

match 'n' tech this 'ere string, ter see if all's right. D'ye understand?"

John nodded.

"You goin' away?" he asked.

"Yes," Tom answered. "I've gut ter begin ter work the spell. Now say over wot I told ye 'bout the string."

"Put a match on it when the clock strikes," John answered.

"Yes, that's it," Tom said, patting the already crouching figure. "Ye'll see the spell. Now I'm a goin'."

Twice he returned to ask if Little John was sure that the work to be done was understood, then he passed out of the shed, replacing the board after him. Patiently the little old man crouched and watched, like a faithful dog, who covets his master's caress.

The time was five minutes to ten when Tom, breathless from his rapid walk, strutted through the crowd on Red hill, which opened and gave him a passage.

"Hark ye!" he exclaimed. "Old Tom has made ye a promise! Ye want bread! When the night comes day, it's a sign that all that falls inter yer hands is yer own ter keep! Old Tom's goin' ter work a spell!"

Not another word would he say in answer to the eager questions asked him, but stood erect, his head thrown back, his arm extended, his finger pointing to the western horizon. An oppressive stillness grew on them as they huddled together, their ignorant, pinched faces turned toward their prophet and deliverer. In their ferocious, glaring eyes was written, "Woe be to that prophet should his sign fail!"

One!

Not a movement in Tom's features. Steadily the prophetic hand pointed to the west.

Two—three—four—five—

Savagely shone the eyes of the starving men. Involuntarily they crowded nearer, their hands clenched, their breathing the only sound that broke the silence.

Six—seven—eight—nine—

Great drops of perspiration were oozing from the prophet's forehead. His eyes bulged from his head like those of a man who is strangling by the rope. Still those famished beasts hesitated. There was a majesty in the figure that awed them.

Ten!

A second's silence as of death, when the water ran from the prophet's mahogany colored face as he realized on how feeble an instrument he had risked his all. Rough hands were on his shoulder, when there came a low, distant rumble, then a crash like battling thunder, when earth and heaven seemed to meet in fiery grandeur—then darkness. A yell issued from three hundred throats, and crazed with hunger and excitement, Red hill descended on the town.

The town was active with people flocking to the ruins of the great mill; still the Red hillers pressed on, devastation marking their path. Stones crashed through windows, and loads of booty were every minute being carried to the women and children on the hill. It was a night of lawlessness and terror. From the midst of the rioters Old Tom issued his orders of plunder and destruction, till in a score of directions angry flames ascended. Then the town rallied, and on Millbury common occurred a hand to hand conflict. Missiles whirled through the air, and curses and groans

were intermingled. The mob retreated, slowly at first, then at full speed to their haunts, where the pursuers dared not follow. Far into the morning the air was filled with the sounds of their revelries, while lights shining through the windows in the valley told of the vigil of the town people, awaiting another onslaught.

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Through the streets a little old man wandered alone, who turned a pinched, white face to the glittering stars, with a simple, meaningless smile. God's mercy be on that benighted head! God be thanked that the weary heart shall never break from knowing of the misery the trembling hand evoked. Feebly he trotted on, till he sank from exhaustion. The gutter was his bed, the damp green turf his pillow. Silently he lay beneath the stars that answered his smile so coldly, then his eyes closed. No man saw it, but from that boundless dome above issued a host of angels, who with their wings fanned out the flickering earth-life and bore him into heaven.

Sweet, gentle Marie! As the evening dew raises the drooping leaves along the dusty road side, so were her eyes lifted with a new brilliancy and beauty by the loving care which now surrounded her. Unfettered she roamed, growing day by day deeper into the hearts of her new friends. As with warm rays of sunlight, the houses became permeated with her presence, and Bob's mother lived over again an almost forgotten youth as she fondled the head resting on her knee.

The animals stretched their necks for her caress; shy village children stole glances into her face as they walked by her side, and her two protectors peered down the street as their teams rattled home, to see if she was there to greet them.

On the evening following the second outbreak in Millbury the men were sitting on the piazza smoking their pipes. Marie had been singing to them, accompanying her voice on the old organ. At an early hour the music ceased and she came to bid them good night, then went up to her room. After she had left them, Bob's mother came out to talk over the events of the day.

"We heard in 'he city that there was a hundred thousand dollars insurance on Brigham & Co.'s mill," said Bob. "Brigham & Co. won't lose anything, they say. If they had been obliged to realize on the property it wouldn't have brought half that amount."

"Have they made any arrests?" asked Bob's mother.

"The town's goin' ter offer a reward," Bill answered. "They want a feller called Old Tom. He put the men up to it."

"There's a good many stories," said Bob. "Some say Brigham & Co. was about used up through signing Goldthurst's notes."

"I was in Hawkes' office. Hawkes is that young banker that's gut ahead so," said Bill. "Hawkes bought my load ter-day, 'n' when I went up fer the check Old Grillis was in his private office. I heard Hawkes say, 'You won't take the insurance, will you?' 'Why shouldn't I?' says Grillis. He was a stampin' 'round the room. 'Oh, well,' said Hawkes, 'it's kinder hard on the insurance company. A feller blowed up the mill, 'n' the insurance folks didn't bargain on that