

He touched upon the shoulder with the accolade of His Knighthood."

"It's smarting still," grumbled the man, thinking of Gault's knife, and the three new wounds of last night. "Say, Hilda, that fire's getting worse ; I guess it's spread to the *Avenger* block."

"The Dragon's house—did you—is he dead, Brand?"

"Very much alive when I left him, but harmless."

"For the present—until he grows more teeth. I suppose Dragons are but part of the economy of Nature, fulfilling some wise end. He was my foster brother."

An enormous column of flame rose up to heaven, as the *Avenger* building fell, then the rumbling echoes gradually died away.

"I forgot that that might happen," said Brand gravely. "The Liberators kept a stock of explosives there. So that is the end."

"And the beginning?"

"Come, let's go."

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In the upper room of the Club were gathered the men who had fought against the Dragon, members of the house, and their guests, Colonel Giggleswick, Captain Baxendale, Captain Browne, and all their following from the yacht, for this was Brand's wedding-day. When he came in with his bride they would have cheered, but, warned by Dr. Schmitt, consented to remain quite quiet ; and Brand, looking about while he shook hands with many tried and valued friends, saw that two—the sorest tried of all—were not present.

"Where is Dick?" he asked.

"Coming in a few minutes."

He turned to Dr. Schmitt to enquire concerning the Arizona cowboy wounded last night in his defence.