

dential, and all that, you know."

Allison opened the door to his private office, shut it again, and locked it. They remained closeted together for perhaps three-quarters of an hour.

Old Tom Jeffreys, walking through the park on his way to the office about dusk next evening, was startled at being suddenly accosted by a stranger, who stepped unexpectedly in front of him; he had not noticed the fellow standing by the lilacs.

"Mr. Jeffreys, of *The Recorder*?" he inquired, gruffly. "I want to see you, sir, for a minute on a matter of great importance both to you and your paper. Shall we sit over here?"

The man was leading the way as he spoke to a bench close by and almost hid in the shadow of the trees. Jeffreys noticed that the stranger's trousers were badly frayed and, in fact, his general appearance was exceptionally seedy. The old man sat down timidly, filled with mild wonder and curiosity.

"What I am about to tell you, Mr. Jeffreys, is going to surprise you more than a little; in fact, sir, it's going to astound you. To be brief, I'm going to put you wise to the biggest newspaper sensation this town has ever seen, and all I ask in return is that you'll not try and remember the man who gave you the tip—meaning me, you understand. My name is not necessary. I once worked for John Robertson, of the Robertson Loan Company—not here, though, and where is no matter. I can't tell you, either, how I come to know the facts I'm about to put you next to; but that they are facts you can easily corroborate by going to Detective Allison.

"And now to get to those facts. To-morrow morning the Robertson Loan & Savings Company's doors will be closed to the public. The company is on the rocks—ruined completely. President Robertson has been bleeding the concern for ten

years, and it has just recently been discovered that his pilferings have reached the comfortable sum of \$536,000. President Robertson has been missing since last Thursday; to cover up this, it was given out that he was away on an official trip. His body was recovered from the river only last night, and it is now at the morgue."

"Good heavens!" gasped Jeffreys, spasmodically clutching the other's knee.

"It's true, sir, every word! When you leave here, go straight to Detective Allison and he will verify everything I'm telling you. You are better able to appreciate the value of this from a newspaper standpoint than I am, who know nothing about the business, and if you'll go and see Allison, he'll give you details.

"For reasons that you can no doubt understand, the directors and the police have been keeping the thing dark, but to-morrow morning the cat will be out of the bag and the company intends issuing a public announcement. I'm giving the tip to you personally, Mr. Jeffreys, because I've been told you are not only a competent newspaper man, but the oldest newspaper man in this burg. Not another paper in the country has a line on this, so far as I know, and I want you to handle it personally; in that you can oblige me and that is all I ask. Go and see Allison. And now, good-bye, sir, and good luck to you."

The man was gone before the dumfounded Jeffreys could extricate his voice from the tangle of his surprise. For fully five minutes he sat there, trembling, in speechless wonder. Then he got quickly to his feet and set out at a shuffling run for the police station.

Copley dropped the paste-brush back into the pot in front of him, snipped off a piece of telegraph with his scissors and scribbled a head; doubling up the "copy," he jammed