

ask, though it'll ruin me. I'll put it in the big oak to-morrow night."

"No," disagreed Dave, "I mus' have it at once. Spot cash an' we're quits, cap'n."

The old man mused a moment and then reluctantly turned to the oaken chest. After a great deal of rummaging about, he drew out a square tin box and placed it upon the table. Then, with a key which he carried suspended about his neck by a siken cord, he opened it. Dave's eyes glistened greedily as he noted the packages of bank notes and piles of gold coin. With trembling hands the old captain drew out a bundle of notes and untied the cord that bound them. Then, slowly and carefully, he counted out to Dave the price of his silence. Returning the remainder to the box, he snapped the lock and turned to replace it in the chest. As he did so, Dave rose stealthily to his feet and followed him. In the snaky eyes there gleamed a murderous light and in the clenched hand glittered a more murderous-looking knife.

As the old man closed the great lid, Dave bent over him and seized him by the throat. With a quick jerk he threw back the head and shoulders, exposing the breast. Then, before the captain could grasp the truth, the knife descended and buried itself in his heart. With a stifled cry the old man fell to the floor. At that instant the parrot awoke.

"Murder!" it shrieked, and flew wildly at Dave, pecking and clawing at his head.

He turned like a flash and grasped the bird by the neck, gave it a quick wrench and flung it into the further corner of the room. A convulsive shudder, a flutter of bright wings and the bird lay still.

Dave wiped the blood from a deep scratch on his cheek where the parrot's beak had struck him, and then bent over the dead man. With an unshaking hand he drew out the little key and took it from the string. Then he opened the chest, drew out the tin box, and dextrously transferred the treasure to his pockets. Casting a final glance about the room he walked quickly to the window and was about to vault through when a sudden thought seemed to come to his mind. Turning swiftly he put out the light. Only a faint glimmer from the open grate fire shone about the room. Then he took up the tin box and filled it with various old letters and papers which he found in the chest, after which