

Roger. "I thought that we could fix it upon our grim chief,—and he would be damned. But thou hast copy-righted it, and thou alone canst bear the shame of it. Oh, Alfred, on what a broken reed have I leaned!"

He gazed sadly upon Mynx and upon the towel rack.

CHAPTER XXIX.

It is midnight in the Capital, and midnight also at all other points using Eastern standard time. But of this anon. It is midnight at the Capital, or was when this chapter opened. It is now one minute past twelve a.m. But of this more anon. Roger Rearguard sat with a copy of the *Free Press* in his fevered hands. And that lean, straggling man, now grown leaner and stragglier from long, lone vigils with the sleepless Roger is none other, as per usual, than the poet Mynx.

"Alas, we are undone," cried Rearguard.

"Hold!" interrupted Alfred. "You said that in the last chapter."

"Oh, Alfred," sighed Roger, "hast thou no powers of observation? It was Roger who said 'We are undone' in the last chapter. It is Rearguard who says it now."

The discomfited Mynx made no reply, and his friend repeated:

"We are undone." Then he added, "Our plot is discovered. Read this, Alfred," and he handed him the newspaper.

Mynx read the paper slowly and painfully, for, poet though he was, he had entered the service in the good old days before 1908. Slowly and painfully he read the telegraphic news, the society news, the classified ads. and the editorials.

"I see nothing here to alarm us," said Alfred, breaking silence.

"Oh, Alfred," cried Roger impatiently. "I would that thou hadst some sense."

The faithful Mynx produced a quarter from the old-fashioned portmanteau which he carried with him always now.

Roger seized the coin and added, "Oh, Alfred, I would that thou hadst some intelligence."

The faithful Mynx began to open the portmanteau again, but, at a look from Rearguard, paused.

"We are undone, Alfred," said Roger. "The *Free Press* has divulged our secret intentions. The maxim guns which we have stationed on Parliament Hill over against the office of our hated chief have been observed. Our identity may not be known but our schemes are frustrated," Roger groaned.

"Is there nothing we can do?" asked the faithful Alfred.

"Nothing," Roger replied, "without friends. We must raise the standard of revolt, even as the commission has raised the standard of examinations. The third division is disaffected. The women in the service are ready to turn their hat-pins into tuning-forks,—no, I mean, into pruning hooks,—no, into,—why, canst thou not help me out, thou numbskull?"

"Into toasting-forks," ventured the faithful, though somewhat dull, Alfred, in whose heart there burned the secret fire of love unknown to Roger.

Roger looked at him with a pained expression on his face. He sighed and continued as if Alfred were not present:

"The time is ripe. Oh, that Alfred were a man! Yet he might do something. *The Civilian* would be glad to have even his verses. I will have him made Editor,—in time,—and that paper will be on my side. The Retirement Fund shall be seized first and distributed. Gold! Gold! Gold! The battle is won."

He ceased speaking to himself and became aware again of the presence of Mynx.

"Alfred!" he thundered. "Take this coin thou gavest me and hie thee to the public ways. Buy up all the newspapers,—from the newsboys."

"It is past midnight," Alfred re-