

CHAPTER II

THEY EMBARK UPON A CRIME

Varney was wrong in one thing: Mr. Carstairs's *Cypriani* was not ready to start anywhere at half a day's notice. For that reason it did not start for Hunston on the following afternoon. As always happens, the preparations for the little expedition took four times as long as anybody would have thought possible.

For these delays no blame could be attached to Peter Maginnis. He had no getting ready to do beyond bidding his father's man to pack him for a week, and obtaining from his hatter's, at an out-of-season cut-price, an immense and peculiar Panama with an offensive plaid band. Possibly it was the only hat of its kind in the world. One might picture the manufacturer as having it made up as an experiment, becoming morose when he looked at it, and ordering his superintendent to make no more like it at the peril of his life.

Peter, however, was delighted with it. Gazing at himself with smirking satisfaction in the hat-shop mirror, he ordered the old one sent home and was all ready to go to Hunston and kidnap Mary Carstairs.

But other preparations could not be completed with

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