

"I had begun a work which was beyond all parallel in the history of the world. I, strangling crime with my strong hands, making all criminals my slaves by turning their misgilded powers to great uses. I, sweeping clean the rocks of an old civilization, was laying the foundations, building up the walls of a new order.

"You, seeing things which were beyond your understanding, possessed with an ape-like ease of mischief, a little dangerous knowledge of the use of fire, have set my empire in flames."

Far down below the roar of voices swelled to loud thunder, mingled at times with the clash of broken glass; now could be heard the crash of an improvised battering-ram against the street door; then, while these two men listened, the vestibule was carried with a yell of triumph, and a raging mob began to sack the Enquiry Office.

Brand moved a step nearer to the desk. "Mr. Gault."

"Well?"

"I don't understand, I know very little; but wouldn't it have been better if these walls had not been raised upon a foundation of lies? I did not come to argue, or to triumph. I fought you first for a woman, and to-day I shall marry her, because she loves me; but I don't want to hurt you more than I can help even now. For the rest, can you believe me if I say that I fought not you personally, but what you represent?"

Gault made no answer; and for some minutes Brand stood waiting for him to speak. A peal of musketry rang out across the square, fired by State troops for a warning. The mob broke and ran; the police and the soldiers took possession; but already dense clouds of smoke darkened the windows, because the Frailty Investigation Offices next door had been set on fire,