

## CHAPTER XXVII NAN'S TRIUMPH

The night's events were not yet ended. An automobile left the edge of the stone-yard, followed a lane and turned into the main highway, where it encountered a woman standing in the middle of the road and waving her arms. She was distinctly visible in the moonlight.

The man with the monocle slowed the car and came to a sudden stop, rather than run her down.

"What's the matter?" he demanded impatiently.

"Wait a minute; I want to talk to you."

"Can't stop," he replied in a querulous tone. "I've got fifty miles to make before daylight. Out of my way, woman."

With a dexterous motion she opened the door and sprang into the seat beside him.

"Here! Get out of this," he cried.

"Drive on," she said calmly. "It'll save time, since you're in a hurry."

"Get out!"

"I'm going to ride with you. Why bother to argue?"

He turned nervously in his seat to get a look at her, then shifted the clutch and slowly started the car. The woman sat quiet. While bumping over the uneven road at a reckless speed the driver turned at times to cast stealthy glances at the person beside him. Finally he asked in exasperation:

"Do you know where I'm going?"

"You haven't told me."

"Do you know who I am?"

"How should I?"

"Oh, very well," with a sigh of relief. "But isn't this rather--er-- irregular?"

"Very."

Again he drove for a time in silence. In the direction they were following they whirled by a village every three or four miles, but the country roads were deserted and the nearest city of any size lay a good fifty miles on.

"I don't know who you are," observed the woman presently, "but I can hazard a guess. You call yourself Joselyn--Ned Joselyn--but that isn't your name. It's the name you married Annabel Kenton under, but it doesn't belong to you."

He gave a roar of anger and started to slow down the car.

"Go ahead!" she said imperatively.

"I won't. You're going to get out of here, and lively, too, or I'll throw you out."

"Do you feel anything against your side?" she asked coolly.

"Yes," with a sudden start.

"It's the muzzle of a revolver. I think it's about opposite your heart and my finger is on the trigger. Go ahead!"

He turned the throttle and the car resumed its former speed.

"Who the deuce are you?" he demanded, in a voice that trembled slightly.

"Like yourself, I have many names," she said. "In Washington they call me Nan Shelley; at Cragg's Crossing I'm Mrs. Scammel, formerly Nan Cragg."

"Oh--ho!" with a low whistle of astonishment. "Nan Cragg, eh! So you've returned from your wanderings, have you?" with a derisive sneer.

"For a time. But in wandering around I've found my place in the world and I'm now a lady detective, not an especially high-class occupation but satisfactory as a bread-winner. I find I'm quite talented; I'm said to be a pretty fair detective."

She could feel him tremble beside her. He moved away from her as far as he could but the pressure against his side followed his movements. After a time he asked defiantly:

"Well, being a detective, what's your business with me? I hope you're not fool enough to think I'm a criminal."

"I don't think it; I know it. You're an unusual sort of a criminal, too," she replied. "You're mixed up in a somewhat lawless international plot, but it isn't my present business to bring you to book for that."

"What is your present business?"

"To discover what you've done with my father's money."

He laughed, as if relieved.

"Spent it for the cause of Ireland."

"Part of it, perhaps. But the bulk of the money you've taken from the Champions of Irish Liberty, most of which came out of my father's own pocket, and practically all the money he gave you to invest for him, you have withheld for your own use."

"You're crazy!"

"I know the bank it's deposited in."

Again he growled, like a beast at bay.

"Whatever I have on deposit is to be applied to the Cause," said he. "It's reserved for future promotion."

"Have you seen to-day's papers?" she inquired.

"No."

"The revolution in Ireland has already broken out."

"Great Scott!" There was sincere anxiety in his voice now.

"It is premature, and will result in the annihilation of all your plans."

"Perhaps not."

"You know better," said she. "Anyhow, your actions are now blocked until we see how the rebellion fares. The Irish will have no further use for American money, I'm positive, so I insist that my father receive back the funds he has advanced you, and especially his own money which he gave you to invest and you never invested."

"Bah! If I offered him the money he wouldn't take it."

"Then I'll take it for him," she asserted. "You'll give up that money because you know I can have you arrested for--well, let us say a breach of American neutrality. You are not a citizen of the United States. You were born in Ireland and have never been naturalized here."

"You seem well posted," he sneered.

"I belong to the Government Secret Service, and the Bureau knows considerable," she replied dryly.

He remained silent for a time, his eyes fixed upon the road ahead. Then he said:

"The Government didn't send you to get Cragg's money away from me. Nor did Cragg send you."

"No, my father is afraid of you. He has been forced to trust you even when he knew you were a treacherous defaulter, because of your threats to betray the Cause. But you've been playing a dangerous game and I believe my father would have killed you, long ago, if--"

"Well, if what?"

"If you hadn't been his own nephew."

He turned upon her with sudden fierceness.

"Look out!" she called. "I've not the same objection to killing my cousin."

"Your cousin!"

"To be sure. You are the son of Peter Cragg, my father's brother, who returned to Ireland many years ago, when he was a young man. Ned Joselyn is an assumed name; you are Ned Cragg, condemned by the British government for high treason. You are known to be in America, but only I knew where to find you."

"Oh, you knew, did you?"

"Yes; all your various hiding-places are well known to me."

"Confound you!"

"Exactly. You'd like to murder me, Cousin Ned, to stop my mouth, but I'll not give you the chance. And, really, we ought not to kill one another, for the

Cragg motto is 'a Cragg for a Cragg.' That has probably influenced my poor father more than anything else in his dealings with you. He knew you are a Cragg."

"Well, if I'm a Cragg, and you're a Cragg, why don't you let me alone?"

"Because the family motto was first ignored by yourself."

For a long time he drove on without another word. Evidently he was in deep thought and the constant pressure of the revolver against his side gave him ample food for reflection. Nan was thinking, too, quietly exulting, the while. As a matter of fact she had hazarded guess after guess, during the interview, only to find she had hit the mark. She knew that Ned Cragg had been condemned by the British government and was supposed to have escaped to America, but not until now was she sure of his identity with Ned Joselyn. Her father had told her much, but not this. Her native shrewdness was alone responsible for the discovery.

"We're almost there, aren't we?" asked Nan at last.

"Where?"

"At the house where you're at present hiding. We've entered the city, I see, and it's almost daybreak."

"Well?"

"I know the Chief of Police here. Am I to have that, money, Cousin Ned, or--"

"Of course," he said hastily.