

6 THE WEB OF THE GOLDEN SPIDER

shadow of the area way, Wilson saw an officer swoop down upon her like a hawk. The woman started back with a little cry as the officer placed his hand upon her arm. Wilson saw this through the mist like a shadow picture and then he crossed the road. As he approached them both looked up, the girl wistfully, the officer with an air of bravado. Wilson faced the vigorous form in the helmet and rubber overcoat.

"Well," growled the officer, "what you doin' round here?"

"Am I doing anything wrong?"

"That's wct I'm goneter find out. Yer've both been loafin' here fer an hour."

"No," answered Wilson, "I have n't been loafing."

"Wot yer doin' then?"

"Living."

Wilson caught an eager look from the shadowed face of the girl. He met the other eyes which peered viciously into his with frank aggressiveness. He never in his life had felt toward any fellow-creature as he felt towards this man. He could have reached for his throat. He drew his coat collar more closely about his neck and unbuttoned the lower buttons to give his legs freer play. The officer moved back a little, still retaining his grip on the girl's arm.

"Well," he said, "yer better get outern here now, or I'll run you in, too."

"No," answered Wilson, "you'll not run in either of us."

"I won't, eh? Move on lively——"