracted by the raps of the nightstick. They scattered as Finerty and the two patrolmen on the adjoining beats butted through them. The scuffle and clang of the ambulance from Fifty-eighth Street came faintly from down the avenue.

"I'm going down there before that nigger gets away. You can see him aboard. I guess it's the morgue for his," said Finerty, motioning to the huddled heap on the sidewalk.

There was something in his voice that caused the two patrolmen to glance at him curiously. Finerty's

eyes had a starved look. He seemed to be fighting with some terrible emotion or passion—choking it back.

"All right. I'll go with yeh," said Brady, one of the men, as the ambulance rattled up and the white-coated doctor hopped off.

The two made their way down the dark, silent Hill. Finerty, in his unostentatious way, had learned every square inch of his beat. He knew where Williams lived. A scattered trail of blood straggled here and there on the sidewalk.

Finerty, his jaws set, ascended the steps of an evil-looking flat-house. The door was shut, and no answer was given to his repeated ringing. Finerty used his nightstick. The Hill had been unnaturally quiet, but now a vague hum came from Amsterdam Avenue. The hum increased, windows were flung up and doorways emitted figures of both sexes and every age. A shot sounded somewhere in the night. The whites were out for revenge.

AS Finerty continued to rap on the door something suddenly flashed between him and Brady and crashed on the steps. It was a brick from the roof. A window went up over the way and a revolver commenced to spit spitefully, its bullets humming about the heads of the bluecoats. The street suddenly seemed to be alive. A storm of white loughs came sweeping down from the avenue, and doorway, roof and window had each their welcome. Down on West End Avenue and the side streets, separate and private engagements were the rule. A hurry call had been sent in for the reserves, but a man might as well try to stem the flood tide as to bring peace and order to that turbulent sea of fighting humanity. Captain Hogan summed up the situation instantly and telephoned to neighboring precincts for all their available men.

Meanwhile, Finerty, with one heave of his huge shoulder, had sent the hail door crashing from its hinges.

"Don't yeh mix in there, it's a death-trap," said Brady, hurriedly, laying a hand on Finerty's arm. "They'll be waitin' f'r yeh at th' top of th' stairs. Don't go in. Wait f'r th' reserves."

"Yeh can wait. I'm goin' in," said Finerty, savagely, wiping away the blood where a bullet had grazed his cheek. "I'm goin' in," he said again. Even in the excitement Brady noticed the curiously tense tone of the voice and the steely glitter in the eyes.

"Yer a fool," snarled Brady, as Finerty sprang into the dark, narrow hall. Another moment and Brady was swinging his night-stick, holding the stoop against the oncoming enemy.

Then from the hall came crash and oath on oath. Once he heard a laugh—a laugh that set his teeth on edge. It was Finerty's.

The room was not pretty. There was much dirt and very much blood. Much broken furniture and dishes and humanity. A fat negress, huddled in a corner, was sobbing hysterically. A half starved geranium stood up stiffly in a cracked jam-pot on the window sill. A wheezy gas jet was flaring. On the floor lay three men—all big men. One lay very still, but the other two twisted this way and that, groaning unpleasantly. On a lounge sat Finerty, hands on knees, staring fixedly at the three figures on the floor. The reserves found him thus. A razor, scientifically wielded, is an excellent flesh-cutting instrument, and Finerty had suffered.

"ONE dead and two most unconscious and not one shot," said the battered Brady in a hushed voice. "I can't believe it. I never seen such stren'th an'—an'—"

"An' blood lust! Say it, say it," cried Finerty, fiercely, his voice breaking, stretching out his razor-hacked hands. "Say it, an' ye'll have the truth." He rocked back and forth, and the bluecoats watched him with white strained faces. "It's been m' curse," panted Finerty, thickly, clenching his hands above his head. "Gawd's curse on m' stren'th. Gawd's

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