

CHAPTER IV

WHICH CONCERNS POLITICS AND OTHER LOCAL MATTERS

It was an odd sight against the setting of pretty night and light, idle talk. Peter's lip tightened.

"He's dead, poor chap!" he said, in a low voice. "Murdered."

"So it seems. We can't be sure from here, though. Where's that watch? Here — some of you! Lower away the dinghy! Get a move!"

The boats were on their hooks, swung outboard ready for instant use. The crew, tumbling out swiftly at the call, cleared away one and let it fall over the side. The young men went down with it, Peter seizing the oars as his by right. The floating boat with its strange cargo had drifted close and was now lost in the vast black shadow of the yacht.

"Where is it?"

"I can't — Yes! There it is. Straight back. Now a little to the right. Way enough!"

Varney, in the stern, leaned out and gripped the drifting gunwale securely. But it was so dark here that he could see almost nothing.

"He's breathing, I think," he said, his hand against the strange man's chest. "Pull out into the light."