

The King of Arcadia

"If you were called in as an expert, what would you make of that?" he asked.

The assistant professor adjusted his eye-glasses, read the message, and returned it without suggestive comment.

"My field being altogether prosaic, I should make nothing of it. There are no assassinations in geology. What does it mean?"

Ballard shook his head.

"I haven't the remotest idea. I wired Lassley this morning telling him that I had thrown up the Cuban sugar mills construction to accept the chief engineer's billet on Arcadia Irrigation. I didn't suppose he had ever heard of Arcadia before my naming of it to him."

"I thought the Lassleys were in Europe," said Gardiner.

"They are sailing to-day in the *Carania*, from New York. My wire was to wish them a safe voyage, and to give my prospective address. That explains the date-line of this telegram."

"But it does not explain the warning. Is it true that the Colorado irrigation scheme has blotted out three of its field officers?"

"Oh, an imaginative person might put it that way, I suppose," said Ballard, his tone asserting that none but an imaginative person would be so foolish. "Braithwaite, of the Geodetic Survey, was