

I had to leave after my speech, and as soon as the applause had subsided I was making my way out into the street, when I perceived Mr. Elliot standing just inside the door, and from his pained expression I could see he had heard every word. Touching my hat, I tried to slip past him, but he laid his hand on my arm.

'God has given you a gift of speech, Morris,' he said quietly; 'the power of rousing the passions and guiding the feelings of your fellow-men. May He forgive you, my poor fellow, for the grievous use you are making of it. And may He, in His own good time, make you *feel* His Hand and acknowledge His power, that you may know Him and turn to Him before it is too late.'

He walked away without saying more, but something in his words struck a chill on my heart, and the much-applauded orator, the man who, according to his own account, feared nothing in this world or the next, slunk home that night like a beaten dog.

I tried to shake the feeling off next day, and partly succeeded in doing so, but for some nights I never addressed our men, even on the most trivial subject, without a glance at the door to see if Mr. Elliot was there. But he did not appear again, and after a time I forgot the circumstance and ceased to think of his words, till they came back to me in the most awful moment of my life.

It was about six months after that I went gaily to work one morning, perhaps in rather higher spirits than usual, for I was about to finish an important piece of work. It was a large iron safe, intended to be built into the wall of a bank, and was constructed of immense strength. The locks especially interested me, as I had made a suggestion concerning them which had met with Mr. Wilson's great approval. It was an invention I had been thinking over for a long time, a contrivance which made it practically impossible for one not in the secret to open the safe door even with the key. It was undoubtedly a clever idea, and I had spent a great deal of thought and time in getting

it perfected. I was exceedingly proud of my success.

The bank manager and Mr. Wilson had both inspected the safe the day before, and had expressed great satisfaction, and complimented me very highly. Mr. Wilson had opened and closed the locks an innumerable number of times, and had finally put one of the keys (there were but two, and I had the other) into his pocket, jokingly remarking, as he left the room, that no one could possibly rob the bank but himself and me.

No one else had been allowed to see the working of the locks, though the other men were all much interested in it, and when after about an hour's work that morning I announced that it was completed, they came in a body to examine it.

While they were standing round I got inside the safe to show off the strength of the hinges, and anxious to see if they worked easily, I pulled the door towards me. Either I gave a harder pull than I intended, or some of the men accidentally pushed against it, but before I could prevent it, the door, shutting with a spring, closed instantly, and a series of re-echoing clangs convinced me that the machinery was working only too well, and that the bolts and bars, so contrived as to act simultaneously with the locks, were all falling into their places with a fatal exactness.

For a second or two the full horror of my position did not dawn upon me, till the dead silence followed, and then the awful thought flashed into my mind, *I had the key in my pocket.*

And if it had been in the lock, no one could open it—no one but the bank manager, by this time miles away, and Mr. Wilson. Would anyone think of sending for him? Would the men realise that every minute, nay, every second, was of importance? I knew it was impossible for any amount of strength to break in the safe, but I held my breath and strained my ears to discover what was being done. Useless! No sound penetrated those iron walls.

(To be continued.)