

followed at the next move. As the two entered the brilliant saloon, the favorite resort of the *bon-vivant* of St. Louis, the other two members of the group were close behind them, and the toils were encompassing our friend, altogether totally unaware of his danger. Every means was now attempted by Colonel Westcott to throw him of his guard, and elicit something that would connect him with the great bank robbery, but in vain. The loquacious fellow, warm with wine and good fellowship, was not to be entrapped into a word implicating him in an affair of which indeed he knew nothing except the extravagant rumors current among the passengers. And still the Colonel rattled something in his pocket that might have been specie and might have been something else. It was quite midnight when they returned to the hotel, the other members of the group being already there reinforced by several of their own class.

And now came the hurried consummation. A hurried conference among the detectives while Brother LARKIN was asking the usual question of the clerk relative to hotel trains etc., and Colonel WESTCOTT walked straight to his victim, laid his hand decidedly upon his shoulder and said, "TOM BRAILEY, you are my prisoner!"

If the reader has ever had the heavy grip of a sheriff's officer laid upon him he will bear witness to its ponderosity, and the utter feeling of helplessness that momentarily follows. Brother Larkin was a man constitutionally brave, himself a major in the late war who had seen service in well-fought fields, but he may be pardoned for blanching a moment and even cowering under the unexpected blow.

"Is this a jest Colonel Westcott?"

"No jest, Tom Brailey, my name is Carroll and I am a detective, these gentlemen are also detectives and we are bound to have you."

"What is the charge?"

"Now Tom, that thing is played. You know too much to try any gab on us. Be a man and yield quietly."

"What is the charge?"

"Will you go with us peaceably?"

"What is the charge? Don't you dare to lay your hand on me again until you explain the charge and show your authority."

Our hero had by this time backed into the corner out of which opened the door to the baggage room. On one side of him was the desk of the book-keeper, and the passage way was so blocked up with large trunks on the other hand that his own portly form occupied the whole entrance. As he stood facing the chief detective, his eye now kindled up with a sense of the deceit that had been practiced on him all the evening, he was undoubtedly a dangerous subject.

Evidently the detectives so viewed it, for the spokesman dropped his tone.

"Now Tom Brailey."

"My name is not Tom Brailey. You will see my name in the register, George Alexander Larkin, I have ample papers about me to prove my identity. Had you asked it instead of playing the dirty sneak all the evening as you have, I should have satisfied you in five minutes. But now explain the charge and show your authority, or the first man who lays hands on me dies the death."

And the display of a pocket six-shooter, and the sharp click of its lock, and the steady aim from an arm brawny and untrembling that bore directly upon the officers head, served to clinch these bold words. A dead silence of a minute ensued. A brief conference with the landlord who was watching the proceedings, and the officer yielded. He exhibited the telegrams he had received, showed the marked resemblance between the bank-robber and our excited friend, proved his own identity by the testimony of the landlord, and in a conciliatory tone requested that no further defence be made.

So Brother Larkin consented to accompany the party to the house of detention. Placing his pocket-book in the hands of the clerk, and restoring his pistol to his pocket he had moved a few steps towards the door, when a new and more startling incident was added to the drama; the chief detective drew from his pocket the rattling objects which might have been specie but proved to be handcuffs, and began to arrange them for use upon our brother's hands.

And the soul of the outraged man now rose in arms. He sprang back to his corner at a bound, prostrating one of the officers in the act. He again drew his pistol, cocked it at a motion and fired upon the officious detective with as good an aim as to knock the hat from off his head; an inch lower would have made a vacancy in that department forever. Cocking the dangerous little machine again, he held it forward and,

"Now which of you is ready for your coffin?" he boldly said.

The report of the pistol called down from their rooms in an incredibly short space of time a score of travellers. The police, from the streets gathered in like eagles to their prey. Before the smoke of the first discharge had dispersed the office was