

where Ford landed and started off up the paddocks, while I waited in feverish impatience for his return. Everything was so still that I felt certain he would be observed. Wild ducks started up out of the mangroves, and flew off across the river; the tide lapped round my boat, and along the mudbanks of the creek; and I heard the fish jumping out in midstream. For some time I strained my ears for sounds, then I heard someone making his way rapidly down the bank.

"Right there, Haynes?" a voice whispered.

"Right, old man," I replied. "Have you done it?"

"Rather," he replied, pushing the boat off the mudbank, and flinging himself in. "I thought I'd never find my way though. Now we must row like mad. The fire was just beginning to show as I came down the bank."

"I wouldn't give much for our remains if we're caught," I remarked grimly.

"We won't get caught. Listen, there they go!"

It was the barking of dogs, and then a red glow in the sky on our left told us that the fire was doing its destructive work.

"Pull like the devil!" cried Ford. And we did. We made for the point regardless of everything, and ran our boat up under cover of the big pohutukawas beneath it.

As we sprang out on the beach, we suddenly stopped; and our blood curdled at the awful sounds that came down from the Black Grange.

"Must be the woman in the D.T.'s," said Ford, courageously.

"Of course, that's it," I replied.

So we took up the small crowbar we had brought with us, and made for the bank. The horrible yells continued, and what with the barking of dogs and the shouting of men, there was such a pandemonium as I never want to hear again. But suddenly, as it lulled, the most glorious music I have ever heard rang out. It was the chorus of an old English song; and up that bank we went like men possessed. A light from a

barred window guided us, and it was the work of a moment to get there and wrench off the bars, for the noise was drowned by the sounds from the drunken woman in the next room.

We caught a glimpse of a pair of shining eyes and a tall figure in a heavy dark cloak, and the next minute there were three of us in the garden running as fast as we could for the water below. A quarter-of-an-hour later we were well upstream, with a red glare glimmering over the water behind us. Really I don't think any number of untoward experiences could ever put in the shade the sensations we struggled to keep to ourselves that night. At first old Ford and I thought most of the girl, and reckoned she must have been desperately anxious to get away before she trusted herself to a couple of fellows of whom she knew nothing. It did not occur to us that the risk was probably all on our side. But two hours later, when we were well on the way to Auckland, and our companion had shown no disposition to speak of her past, or enquire what we meant to do with her in the future, we began to have rather confused ideas as to how we were going to make her fit in with the ordinary course of things. If only she had been a hapless maiden, ready to faint, or do something womanlike, we should have immediately risen to the occasion, but this superbly self-possessed creature, who dashed along the lonely roads beside us quite took our breath away, and the strain was getting too much for us, when of her own accord she grew communicative as we were going slowly up a long hill.

She told us her name was Rosa Montague; that the owner of the Black Grange was her guardian; that he had brought her out to New Zealand some three years before, and kept her a prisoner; that she believed she was the heiress to a large amount of money over which her guardian had, so far, had control; and finally that she was of age that very day, and meant to take steps to recover her wealth as soon as possible.

So far so good. The prospect of money is always a pleasant one to contemplate, and