

sensed, from mere surprise or fright at finding some intruder in the room; that must have been expected. This was from something more astounding, from something incredible.

"What is it?" Santoine cried.

"Good God! Basil!"

"Who is it, Wallace?" the blind man knew now that his friend's incoherence came from recognition of some one, not alone from some sight of horror. "Who is it, Wallace?" he repeated, curbing himself.

"Basil! I it—it must be—I know him! It is—"

A SHOT roared in front of Santoine. The blind man, starting back at the shock, drew in the powder-gas with his breath; but the bullet was not for him. Instead, he heard his friend scream and choke and half call, half cough.

"Wallace!" Santoine cried out; but his voice was lost in the roar of another shot. This was not fired by the same one who had just fired; at least, it was not from the same part of the room; and, instantly, from another side, a third shot came. Then, in the midst of rush and confusion, another shot roared; the light was out again; then all was gone; the noise was outside; the room was still except for a cough and choke as Blatchford—somewhere on the floor in front of the blind man—tried again to speak.

Basil Santoine, groping with his hands, found him. The blind man knelt and with his fingers over his cousin's face; he found the wound on the neck where Blatchford's life was running away. He was still conscious. Santoine knew that he was trying his best to speak, to say just one word—a name—to tell whom he had seen and who had shot him; but he could not.

Santoine put his hand over a hand of his cousin. "That's all right, Wally; that's all right," he assured him. And now he knew that Blatchford's consciousness was going forever. Santoine knew what must be most on his friend's mind at that last moment as it had been most on his mind during more than thirty years. "And about my blindness, Wallace, that was the best thing that ever happened to me. I'd never have done what I have if I hadn't been blind."

Blatchford's fingers closed tightly on Santoine's; they did not relax but now remained closed, though without strength. The blind man bowed and then lifted his head. His friend was dead, and others were rushing into the room—the butler, one of the chauffeurs, Avery, more menservants; the light was on again, and amid the tumult and alarms of the discoveries shown by the light, some rushed to the windows to the south in pursuit of those who had escaped from the room. Avery and one or two others rushed up to Santoine; now the blind man heard, above their cries and alarms, the voice of his daughter. She was beside him, where he knelt next the body of Blatchford, and she put back others who crowded about.

"Father! What has happened? Why are you here? Oh, Father, Cousin Wallace!"

"He is dead," Santoine said. "They shot him!"

"Father; how was it? You—"

"There are none of them in the room?" he asked her in reply.

"None of them?"

Her failure to understand answered him. If any of the men who fought there had not got away, she would have understood. "They were not all together," he said. "They were three, at least. One was not with the others. They fired at each other, I believe, after one shot him." Santoine's hand was still in Blatchford's. "I heard them below." He told shortly how he had gone down, how Blatchford had entered and been shot.

The blind man, still kneeling, heard the ordering and organizing of others for the pursuit; now women servants from the other part of the house were taking charge of affairs in the room. He heard Avery questioning them; none of the servants had had part in the fight in the room; there had been no signal heard, Santoine was told, upon any of the bells which

he had tried to ring from his room. Eaton was the only person from the house who was missing. Harriet had gone for a moment; the blind man called her back and demanded that she stay beside him; he had not yet moved from Blatchford's body. His daughter returned; her hand on his shoulder was trembling and cold—he could feel it cold through the linen of his pajama jacket.

"Father, you must go back to bed!" she commanded uselessly. He would not stir yet. A servant, at her call, brought a robe which she put over him, and she drew slippers on his feet.

"They came, at least some of them came,"—Santoine had risen, fighting down his grief over his cousin's death; he stood holding the robe about him—"for what was in your safe, Harriet."

"I know; I saw it open."

"What is gone?" Santoine demanded.

He heard her picking up the contents of the safe from the floor and carrying them to the table and examining them; he was conscious that, having done this, she stood staring about the room as though to see whether anything had escaped her search.

"What is gone?" Santoine repeated.

"Why—nearly all the formal papers seem to be gone; lists and agreements relating to a dozen different things."

"None of the correspondence?"

"No; that all seems to be here."

Santoine was breathing quickly; the trust for which he had been ready to die—for which Blatchford had died—seemed safe; but recognition of this only emphasized and deepened his perplexity as to what the meaning had been of the struggle which an instant before had been going on around him.

"We don't know whether he got it, then, on not!" It was Avery's voice which broke in upon him; Santoine merely listened.

"He? Who?" He heard his daughter's challenge.

"Why, Eaton. It is plain enough what happened here, isn't it?" Avery answered. "He came here to this room for what he was after—for what he has been after from the first—whatever that may have been! He came prepared to force the safe and get it! But he was surprised—"

"By whom?" the blind man asked.

"By whomever it is that has been following him. I don't attempt to explain who they were, Mr. Santoine; for I don't know. But—whatever they were—in doing this, he laid himself open to attack by them. They were watching—saw him enter here. They attacked him here. Wallace switched on the light and recognized him; so he shot Wallace and ran with whatever he could grab up of the contents of the safe, hoping that by luck he'd get what he was after."

"It isn't so—it isn't so!" Harriet denied.

Her father checked her; he stood an instant thoughtful. "Who is directing the pursuit, Donald?" he asked.

A VERY went out at once. The window to the south, which stood open, was closed. The blind man turned to his daughter.

"Now, Harriet," he commanded. He put a hand out and touched Harriet's clothing; he found she had on a heavy robe. She understood that her father would not move till she had seen the room for him. She gazed about again, therefore, and told him what she saw.

"There was some sort of a struggle near my safe," she said. "Chairs—everything there is knocked about."

"Yes."

"There is also blood there—a big spot of it on the floor."

"I found that," said Santoine.

"There is blood behind the table near the middle of the room."

"Ah! A man fired from near there, too!"

"There are cartridges on the floor—"

"Cartridges?"

"Cartridge shells, I mean, empty, near both those spots of blood. There are cartridge shells near the fireplace; but no blood there."

"Yes; the bullets?"

"There are marks everywhere—above the mantel, all about."

"Yes."

"There is a bar of iron with a bent end near the table—between it and the window; there are two flashlights, both extinguished."

"How was the safe opened?"

"The combination has been cut completely away; there is an—an instrument connected with the electric-light fixture which seems to have done the cutting. There is a hand-drill, too—I think it is a hand-drill. The inner door has been drilled through, and the catches drawn back."

"Who is this?"

The valet, who had been sent to Eaton's room, had returned with his report. "Mr. Eaton went from his room fully dressed, sir," he said to Santoine, "except for his shoes. I found all his shoes in his room."

During the report, the blind man felt his daughter's grasp on his arm become tense and relax and tighten again. Then, as though she realized she was adding to his comprehension of what she had already betrayed, she suddenly took her hand from her father's arm. Santoine turned his face toward his daughter. Another twinge racked the tumult of his emotions. He groped and groped again, trying to catch his daughter's hand; but she avoided him. She directed servants to lift Blatchford's body and told them where to bear it. After that, Santoine resisted no longer. He let the servants, at his daughter's direction, help him to his room. His daughter went with him and saw that he was safe in bed; she stood beside him while the nurse washed the blood-spots from his hands and feet. When the nurse had finished, he still felt his daughter's presence; she drew nearer to him.

"Father?" she questioned.

"Yes."

"You don't agree with Donald, do you?—that Mr. Eaton went to the study to—to get something, and that whoever has been following him found him there and—and interrupted him and he killed Cousin Wallace?"

SANTOINE was silent. "That seems the correct explanation, Harriet," he evaded. "It does not fully explain; but it seems correct as far as it goes. If Donald asks you what my opinion is, tell him it is that."

He felt his daughter shrink away from him.

The blind man made no move to draw her back to him; he lay perfectly still; his head rested flat upon the pillows; his hands were clasped tightly together above the coverlet. He had accused himself, in the room below, because, by the manner he had chosen to treat Eaton, he had slain the man he loved best and had forced a friendship with Eaton on his daughter which, he saw, had gone further than mere friendship; it had gone, he knew now, even to the irretrievable between man and woman—had brought her, that is, to the state where, no matter what Eaton was or did, she must suffer with him! But Santoine was not accusing himself now; he was feeling only the fulfillment of that threat against those who had trusted him with their secrets, which he had felt vaguely after the murder of Gabriel Warden and, more plainly with the events of each succeeding day, ever since. For that threat, just now, had culminated in his presence in purposeful, violent action; but Santoine in his blindness had been unable—and was still unable—to tell what that action meant.

Of the three men who had fought in his presence in the room below—one before the safe, one at the fireplace, one behind the table—which had been Eaton? What had he been doing there? Who were the others? What had any of them—or all of them—wanted? For Santoine, the answer to these questions transcended now every personal interest. So, in his uncertainty, Santoine had drawn into himself—withdrawn confidence in his thoughts from all around, from Donald Avery, even from his daughter—until the answer should be found. His

Boys, Become Salesmen!

WHEN the war is over there will be a lot of new salesmen wanted to sell goods. If you are ambitious to "get along," why not begin in any easy task like selling a high-class weekly paper. This will teach you to become a bigger salesman later on.

You Can Sell Canadian Courier for several reasons. Listen.

(1) The people will want it when they see it.

(2) There are not near enough agents at work selling. Has your town got a boy salesman?

(3) Canadian Courier is becoming more interesting and valuable every week. A fine programme of special articles, pictures and stories is going to give it a big boost everywhere.

(4) Subscribers write us telling how they appreciate it. "I would as soon miss a meal as my Courier," said one man down in Quebec Province.

Boys, Become Agents.

(5) Reason No. 5 is good. We have helps for the "new boy." It is called "Selling Points," which shows him how, also full instructions how to do business.

(6) The boy agent cannot fail to be rewarded. The new and popular price of

5 Cents Per Copy

is making new readers for us every day.

Come on, boys. Try it in your spare time. Write to me for descriptive terms and sample copies.

SALES MANAGER

Canadian Courier

181 Simcoe St., Toronto