

The speaker's back was towards the door, and in spite of sundry furtive warnings, he continued his narrative. Harry's face turned a shade paler, the laugh died from his lips, as he slowly advanced into the room. One of those who had found the whole matter a huge joke, began to throw off some witticism, at which a few laughed. Harry faced them all, a flash as of steel in his blue eyes, a flush mounting to his face. His bearing was gallant, as it would have been, some of them thought, in battle.

"Look here," he cried, "you fellows had better stop. There are some matters I allow no man to joke about, and I will not even have them mentioned here..."

The subaltern, who was so ashamed of himself, that he felt as if he could have crept into a mouse hole, thought as he heard Harry speak thus, of the red light and its awful signification and the strange sensation he had felt.

Some present were disposed to resent Harry's tone his use of the words allow, etc., and informed him that none was going to ask his leave to say what they pleased. One of the jokers, an innately low fellow, who should never have been amongst gentlemen prefaced a new and profane witticism, with an oath. Harry sprang towards him, the steel blue eyes dangerous now. He raised his hand to strike, then re-training himself let it drop, but said slowly and deliberately instead:

"If you dare to speak like that again, I'll knock you down."

Every one knew that Harry meant what he said, and the man who had been capable of violating every canon of decency, was not so brave as his uniform might have led people to suppose. An uproar arose, however, during which Harry stood at bay like a young lion, though as far as he knew, the sentiment of the whole company was against him. The subaltern suddenly sprang to his feet, and planted himself beside Harry.

"I say," he said, "I behaved like a cad in this affair, following a fellow about and bringing that story here, but I'll be dashed if I don't stand by Harry against the crowd."

"We're all with him!" cried several voices—all except the two or three.