

long and impudent pantomime halted abruptly and fixing Coleman with his eye demanded: "Well?"

"Well—what?" said Coleman, bristling a trifle.

"Is it true?"

"Is what true?"

"Is it true?" Peter was extremely solemn.

"Say, me bucko," said Coleman suddenly, "if you've come up here to twist the beard of the patriarch, don't you think you are running a chance?"

"All right. I'll be good," said Peter, and he sat on the bed. "But—is it true?"

"Is what true?"

"What the whole hotel is saying."

"I haven't heard the hotel making any remarks lately. Been talking to the other buildings, I suppose."

"Well, I want to tell you that everybody knows that you and Marjory have done gone and got yourselves engaged," said Peter bluntly.

"And well?" asked Coleman imperturbably.

"Oh, nothing," replied Peter, waving his hand.

"Only—I thought it might interest you."

Coleman was silent for some time. He fingered his papers. At last he burst out joyously. "And so they know it already, do they? Well—damn them—let them know it. But you didn't tell them yourself?"

"I!" quoth Peter wrathfully. "No! The minister told us."