

"and it's very well for you with your money and your fine house, to call a poor fellow like me a dirty dog, but I haven't stolen anything, have I?"

"I don't know," said Nicholas.

"There are two of you : you'd better search me."

The man's eyes flashed as he said this, and he gave a hitch to the sleeves of his coat as if he would like to have them try it.

"Look here," said Mr. Bellamy Gold, "you had better leave the town the first chance you can get, or I'll have you arrested for a vagrant."

"I shall leave town when I get ready, and I shall leave this house when I get ready, too. Perhaps you'd like to put me out, now, come!"

The fellow had hardly time to complete his menace when Nicholas leaped to his feet, grasped the man's collar, wheeled him about, and taking him by his shoulders, pushed him, violently resisting, out of the room, through the hall, and down the steps. The rascal had dropped his hat at the door, and this Nicholas tossed after him.

He was in a great rage and started to come back, but he had felt the force of the young muscles, and saw that Nicholas in the doorway had him at a disadvantage.

"You are a smart boy, you are," he growled huskily, "but I'll get you in a tight place yet! Never you mind! I'll have it out of you—if I ever catch you anywhere," he prudently added.

Nicholas laughed at him and he seemed reluctant to go away, but at last he went off, growling and threatening, and talking to himself. Nicholas stood in the door and watched him until he passed out of sight. The man's features, his figure, his gait, his voice, were as thoroughly impressed upon his memory as if he had known him from boyhood.

Before Nicholas closed the door and locked it against further intrusion, he called for Pont. When the negro appeared, Nicholas asked him if he had seen the tramp. He replied that he had.

"Then," said Nicholas. "take the short cut to the station; get there before him, and see what he does with himself."

Pont started upon a run, and soon disappeared behind the shrubbery. Then Nicholas went back laughing to the lawyer, whom he found very much disturbed.

"I don't like this," said Mr. Bellamy Gold. "You have provoked the man's ill-will, and if I haven't mistaken his character, he would murder you as readily and remorselessly as he would eat a dinner. I don't like it. It's a bad thing."

"Well, it is done, and it can't be helped," said Nicholas.

"It's a bad thing," the lawyer repeated. "He has seen everything."