

me telephone and provide for its safe removal to a deposit box—now, to-night. I can arrange it."

But Professor Caron demurred. He had a reason for wanting it beside him for a little while. It was quite safe because nobody knew that he had it—except them; he had taken them into his confidence as an additional precaution. If by any remote chance his plans were interfered with, they—his friends—would know where to find the ruby and would be able to take charge of it according to his direction. They were alone, were they not? And Monsieur Lamont had provided this room with excellent blinds and drapes——

Addison Kent rose and stepped quickly across to the portières which screened the archway. His movement was sudden and silent. When he thrust his head into the hall he was relieved to find it empty; for he had fancied a movement of the heavy curtain. It must be just that his imagination had been keyed to special activity by the evening's surprises, he thought.

Turning back into the room, his glance fell upon Richard Malabar. The journalist was passing the scarab to Professor Caron with a hand that trembled visibly. All levity was gone now from Malabar's demeanour. Kent saw that he looked strangely excited.

II

"Professor, this so-called 'treasure of Osiris' you have been telling us about——" Malabar cleared his throat, a trifle impatient of his huskiness. "You say you have actually seen it?"

"Yes, I said that."