

CHAPTER XXX

THE SENTENCE

IN the anteroom the doorkeeper waved Hardy to a door on the right. It led him into a stenographers' room. He saw the flounce of a woman's skirt behind a revolving bookcase near the far end of the room, and paused. Some one stepped into the room after him, and touched him authoritatively on the shoulder.

"One moment, Captain Hardy — your sentence."

He turned, and faced the President's aide with the clear, unflinching gaze of a brave man about to be shot. The aide saluted with punctilious formality. Hardy responded with equal formality. The aide presented an official document, saluted, and withdrew from the room.

For a long moment Hardy stood with the decree of his fate slowly crumpling in his hand. His eyes were fixed on vacancy. Doubtless he was seeing the years of soldierly comradeship and duty that now lay in the past and the vision of the career to which he was to have given the utmost of his powers. He had always loved his profession — And now —