

to come here. If you open the door I'll be more explicit."

"Maybe they're after yer, eh?" she asked facetiously. "You'd better be going quietly, mister. I keeps a policeman's whistle handy to my pocket, and the beat ain't far off."

She would have closed the door, but the suppliant's desperate voice once more intervened.

"Mary Anne, don't you know me, you must let me in. It's an old friend of yours in trouble."

Something came to Mary Anne, a kind of intuition, though it could not be said to be absolute recognition. She undid the chain, and bade him enter. She eyed him keenly as he stepped across the threshold, but still failed to recognize him. A tall, thin, clean-shaven man, though with a sort of stoop in his shoulders, and a furtive look in the eyes behind the blue goggles; he was unlike any man of her acquaintance. Yet there seemed something hauntingly familiar about these eyes.

"Don't know yer, mister," she said suspiciously. "But, maybe, now you've wormed yourself in, you'll say yer nime and whatcher wants. I'm a lone widder, and though I ain't afraid of the likes of you, I don't want no truck wiv folks that ain't honest and sober, and hard-workin', see, them's the werry foundations of forty-siving St. Paul's crescent."

The stranger faintly, ironically smiled, and it seemed as if some vague fear fell away from him. For this woman had known him on terms of intimacy for five years, had been a servant in his house, carrying his meals and opening his door, and though he stood of a set purpose directly under the light of the hall lamp, she failed to recognise him.

"Can I come in anywhere, Mary Anne?" he inquired; then some familiar inflection of his voice went home, and she gave a little cry as she walked before him to the sitting-room door.

"Lor-a-mighty, 'tain't Mister Reedham," she said, beginning to tremble, though why she could not have told.

"You have said it, Mary Anne," he replied, "I am your old master in need

of help and shelter, and—and I had better say it out frankly, hiding."

"Lor-a-mighty!" she repeated, and her placid face grew pale, and her hand trembled as she steadied herself by the end of the table to take a better look at him.

"Lor-a-mighty," she repeated, "I shouldn't a knowed yer. Wotever is it? Wotever as happened, and where is the Missus and Marster Leslie?"

He shook his head, and there was such anguish in his eyes that her kind heart smote her almost to tears.

"Don't go fer to tell me anythink, I ain't needin' to know," she said quickly. "I never wus one to ast questions or pry inter nobody's business. Them as goes pokin' their noses into that fire gits burnt hoftener then they like. Yer looks desprit. Hexcuse me, sir, but—but are they hafter yer?"

She made mysterious signs with her eyes and her fingers, and Reedham merely nodded in response.

"Listen, Mary Anne, and I will tell you all you need to know. It is business trouble, which I cannot explain to you; you would not understand it. I have spent money that did not belong to me, always hoping to get it back, and to be able to repay, you can follow that?"

"I kin. It's a bad wy, Mister Reedham, fer rich or fer pore, it don't matter. It leads 'em all the sime wy."

"Yes, but one does not always stop to think of that. There were other reasons why I wanted to get rich quick, reasons I have never breathed to a soul. One day, perhaps, I may tell you. The hue and cry will die down soon, I expect. Every day I have expected to read an account of myself in the newspapers, and the general idea will be, that I have committed suicide as they generally do."

"I see."

Mary Anne began to grasp the situation, and she never took her eyes from the white, desperate face of the man standing by her table pleading for shelter and help. She knew that she would give him both. She had no code of ethics as taught by the schools, but she had a grateful heart, and the years of her service at Norwood had been ren-