

what's the matter. Something wrong with the carburetter or the ignition."

"I'm late already," broke in the gentleman, visibly bolstering up his patience.

It was this moment that the driver of the red car chose for making his habitual gesture, which he accompanied with the usual inviting smile and questioning lift of the eyebrows.

Instantly the keen gaze of the man with the waxed moustache fixed his. "Why do you hold up your hand?" inquired the clear tones, with the un-English accent. At the same time the speaker tried to mask his face in shadow, backing away from the blaze of the two cars' acetylene lamps.

"I hold up my hand because I'm plying for hire," answered Christopher Race.

"Eh? Plying for hire with *that* car? You are joking, I suppose." Tone and eyes expressed astonishment, perhaps distrust. But the red automobile had come to a dead stop, and the gentleman in the tall hat had stepped to the edge of the pavement to examine it at close quarters, also to examine, incidentally, its driver.

"Not at all," said Christopher Race, "unless life is a joke. I'm out to gain a livelihood. I have no licence to live, but I have a licence to drive, if you would care to see it."

The other stared, though not offensively. There was even a twinkle in his eye, but a word might have kindled it to a spark of fire.

"You look like a gentleman," he remarked.

"I almost believe I am one," replied Christopher, and he let his eyes twinkle a little also, but not too much, for now he was sure who it was with whom he talked, though he did not intend to make it known that he knew.