Suddenly a thought seemed to strike him, for, rising, he glanced about the room till his eyes rested upon a rough cupboard in one corner. Advancing to it he opened it and peered in. His face lighted up with triumph as he drew forth two bulky buckskin bags and a pair of rusty balances. Placing these upon the table and reseating himself, he was soon absorbed in weighing out the gold-dust which he had rightly guessed the bags to contain. Thus it was that he did not see nor hear the form on the hearthstone as it lifted itself to a half-sitting posture, and passed a hand in a dazed sort of way over its head. He did not see those eyes light up with their old fury as they rested upon him and his occupation. He did not hear the soft footfall approaching nearer and nearer to his chair.

"Gad! but that's a haul," he exclaimed, as he finished weighing the last portion, and arose to stretch himself; "three thousand cool! Why, that will be just about right to get me safe into the States, and once I'm there I'll quit this..."

But his sentence was cut short as a sharp, metallic click caught his ear, and turning quick as a flash, made a wild clutch at the gleaming weapon of his opponent—but too late!

There was a deafening report, and with a shriek he fell headlong to the floor, and the next instant the body of the maniac sank, face downward, across his victim! The morning sun streamed in through the open door, shedding peace and light upon the scene.

A Bit of History.

For a long time before the great strike of 1897, the forces of upheaval had been silently gathering. Men were uneasy—they knew not why. Business was stagnant; the wheels of commerce were blocked, and trade was at a standstill. A general feeling of suspense hung over the country like a black cloud, chilling all legitimate industry, and darkening the whole outlook. Thousands of bread-winners were unable to find work, and their enforced idleness begot in them a wild desperation.

On every street-corner could be heard gloomy whispers prophesying speedy ill to the republic. Many hard characters well known to the police seemed collected in larger than usual numbers in New York and Boston. Collisions between gangs of roughs and the police were of everyday occurrence. The worst elements of the population, flowing back from the West, lay ready to spring at the throat of the Eastern capitalists.

The latter, all unconscious of their peril, busied themselves in passing resolutions to the effect that American industries should be more efficiently "protected." Great meetings were held, and vehement statements made that this or the other political party was "ruining the nation." The best men of all classes spent themselves in this child's play, while a blow at the heart of the republic was rapidly preparing.

Swiftly and heavily fell the stroke. On the 17th of April, 1897, a strange and ominous demand was made of the directors of the Boston Consolidated Horse Railroad. A committee in behalf of the employees presented a request in writing, stating that no work would be done until the following concessions were made:

(1) That the hours of work should be reduced to four per day.
(2) That no more than ten passengers be carried at any one time, since unnecessary labor was incurred in collecting the fares of a larger number.
(3) That no regular time-table be adopted by the company, but that the men should be allowed to run as it seemed to them fit.

The directors at once rejected these remarkable propositions, and advertised for new hands. This was precisely what had been hoped and expected by the whole anarchist portion of the community. The news was flashed over the wires to men who had been waiting for just this opportunity. Throughout New England the strike was declared general. All laborers of whatsoever trade or occupation threw down their tools and refused to work. On the afternoon of the 18th, groups of idle men covered Boston Common, in dark, sullen patches.