

"But you did not finish telling us——" began Malabar, in protest.

"No, no! Not to-night, please. Not in this house! Not now!"

"But you were going to tell us—were you not?—until this harmless bug—— Why did it frighten you so?"

Professor Caron drew himself erect with some dignity.

"You ask too many questions, Mr. Malabar. It is the failing of the journalist, is it not? I shall answer nothing. It is enough for me to express the desire that we defer all further conversation upon these matters."

"Certainly, Professor, if you wish it," apologized Malabar quickly. "I cannot tell you how much I have enjoyed this interesting evening, and I only hope that I may have the privilege of meeting you again soon——"

"By all means—to-morrow. Perhaps, Mr. Kent, we might take that drive you were good enough to suggest the other day. If you will call for me, we can spin away somewhere in quiet places, and then I promise to reveal to you everything that is on my mind."

So it was arranged. Professor Caron himself escorted them to the door. There was nothing for them to do but to take their sudden dismissal in good grace. They might smile at the whims of their host; but there was no question that he had been greatly upset by something. Keen as their curiosity was to know what lay behind the savant's strange fear, they forbore to question him further, especially as he promised to gratify their curiosity the next afternoon when they went motoring.

"I want you to feel that you can call upon me at