

sands. Blumstein thought the telegraphing could have been done from the yacht, but the operator said that was impossible. He needed a firm and stable foundation for his instruments. When everything was set up, the cable was grasped for, found, and hauled in shore with some difficulty. The crew had been told that the voyage was for the purpose of repairing the cable. The long snake-like dripping rubber cord, festooned with seaweed, was hoisted up on a wooden block beside the hut, Cornwallis pulling harder than any of the sailors.

"Now, Blumstein," he cried, "take that axe and chop it in two."

"Can't one of the men do that?" objected Blumstein.

"The men and myself have to hold it in place. Do what I tell you."

"I'd rather have some one else cut the line," demurred the financier.

"Chop that cable," hissed Cornwallis in the ear of the hesitating man. "Don't you see the men wondering at your delay? They will suspect something is wrong in a moment."

Blumstein, the sweat starting in great drops from his brow, for it is hot on the African coast, hacked away for some moments before the last strand was severed, and the cable fell apart. Cornwallis, with great dexterity and little loss of time, joined the severed ends, and ran his wires into the hut, connecting them with his already set-up instruments.

"There we are, Mr Blumstein. We haven't interrupted communication for long. Do you want to know what they are talking about? They're having a blooming conference somewhere; old Kruger and the Governor of the Cape. We're just in time to set the world on fire, so perhaps you will now give me the code word to send to your partner, and then the moment I find the money has been paid to my brother I shall be ready to begin operations."

"That wasn't the bargain," said Blumstein. "The money was not to be paid until the deal was finished. Besides, we need that £200,000 to buy

shares with. Do you think we're made of money?"

"Just as you say, Mr Blumstein. No business message is going over this line until that cash is paid. What a pity it is that you cut the cable, because if you hadn't we could have shoved it back into the sea, and no harm done. Now I'm afraid you have placed yourself within jeopardy of the law for no purpose. Shall we go home, then, and leave the Cable Company to make their own repairs? I didn't bring materials for mending, and besides I fear I haven't the skill."

"But you are as much in this as I am."

"I don't think so. I didn't cut the cable, while you did, with your own fair hands, assisted by an axe. I have witness to that effect. You see, I'm a poor young operator looking for a job, at least that is what I was when I met you. Poor but honest. I had no idea what you were up to until you cut the cable, and proposed to me, when the men returned to the yacht, that I should send false despatches. Then my indignant honesty was aroused, and I refused as soon as your nefarious proposal was made known to me."

"Then you are a blackmailer, after all. But you shall make nothing of it: not a penny. What is to prevent me shooting you dead where you stand?"

"Oh, a great deal, Mr Blumstein. You haven't the courage, in the first place. You can lie, and cheat, and steal, all within the law, of course; you can round on your benefactor, and, using the knowledge got in his employ, you can ruin him; yes and murder him in the only way that your class has the pluck to murder. You see I know your history."

"Who the devil are you?"

"I am John Sanders, eldest son of the man you robbed. I've been waiting for you for years. I thought I had you on that July swindle, but, as you said, it did not come off, so I became impatient and laid this trap for you. You're not the first man that has been nipped in South Africa, are you?"

"I'll signal the boat, sail away, and leave you here. The steamer is mine. I chartered her for this trip, and the captain dare not refuse to obey my orders."

"My dear Blumstein, you talk like a child. The captain can refuse any orders that are illegal, is it likely that he is going to maroon me here because you tell him so? Your project is too absurd. The fact is that you are helpless. My brother in London has all the evidence needed to convict you and your partner of a most rascally scheme to defraud the public—a scheme which involved the cutting of a submarine cable; and you should really have looked up the penalty for that before you grasped the axe."

"But the plan was yours from the beginning."

"Oh, no, it wasn't. I'm the innocent, deluded, incorruptible young man as I told you some time ago. Do you think you could persuade a judge and jury that I put you up to this? Then why did I round on you? Why did I not go in for the spoil? There was any amount of money to be made by keeping quiet and doing what you told me, and nothing to be gained by exposing you."

"But I will show that you are the son of the man I was said to have ruined, and I will show that you did this for revenge."

"But you have protested all along that you did not ruin my father. There is a statement to that effect in the files of the 'Financial Argus,' don't you remember it—'A Vindication'—I think it was called. Besides no one would believe that I threw away a fortune in order to have a belated revenge on a man I had never seen before. But granting all that; granting that you could convict me as an accomplice, before, after, and during the act, how does that help you? You joined this piece of villainy with your eyes open. You voyaged to Cape Town and chartered this steamer at piratical rates. At the very worst they will believe that I repented in time to prevent a

gross swindle; my better nature coming uppermost at the last. But you're into this up to the neck. You are an outlaw at the present moment."

"If I agree to have the money paid over to your brother you will then do what cubbing I want you to do. You promised, you know."

"A man must not keep an illegal promise, Mr Blumstein. No, I shall not cable any false news."

"Then, you mean simply to rob me of this money if you can. You talk of swindling the public, but you are determined to swindle me and my partner out of £200,000."

"It's all a question of terms, Mr Blumstein, and if you like to call it swindling, I don't mind in the least. You see, I've been a good part of my life in South Africa, where we are not as law-abiding, perhaps, as in England. England has such a respect for the law that as you got that amount out of my father under cover of the law, why, it was all right, although everyone knew you for a cheat. I couldn't recover through process of law, so I took this method of getting back what should have belonged to my brother and myself. Now, Mr Blumstein, are you going to have that money paid, or do you prefer to be arrested the moment you set foot on land, for I'll have the authorities watching for this steamer, by a few words sent along this wire."

"I'll pay the money," said Mr Blumstein. "What are you going to do about the cable?"

"Oh, there's nothing to do, but just chafe the ends a bit, and shove it back into the sea, hoping the Company will imagine the rocks have cut it. It will do England and South Africa good if they are without news of each other for a few days. Give 'em time to cool."

"The cable between England and South Africa is again in working order. It is alleged there was a break off Point Frisky. It is rather surprising that these convenient breaks should occur just when they are most welcomed by the 'Transvaal.' Daily Paper.



WAITING FOR PEARLS.