

THE WHITE MOLL

— I —

NIGHT IN THE UNDERWORLD

IT was like some shadowy pantomime: The dark mouth of an alleyway thrown into murky relief by the rays of a distant street lamp . . . the swift, forward leap of a skulking figure . . . a girl's form swaying and struggling in the man's embrace. Then, a pantomime no longer, there came a half threatening, half triumphant oath; and then the girl's voice, quiet, strangely contained, almost imperious:

"Now, give me back that purse, please. Instantly!"

The man, already retreating into the alleyway, paused to fling back a jeering laugh.

"Say, youse've got yer nerve, ain't youse!"

The girl turned her head so that the rays of the street lamp, faint as they were, fell full upon her, disclosing a sweet, oval face, out of which the dark eyes gazed steadily at the man.

And suddenly the man leaned forward, staring for an instant, and then his hand went awkwardly to touch his cap.

"De White Moll!" he mumbled deferentially. He pulled the peak of his cap down over his eyes in a sort of shame-faced way, as though to avoid recognition, and, stepping nearer, returned the purse.