

THE AMBUSH

Again I started on, affected to stumble on a root, and went sprawling forward. That ruse gave me just the added distance I needed from the man behind. In a flash I was on my feet again and rushing straight toward the other man, who, in the concealment of a clump of bushes, was waiting for me.

When he sprang from his hiding place and confronted me, armed with a heavy bludgeon, I stopped short, just out of striking distance, and stood gazing, as if stupefied, straight into his face.

The other guard was coming up from behind. Well, that was what I meant him to do. I waited, waited, perhaps, three interminable seconds, until my ears told me that the man who was stealing up behind had come close enough.

The guard who, behind my defenseless back, thought he had me at his mercy, had never heard of the terrible "turning-kick" of the French boxers. Whirling half around on one foot, the whole weight of my body and the momentum of my spring behind it, I sent my heavily shod heel crashing against the side of his head. He went down like a ninepin.

That accounted for one; I had still to deal with the other.

The terror in this man's face hinted flight, and I could afford to take no chance of that. He was