

voice hoarse with his emotion, "for God's sake, make them think what they are doing before they make a public accusation against me—before they charge me with this to others not on this train! I can't answer what you asked; I can't tell you now about myself; there is a reason—a fair and honest reason, and one which means life or death to me. It will not be merely accusation they make against me—it will be my sentence! I shall be sentenced before I am tried—condemned without a chance to defend myself! That is the reason I could not come forward after the murder of Mr. Warden. I could not have helped him—or aided in the pursuit of his enemies—if I had appeared; I merely would have been destroyed myself! The only thing I could hope to accomplish has been in following my present course—which, I swear to you, has had no connection with the attack upon your father. What Mr. Avery and Connery are planning to do to me, they cannot undo. They will merely complete the outrage and injustice already done me—of which Mr. Warden spoke to his wife—and they will not help your father. For God's sake, keep them from going further!"

Her colour deepened, and for an instant, he thought he saw full belief in him growing in her eyes; but if she could not accept the charge against him, neither could she consciously deny it, and the hands she had been pressing together suddenly dropped.

"I—I'm afraid nothing I could say would have much effect on them, knowing as little about—about you as I do!"

They dashed the door open then—silenced and overwhelmed him; and they took her from the room and left him alone again. But there was something left with him which they could not take away; for in the moment he had stood alone with her and passionately pleading, something had passed between them—he could give no name to it, but he knew that Harriet Santoine never could think of him again without a stirring of her pulses which drew her toward him. And through the rest of the lonely day and through the sleepless night, he treasured this and thought of it again and again.

THE following morning the relieving snowplows arrived from the east, and Eaton felt it was the beginning of the end for him. He watched from his window men struggling in the snow about the forward end of the train; then the train moved forward past the shoveled and trampled snow where rock and pieces of the snowplow were piled beside the track—stopped, waited; finally it went on again and began to take up its steady progress.

The attack upon Santoine having taken place in Montana, Eaton thought that he would be turned over to the police somewhere within that State, and he expected it would be done at the first stop; but when the train slowed at Simons, he saw the town was nothing more than a little hamlet beside a side-track. They surely could not deliver him to the village authorities here. The observation car and the Santoine car were uncoupled here and the train made up again with the Santoine car as the last car of the train and the observation car ahead of it. This, evidently, was to stop the passing of passengers through the Santoine car. Did it mean that the change in Santoine's condition which Dr. Sinclair had been expecting had taken place and was for the worse? Eaton would have liked to ask about this of Connery, whom he saw standing outside his window and keeping watch upon him during the switching of the cars; but he knew that the conductor would not answer him.

He rang, instead, for the porter and asked him for a railway folder, and when this had been brought, he opened it to the map of the railroad and checked off the names of the towns they would pass through. Nearly all the names set in the bold-face letters which denoted the cities and larger towns ahead of them were, he found, toward the eastern end of the State; the nearest—and the one, therefore, at which he thought he would be given up—was several hours away. At long

intervals the train passed villages all but buried in the snow; the inhabitants of these, gathered at the stations, stared in on him as they looked in on any other passenger; and at each of these stops Connery stood outside his window guarding against possibility of his escape. Each time, too, that the train slowed, the porter unlocked the door of the compartment, opened it and stood waiting until the train had regained its speed; plainly they were taking no chances of his dropping from the window.

EARLY in the afternoon, as they approached the town whose name in bold-face had made him sure that it was the one where he would be given to the police, Eaton rang for the porter again.

"Will you get me paper and an envelope?" he asked.

The negro summoned the conductor. "You want to write?" Connery asked.

"Yes."

"You understand that anything you write must be given to me unsealed." "That's satisfactory to me. I don't believe that, even though it is unsealed, you'll take it upon yourself to read it."

The conductor looked puzzled, but sent the porter for some of the stationery the railroad furnished for passengers. The negro brought paper, and pen and ink, and set up the little table in front of Eaton; and when they had left him and had locked the door, Eaton wrote:

"Miss Santoine:

"The questions—all of them—that you and others have asked me you are going to find answered very soon, within a very few hours, it may be, certainly within a few days—though they are not going to be answered by me. When they are answered, you are going to think me the most despicable kind of man; you are not going to doubt, then—for the answers will not let you doubt—that I was the one who hurt your father. You, and every one else, are going to feel—not only because of that, but because of what you will learn about me—that nothing that may happen to me will be more than I justly deserve.

"I don't seem to care very much what people other than you may think; as the time grows nearer, I feel that I care less and less about that; but I do care very much—and more and more—that you are going to think of me in this way. It is very hard for me to know that you are going to regret that you ever let me talk beside you in the friendly way you did, or that you let me walk beside you on the station platform at Spokane, and that you are going to shrink with horror when you recollect that you let me touch you and put my hand upon your arm. I feel that you do not yet believe that it was I who attacked your father; and I ask you—even in the face of the proof which you are so soon to receive—not to believe it. I took this train—"

He stopped writing, recollecting that the letter was to be given to Connery unsealed and that Connery might read it; he scratched out the sentence he had begun; then he thought a moment and went on:

"I ask you not to believe that. More than that, I ask you—when you have learned who I am—still to believe in me. I don't ask you to defend me against others; you could not do that, for you will see no one who will not hate and despise me. But I beg of you, in all honesty and faith, not to let yourself feel as they do toward me. I want you to believe—"

He stopped again, but not because he felt that Harriet Santoine would not believe what he was asking her to believe; instead, it was because he knew she would. Mechanically he opened his travelling-bag and got out a cigar, bit off the end and forgetting in his absorption to light it, puffed and sucked at it. The future was sure of him; he foresaw it plainly, in detail even, for what was happening to him was only the fulfillment of a threat which had been over him ever since he landed at Seattle. He was going out of life—not only Harriet Santoine's life, but all life, and the

letter he was writing would make Harriet Santoine believe his death to have been an act of injustice, of cruelty. She could not help but feel that she herself had been in a way instrumental in his death, since it was the accusation of violence against her father which was going to show who he was and so condemn him. Dared he, dying, leave a sting like that in the girl's life?

He continued to puff at the unlighted cigar; then, mechanically, he struck a match to light it. As the match flared up, he touched it to the sheet on which he had been writing, held the paper until the written part was all consumed, and dropped it on the floor of the car, smiling down at it wryly and grimly. He would go out of Harriet Santoine's life as he had come into it—no, not that, for he had come into it as one who excited in her a rather pleasing doubt and curiosity, but he would go out of it as a man whom she must hate and condemn; to recall him would be only painful to her, so that she would try to kill within her all memory of him.

As he glanced to the window, he saw that they were passing through the outskirts of some place larger than any they had stopped at before; and realizing that this must be the place he had picked out on the map as the one where they would give him to the police, he closed his travelling bag and made ready to go with them. The train drew into the station and stopped; the porter, as it slowed, had unlocked and opened the door of his compartment, and he saw Connery outside upon the platform; but this was no different from their procedure at every stop. Several people got on the train here; others got off; so Connery, obviously, was not preventing those who had been on the train when Santoine was struck, from leaving it now. Eaton, as he saw Connery make the signal for the train to go ahead, sank back suddenly, conscious of the suspense he had been under.

He got out the railroad folder and looked ahead to the next town where he might be given up to the authorities; but when they rolled into this in the late afternoon, the proceedings were no different. Eaton could not understand. He saw by studying the time-table that some time in the night they would pass the Montana state line into North Dakota. Didn't they intend to deliver him to the State authorities in Montana?

When the waiter brought his supper, Connery came with him.

"You wrote something to-day?" the conductor asked.

"I destroyed it."

Connery looked keenly around the compartment. "You brought me two envelopes; there they are. You brought three sheets of paper; here are two, and there's what's left of the other on the floor."

Connery seemed satisfied.

"Why haven't you jailed me?" Eaton asked.

"We're waiting to see how things go with Mr. Santoine."

"Has he been conscious?"

CONNERY did not answer; and through the conductor's silence Eaton sensed suddenly what the true condition of affairs must be. To give him up to the police would make public the attack upon Santoine; and until Santoine either died or recovered far enough to be consulted by them, neither Avery nor Connery—nor Connery's superiors, apparently—dared to take the responsibility of doing this. So Eaton would be carried along to whatever point they might reach when Santoine died or became fully conscious. Where would that be? Clear to Chicago?

It made no material difference to him, Eaton realized, whether the police took him in Montana or Chicago, since in either case recognition of him would be certain in the end; but in Chicago this recognition must be immediate, complete, and utterly convincing.

The next day the weather had moderated, or—here in North Dakota—it had been less severe; the snow was not deep except in the hollows, and on the black, windswept farm-



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