

As soon as George Bolingbrooke saw Jones had reached a place of safety, he suddenly let go his hold, for Ditchfield was almost stifled, so strong was the pressure upon the cervical portion of his respiratory apparatus.

"What do you mean, you big lout, by interfering with me thus?" dark with rage and stagnated blood.

"Calm yourself, my dear fellow," was George Bolingbrooke's mild command. "You were going to punish one who had nothing to do with your mishap."

"Anyway, I'll teach you to mind your own business and not meddle with my affairs," cried Ditchfield, convulsed with jealous anger, as the students, seeing there was one who was not afraid of the cowardly bully, began jeering and laughing at him dreadfully.

With a scowl of infinite wrath, John Ditchfield surveyed his tormentors, seated high upon the window ledges and side-beams and the cross-bar above his head. Then, turning his attention once more to his giant rival, he demanded: "Will you fight?"

"If it so please you," was the quiet rejoinder, "but I don't think we have very much to fight over."

"Come along then to the quad"—the usual place for these meetings.

"No," calmly and firmly. "If I am to fight at all I'll fight it out here on the platform, and the others can look on and see fair play. You are acquainted in this college. You have friends at your back. I am a stranger, but I will rely upon the final men to see justice and fair play. This space is ample when the table is removed."

"Hurrah!" cries little Felcher. "Hooray! Hooray!" whilst MacMahon hustles the table and desk out into the hall.

One of the final men, a very popular young fellow, now descends from his perch in one of the windows, where he has been enjoying this cowardly ruffianism as much as he could enjoy it, and takes his place upon the platform.

His presence is greeted with prolonged cheering as he is the President of the Students' Society, and has therefore the right to preside at all entertainments and meetings of the student body; and is not here an entertainment and a meeting which will eclipse any and everything yet held within the college halls and under their auspices.

He shoves MacMahon and Felcher off the platform, the boys cheering their approval. Then he places the two gladiators at either end of this improvised arena.

One can now study to perfection the chances of the two men.