

along the aisle. In an instant he had rallied. But, immediately afterwards, he seemed mysteriously to falter again, turned dizzily about, stood uncertainly in the narrow passage, clinging to a seat as if for support. All this time it was noticeable that he kept his back carefully turned on his antagonist, reeling slightly—but always reeling a little closer to his enemy. The latter looked down at him rather pityingly. "Comin' to find out this is a free country, I reckon, ain't you, sonny?" he sneered drawlingly; "can't set up Sunday-school just when you take a notion, can you?" as he made a mock motion with his foot towards the still swaying figure.

But the swaying was to the ruddy-haired youth what the crouch was to the tiger of the jungle. Quicker than a flash of light, with the sudden swirl that had been practiced on a hundred football fields, maddened with rage and pain, he flung himself, bodily lifted from his feet, into the very arms of the other—through them, too, the wild momentum hurling him on; and in an instant he was on his bosom, his hands clutching at his throat as though they were a steel trap that had just been sprung.

It was all over in a moment—yet not all over either. Forcing the breath from the ruffian, he loosened one hand just long enough to deal him a smashing blow that turned the songster's attention, for the time at