

sprinkling of well-dressed men and women already dining decorously there. Everything was decorous about the Great Empire Hotel. No thought had been spared in the effort to keep the place quiet and select. The carpets were extra thick, the waiters more than usually soft-footed. On the whole, it was a restful place, though, perhaps, the decorative scheme of its lighting erred just a trifle on the side of the sombre. Still, flowers and ferns were soft and feathery. The band played just loudly enough to stimulate conversation instead of drowning it. At one of the little tables near the door two men were dining. The one had the alertness and vigour which bespeaks the dweller in towns. He was neatly groomed, with just the slight suspicion of the dandy in his dress, though it was obvious at the merest glance that he was a gentleman. His short, sleek hair gave to his head a certain suggestion of strength. The eyes which gleamed behind his gold-rimmed glasses were keen and steady. Most men about town were acquainted with the name of Jim Gurdon, as a generation before had been acquainted with his prowess in the athletic field. Now he was by way of being a barrister, though his ample private means rendered professional work quite unnecessary.

The other man was taller, more loose-limbed, though his spare frame suggested great physical strength. As to the rest, he was dark in a hawk-like way, though