

turb the festivities and harmony of the day. Lord Porthoning certainly will not object if we just satisfy ourselves that the brooch was the only instance of — momentary aberration; shall we call it? ”

If Lord Porthoning's attitude had been a little mysterious before it was absolutely incomprehensible now. He stood suddenly upright and brandished his cane over his head.

“If either of you touch me,” he shouted fiercely, “I'll break your skulls! This is blackmail! I'll send for the police! Let me go!”

His sudden fit of anger, justifiable though it certainly seemed on the face of it, nevertheless took both Mr. Bundercombe and myself by surprise. The former, indeed, was in the act of opening the door, when he paused. Once more he caught my connection by the collar and thrust his hand into the other coat pocket. When he withdrew it it was filled with rings, a bracelet and a pendant.

He threw them silently — a glittering heap — on the table. Without a word he thrust his hand in once more and brought out a little black ivory carving of a Japanese monk, which was perhaps one of the most valuable of my offerings.

There was a blankness in Mr. Bundercombe's expression that I could not understand.

I frowned. It seemed to me the affair had now