

Clewston detective knows that Clewston wants seventy per cent. of the spoil—and Clewston gets it. Profitable? Oh, that's only a drop in the Clewston bucket; because an American doesn't run the detective business for his health. Blackmail, sir, is the tribute which Vice pays to Knowledge; and yet they say that Vice doesn't pay! My dear young friend, Vice pays rather than get itself talked about—Vice pays through the nose; or who would believe in its kid gloves of virtue, its frock-coat of respectability, its silk hat of self-righteousness? Vice pays seventy per cent. of its plunder to stay out of gaol, twenty-five per cent. to keep up appearances. Vice is a fool! And I, sir—who gave Clewston his exchange, who organized his record office, who contributed more than any other man to his enormous power—I—look at what I am—an outcast, a tramp, a pariah!

The wretched man threw aside Brand's coat, scrambled down off the packing-case, and waved his long bony arms in frantic gesticulation. "Give me proof!" he wailed. "You're the only man who saw him at his devilish work! Give me proof of Clewston's identity as the wrecker of trains, the bungling assassin—give me the one proof, Haraldson, that it was his face you saw in the flames that night, and I will tear him down! I'll crush his jaws under my heel! I'll grind him to powder! Proof, I say! Proof! Proof!"

"Meanwhile," said Brand, "that's a coffee-stand starting up at the dock gates, and I made five cents last night by holding a horse. Stay here." Brand left his friend sunk in a sort of stupor, and groped his way among the railway sidings to the stall by the dock gates, where he bought some bread. On his return, after an absence of five minutes, he found a policeman hoisting the Colonel off his packing-case by the scruff of the neck.