Multiple Wodehouse I by P. G. Wodehouse

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The Wire Pullers

It is a splendid thing to be seventeen and have one's hair up and feel that one cannot be kissed indiscriminately anymore by sticky boys and horrid old gentlemen who "knew you when you were that high, my dear," or who nursed you on their knees when you were a baby. When I came down to dinner for the first time in a long frock and with my hair in a bun there was a terrific sensation. Father said, "My dear Joan!" and gasped. The butler looked volumes of respectful admiration. The tweeny, whom I met on the stairs, giggled like an idiot. Bob, my brother, who is a beast, rolled on the floor and pretended to faint. Altogether it was an event. Mr. Garnet, who writes novels and things and happened to be stopping with us for the cricket, asked me to tell him exactly how it felt to have one's hair up for the first time. He said it would be of the utmost value to him to know, as it would afford him a lurid insight into the feminine mind.

I said: "I feel as if I were listening to beautiful music played very softly on a summer night, and eating heaps of strawberries with plenty of cream."

He said, "Ah!"

But somehow I was not satisfied. The dream of my life was to spend the winter in town, as soon as I had put my hair up, and go to dances and theatres and things, and regularly come out properly, instead of lingering on in this out-of-the-way place (which is ducky in the spring and summer, but awful in the winter), with nobody to be looked at by except relations and father and the curate and village doctors, and that sort of people.

We knew lots of nice people in town who would have given me a splendid time; but father was always too lazy to go. He hates London really. What he likes is to be out of doors all day and every day all the year round with his gun or rod. And he loves cricket, too. So do I. That is to say, I like watching it. But you can't watch cricket in the winter.

It really wasn't fair of father to keep me stowed away in a place like Much Middlefold now that I was grown up. I spoke to him about it after dinner.

I said, "Father, dear, you are going to take me to town this winter, aren't you?"

He shied. It is the only word to express it.

"Er -- well, my dear -- well, we'll see, we'll see."

Poor old father, he does hate London so. It always brings on his rheumatism or something, and he spends most of his time there, I believe, when he is really obliged to go up on business, mooning about Kensington Gardens, trying to make believe it's really the country. But there are times when one feels that other people's objections must give way. When a girl is pretty (I believe I am) and has nice frocks (I know I have), it is perfectly criminal not

to let her go and show them in town. And I love dancing. I want to go to dances every night. And in Much Middlefold we have only the hunt ball, and perhaps, if we're lucky, two or three other dances. And you generally have to drive ten miles to them.

So I was firm.

I said, "Father, dear, why can't we settle it now, and then you could write and get a house in good time?"

He jibbed this time. He sat in his chair and said nothing.

"Will you, father?"

"But the expense -- "

"You can let the Manor."

"And the land; I ought to be looking after it."

"Oh, but the tenant man who takes the house will do that. Won't you write tonight, father, dear? I'll write if you'll tell me what to say. Then you needn't bother to move."

Here an idea seemed to strike him. I noticed with regret that his face brightened.

"I'll tell you what, my dear," he said; "we will make a bargain."

"Yes," I said. I knew something horrid was coming.

"If I make fifty in the match on Monday, we will celebrate the event by spending the winter in town, much as I shall dislike it. Those wet pavements always bring on my rheumatism; don't know why. Wet grass never does."

"And if you don't make fifty, father?"

"Why then," he replied, cheerfully, "we'll stay at home and enjoy ourselves."

The match that was to be played on Monday was against Sir Edward Cave's team. Sir Edward was a nasty little man who had made a great deal of money somehow or other and been knighted for it. He always got together a house party to play cricket, and it was our great match. Sir Edward was not popular in the county, but he took a great deal of trouble with the cricket, and everybody was glad to play in his park or watch their friends playing.

Father always played for Much Middlefold in this match. He had been very good in his time, and I heard once that, if only the captain had not had so many personal friends for whom he wanted places in the team, father would have played for Oxford against Cambridge in his last year. But, of course, he was getting a little old now for cricket, and the Castle Cave match was the only one in which he played.

He had made twenty-five last year against Sir Edward Cave's team, and everybody had said how well he played, so I thought he might easily do better this year and make double that score.

"And if you make fifty you really will take me to town? You'll promise faithfully?"
"Foi de gentilhomme! The word of a Romney, my dear Joan; and, mind, if I do not make fifty the subject must be dropped for the present year of grace. Next year the discussion may be reopened; but for this winter there must be no further attempt at coaxing. You know that I am as clay in your hands, young woman, and you must not take an unfair advantage of my weakness."
I promised.
"And you really will try, father, to make fifty?"
"I can promise you that, my dear. It would take more than the thought of the horrors of London to make me get out on purpose."
So the thing was settled.
I went to see Bob about it before going to bed. Bob is a Freshman at Magdalen, so, naturally, he is much more conceited than any three men have any right to be. I suppress him when I can, but lately, in the excitement of putting my hair up, I had forgotten to give him much attention, and he had had a bad relapse.
I found him in the billiard room with Mr. Garnet. He was sprawling over the table, trying to reach his ball without the rest, and looking ridiculous. I waited till he had made his stroke and missed the red ball, which he ought to have pocketed easily.
Then I said, "Bob!"
He said, "Well, what?"
I think he must have been losing, for he was in a very bad temper.
"I want to speak to you.
"Go ahead, then."
I looked at Mr. Garnet. He understood at once.
"I'm just going to run upstairs for a second, Romney," he said. "I want my pipe. Cigarettes are bad for the soul. I shan't be long."
He disappeared.
"Well?" said Bob.
"Father says that if he makes fifty on Monday against the Cave he'll take me to London for the winter."
Bob lit another cigarette and threw the match out of the window.
"You needn't hurry to pack," he said.
"Don't you think father will make fifty?"
"He hasn't an earthly."
"He made twenty-five last year.
"Yes; but this year the Cave men have got a new pro. I don't suppose you have ever heard of him, but his name's Simpson -- Billy Simpson. He

played for Sussex all last season, and was eleventh in the first-class bowling averages. The governor may have been the dickens of a bat in his day, but I'll bet he doesn't stand up to Billy for many overs. As for getting fifty -- "
Words failed him. I felt like a cat. I could have scratched somebody -- anybody; I did not care whom. No wonder father had made the bargain so cheerfully. He knew he could only lose by a miracle.
"Oh, Bob!" I said. My despair must have been tremendous, for it touched even Bob. He said, "Buck up!"
I said, "I won't buck up. I think everybody's horrid."
"Look here," said Bob, anxiously -- I could see by his face that he thought I was going to cry -- "look here, chuck playing the giddy goat and going into hysterics and that sort of thing, and I'll give you a straight tip."
"Well?"
"This man Simpson -- I have it on the highest authority -- is in love with your maid -- what's her name?"
"Saunders?"
"Saunders. At present it's a close thing between him and a chap in the village. So far it's anybody's race. Billy leads at present, because it's summer and he's a celebrity in the cricket season. But he must pull it off before the winter or he'll be pipped, because the other Johnny plays footer and is a little tin god in these parts directly footer begins. Why don't you get Saunders to square Billy and make him bowl the governor some tosh which he can whack about?"
"Bob," I cried, "you're an angel, and I'm going to kiss you!"
"Here, I say!" protested Bob. "Break away!"
While I was kissing him Mr. Garnet came back.
"They never do that to me," I heard him murmur, plaintively.
I spoke to Saunders while she was brushing my hair.
I said, "Saunders!"
"Yes, miss."
"Er -- oh, nothing."
"Yes, miss."
There was a pause.
"Saunders!" I said.
"Yes, miss."
"Do you know Simpson, the cricket professional at Castle Cave?"
"Yes, miss."
Her face, reflected in the glass in front of me, grew pinker. It is always rather pink.
"He is very fond of you, isn't he?"

"He says so, miss."
She simpered -- visibly.
"He would do anything for you, wouldn't he?"
"He says so, miss." Then, in a burst of confidence, "He said so in poetry once, miss."
We paused again.
"Saunders!" I said.
"Yes, miss."
"Would you like that almost new hat of mine? The blue chiffon one with the pink roses?"
She beamed. I believe her mouth watered.
"Oh, yes, miss."
Then I set out my dark scheme. I explained to her, having first shown her how necessary it was to keep it all quite secret, that a visit to town that winter depended principally on whether Mr. Simpson bowled well or badly in the match on Monday. She held Simpson in the hollow of her hand. Therefore she must prevail upon him to bowl father a sufficient quantity of easy balls to allow him to make fifty runs. In return for these services he would win Saunders's favor, and Saunders would win the hat she coveted and also a trip to London.
Saunders quite saw it.
She said, "Yes, miss."
"You must make him bowl badly," I said.
"I'll do what I can, miss. And I do really think that Mr. Simpson will act as I tells him to."
Once more she simpered.
Father came back in very good spirits from practising at the village nets next day.
"I was almost in my old form, my dear," he said. "I was watching them all the way. Why, I am beginning to think I shall make that fifty after all."
I said, "So am I, father, dear."
Saunders had stirring news on the following night. It seemed that Mr. Simpson was in an awkward position.
"Sir Edward, miss," said Saunders, "who always behaves very handsome, Mr. Simpson says, has offered to give him a ten-pound note if he bowls so well that nobody of the Middlefold side makes fifty against Castle Cave."
Here was a blow. I could not imagine any love being proof against such a bribe. London seemed to get farther away as I listened.
"And what does Simpson -- "

"Well, Mr. Simpson and me, miss, we talked it over, and I said, 'Oh, if you prefer Sir Edward's old money to a loving heart,' I said, 'why, then,' I said, 'all is over between us,' I said, 'and there's others I could mention who worships the ground I tread on, and wouldn't refuse me nothing,' I said. And Mr. Simpson, he said ten pounds was a lot of money and wasn't to be found growing on every bush. So I just tossed my head and left him, miss; but I shall be seeing him tomorrow, and then we shall find out if he still thinks the same.

The next bulletin of Mr. Simpson's state of mind was favorable. After a day of suspense Saunders was able to inform me that all was well.

"I walked out with Mr. Harry Biggs, miss, and Mr. Simpson he met us and he looked so black, and when I saw him again he said he'd do it, he said. Ho, he is jealous of me, miss."

Mr. Harry Biggs, I supposed, was the footballer rival.

I slept well that night and dreamed that I was dancing with Saunders at a house in Belgrave Square, while Mr. Simpson, who looked exactly like Bob, stood in a corner and stared at us.

It was a beautiful day on the Monday. I wore my pink sprigged muslin with a pink sash and the pink chiffon hat Aunt Edith sent from Paris. Fortunately, the sun was quite hot, so I was able to have my pink parasol up the whole time, and words can't express its tremendous duckiness.

The Cave team were practising when we arrived, and lots of people had come. The Cave man, who was wearing a new Panama, met us at the gate.

"Ah, Sir William," he said, fussing up to father, "you're looking well. Come to knock our bowling about, eh? How do you do, Miss Joan? We're getting quite the young lady now, Sir William, eh? quite the young lady."

"How do you do, Sir Edward?" I said in my number four manner, the distant but gently tolerant. (It wants practice, but I can do it quite well now.)

"I hear you have a new professional this year," said father. "Which is he?"

"Ah, yes, yes; Simpson. You have probably seen his name in the papers. He did well for Sussex last season. There he is, standing by the tent. That tall young fellow."

I eyed Mr. Simpson with interest. He was a nice-looking young man, but gloomy. He was like a man with a secret sorrow. And I don't wonder. I suppose a bowler hates to have to bowl badly on purpose. And there was the ten pounds, too. But he must have thought it worthwhile, or he wouldn't have done it. I could not help wondering what was Saunders's particular attraction. Perhaps I don't see her at her best, reflected over my head in the looking-glass.

Much Middlefold won the toss, and father and another man went in to bat. I was awfully excited. I was afraid, when it actually came to the point, Mr. Simpson's blood would be up to such an extent that he would forget all about Saunders's attractiveness. The other man took the first ball. I could see that he was very much afraid of Mr. Simpson. He looked quite green. He made a huge swipe at the ball and missed it, but it didn't hit the wickets. Then he hit one right into Sir Edward's hands, and Sir Edward let it fall and puffed out his cheeks as if he was annoyed, as I suppose he was. And then Mr. Simpson bowled very fast, and knocked two of the stumps out of the ground.

"It isn't playing the game, don't you know," I heard one of our side say, "bringing a man like Billy Simpson into a country cricket match." He was sitting on the grass not far from me with his pads on. He looked very unhappy. I suppose he was going in to bat soon. "He's too good, don't you know. We shall all be out in half an hour. It spoils all the fun of the thing. They wouldn't like it if we got a lot of first-class pros to come and bat for us. Tell you what -- it's a beastly shame!"

The next man missed his first ball; it went past the wicket-keeper. They ran one run, so that now father had to bat against Mr. Simpson.

"If old Romney doesn't do something," said the man who thought Mr. Simpson too good for country cricket, "we're in the cart. He used to be a rattling bat in his time, and he might stop the rot."

He did. I was watching Mr. Simpson very carefully, but I couldn't see that he bowled any differently to father. Still, he must have done, because father hit the ball right into the tent, close to where I was sitting. And the next ball, which was the last of the over, he hit to the boundary again. Everybody clapped hard, and the man sitting on the grass near me said that, if he could keep it up, he would "knock Billy off his length, and then they'd have to have a change."

"And then," said he, "we'll have them on toast."

The match went on in a jerky sort of way. That is to say, father continued to score as if the bowling was the easiest he had ever seen, and the others simply went to the wickets and were instantly destroyed by Mr. Simpson.

"The fact is," said the young man near me, cryptically, "we're all rabbits, and old Romney is the only man on the side who could hit a football." He had himself been in, and been bowled second ball.

The last man was now at the wickets, and it was getting frightfully exciting, for father had made forty-eight. The whole score was only ninety-three. Everybody hoped that the last man would stop in long enough to let father make his fifty -- specially myself. I was in such a state of suspense that I dug quite a trench with my parasol. I felt as if I were going to faint.

The other bowler, not Mr. Simpson, was bowling. Father was battling, and he had the whole six balls to make his two runs off.

This bowler had not taken any wickets so far, and I could see that he meant to get father, which would be better than bowling any number of the rabbits, as the young man called them. And father, knowing that he was near his fifty, but not knowing quite how near, was playing very carefully. So it was not till the fifth ball of the over that he managed to make anything, and then it was only one. So now he had made forty-nine. And then that horrid, beastly idiot of a last man went and spooned up the easiest catch, and Sir Edward Cave, of all men, caught it.

I went into a deserted corner and bellowed.

Oh, but it was all right after all, because father said that forty-nine not out against one of the best bowlers in England was enough for his simple needs, and that, so far as our bargain was concerned, it should count as fifty.

So I am going to town for the winter, and Mr. Simpson has got his ten-pound note, and will marry Saunders, I suppose, if he hurries and manages it before the football season comes; and father is as pleased as possible with his forty-nine, because he says it restores his faith in himself and relieves him of a haunting fear that he was becoming a veteran; and the entire servants' hall is moaning with envy at Saunders's blue chiffon hat with pink roses.

The Pro: (A Cricket Story)

I believe this story to be fictitious. It was told me by a man, a perfect stranger, whose eye gleamed with untruthfulness. He told it to me in the knowledge that I would be unable to take any steps towards verifying his statements, for I had already informed him that I was only resting in the village for a few hours, and intended to do another twenty miles on my bicycle before nightfall.

My own belief is that the man was a novelist, and that he told me as a true story what was really the plot of his next romance. Before using, in fact, he tried it, as the saying is, upon the dog. If this was the case, he will now be sorry that he spoke. The entire contents of this magazine are protected by copyright, and if he attempts to produce the story now there will be trouble.

I had stopped in the course of my bicycle tour to lunch in a village, the name of which I never learnt. After lunch, I wandered out with my pipe till I came to a field where cricket was being played. A tall, thin man was bowling very slowly to a huge rustic, and the latter, in spite of spirited efforts, was failing altogether to hit the ball. The last ball of the over took his leg stump. And it was during the pause between his exit and the entrance of his successor that the untruthful man came and sat beside me.

"Cricketer?" he asked.

"Yes," I said.

"Fine game.

I agreed. He lit his pipe.

"Know who that is?" he inquired, nodding towards the tall bowler.

I explained that I was a stranger, merely passing through his beautiful little village. It seemed to me that the statement relieved him.

"That's Fendall."

"I don't think I know," I said.

"I was forgetting. You would probably know him better as Gray. Though he got his blue as Fendall. You must remember Gray? Bowled for Middlesex one year."

I thought I recalled the name. After some searchings of the brain, I placed the man. His disappearance from first-class cricket had caused something of a sensation at the time. After one brilliant year, which landed him second in the bowling averages, he had forsaken the game.

"So that's Gray!" I said.

I had always had an idea that he was a much shorter man. But up to the present I had had no cause to doubt my companion's word. Reflection came later. Thinking it over, I don't believe the man was Gray at all. However--
"His," said my friend, "is a rather curious story. If you think it wouldn't bore--"
"Bang it out," I said agreeably.
And he proceeded to bang as follow:
* * * * *
Desmond Fendall proposed to Alice Bond during the luncheon interval of the third day of the 'Varsity match in the little balcony at the top of Lord's pavilion. He had taken her up there ostensibly to enable her to obtain a bird's-eye view of the ground, which, he said, with perfect justice, presented a quaint and beautiful appearance when seen from above during the after-luncheon promenade. His real reason for selecting this spot was that he knew it would be empty at that time. And Miss Bond, who saw through his scheme with the keen penetration which is the property of the modern young lady, had agreed with a readiness which should have encouraged him, if he had been cool enough to observe it.
"Jolly, isn't it?" he said, as they reached the balcony and surveyed the kaleidoscope beneath.
"Offly cunning," agreed Miss Bond. She was from New York, where the duchesses come from. Her father, Mr. Paul Bond, was a power on Wall Street. By means of a series of big deals, each perceptibly shadier than the last, he had amassed a very large fortune. He was now reaping the reward of wickedness, for his wife and daughter, stimulated by the figures in his pass-book, had shanghaied the poor man, and landed him at the Hotel Cecil before he knew what was happening to him. After which they went out and did a little shopping.
A dinner at the house of a mutual friend had made them acquainted with Fendall. And Fendall had done the rest. Skipping the intermediate pages of their love-story, we find ourselves on the little balcony of Lord's pavilion, with Alice leaning over the balustrade, wondering why the man does not go at it bravely, and Fendall breathing on her brown back hair, conscious only of feeling a most awful idiot, don't you know.
After a long silence, Fendall spoke. "I say," he said. "By Jove, I love you! I mean--What?"
"Mr. Fendall!"
"It's a fact," continued that wreck, miserably. "I know--not worthy-- ordinary sort of chap like me--what I mean is, will you be my wife-- Alice?"

"Why, of course I will, silly," said the lady briskly. "Let's go and fix it up with Pop."

Fendall folded her in his arms, to the great contentment of some scores of observers on the turf below, who, having noticed Desmond's blazer, were scanning the balcony with field-glasses to see which of the Oxford team it contained.

An acute newspaper-man, with his finger on the public pulse, wired an account of the incident to his journal, which came out that evening with the following headlines:

THE LADY AT LORD'S. TENDER INTERLUDE AT 'VARSITY MATCH. DID SHE ACCEPT HIM? AMOROUS OXONIAN POPS IN PAVILION.

No names, however, were mentioned.

"And now," said Alice, "let's go and find Pop. You haven't met him yet, have you? Well, you go and hunt through the crowd till you strike a man who looks as if he had no friend on earth but a yellow dog, and that'll be Poppa. He don't enjoy cricket, Pop don't."

"Before seeing your--er--Pop," said Desmond, "I should like to have a word with mine. It would be as well just to find out how I stand with him. I mean, your father will want to know how I propose to support you, and so on; and I haven't a penny except what my father allows me. So I think I'll call on Mr. Bond to-morrow. And, in the meantime, I don't think I should say anything to him if I were you. Let it be our secret, darling."

Once more the sun flashed on a hundred up-turned field-glasses. Then the bell rang for the clearing of the ground, and Desmond had to get ready to go out and bowl.

He went home that night in an uplifted state of mind. The relief of having won Alice made him bowl as he had seldom bowled before. The wicket had crumbled a little at the other end, and he made the ball leap from the pitch like a live thing. His luck was thoroughly in that day. Men took catches off his bowling which on any other day they would have dropped without shame. Nothing could go wrong. When the Cambridge hitter showed signs of knocking him off his length, deep mid-on, doubling himself backwards over the pavilion rails, caught him with two finger-tips of the left hand. And when the Light Blue captain settled down to play for a draw, the Oxford wicket-keep, wriggling round the stumps with the earnestness of a Boneless Wonder, brought off a marvellous catch a quarter of the way down the pitch. He finished up his afternoon's work by clean bowling the last two men with successive balls.

Oxford won with a hundred runs to spare, and Desmond had to bow his acknowledgements from the window of the dressing-room.

Desmond lived with his parents in Ovington Square, S.W., that genteel haven from the storm of modern hustle. His father was a man of no profession and considerable fortune. As he drove home that evening, his head fizzing with the day's doings, Desmond felt that he could count on obtaining from him an addition to his allowance which would enable him to approach Mr. Paul Bond in a practical manner. He never had denied him anything, and there seemed no reason why he should begin now.

Coming down to the drawing-room after dressing for dinner, he found Mr. Fendall there alone.

"Your mother has gone to bed, Desmond," said his father. "She was not feeling well."

"Oh, I'm awfully sorry. Anything much the matter?"

"A temporary headache. Nothing more. Come, let us go in, my boy. I have something to say to you of no small importance." Mr. Fendall always spoke in this cultured way--this was due to Blood. The Fendalls had come over by the same boat as the Conqueror.

"I was glad to read of your success this afternoon, Desmond. I see the paper says that you mixed them up well, and frequently had the opposition strikers scratching like rabbits. I am not sufficiently abreast of the English of this generation to gather the precise meaning of the remarks, but they sound complimentary."

"Oh, they only mean that I rattled them with googlies, rather," explained Desmond.

"I see," said Mr. Fendall.

"What was it you wanted to speak to me about, father?"

"It was this, my boy. You are a Fendall, and will consequently bear the blow with fortitude, so I will not endeavour to lessen it with soothing words. Briefly, we are ruined."

As his father had said, Desmond was a Fendall.

"Yes?" he said. "How's that?"

"Some months ago I was induced to put the bulk of my fortune into a speculation. I was informed that it would be a profitable speculation. And so it was."

"But I thought you said--"

"But not to me. It was profitable to the other man. I lost everything."

"Everything!"

"Well," Mr. Fendall waved a depreciatory hand, "I speak in a loose sense when I say everything. We shall have possibly a bare thousand or two

thousand a year. Not more. For myself I care little. I can bear a life of poverty, I fancy. Your mother is also reconciled to the prospect of penury. It is with regard to you, my boy, that we are exercised. I fear it will be a shock to you, Desmond, but it must be faced. I shall be able to continue your allowance, but I am afraid you will have to look about for some profession as a means of earning a living. We Fendalls have rarely had to do such a thing in the past, but necessity compels. I believe there are many quite passable professions. I will leave you to select one at your leisure."

"All right," said Desmond. "By the way, father, what was the speculation you went into?"

"It was connected with a mine. A good mine, but incomplete. It had no gold in it."

"Who was the man who let you in for it?"

"He was an American. From what I gather, an excellent man of business. He is a Mr. Paul Bond, of New York."

(At this point my companion paused dramatically, and I could see him placing a mental row of stars below that last sentence. After a moment's silence, during which I relit my pipe, he resumed his narrative).

Desmond's feelings, said he, when he heard this dramatic piece of news may be imagined. The day is warm, and you might go to sleep if I turned this story into an analysis of the emotions of those concerned. With your leave, therefore, we will stick to the purely narrative aspect of the tale. Whatever emotions he had, he did not show them. He was a Fendall and the Fendalls did not show emotion. He contented himself with asking his father to pass the walnuts, which the old gentleman obligingly did. The conversation then turned with well-bred ease to the current piece at His Majesty's Theatre.

After dinner Desmond withdrew to his room, and set himself to think things over. The Fendalls were not much of a family for thinking-- Blood was their long suit, not Brains--and the problem of what he was to do in the immediate and the more distant future kept him up long past his usual bedtime.

At last, after carefully weighing every other alternative, he decided to write to Alice explaining that he was now hardly in a position to offer himself as an eligible suitor, owing to the unfortunate accident of his father's speculation.

He did not mention who was responsible for the fact that the speculation had proved unfortunate. Alice was a pure-minded girl, and her parents had always carefully kept from her the secrets of her father's Wall Street life. To tell her all would have given her great pain, and this Desmond vowed he would never do. He concluded his letter by saying he would release her from her engagement if she wished it, but that he hoped she would not; and that if

she were willing to wait for him, he would work for her with all the accumulated energy of generations of ancestors who had never done a hand's turn. Having read this over and corrected, with the aid of a dictionary, one or two spelling mistakes which had crept into the text, he went out and posted it at the pillar-box at the top of the square. It was just in time for the three o'clock collection.

Thinking that he had exercised his brain sufficiently for one night, he postponed the choice of a career till the morrow, and turned in.

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Fendall at breakfast next morning as he began to assail his rasher, "and what have you decided to do? In what particular profession are you going to amass laurels to adorn the family name?"

"The fact is, I haven't quite settled yet, father. Can you suggest anything?"

Mr. Fendall thoughtfully smalmed a section of his bacon with mustard.

"If you were not handicapped by a public school and University education," he said, "I could suggest many professions. But I fear that your up-bringing has hardly fitted you for them. There is the Church, of course."

"Couldn't preach for nuts," said Desmond.

"Finance again. There is much money to be made in that branch of modern life." Here Mr. Fendall sighed reminiscently. "But there, too, you are handicapped."

"I tell you what I shall do, father," said Desmond suddenly. "I'm going to be a pro."

"A--? You said, what?"

A pro. Professional cricketer. Middlesex will take me on like a shot. At least, they've always wanted me to play for them so far. Thank goodness I was decently educated at a good public school. Think what a hole I should be in if I hadn't been taught to bowl and field property."

"But, Desmond, the family name! Can a Fendall become a professional cricketer?"

"I shall adopt a thingummy."

"What is a thingummy?"

"You know what I mean. Nom de plume, isn't it? An alias, don't you know."

"Ah," said his father, relieved. "Then the outlook is not so grey."

"Gray!" said Desmond. "That'll be top-hole. Quite a good name to play under."

So D. Fendall, Esq., the Dark Blue, dropped out of first-class cricket: and in their match against Surrey, in the second week of July, the Middlesex committee gave a trial to a new professional, called Gray. After he had taken eight Surrey wickets in the second innings and won the game for his side, Gray received an offer for the lucrative post of sub-deputy-under-acting-

assistant-vice-secretary of the Blankshire C.C., always on the look-out for promising young men (from other countries). But he preferred to play as a professional for Middlesex.

(Here my informant paused with the remark that talking always did make him thirsty. He told me the rest of the story over a cooling tankard outside the village inn.)

We now, he said, leave Desmond Fendall for a space, and return to Miss Alice Bond.

The Bonds had left London at the end of the season, and the beginning of August found them established in a house in the country. While in town Mr. Bond, with his usual astuteness, had gathered in as an ally that eminent member of the unemployed, Lord Teddy Trimble. In exchange for a comfortable home Lord Teddy had given his services, and succeeded in taking the Bonds to a great many houses which, but for him, would have been closed to them.

"In a strange country," said Mr. Bond, "you must have a friendly native to do the wise guide act."

And, for a consideration, Lord Teddy had agreed to take up this role. He was now in the country with them.

"Look here," Mr. Bond was saying to him one lovely morning in the first week of August, "let's get this square. At present you have me guessing. I don't care for myself. My own society's good enough for me. But my wife and Alice have got that hankering to mix with the Upper Ten, so, I suppose, they've got to do it. See here. You corralled Lord This and Lady What's-her-name and Sir Everard Whatever- they-called-him when we were in London. And you did it without straining yourself. Now what's the matter with these country guys that you can't put the hypnotic eye on to them, too? Here have we been here a fortnight and well---- You can see for yourself. The front steps ain't worn through by the haughty and exclusive feet of titled visitors, are they now? What's it all mean? Haven't you got a pull in this ward, or what is it?"

"It's a little difficult to explain, Mr. Bond," replied Lord Teddy. "You see in London people are--shall we say, more friendly? More sensible is perhaps the word. They realise that a man has not to be born in a place to be a pleasant companion. But in the country the English county family is unique. You have nothing like it on your side, I believe. Everybody round here has stuck in the same place since the Stone Age, and they can't see that a man isn't necessarily a pariah because he has only just come among them. They like to wait a few dozen years and keep an eye on him. If he seems all right at the end of that time they call, one by one, very cautiously. If an angel

came to settle here they would wait and watch him to see if he hadn't got his wings from Clarkson's. It is hard on Mrs. Bond and Miss Alice, but I really do not see what can be done."
"But, great Roosevelt! you don't mean to say we've got to stay in this desert all along till the cows come home! Why----"
Through the half-open door came the sound of a piano. Miss Bond was singing in the drawing-room.
"Give my regards to Broadway!"
Second line inaudible.
"Please remember me to Forty-second street, and--"
Mr. Bond went to the door and shut it. "I can't stand it," he said. "It makes me home-sick. See here, Trimble, either we rope in these exclusive guys quick, or I go straight back to old New York. Which is it to be?"
This remark stimulated the brain of Lord Teddy to a painful activity. If Mr. Bond left England his occupation would be gone; and he had not the slightest desire to give up so snug a situation. Besides, he half thought of marrying Miss Alice Bond.
So Lord Teddy Trimble had a violent brain-wave, and proceeded to speak wisdom.
"I have it," he said. "What you must do is to get up a cricket-week."
"What's a cricket-week?"
"Why, get together a houseful of men and play matches with the people round here. It's the only way. Fortunately this is a cricket neighbourhood. They'll come and play with anyone if they think he's likely to give them a good game on a good wicket. Then if you beat them, they'll come again next year."
"I shan't be here next year," said Mr. Bond, firmly.
"Well, anyhow, it'll break the ice, and that's what you want. The great thing is to win, though. If we don't we might as well not have played. We have got to justify our existence."
It was pretty to see the way Lord Teddy identified his interests with those of his host.
"Give me a free hand," he continued, "and I'll get together a decent lot. It'll be rather short notice, so I may not be able to make the team as strong as it might be. Then I'll arrange a match for them. Old Ellershaw, of the Priory, has his week on in a few days. He'll be ready enough to put on an extra match. I'll see about getting the field into order. It used to be a cricket-ground last year, I've heard, so there should be no difficulty. Oh, and there's another thing. We shall want someone to bowl."
"Bowl? Ah, I take you. You mean to pitch."

"If you prefer it. We must have down a pro."
Mr. Bond took up the day's paper.
"Let's have the best that's to be got," said he. "Here's the list of averages. Write to the man at the top. Offer him his own price."
"Who is it?" asked his lordship.
"His name's Gray," said Mr. Bond.
(My companion paused again to insert another row of mental stars. After a pull at his mug, he proceeded.)
"You will be saying to yourself," he resumed, "that Middlesex would never have let off their best bowler to go and play in a country match. But it happened that the county, which, as you know, has a small fixture-card, was without a match in the earlier half of the week for which Gray had been invited, and he was consequently enabled to accept.
Had I not promised to refrain from describing Desmond's emotions, I should say his heart leaped when he read Lord Teddy's letter. For weeks he had been chafing at his inforced separation from Alice, and here, at last was his chance of seeing her. He wrote two letters that night, one to Lord Teddy, accepting his invitation, the other to Alice, informing her of what had happened, and begging her to treat him with a statuesque calm when witnesses were present, as it would get the M.C.C. a bad name if a professional sent down by them were observed to embrace or be embraced by the daughter of the house.
Lord Teddy, spending Mr. Bond's money lavishly on telegrams, got together the rest of his team, and arranged the match with Mr. Ellershaw.
"They're rather a scratch lot," he told Mr. Bond. "The best of the men I asked couldn't come. But with Gray to bowl, we should worry through all right."
In due season the match-day arrived.
"See here," said Mr. Bond to Desmond in the morning. "It occurs to me that if you're such a champion at this game it won't do for you to play under your own name, or we shall have the other side hollering that it isn't fair."
"Very well, sir. I'll play as Fendall."
"Say, why do you choose that name, young man?"
"The name occurred to me," said Desmond.
"Queer. I knew a man named Fendall. One of your real first family men. Just the sort of man Mrs. Bond would have been crazy to know. But-- well, I guess this don't interest you, young fellow. Call yourself Fendall, if it makes you feel good."
"You are very kind," said Desmond.
Lord Teddy, who was captaining the side, won the toss, and decided to bat. The wicket looked good, and there seemed a chance of a big total. But it

soon became evident that there were all the salient points of a whited sepulchre about that wicket. On the surface it was good and true, but it had a treacherous heart. Little patches began to appear on it.

Balls which should have come along stump-high, sprang up, hit the batsman on the fingers, and found a resting-place in the slip's hands. Three men fell in this way in rapid succession. The next two, seeing that the wicket was playing tricks, attempted to force the game, and were caught in the long-field.

Desmond, watching the ball with the care bred of a couple of seasons of first-class cricket, stayed at one end, while the rest of the team walked to and from the other crease. When the last wicket fell, he had made forty-one, and was not out. The total was one hundred and twenty- three.

The visiting side put up fifteen for the loss of one wicket, and then the luncheon interval arrived.

After luncheon Alice and Desmond met by appointment in a secluded spot near the house.

Were it not for the fact that I have pledged myself to abstain from emotional analysis, I could put in some fine descriptive work at this point. When one remembers that the two had not seen each other for a weary stretch of weeks, one will readily understand that they---- However, suffice it to say that they were in the middle of a conversation of peculiar interest when Desmond from the corner of his eye observed Mr. Paul Bond approaching.

"Get behind that tree," he said, "quick. Here comes your father." Alice vanished.

From his manner, Mr. Bond appeared to have seen nothing.

"Well, young man," he said, "from what I hear this game's in an interesting state."

"Very interesting," said Desmond.

"I want a word with you in your capacity of champion pitcher on our team. See here, now. You seem a fairly discreet young man, so I guess I don't mind telling you why I want to win this game so particular. My wife has a fancy to mingle with these county families, and it seems that the quickest way to do it is to beat them at cricket. So its up to you to pitch your level best after the intermission, and if we win I'll put another ten pounds on top of what I'm paying you. See?"

It was here that Desmond Fendall got his Bright Idea. The Fendalls were not given to getting ideas as a rule, which makes it all the more remarkable.

"Mr. Bond," he said, "I do not want your money."

"Then you ought to exhibit yourself in vaudeville," said the other. "You're a freak."

"When I say that, I mean I want something more than money."
"Yes?"
"And that is--your daughter."
Mr. Bond exhibited an almost Fendallian sang froid.
"You don't want much, young man, do you?" he said.
"We love one another."
"I didn't know you'd met."
"We have been engaged since the beginning of July."
"I'm getting some nice new friends in the old country, sure I am. Young man, I appreciate Gall, but it won't do. You must not scratch in that alkali patch."
"Very well," said Desmond. "Then we shan't win this match."
For the first time Mr. Bond betrayed some consternation.
"Young man, this begins to resemble a hold-up."
He reflected.
"How would you propose to support my daughter?"
"I was thinking that you would come in there."
"Oh, you were thinking that, were you?"
"You see, Mr. Bond, but for you, I should be well off. You--well, we won't say swindled--you deprived my father of his fortune by means of a business artifice, so it's only fair that some of it should come back into the family."
"What! Was old man Fendall your father?"
"He was. Indeed, he still is."
"So you see, Poppa," said Miss Bond, coming out from behind her tree, "if it's all true (and I believe every word Desmond says), you ought to pay him back. Desmond told me the whole thing, only he didn't mention your name, and I think you were offly wicked."
"But," added Desmond, magnanimously, "it is not too late for forgiveness. Be a sportsman, Mr. Bond. Hand us back what you got from my father, with your blessing. Why," he said, warming up as he proceeded, "if you could see that poor old man, once accustomed to every luxury, steeped now in poverty, even you would be touched. You left him a bare two thousand a year, Mr. Bond."
The financier started.
"No, no, don't say that. He hasn't only got two thousand! Great Tammany Hall! I didn't figure to make the man a beggar."
"It is only too true," said Desmond. "And remember what you were saying to me only this morning, what a help my father would be to you in society, and how pleased Mrs. Bond would be to know him."
The financier wavered.

"Come along, Pop," said his daughter briskly. "It's got to be done, so do it smiling. Pass out that blessing, and let's all be happy."

For a moment the man from Wall Street hesitated. Then in a low but distinct voice he said, "I consent."

* * * * *

That was the story. As I said before, I believe the man to have been a wilful perverter of the truth. He had an untruthful eye.

The Reformation of Study Sixteen

"What they want, of course," said Clowes, "is exercise."
"They get out of that with their beastly doctor's certificates," said Trevor. "That's the worst of this place. Any slacker who wants to shirk games goes to some rotten doctor in the holidays, swears he's got a weak heart or something, and you can't get at him. You have to sit and look on while he lounges about doing nothing, when he might be playing for the house. I bet Bellwood and Davies would both make good enough forwards if one could only get them on to the field. They're heavy enough."
"I don't wonder, considering the amount they eat and the little exercise they take. I should say there was about twice as much of Bellwood as there ought to be. And he's the sort of chap you don't want more of than's absolutely necessary."
Study sixteen was under discussion, not for the first time. Bellwood and Davies, its joint occupants, had been a thorn in Trevor's side ever since he had become captain of football. It was bad enough that two such loafers should belong to the school. That they should be in his own house was almost more than he could bear.
It was his aim to make Donaldson's the keenest and most efficient house at Wrykyn, and in this he had succeeded to a great extent. They had won the cricket cup, and were favourites for the football cup. Everyone in Donaldson's was keen except Bellwood and Davies. They, sheltered behind doctor's certificates, took life in their own slack way, and refused to exhibit any interest whatever in the doings of the house.
"It's a rummy thing about that study," said Clowes, "it's always been like that. I believe anybody who's a slacker or a bad lot goes there naturally; wouldn't be happy anywhere else. Do you remember, when we first came to the house, Blencoe and Jones had it? They got sacked at the end of my first term. After that it was Grant and Pollock. They didn't get sacked, but they ought to have been. Now it's these two. Let's hope they'll keep up the tradition and get turfed out at their earliest convenience!"
"It makes me so sick," said Trevor poking the fire viciously, "to think of two heavy chaps like that being wasted. They might make all the difference to the House second. We want weight in the scrum."
In addition to the inter-house challenge cup there was a cup to be competed for by the second fifteens of the houses. Donaldson's had a good chance of this, but were handicapped by a small pack of forwards. Seymour's, their only remaining rival, were big and weighty. Clowes got up and stretched himself.

"Well," he said, "I don't think you'll get much help from Bellwood and pard. They remind me of the man who slept well and ate well but who, when he saw a job of work, was all of a tremble. They won't do a stroke if they can help it, and I don't see how you can get them in the teeth of their certificates. Well, I must go and work. I like to do a Greek book unseen if possible, but the Agamemnon is too tricky. I shall have to prepare it. By the way, have you got a copy to spare? I left mine over at school."
"I'm afraid I've only got one, and I shall be wanting that. You can have it if you'll give it up at half-past nine sharp."
"No, it's all right, thanks. I'll borrow one from Dixon. He's sure to have one. I believe he's got every Greek play ever written."
Clowes went off to Dixon's study. Dixon was a mild, spectacled youth who did an astonishing amount of work, and was about as much of a hermit as anyone can be in a public-school house. He was nervous and anxious to oblige when he was not too deep in his own thoughts to understand what your request was.
"Hullo," said Clowes, as he entered Dixon's room, "this door seems pretty wobbly. What have you been doing to it?"
He moved it to and fro by way of illustration.
It was very rickety indeed. It was, in fact, almost off its hinges.
"I'm afraid it is a little," assented Dixon. "The fact is, fellows have been running against it, and I think that has made it a little shaky."
"Running against it!" said Clowes. "What did you do?"
"I -- er -- well, the fact is, I didn't do anything. You see it was an accident. They told me themselves that it was."
"It only happened once then? Must have taken a good strong chap to rush a door almost off its hinges at one shot."
"No. They stumbled against it rather often."
"Stumbled is good," said Clowes. "I suppose they didn't say how they came to stumble?"
"Oh, yes, they did. They tripped."
"And you mean to say you believed that?"
"I couldn't very well doubt their word," expostulated Dixon.
Clowes smiled pityingly.
"I didn't want to hurt their feelings," Dixon went on.
Clowes smiled again.
"Who are the sensitive trippers?" he asked.
"Well, l don't know that I ought to say, but I suppose it will be all right. They were Davies and Bellwood."

"So I should have thought," said Clowes. "How do you find that sort of thing affects your work?"
"Well, the fact is," said Dixon eagerly, "I do find it a little hard to concentrate myself when I am continually interrupted by bangs on the door."
"So should I. I think you'd get on better if you didn't study Bellwood's feelings so much. Do you mind if I borrow this Agamemnon for a couple of hours? I've left mine over at the school, and we've got a beastly hard chorus to prepare for tomorrow."
"Oh, certainly, do," said Dixon. "Splendid play, isn't it?"
"Not bad. I prefer Charlie's Aunt myself. Matter of taste, though. Thanks. I'll return it before I go to bed."
And he went back to his own study.
It was in the afternoons, after school, that Bellwood and his companion Davies found time hang so heavily on their hands. To lounge in one's study and about the passages was pleasant for a while, but it was apt to pall in time, and then it was difficult to know how to fill in the hours.
On the afternoon following Clowes's conversation with Dixon, Bellwood found things particularly slow. in ordinary circumstances he and Davies would have been at the school Shop eating a heavy, crumpety tea. But today an unfortunate passage of arms with his form-master had led to that youth's detention after school; and he was not yet out. Bellwood was one of those people who do not like to tea alone.
Besides, it was Davies's turn to pay; and to go and have a meal at his own expense would have been so much dead loss.
So Bellwood haunted the house, feeling very much out of humour.
After wandering up and down the passage a few times and reading all the notices on the house notice-board, it occurred to him that the half hour before the return of Davies might be well spent by ragging Dixon. It was for the purpose of keeping their betters from becoming dull, that people like Dixon were put into the world; and Dixon would in all probability be working -- which would add a spice to the amusement.
He collected half-a-dozen football boots from the senior day-room. The rule of the house being that football boots were not to be brought into that room, there was always a generous supply there. Then he lounged off to Dixon's study. The door, as he had expected, was closed. He took a boot and flung it with accurate aim at one of the panels. There was a loud bang, and he grinned as he heard a chair pushed back inside the study and somebody jump up. That was all right, then. Dixon was at home.
He was stooping to pick up another missile, when the door opened. It was only when the second boot got home on the shin of the person who stood in

the doorway, that he recognised in that person not Dixon, but Trevor. It was just here that he wished he had tried some other form of amusement that afternoon.

And, indeed, the situation was about as unpleasant as it could be. Even in moments of calm Trevor was a cause of uneasiness to Bellwood. And here he was unmistakably angry. It so happened that Bellwood's boot had found its billet on the exact spot on which a muscular forward from Trinity College, Cambridge, had kicked Trevor in the match of the previous Saturday.

"Oh, I say, sorry," gasped Bellwood.

"What the blazes are you playing at?" asked Trevor.

"I'm frightfully sorry," said the demoralised Bellwood; "I thought you were Dixon."

"And why should you fling boots at Dixon?"

Bellwood, not feeling equal to the explanation that it was the mission in life of people like Dixon to have football boots thrown at them, remained silent; and Trevor, having summed up Bellwood's character in an address in which the words "skunk," "worm," and "disgrace to the house," occurred with what seemed, to the recipient of the terms, unnecessary frequency, dragged him into the study, produced a stick, and taught him in two minutes more about the folly of throwing football boots at other people's doors than he would have learned in a month of verbal tuition.

Bellwood slunk away down the passage, and half-way to his own study met Davies, released from the form room and full of his grievances.

To judge from his remarks, Davies did not think highly of Mr Grey, his form-master. Mr Grey in his opinion, was a person of the manners-none-and-customs-horrid type. He had a jolly good mind, had Davies, to go to the Headmaster about it.

In a word, Davies was savage. Bellwood, eyeing his wrathful friend, was struck with an idea. Trevor's stick had stung like an adder.

"Beastly shame," he agreed, as Davies paused for breath. "It was jolly slow for me, too. I've been putting in the time having a lark with old Dixon. I can't get him to come out, though I've been flinging boots. And his door won't open. I believe he's locked it."

"Has he, by Jove!" muttered Davies, "we'll soon see about that. Stand out of the way."

He retired a few paces, and charged towards the door. Bellwood took cover in study twelve, the owner of which happened to be out, and listened.

He heard the scuffle of Davies's feet as he dashed down the passage. Then there was a crash as if the house had fallen. He peeped out. Davies's rush

had taken the crazy door off its hinges, and he had gone with it into the study. He had a fleeting view of an infuriated Trevor springing from the ruins. Then, with Davies's howl of anguish ringing in his ears, he closed the door of study twelve softly, and sat down to wait till the storm should have passed by.

At the end of a couple of minutes somebody limped past the door. The remnants of Davies, he guessed. He gave him a few moments in which to settle down. Then he followed, and found him in a dishevelled state in their study.

"Hullo," he said artlessly, "what's up? What happened? Did you get the door open?"

Davies glared suspiciously, scenting sarcasm, but Bellwood's look of astonishment disarmed him.

"Where did you go to?" he enquired.

"Oh, I strolled off. What happened?"

Davies sat down, only to spring up again with a cry of pain. Bellwood recognised the symptoms, and felt better.

"I took the beastly door clean off its hinges. I'd no idea the thing was so wobbly."

"Well, we ragged it a bit the other night, you remember. It was a little rocky then. Was Dixon sick?"

"Dixon! why, Dixon wasn't in there at all. It was Trevor -- of all people! What the dickens was he doing there, I should like to know?"

Bellwood's look of amazement could not have been improved upon.

"Trevor!" he exclaimed. "Are you sure?"

"Am I sure! Oh, you -- !" words failed Davies.

"But what was he doing there?"

"That's what I should like to know."

It was really quite simple. Clowes had told the head of the house of Dixon's painful case, and suggested that if he wished to catch Bellwood and his friend "on the hop," as he phrased it, an excellent idea would be to change studies secretly with Dixon. This Trevor had done, with instant and satisfactory results. The ambush had trapped its victims on the first afternoon.

Study sixteen continued to brood over its misfortunes.

"Beastly low trick changing studies like that," said Davies querulously.

"Beastly," agreed Bellwood.

"That worm Dixon must have been in it. He probably suggested it to Trevor And now he'll be grinning over it."

This suspicion was quite unfounded. Dixon had probably never grinned in his life.
"I tell you what," said Bellwood suddenly, "if they've changed studies, Dixon must be in Trevor's den now. He's always in the house at this time. He starts swotting directly after school. What's the matter with going and routing him out and ragging him now? He wants it taken out of him for letting us down like that. Come on."
"We'll heave books at him," said Davies with enthusiasm.
And the punitive expedition started.
Trevor's study was in the next passage. They advanced stealthily to the door and listened. Somebody coughed inside the room. That was Dixon. They recognised the cough.
"Now," whispered Davies, "when I count three!"
Bellwood nodded, and shifted a Hall and Knight's algebra from his left hand to his right.
"One, two, three."
He turned the handle sharply, and flung open the door. At the same moment Bellwood discharged his algebra. It was a snapshot, but Dixon, sitting at the table outlined against the window, made a fine mark.
"Oh, I say!" cried Dixon, as the corner of the projectile took him on the ear.
"Go on," shouted Davies from behind the door, as Bellwood paused with Victor Hugo's Quatre-vingt-treize poised. "Sling it in!"
But Bellwood did not throw. The book dropped heavily to the floor. Just as his first shot found its mark he had caught sight of Trevor, seated in a deck-chair by the window, reading a novel.
Finding Dixon's study somewhat uncomfortable after Davies had removed the door, he had taken his book to his own den, where he could read in peace (so he thought) without disturbing Dixon's work.
This third attack was the last straw. The matter had become too serious for summary treatment. He must think out a punishment that would fit the crime.
It flashed upon him almost immediately.
"Look here," he said, "this is getting a bit too thick. You two chaps think you can do just as you like in the house. You're going to find that you can't. You're no good to Donaldson's. You shirk games. You do nothing but eat like pigs and make bally nuisances of yourselves. So you can just choose. I'm going out for a run in a few minutes. You can either come too, and get into training and play for the house second against Seymour's, or you can take a touching-up in front of the whole house after tea."

Davies and Bellwood looked blankly at one another. Could these things be? For three years they had grown up together like two daisies of the field: they had toiled not, neither had they spun. For three years the only form of exercise they had known had been the daily walk to the school Shop. And here was Trevor offering them, as the sole alternative to a house licking, a beastly violent run. And Trevor was celebrated for the length of his runs when he trained, and also for the rapidity of the same. The thing was impossible. It couldn't be done at any price. Davies bethought him of the excuse which had stood by him so well for the past three years. This was just one of those emergencies for which it had been especially designed. But even as he spoke he could not help feeling that Trevor was not in just the proper frame of mind for medical gossip.

"But," said Davies, "our doctor's certificates. We aren't allowed to play footer."

"Doctor's certificates! Rot! You'd better burn them. Well, are you coming for the run?"

Bellwood clutched at a straw.

"But we've no footer clothes," he said.

"You'd better borrow some, then. If you aren't back in this study, changed, by half-past five, you'll get beans. Now get out."

At ten minutes past five a tentative knock sounded on the door. Trevor opened it. There stood the owners of study sixteen garbed in borrowed football shirts and shorts.

Of the details of that run no record remains. The trio started off in a south-easterly direction, along the road which led to Little Poolbury. From this it may be deduced that the spin was not a short one. Whenever Trevor had chosen this direction for one of his training runs on previous occasions he had worked round through Little Poolbury to Much Wenham by road, then across difficult country (ploughed fields, brooks, and the like) to Burlingham, and then back to the school along the high road, the whole distance being between four and five miles. There is no reason for supposing him to have chosen another route on this occasion.

At any rate, as six struck from the college clock, a procession of three turned the corner of the road which ran past the school. Bellwood headed the procession. He was purple, moist, and muddy, and he breathed in heavy gasps. A yard behind him came Davies in a similar condition, if anything, a shade worse. At the tail of the procession came Trevor, who looked as fresh as when he had started. He wore a pleasant smile. They passed in at Donaldson's gate, and were lost to view.

Study sixteen was subdued that night, but ate an enormous tea, and looked ninety per cent fitter than it had done for years.

And in the last paragraph of the one hundred and eighteenth page of the eleventh volume of the Wrykinian, you will find these words to be written: "Inter-House Cup (second fifteens), Final. Donaldson's v. Seymour's -- This match was played on Saturday, March 10th, and resulted in a win for the former, after a good game by one goal and two tries to a penalty goal. For the winners Kershaw played well at half, and Smith in the centre. The pick of the forwards were Bellwood and Davies. The latter's try was a clever piece of play. For Seymour's . . ." But that's all.

Reginald's Record Knock.

Reginald Humby was one of those men who go in just above the byes, and are to tired bowlers what the dew is to parched earth at the close of an August afternoon. When a boy at school he once made nine not out in a house match, but after that he went all to pieces. His adult cricket career was on the one-match one-ball principle. Whether it was that Reginald hit too soon at them or did not hit soon enough, whether it was that his bat deviated from the dotted line which joined the two points A and B in the illustrated plate of the man making the forward stroke in the Hints on Cricket book, or whether it was that each bail swerved both ways at once and broke a yard and a quarter, I do not know. Reginald rather favoured the last theory.

The important point is that Reginald, after an almost unbroken series of eggs in the first two months of the season, turned out for Chigley Heath versus The Hearty Lunchers in the early part of July, went in first, and knocked up a hundred and thirteen.

Reginald, mark you, whose normal batting style was a sort of cross between hop-scotch, diabolo, and a man with gout in one leg trying to dance the Salome Dance.

When great events happen the public generally shows an anxiety to discover their cause. In the case of Reginald's century, on the face of it the most remarkable event since the Flood, the miracle may be attributed directly to his personal popularity.

Carpers may cavil at this statement. It is possible, too, that cavillers may carp. I seem to see them at it. All around me, I repeat, I seem to hear the angry murmur of carpers cavilling and cavillers carping. I seem to hear them asking how it is possible for a man to make a century by being popular. 'Can a batsman,' they ask, 'by sheer amiability stop a yorker on the leg stump?'

Nevertheless it is true. The facts are these:

Everybody who plays club cricket knows the Hearty Lunchers. Inveterate free-drinkers to a man, they wander about the country playing villages. They belong to the school of thought which holds that the beauty of cricket is that, above all other games, it offers such magnificent opportunities for a long drink and a smoke in the shade. The Hearty Lunchers do not take their cricket in that spirit of deadly and business-like earnest which so many people consider is spoiling the game. A Hearty Luncher who has been given out caught at the wicket does not explain on arriving at the pavilion that he was nowhere near the ball, and that the umpire has had a personal grudge against him since boyhood. No, he sinks into a deck chair, removes his pads,

and remarks that if anyone was thinking of buying him a stone ginger with the merest dash of gin in it, now is his time.

It will therefore readily be understood that Reginald's inability to lift his average out of the minuses did not handicap him with the Hearty Lunchers, as it might have handicapped him with some clubs. The genial sportsmen took him to their bosoms to a man and looked on him as a brother. Reginald's was one of those noble natures which are always good for five shillings at any hour of the day, and the Hearty Lunchers were not slow to appreciate it. They all loved Reginald.

Reginald was seated in his room one lovely evening at the beginning of July oiling a bat -- he was a confirmed bat-oiler -- when the telephone bell rang. He went to the instrument and was hailed by the comfortable voice of Westaway, the Hearty Lunchers' secretary.

'Is that Humby?' asked Westaway. 'I say, Reggie, I'm booking you for the Chigley Heath match next Saturday. Train, Waterloo, ten fifteen.'

'Oh, I say,' replied Reginald, a note of penitence in his voice, 'I'm afraid I can't -- fact is, I'm playing for Chigley.'

'You're what?'

'They asked me last week -- they seemed very keen that I should play.'

'Why, haven't they seen you play?'

'I'm awfully sorry.'

'Oh, all right. How do you come to be mixed up with Chigley Heath?'

'My fiancee lives down there.'

'I see. Well, so long.'

'So long.'

'You're all right for the Saturday after against Porkley-in-the-Wold, I suppose?'

'Yes, rather!'

'Good! So long.'

'So long.'

And Reginald, replacing the instrument, resumed the oiling of the bat.

Now Westaway happened to be of a romantic and sentimental nature. He was inclined to be stout, and all rather stout men are sentimental. Westaway was the sort of man who keeps old ball-programmes and bundles of letters tied round with lilac ribbon. At country houses, when they lingered on the terrace after dinner to watch the moonlight flooding the quiet garden, it was Westaway and his colleagues who lingered longest. Westaway knew Tennyson's 'Maud' by heart, and could take Browning without gas.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Reginald's remark about his fiancee living at Chigley Heath should give him food for thought. It appealed to him.

He reflected on it a good deal during the evening, and running across Blagdon, the Hearty Lunchers' captain, after dinner that night at the Club, he spoke of the matter to him. It so happened that both had dined excellently and were looking on the world with a sort of cosy benevolence. They were in the mood when men give small boys sixpences.

'I rang up Reggie Humby today,' said Westaway.

'One of the best, Reggie,' said Blagdon. 'Waiter, coffee and -- what's yours? Coffee for two, a Maraschino, a liqueur brandy, and two of those old-shape Larranagas. Yes, dear old chap, Reggie.'

'Did you know he was engaged?'

'I did hear something about it -- girl of the name of Belleville or something like that -- Melville, that's it! Charming girl. Fond of poetry and all that, I believe.'

'She lives at Chigley Heath.'

'Then Reggie'll get a chance of seeing her next Saturday.'

'He tells me he's promised to play for Chigley Heath against us.'

'Confound him, the renegade! Still, we needn't scratch because of that, need we?'

Westaway sucked at his cigar in silence for a while, watching with dreamy eyes the blue smoke as it curled ceilingwards. When he spoke his voice was singularly soft.

'Do you know, Blagdon,' he said, sipping his Maraschino with a sort of gentle melancholy, 'do you know, there is something wonderfully pathetic to me in this business. I see the whole thing so clearly. There was a kind of quiver in poor Reggie's voice when he said: "I am playing for Chigley Heath, my fiancee lives down there," which told me more than any words could have done. It is a tragedy in its way, Blagdon. We may smile at it, think it trivial; but it is none the less a tragedy. That warm-hearted, enthusiastic girl, all eagerness to see the man she loves do well. Reggie, poor old Reggie, all on fire to prove to her that her trust in him is not misplaced, and the end -- Disillusionment -- Disappointment -- Unhappiness.'

'He might be duck not out,' said the more practical Blagdon.

'He won't go in last for Chigley Heath; probably they think a lot of him. He may be their hope. Quite possibly he may go in first.'

'If Reggie's mug enough to let himself be shoved in first,' said Blagdon decidedly, 'he deserves all he gets. Waiter, two whiskies and soda, large.'

Westaway was in no mood to subscribe to this stony-hearted view.

'I tell you,' he said, 'I'm sorry for Reggie! I'm sorry for the poor old chap, and I'm more than sorry for the girl.'
'Well, I don't see what we can do,' said Blagdon. 'Not all the soda, thanks. We can hardly be expected to bowl badly just to let Reggie show off before his girl.'
Westaway paused in the act of lighting his cigar, as one smitten with a great thought.
'Why not?' he said. 'Why not, Blagdon? Blagdon, you've hit it!'
'My dear chap!'
'You have! I tell you, Blagdon, you've solved the whole thing. Reggie's a dashed good sort, one of the very absolute! Why not give him a benefit? Why not let him knock up a few for a change? It'll be the only chance he'll ever get of making a decent score. You aren't going to tell me at your time of life that you care whether we beat Chigley Heath or not!'
'I was thinking more of the dashing about in a hot sun while Reggie made his runs -- I'm all against too much exercise.'
Blagdon was one of the non-stooping brigade. He liked best to field point with a good cover behind him.
'Oh, nonsense!' said Westaway; 'there won't be too much of that, we can be getting the rest of them out all the while; and, besides, fifty will satisfy poor old Reggie. We needn't let him make a hundred.'
Blagdon's benevolence was expanding under the influence of the whisky and soda (large) and the old-shaped Larranaga. Little acts of kindness on Reggie's part, here a cigar, there a lunch, at another time a box at a theatre, began to rise to the surface of his memory like rainbow-coloured bubbles. Having grown accustomed to the basic bizarreness of the hon. secretary's idea, he began now, as it were, to out-Westaway Westaway.
'No!' he said, 'let us do the thing in style. Reggie shall have his knock and he shall make a century, unless, of course, they put him in last. If they do that he will have to be satisfied with twenty or so.'
'As to squaring the bowlers,' said Westaway, 'can that be managed?'
'You and I will go on first, with Blake and Harris as first change. After Blake and Harris, Grigson can have an over, too. We will broach the matter to them at a dinner at which we will be joint hosts. They are all stout fellows who will be charmed to do a little thing like this for a sportsman like Reggie.'
'Yours is a noble nature, Blagdon,' said Westaway, reaching out for his glass.
'Oh, no,' said the paragon modestly. 'Have another cigar?'
In order that the reader may get the mental strangle-hold on the plot of this narrative which is so essential if a short story is to charm, elevate, and

instruct, it is necessary now for the nonce (but only for the nonce) to inspect Reginald's past life.

Reginald, as stated by Blagdon, was engaged to a Miss Melville -- Miss Margaret Melville. How few men, dear reader, are engaged to girls with svelte figures, brown hair, and large blue eyes, now sparkling and vivacious, now dreamy and soulful, but always large and blue! How few, I say. You are, dear reader, and so am I, but who else? Reginald, however, happened to be, and he considered himself uncommonly fortunate.

He was happy. It is true that Margaret's mother was not, as it were, wrapped up in him. She exhibited none of that effervescent joy at his appearance which we like to see in our mothers-in-law elect. On the contrary, she generally cried bitterly whenever she saw him, and at the end of ten minutes was apt to retire sobbing to her room, where she remained in a state of semi-coma till an advanced hour. She was by way of being a confirmed invalid, and something about Reginald seemed to get right in amongst her nerve centres, reducing them for the time being to a complicated hash. She did not like Reginald; she said she liked big, manly men. Behind his back she not infrequently referred to him as a 'poop'; sometimes even as 'that guffin.'

She did not do this to Margaret, for Margaret, besides being blue-eyed, was also a shade quick-tempered. Whenever she discussed Reginald, it was with her son Brewster. Brewster Melville, who thought Reginald a bit of an ass, was always ready to sit and listen to his mother on the subject, it being, however, an understood thing that at the conclusion of the seance she yielded one or two minted sovereigns towards his racing debts. For Brewster, having developed a habit of backing horses which either did not start at all or sat down and thought in the middle of a race, could always do with a pound or two. His prices for these interviews worked out, as a rule, at about two and a half guineas a thousand words.

In these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that Reginald and Margaret should prefer to meet, when they did meet, at some other spot than the latter's ancestral home. It suited both of them better that they should arrange a secret tryst each week. Reginald preferred it because being in the same room as Mrs Melville always made him feel like a murderer with particularly large feet; and Margaret preferred it because, as she told Reginald, these secret meetings lent a touch of poetry, a sort of atmosphere of Marcus Stone's pictures, to what might otherwise have been a commonplace engagement.

Reginald thought this charming; but at the same time he could not conceal from himself the fact that Margaret's passion for the poetic cut, as it were, both ways. He admired and loved the loftiness of her Soul, but, on the other

hand, it was the deuce of a business having to live up to it. For Reginald was a very ordinary young man. They had tried to inoculate him with a love of Poetry at school, but it had never 'taken'. Until he was twenty-six he had been satisfied to class all poetry (except that of Mr Doss Chiderdoss) under the heading of Rot. Then he met Margaret, and the trouble began. On the day he first met her, at a picnic, she had looked so soulful, so aloof from this world, that he had felt instinctively that here was a girl who expected more from a man than a mere statement that the weather was rippin'. It so chanced that he knew just one quotation from the Classics, to wit, Tennyson's critique of the Island Valley of Avilion. He knew this because he had had the passage to write out one hundred and fifty times at school, on the occasion of his being caught smoking by a master who happened to be a passionate admirer of The Idylls of the King.

A remark of Margaret's that it was a splendid day for a picnic and that the country looked nice gave him his opportunity.

'It reminds me,' he said, 'of the Island Valley of Avilion, where falls not hail or rain or any snow, nor ever wind blows, loudly; but it lies deep-meadow'd, happy, fair, with orchard lawns...'

He broke off here to squash a wasp; but Margaret had heard enough.

'Are you fond of poetry, Mr Humby?' she said, with a sort of far-off look.

'Er -- oh, rather! I should think so!' said Reginald.

And that was how all the trouble had started. It had meant unremitting toil for Reginald. He felt that he had set himself a standard from which he must not fall. He bought every new volume of poetry which was praised in the Press, and learned the reviews of it by heart. Every evening he read painfully a portion of the Classics. He plodded through the poetry sections of Bartlett's Book of Quotations. Margaret's devotion to the various bards was so enthusiastic, and her reading so wide, that there were times when Reginald wondered if he could stand the strain. But he pegged away manfully.

He was helped by the fact that he actually saw Margaret but rarely. Being in a government office he found it impossible to get away during the week, Chigley Heath being a matter of thirty miles or so from London. Sunday was, as a rule, the only day on which they met; and studious application to the poets during the week always enabled him to acquit himself with credit. But the strain was fearful.

It occurred to Reginald on this particular Saturday that he was in a position to bring off a double event. The Hearty Lunchers' match was to begin at eleven-thirty. Consequently, if he arranged to meet Margaret at ngly, their usual Sunday meeting-place -- Brown's boathouse, which was about a mile from the cricket-field -- at four-thirty, he could have his game and still have

plenty of time to pull her up the river to their favourite honeysuckled cottage for tea. If his side happened to be fielding at four o'clock he could get a substitute to act for him; and if Chigley Heath batted last he would get his captain to put him in early, so that he could get his innings over in good time.

Having laid these plans he caught his train on the Saturday morning with a light heart.

All went well from the start, The day was fine, the sun warm but tempered with a light breeze. The Hearty Lunchers batted first and lost six wickets before the interval for a hundred and twenty. The Chigley Heath crowd, mainly composed of small boys and octogenarians, who looked on the Hearty Lunchers as a first-class team because they wore bright blazers, were loud in their approval of their bowlers' performance in dismissing more than half the side for so few runs.

Reginald, who quite inadvertently had caught a hot catch at mid-on, went into the pavilion thoroughly pleased with himself. It was a red-letter day for him when he caught a catch, and this had been a particularly smart one. Indeed, he had not realised that the ball was coming in his direction at all till it hit him in the stomach.

At the festive board the Hearty Lunchers, as usual, justified their name, and it was not until a quarter to three that the match was resumed. The Hearty Lunchers believed in scientific stoking preparatory to the strenuous toil of the afternoon. The bill of fare was good and varied, and the only bitter drop in Reginald's cup was that he could not find his tobacco pouch. He had had it with him in the train, but now it had vanished. This rather saddened Reginald, for the pouch had been given to him by Margaret, and be had always thought it one more proof of the way her nature towered over the natures of other girls, that she had not woven a monogram on it in forget-me-nots. This record pouch, I say, was missing, and Reginald mourned for the loss.

He was still moody when the team went out to the field.

The remaining Hearty Lunchers did not offer very much resistance to the Chigley Heath fast bowler, and the whole side was out with the addition of forty runs.

It was now half-past three, and Reginald saw that if he was to do himself justice with the bat he must be put in early. Buttonholing the Chigley Heath captain he explained this to him, and the captain, a sympathetic soul, requested Reginald to get his pads on and come in first with him.

Having received one favour Reginald did not like to ask another, so greatly against his will he prepared himself to take first ball. He did this with grave

care. Everyone who has seen Reginald Humby bat knows that his taking of guard is one of the most impressive sights ever witnessed on the cricket field. He tilted his cap over his eyes, waggled his bat about till the umpire was satisfied that he had got two-leg, scratched the crease with a bail, looked round at the field, walked out of his ground to pat down a blade of grass, picked up a fragment of mud, waved imperatively to two small boys who looked as if they might get behind the bowler's arm, and finally settled himself, left toe well in the air, to receive the first ball.

It was then that he noted for the first time that the bowler was Blagdon. The sight sent a thrill through Reginald. He had seen Blagdon bowl at the nets, but he had never dared to hope that he might bat against him in a match. Exigencies of space forbid a detailed description of Blagdon's bowling. Suffice it to say that it was a shade inferior as bowling to Reginald's batting as batting.

It was Reginald's invariable custom to play forward, on principle, to each ball of his first over wherever it pitched. He called this playing himself in. In accordance with this rule he lunged grandly for six balls (three of which were long-hops to leg), and Blagdon registered a maiden. Four small boys near the pavilion clapped tentatively, but an octogenarian scowled, and, having said that cricket was a brighter game in his young days, went on to compare Reginald unfavourably with Alfred Mynn.

Scarcely had Reginald recovered from the pleasurable shock of finding Blagdon bowling at one end when he was amazed to find that Westaway was bowling at the other. Critics had often wrangled warmly as to the comparative merits of Blagdon and Westaway as bowlers; some thought that Blagdon had it, others that Westaway was the more putrid of the two; a third party called it a dead heat.

The Chigley Heath captain hit Westaway's first ball for three, and Reginald, coming to the batting end, suddenly resolved that this was an occasion on which conventional rules might be flung to the winds; instead, therefore, of playing forward at a full-pitch to leg, he waited for it, and lashing out sent it flying over short slip's head for a single.

That stroke marked an epoch. Reginald was now set.

The ordinary batsman, whose average always pans out at the end of the season between the twenties and the thirties, does not understand the whirl of mixed sensations which the really incompetent cricketer experiences on the rare occasions when he does notch a few. As ball follows ball, and he does not get out, a wild exhilaration surges through him, followed by a sort of awe as if he were doing something wrong, even irreligious. Then all these yeasty emotions subside, and are blended into one glorious sensation of

grandeur and majesty, as of a giant among pygmies. This last state of mind does not come till the batsman's score has passed thirty.

By the time that Reginald, ballooning one of Blagdon's half-volleys over cover-point's head, had made his score thirty-two, he was in the full grip of this feeling. As he stood parting the pitch and waiting for the ball to be returned from the boundary, he felt that this was Life, that till now he had been a mere mollusc. His eye rolled proudly round the field.

As it did so it was caught by the clock of the adjacent church, and the sight of that clock was like a douche of cold water. The hands stood at a quarter past four.

Let us pause and ponder on this point for a while. Do not let us dismiss it as if it were some mere trivial everyday difficulty, because it is not. It is about the heftiest soul problem ever handed out to suffering man. You, dear reader, play a long and stylish innings every time you go to the wickets, and so do I; but Reginald was not like us. This was the first occasion on which the ball had seemed larger to him than a rather undersized marble. It was the first occasion on which he had ever hit at a ball with the chances in his favour of getting it anywhere near the centre of the bat.

On the other hand, he was passionately devoted to Margaret Melville, whom he was due to meet at Brown's boathouse at four-thirty sharp. It was now four-fifteen, and Brown's boathouse was still a mile away.

Reginald Humby was at the cross-roads.

The mental struggle was brief but keen. A sharp pang, and his mind was made up. Cost what it might he must stay at the wickets. Not even for Margaret could he wilfully put an end to an innings like this. If she broke off the engagement -- well, it might be that Time would heal the wound, and that after many years he would find some other girl for whom he might come to care in a wrecked, broken sort of way. But a chance like this, a chance of batting thoroughly set, against the bowling of Blagdon, Westaway, Blake, and Harris, could never come again. Such things did not happen twice in a lifetime. Only to the very favoured did they happen once. What is Love compared to a chance of knocking up a really big score?... Reginald prepared to face the bowling again.

Soon a burst of applause from the pavilion signalled the fact that Reginald had made the first fifty of his life.

The time was now twenty-five to five, and Brown's boathouse was exactly where it had been at a quarter past four, a mile away.

But there was no room now in Reginald's mind for even a passing thought about Brown's boathouse, for his gleaming eyes had seen that Grigson was

being put on to bowl. Antony would have forgotten Cleopatra if he had had the chance of batting against Grigson.

If Grigson, as a bowler, had one fault more than another (which his friends denied), it was that he was too tantalising. In pace his deliveries were -- from a batsman's point of view -- ideal. It was in direction that they erred. His first ball soared languidly into the hands of second slip, without touching terra firma. His second was fielded and returned by point. Reginald watched these truants with growing impatience.

At the third ball he could restrain himself no longer. The sight of the square-leg umpire shaping for a catch maddened him. He bounded from his crease, pushed the official to one side, and was just in time at the end of this manoeuvre to smite the ball as it bounced and send it hurtling to the pavilion. There were cheers; the octogenarian who had compared him to his disadvantage with Alfred Mynn handsomely retracted his words; and two small boys in their enthusiasm fell out of a tree.

Of the remaining hour and ten minutes of his innings Reginald's recollections are like some blurred but beautiful dream. He remembers occasional outstanding hits -- as when he scored a boundary off a ball of Grigson's which stopped dead two-thirds of the way down the pitch, and when he beat short-slip in a race for a delivery of Harris's. But the greater part of the innings has fled from him.

One moment, however, still stands out sharp and clear in his memory -- the moment when a second burst of cheering, beside which the first was as nothing, informed him that his score had reached three figures. After that one or two more lofty hits, and finally the crash of the stumps and the triumphant return to the pavilion on the shoulders of a mixed bevy of Chigley Heathens and Hearty Lunchers.

For some fifteen minutes he sat on a bench in a moist, happy trance.

And then, suddenly, like a cold douche, came the thought of Margaret. Reginald sprang for the dressing-room and changed his clothes, his brain working feverishly.

And as he laced his boots there came, like some knell, the sound of the clock outside striking six.

Margaret and her mother were seated in the drawing-room when Reginald arrived. Mrs Melville, who had elicited the information that Reginald had not kept his appointment, had been saying 'I told you so' for some time, and this had not improved Margaret's temper. When, therefore, Reginald, damp and dishevelled, was shown in, he felt like a man who has suddenly discovered the North Pole. Mrs Melville did her celebrated imitation of the

Gorgon, while Margaret, lightly humming an air, picked up a weekly paper and became absorbed in it.
'Margaret, let me explain,' panted Reginald.
Mrs Melville was understood to remark that she dared say.
Margaret's attention was riveted by a fashion plate.
'Driving in a taximeter to Charing Cross this afternoon,' resumed Reginald, 'I had an accident.'
(Which was the net result of his feverish brain-work in the pavilion dressing-room.)
The weekly periodical flapped to the floor.
'Oh, Reggie, are you hurt?'
'A few scratches, nothing more; but it made me miss my train.'
'Oh, Reggie! but why didn't you wire? I have been worrying so.'
'I was too agitated, dearest.'
'What train did you catch?'
'The five-one.'
'Why, Brewster was coming home by the five-one. Did you see him,'
Reginald's jaw dropped slightly.
'Er -- no,' he said.
'How curious,' said Margaret.
'Very curious,' said Reginald.
'Most curious,' said Mrs Melville.
They were still reflecting on the singularity of this fact when the door opened again, and the son of the house entered in person.
'Thought I should find you here, Humby,' he said. 'They gave me this at the station to give to you; you dropped it this morning when you got out of the train.'
He handed Reginald the missing pouch.
'Thanks,' said the latter, huskily. 'When you say this morning, of course you mean this evening but thanks, all the same -- thanks -- thanks.'
'No, Reginald Humby, he does not mean this evening,' said Mrs Melville.
'Brewster, speak! From what train did that guf -- did Mr Humby alight when he dropped the tobacco pouch?'
'The ten-fifteen, the porter chap told me -- said he would have given it back to him then only he nipped off in the deuce of a hurry in a cab.'
Six eyes focused themselves upon Reginald.
'Margaret,' he said, 'I will not try to deceive you -- '
'You may try,' observed Mrs Melville, 'but you will not succeed.'
'Well, Reginald?'
Reginald fingered his collar.

'There was no taximeter accident.'
'Ah!' said Mrs Melville.
'The fact is, I've been playing cricket for Chigley Heath against the Hearty Lunchers.'
Margaret uttered an exclamation of surprise.
'Playing cricket!'
Reginald bowed his head with manly resignation.
'Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you arrange for us to meet on the ground? I wanted to watch the match, only I couldn't get there in the morning, and it didn't seem worth it for such a little while in the afternoon.'
Reginald was amazed.
'You take an interest in cricket, Margaret? You! I thought you scorned it, considered it an unintellectual game.'
'Why, I play regularly in the ladies' match.'
'Margaret! Why didn't you tell me?'
'I thought you might not like it. You were so spiritual, so poetic. I feared you would despise me.'
Reginald took a step forward. His voice was tense and trembling.
'Margaret,' he said, and his accents thrilled with a dawning hope, 'this is no time for misunderstandings. We must be open with one another. Our happiness is at stake. Tell me honestly, do you like poetry really?'
Margaret hesitated, then answered bravely:
'No, Reginald,' she said. 'It is as you suspect. I am not worthy of you. I do not like poetry. Ah, you shudder! You turn away!'
'I don't,' yelled Reginald. 'I don't. You've made me another man, Margaret!'
She stared, wild-eyed, astonished.
'What! Do you mean that you, too -- '
'I should jolly well think I do. I tell you I hate the beastly stuff. I only pretended to like it because I thought you did. The hours I've spent mugging it up! I wonder I've not got brain fever.'
'Reggie! Used you to read it up too? Oh, if I'd only known!'
'And you forgive me -- this afternoon, I mean?'
'Of course. You couldn't leave a cricket match. By the way, did you make any runs?'
Reginald coughed.
'A few,' he said, modestly. 'One or two. In fact, rather a lot. As a matter of fact, I made a hundred and thirteen.'
'A hundred and thirteen!' whispered Margaret. 'My hero!'
'You won't be wanting me for a bit, will you?' asked Brewster, nonchalantly. 'Think I'll smoke a cigarette in the garden.'

And sobs from the staircase told that Mrs Melville was already on her way to her room.

A Prisoner Of War

Mrs. Lora Delane Porter, that great woman, was condescending to argue with Herbert Nixon, a mere menial. The points under discussion were three: --

(a) Why had Herbert been absent from duty between the hours of 3 p.m. and midnight on the previous day?

(b) Why had he returned singing?

(c) Why had he divested himself of his upper garments and stood for twenty minutes before the front door, daring the Kaiser to come out and have his head knocked off?

Those were the main counts in Mrs. Porter's indictment, and she urged them with the skill of one who for many years had been in the forefront of America's Feminist movement. A trained orator and logician, she made mincemeat of Mr. Nixon.

Herbert's official position was that of odd-job man to the house which Mrs. Porter had taken for the summer in England. He had gone with the place as a sort of bonus.

"You don't understand, ma'am," he said, pityingly. "Being a female, you wouldn't understand. It's polerticks. This 'ere country 'as 'ad to go to war -- "

"And so you had to go and stupefy the few brains you possess at the village inn? I don't see the connection."

"I can't argue with you, ma'am," said Mr. Nixon, patiently. "My 'ead don't seem just right this morning. All I know is -- "

"All I know is that you can go right away now and look for another job."

" 'Ave it your own way, ma'am, 'ave it your own way. If you don't want me, there's others that'll be glad to 'ave me."

"Don't let me keep you from them," said Mrs. Porter. "Good morning."

Herbert vanished, and Mrs. Porter, dipping her pen in the ink, resumed the chapter of "Woman in the New Era" which his entry had interrupted.

Sybil Bannister came into the room. She was small and fluffy. Mrs. Porter greeted her with an indulgent smile. Ruthless towards the Herbert Nixons, she unbent with Sybil. Sybil was her disciple. She regarded her as a gardener regards some promising young plant.

Six months before Sybil had been what Mrs. Porter called undeveloped. That is to say, she had been content to live a peaceful life in her New York home, worshipping her husband, Mrs. Porter's nephew Hailey. The spectacle of a woman worshipping any man annoyed Mrs. Porter. To see one worshipping Hailey, for whom she entertained the contempt which only strong-minded aunts can feel for their nephews, stirred her to her depths.

Hailey, it is true, had not been a perfect husband. He was a rather pompous young man, dictatorial, and inclined to consider that the machinery of the universe should run with his personal comfort as its guiding motive. But Sybil had not noticed these things till Mrs. Porter pointed them out to her. Until Mrs. Porter urged her to assert her rights, she had not thought the matter out sufficiently to understand that she had any.

That determined woman took the situation strongly in hand. Before Hailey knew what had struck him the home was a battlefield, and when the time arrived for Mrs. Porter to go to England things came to a head. She invited Sybil to accompany her. Hailey forbade her to go. Sybil went. That is the whole campaign in a nutshell.

"I have just dismissed Nixon," said Mrs. Porter. "I have no objection in England going to war, but I will not have my odd-job man singing patriotic songs in the garden at midnight."

From the beginning of hostilities Mrs. Porter's attitude towards the European War had been clearly defined. It could continue, provided it did not bother her. If it bothered her it must stop.

Sybil looked uncomfortable.

"Aunt Lora, don't you think -- I've been thinking -- I believe I ought to go home."

"Ridiculous! You are perfectly safe here."

"I wasn't thinking so much about myself. I -- I believe Hailey will be worried about me."

Mrs. Porter directed at her shrinking protegee one of the severe stares which had done so much to unman Mr. Nixon at their recent interview. This was backsliding, and must be checked.

"So much the better. It is just what Hailey wants -- to have to worry about somebody except himself. The trouble with Hailey has always been that things have been made too comfortable for him. He has never had proper discipline. When Hailey was a child I once spanked him with a clothes-brush. The effects, while they lasted, were extremely gratifying. Unfortunately, immediately after the incident I ceased to be on speaking terms with his father, so was not able to follow up the good work."

Sybil shifted uneasily. She looked mutinous.

"He's my husband," she said.

"It's too late to worry about that."

"He is always very kind to me."

"Nonsense child! He treated you like a door-mat. When he was in a bad temper he snarled at you; when he was in a good temper he patronized you."

"He's very fond of me."

"Then why doesn't he try to get you back? Has he written you a single letter, asking you to go home, in the last two months?"
"You don't understand Hailey, Aunt Lora. He's so proud."
"Tchah!"
When Mrs. Porter said "Tchah!" it was final. There was nothing ill-tempered or violent about the ejaculation: it was simply final. Sybil withdrew.
It was Mrs. Porter's daily practice, when she had made her simple breakfast and given her household staff its instructions, to walk briskly out of her garden-gate, proceed for a mile down the high road, then, turning, to walk back and begin work on her current book. The procedure had two advantages. It cleared her brain, and it afforded mild exercise to Mike, her Irish terrier.
On the morning after the rout of Herbert Nixon, she had just emerged from the garden, when she was aware of a ragged figure coming towards her down the straight white road. She called to the dog, who was sniffing at an attractive-smelling dead bird which he had located under the hedge.
"Mike!"
Lora Delane Porter was not afraid of tramps; but it is no sign of fear to mobilize your forces; it is merely a sensible precaution in case of accidents. She mobilized Mike. He left the bird, on which he had intended to roll, with a back-glance of regret, and came trotting to her side.
"To heel!" said Mrs. Porter.
The tramp was a typical ruffian of his species. He was unkempt and grimy; he wore a soiled hat, a grey suit of clothes picked out with splashes of brown and green and there was no collar round his neck. He walked as if he had been partially hamstrung by a bungling amateur who had made a bad job of it.
As she drew level with him he looked at her, stopped, and said: "Aunt Lora!"
Mrs. Porter made it a rule to pass the ordinary tramp without a glance; but tramps who addressed her as "Aunt Lora" merited inspection. She accorded this inspection to the man before her, and gave a little gasp. His face was obscured by dust and perspiration, and he had a scrubby beard; but she recognized him.
"Hailey!"
To preserve a perfect poise in the face of all of life's untoward happenings was part of Mrs. Porter's religion. Though, for all her stern force of character, she was now inwardly aflame with curiosity, she did not show it in her manner.

"What are you doing here, Hailey?" she inquired, calmly.
He passed the ruins of a silk handkerchief over his grimy face and groaned. He was a shocking spectacle.
"I've had an awful time!"
"You look it."
"I've walked every step of the way from Southampton."
"Why?"
"Why! Because I had to. Do I look as if I were doing this for my health?"
"It's an excellent thing for your health. You always did shirk exercise."
Hailey drew himself up and fixed his aunt with a gaze which was a little too bloodshot to be really dignified.
"Aunt Lora, do not misunderstand me. I have not come to you for sympathy. I have not come to you for assistance. I have not -- "
"You look like a walking ploughed field."
"I have merely come -- "
"Have you been sleeping in those clothes?"
Hailey's hauteur changed to a human irritation.
"Yes, I have been sleeping in these clothes, and I wish you wouldn't look at me as if I were a kind of freak."
"But you are."
"Aunt Lora, I have not come to you for sym -- "
"Bless the boy, don't tell me all the things you have not come to me for. What have you come for? In the first place, why are you in England at all? Have you come to try and get Sybil to go home?"
"I have not. If Sybil is to return home, she must do so of her own free will. I shall not attempt to persuade her. I am here because, on the declaration of war, I was obliged to leave Paris, where I was spending a vacation. When I reached Southampton and tried to get a boat back to New York I found it impossible. My traveller's cheques and my letter of credit were valueless, and I was without a penny. I had lost all my luggage. I set out to walk to you because you were the only person who could tell me where Professor Tupper-Smith lived."
"Professor Tupper-Smith?"
"Certainly. Professor Tupper-Smith. The English bore you planted on me when he visited New York last year."
Hailey spoke bitterly. Over the unconscious head of this same Professor Tupper-Smith there had raged one of the most serious of the battles which had shattered his domestic peace. The professor was a well-known English writer on sociology, who had come to New York with a letter of introduction to Mrs. Porter. Mrs. Porter, wishing to house him more comfortably than he

was being housed at his hotel, had taken him to Sybil. Hailey was out of town at the time, and the thing had been done in his absence. He and Sybil had had one of their first quarrels about it. In the end the professor had stayed on, and incidentally nearly driven Hailey mad.

Now, if a man had nearly driven you mad in New York, bursting with your meat the while, the least he can do, when you call on him, destitute, in England, is to honour your note-of-hand for a few hundred dollars.

That was how Hailey had argued, and that was what had driven him to his aunt. She knew the location of this human El Dorado; he did not.

"Why do you want to see Professor Tupper-Smith?"

Hailey kicked the hard road in his emotion.

"I want to ask him for his photograph. That's all. Of course, I entertain no idea of getting him to lend me money so that I can get back to New York. As he is the only man I know in England, naturally that had not occurred to me."

Mrs. Porter was a grim woman, sparing with her smiles, but at these words she laughed heartily.

"Why, of course! Do you know, Hailey, I think I must be getting stupid. I never realized till now what a complete fix you were in."

"Will you tell me that man's address?"

"No. At least, not for a long time. But I'll do something else. I'll give you a job."

"What do you mean?"

"Hailey, you always were an undisciplined child. I often told your father so -- when we were on speaking terms. Rich men's sons are always like that. I was saying to Sybil only yesterday that what you needed was discipline. Discipline and honest work! They may make something of you yet. My odd-job man left me yesterday -- you shall take his place. You know what an odd-job man is, I presume? For instance" -- she looked past him -- "he washes the dog. I see that Mike is rolling again. He cannot understand that we don't like it. You had better catch him and wash him at once, Hailey. Take care he does not bite you. Irish terriers are quick-tempered.'

"Aunt Lora, do you imagine for a moment that I am going to -- "

"You won't find out where Professor Tupper-Smith lives if you don't."

Hailey's unshaven jaw fell. There was a silence broken only by the pleased snortings of Mike.

"Aunt Lora, if it is your wish to humiliate me -- "

"Don't be absurd, child. Humiliate you, indeed! You talk as if you were a prince of the blood. I am doing you a great kindness. This will be the making of you. You have been spoiled since you were a boy. You treated Sybil as if

you were a Sultan. You were a mass of conceit. A month or two of this will --"
"A month or two!"
"Or three," said Mrs. Porter. "Well, make up your mind quickly. You have a perfectly free choice. If you prefer to go on tramping through England, by all means do so."
A minute later Mike, busy with his bird, felt his collar grasped. He gazed up into a set, scrubby-bearded face. It was the face of a man with a hidden sorrow.
"Under the tap in the stable-yard is the best place," said Mrs. Porter.
Of the two principals in the ablutions of Mike, the bather and the bathed, it would have been hard for an impartial spectator to have said which looked the unhappier. Mike's views on total immersion were peculiar. To plunge into any river, pond, or other sheet of water was one of his chief pleasures. In a tub, with soap playing a part in the proceedings, he became a tortured martyr.
Nor did Hailey approach the operation in a more rollicking spirit. He had never washed a dog before. When his dog in New York required washing, some underling below-stairs did it. The thought crossed his mind, as he wrought upon Mike, that whatever that underling's wages were, they were not enough.
He was concentrating tensely upon his task when Sybil entered the yard. Sybil was in the grip of a number of emotions. When Mrs. Porter had informed her of Hailey's miraculous appearance, joy had predominated. When she learned of his misfortunes, it had been succeeded by pity. Then the curious fact came home to her that, though Hailey was apparently there, he had not yet appeared before her. And when this mystery was explained by the information that he was washing the dog in the stable-yard, her astonishment grew. Finally, when she had grasped the whole position of affairs a great dismay came upon her. She knew Hailey so well -- his pride, his sensitive fastidiousness, his aloofness from all that was rough and undignified in the world. This was terrible. She pleaded with Mrs. Porter, but Mrs. Porter remained resolute.
Then she sped to the stable-yard, to witness the horror for herself.
Hailey looked up. Silence reigned in the stable-yard. Hailey looked at Sybil. Sybil stood there without a word. Mike shivered miserably, as one on the brink of the tomb.
"Well?" said Hailey, at length.
"Oh, Hailey!"
"Well?"

"Oh, Hailey, it is nice seeing you again!"
"Is it?"
Sybil's mouth quivered, and her eyes grew large and plaintive. Hailey did not soften. Sybil, he reminded himself, was in Mrs. Porter's camp, and it was Mrs. Porter who had inflicted this beast of a dog on him.
He removed Mike from the tub and enveloped him in the towel.
"Hailey, dear, don't be cross."
"Cross?"
It is difficult for a man conscious of a four days' beard and perhaps a quarter of an inch of English soil on all the exposed parts of his person to raise his eyes with chilly dignity, but Hailey did it. He did it twice.
"Cross?"
"I begged Aunt Lora not to -- "
"Not to what?"
"Not to -- to make you do this. I begged her to ask you to -- to stay with us."
"I am staying with you."
"I mean as a guest."
A third time Hailey raised those dusty eyebrows.
"Do you imagine for a moment that I would accept my aunt's hospitality?"
There was a pause.
Hailey released Mike, who shot out of the yard like a torpedo.
"Why did you come to England, Hailey?"
"I was on a vacation in France, and had to leave."
"You didn't come to -- to see me?"
"No."
"Hailey, you don't seem very fond of me."
Hailey picked up the towel and folded it.
"If Aunt Lora tells you where Mr. Tupper-Smith lives, I suppose you will go back to New York again?"
"If Mr. Tupper-Smith will lend me the money, I shall go by the first boat."
He lifted the tub with an air of finality, and emptied it down the drain. Sybil paused irresolutely for a moment, then walked slowly away.
The days which followed did nothing to relieve Hailey's depression. Indeed, they deepened it. He had not imagined that he could ever feel sorrier for himself than he had felt by bedtime that first night, but he discovered that he had merely, so to speak, scratched the surface of gloom.
On the second day he sought audience of his aunt.
"Aunt Lora, this cannot continue."
"Why? Have you decided to become a tramp again?"

"You are taking an unjustifiable advantage of my misfortune in being helpless to resent it to -- "
"When you were a small boy, Hailey, you came to visit me once, and behaved like a perfect little devil. I took advantage of your misfortune in being helpless to resent it to spank you with a clothes- brush. My mistake was that I stopped the treatment before I had cured you. The treatment has now begun again, and will continue till you are out of danger."
"Aunt Lora, you cannot realize the humiliation of my position."
"Nonsense! Use your imagination. Try to think you're a pioneer out in the West."
"I have no ambition to be a pioneer out in the West."
"Your real trouble, Hailey, is that you think the society beneath you."
"I am not accustomed to hob-nob with cooks."
"It is exceedingly good of my cook to let you hob-nob with her. She knows you came here without reference, after having been a tramp. It shows she is not a snob."
Hailey returned to his hewing of wood and drawing of water.
For a rather excessively fastidious young man with an extremely high opinion of himself there are more congenial walks in life than that of odd-job man in a country house.
The duties of an odd-job man are extensive and peculiar. He is seldom idle. If the cook does not require him to chop wood, the gardener commandeers him for potato-digging. He cleans the knives; he cleans the shoes; he cleans the windows; he cleans the dog. In a way his is an altruistic life, for his primary mission is to scatter sweetness and light, and to bestow on others benefits in which he himself cannot share; but it is not an easy one.
Hailey did all these things and others besides. His work began at an hour which in happier days he had looked on as part of the night, and it ended when sheer mental fatigue made it impossible for those in command over him to think up anything else for him to do. When this happened, he would light his pipe and stroll moodily in the garden. It was one small count in his case against Fate that he, once known for his nice taste in cigars, should be reduced to a cheap wooden pipe and the sort of tobacco they sell in English villages.
His was not a nature that adapted itself readily to deviations from habit, particularly when such deviations involved manual labour. There were men of his acquaintance in New York who would have treated his predicament in a spirit of humorous adventure. But then they were men whose idea of enjoyment was to camp out in lonely woods with a guide and a fishing-rod. Newport was the wildest life that Hailey had ever known. He hated

discomfort; he hated manual labour; he hated being under orders; and he hated the society of his social inferiors. To treat his present life in a whimsically adventurous spirit was beyond him.

Of all its disagreeable features, possibly that which he resented most was the sense of inferiority which it brought with it. In the real fundamentals of existence, he now perceived, such as reducing unwieldy blocks of wood to neat faggots and putting a polish on a shoe, he was useless. He, Hailey Bannister, respected in Wall Street as a coming man, was continually falling short of even the modest standard of efficiency set up by his predecessor, Mr. Nixon. The opinion below- stairs was that Herbert had been pretty bad, but that Hailey was unspeakable. They were nice about it -- but impatient, distinctly impatient; and it wounded Hailey. He tried to tell himself that the good opinion of the masses was not worth having, but he could not bring himself to believe it. For the first time in his life he found himself humble, even apologetic. It was galling for a young man's self-esteem to be in Rome and fail through sheer incompetence to do as the Romans do. There were moments when a word of praise from the cook would have given Hailey more satisfaction than two successful deals in Wall Street.

It was by chance rather than design that Sybil chose the psychological moment for re-entering his life. His moods since his arrival had alternated between a wild yearning for her and positive dislike. But one night, as he stood smoking in the stable-yard, he was longing for her with a sentimental fervour of which in the days of his freedom he had never been capable. It had been a particularly hard day, and, as he stood poisoning the summer night with his tobacco, a great loneliness and remorse filled him. He had treated Sybil badly, he told himself. He went over in his mind episodes of their life together in New York, and shuddered at the picture he conjured up of himself. No wonder she shunned him.

And, as he stood there, she came to him.

"Hailey!"

She was nervous, and he did not wonder at it. A girl coming to speak to the sort of man he had just been contemplating might have been excused if she had called out the police reserves as an escort.

"Yes?"

He was horrified at the gruffness of his voice. He had meant to speak with tender softness. It was this bad tobacco.

"Hailey, dear, I've brought you this."

Wonderful intuition of Woman! It was the one thing he desired -- a fat cigar, and, as his trained senses told him, a cigar of quality. He took it in a silence too deep for words.

"We were calling on some people. The man's study-door was open, and I saw the box -- I hadn't time to take more than one -- I thought you would like it."
Hailey could not speak. He was overcome. He kissed her.
He was conscious of a curious dizziness.
In the old days kissing Sybil had always been one of his daily acts. He had done it the first thing in the morning, last thing at night. It had not made him dizzy then. He had never even derived any particular pleasure from it, especially in the morning, when he was a little late, and the car was waiting to take him to business and the butler standing by with his hat and cane. Then it had sometimes been almost a nuisance, and only his rigid conscientiousness had made him do it. But now, in the scented dusk of this summer night -- well, it was different. It was intensely different.
"I must go back," she said, quickly. "Aunt Lora is waiting for me."
Reluctantly he released her, and the night swallowed her up. It was a full minute before he moved.
He became aware of something in his right hand. It was the broken remnants of a crushed cigar.
They fell into the habit of meeting in the garden after dark. All day he looked forward to these moments. Somehow they seemed to supply something which had always been lacking in his life. He had wooed Sybil in the days before their marriage in ballrooms and drawing- rooms. It had seemed quite satisfactory to him at the time, but this -- this stealthy coming together in the darkness, these whispered conversations under the stars -- this was what he had always been starving for. He realized it now.
His outlook on life seemed to change. He saw things with different eyes. Quite suddenly it was borne in upon him how amazingly fit he felt. In New York he had been exacting in the matter of food, critical, and hard to please. Now, if supper was a trifle behind time, he had to exercise restraint to keep himself from raiding the larder. Hitherto unsuspected virtues in cold mutton were revealed to him. It might be humiliating for a young man highly respected in Wall Street and in the clubs of New York to chop wood, sweep leaves, and dig potatoes, but these things certainly made for health.
Nor had his views on the society in which he moved remained unaltered. The cook -- what a good, motherly soul, always ready with a glass of beer when the heat of the day made work oppressive. The gardener -- what a sterling conversationalist! The parlour-maid -- what a military expert! That night at supper, when the parlour-maid exposed Germany's entire plan of campaign, while the cook said that she never did hold with war, and the

gardener told the story of his uncle who had lost a leg in the Indian Mutiny, was one of the most enjoyable that Hailey had ever spent.

One portion of Hailey's varied duties was to walk a mile down the road and post letters at the village post-office. He generally was not required to do this till late in the evening, but occasionally there would be an important letter for the morning post, for Mrs. Porter was a voluminous correspondent. One morning, as he was turning in at the gate on his way back from the village, a voice addressed him, and he was aware of a man in a black suit, seated upon a tricycle.

This in itself would have been enough to rivet his interest, for he had never in his life seen a man on a tricycle. But it was not only the tricycle that excited him. The voice seemed familiar. It aroused vaguely unpleasant memories.

"My good man -- why, Mr. Bannister! Bless my soul! I had no idea you were in England. I am delighted to see you. I never tire of telling my friends of your kindness to me in New York."

The landscape reeled before Hailey's blinking eyes. Speech was wiped from his lips. It was Professor Tupper-Smith.

"I must not offer to shake hands, Mr. Bannister. I have no doubt there is still risk of infection. How is the patient?"

"Eh?" said Hailey.

"Mumps is a painful, distressing malady, but happily not dangerous."

"Mumps?"

"Mrs. Porter told me that there was mumps in the house. I trust all is now well? That is what has kept me away. Mrs. Porter knows how apprehensive I am of all infectious ailments, and expressly forbade me to call. Previously I had been a daily visitor. It has been a great deprivation to me, I can assure you, Mr. Bannister. A woman of wonderful intelligence!"

"Do you meant to tell me -- do you live near here?"

"That house you see through the trees is mine."

Hailey drew a deep breath.

"Could I speak to you," he said, "on a matter of importance?"

In the stable-yard, which their meetings had hallowed for him, Hailey stood waiting that night. there had been rain earlier in the evening, and the air was soft and mild, and heavy with the scent of flowers. But Hailey was beyond the soothing influence of cool air and sweet scents. He felt bruised.

She had been amusing herself with him, playing with him. There could be no other explanation. She had known all the time that this man Tupper-Smith was living at their very gates, and she had kept it from him. She had known

what it meant to him to find the man, and she had kept it from him. He waited grimly.
"Hailey!"
There was a glimmer of white against the shadows.
"Here I am."
She came to him, her face raised, but he drew back.
"Sybil," he said, "I never asked you before. Can you tell me where this man Tupper-Smith lives?"
She started. He could only see her dimly, but he sensed it.
"N-no."
He smiled bitterly. She had the grace to hesitate. That, he supposed, must be put to her credit.
"Strange," he said. "He lives down the road. Curious your not knowing, when he used to come here so often."
When Sybil spoke her voice was a whisper.
"I was afraid it would happen."
"Yes, I'm sorry I have not been able to amuse you longer. But it must have been delightful, while it lasted. You certainly fooled me. I didn't even think it worth while asking you if you knew his address. I took it for granted that, if you had known, you would have told me. And you were laughing the whole time! Well, I suppose I ought not to blame you. I can see now that I used to treat you badly in New York, and you can't be blamed for getting even. Well, I'm afraid the joke's over now. I met him this morning."
"Hailey, you don't understand."
"Surely it couldn't be much plainer?"
"I couldn't tell you. I -- I couldn't."
"Of course not. It would have spoiled everything."
"You know it was not that. it was because -- do you remember the day you came here? You told me then that, directly you found him, you would go back to America."
"Well?"
"Well, I didn't want you to go. And afterwards, when we began to meet like this, I -- still more didn't want you to go."
A bird rustled in the trees behind them. The rustling ceased. In the distance a corncrake was calling monotonously. The sound came faintly over the meadows, emphasizing the stillness.
"Don't you understand? You must understand. I was awfully sorry for you, but I was selfish. I wanted to keep you. It has all been so different here. Over in New York we never seemed to be together. We used to quarrel. Everything seemed to go wrong. But here it has been perfect. It was like

being together on a desert island. I couldn't end it. I hated to see you unhappy, and I wanted it to go on for ever. So -- "
Groping at a venture, he found her arm, and held it.
"Sybil! Sybil, dear, I'm going back to-morrow; going home. Will you come with me?"
"I though you had given me up. I thought you never wanted me back. You said -- "
"Forget what I said. When you left New York I was a fool. I was a brute. I'm different now. Listen, Sybil. Tupper-Smith -- I always liked that man -- lent me fifty pounds this morning. In gold! He tricycled five miles to get it. That's the sort of man he is. I hired a car, went to Southampton, and fixed things up with the skipper of an American tramp. She sails to-morrow night. Sybil, will you come? There's acres of room, and you'll like the skipper. He chews tobacco. A corking chap! Will you come?"
He could hear her crying. He caught her to him in the darkness.
"Will you?"
"Oh, my dear!"
"It isn't a floating palace, you know. It's just an old, rusty tramp- ship. We may make New York in three weeks, or we may not. There won't be much to eat except corned beef and crackers. And, Sybil -- er -- do you object to a slight smell of pigs? The last cargo was pigs, and you can still notice it a little."
"I love the smell of pigs, Hailey, dear," said Sybil.
In the drawing-room Lora Delane Porter, that great woman, relaxed her powerful mind with a selected volume of Spinoza's "Ethics." She looked up as Sybil entered.
"You've been crying, child."
"I've been talking to Hailey."
Mrs. Porter dropped Spinoza and stiffened militantly in her chair.
"If that boy Hailey has been bullying you, he shall wash Mike now."
"Aunt Lora, I want to go home to-morrow, please."
"What!"
"Hailey has met Mr. Tupper-Smith and he lent him fifty pounds, and he motored into Southampton -- "
"Mr. Tupper-Smith?"
"No, Hailey."
"That's where he was all the afternoon. No wonder they couldn't find him to dig the potatoes."
"And he has bought accommodation for me and himself on a tramp-steamer which has been carrying pigs. We shall live on corned beef and crackers, and

we may get to New York some time or we may not. And Hailey says the captain is such a nice man, who chews tobacco."
Mrs. Porter started.
"Sybil, do you meant to tell me that Hailey proposes to sail to New York on a tramp-steamer that smells of pigs, and live on corned beef and crackers? And that he likes a man who chews tobacco?"
"He said he was a corking chap."
Mrs. Porter picked up her Spinoza.
"Well, well," she said. "I failed with the clothes-brush, but I seemed to have worked wonders with the simple-life treatment."

The Spring Suit

Rosie was going to buy a new spring suit for George's birthday. Looking at that sentence again, I see that it could be open to misconstruction. The suit was for herself. But it was to be bought in honour of George's birthday and flashed before his admiring gaze for the duration of that occasion.

Altogether, taking it all round, George Mellon's twenty-first birthday promised to be one of the biggest things in history. In the afternoon he was going to strike his employer for a raise, in the evening he and Rosie would dine at the McAstor instead of the red-ink place they usually frequented, and at night they would take in a show, with possibly a bite of supper afterwards at a cabaret place.

A formidable program, and one that made it imperative that Rosie's dress should not be out of the picture. She had been saving all the winter to buy a really irreproachable suit, and the money was in the bank, straining at the leash. All that remained was to make a good selection.

You probably know Rosie by sight. She sits in a sort of kiosk in front of one of those motion picture palaces that have sprung up in recent years like a rash on the face of our fair city. You hand your money in through a little pigeonhole in the glass front of her den and she presses a button, causing a cardboard ticket to leap at you out of a brass slab. Thus far you may argue that I have not sufficiently identified Rosie, New York being full of girls who do conjuring tricks in glass cages.

True, since the movie delirium set in, there are a great many girls who do this. But Rosie is the one who smiles. The others give you your ticket with a sort of aloof hauteur. They have a resigned air, as if the spectacle of multitudes wasting money on the movies saddened them. If they spoke you feel that they would say: "Oh, well, what's the use? There's one born every minute!"

Rosie is different. Rosie beams at you. She has a cheerful little face, with a nice wide mouth; and when you push your hard-earned money through the opening in the glass a flash of white teeth encourages you to believe that, after all, you may not be going to waste your evening, and that you will not subsequently kick your spine up through your hat for having been such a chump as to pay thirty good cents to see Mabelle Gooch -- or whoever it is -- tumble over herself in Lepers of the Great White Way, or whatever the picture is called. You go in feeling heartened, with a vague impression that Rosie must be a rather nice girl.

George Mellon, the party of the second part, is also, curiously enough, a door hound, a keeper of the gates and a dweller upon the threshold. But he

works by day. He is the presentable young man who sits in the anteroom at the offices of the Ladies' Sphere and keeps people from seeing the editor. Editors, who are human beavers, industrious little creatures who work hard and shrink from the public gaze, generally employ, to insure privacy, a small boy with red hair, a tight suit and an air of having seen all the trickery and wickedness in the world.

At the Ladies' Sphere, however, where beautiful and refined women are popping in and out all day like rabbits, something with a little more tone is required: and George landed the job against a field of twenty- six competitors. This should enable you to get an adequate angle on George. It is not every young man who can head off without offense lovely creatures in Paris frocks and mink coats, and convince them simultaneously that it is the editor's dearest wish to have a long cozy chat with them, but that he can't see them this morning. Men with less diplomacy than George have held down ambassadorships in foreign capitals.

It was this manner of his that had first attracted Rosie when she had called one morning to see the editor.

"Have you an appointment, madam?" George had inquired, bending suavely over the little wooden gate with the air of a plenipotentiary at the Court of St. James exchanging compliments with a princess of the blood.

Rosie said she had no appointment.

"Then I fear," said George with manly regret, "that it will scarcely be possible for you to see Mr. Hebblethwaite to-day. Mr. Hebblethwaite is exceedingly busy just now. The magazine goes to press to-day." The magazine was always going to press when people tried to get past George.

"If you would care to leave a message -- "

"I only wanted to ask him if he would mind giving me the Ten Delicious Morsels From the Chafing Dish that he had in the March number. I cut them out, but I lost them."

"Our Circulation Department would attend to that," said George. "If you would care to leave your name and address I will see that they are forwarded to you."

And in the short space of time it took Rosie to write down her name and address George had handed the raspberry to two artists and a short-story writer. Rosie felt that this was no ordinary man.

George must have conceived an equally flattering opinion of her; for that same evening he called at her rooming house in person, bearing the March number. And so pleasantly and swiftly did their acquaintance progress that, before he left, Rosie had cooked Delicious Morsel Number Three on her chafing dish, and they ate it together. Rosie was a wonderful cook; and it

may be that George, who had suffered much from boarding-house meals since he came to New York, acquired at that moment his first yearning for domesticity.

All through the summer and fall their intimacy had ripened, and in the middle of November George proposed. They decided that they would get married immediately after his next raise of salary, and George had fixed the beginning of May as the date for negotiating that business deal. Balmy spring, with all its softening influences, would have had a chance by then to work on Mr. Hebblethwaite and render him malleable.

"But oh, George," said Rosie, "suppose he doesn't give it to you!"

"He will. He knows I'm a valuable man."

"Of course you are. But -- "

"There were twenty-six others applied for the job same time as me, and I copped. That shows you."

"I know you're wonderful!" said Rosie. "But, still -- "

Rosie had once traveled up in the elevator with Mr. Hebblethwaite and the memory lingered. The editor was a little man, with fiery eyes that glowed behind big spectacles, and he had glared at Rosie in the elevator as if the only thing that kept him from eating her was the fact that he had already breakfasted.

"It isn't everyone," said George, "who could do my job. You wouldn't believe the number of females who come every day to waste Mr. Hebblethwaite's time. I tell you, I wonder I don't lose my voice with telling them he's busy. And it's got to be done right, or you might as well not do it at all. You can't go offending people. But gee, you've no idea what an amount of gall women have! Why, the first week I was at the office a female got past me by saying she was the boss' wife. She looked all right, she spoke all right; so I thought she was all right, and I opened the gate. In about ten minutes out she came, said good morning with a nice smile, and beat it. And two seconds later I'm rung for and there's the boss chewing holes in the carpet and smashing up the furniture with his bare hands. Seems she was a lady book agent; and before he could get rid of her she had landed him with Historic Heartbreakers, highly educational and as interesting as a novel. Since then I've played it safe. No body gets past me without an appointment. The boss knows that, and values me according."

"But Mr. Hebblethwaite looks so fierce. I'd die of fright if I had to ask him for a raise."

George felt in his inner pocket and produced, with a certain complacence, a cutting from the advertising pages of the magazine that employed him.

"I might have felt that way once, but the other day I came across this. I've written for -- the book. It looks to me like the goods."
The cutting showed a picture of a resolute young man with a clean-cut face and a strong mouth pointing a minatory finger at an elderly man with a pointed beard. The elderly man was cowering down in his chair and obviously getting the loser's end of the mix up. Beneath the picture were the words: "Look Him in the Eye and Win!"
And then:
No matter how big he is, no matter how powerful, he will listen, heed you and respect you. Don't flinch. Make him drop his glance or turn his gaze and your battle is won. What battle? Your every battle -- the battle you must fight every day with the men who block your way to success.
Have courage and show it. "Courage for what?" you ask. The courage to assert yourself, to demand and get your rights; the calm, steady, unwavering courage that shows through your eye to every man you meet.
Send the coupon below and let us mail to you -- absolutely free, for examination -- a copy of this sensational new book -- The Will and its Training: by Otis Elmer Banks, Ph.D.
Have courage and the world is your oyster.
Rosie was impressed.
"Why should the world be an oyster?" she asked.
"I don't know," said George frankly. "I didn't understand that bit myself. But that's not the point. The whole thing is that I mean to train myself scientifically and then go to it. You can see by what it says here that it'll be like taking money from a child's bank. Very likely I shan't hardly have to ask. Probably he'll unbelt directly he meets my eye."
So that was settled; and it seemed to Rosie to make it all the more imperative that she should not fall down on her end of the coming campaign. If George was going to go through an ordeal like that for her sake, the least she could do was to reward him by being a credit to him in the matter of a spring suit. She was in the position of the lady for whom a knight jousted in the Middle Ages. After a hard afternoon at the tournament the knight had a right to expect to find his queen of beauty looking worth the trouble. As the days went by, Rosie began to regard the spring suit as a sort of symbol of her love and of her worthiness to be loved. Her future seemed to hang on it.
The process of buying a spring suit, especially if you wait till spring to do it, is not so simple as it might seem to the lay mind. The big room at the big store that Rosie had selected was crammed to suffocation when she arrived. Women of all sorts and sizes were competing for the attention of the salesgirls. The assemblage looked like the mob scene in a motion picture.

Large women jostled small women; short women jostled tall women; thin women and stout women pushed one another and everybody else impartially.

Rosie sat down in a corner to wait. It was the first warm day of spring and she felt exhausted. But because she was Rosie and combined an out-size in hearts with a small size in bodies, it was not her own tiredness that compelled her pity. She was sorry for the salesgirls. They were working so terribly hard. Rosie watched them dive into mysterious closets, come out laden with suits and more suits, and exhibit these to the customers in much the same manner as the waiter at your restaurant shows you the lobster, but without the latter's optimism.

The waiter is confident and cheery. He knows there is going to be a happy ending. His air is the air of a man concluding the last trading formalities of a successful business operation. But these girls who were parading spring suits had the disheartening knowledge, the fruit of long experience, that they were probably wasting their time, and that most of the women they served had no intention of buying but had merely come there to play at shopping.

Presently the crowd thinned. It was near closing time. The big room presented an after-the-battle appearance. Spring suits lay about on tables as if they had swooned there from exhaustion. The air was close and heavy. The salesgirls stood in twos and threes among the wreckage like the survivors of a forlorn hope. One of them perceived Rosie and limped toward her in a depressed way. Rosie could almost see her thinking. Plainer than words her pale face was saying: "Oh, Lord! Another of them!"

"Can I attend to you, madam?"

Rosie felt shrinkingly apologetic. She had forgotten that she had a headache herself and that she had been waiting patiently for nearly an hour. She only felt that it was brutal of her to keep the poor girl working a moment longer.

"I want to look at suits, please."

The salesgirl's expression seemed to say that her worst fears had been confirmed.

"What size, madam?" she said mechanically.

"Eighteen misses' please," said Rosie meekly, feeling like an overbearing Eastern tyrant.

The girl walked slowly away, picked up one of the suits that had fainted on a near-by chair, and returned, her listlessness more marked than ever. She resembled someone who had been forced into playing a game that through much repetition has become tedious and painful.

The suit she bore was, in a sense, a suit. In shape and material it conformed to the definition. But the mere sight of it sent a shudder through Rosie, by so

much did it miss being the ideal of her dreams. It had no poetry, no meaning, no chic, no je-ne-sais-quoi , no anything that was attractive and inspiring. Worse, it looked vulgar. It was a loud black-and-white check, and one glance told Rosie that she would look awful in it. She had opened her lips to denounce and reject the horrid thing when she caught sight of the girl's face.
Girls who live alone and support themselves, like Rosie, come to acquire something of the masculine attitude towards life. They lose the woman's inborn gift of shopping and acquire in its place that consideration for the other party to the transaction which marks the average male. A man whose aim it is to buy a pair of trousers does not stand coolly by while the attendant exhibits his entire stock and then go off without making a purchase. A brief "Gimme those!" and his shopping is finished.
Rosie had this male characteristic. She hated giving trouble. Even in ordinary circumstances it pained her to have to refuse to buy. And now, looking at this pale tired girl before her, she forgot all about the vital importance of finding the one spring suit heaven had destined for her from the beginning of things. All she felt was that she must get the business finished quickly and let the poor girl go home.
"That will do splendidly," she said.
The salesgirl blinked. This was one of the things that didn't happen. Then, as realization came to her, her eyes lit up. Their grateful gleam was Rosie's recompense. And she needed some recompense, for directly the words were out of her mouth she knew what she had done.
The memory of a kind action is supposed to be an unfailing receipe for happiness. Boy Scouts grow fat on it. But Rosie, as she went to meet George at the Hotel McAstor on the night of his birthday, felt none of that glow of quiet content she might reasonably have expected as her right. On the contrary, she was miserable and apprehensive. Man -- which includes woman -- being the ruler of creation and having an immortal soul and other advantages, ought to be superior to such trivalities as clothes.
A quiet conscience is more important than a loud suit. But such is human frailty that the best of us lose our nerve if we feel that our outer husk is not all it should be. Rosie knew that she did not look right! And when a woman feels that, she might just as well go home and get into a kimono.
The situation was rendered more poignant by the fact that George was not as other men. George was employed at the offices of a magazine that dictated the fashions to a million women; where even the stenographers looked like fashion plates and every caller presented to his gaze the last word in what was smart.

George, therefore, naturally had a high standard. Something special was required to win his trained approval. And she was coming to meet him at a fashionable restaurant in a black-and-white check suit that was not only hideous but hardly respectable.

It was just the sort of suit that girls wore to whom strange men on street corners said: "Hello, kiddo!" It was a flashy, giggling, sideways-glancing, chorus-of-a-burlesque-show sort of suit. It was the outer covering of a cutie and a baby doll.

As she got off the car she saw him waiting outside the restaurant. He looked superb. George was always a great dresser. He was tall and slim, and resembled those divine youths you see in tailors' advertisements, who stand with bulging bosoms and ingrowing waists, saying to their college chums, as they light a cigarette: "Yes, my dear chap, I always buy the Kute-kut Klothes, each suit guaranteed for one year on the easy-payment system. A fellow must look decent!"

She hurried toward him with a sinking heart, gamely forcing her face into a smile.

"Here I am, dear!"

"Hello!" said George.

Was his voice cold? Was his manner distant?

"Many happy returns of the day!"

"Thanks!"

Yes. His voice was cold. His manner was distant. And a dull disapproving look was in his eyes.

There was a momentary silence. They stood aside to allow a stream of diners to go in. Rosie looked at the women. They were walking reproaches to her. They were smart. They glittered. A sudden panic came upon her. Something told her that George would be ashamed to be seen with her in a place like the McAstor.

"I say, Rosie!"

There was embarrassment in George's voice. He gave a swift look over his shoulder into the crowded prismatic lobby of the restaurant.

"I don't know that I'm so crazy to have dinner here," he said awkwardly. "How about going somewhere else?"

The blow had fallen. And, like most blows that fall after we have been anticipating them, it had an unexpected effect on its victim. A moment before she had felt humble, ashamed of herself. But now, when George had come out into the open and as good as told her in so many words that he shrank from being seen with her in public, a fighting spirit she had never suspected herself of possessing flamed into being. All her unhappiness

crystallized into a furious resentment. She hated George, who had humiliated her.
"I don't mind," she said.
"Darned noisy crowded place," said George. "I've heard the service is bad too."
She despised him now, besides hating him. It was pitiful to see him standing there, mumbling transparent lies to try to justify himself.
"Shall we go to Giuseppe's?" she asked coldly.
The question was a test. Giuseppe's was where they always went, one of the four hundred and eighty-seven Italian restaurants in the neighborhood of Times Square which provided sixty-cent table-d'hote dinners for the impecunious. The food was plentiful, especially the soup, which was a meal in itself, and they had always enjoyed themselves there; but if George could countenance the humble surroundings of Giuseppe's on his birthday, on the night they had been looking forward to for weeks as a grand occasion, then George must indeed have sunk low. For George to answer "Yes" was equivalent to an admission that he had feet of clay.
"Yes," answered George; "that's just what I'd like."
Rosie put her finger in her mouth and bit it hard. It was the only way she could keep from crying.
Dinner was a miserable affair. The constraint between them was like a wall of fog. It was perhaps fortunate that they had decided to go to Giuseppe's, for there conversation is not essential. What with the clatter of cutlery, the babel of talk, the shrill cries of the Italian waitresses conveying instruction and reproof to an unseen cook, who replied with what sounded like a recitative passage from grand opera, and the deep gurgling of the soup dispatchers, there is plenty of tumult to cover any lack of small talk.
Rosie, listening to the uproar, with the chair of the diner behind her joggling her back and the elbow of the diner beside her threatening her ribs, remembered with bitterness that George had called the McAstor a noisy crowded place.
When the ice cream and the demi-tasses appeared Rosie leaned forward.
"Did you get tickets for a theater?" she asked.
"No," said George; "I thought I'd wait and see what show you'd like to go to."
"I don't think I want to go to a show. I've got a headache. I'll go home and rest."
"Good idea!" said George. It was hopeless for him to try to keep the relief out of his voice. "I'm sorry you've got a headache."
Rosie said nothing.

They parted at her door in strained silence. Rosie went wearily up to her room and sat down on the accommodating piece of furniture that was a bed by night and by day retired modestly into the wall and tried to look like a bookshelf. She had deceived George when she told him she had a headache. Her head had never been clearer. Never had she been able to think so coherently and with such judicial intensity. She could see quite plainly now how mistaken she had been in George. She had been deceived by the glamour of the man. She did not blame herself for this. Any girl might have done the same.

Even now, though her eyes were opened, she freely recognized his attractions. He was good-looking, an entertaining talker, and superficially kind and thoughtful. She was not to be blamed for having fancied herself in love with him; she ought to consider herself very lucky to have found him out before it was too late. She had been granted the chance of catching him off his guard, of scratching the veneer, and she felt thankful. . . . At this point in her meditations Rosie burst into tears -- due, no doubt, to relief.

The drawback to being a girl who seldom cries is that when you do cry you do it clumsily and without restraint. Rosie was subconsciously aware that she was weeping a little noisily; but it was not till a voice spoke at her side that she discovered she was rousing the house.

"For the love of Pete, honey, whatever is the matter?"

A stout, comfortably unkempt girl in a pink kimono was standing beside her. There was concern in her pleasant face.

"It's nothing," said Rosie. "I didn't mean to disturb you."

"Nothing! It sounded like a coupla families being murdered in cold blood. I'm in the room next to this; and I guess the walls in this joint are made of paper, for it sounded to me as if it was all happening on my own rug. Come along, honey! You can tell me all about it. Maybe it's not true, anyway."

She sat down beside Rosie on the bookcase bed and patted her shoulder in a comforting manner. Then she drew from the recesses of her kimono a packet of chewing gum, a girl's best friend.

"Have some?"

Rosie shook her head.

"Kind o' soothing, gum is," said the stout girl, inserting a slab into her mouth as if she were posting a letter, and beginning to champ rhythmically, like an amiable cow. "Now what's your little trouble?"

"There's nothing to tell."

"Well, go ahead and tell it, then."

Rosie gave in to the impulse that urged her to confide. There was something undeniably appealing and maternal about this girl. In a few broken sentences

she revealed the position of affairs. When she came to the part where George had refused to take her into the McAstor the stout girl was so moved that she swallowed her gum and had to take another slab.
The stout girl gave it as her opinion that George was a cootie.
"Of course," said Rosie with a weak impulse to defend her late idol, "he's very particular about clothes."
The stout girl would hear no defense. She said it was Bolsheviki like George who caused half the trouble in the world. It began to look to her as if George Mellon was one of these here now lounge lizards that you read pieces about in the papers.
"Not," she said, eying Rosie critically, "but what that certainly is some little suit you've got on. I'll say so! Nobody couldn't look her best in that." She gave a sudden start. "Say, where did you get it?"
"At Fuller Benjamin's."
"No!" cried the stout girl. "But it is! I thought all along it looked kind o' familiar. Why, honey, that's the suit we girls call the Crown Prince, because it oughtn't to be at large! Why, it's a regular joke with us! I've tried to sell it a dozen times myself. What? Sure I work at Fuller Benjamin's. And -- say, I remember you now. You came in just on closing time and Sadie Lewis waited on you. For the love o' Pete, why ever did you go and be so foolish as to let Sadie wish a quince like that on you?"
"She looked so tired," said Rosie miserably, "I just hated to bother her to show me a lot of suits; so I took the first. It seemed such a shame. She looked all worn out."
For the first time in her career as a chewer, a career that had covered two decades, the stout girl swallowed her gum twice in a single evening. Only the supremest emotion could have made her do this, for she was a girl who was careful of her chewing gum, even to the extent of parking it under the counter or behind doors for future use when it was not in active service. When she bought gum she bought the serial rights. But now, in the face of this extraordinary revelation, swallowing it seemed the only thing to do. She was stunned. A miracle had happened. With her own eyes she had seen a shopper who had consideration for shopgirls. Diogenes could not have been more surprised if he had found his honest man.
"Well, if that don't beat everything!" she gasped. "Wherever did you get those funny ideas of yours about us salesladies being human? Didn't you know we was just machines? Now you listen here, honey: There's certainly something coming to you for that, and here's where you're going to get it. I've the cutest suit all tucked away down at the store, just ready and waiting for you. Honest, it's a bird! What's your size? Eighteen misses', I should

judge. Why, it'll fit you just like mother made. I sold it this morning to a dame who went dippy over it."
"It's sold!"
"Don't you worry about that. It hasn't been sent off yet. And I know the dame that got her hooks onto it. She's one of the Boomerang Sisters, the kind you send goods to and have 'em come whizzing back to you. She's a C. O. D. lizard. She ain't worthy of that suit, honey, and she ain't going to get it. She'll get the Crown Prince instead and be told that's what she ordered."
"But won't you get into trouble?"
"There you go again, worrying yourself about the poor working girl! Say, that habit's going to grow on you if you don't watch out! I won't get into no trouble. She'll let out a squawk you'll be able to hear as far as White Plains, I've no doubt; but I should manifest concern! I'm quitting on the seventeenth. Going to be married!"
The stout girl sighed dreamily.
"Say, there's a fellow that really is a fellow! Runs a dry-goods-and- notions store back home where I come from; been crazy about me since we were kids; has a car, coupla help, half-acre lot back of the house, twenty-eight chickens, and a bulldog that he's been offered fifty dollars for, and grows his own vegetables. I'm the lucky girl, all right. Not a thing to it!
"Well, you look in at the store bright and early to-morrow morning, ask for me -- Miss Merridew's my name -- and I'll have that suit waiting for you. I'll say good night now. Got to write to my boy before I hit the hay. See you later!"
The stout girl withdrew. Presently Rosie heard her through the wall singing Poor Butterfly. A little later there came an imperious banging on the floor above, from the room where the long-haired young man lived who was supposed to be writing a play. The singing stopped. Silence reigned.
George was dealing with a poetess in his suave manner when Rosie reached the office of the Ladies' Sphere at noon next day. In a few moments the poetess had receded like a brightly colored wave that rolls down the beach. The elevator engulfed her and she was no more. George came over to Rosie.
"Hello, kiddie! Where did you spring from?"
This was quite a different George. His eyes shone with pleasure at the sight of her. His animation had returned -- a very different George from the dull-eyed disapproving critic of last night.
Rosie looked at him steadily, without an answering smile. She was a very different Rosie, also, from the stricken creature who had parted from him yesterday. The new suit was all and more than Miss Merridew had claimed

for it. Navy blue, with short shoulders, tight sleeves and wonderful lines, it was precisely the suit of which Rosie had dreamed.

She felt decently clad at last. From the smart little straw hat, with its flowers and fruit, to the black silk stockings, with their white clocks, and the jaunty patent-leather pumps, she was precisely all that a girl would wish to be. She could hold up her head again.

And she did hold up her head, with a militant tilt of the chin. She was feeling strong and resolute. Before she left, the engagement would be broken. On that point she was as rigid as steel. If her outward appearance was all that George valued, she had done with him.

"I came to say something to you, George," she said quietly.

George did not appear to have heard her. He looked about him. From behind doors came the click of typewriters and the sound of voices, but nobody was visible. They had the anteroom to themselves.

"Say! I got it!"

"Got it?"

"The raise! Another fifteen per."

"Yes?"

He seemed not to notice the coolness of her voice. This man was full of his own petty triumph.

"I'll tell you one thing, though," he went on; "I don't know who Elmer Otis Banks is, but he's a prune! That dope of his may be all right with some people, but when it comes to slipping one over on Mr. Hebblethwaite it's about as much good as a cold in the head.

"Yesterday afternoon I breezed into the boss' office, looked him in the eye as per schedule, and said I could do with a raise. According to the dope he ought to have come across like a lamb. But all he did was to tell me to get out. I got out. The way I figured it was that if I didn't get out then I'd be getting out a little later for keeps."

A caller intruded, desirous of seeing the editor. George disposed of her. He returned to Rosie.

"Well, back I go to my chair out here, feeling good and sore, and presently a dame blows in and wants to see the boss. I tell her nothing doing.

" 'You evidently don't know who I am,' she says, looking at me as if I was just one of the common people. 'I am Mrs. Hebblethwaite.'

"She had a book under her arm and it looked to me like a sample. I wasn't taking any chances.

" 'Sorry, ma'am,' I says, 'but the last Mrs. Hebblethwaite that made a play round the end and scored a touchdown in the boss' private office was a book

agent. So unless you have an appointment, it's no go. I value my job and I want to hold it.'
" 'I shall speak to my husband about your impertinence,' she said, and beat it.
"I thought no more about it. And that night, while I was waiting for you in the McAstor lobby, I'm darned if the boss didn't come in with this same woman; and I heard her ask him if he'd remembered to put the cover over the canary's cage before they left home.
"Gee! By the time you arrived I'd made up my mind it would be the gate for me first thing this morning. I don't suppose you noticed anything, but I was feeling so sick I just wanted to creep away and die."
Rosie leaned bonelessly against the rail. The reaction from her militant mood had left her limp. The thought of how she had wronged her golden-hearted George filled her with self-loathing. She had no right to be engaged to the most perfect of his sex.
"Oh, George!" she gasped.
George misinterpreted her emotion. He patted her hand encouragingly.
"It's all right, kiddie! I told you there was a happy ending. This morning the boss sent for me.
" 'What's all this I hear about your refusing Mrs. Hebblethwaite admittance yesterday?' he said. I was feeling that all was over now except the tearful farewells. 'She told you who she was,' he said. 'What did you keep her out for?'
" 'I thought you were busy, Mr. Hebblethwaite,' I said. 'And it's always been my idea that if callers hadn't appointments you weren't to be disturbed on any account.'
"He didn't say anything for a bit; then he kind of glared at me.
" 'How many were there after the job when you got it?'
"I told him twenty-seven, counting me.
" 'Then let me tell you, young man,' he said, worrying his cigar, 'that I don't consider you one of twenty-seven. You're one in a million! You've a head! Weren't you boring me yesterday with some silly story about wanting a raise? What do you want a raise for?'
" 'Want to get married, sir.' He looked at me in a pitying sort of way.
" 'You don't know when you're well off,' he said. 'Oh, well! Give this to the cashier.'
"And he scribbled something on a bit of paper. And -- "
George broke off and slid nimbly to intercept a fair creature in mauve who was trying to buck center.

"Have you an appointment, madam? Then I fear -- Mr. Hebblethwaite is extremely busy. . . . The magazine goes to press to-day. If you will leave a message -- "
He came back.
"What was I saying? Oh, yes. He gave me a note to the cashier for another fifteen a week. So there we are! Say, I happened to be passing a shop a few days ago and I saw in the window some parlor furniture -- "
Rosie gulped.
"But, George, why didn't you tell me?"
"Tell you? I have told you!"
"Last night, I mean."
George laughed a little sheepishly.
"Well, after the way I'd been blowing to you about what a marvel I was and what I was going to do to the boss when I got him alone, I kind of felt you'd think me such a darned fool. Besides, I didn't want to worry you."
"But you did worry me. I nearly died."
George stared.
"Eh? How? Why?"
"Why. I naturally thought, when you suddenly didn't want to go into the McAstor, that you were ashamed to be seen with me."
"Ashamed to be seen with you! Whatever gave you that idea?"
"I thought you thought my dress was too awful."
"What's the matter with your dress?" asked George, puzzled. "It looks all right to me."
"Not this one, the one I wore last night."
"Isn't that the one you wore last night?" said George.
"I never notice what you've got on, kiddie. You could wear overalls and make a hit with me. It's you I'm in love with, not the scenery."
Rosie blinked.
"You're the most wonderful man on earth!"
"Sure! But don't tell anybody."
"But all the same, you're pretty awful not to see that this is the cutest spring suit ever made."
George looked into her eyes. Elmer Otis Banks himself never directed into anybody's eyes such a steady whole-hearted gaze. Looking over his shoulder again to make sure that their privacy was still undisturbed, he kissed Rosie.
"Anything you wear looks that way to me," he said. "Well, as I was saying, I was passing this shop, and there in the window was the swellest set of parlor furniture -- "

Mike's Little Brother

These things happened in New York, which is the capital of the Land of Unexpectedness; which, like Shakespeare's divinity, shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will. The fool of the family, sent there in despair to add one more to his list of failures, returns home at the end of three years a confirmed victim to elephantitis of the income. His brother with the bulging forehead and the college education falls, protesting, into the eighteen dollars a week class. Anything may happen in New York.

Michael Burke and his brother Tim had journeyed from Skibbereen to the land where the dollar bills grow on trees, without any definite idea what they were going to do when they arrived there; and New York had handled such promising material in its best manner. Michael it had given to the ranks of the police. Tim it had spirited away. Utterly and absolutely he had vanished. Michael had left Ellis Island while Tim was still there. "And divil a sign," said he, swinging his club sadly, "have I seen of me little brother from that day on."

We were patrolling Merlin Street, on the East Side, together, one night when he first told me the story. I was the smallest of all possible reporters on The Manhattan Daily Chronicle at the time, and my most important duty was to cover the Windle Market police-station, which is within a stone's throw of Merlin Street. It was there that I had met Michael; and when matters were quiet at the station, I would accompany him on his beat, and we would talk of many things, but principally of his little brother Tim. As the days went on, I must have heard the story fifty times. In the telling it sometimes varied, according to Michael's mood. Sometimes it would be long and unrestrainedly pathetic. At other times it would have all the brevity of an official report. But it always ended in the same way. "And divil a sign," Mike would say, "have I seen of me little brother from that time on."

My imagination got to work on the thing. I liked Michael, and the contrast between his words and his granite, expressionless face appealed to me. It was not long before I began to build up in my mind's eye a picture of the vanished Tim. Each night some remark of Mike's would add another touch to the portrait. Why I got the idea that Tim was delicate I do not know. I suppose it came from Mike's insistence on the epithet "little." At any rate, Tim to me was a slightly-built boy, curly-haired, blue-eyed and pale. Not unlike little Lord Fauntleroy, grown up. Sometimes he had a cough.

There were nights in the hot weather when Mike would be despondent. A New York summer night does not encourage optimism. Tim was dead. He was sure of it. He had made inquiries and had found that a Timothy Bourke,

released from Ellis Island at about that time, had found employment helping to construct the Subway. "This Timothy Bourke, working in compressed air in casement under the water, had taken that horrible form of paralysis known as the "bends," and had died.

"They spelt the name different," said Mike. "There was an 'o' to it, which there isn't to Burke; but it's me little brother for all that." And from this conviction he was not to be shaken for a whole fortnight, till one evening the skies were torn by a thunderstorm and for the space of two hours New York became a shower-bath. And with the cool spell that followed Mike's optimism came back to him.

It was in the fall that the great thing happened. I am bound to say that by that time I had become as hopeless of setting eyes on Tim in the flesh as ever Mike in his gloomiest moments had been. The better I became acquainted with New York, the more was I impressed with the vastness of the place and the impossibility of finding a man who has disappeared in such a jungle of humanity. New York is not like London. There is no one spot in it which everyone must visit. In London, it has well been said, if you want a man, you may go to Charing Cross and wait. You may have to wait a long time, but sooner or later he will come. New York has no Charing Cross.

My heart was sore for Mike -- sorest when he was the most cheerful and talked of the great times he and Tim would have together when they met. It hurt me to hear him talk. Tim was dead -- I knew it.

And then one night we found him, without the slightest difficulty. It was as if Fate, conscience-stricken, had resolved that there should be no chance of our overlooking him, for he came to us heralded by the loudest shouts I had ever heard from human throat. Mike and I were walking slowly up Merlin Street, Mike deep in an anecdote of his little brother's childhood, when suddenly from around the corner in Blake Street there came to us the first of those giant yells. Instantly Mike's mind got back from the interesting past to the equally interesting present. His jaw protruded. He gripped his club more tightly. The yells suggested murder. We rounded the corner at a brisk gallop. My feelings, when we came in sight and found that it was not a murder, were mixed. As a citizen, I was relieved. As a reporter, I am afraid I was a little disappointed. Things had been quiet at Windle Market of late and there is no doubt that a murder gives a gifted young reporter anxious to display his powers to an editor who has always shown a touch of skepticism concerning them, a distinct chance. I replaced my notebook in my pocket with a sigh of resignation. The thing was not even a hold-up. Indeed, at first sight it looked more like a convivial meeting of old friends than anything else.

There were two men on the sidewalk. One short and stout and wearing a derby hat, was engaging in executing a sort of shuffling dance. The other, a gigantic red-haired man, was standing and snapping his fingers. He was bare-headed. There were the ruins of a tall hat on the ground beside him. Apparently in the exuberance of the moment he had thrown it down and jumped on it.

The stout man was the first to catch sight of us. He paused in his dance, and screamed a few words joyfully in German. The other, with another mammoth shout, wheeled round. The light fell on his face. It was a generously-planned face. Nature seemed to have started out with the idea of making two faces and then to have decided to use all the material for one. A vast jaw was its principal feature. This was surmounted by a grin that must have measured many inches. Curiously enough, the man reminded me instantly of someone I knew quite well, though at the moment I could not name him.

Mike had no such uncertainty. With a yell that rivalled the loudest of those we had heard in Merlin Street, he stopped dead, then sprang forward again.

"Timmy!" he roared. "Me little brother!"

"Mike!" howled the man. "Saints above us, it's me darlin' Micky!"

They met in a hug like two wrestlers, while I stood respectfully on the outskirts, rapidly removing from its place in my portrait gallery that touching Lord Fauntleroy picture of Mike's little brother which I had been at such pains for the last six months to paint, varnish and frame at my own expense. It was a pretty picture, considered simply as a work of art, but I felt that it was not a good likeness.

Meanwhile, the brothers had disentangled themselves and were bringing their life-histories up-to-date.

"Little did I think," said Tim admiringly, "to see me darlin' Micky a cop, in a fine blue uniform an' all. It's you that look the handsome boy, Micky. Who'd have thought of me Micky a cop! Praise the day!"

"An' I've bin lookin' for you Timmy, ivery blessed minute since they siperated us at the island. Young mister man here" -- he indicated me with a wave of the hand -- "he'll tell ye that's the truth. Ivery blessed minute, mornin' and night, Timmy. Divil a wink of sleep have I had for eighteen months the way I've been looking for ye. I thought ye were dead. Timmy me boy. Young mister man here he'll tell ye that's the truth. Where have ye bin? What have ye bin doin'?"

"Sure, I've bin makin' me fortune, Micky boy, like I said I would. First thing after leavin' the island I gets a job as a bar-keep, settin' up the drinks and throwin' out the drunks; and wan day in blows Dan Magee -- Red Dan

Magee, the same which lived across the way in Skibbereen. He blows in and calls for a Wurtzberger. 'Dan!' says I, handin' him the beer and a push in the chest simultaneous. 'Wurra!' says he. It's Timmy Burke or his ghost! And, says Dan, he's made money the time he's bin livin' here, and he's a hotel in a town out West, and I'm to go with him and help him, for 'tis too large for him to look after alone. Off I go, and it's a fine, large hotel wid the folks jostling wan another in the doorways the way they're eager to get in, and now Dan's back to Ireland, lavin' meself in charge, drawin' good money. And I'm in New York for a wake's holiday for rest and me health."

At this point in the conversation the first jarring note was struck. The little German, who had been hopping round in an agitated manner, evidently anxious to obtain a hearing, burst into speech. He spoke rapidly and gutturally in his native language. The brothers inspected him with grave disapproval. "Aw, g'wan," said Mike, "talk English."

The flood of speech continued unchecked. I stepped forward. I am a poor German scholar but I was able to pick up the main drift of the harangue.

"He's making a complaint," I said.

"What's he got to complain about?" said Mike.

The German was now addressing himself directly to me. Something seemed to have told him that I was his link with the representative of the law. Having persuaded him to reduce his speed, I was enabled to follow him more closely.

"It's about your brother," I said.

"About Timmy?"

"He says that your brother assaulted him."

Righteous indignation on the part of Tim. "And it's meself," he said, pained, "that did nothing of the kind. I just gave him wan little shake, so as he'd hardly feel it, to stop him when he was tryin' to run."

"He says you forced him to dance."

"And wasn't I just tryin' to teach the little man to dance an Irish jig?" demanded Tim warmly.

"Anyhow," I said, "he wants to make a complaint at the station."

A look of deep thought and care settled on Mike's face. In the excitement of the reunion this aspect of the affair had escaped him for the moment. He had sunk the policeman in the brother. He began to look as if he would be compelled to reverse the process.

I pleaded in my best German. I was eloquent, lucid and moving, but without effect. The complainant was obdurate. His feelings had been wounded and nothing would satisfy him but a general adjournment to the police-station.

"I'm sorry," I said to Mike. "I can't persuade him. He's set on it."

There was an awkward pause. Mike looked at Tim. Tim looked at Mike. I lit a cigarette. The German gesticulated.
"Timmy," said Mike ruefully, "it's pinchin' ye I'll have to be after."
There was another pause.
"Will ye be comin' along, Timmy boy?" said Mike.
His little brother was obviously struggling with his feelings. He looked from Mike to the ground and back again at Mike. His twiddling fingers betokened agitation of mind. He grinned furtively at intervals. Then he unbosomed himself. "Micky," he said solemnly, "this is the way ut is. If ye ask ut of me as a brother, I'll go as quiet as Mary's lamb. But I tell ye," he proceeded with pathos, "it cuts me to the heart. Wasn't I lookin' to end me evening with the father and mother of a fight with some fool of a cop who'd give me all the fight I wanted? Faith, I haven't so much as slapped a man since I left Red Dan's hotel in Wistaria. I tell ye, Micky boy, it's hard. But if ye ask ut of me as a brother, I'll do ut. But it's hard. Bad days to ye, ye small sawn-off, for spoilin' a man's pleasure," he concluded, eyeing the little German reproachfully. "Which way do we go, Micky boy?"
And then Michael rose to the situation like a hero. He sank his private feelings in order to give his little brother pleasure. Tim was the type of Irishman to whom a fight at any hour of the day is meat and drink, regardless of the identity of his opponent. He would have fought his dearest friend for pure love of the thing. But Mike was differently constituted. He was something of a sentimentalist, and a fight with his brother was by no means necessary to his happiness. But he did not hesitate.
"Timmy," he said, handing me his club, "ye shan't have your pleasure spoiled. Ye shan't come quiet. I'd take shame to presume on yer kind heart. Young mister man here can see fair, and I'll just be the plain cop and give ye all the fight you need."
"Micky boy," said Tim, deeply moved, "ye're a jool."
Tim apparently favoured the hurricane style of fighting. He rushed in with a whoop, and was hit out again with a drive under the chin. He gulped once or twice. "Faith," he said, "I thought me head was off. Ye've a fine, strong left, Micky boy."
"Ye want to watch for it comin' up sudden when ye swing," said Mike. "Ye never would trouble about your guard, Timmy," he went on, more in sorrow than in anger. "If I told ye wance about it in the old day, I told ye a thousand times."
They circled warily round one another, sparring for an opening.
I had ut from Dan Magee," said Tim conversationally, parrying a left hook, "that little Kate Malone is married this eight months."

"She is?" said Mike, interested, swinging with his right, and missing. "Who's the boy?"
"Larry" -- Tim broke off to rush in and try a double lead and a right to the body; Mike scored the first knockdown with an upper-cut; " -- O'Brien," concluded Tim from the ground, feeling his jaw cautiously.
"Larry O'Brien! Ye don't say! Have ye had enough, Timmy boy?"
"I should like more," said Tim wistfully, "if ut isn't incommodin' you, Micky."
"Sure, no," said Mike heartily, "take all you want."
"Thank ye, Micky boy."
"An' look out for me left that comes up when we're in-fightin'," said Mike, with brotherly solicitude.
"I'll remember ut. Ready, Micky?"
"Sure!"
Round two began.
"Murphy's dead," said Tim.
Mike side-stepped. "Which Murphy?" he asked.
"Old Jack Murphy," said Tim, landing heavily on his brother's left ear.
"Old Jack Murphy who had the duck-farm?"
"That's the man. He died of fallin' downstairs in the dark and breakin' his neck."
"Poor old Jack," said Mike, sorrowfully hammering Tim's ribs.
"All flesh is as grass," said Tim philosophically as he went down for the second time.
It was in the middle of the third round that the end came. It was the briskest of the three, and for the first minute I thought that Tim would recover the ground he had lost in the opening stages. Twice he staggered Mike with right swings, but his fatal passion for imparting news undid him. In the excitement of telling the story of the love-affairs of a certain Andy Regan, as related to him by Dan Magee, he had the misfortune to leave exposed that portion of the anatomy known as the solar plexus. Mike's left shot out, and the anecdote ended in a gasp and a gurgle, as the narrator sank slowly and peacefully to the ground.
Mike wiped his brow and looked deprecatingly at me. "Ye mustn't think me little brother can't fight," he said. "He's a rale good boy, if he wasn't so careless. Boy and man he never would remember to kape watch over his body, the way it wouldn't get jolted by a blow. But for all I've beaten him, don't you think, young mister man, as me little brother isn't a rale good fighter. He's careless, that's all. Are ye feelin' better, Timmy boy? Have ye had enough?"

"Thank ye, Micky, yes. I'd go on, but I doubt me I can't stand. I'm rale sorry to spoil your pleasure this early, but me legs will not hold me. Lift me up aisy, Micky boy, and help me to the station."
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