

master. He warned you off; but if you will come, by the Lord you do it at your own risk! Forfeit, my good Mr. Malone, I claim forfeit! It strikes me that you have played a rather dangerous game, and you have lost it."

"Look here, Sir!" said I, backing to the door and opening it. "You can be as abusive as you like; but there is a limit. 'You shall not assault me!'"

"Shall I not?" He was slowly advancing in a peculiarly menacing way; but he stopped now and put his big hands into the side pockets of a rather boyish short jacket which he wore. "I have thrown several of you out of the house. You will be the fourth or fifth. Three pound fifteen each—that is how it averaged. Expensive, but very necessary. Now, Sir, why should you not follow your brethren? I rather think you must." He resumed his unpleasant and stealthy advance, pointing his toes as he walked, like a dancing master.

I could have bolted for the hall door; but it would have been too ignominious. Besides, a little glow of righteous anger was springing up within me. I had been hopelessly in the wrong before; but this man's menaces were putting me in the right.

"I'll trouble you to keep your hands off, Sir! I'll not stand it!"

"Dear me!" His black mustache lifted, and a white fang twinkled in a sneer. "You won't stand it, eh?"

"Don't be such a fool, Professor!" I cried. "What can you hope for? I'm fifteen stone, as hard as nails, and play center-three-quarters every Saturday for the London Irish. I'm not the man—"

It was at that moment that he rushed me. It was lucky that I had opened the door, or we should have gone through it. We did a Catharine wheel together down the passage. In some way we gathered up a chair upon our way, and bounded on with it toward the street. My mouth was full of his beard, our arms were locked, our bodies intertwined, and that infernal chair radiated its legs all around us. The watchful Austin had thrown open the hall door. We went with a back somersault down the front steps. I have seen the two Macs attempt something of the kind at the halls; but it appears to take some practice to do it without hurting oneself. The chair went to matchwood at the bottom, and we rolled apart into the gutter. He sprang to his feet, waving his fists and wheezing like an asthmatic.

"Had enough?" he panted.

"You infernal bully!" I cried as I gathered myself together.

THEN and there we should have tried the thing out, for he was effervescing with fight; but fortunately I was rescued from an odious situation. A policeman was beside us, his notebook in his hand.

"What's all this? You ought to be ashamed!" said the policeman. It was the most rational remark I had heard in Enmore Park. "Well," he insisted, turning to me, "what is it, then?"

"This man attacked me," said I.

"Did you attack him?" asked the policeman.

The professor breathed hard and said nothing.

"It's not the first time, either," said the policeman, shaking his head severely. "You were in trouble last month for the same thing. You've blackened this young man's eye. Do you give him in charge, Sir?"

I relented. "No," said I, "I do not."

"What's that?" said the policeman.

"I was to blame myself. I intruded upon him. He gave me fair warning."

The policeman snapped up his notebook. "Don't let us have any more such goin's on," said he. "Now then, move on, there, move on!" This to a butcher's boy, a maid, and one or two loafers who had collected. He clumped heavily down the street, driving this little flock before him.

The professor looked at me, and there was something humorous at the back of his eyes. "Come in!" said he. "I've not done with you yet."

The speech had a sinister sound; but I followed him none the less into the house. The man servant, Austin, like a wooden image, closed the door behind us.

## CHAPTER IV.

### "It's Just the Very Biggest Thing!"

HARDLY was it shut, when Mrs. Challenger darted out from the dining room. The small woman was in a furious temper. She barred her husband's way like an enraged chicken in front of a bulldog. It was evident that she had seen my exit, but had not observed my return.

"You brute, George!" she screamed. "You've hurt that nice young man!"

He jerked backward with his thumb. "Here he is, safe and sound, behind me."

She was confused, but not unduly so. "I am so sorry! I didn't see you."

"I assure you, Madam, that it is all right."

"He has marked your poor face! Oh, George, what a brute you are! Nothing but scandals from one end of the week to the other! Imagine hating and making fun of you! You've finished my patience! This ends it!"

"Dirty linen!" he rumbled.

"It's not a secret," she cried. "Do you suppose



"Say 'Please,' and I'll Let You Down."

that the whole street—the whole of London, for that matter—Get away, Austin, we don't want you here—do you suppose they don't all talk about you? Where is your dignity? You, a man who should have been regius professor at a great university, with a thousand students all revering you! Where is your dignity, George?"

"How about yours, my dear?"

"You try me too much. A ruffian—a common, brawling ruffian!—that's what you have become!"

"Be good, Jessie."

"A roaring, raging bully!"

"That's done it! Stool of penance!" said he.

To my amazement he stooped, picked her up, and placed her sitting upon a high pedestal of black marble in the angle of the hall. It was at least seven feet high, and so thin that she could hardly balance upon it. A more absurd object than she presented cocked

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