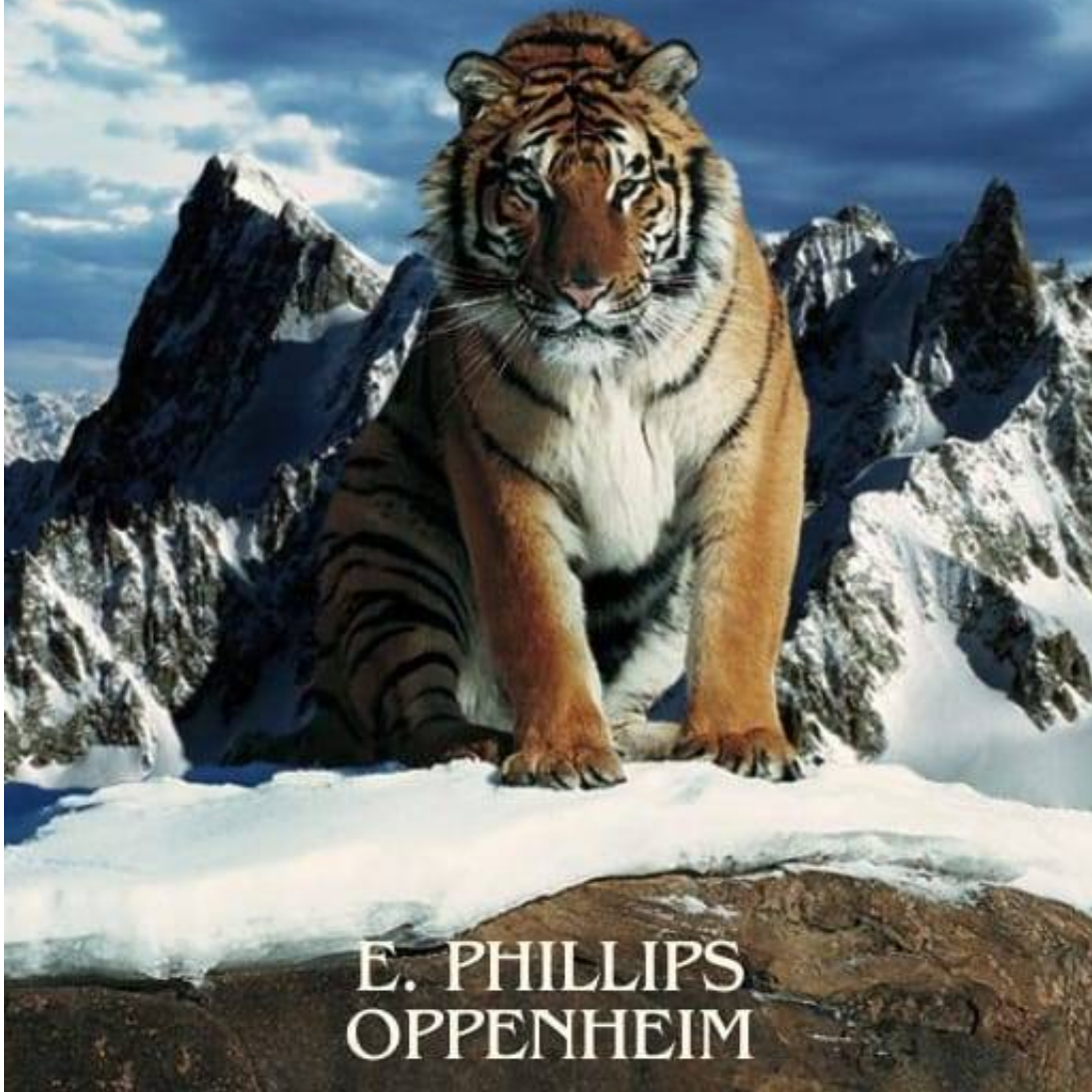


THE TIGER ON THE MOUNTAINS



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OPPENHEIM

The Tiger on the Mountains

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PADDY COLLINS was an enterprising young New York journalist who had come into five thousand dollars and was spending it in foreign parts. He passed most of his time in argumentative discussion, and nothing pleased him more than to make sensational statements and support them with a stream of eloquence, and by brute force if those who differed from him could be induced to follow him so far. He stood at the bar of the Hôtel de France, and laid down the law about Monte Carlo.

"What's all this talk about Monte Carlo being the hub of the world for adventure and queer doings, and that sort of stuff?" he demanded. "I'll tell you there isn't a soberer or a quieter spot on God's earth, and I'll tell you why. It's the gambling that makes people lead Sunday-school lives here."

Mervin Holt, a well-known diner-out and wit of the place, who had just escaped from a gala dinner, edged his way into the discussion.

"You intrigue us, my friend Collins," he said. "Proceed, we beseech you. I warn you that my friend here, Peter Hames, and I are in utter disagreement with your premise."

"Well, that's more interesting," the Irishman declared. "I have no use for the fellow who agrees with me. I'll tell you why what I said was the truth. You see that great big building across the way. That's the octopus that sucks dry all the passions of this place—that and a smaller, very superior step-sister, when its flunkies deign to open the doors. I'm telling you, a big crowd of people nowadays haven't room for more than one passion in their lives. You'll see 'em streaming in there hour after hour, from ten o'clock until two in the morning. When they've had their little whack there they're like a wet glove—no life in 'em—no spirit for love-making, no stomach for fighting, no heart for even a good all-around quarrel. The gambling emasculates the place."

"This," Peter Hames observed pleasantly, "is an entirely new point of view."

"It's damned well the truth," Collins asserted. "I ask you, when do you ever see a fight in the streets here? When do you ever see a drunken man? When do you ever see any real love-making even,

except between those painted dummies and their gigolos? I am not counting that sort of muck. I tell you there's no red blood in the place. The man who gets led away by those lying novelists and story writers, and comes here for adventures, gets damned well left...

"Whisky-and-sodas round, barman. I've wasted my money on this trip, but there's never a penny wasted that goes into honest liquor."

"You are a man," Mervin Holt remarked, "after my own heart. You have the gift of forthright speech, the courage of your opinions and the additional advantage of being amazingly ignorant upon the subject you choose for discussion."

Paddy Collins set down his glass. Mervin Holt wagged a forbidding forefinger.

"No, you don't," he warned him. "I know you of old, my fire-eating friend. You don't pick a quarrel with me. Try someone of your own size. We will dispute with words, if you like. Words are the chosen rapier of this duelist. But when it comes to brute force, so far as I am concerned, it is a thing extinct. I love all men, however much I may disagree with them. I quarrel with none."

"You've a fair gift of gab yourself," Paddy Collins observed, looking at his neighbor with curiosity not unmingled with respect. "You don't happen to be an Irishman?"

"I was spared that—I was denied that privilege," Mervin Holt regretted, swiftly correcting himself. "For the Irish race in the abstract, however, I have an immense admiration. Individually, I find them intellectually stimulating."

"It's more than the Monte Carlo whisky is anyway," Paddy Collins grumbled. "Is there anyone else of a sizable physique who disagrees with me?"

"I do, utterly and completely," Peter Hames announced.

Collins swung round and eyed the speaker with satisfaction.

"Well, that's something," he approved. "You're a man worth putting the hands up with. Let's hear your tongue first."

"You're wrong fundamentally," Peter Hames pronounced. "In the first place, the gambling that goes on there and in the Sporting

Club provokes passions in a great many men and women instead of deadening them."

"The passion of a dirty greed, that's all," the Irishman scoffed. "It makes men forget to take a turn in the ring now and then or to make love to the lassies when the wine's been round."

"I say that it provokes passion," Peter Hames went on, "and I stick to it. Love-making isn't the only passion in the world. There's jealousy, there's fury at having lost your money, there's despair. There's also the full heart and the tingling pulses of the winner. Secondly, you, my friend, who, I think I am correct in saying, have spent some twenty-four hours in the place, know very little of what you're talking about if you say that in the principality there are no crimes, no fighting, no disturbances, no tragedies. We've no American press here to blazon out our day-by-day happenings, and there's a great deal goes on that never finds its way into print."

"You say so," Paddy Collins sneered. "From what I've seen of the Monégasques—amongst the croupiers, at any rate—I shouldn't think there's one of them with a stomach for a fight."

"Again you speak in blissful ignorance," Peter Hames assured him. "The Monégasque, when the time comes, is a very dangerous fighter indeed. His women, far from being what you think, are almost fiercely virtuous, and their mankind are ready to slit the throat of anyone who tries to make them anything else. Where you get left in ignorance is the fact that they don't report their little affairs. Journalism here is a dead calling. I could take you a hundred yards away, and we could stick knives into one another. The gendarmerie would be exceedingly annoyed, but that would just be about their sole interest in the affair."

Paddy Collins ordered another round of whiskies. He was promptly forestalled, however, by Mervin Holt.

"You, sir, are our arch entertainer this evening," he explained. "We may be a smug crowd, but we never sponge on a man for drinks."

"You are too small to talk to in a disputative manner," Paddy Collins declared. "This man Peter Hames here is my lad. He's contradicted me."

"Yes, but I'm not going to quarrel with you about that," Peter Hames assured him. "I'm going to put it to you in this way. You don't believe there are bloodshed and murdering habits and loose passions going about here, except those that are born in the gambling rooms. I contradict you."

"Let us take a little walk together," Paddy Collins suggested.

"Not at all," Peter Hames interrupted. "Let us be reasonable men. The final argument always remains. I propose to prove my contention."

Paddy Collins licked his lips. He was beginning to like this prospective antagonist.

"You'll show me a row?" he asked eagerly.

Peter Hames laid his hand upon the journalist's shoulder.

"I have heard of you, Collins," he said. "I know you're a great talker, but you're no fool. You can keep a still tongue, act like a man of discretion when it's necessary, and use your fists when it isn't."

"You're speaking golden words," the journalist agreed.

"Then I will show you a row," Peter Hames promised.

UP THE hill toward the tangled region of Beausoleil went the two men arm in arm.

"It will be half a dozen we have to tackle, maybe?" the Irishman asked hopefully.

"Tonight," Peter Hames told him, "you may not have to clench your fist even. You may have to hold your breath and wait, but if we have luck we shall learn where and when this thing is to be fought out. There'll be four on the other side tonight, but I don't think they'll be fighting unless they discover that we're watching them."

Peter Hames pushed open the door of the Café Régál.

"Keep your mouth closed in here," he enjoined. "Let me do the talking. It's a bad place."

The Café Régál was only moderately full. Mademoiselle Anna sat on her accustomed seat. A little distance away a fair-haired young woman, who had recently taken to patronizing the establishment, and who went by the name of Fifine, occupied

another stool. One or two of the small neighboring tradespeople or passers-by were scattered about the place.

At a table, talking earnestly together, were three black-haired, black-mustached and bearded, olive-skinned Monégasques.

"Those three men," Peter Hames whispered in his companion's ear, "are planning an assassination. That will give you something to be going on with. Now come to the bar."

"I'll swear your grandfather was an Irishman," Paddy Collins declared vigorously. "There's sober sense about your conversation. It's whisky-and- sodas, barman—and doubles."

"One moment," Peter Hames murmured. "This is business."

He strolled behind, and offered Mademoiselle Anna a cigarette.

"Lotarde's coming," she whispered, her lips scarcely moving. "They had a meeting this afternoon. He has them all worked up into a perfect fury. It's to be tomorrow, or the next day."

"The devil!" Peter Hames muttered.

"I never thought they'd go so far," she went on. "I sent for you directly I saw there was danger, but I didn't believe they meant murder. They're making their plans tonight. Your room is ready. They'll be next door. If there's trouble, I'll come."

"Keep out of it," he begged. "I have a man with me who was born fighting."

"You forget Lotarde," she warned him. "He is a madman. He shoots at sight. Be careful. One of the three—Mercault—went to the palace yesterday, and apparently they refused every one of his demands. Be careful! He's watching us here... I don't want your cigarette," she added, pushing his case away with a touch of insolence.

Peter Hames withdrew apologetically, and the Irishman grinned at his apparent discomfiture.

"Now, my amorous but clumsy guide into the land of adventure," the latter said, planting one hand firmly upon the counter, and swinging himself from his stool, "you need a lesson in the way to approach a reluctant will-o'-the-wisp."

"Shut up, you fool!" Peter Hames interrupted. "We are going to sit in that corner. Listen! There are more serious things doing than talking nonsense to these young women."

Mr. Paddy Collins left the neighborhood of the bar with reluctance.

"Take 'em on another evening, old chap," Peter Hames begged. "Tonight you and I have got to tread on velvet. Within the course of a few minutes we may be fighting for our skins. By this time tomorrow night, if you stick it out, we may be fighting for our lives. When that's over, you can have a free hand with the women. You asked for this, remember. I know the way to bring it off. Both those girls are spies. One of them is our friend; the one who is just out of hearing is the mistress of Mercault, the leader of the dissatisfied Monégasques, and would give us away in a second if she had any idea what we were after."

The Irishman, who was beginning to find the enterprise entirely to his taste as he gained faith in his companion, became more and more amenable. "When's the next move?" he asked cheerfully.

"See those three men?" Peter Hames inquired, without even glancing in their direction.

"Those three monkeys chattering themselves into a fever over a glass of syrup? I see them. It don't seem to me they're going to spit any blood."

"That's your ignorance of these parts," Peter Hames confided. "They're natives of the principality, and there isn't one of them who hasn't a knife in his pocket—maybe a gun, too, for anything I know, but they're handier with the knife. We're going to follow them."

"Where?"

"Into a room upstairs—or rather we're going into the next room. Now, hold your breath. You're in this business, and you may as well know what there is to be known. Ever hear of Lotarde?"

"Tiger Lotarde, the anarchist?"

"That's the fellow."

"Hear of him! God help us, what a question!" Paddy Collins exclaimed. "I was detailed to get his story the day after that

explosion in Wall Street. I saw him in Sing Sing before he escaped. I knew him before that. I went across to Chicago to try and run his gang to earth. They were protected there. If I had written the story I got from Lotarde himself, it would have been back to the old country for me, or a knife in my back. What about him?"

"You may see him tonight, that's all," Peter Hames replied. "If he's a pal of yours, you'd better quit."

"A pal of mine—the dirty fox! Vile little skunk!" the Irishman declared, spitting with abject disgust into a sawdust-filled receptacle. "He went against me. Told me in Sing Sing that he'd given orders to have me knifed before I left Chicago—told me that while he was sitting in his cell!"

"You're in luck. You may get your own back on him before we're through. It is his show we're up against."

A DOOR leading into the back premises of the café, at right angles to the bar, was slowly opened. The men who were talking so eagerly together stopped and looked up expectantly. A woman stood on the threshold—gray-haired, with a fat, evil face and bent shoulders. She held a shawl around her neck, extended a forefinger and pointed upward. With that she disappeared, and, one by one, the three men passed through the door which the old woman had left open.

"So that's that!" Peter Hames muttered. "Lotarde has arrived."

"Never did I imagine," Paddy Collins reflected, "that Lotarde and I could ever be sheltered by the same roof."

"He's upstairs, and there's mischief brewing," Peter Hames assured him, "and listen, my friend, I met you only an hour or so ago, at a bar, and you talked impulsively for a few minutes. Just remember this. It's not too late to walk away and wash out those few sentences. If you go through with this—and why you should I don't know, for it's not your affair—it will be life or death for us, perhaps, within half an hour; certainly within a week."

The Irishman laughed until the corners of his eyes crinkled.

"I see myself quitting!" he scoffed. "I'm for fighting any man or any men, with their own weapons at any moment. My blood's gone stagnant with these civilized ways."

Once more the door opened—more slowly this time. More slowly still, the old woman pushed out her head. Her face was like the face of a gnome, but in her pendulous, sagging lip and bleared eyes there was a new expression. She was afraid. Her stubby forefinger, however, pointed upward. Peter Hames drained his glass.

"Here's luck to us," he murmured. "Come on, Collins."

The Irishman followed cheerfully. The woman had left them—muttering to herself and apparently ill at ease after that one fierce word of warning whispered into her ear by Peter Hames. The latter led the way up a narrow staircase, turned the handle of a door, and entered a small, filthy bedroom. He closed the door behind him, and opened a cupboard. Inside the boxlike aperture was a dangling wire from what seemed to be a telephone instrument.

"Home-made microphone, Collins," he confided. "Only one of us can listen. I've started this business, so I'll be that one. Close the door. I shall hear when they leave off talking, and I'll hold out my hand. Be prepared then, in case they've tumbled to it that there's anyone about. Remember, we're expecting Mademoiselle Anna and Mademoiselle Fifine to come up."

THERE was a silence in that shabby little room which seemed to have qualities of its own. Peter Hames listened with fierce and riveted attention. Paddy Collins, seated on the edge of the bed, watched the door. Time went by uncounted. Suddenly, Peter Hames stepped backward quickly, closed the door of the cupboard and came out into the room.

"All serene, Paddy," he reported. "They've tumbled to nothing. Don't breathe. Don't make a sound. Let them get down to the café."

The two men stood tense and alert. They heard the footsteps pass on the crazy landing. Suddenly, without a moment's warning, the rearmost of the Monégasques kicked open the door of the bedroom, stood upon the threshold, glanced suspiciously at Collins, and burst into a storm of excited questions. The Irishman listened in puzzled silence for a few seconds. Then he stooped, lifted the man in his arms, and threw him down the staircase.

"I couldn't tell what else to do with him," he remarked apologetically to Hames—"talking a lot of gibberish like that to a decent man. He was too small to hit anyway."

"Get behind, you fool!" Peter Hames muttered. "Lotarde may recognize you. I'll see to this."

He stepped on to the landing. All of the conspirators now were creeping up the stairs, and there was a very evil look in the face of the nearest. Peter Hames gave them no time to ask questions. He addressed them in fluent French.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I apologize for my friend, but what would you? We have a rendezvous here with two young ladies from the bar. Already we have waited nearly half an hour. My friend does not speak French. He thought that the man who forced his way in had been keeping the girls away."

Almost as Hames finished speaking, there was the sound of soft footsteps along the crazy passage, and the red light of a cigarette through the gloom behind. Mademoiselle Anna made her appearance. She stopped short.

"But you call this a rendezvous!" she demanded angrily. "Have you brought the whole of Beausoleil to see me?"

Peter caught her wrist.

"Mademoiselle, do not go," he begged. "One of the gentlemen made a mistake. The affair, I trust, is explained," he added, turning to them. "Be so good as to enter, mademoiselle."

He pointed to the bedroom. The little party of men were full of apologies. Peace suddenly reigned. They descended. Peter Hames followed Mademoiselle Anna, stepped swiftly past her to the cupboard, tore down the wire and the little instrument, and flung both under the bed.

"We are well out of this," he exclaimed. "As usual, mademoiselle, you turned up exactly at the right time. Now, will you show us the way out through the kitchens? The rest I leave to you."

She laughed.

"Follow me," she enjoined. "Afterward I shall go to the bar and make my complaints. Madame will be furious to have this, my first little affair, interfered with."

They passed down some rickety back stairs on tiptoe. Mademoiselle Anna opened a door, and they went out into the night.

"We are over the first hurdle," Peter Hames whispered, as he grasped his companion's arm, "but, after what I've heard through that amazing little instrument, you'll have to pray to all the saints in your calendar, Paddy, to bring us safely over the next one."

FLAT on their stomachs in the shadow of a tumbled mass of rock, a few yards above one of the narrow, winding roads, the most dangerous in Europe, which zigzag from Monte Carlo to Èze and beyond, Peter Hames and the Irishman, having disposed of their car, lay cheek by cheek. The whole panorama of the place lay stretched beneath them—the black rock, the harbor lights, the glittering casino, the electric standards in the avenues. Below, on the coast road, they could trace for miles, the lights of moving vehicles. They could hear, even, in the still, clear atmosphere, the night murmur of insects hundreds of feet below.

"Now your time has come, Paddy," Peter Hames whispered. "There's no eavesdropping here, and you shall know exactly what we're up against. Have you heard of the trouble between the Monégasques and the reigning family here?"

"Why, sure I have," Paddy acknowledged. "I went up to the palace to get a story, and it wasn't any too polite I found them."

"Which is in the right," Peter Hames went on, "I don't know. Everything here is done by means of petitions, and just as the Monégasques are preparing another petition, along comes Lotarde. In less than two days he's got them all worked up. They were excited enough in their small way before, but they lapped up his poison as though it were mother's milk. There's no more talk of petitions or deputations. They're out for murder, and they've chosen tonight to bring it off, and within fifty yards of this place for the scene."

Paddy Collins rubbed his hands softly together. The joy of battle was creeping into his veins.

"The dirty skunk of an anarchist!" he muttered. "Begad, Peter Hames, if you'd told me as much last night I'd have had the life out of him on those stairs."

"He'd have shot you before you got near," his companion rejoined quietly. "Besides, there was no proof—just our word against theirs. These royalties have been warned to keep within their own walls for a time, but, whatever their faults may be, they don't lack courage. You see the château above us. They are dining there tonight—the two young people and His Royal Highness. I watched their car go up at half past eight—unguarded, if you please, but driven at a great pace. In less than half an hour they will be returning. We shall see the light flash out from the château when they start. You notice that corner—I could chuck a pine cone into it—exactly below us?"

"Well?"

"The idea is to put some sort of an obstacle just round the bend. The car is to smash into it, and then they start the shooting. There'll be seven of them."

The Irishman grinned.

"There won't be seven on their legs a few seconds after we show ourselves," he bragged.

A SLIGHT hiss of indrawn breath—otherwise silence. Both men watched the dark shapes of two motor cars without lights which had climbed the hill and were now drawn up close below them. They counted the descending figures—eight men altogether. One by one they disappeared into a little growth of scrub, carrying something which seemed to be like a coil of rope. When they emerged, they had evidently attached it to some hidden obstacle. Straining and groaning, they dragged it across the road, until it reached from the overhanging bank halfway across—an iron railway chain, which must have weighed at least half a ton. Peter Hames was uneasy. He had expected something less formidable.

"We can't move that," he muttered.

"Better have a go at them right away," Collins urged. "I've marked Lotarde. He's there, all in black, with a black béret. I want him."

Peter Hames' grip was almost unnecessarily hard.

"This is my show, Collins," he insisted. "Listen! We are going to crawl through the scrub here another forty yards higher. We can

stop the car on the bend above them. We'll let them know what the trouble is, and then we can tackle this crowd below. We can't afford to risk being done in before they come. Follow me."

They made their way slowly some thirty yards. Once Collins dislodged a pebble, which clattered into the road. The little party below were startled, but only momentarily. Their task was completed. They all crawled back into the scrub. Another ten yards of painful progress, and a little belt of scrubby pines concealed Peter Hames and his companion from the upper road.

"Now we're safe," the former whispered, "and we're only just in time."

WITH a blaze of lights from the château above, and the sound of a motor horn, twin lamps appeared, curving down the long drive, and remained visible, threading their tortuous way to right and left, but always descending. Peter Hames groaned as he noticed the pace at which the car was being driven.

"Unless they'll stop for us," he said, they'll smash right into that thing. There's no one on God's earth can help them then. Follow me, Paddy."

They slipped from the scrub and the rough ground on to the road. Both had electric torches, and both kept their fingers upon the switches. As the oncoming car swung round the last corner, they both turned on their lights. Almost instantly they heard the grinding of brakes. Peter Hames glanced anxiously over his shoulder and downward.

"Those fellows will know there's something up," he muttered. "It can't be helped."

The car came skidding down the hill, slackening its speed more and more as the brakes began to hold. It was almost at a standstill when the two men disclosed themselves. Peter Hames at once addressed the chauffeur and his companion upon the box. He spoke in rapid French:

"There is an ambush of men just below, who mean mischief. They have an iron chain across the right-hand side of the road. When you turn the next corner, keep absolutely to the left, and then you can pass. Wait whilst I speak to your passengers."

"*Mais c'est Monsieur le Prince et la Princesse,*" the man expostulated.

"I know," Hames replied impatiently. "Go on directly I've spoken to them, only instead of keeping to the proper side of the road, keep to the left, and you'll just clear it. They'll be so surprised they'll let you pass."

The window of the car had been lowered. Peter Hames stepped back.

"Sorry, sir," he explained. "There's an ambush of some of your dissatisfied citizens just below, and I'm afraid they mean mischief. They've blocked the road, but I've told your man how to pass. If there's any trouble, we shall be there. If you've any arms in the carriage, get them ready, if not, make a dash for it."

"Who are you?" the man who was leaning out of the window asked.

Peter Hames waved the chauffeur on.

"My friend and I don't matter," he answered. "You'll know all about us later if there's trouble."

THE two men hurried down the scrub, and arrived at the obstacle before the car had turned the corner. Lotarde and his friends, startled by the sound of their approaching footsteps, leaped into sight, but the glare of the headlights of the big car, as it swept round, dazzled everyone for a moment. A shot was fired at random, of which nobody took any notice. Both men were eagerly watching the progress of the automobile. Magnificently driven, it passed the obstacle with barely an inch to spare, shot by, recovered after a violent skid—for a second or two one wheel had been over the precipice—and rocked and swayed down the road. There was a howl from the opposite side of the way, and simultaneously Paddy Collins threw off all restraint, for the lights had shown the two men the nature of the terrible obstruction left untouched in the road, and had given the Irishman, too, a glimpse of the beautiful woman in the car.

"The bloody murderers!" he shouted. "Come on at them, Hames!"

Somehow or other they all seemed to be in the road together. The Monégasques were armed, apparently, only with knives, and, bent double, they were spreading out in a curve to surround the two men. Paddy Collins, who was perhaps more used to mob fighting than his companion, suddenly caught sight of Lotarde crawling round to the open end of the semicircle.

"Look out, Peter!" he cried. "Duck!"

Peter ducked, and Paddy Collins sprang sideways. A stab of flame spent itself in vain, and the whistling bullet sped on, burying itself in a tree. There was a great joy in the heart of the Irishman, for, quick though Lotarde's draw had been, his own gun barked out a second later.

"This," he grunted, "was worth coming to Europe for!"

Lotarde spun round on his feet, gave a long, terrible cry, reeled and fell in a heap upon the road. One of the Monégasques, who had a fancy for a quick stab at close quarters, felt Peter Hames' fist crash into his face, and remembered nothing more till he awoke in a hospital. Paddy Collins disposed of another in almost the same fashion, and a third, whose knife was dangerously near, Peter Hames shot through the leg. The others seemed about to make a concerted rush, but were suddenly stricken with a new panic. The car had stopped at the bend, and the younger man of the party came panting up the hill, with a revolver in each hand. The Monégasques never hesitated for a second. Bloodshed on this scale they had never contemplated. They turned and ran like rabbits. Peter Hames and Collins lowered their revolvers, and the young man, who had just joined them, followed suit reluctantly.

"Our own people!" he cried bitterly.

"They were only puppets," Peter Hames assured him. "Come here."

They all three went to where Lotarde was lying in the road. Paddy Collins pointed downward, and there was a merciless fury in his eyes.

"That's the man who is responsible for tonight," he declared, "and for more tragedies in Europe during the last ten years than any other human being. If I were a Latin, I would spit on him. Being an

Irishman, I say God help his soul if he has one, for if ever there was a rascal well off the face of the earth, it is Tiger Lotarde."

"Lotarde the anarchist?" the young man exclaimed.

"Dead, and I shot him, thank God!" the Irishman avowed.

They drew away. The young man laid a hand upon the shoulder of each of them.

"Gentlemen," he said earnestly, "you are both of you strangers to me, but my people as well as I, myself, will be anxious to know to whom we may express our gratitude."

Peter Hames hesitated.

"Not out of discourtesy, sir, but for many reasons, please let us go our own way."

"But who are you? I must know that," the young man insisted.

"We are just two human beings," Peter Hames told him, "who love adventure, and seek it whenever we have the opportunity. We interfere sometimes in other people's business, but it is generally when we think we can do some good by it. My friend here had an old grudge against Lotarde. His life is forfeit in half a dozen countries, so his death is no one's crime. If you want to do us a service, and if you will forgive my suggesting it—perform a gracious gesture to your people—wipe out the memory of tonight. It was Lotarde's responsibility, and Lotarde is dead."

"Your view shall be mine," the young man promised, "but I cannot possibly leave you like this upon the mountain. Will you permit me to present you to my relations?"

"We will pay our respects, if you will allow us, at the palace another time," Peter Hames begged.

"We are not looking for thanks," Paddy Collins chipped in. "It was a mighty smart little breeze while it lasted. I noticed you didn't hesitate long about coming into it yourself, sir," he added, with a twinkle in his eyes.

The motor horn from below sounded, and the three men separated. As they fetched out the car from its hiding place, Paddy Collins made queer little sounds with his tongue.

"I'm for asking you one question, my friend," he said. "How far might it be to the most adjacent bar?"

"I have whisky enough at my own villa," Peter Hames assured him, "to fill a bathtub."

"At the present moment," the Irishman declared, "I'm feeling that I could empty it."