

imaginary antagonist, and winked his eye. Then he told Spotley, I imagined, that he too was in the pugilistic line, and was pleased to meet so renowned a master of the art. Spotley was, of course, civil, but impassive, affecting to make light of the other's compliments.

Then I imagined the visiting boxer narrated the details of some encounter of the ring he had recently witnessed. Pantomimically he wiped the floor with his antagonist, after pursuing him to the ropes more than once. This over, he put out his hand effusively and shook Spotley's with great respect. I imagined that the tears almost came into his eyes. Then Spotley retired to his desk.

"Queer customer that," I said to him ten minutes afterwards.

"Whom do you mean?" replied Spotley, with frigidity.

"That English sport in the plaid suit. He has a great reverence for you—says you are a mighty one with fists."

"Indeed?" said Spotley, softly.

"We never gave you credit for that or anything like it, Mr. Spotley."

"No?"

"No!"

"Well, there's nothing particularly strange in that, is there?"

"I don't know that there is—and yet—well, I wonder that it has never come out. Fancy you being a regular master of the fistic art, and we who see you every day never suspecting it."

"Is a man obliged to exhibit all his qualifications?" he asked.

"No. I don't suppose so—at any rate I don't suppose you would, Mr. Spotley," I replied.

"Please excuse me," he said, with cold politeness: "at the present time I am very busy." And, with an aggravating smile, he closed the colloquy.

After that Spotley was more taciturn, cautious and self-contained than ever. Yet, strange to say, the circum-

stance added a fresh halo to Spotley's mysterious respectability.

"I don't believe it," said Erhardt, a big, light-haired young man, who was known to spend his evenings at a club where gentlemanly boxing was a specialty; "the thing's ridiculous. Spotley's been in the bank for fifteen years. You tell me that all that time he has kept this to himself. A man couldn't do it; he would be bound to show it somehow."

"Of course, you do yourself, Erhardt. But then you are not Spotley."

"Well, has he the make of a boxer? Look at his build. Where's his chest? Where's his muscle?"

"Oh that's what you might say of many an athlete. Spotley is very well made. He's solid. Big, even as you are, Erhardt, he might prove too tough for you."

"Well, of course he's not in my class. That's simply absurd. I wouldn't want to hurt the little man. Then look at his age. Why he's fifty."

"Thirty-five," I said.

"Well, I grant you he looks younger sometimes—but still—Oh, the thing's ridiculous. There's some mistake about it."

Nevertheless, it was observed that Erhardt eyed Spotley very closely from that day forward. We would catch him looking up from his ledger and gazing at the human enigma as if he were mentally calculating the size of his biceps and the length of his reach.

Bank life is so tedious that anything is welcomed that is calculated to vary the monotony of the daily routine, and there is generally some topic that—off and on—floats on the surface of such scattered conversing opportunities as fall to the lot of the clerks. If two of us happened to meet in the street on the way home, the talk would at this time gravitate towards the mysterious Spotley. The interest was kept alive by various little circumstances. The sporting