

# THE IRON CLAW

By ARTHUR STRINGER  
NOVELIZED FROM THE PATHE PHOTO  
PLAY OF THE SAME NAME

Copyright Arthur Stringer

**SYNOPSIS.**  
ENOCH GOLDEN lives with his wife and daughter in a modern Eden until their home on "Windward Island" is invaded by Dr. Ludwig Pallardi. Pallardi, by threats, compels the wife in his effort to steal the secret of the island. Golden discovers them, drives the wife from him, and not only crushes Pallardi's hand that craved her, but brands his face. Pallardi in revenge opens the flood gates of the island and escapes with Margory, the child. Golden and his wife narrowly escape.

Twelve years later Margory has grown into beautiful young womanhood. Golden is a millionaire. He is a widower and a miser. Legar, turns the girl over to Casavanti, the "tenderloin" princeling, but she is rescued by a mysterious stranger who wears a laughing mask. He tells her he is the "Hammer of God."

The girl is taken to Golden's home by the stranger and thrust into Golden's study. But just as he discovers who she is she is spirited away again. Manley, his frivolous young secretary, trades her to the "Owl's Nest," where Legar and his evil companions live. She is rescued from there by the mysterious stranger by the remarkable expedient of encasing her in a brandy cask and driving off with her.

Legar then threatens Golden with robbery, and after setting off an explosion under the Third National Bank calmly walks away with \$50,000 under the guise of a forged letter. He escapes with the money.

Manley is kidnaped from Golden's home to the Owl's Nest by Legar. He escapes. In the meantime Margory has been locked in the big vault at Golden's home by Legar, who escapes with the missing half of the chart indicating the treasure on Windward Island. The Laughing Mask, hiding in Legar's limousine, snatches this from his hands, however, and escapes. Manley returns to the house and, with the aid of Margory's trained parrot, who repeats the safe combination, releases Margory—alive, but unconscious.

Golden receives the "Spotted Warning" from Legar, demanding that he give him the missing portion of the treasure chart of Windward Island. He laughs at the warning and sends Margory to his sister's country home for safety. En route the machine collides with Legar's auto, and Margory is rescued by the Mysterious Mask, who takes her to her mother. Golden, fearing Margory is in Legar's hands, and receiving a final warning from Legar, keeps the demanded appointment on the 24th floor of the Central Tower building.

Manley, arriving at the scene, after a thrilling ride in an airplane to the Tower roof, in time to see Golden struggle with a dark figure. The bit of yellow paper escapes their grasp and flutters to the street below. Manley grasps it with a third figure, Golden clutches for the elusive paper on the edge of the abyss and then a dark figure slides over the cornice and drops 300 feet to the street below. Who fell?

By a bit of strategy the Laughing Mask makes his escape with the much-sought section of the chart, after Legar has discovered it in the hands of a negro chambermaid, who had found it in the waste basket in one of her offices. He secretly returns Margory to her father's home. An antique Japanese armor set, presented to the household by a rather mysterious guest, Count Luigi da Espares, bothers Manley, whose suspicions are founded when he sees the right hand of the set, containing a knife, raise over the breast of Margory, doing in a library chain. He shoots at the intruder, but the result is a result. Investigation proves that someone's arm had been struck through the portieres into the warhol. The butler, long under suspicion, is found in his room, writhing in pain.

A strange, masked figure enters into the struggle, and the butler escapes. Manley and the other opponent retreat to the bottom of the stairs. The stranger escapes. Manley, convinced the stranger is none other than the Count, in non-placed to see the nobleman walk coolly into the room. Manley declares to Golden and Margory: "He is merely the guy who put the laugh in Laughing Mask."



In the House of Golden There Were Few Moments When Margory Could Relax Legar's Latest Plot Was Even Then About to Crash Upon the Household.

BEGIN THE GREATEST OF ALL MOTION PICTURE SERIALS TODAY.

"The Iron Claw" has but reached the eighth episode. Begin this installment today and provide for the month by ordering your next week's paper at once. If you like a thrill in each paragraph you'll enjoy "The Iron Claw."

Davy, we'll give him a welcome that he's going to remember!"

Two hours later, as Enoch Golden stood with his daughter at his side receiving their guests, it would have taken a particularly penetrating eye to detect any dark undercurrent of intrigue to that rippling tide of color and mirth which eddied about them. So punctilious was Golden's table manners, hand-grasp to each of those incoming visitors that Margory herself made note of this newer phase in her father's character.

Side by side with a Flemish nun walked a Paris Apache, then came a Montenegro, and an equally well-dressed Oriental Swami, then a red-shaded pirate and a velvet-clad Venetian Doge. Then, following a man on "lifters," who laughingly proclaimed himself to be Hully Gee, the Chinese came an equally well-dressed gold-braided Arabian burnoose. This figure, for all its height, was strangely stoop-shouldered, moving with a dignity of step which went well with the voluminous drapery in which it was clad. And that Manley, on his knees, reached out to greet the two hands which his host extended to him. About these hands he saw at a glance there could be nothing doubtful. They were most unmistakably flesh and blood.

But Manley had little time to give further thought to the scene, for at that moment he became aware of the fact that Da Espares had slipped away to another part of the house—and during that night Manley had determined he would keep an eye on his enigmatic foreign friend. But instead of following Da Espares, on discovering him stepping quietly into the deserted library, the alert-eyed young secretary promptly retraced to the quarter where the receiver of his distasteful was concealed. There, on placing this watch-case receiver to his ear, Manley had the satisfaction of catching the faint hum of voices. Much of that guarded talk taking place in the library Manley could not overhear. But he caught enough to arouse his curiosity.

"Then the plan has worked?" asked the anxious voice of Da Espares.

"Without doubt," answered the other voice. "The girders have been cut through and the bomb placed!"

"And the clock fuse adjusted?"

"Yes."

"But what was it for?"

"For the stroke of 12!" answered the unknown voice. "At that time the crowd will be at the table, and the explosion will be at its height."

"But how," asked the anxious voice of Da Espares, "could we get Legar inside?"

"The sound of a triumphantly quiet laugh came over the little instrument. 'Legar is already here!' announced the other."

"Hush! Not so loud!" warned Da Espares. And from that point on it was only broken phrases that trickled into the hidden listener's ear.

"Come as an Arab chief."

"Nichols, the Dace, about on his back."

"Yes, under cloak."

"Could hold out both hands . . . and never even suspected . . . being watched . . . can't afford to lose this tinjar!"

"Again came the sound of the quietly triumphant laugh. And it was Da Espares' voice that sounded clearly the next moment."

"But how did he work that bridge fall?"

"'Long dive . . . came up under a lumber schooner's stern and hung to rudder chain . . . down with tide . . . an hour later . . . swam ashore . . . laugh to Oyster Joe's!'"

Manley did not wait for more. Midnight, he knew, was already too perilously close for half measures. By the time he reached the upper floor, in fact, he found Enoch Golden already heading the grand march to the great table running almost the full length of the huge room opening off the dining room. The next moment he saw Da Espares himself step hurriedly yet smilingly to the side of Margory Golden and take their places in that gayly-colored line that rippled with laughter and movement as the orchestra once more struck up. Then, remembering what he had overheard about mysteriously weakened girders and planted bombs, Manley likewise remembered the newly-installed vault and the fact that Legar's final object was the possession of a certain paper which that vault held. And he slipped out through the door, and on through the empty conservatory, frantically wondering just what his first move to avert that impending catastrophe should be.

The figure which intervened in that crisis, however, was a much more picturesque one than the slight figure of a young private secretary in somewhat disheveled evening clothes. For when the merriment about the great crowded table was at its height an unexpected and unsuspected guest strode in through the wide door and confronted the company there assembled. This figure wore a dust-stained motor coat and cap. But the most conspicuous feature of his attire was the yellow mask which covered his face. Equally conspicuous was the huge blue-barreled revolver which he firmly held in his right hand. This weapon, in fact, glinted menacingly in the strong light as the stranger's left hand was suddenly lifted for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he proclaimed in a clear voice, "this intrusion I fear, may shock you. But you are about to be shocked in a much more serious way. On the stroke of 12 there is to be an accident here, perhaps something much graver than an accident, in which it is my great desire that you should not participate. So I must ask each and every one of you to leave this room and this house as quietly, yet as

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

ration, promptly called up headquarters and made the startling discovery that no such message had gone in to the authorities there.

In five minutes he was in his own car, hastening to a conference with central office itself. In another five minutes, on learning from Wilson over the wire that Da Espares and Margory had already left the house in the limousine, Manley had his car filled with armed plainclothes men from the central office and was speeding out through the city as fast as a motor could carry him. As they swept up the dusty approach to the bridge they even saw that they were none too soon.

For already, in the bright afternoon sunlight, they could make out a glimmering limousine as it came to a stop at the end of the bridge. They could see a somewhat hesitating and white-faced girl step from this limousine at the same moment that they caught sight of a group of men emerge quickly from the shrubbery at the end of the bridge itself.

These men, spreading out fanlike, swept past the limousine in which Da Espares and the chauffeur were still seated. Four of them, rounding the

car, cut off the girl's avenue of retreat. Another four advanced on her from the bridge-end, at the same time that a fifth man leaped to the running board and started to struggle with the chauffeur.

Even as he stared at that quickly shifting scene Manley could make out the figure of Legar himself. He could see the Iron Claw reach out for the startled figure of the girl, crouched back against the bridge railing, even as his own car wheels leaped from the approach to the bridge timbers themselves. He could also make out Da Espares' sudden leap from the waiting limousine. Manley, on beholding this, gave a cry of warning to the plainclothes men about him, for he could plainly see the glint of a revolver in Da Espares' hand.

It was a brief fight, but a bitter one, and much of it escaped Manley's attention. The one thing that held him transfixed was the sudden vision of Da Espares dodging through the Iron girders in sudden pursuit of Legar, as the latter, breaking free from his enemies, ran to the opposite side of the bridge.

There, seeing retreat on either quarter, Legar, suddenly leapt from the waiting limousine, cut off, that master criminal nimbly mounted the iron railing and

gave one glance toward the water below him. Yet, as he poised there, ready to leap, Da Espares leveled his weapon and fired.

Manley could hear the shrill scream of the girl and the shouts of the startled men, the great splash of the tumbling body as it catapulted down in the black running water. The next moment the captain and his uniformed squad from the Greenock clubhouse were charging across the bridge, joining in with their plainclothes colleagues already forcing the last of Legar's adherents to flight. And as Manley made his way toward the glimmering limousine and Margory Golden he could hear the latter's nervous sobs as she leaned weakly against the bridge railing and wept.

"Oh, you kill him!" she asked with a voice tremulous with horror as Da Espares stepped to her side.

"Your enemy is dead!" was the latter's quiet-toned reply. "He sank at once. And this time he will never return."

"Oh, it's terrible!" quavered the overtaxed girl.

"Terrible, indeed!" softly acquiesced the man at her side. "But for the

sake of your happiness I would venture many things more terrible!"

The Unbidden Guest.

The gallant Count Luigi Da Espares, in view of his much-talked-of victory on the turnpike bridge, found himself forced to the not uncongenial role of a hero. And that discreet nobleman took advantage of the high esteem in which he momentarily stood to push through to completion certain arrangements for the costume ball on which he seemed to have set his heart.

Knowing what he knew, the secretary still regarded that impending function as a danger in disguise, just as he still nursed very substantial doubts as to the actual death of Legar.

So fixed was Manley in his suspicion, however, that he insisted on a conference with Enoch Golden himself. For that conference he wrung small consolation for his suspicions and even scanty encouragement for his apprehension. It was true, Golden admitted, that the work on his newly installed vault was not completed. But he had caused his daughter enough trouble in her day, he also protested, without mortifying the girl by countermanding the orders which already showed every sign of turning his home into a second Eden Musee. And foreigners were mostly fools, he admitted, but because this young jackanapes of a Count had proved himself a finished hand with the ladies was no reason why he shouldn't get a fair deal for drowning a crook like Legar.

"But I tell you I don't believe Legar is drowned!" was Manley's passionately repeated protest. "I don't believe Da Espares shot him, or even tried to shoot him!"

"Well, he certainly went into that river and went under, and unless the man's a skipjack and a sawfish rolled in one, he's still there! For that police captain and six of his men saw him go there!"

And that seemed to end the matter as far as the acrimonious old millionaire was concerned. Manley, in fact, had given up any hope of further argument on the question when a trivial yet disquieting incident occurred, and in occurring brought about a slight change in Enoch Golden's attitude. This incident involved the receipt of a strange missive bearing the signature of that elusive interloper in the affairs of the house of Golden known as the Laughing Mask. It read as follows:

"Count Luigi Da Espares is not only an impostor, but also your enemy. And as a friend I herewith warn you that he is not to be trusted."

Even this epistle, which bore only the emblem of a Laughing Mask for signature, might have been accepted as of no great importance had not Enoch Golden been the recipient of still another communication. This time it was a telephone message from a stranger acknowledging himself to be an active colleague of the Iron Claw.

"Legar may be gone," said the unknown voice over the wire, "but his work is going to go on, and don't you forget it! You still hold that chart. If the chief didn't get his chart before he cashed in I'm the guy who's going to get it!"

"All right," was Golden's shouted response. "You come up here and get it! And at the same time you'll get what you deserve! For I'm going to stop this sort of work, my blackleg friend, if it takes the last breath out of my body and the last dollar out of my pocket!"

Then, having slammed down the receiver, the deliverer of that ultimatum promptly sent for his secretary.

"I want extra guards put around this house!" was Golden's command. "And I want nobody to come into it who can't be accounted for!"

"That's exactly what I want you to do, what I ask you to do. That's our one chance, if what I suspect proves to be the case! You can disguise faces in an affair like this tonight, but you can't disguise a lost hand. So the one thing you must do is to stand there and see that every man who comes into this house comes with a sound hand."

Golden stood slowly shaking his head up and down in comprehension. Then he turned with a morose smile to the younger man.

"And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

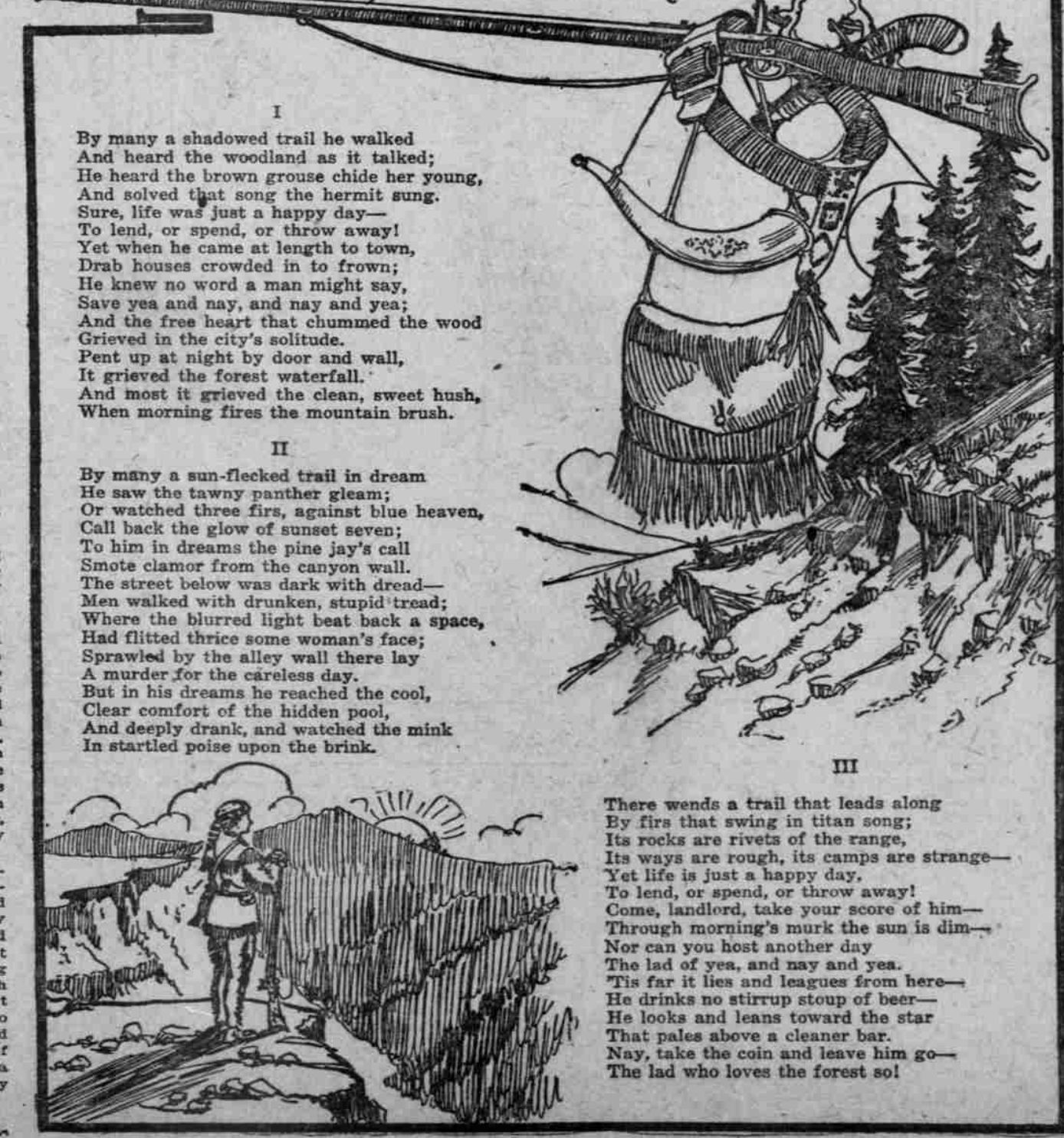
And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

And if our Iron Claw is there,

## Boone In Town

By Ben Hur Lampman



I  
By many a shadowed trail he walked  
And heard the woodland as it talked;  
He heard the brown grouse chide her young,  
And solved that song the hermit sung.  
Sure, life was just a happy day—  
To lend, or spend, or throw away!  
Yet when he came at length to town,  
Drab houses crowded in to frown;  
He knew no word a man might say,  
Save yea and nay, and nay and yea;  
And the free heart that chummed the wood  
Grieved in the city's solitude.  
Pent up at night by door and wall,  
It grieved the forest waterfall.  
And most it grieved the clean, sweet hush,  
When morning fires the mountain brush.

II  
By many a sun-flecked trail in dream  
He saw the tawny panther gleam;  
Or watched three firs, against blue heaven,  
Call back the glow of sunset seven;  
To him in dreams the pine jay's call  
Smote clamor from the canyon wall.  
The street below was dark with dread—  
Men walked with drunken, stupid tread;  
Where the blurred light beat back a space,  
Had flitted thrice some woman's face;  
Sprawled by the alley wall there lay  
A murderer for the careless day.  
But in his dreams he reached the cool,  
Clear comfort of the hidden pool,  
And deeply drank, and watched the mink  
In startled poise upon the brink.

III  
There wends a trail that leads along  
By fire that swing in titan song;  
Its rocks are rivets of the range,  
Its ways are rough, its camps are strange—  
Yet life is just a happy day.  
To lend, or spend, or throw away!  
Come, landlord, take your score of him—  
Through morning's murk the sun is dim—  
Nor can you host another day  
The lad of yea, and nay and yea.  
'Tis far it lies, and leagues from here—  
He drinks no stirrup stoup of beer—  
He looks and leans toward the star  
That pales above a cleaner bar.  
Nay, take the coin and leave him go—  
The lad who loves the forest soil

By many a shadowed trail he walked  
And heard the woodland as it talked;  
He heard the brown grouse chide her young,  
And solved that song the hermit sung.  
Sure, life was just a happy day—  
To lend, or spend, or throw away!  
Yet when he came at length to town,  
Drab houses crowded in to frown;  
He knew no word a man might say,  
Save yea and nay, and nay and yea;  
And the free heart that chummed the wood  
Grieved in the city's solitude.  
Pent up at night by door and wall,  
It grieved the forest waterfall.  
And most it grieved the clean, sweet hush,  
When morning fires the mountain brush.

By many a sun-flecked trail in dream  
He saw the tawny panther gleam;  
Or watched three firs, against blue heaven,  
Call back the glow of sunset seven;  
To him in dreams the pine jay's call  
Smote clamor from the canyon wall.  
The street below was dark with dread—  
Men walked with drunken, stupid tread;  
Where the blurred light beat back a space,  
Had flitted thrice some woman's face;  
Sprawled by the alley wall there lay  
A murderer for the careless day.  
But in his dreams he reached the cool,  
Clear comfort of the hidden pool,  
And deeply drank, and watched the mink  
In startled poise upon the brink.

There wends a trail that leads along  
By fire that swing in titan song;  
Its rocks are rivets of the range,  
Its ways are rough, its camps are strange—  
Yet life is just a happy day.  
To lend, or spend, or throw away!  
Come, landlord, take your score of him—  
Through morning's murk the sun is dim—  
Nor can you host another day  
The lad of yea, and nay and yea.  
'Tis far it lies, and leagues from here—  
He drinks no stirrup stoup of beer—  
He looks and leans toward the star  
That pales above a cleaner bar.  
Nay, take the coin and leave him go—  
The lad who loves the forest soil

### EIGHTH EPISODE.

#### The Stroke of 12.

ENOCH GOLDEN had never been known as a half-hearted fighter. was, in fact, of that pertinacious breed who fight best when half defeated. And as he grew into a fuller realization of the danger to his daughter's safety, he proceeded to take more effective steps to protect himself.

But the mere posting of a couple of paid sentinels about his doors did not mark the limit of his activities. He strove for still more substantial protection by the hiring of one of his upper rooms of his house a huge burglar-proof vault of chromium steel. The installation of so ponderous a vault, however, involved much material strengthening of a structure not primarily designed for the support of

several tons of iron. The body of expert workmen had been busy putting in pillars and girders and disguising these ponderous supports under a veneer of mahogany ceiling beams and oriental teakwood columns. In the ornamentation of the latter, in fact, the owner of the house, Da Espares, assistant in Count Luigi Da Espares, who, with his finished taste and his knowledge of the fine arts, advanced many suggestions for beautifying what might otherwise have been an unsightly and cumbersome innovation.

It was Margory Golden, even more than her father, to whom Da Espares, in these small efforts, looked for gratitude. And the young Margory Golden saw of that gallant young antiquarian the more mysteriously impressed she became.

David Manley, who was not altogether ignorant of this new turn in the tide of events, found little to add to his happiness in this evergrowing intimacy between Margory and her guest. For Manley, by this time, did more than merely mistrust Da Espares; he hated him.

These vague misgivings of Manley's extended even to the costume dinner-dance which this esthetic foreigner undertook to engineer for Margory's amusement. And in talking over his plans with Golden himself, as the latter was making ready for one of his smart trips to Washington, the young nobleman even ventured the hope that this fête might be made the occasion of an even more auspicious announcement.

"What do you mean by that?" demanded the astounded financier. "Are you trying to tell me that you want to marry my daughter?"

"That is the honor of which I have dreamed," was Da Espares' quietly intoned reply.

"Well, the point is, has my Margory been dreaming of the same line?"

"That I cannot venture to say," replied that unctuously gallant suitor.

"Well, in America that's about the first thing that counts! And I guess we'd better call off this courtship talk until we find out how the girl feels about it."

The disappointed, but not disheartened count, accordingly proceeded quietly yet earnestly to sound Margory Golden herself as to her feelings in the matter. But here, too, he was met with a reply which, if graciously worded, was at least noncommittal.

"Then you will at least permit me to hope?" persisted her soft-voiced wooer.

The girl turned on him one of her entrancingly inconsequential smiles. It was a smile which he sometimes found it no easy matter to understand.

"Your hopes, I'm afraid, are something I have very little influence over."

"But you at least know that I wish to bring you happiness, that I was your friend in the past, that always in the future I want to be your friend!"

"But when friendship remains masked, it remains harder to understand!"

"Then the mask may be withdrawn, and withdrawn sooner, than you expect."

"Just what does that mean?" asked the clear-eyed girl, studying his face.

"It means that I am about to make a move which will deliver you and your father from his enemy. And this time I think the plan will succeed."

"What plan?"

"That I cannot yet explain to you, Manley, on overhearing that deca-

But if you trust me in what I am doing, in what I have done, you will see that I am working only for your happiness!"

Mysterious as that plan was, it developed through an incident which soon brought things down to the plan of the practical. For when the masons and ironworkers who were completing the installation of the new Golden vault returned from their midday meal a far from attractive stranger stole into the house at their heels. And when David Manley happened to catch sight of this stranger deep in talk with Count Da Espares, he promptly jumped to