

sole of his right shoe fell away from his foot and flapped against the floor. His arms hung loose at his sides.

"Will you"—he said, whispering, when he almost had reached the desk—"will you help—help me?"

Although the whine of appeal was still in the whisper, there was, back of that, something which sounded like a new definition of despair. It announced that he had no hope of finding help.

"Sure!" Sullivan answered him breezily.

The stranger lurched against the desk and fell forward, the hardness of his bony elbows making a knocking noise. With his head bowed, his nose mashed against the hard wood, he flung up his right arm, his hand shaking, the fingers moving through the air with the slow, crawly motion, and screamed aloud, one prolonged note.

"Ee-ee-ee!" he lamented shrilly. "I'm afraid of it!"

He lifted his head so that it was flung far back on his shoulders, and stared at Sullivan.

"I've run through the streets," he said in a whisper, "through the streets and through the fields—a thousand miles! And it was always—always behind me. It held on to my shoulder."

He clapped his left hand to his right shoulder, hesitated a moment, and grinned sheepishly, trying to cover up his failure to capture that which threatened him.