

With a mad yell Bletsoe darted backwards, and then, glancing swiftly round the hall, he rushed past me up the staircase.

“Stop at once!” said Mr. Snellgrove, “or, so help me, I’ll fire!”

Bletsoe stopped suddenly at the threat. He was half-way up the first flight of stairs. He turned slowly and faced us, his mouth twitching rapidly. Mr. Snellgrove stood at the bottom of the stairs holding a revolver in his right hand.

“Bah!” cried Bletsoe. “You would not kill me. You are too clever for that. You would only wound me, and then——” He held his hand close to his neck, and uttering a horrible guttural sound he jerked his thumb upwards. “My father’s death! No. Never that. If I had the luck to have carried my revolver with me I should not hesitate. I would shoot you all like rats. But I have only my knife—my knife!” And suddenly drawing from his pocket the surgical knife he had held at my breast on the cliffs, he gazed at it and then at us for one awful moment, and with a yell he buried the glistening blade in his heart.

A moment later his body tumbled down the stairs, and rolled to our feet.

THE END.