

ness. That was the night of the 7th, the night you saw the last glow. It was very dark, except for occasional bursts of fire from the crater. Judge of my incredulous amazement when, in an access of this illumination, I saw plainly a schooner hardly a mile off shore, coming in under bare poles."

"Under bare poles?" cried Slade.

"The halliards must have disintegrated from some slow action of the celestium. It could be destructive: terrifically destructive. You shall judge. There was the schooner, naked as your hand. Possibly I might have thought it a hallucination but for what came after. Darkness fell again. I supposed then that Handy Solomon's crew were managing—or mismanaging—the *Laughing Lass* without the aid of their leader, whom I had satisfactorily buried. I hoped they would come ashore on the rocks. Yes I was vengeful . . . then.

"Of a sudden there sprang from the darkness a ship of light. You have all seen those great electric effects at expositions. Someone touches a button . . . you know. It was like that. Only that the piercingly brilliant jewelled wonder of a ship was set in the midst of a swirl of vari-coloured radiance such as I can't begin to describe. You saw it from a distance. Imagine what it was, coming close upon you that way—dead on, out of the night. A living glory, a living terror. . . ."

His voice sank. With a shaking hand he fumbled amid his cigarette papers.

"It came on. A human figure, glowing like a diamond ablaze, leaped out from it; another shot down