

man who undertook the business to be able to keep his mouth shut, and again to insinuate that there was money enough in the business for both lawyer and client. When they arrived in the private parlor, Mr. Burrows was in the spirit to make a grasp for another chance in life, or, in his own phraseology, stock in his prospects was nearer par.

The client was a lady. There was no introduction. The three sat about a table and while Arthur rehearsed the conversation from the time he had entered Burrows' office, the legal gentleman deferentially kept his eyes away from the lady's face. The two or three quick glances he had stolen at her, however, showed him a well developed woman elegantly dressed, with a face that would have been handsome even without its artificial coloring. The predominant thought in Burrows' mind was concerning the retainer and the possibility of an immediate payment.

"I have certain documents which it will be necessary for you to examine before anything further need be done," the lady commenced. "My agent says you have spoken of a retainer."

"Mr. Brigham will testify that this is a very busy period with me—"

"Then you are acquainted with Mr. Brigham?" interrupted the lady, in some surprise.

"I had the pleasure of a slight acquaintance with Mr. Brigham years ago," Burrows hurriedly explained. He was greatly discomfited by the coldness in her voice.

A whispered conversation took place between the client and her agent, during which the legal gentleman was in an extremely trying state of suspense. When the lady next looked on him Burrows continued, in hopes of offsetting any damage he might have done by claiming the acquaintance—

"I deferred a matter of great importance to accompany your agent here. I have a complicated case which will require my attention in Essex for several days. I should not have listened to him at all, but he mentioned Essex, and I thought your business might be something that I could attend to in conjunction with my other matter. If I am mistaken and the business would require much time in another direction, I must positively decline to accept any confidence."

Mr. Burrows had begun this speech anxiously. His reference to Essex was a *coup de etat* on which he based considerable hope. His conclusion was in a very decided tone, one that would admit of no argument, for he had observed the look of satisfaction which passed from the lady to her agent, and he resolved to risk all in one throw of the line.

"My retainer," he continued, "is governed by the duties involved. In case of attachment or looking up deeds, I should require only a small advance. For matters of greater importance—in case your business concerns money in great amount, I should have to call for a retainer of fifty dollars."

From various glances and motions exchanged between his listeners, Mr. Burrows correctly surmised that luck was running in his favor. His very stomach listened for her next words.

"The case concerns a great amount of money," she said, pushing toward him the documents and with them the retainer. It was all Burrows' head could do to pre-

vent his legs from running out of the parlor and to the nearest restaurant. He was very faint when he took up the first paper, but as he examined he grew actually dizzy, from a different cause, however, for it was the document of which he had heard from childhood, a copy of the will of Ephraim Marshfield.

Burrows became so absorbed in the reading that his client grew impatient.

"Have you any questions to ask?" she said.

"What relation do you bear to any person herein named?" inquired Burrows.

"I am the daughter of Richard Crosswicks. My father being dead and there being no claimants from the Marshfield family, I am the heiress of the Marshfield property."

"Your father's death and your own identity you can prove?"

Mr. Burrows was becoming excited.

"Certainly!"

"Miss Crosswicks!" exclaimed Burrows, "you are singularly fortunate in stumbling on me, so to speak, when you were looking for an attorney to settle this affair. I have known of this will from boyhood. I am intimately acquainted with people who are nearly connected with the facts concerning the case, besides being on terms of intimacy with those who have it in their power to settle the estate. I can answer for you positively that you will have the estates in your possession in less than one month, as all Essex knows of the old man Marshfield's death," counting the evidence on his fingers. "All Essex knows of the sinking ship and perishing of the family. All Essex knows of the conditions of this will. You can prove your father's death and your identity. Madam—or, I beg your pardon—Miss, I guarantee your case."

"But suppose a natural heir to the property to be alive?" suggested the woman, rather nervously.

"Preposterous! Impossible! You alarm yourself unnecessarily, madam!" Burrows exclaimed, bowing gallantly. "But in case a claimant should come up, the identity must be proven. It is our business to see that the real heir or heiress, should he or she be alive, shall not prove his or her identity. We must down everybody, madam, right or wrong! We must down 'em! By this will the property is yours, my client's."

Mr. Burrows had wrought himself to such a pitch of enthusiasm that he had forgotten he was hungry.

"That's just it!" interposed Brigham. "The lady owns the estate and everything that disputes her rights must be removed from her path!"

"Certainly! certainly!" repeated Burrows. "By one means or another. I think I understand you fully."

"I have this package," said the lady. "If my right be disputed and you think the case looking less favorable than at present, you are to open this package. If you meet with no opposition, you are to return this package to me as it is, unopened. If you prove faithful to me and secure the property, I will give you one-fifth of the estate. I'll not detain you any longer; we understand each other! You can direct any important information to Alice Goldthurst, at this hotel. I will receive it."

Burrows, as he left the parlor, was not one whit less excited than the lady herself. A half hour later he was treating himself to an excellent supper. As the