

CHAPTER XXVIII

A BATTLE OF WILLS

DR. WYCHERLEY had asked for an interview at the ship-owner's office. He had a particular reason for wishing to investigate further the mental atmosphere that obsessed Lars Larssen. In the man's own office, surrounded by what he had planned for himself, more could be gleaned than from the inscrutable eyes and the grim, straight mouth.

Dr. Wycherley had found himself drawn into the great fight between Lars Larssen and the sailormen, in spite of his original intentions. The man's dominating personality had made a profound impression upon him. It was no longer the case of a mere financial squabble—for which Dr. Wycherley had a deep contempt born of his study of mind—it was now complicated by the strange relations of father and son. And beyond this was something larger still that Dr. Wycherley sensed with his keen, intuitive perception, though as yet the feeling had not crystallized into the tangible.

In the great building in Leadenhall street which bore the simple business sign of "LARS LARSEN—SHIPPING," a sign arrogant in its simplicity, was a room on the second floor that quite transcended Dr. Wycherley's experience of business offices. It was a