

announced with a sudden access of vocal force: "That man is innocent."

The words had a triumphant ring in them that echoed through the auditorium.

"Innocent?"

The tone of the senior Burbeck was scornful in the extreme. Increasing anger at being thus interfered with, especially by Rollie had turned the Elder's face almost purple. "Young man," he commanded harshly, "you stand aside and let this church declare its will."

"I will not stand aside," protested the son. "I will not let you, my father, do this great wrong. He forbade me to speak; but I will speak. Yes, no matter what happens, I must speak."

The young man turned a frightened glance upon his mother. Mrs. Burbeck was gazing intently at her son, a look of shock giving way to one of comprehension and then a pitiful half-smile of encouragement, as if she urged him to go on and do his duty, whatever that involved.

"That man," Rollie began afresh, his neck thrust forward desperately, while he pointed to the minister, who had stepped back once more as though he felt the purposes of God in operation and no longer dared to interfere; "that man is innocent. I am the thief. I stole the diamonds. I did it to get the money to cover a defalcation at the bank. Fearful of the consequences, I turned to him in my distress. He got the money to restore what I had stolen. I put the diamonds in his box for an hour, and by a mistake he went off with the key. That explains all. When I returned from the cruise on the Bay and learned what had happened, I was paralyzed with fear. At first I did not even have the manhood to go and tell him how the diamonds got into his box. When I did, he made me keep the silence for fear the blow would kill my mother. It seemed to me that this was not a sufficient reason. But