

"You have been talking pretty loud about using the 'big stick' over on the other side," he went on sternly, "but that big-stick business you will find is a thing that works two ways. Suppose then I should tell you, 'No answer to my question, no credentials.' What would you have to say?"

"I should say," Edestone's face was set, "simply this, Mr. Secretary, if I must speak in the language of the people in order that you may understand me: 'I should like very much to have your backing in the game, but if you are going to sit on the opposite side of the table, I hold three kings and two emperors in my hand, and I challenge you to a show-down.' I should further say that, credentials or no credentials, I am leaving tomorrow on the *Ivernia*, and that inasmuch as I have a taxi at the door, and a special train held for me at the Union Station, I must bid you good-day, and leave you to your watchful waiting, while I work alone."

He rose from his seat, and with a bow started for the door.

"Hold on there, young fellow, keep your coat on!" the Secretary shouted, throwing his head back and laughing loud enough to be heard over on the Virginia shores. "You remind me of one of those gentle breezes out home, which after it