

want to die so much!" She gloated over the weakness of his spirit. "If you'll swear on the Bible to do that," he went on, "I'll tell you the great secret." Instantly she became attentive; she divined something of importance. "When I was in Spain," continued Glass, "I was quartered in a certain castle belonging to one of the grandees. He was an old man, paralysed, as helpless as I am to-day. His lady, at the first of the invasion, had buried the family treasure in a secret place. There are diamonds there, and pieces of eight, and many golden ornaments. They told me this one night under the following strange circumstances ——" he broke off. "Give me water! I'm faint, of a sudden." She brought it to him. Presently he continued in a firmer voice. "One day we were attacked by a body of French troops — a reconnaissance in force. The castle was surrounded, I and the few men with me, our retreat cut off, prepared to defend ourselves, and our host and hostess, to the last. We were driven from floor to floor. But one of my men, sore wounded, lying below, determined on a desperate resource. He managed to crawl to the cellar, where great quantities of wood were stored; and he set it on fire. The French, alarmed, beat a hasty retreat from the precincts; I and my few remaining men pursued them to the gates. The fight would doubtless have been renewed, but at that moment the plumes of our dragoons appeared in the distance. The French sprang to their horses and were off. I returned hastily to the castle, and we succeeded in extinguishing the fire. I bore the lady in my own arms into the fresh air, through all the smoke; two of my men rescued the old count. That afternoon they had a long conference together, and in the evening said that they had decided to tell me of the treasure.

In case misfortune should happen to them both, I was to pledge myself to convey the paper, which they then intrusted to me, to their only son, who was fighting in our army. I readily agreed. A few nights later the devil tempted me; I opened the paper. It was a mass of meaningless figures, a cipher; but I had the key. I worked it out; I went to the place indicated; there lay the treasure. But my heart smote me; not mine be a fouler than the sin of Achan! I replaced the earth. I returned, and prayed all night for a clean heart.

Shortly afterwards I changed my quarters; we were retreating. On our next advance I returned to pay a visit to my kind hosts. Alas! They had been murdered by a band of guerillas. As duty bade, I sought the son; but again I was too late; he had fallen in battle on the third day of our advance.

I have kept the secret locked in my breast; I would not touch the treasure, though it was now as much mine as anybody's, because I had been tempted. But now I see necessity itself command me; I am no longer man enough to endure the torture which I suffer ——" Here his voice broke. "I will give you the key if you will do as I say; and when I am dead you are free to go and find it."

Ada Glass made her mind up in a moment. She was eager. After all, there were other pleasures in the world than — what she had been enjoying.

"Take the Bible," said Glass, "and swear!" She did so without a tremor. It was an oath to commit murder; but the Scots mind does not halt in such a case.

"Good," said the Major. "Now look in the uniform case; you'll find the cipher sewn into my tunic; it's in the lining of the left sleeve." His wife obediently unpicked the stuff. A small map, with a row of hieroglyphic figures, was in her hand. "Now tell

me the key!" Glass began to breathe with difficulty; he spoke in a faint voice. "Water!" he whispered. She brought him a full glass, and he drank it, and sighed happily. "The key's a word," he said. "What? I can't hear you." She came over close to him. "The key's a word. It's in the Bible. I'll remember it if you'll read the passage. I marked it in the book. It's somewhere in Judges." He was evidently speaking with the greatest possible effort; and even so, she could hardly hear him. She brought the Bible across to him, but it was too dark to read; so she fetched the lamp and set it upon the floor at his side. "About Chapter Eight. I can't remember." "Chapter which?" "I think it's eight." "Eight?" "Yes." It was the faintest murmur. He had been like that for some days; now it alarmed her; might he die without revealing the secret? She fetched some whiskey, and gave it to him to drink.

"Oh, is it this," she said, "about Samson in the mill? It's marked in red." "Yes," he said, still very faintly, "read from there." She sat down by his head, and began to read. After each verse she questioned him; he signed to her to go on. Presently she came to the verse "And Samson said 'Let me perish with the Philistines'." "It's there," he said. "It's ——" his voice died away to nothing. "You're not ill, are you?" she cried in alarm. "I'm going to die," he gasped out, word by word. "Tell me the word!" she screamed, "for God's sake, man, don't die first!" "It's ——" Again the voice died away. "Do, do try!" she said, putting her ear over his mouth. Instantly, with utter swiftness, his iron jaw closed like a vice upon her ear. She pulled away, screaming, but she might as well have tried to dislodge a bulldog. Indeed, she helped him to roll over toward the lamp. A jerk of one stump, and the oil flamed among the straw of the pallet.

The dying shrieks of his mother woke Joshua. He jumped out of bed, came into the room, saw the two bodies writhing in the flames. He clapped his hands gleefully, and ran out into the snow.

"I admit it's a pretty ghastly story," cried Jack Flynn, who had evoked it; "but I don't see what in heaven's name it has to do with you, and saving the Hemlock Club!"

"Because, my young friend, as usual, you have not condescended to wait for the end of it. The events that I have been at the pains to recount occurred during the usurpation of George the Third, so-called." (It was the club custom always to speak of the Georges as usurpers.) "My part begins in the year 1850 of the vulgar era."

In February of that year an anonymous book entitled "A Jealous God," was published through a well-known firm — I forget the name for the moment. The book made a great stir in religious circles. The author, evidently an authority on theology, had taken the teachings of Victorian Science as a commentary, and his work was principally intended to complete the ruin of Deism. The author insisted upon the cruelty and imbecility of nature; pointed out that all attempts to absolve the Creator from the responsibility must culminate in Manichaeism or some other form of Dualism; and proceeded to interpret the wisdom of the Deity as His ability to trick His creatures, His power as His capacity to break and torture them, and His glory as witnessed chiefly by the anguish and terror of His victims. I need hardly say, that the author, although anonymous, professed himself a member of the Exclusive Plymouth Brethren.