

the outer circle every once in a while, there is little doubt that the trio would have overcome their antagonists.

But there was no thought of letting them win. A shout arose, and Charley thought he recognized the voice again—

"Out with the lights! Out with the lights! By heaven, they'll never leave the room alive!"

The onlookers shuddered, but none of them dared enter the room to assist the seemingly doomed men. The door was slammed in their faces, and a smashing of glass told them that the lamps had been overturned, and the hunters and their quarry were at it in the dark.

Though unable longer to see the struggle, the crowd outside could form a pretty fair idea of how it was going on. Someone was forced against the door, which shook and sprang with the force of the blow. The fight was evidently very near, if not immediately at, this door.

At this moment the outer circle of the crowd was parted, and Mr. Forbes and Lizzie rushed towards the tavern door.

"What is this?" cried Mr. Forbes. "Is it possible you can stand here while murder is being done? Cowards that you are! Come, I will shame you! Open the door and let me go in!"

The throng was cowed, and drew aside sullenly to let him pass.

"Stay you here," he said to Lizzie, who had followed him. "This is a man's work."

He shook the door violently, but to no purpose. It was bolted within. Drawing back a few paces he hurled himself against it, when it yielded, and swung back into the dark room in which the combat was raging.

"Lights here!" he shouted to the throng behind, and dashing into the room, he wormed himself among the fighters, appealing and roundly censuring. No other man, perhaps, could have done this without being attacked; certainly none other could have done so and been successful.

The combatants parted slowly, and when lights were brought in a horrible scene presented itself—one which can, perhaps, be imagined, but of which a detailed description is unnecessary, and would be repulsive. Several men lay on the floor perfectly senseless, among them McCoy, who had borne the animus of the attack; Peter leaned, gasping, against the wall, blood streaming from many a cut, and among his assailants not one had escaped severe injury.

Mr. Forbes stood looking around him in silence, and a look of intense sadness overspread his face. They waited for him to speak, which at last he did.

"Oh! men, men!" he said, "is this all you can show me after the many years I have spent among you—a cowardly attack of a dozen upon two defenceless men in the dark? Why should I remain here longer when this is all I have taught you? There is your handiwork," he continued, pointing at the insensible men, one or two of whom were coming to, "the least you can do now is to help them home."

At this juncture Lizzie, who had stood as though dazed, screamed and threw herself by the prostrate

figure of Bolton, who was one of the unfortunates who had received the greatest injury. At her scream Mr. Forbes turned and knelt down also by the wounded man, who was slowly coming to.

"Are you badly hurt, Bolton?" he asked.

Bolton pressed his hand to his head.

"Your head, is it?" enquired Mr. Forbes.

"Yes," said Bolton, "my head a cut help me up."

Lizzie bent over him to raise him, when he screamed and fainted.

Mr. Forbes turned pale. "There is something serious here," he said. "Get a stretcher some of you," addressing the spectators, "and some water."

He looked up at Peter and, from the expression on his face, was evidently struggling with counterwishes. Then he addressed Peter—

"You are doctor enough for this case. Will you look at him?"

Peter staggered forward and knelt by the side of the injured man. After a few moments' investigation he rose.

"Well?" said Mr. Forbes.

Peter shook his head.

"What!" exclaimed the schoolmaster, springing to his feet.

"His back," said Peter, in a low voice.

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Forbes, "and you stand there uninjured!"

The stretcher was brought in just then, and Bolton was placed gently upon it before consciousness returned. The other injured men had been revived and taken home in the meantime. Just as the bearers were about to lift Bolton, Peter approached Lizzie, who drew back from him. He walked with difficulty and was severely bruised, his very appearance appealing on his behalf.

"Lizzie," he said, gently, "don't shrink from me. I have done you much wrong, and do not ask your love again; but don't think worse of me than you can help. I am sorry that Bolton is badly hurt, but surely, surely, you will acknowledge that, whoever dealt him the blow, it was not I who began the fight."

Lizzie made no reply, but Mr. Forbes did.

"Peter Simson," he said, sternly, "you have been the curse of this family until it has come to this. You know why Bolton attacked you, and you know that you are as guilty of his wound as if you would have been had you struck him from behind."

Peter stood still, his face pale and his lips compressed. The bearers lifted up their burden and passed out before him. He made a step as though to follow, and then turning round, hid his face in his hands and burst into tears.

A few moments after Bolton had been carried out Harry burst into the room, breathless and excited. He looked around him at the wreck, in amazement, and then turning to Peter, said—

"Thank goodness, old boy, you're not killed. I hurried all I could, but did not find Forbes, as you call him."

Peter did not reply.

"Harry," called Charley from a bench where he was reclining, "don't bother Peter just now. Come