

CHAPTER V.

One Use for a Monocle.

Sedgwick, who had followed the impromptu cortege with his vision, was brought up sharply by the glare of a pair of eyes outside the nearest window. The eyes were fixed on his own. Their expression was distinctly malevolent. Without looking round, Sedgwick said in a low voice:

"Kent!"

No answer came.

"Kent!" said the artist a little louder.

"Huh?" responded a muffled and abstracted voice behind him. "See here for a moment."

There was neither sound nor movement from the scientist.

"An Indian-looking chap outside the window is trying to hypnotize me, or something of that sort."

This information, deemed by its giver to be of no small interest, elicited not the faintest response. Somewhat piqued, the artist turned, to behold his friend stretched on a bench, with face to the ceiling, eyes closed, and heels on the raised end. His lips moved faintly. Alarmed less the heat had been too much for him, Sedgwick bent over the upturned face. From the moving lips issued a musical breath which began its career softly as Raff's Cavatina and came to an inglorious end in the strains of Honey Boy. Sedgwick shook the whistler insistently.

"Eh? What?" cried Kent, wrenching his shoulder free. "Go away! Can't you see I'm busy?"

"I'll give you something to think about. Look at this face of a cigar-store Indian at the window. No! It's gone!"

"Gansett Jim, probably," opined Kent. "Just where his interest in this case comes in, I haven't yet found out. He favored me with his regard outside. And he had some dealings with the sheriff on the beach. But I don't want to talk about him now, nor about anything else."

Acting on this hint, Sedgwick let his companion severely alone, until a bustle from without warned him that the crowd was returning. Being aroused, Kent accosted one of the villagers who had just entered.

"Body coming back?" he asked.

"Yep. On its way now."

"What occurred in the house where they took it?"

"Search me! Everybody was out pur purrs out aq ino inns doc. They had that body to themselves nigh twenty minutes."

At this moment the sheriff entered the hall, followed by Doctor Breed, who escorted the coffin to his supporting sawhorses. The meager physician was visibly at the fag end of his self-control.



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Even the burly sheriff looked like a sick man, as he lifted aside the coffin lid and spoke.

"There was reasons, neighbors," said he "why the corpse wasn't suitable to be looked at. Nobody had seen it since last night. We've fixed it up as good as we could, and you'll now please pass by as quick as possible."

In the line that formed Kent got a place behind Elder Dennett, who had decided to take another look for good measure, as he said.

The look was a productive one. No sooner had it fallen on the face of the dead than Dennett jabbed an indicatory finger in that direction and addressed the sheriff:

"Hey, Len! What's this?"

"What's what?" growled Schlager.

"Why, there's a cut on the lady's right cheek. It wasn't there when I seen the corpse last night."

"Ah, what's the matter with

your eyes?" demanded the sheriff savagely. "You want to hog the limelight, that's your trouble!"

This was evidently a shrewd lash at a recognized weakness, and the Elder moved on amid jeering comments. But Sedgwick, whose eyes had been fixed upon Kent, saw a curious expression flicker and fade across the long-jawed face. It was exactly the expression of a dog that pricks up its ears. The next moment a titter ran through the