Multiple Wodehouse II
by Pelham Grenville Wodehouse

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Love Me, Love My Dog

After five minutes of silent and intense thought, John Barton gave out the statement that the moonlight on the terrace was pretty. Aline Ellison said, "Yes, very pretty."

"But, I say, by Jove," said the voice behind them, "you should see some of the moonlight effects on the Mediterranean, Barton. You really should. They would appeal to you. There is nothing like them, is there, Miss Ellison?"

Homicidal feelings surged up within John's bosom. This was the fourth time that day that Lord Bertie Fendall had interrupted just as he got Aline alone. It was maddening. Man, in his dealings with the more attractive of the opposite sex, is either a buzzer or a thinker. John was a thinker. In ordinary circumstances a tolerable conversationalist, he became, when in the presence of Aline Ellison, a thinker of the most pronounced type, practically incapable of speech. What he wanted was time. He was not one of your rapid wooers, who meet a girl at dinner on Monday, give her their photograph on Tuesday morning, and propose on Tuesday afternoon. It took him a long while to get really started. He was luggage, not express. But he had perseverance, and, provided the line was kept clear, was bound to get somewhere in the end.

The advent of Lord Bertie had blocked the line. From the moment when Mr. Keith, their host, had returned from London bringing with him the son and heir of the Earl of Stockleigh, John's manoeuvres had received a check. Until then he had had Aline to himself, and all that had troubled him had been his inability to speak. He had gone dumbly round the links with her, rowed her silently on the lake, and sat by in mute admiration while she played waltz tunes after dinner. It had not been unmixed happiness, but at least there had been no competition. But in Lord Bertie he had a rival, and a rival who was a buzzer. Lord Bertie had the gift of conversation, and a course of travel had provided him with material for small-talk. Aline, her father being rich and her mother a sort of female Ulysses, had gone over much of the ground which Lord Bertie had covered; and the animation with which she exchanged views of European travel with him made John moist with agony. John was no fool, but he had never penetrated farther into the heart of the Continent than Paris; and in conversations dealing with the view from the summit of the Jungfrau, or the paintings of obscure Dagoes in Florentine picture-galleries, this handicapped him.

On the present occasion he accepted defeat with moody resignation. His opportunity had gone. The conversation was now dealing with Monte Carlo, and Lord Bertie had plainly come to stay. His high-pitched voice rattled on and on. Aline seemed absorbed.

With a muttered excuse John turned into the house. It was hard. To- morrow he was leaving for London owing to the sudden illness of his partner. True, he would be coming back in a week or so, but in that time the worst would probably have happened. He went to bed so dispirited that, stubbing his toe against a chair in the dark, he merely sighed.

As he paced the terrace after breakfast, waiting for the motor, Keggs, the Keiths' butler, approached.

At the beginning of his visit Keggs had inspired John with an awe amounting at times to positive discomfort. John was a big, broad- shouldered young man, and his hands and feet were built to scale. But no hands and feet outside of a freak museum could have been one half as large as his seemed to be in the earlier days of his acquaintanceship with Keggs. He had suffered terribly under the butler's dignified gaze, until one morning the latter, with the air of a high priest conferring with an underling on some point of ritual, had asked him whether, in his opinion, he would be doing rightly in putting his shirt on Mumblin' Mose in a forthcoming handicap, as he had been advised to do by a metropolitan friend who claimed to be in the confidence of the trainer. John, recovering from the shock, answered in the affirmative; and a long and stately exchange of ideas on the subject of Current Form ensued. At dinner, a few days later, the butler, leaning over John to help him to sherry, murmured softly:

"Romped 'ome, sir, thanking you, sir," and from that moment had intimated by his manner that John might consider himself promoted to the rank of an equal and a friend.

"Excuse me, sir," said the butler, "but Frederick, who 'as charge of your packing, desired me to ask you what arrangements you wished made with regard to the dog, sir."

The animal in question was a beautiful bulldog, Reuben by name. John had brought him to the country at the special request of Aline, who had met him in London and fallen an instant victim to his rugged charms.

"The dog?" he said. "Oh, yes. Tell Frederick to put his leash on. Where is he?"

"Frederick, sir?"

"No, Reuben."

"Gruffling at 'is lordship, sir," said Keggs, tranquilly, as if he were naming some customary and recognized occupation for bulldogs.

"Gruffling at -- ? What!"
" 'Is Lordship, sir, 'ave climbed a tree, and Reuben is at the foot, gruffling at 'im, very fierce."
John stared.
" 'Is lordship, sir," continued Keggs, " 'as always been uncommon afraid of dogs, from boy'ood up. I 'ad the honour to be employed has butler some years ago by 'is father, Lord Stockleigh, and was enabled at that time to observe Lord 'Erbert's extreme aversion for animals of that description. 'Is huneasiness in the presence of even 'er ladyship's toy Pomeranian was 'ighly marked and much commented on in the servants' 'all."
"So you had met Lord Herbert before?"
"I was butler at the Castle a matter of six years, sir."
"Well," said John, with some reluctance, "I suppose we must get him out of that tree. Fancy being afraid of old Reuben! Why, he wouldn't hurt a fly."
" 'E 'ave took an uncommon dislike to 'is lordship, sir," said Keggs.
"Where's the tree?"
"At the lower hend of the terrace, sir. Beyond the nood statoo, sir."
John ran in the direction indicated, his steps guided by an intermittent sound as of one gargling. Presently he came in view of the tree. At the foot, with his legs well spread and his massive head raised, stood Reuben. From a branch some little distance above the ground peered down the agitated face of Lord Bertie Fendall. His lordship's aristocratic pallor was intensified. He looked almost green.
"I say," he called, as John appeared, "do for Heaven's sake take that beastly dog away. I've been up here the dickens of a time. It isn't safe with that animal about. He's a bally menace."
Reuben glancing over his shoulder recognized his master, and, having no tail to speak of, wagged his body in a welcoming way. He looked up at Lord Bertie, and back again at John. As clearly as if he had spoken the words his eye said, "Come along, John. You and I are friends. Be a sportsman and pull him down out of that."
"Take the brute away!" cried his lordship.
"He's quite good-natured, really. He doesn't mean anything. He won't hurt you."
"He won't get the bally chance," replied Lord Bertie, with acerbity. "Take him away."
John stooped and grasped the dog's collar.
"Come on, Reuben, you old fool," he said. "We shall be missing that train."
The motor was already at the door when he got back. Mr. Keith was there, and Aline.

"Too bad, Barton," said Mr. Keith, "your having to break your visit like this. You'll come back, though? How soon, do you think?"
"Inside of two weeks, I hope," said John. "Hammond has had these influenza attacks before. They never last long. Have you seen Reuben's leash anywhere?"
Aline Ellison uttered a cry of anguish.
"Oh, you aren't taking Reuben, Mr. Barton! You can't! You mustn't! Mr. Keith, don't let him. Come to auntie, Reuben, darling. Mr. Barton, if you take my precious Reuben away I'll never speak to you again."
John looked at her, and gulped.
He cleared his throat.
What he wanted to say was: "Miss Ellison, your lightest wish is law. I love you -- not with the weak two-by-four imitation of affection such as may be offered to you by certain knock-kneed members of the Peerage, but with a great, broad, deep, throbbing love such as the world has never known. Take Reuben. You have my heart, my soul; shall I deny you a dog? Take Reuben. And when you look upon him, think, if but for a moment, of one who, though far away, is thinking, thinking always of you. Miss Ellison, good-bye!"
What he said was: "Er, I -- "
And that, mind you, was pretty good going for John.
Oh, thank you!" cried Aline. "Thank you so much, Mr. Barton. It's perfectly sweet of you, and I'll take such care of him. I won't let him out of my sight for a minute."
". . ." said John, brightly.
Mathematicians among my readers do not need to be informed that ". . ." is the algebraical sign representing a blend of wheeze, croak, and hiccough.
And the motor rolled off.
It was about an hour later that Lord Bertie Fendall, finding Aline seated under the shade of the trees, came to a halt beside her.
"Barton went off in the car just now, didn't he?" he inquired, casually.
"Yes," said Aline.
Lord Bertie drew a deep breath of relief. At last he could walk abroad without the feeling that at any moment that infernal dog might charge out at him from round the next corner. With a light heart he dropped into a chair beside Aline, and began to buzz.

"Do you know, Miss Ellison -- "

A short cough immediately behind him made him look round. His voice trailed off. His eyeglass fell with a jerk and bounded on the end of its cord. He sprang to his feet.
"Oh, there you are, Reuben," said Aline. "Here, come here. What have you been doing to your nose? It's all muddy. Aren't you fond of dogs, Lord Herbert? I love them."
"Eh? I beg your pardon?" said his lordship, revolving warily on his own axis, as the animal lumbered past him. "Oh, yes. Yes. That is to say -- oh, yes. Very."
Aline was removing the mud from Reuben's nose with the corner of her pocket-handkerchief.
"Don't you think you can generally tell a man's character by whether dogs take to him or not? They have such wonderful instinct."
"Wonderful," agreed his lordship, meeting Reuben's rolling eye and looking hastily away.
"Mr. Barton was going to take Reuben with him, but that would have been silly for such a short while, wouldn't it?"
"Yes. Oh, yes," said Lord Bertie. "I suppose," he went on, "he will spend most of his time in the stables and so on, don't you know? Not in the house, I mean, don't you know, what?"
"The idea!" cried Aline, indignantly. "Reuben's not a stable dog. I'm never going to let him out of my sight."
"No?" said Lord Bertie a little feverishly. "No? Oh, no. Quite so."
"There!" said Aline, giving Reuben a push. "Now you're tidy. What were you saying, Lord Herbert?"
Reuben moved a step forward, and wheezed slightly.
"Excuse me, Miss Ellison," said his lordship. "I've just recollected an important -- there's a good old boy! -- an important letter I meant to have written. Excuse me!"
The announcement of his proposed departure may have been somewhat abrupt, but at any rate no fault could be found with his manner of leaving. It was ceremonious in the extreme. He moved out of her presence backwards, as if she had been royalty.
Aline saw him depart with a slightly aggrieved feeling. She had been in the mood for company. For some reason which she could not define she was conscious of quite a sensation of loneliness. It was absurd to think that John's departure could have caused this. And yet somehow it did leave a blank. Perhaps it was because he was so big and silent. You grew used to his being there just as you grew used to the scenery, and you missed him when

he was gone. That was all. If Nelson's column were removed, one would feel lonely in Trafalgar Square.
Lord Bertie, meanwhile, having reached the smoking-room, where he proposed to brood over the situation with the assistance of a series of cigarettes, found Keggs there, arranging the morning papers on a side-table. He flung himself into an arm-chair, and, with a scowl at the butler's back, struck a match.
"I 'ope your lordship is suffering no ill effects from the adventure?" said Keggs, finishing the disposal of the papers.
"What?" said Lord Bertie, coldly. He disliked Keggs.
"I was alluding to your lordship's encounter with the dog Reuben this morning."
Lord Bertie started.
"What do you mean?"
"I observed that your lordship 'ad climbed a tree to elude the animal."
"You saw it?"
Keggs bowed.
"Then why the devil, you silly old idiot," demanded his lordship explosively, "didn't you come and take the brute away?"
It had been the practice in the old days, both of Lord Bertie and of his father, to address the butler in moments of agitation with a certain aristocratic vigour.
"I 'ardly liked to interfere, your lordship, beyond informing Mr. Barton. The animal being 'is."
Lord Bertie flung his cigarette out of the window, and kicked a foot- stool. Keggs regarded these evidences of an overwrought soul sympathetically.
"I can appreciate your lordship's hemotion," he said, "knowin' 'ow haverse to dogs your lordship 'as always been. It seems only yesterday," he continued, reminiscently, "that your lordship, then a boy at Heton, 'ome for the 'olidays, handed me a package of Rough on Rats, and instructed me to poison 'er ladyship your mother's toy Pomeranian with it."
Lord Bertie started for the second time since he had entered the room. He screwed his eyeglass firmly into his eye, and looked keenly at the butler. Keggs's face was expressionless. Lord Bertie coughed. He looked round at the door. It was closed.
"You didn't do it," he said.
"The 'onorarium which your lordship offered," said the butler, deprecatingly, "was only six postage-stamps and a 'arf share in a white rat. I did not consider it hadequate in view of the undoubted riskiness of the proposed act."

"You'd have done it if I had offered more?"
"That, your lordship, it is impossible to say after this lapse of time."
The Earl of Stockleigh had at one time had the idea of attaching his son and heir to the Diplomatic Service. Lord Bertie's next speech may supply some clue to his lordship's reasons for abandoning that scheme.
"Keggs," he said, leaning forward, "what will you take to poison that dashed dog, Reuben?"
The butler raised a hand in pained protest.
"Your lordship, really!"
"Ten pounds."
"Your lordship!"
"Twenty."
Keggs seemed to waver.
"I'll give you twenty-five," said his lordship.
Before the butler could reply, the door opened and Mr. Keith entered.
"The morning papers, sir," said Keggs deferentially, and passed out of the room.
It was a few days later that he presented himself again before Lord Bertie. His lordship was in low spirits. He was not in love with Aline -- he would have considered it rather bad form to be in love with anyone -- but he found her possessed of attractions and wealth sufficient to qualify her for an alliance with a Stockleigh; and he had concentrated his mind, so far as it was capable of being concentrated on anything, upon bringing the alliance about. And up to a point everything had seemed to progress admirably. Then Reuben had come to the fore and wrecked the campaign. How could a fellow keep up an easy flow of conversation with one eye on a bally savage bulldog all the time? And the brute never left her. Wherever she went he went, lumbering along like a cart-horse with a nasty look out of the corner of his eye whenever a fellow came up and tried to say a word. The whole bally situation, decided his lordship, was getting dashed impossible, and if something didn't happen to change it he would get out of the place and go off to Paris.
"Might I 'ave a word, your lordship?" said Keggs.
"Well?"
"I 'ave been thinking over your lordship's offer -- "
"Yes?" said Lord Bertie, eagerly.
"The method of eliminating the animal which your lordship indicated would 'ardly do, I fear. Awkward questions would be asked, and a public hexpose would inevitably ensue. If your lordship would permit me to make an alternative suggestion?"

"Well?"
"I was reading a article in the newspaper, your lordship, on 'ow sparrows and such is painted up to represent bullfinches, canaries, and so on, and I says to myself, 'Why not?' "
"Why not what?" demanded his lordship, irritably.
"Why not substitoot for Reuben another dog painted to appear identically similar?"
His lordship looked fixedly at him.
"Do you know what you are, Keggs?" he said. "A blithering idiot."
"Your lordship always 'ad a spirited manner of speech," said Keggs, deprecatingly.
"You and your sparrows and canaries and bullfinches! Do you think Reuben's a bally bird?"
"I see no flaw in the idea, your lordship. 'Orses and such is frequently treated that way. I was talking that matter over with Roberts, the chauffeur -- "
"What! And how many more people have you discussed my affairs with?"
"Only Roberts, your lordship. It was unavoidable. Roberts being the owner of a dog which could be painted up to be the living spit of Reuben, your lordship."
"What!"
"For a hadequate 'onorarium, your lordship."
Lord Bertie's manner became excited.
"Where is he? No, not Roberts. I don't want to see Roberts. This dog, I mean."
"At Robert's cottage, your lordship. 'E is a great favourite with the children."
"Is he, by Jove? Good-tempered animal, eh?"
"Extremely so, your lordship."
"Show him to me, then. There might be something in this."
Keggs coughed.
"And the 'onorarium, your lordship?"
"Oh, that. Oh, I'll remember Roberts all right."
"I was not thinking exclusively of Roberts, your lordship."
"Oh, I'll remember you, too."
"Thank you, your lordship. About 'ow extensively, your lordship?"
"I'll see that you get a couple of pounds apiece. That'll be all right."
"I fear," said Keggs, shaking his head, "hit could 'ardly be done hat the price. In a hearlier conversation your lordship mentioned twenty- five. That, 'owever, was for the comparatively simple task of poisoning the animal. The substitootion would be more expensive, owing to the nature of the process. I was thinking of a 'undred, your lordship."

"Don't be a fool, Keggs."
"I fear Roberts could not be induced to do it for less, the process being expensive."
"A hundred! No, it's dashed absurd. I won't do it."
"Very good, your lordship."
"Here stop. Don't go. Look here, I'll give you fifty."
"I fear it could not be done, your lordship."
"Sixty guineas. Seven -- . Here, don't go. Oh, very well then, a hundred."
"I thank you, your lordship. If your lordship will be at the bend in the road in 'alf an hour's time the animal will be there."
Lord Bertie was a little early at the tryst, but he had not been waiting long when a party of three turned the corner. One of the party was Keggs. The second he recognized as Roberts the chauffeur, a wooden-faced man who wore a permanent air of melancholy. The third, who waddled along at the end of a rope, was a dingy white bulldog.
The party came to a halt before him. Roberts touched his hat, and eyed the dog sadly. The dog sniffed at his lordship with apparently amiability. Keggs did the honours.
"The animal, your lordship."
Lord Bertie put up his glass and inspected the exhibit.
"Eh?"
"The animal I mentioned, your lordship."
"That?" said Lord Bertie. "Why, dash it all, that bally milk-coloured brute isn't like Reuben."
"Not at present, your lordship. But your lordship is forgetting the process. In two days Roberts will be able to treat that hanimal so that Reuben's own mother would be deceived."
Lord Bertie looked with interest at the artist. "No, really? Is that a fact?"
Roberts, an economist in speech, looked up, touched his hat again in a furtive manner, and fixed his eyes once more on the dog.
"Well, he seems friendly all right," said Lord Bertie, as the animal endeavoured to lick his hand.
"He 'as the most placid disposition," Keggs assured him. "A great improvement on Reuben, your lordship. Well worth the 'undred."
Hope fought with scepticism in Lord Bertie's mind during the days that followed. There were moments when the thing seemed possible, and moments when it seemed absurd. Of course, Keggs was a silly old fool, but, on the other hand, there were possibilities about Roberts. The chauffeur had struck his lordship as a capable-looking sort of man. And, after all, there

were cases on record of horses being painted and substituted for others, so why not bulldogs?

It was absolutely necessary that some step be taken shortly. His jerky manner and abrupt retreats were getting on Aline's nerves. He could see that.

"Look here, Keggs," he said, on the third morning. "I can't wait much longer. If you don't bring on that dog soon, the whole thing's off."

"We 'ave already effected the change, your lordship. The delay 'as been due to the fact that Roberts wished to make an especial good job of it."

"And has he?"

"That I will leave your lordship to decide. The hanimal is now asleep on the terrace."

He led the way to where a brown heap lay in the sunshine. His lordship followed with some diffidence.

"An extraordinary likeness, your lordship."

Lord Bertie put up his eyeglass.

"By Jove, I should say it was. Do you mean to tell me -- ?"

"If your lordship will step forward and prod the animal, your lordship will be convinced by the amiability -- "

"Prod him yourself," said Lord Bertie.

Keggs did so. The slumberer raised his head dreamily, and rolled over again. Lord Bertie was satisfied. He came forward and took a prod. With Reuben this would have led to a scene of extreme activity. The excellent substitute merely flopped back on his side again.

"By Jove! it's wonderful," he said.

"And if your lordship 'appens to have a cheque-book handy?"

"You're in a bally hurry," said Lord Bertie, complainingly.

"It's Roberts, your lordship," sighed Keggs. " 'E is a poor man, and 'e 'as a wife and children."

After lunch Aline was plaintive.

"I can't make out," she said, "what is the matter with Reuben. He doesn't seem to care for me any more. He won't come when I call. He wants to sleep all the time."

"Oh, he'll soon get used -- I mean," added Lord Bertie, hastily, "he'll soon get over it. I expect he has been in the sun too much, don't you know?"

The substitute's lethargy continued during the rest of that day, but on the following morning after breakfast Lord Bertie observed him rolling along the terrace behind Aline. Presently the two settled themselves under the big sycamore tree, and his lordship sallied forth.

"And how is Reuben this morning?" he inquired, brightly.

"He's not very well, poor old thing," said Aline. "He was rather sick in the night."
"No, by Jove: really?"
"I think he must have eaten something that disagreed with him. That's why he was so quiet yesterday."
Lord Bertie glanced sympathetically at the brown mass on the ground. How wary one should be of judging by looks. To all appearances that dog there was Reuben, his foe. But beneath that Reuben-like exterior beat the gentle heart of the milk-coloured substitute, with whom he was on terms of easy friendship.
"Poor old fellow!" he said.
He bent down and gave the animal's ear a playful tweak. . . .
It was a simple action, an action from which one would hardly have expected anything in the nature of interesting by-products -- yet it undoubtedly produced them. What exactly occurred Lord Bertie could not have said. There was a sort of explosion. The sleeping dog seemed to uncurl like a released watch-spring, and the air became full of a curious blend of sniff and snarl. An eminent general has said that the science of war lies in knowing when to fall back. Something, some instinct, seemed to tell Lord Bertie that the moment was ripe for falling back, and he did so over a chair.
He rose, with a scraped shin, to find Aline holding the dog's collar with both hands, her face flushed with the combination of wrath and muscular effort.
"What did you do that for?" she demanded fiercely. "I told you he was ill."
"I -- I -- I -- " stammered his lordship.
The thing had been so sudden. The animal had gone off like a bomb.
"I -- I -- "
"Run!" she panted. "I can't hold him. Run! Run!"
Lord Bertie cast one look at the bristling animal, and decided that her advice was good and should be followed.
He had reached the road before he slowed to a walk. Then, feeling safe, he was about to light a cigarette, when the match fell from his fingers and he stood gaping.
Round the bend of the road, from the direction of Robert's cottage, there had appeared a large bulldog of a dingy-white colour.
Keggs, swathed in a green baize apron, was meditatively polishing Mr. Keith's silver in his own private pantry, humming an air as he worked, when Frederick, the footman, came to him. Frederick was a supercilious young man, with long legs and a receding chin.
"Polishing the silver, old top?" he inquired, genially.

"In answer to your question, Frederick," replied Keggs, with dignity, "I ham polishing the silver."
Frederick, in his opinion, needed to be kept in his place.
"His nibs is asking for you," said Frederick.
"You allude to -- "
"Bertie," said Frederick, definitely.
"If," said Keggs, "Lord 'Erbert Fendall desires to see me, I will go to 'im at once."
"Another bit of luck for 'Erbert," said Frederick, cordially. " 'E's in the smoking-room."
"Your lordship wished to see me?"
Lord Bertie, who was rubbing his shin reflectively with his back to the door, wheeled, and glared balefully at the saintly figure before him.
"You bally old swindler!" he cried.
"Your lordship!"
"Do you know I could have you sent to prison for obtaining money under false pretences?"
"Your lordship!"
"Don't stand there pretending not to know what I mean."
"If your lordship would explain, I 'ave no doubt -- "
"Explain! By Jove, I'll explain, if that's what you want. What do you mean by doping Reuben and palming him off on me as another dog? Is that plain enough?"
"The words is intelligible," conceded Keggs, "but the accusation is overwhelming."
"You bally old rogue!"
"Your lordship," said Keggs, soothingly, " 'as been deceived, has I predicted, by the reely extraordinary likeness. Roberts 'as undoubtedly eclipsed 'imself."
"Do you mean to tell me that dog is the one you showed me in the road? Then how do you account for this? I saw that milk-coloured brute of Roberts's out walking only a moment ago."
"Roberts 'as two, your lordship."
"What?"
"The himage of one another, your lordship."
"What?"
"Twins, your lordship," added the butler, softly.
Lord Bertie upset a chair.
"Your lordship," said Keggs, "if I may say so, 'as always from boy'ood up been a little too 'asty at jumping to conclusions. If your lordship will

recollect, it was your lordship's 'asty assertion as a boy that you 'ad seen me occupied in purloining 'is lordship your father's port wine that led to my losing the excellent situation, which I might be still 'oldin', of butler at Stockleigh Castle."
Lord Bertie stared.
"Eh? What? So that -- ? I see!" he said. "By Jove, I see it all. You've been trying to get a bit of your own back. What?"
"Your lordship! I 'ave done nothing. 'Appily I can prove it."
"Prove it?"
The butler bowed.
"The resemblance between the two animals is extraordinary, but not absolutely complete. Reuben 'as a full set of teeth, but Roberts's dog 'as the last tooth but one at the back missing."
He paused.
"If your lordship," he added with the dignity that makes a good man, wronged, so impressive, "wishes to disprove my assertions, the modus hoperandi is puffectly simple. All your lordship 'as to do is to open the animal's mouth and submit 'is back teeth to a pussonal hinspection."
John Barton alighted from the motor, and, in answer to Keggs's respectful inquiry, replied that he was quite well.
"Where is everybody?" he asked.
"Mr. Keith is out walking, sir. 'Is lordship 'as left. Miss -- "
"Left!"
" 'Is lordship was compelled to leave a few days back, sir, 'avin' business in Paris."
"Ah! Returning soon, I suppose?"
"On that point, sir, 'is lordship seemed somewhat uncertain."
"How is Reuben?"
"Reuben 'ave enjoyed good 'ealth, sir. 'E is down by the lake, I fancy, sir, at the present moment, with Miss Ellison."
"I think I might as well go and see him," said John, awkwardly.
"I fancy 'e would appreciate it, sir."
John turned away. The lake was some distance from the house. The nearer he got to it the more acute did his nervousness become. Once or twice after he had caught the gleam of Aline's white dress through the trees he almost stopped, then forced himself on in a sort of desperation.
Aline was standing at the water's edge encouraging Reuben to growl at a duck. Both suspended operations and turned to greet him, Reuben effusively, Aline with the rather absent composure which always deprived him of the power of speech.

"I've taken great care of Reuben, Mr. Barton," she said.
Something neat and epigrammatic should have proceeded from John. It did not.
"I'd like to have you all for my own, wouldn't I, Reuben?" she went on, bending over the snuffling dog, and kissing him fondly in the groove between his eyes.
It was a simple action, but it had a remarkable effect on John. Something inside him seemed suddenly to snap. In a moment he had become very cool and immensely determined. Conversation is a safety- valve. Deprive a man of the use of it for a long enough time, and he is liable to explode at any moment. It is the general idea that the cave-man's first advance to the lady of his choice was a blow on the head with his club. This is not the case. He used the club because, after hanging round for a month or so trying to think of something to say, it seemed to him the only way of disclosing his affection. John was a lineal descendant of the cave-man. He could not use a club, for he had none. But he did the next best thing. Stooping swiftly, he seized Aline round the waist, picked her up, and kissed her.
She stood staring at him, her lips parted, her eyes slowly widening till they seemed to absorb the whole of her face. Reuben, with the air of a dramatic critic at an opening performance, sat down and awaited developments.
A minute before, John would have wilted beneath that stare. But now the spirit of the cave-man was strong in him. He seized her hands, and pulled her slowly towards him.
"You're going to have us both," he said.

Ladies And Gentlemen V. Players

Quite without meaning it, I really won the Gentlemen v. Players match the summer I was eighteen. They don't say anything about me in the reports, but all the time I was really the thingummy -- the iron hand behind the velvet glove, or something. That's not it, but it's something of the sort. What I mean is, if it hadn't been for me, the Gentlemen would never have won. My cousin Bill admits this.

I cut the report of the match out of the Telegraph. The part where I come into it begins like this:'. . . After lunch, however, a complete change comes over the game. A change frequently comes over a game of cricket after lunch, but it is usually to the disadvantage of the batting side. In this case, however, the reverse happened. Up to the interval the Gentlemen, who had gone in to make three hundred and fourteen in the fourth innings of the match, had succeeded in compiling one hundred and ten, losing in the process the valuable wickets of Fry, Jackson, Spooner, and MacLaren. As N. A. Knox, who had been sent in first on the previous evening to play out the twenty minutes that remained before the drawing of stumps, had succumbed to a combination of fading light and one of Hirst's swervers in the last over on Friday, the Gentlemen, with five wickets in hand, were faced with the task of notching two hundred and four runs in order to secure the victory. At lunchtime the position seemed hopeless. Two hundred and four is not a large score as scores go nowadays; but against this had to be placed the fact that Batkins, the Sussex professional, who had been drafted into the team at the eleventh hour, was scoring the proverbial success which attends eleventh-hour choices. From the press box, indeed, his bowling during the half-dozen overs before lunch appeared literally unplayable. The ball with which he dismissed MacLaren must have come back three inches. The wicket, too, was giving him just that assistance which a fast bowler needs, and he would have been a courageous man who would have asserted that the Gentlemen might even yet make a game of it. Immediately upon the re-start, however, the fortunes of the game veered completely round, Batkins' deliveries were wild and inaccurate, and the two batsmen, Riddell and James Douglas, speedily took advantage of this slice of luck. So much at home did they become that, scoring at a rapid rate, they remained together till the match was won, the Oxonian making the winning hit shortly before a quarter to six. The crowd, which was one of the largest we have ever seen at a Gentlemen v. Players match, cheered this wonderful performance to the echo. Douglas, the alteration in whose scholastic duties enabled him for the first time to turn

out for the Gentlemen, made a number of lovely strokes in the course of his eighty-one. But even his performance was eclipsed by Riddell's great century. Without giving the semblance of a chance, he hit freely all round the wicket, two huge straight drives off successive balls from Batkins landing among the members' seats. When next our cousins from "down under" pay us a visit, we shall be surprised if Riddell does not show them . . .'

The rest is all about what Bill will do when he plays against Australia. Riddell is Bill. He is Aunt Edith's son, He is at New College, Oxford. Father says he is the best bat Oxford have had since he was up. But if you had seen him at lunch that day, you would never have dreamed of his making a century, or even double figures.

If you read what I wrote once about a thing that happened at our cricket week, you will remember who Batkins is. He came down to play for Sir Edward Cave's place against Much Middleford last year, and got everybody out except father, who made forty-nine not out. And he didn't get father out because I got my maid Saunders, whom he was in love with, to get him to bowl easy to father so that he could make fifty. He didn't make fifty, because the last man got out before he could; but it was all right. Anyhow, that's who Batkins was.

Perhaps you think that I tried the same thing again, and got Saunders to ask him to bowl easy to my cousin Bill in the Gentlemen v. Players match. But I didn't. I don't suppose he would have bowled badly in a big match like that for anyone, even Saunders. Besides, he and Saunders weren't on speaking terms at the time.

And that's really how the whole thing happened.

I really came into the story one night just before I was going to bed. Saunders was doing my hair. I was rather sleepy, and I was half dozing, when suddenly I heard a sort of curious sound behind me -- a kind of mixture of a sniff and a gulp. I looked in the glass, and there was the reflection of Saunders with a sort of stuffed look about the face. Just then she looked up, and our eyes met in the glass. Hers were all reddy.

I said: 'Saunders!'

'Yes, miss.'

'What's the matter?'

'Matter, miss? Nothing, miss.'

'Why are you crying?'

She stiffened up and tried to look dignified. I wish she hadn't because she was holding a good deal of my hair at the time, and she pulled it hard.

'Crying, miss! I wouldn't demean myself -- no, I wouldn't.'

So I didn't say anything more for a bit, and she went on brushing my hair. After about half a minute there was another gulp, I turned round.
'Look here, Saunders,' I said, 'you might as well tell me. You'll hurt yourself if you don't. What is up?'
(Because Saunders had always looked after me, long before I had my hair up -- when I had it right down, not even tied half-way with a black ribbon. So we were rather friends.)
'You might say. I won't tell a soul.'
Then there was rather a ghark. A ghark is anything that makes you feel horrid and uncomfortable. It was a word invented by some girls I know, the Moncktons, and it supplied a long-felt want. It is a ghark if you ask somebody how somebody else is, and it turns out that they hate them or that they're dead. If you hurt anybody's feelings by accident, it is a ghark. This was one, because Saunders suddenly gave up all attempt at keeping it in, and absolutely howled. I sat there, not knowing what to do, and feeling wretched.
After a bit she got better, and then she told me what was the matter. She had had a quarrel with Mr Batkins, and all was over, and he had gone off, and she had not seen him since.
'I didn't know, miss, he'd take on so about me talking to Mr Harry Biggs when we met in the village. But he says: "Ellen," he says, "I must ask you to choose between that" -- then he called him names, miss -- "and me." "William," I says to him, "I won't 'ave such language from no man, I won't," I says, "not even if he is my fiance," I says. So he says: "Promise me you won't speak to him again." So I says: "I won't, and don't you expect it." "Won't what?" he says, "won't speak?" "No," I says, "won't promise." "Ho!" he says, "so this is the end, is it? All's over, is it?" So I says: "Yes, William Batkins," I says, "all is over; and here's your ring what you gave me, and the photograph of yourself in a locket. And very ugly it is," I says; "and don't you come 'anging round me again," I says. And so he rushed out and never came back.'
She broke down once more at the thought of it.
This was the worst ghark I had ever had; because I couldn't think how I could make the thing better.
'Why don't you write to him?' I asked.
'I wouldn't demean myself, miss, And I don't know his address.'
'He plays for a county, so I suppose a letter addressed care of the county ground would reach him. I remember being told which county, but I've forgotten it. Do you know?'

'No, miss. He told me it was a first-class one, but I don't remember which it was.'
'Well, I'll look at the paper tomorrow, and see. He is sure to be playing.'
But though I looked all through the cricket page, I could not find him.
That was Wednesday. On Thursday, my brother Bob arrived from London, bringing with him a friend of his, a Mr Townend, who said he was an artist, but I had never seen any of his pictures. He explained this at dinner. He said that he spent the winter thinking out schemes for big canvases, and in the summer he was too busy playing cricket to be able to get to work on them.
'I say, we've been up at Lord's today,' he said. He was a long, pleasant-looking young man, with a large smile and unbrushed hair. 'Good game, rather. Er -- um -- Gentlemen'll have all their work cut out to win, I think.'
'Ah!' said father. 'Gentlemen v. Players, eh? My young nephew Willie is playing. Been doing well for Oxford this season -- W. B. Riddell.'
'Oh, I say, really? Good field. Players batted first. Fiery wicket, but it'll wear well, I think. Er -- um -- Johnny Knox was making them get up at the nursery end rather, but Tyldesley seems to be managing 'em all right. Made fifty when we left. Looked like stopping. By the way, friend of yours was playing for the pros -- Billy Batkins, the Sussex man. Bob was telling me that you knocked the cover off him down here last summer.
Father beamed.
'Oh!' he said. 'Good deal of luck in it, of course. I managed to make a few.'
'Forty-nine not out,' I said, 'and a splendid innings, too.'
'Oh, I say, really?' said Mr Townend, stretching out a long, thin hand in the direction of the strawberries. 'Takes some doing, that. You know, they only put him into the team at the last moment. But if anyone's going to win the match for them, it'll be he. Just suit him, the wicket ought to, on the last day.'
'Regular Day of Judgment for the Gentlemen,' said Bob. 'Somebody ought to run up to town and hold Bill's hand while he bats, to encourage him.'
I said: 'Father, mayn't I go up to London tomorrow? You know Aunt Edith said only the other day that she wished you would let me. And I should like to see Bill bat.'
Father looked disturbed. Any sudden proposal confuses him. And I could see that he was afraid that if I went, he might have to go too. And he hates London.
I didn't say anything more just then; but after dinner, when Bob and Mr Townend were playing billiards, I went to his study and asked him again.
'I should love to go,' I said, sitting on the arm of his chair. 'There's really no need for you to come, if you don't want to. Saunders could go with me.'
'It's uncommonly short notice for your aunt, my dear,' said father doubtfully.

'She won't mind. She's always got tons of room. And she said come whenever I liked. And Bill would be awfully pleased, wouldn't he?'
'Only make him nervous.'
I said: 'Oh, no. He'd like it. Well, may I?'
I kissed father on the top of the head, and he said I might.
So next day up I went with Saunders, feeling like a successful general.
I got there just before dinner. I found my cousin Bill rather depressed. He had come back from Lord's, where the Gentlemen had been getting the worst of it. The Players had made three hundred and thirty something, and the Gentlemen had made two hundred and twenty-three. Then the Players had gone in again and made two hundred and six, which wasn't good, Bill said, but left the Gentlemen more than three hundred behind.
'And we lost one wicket tonight,' he said, 'for nine; and the pitch is getting beastly. We shall never make the runs.'
'How many did you make, Bill?'
'Ten. Run out. And I particularly wanted to get a few. Just like my luck.'
I asked Aunt Edith afterwards why Bill had been so keen on making runs in this match more than any other, and she said it was because it was the biggest match he had ever played in. But Bill told me the real reason before breakfast the next morning. He was engaged, and she had come to watch him play.
'And I made a measly ten!' said Bill, 'If I don't do something this innings, I shall never be able to look her in the face again. And I know she thinks a lot of my batting. She told me so. It's probably been an eye-opener for her.'
'Poor old Bill!' I said. 'Perhaps you'll do better today.'
'I feel as if I should never make a run again,' he said.
But he did.
I thought it all over that night. Of course, the difficult part was how to let Mr Batkins know that Saunders wanted everything to be forgiven and forgotten. Because he would be out in the field all the time.
I said to Bill: 'You'll be seeing Mr Batkins, the bowler, tomorrow, won't you?'
He said: 'Yes, worse luck, I shall.'
'Then look here, Bill,' I said, 'will you do me a favour? I want to speak to him particularly. Can I, do you think? Can you make him come and talk to me?'
'You can take a man from the pavilion,' said Bill, 'but you can't make him talk. What do you want him for?'
'It's private.'
'You're not after his autograph, are you?'

'Of course I'm not. Why should I want his autograph?'
'Some kids would give their eyes for it. They shoot in picture-postcards to all the leading pros, and make them sign 'em.'
I said nothing, but I did not like Bill hinting that I was a kid; because I'm not. I've had my hair up more than a year now.
I said: 'Well, I don't, anyhow. I simply want to speak to him.'
'Shy bird, Batkins. Probably if he hears that there's a lady waiting to see him, he'll lock himself in the changing-room and refuse to come out. Still, I'll have a try. During the lunch interval would be best -- just before they go onto the field.'
Then I arranged it with Saunders.
I said: 'I shall be seeing Mr Batkins tomorrow, Saunders. If you like, I'll give him a note from you, and wait for an answer.'
'Oh, miss!' said Saunders.
'Then you can say what you like about wanting to make it up, without the ghark of doing it to his face. And if it's all right, which it's certain to be, I'll tell him to come round to Sloane Street after the match, and have some supper, and it'll all be ripping. I'm sure Aunt Edith won't mind.'
Then there was another ghark. Saunders broke down again and got quite hysterical, and said I was too good to her, and she wouldn't demean herself, and she didn't know what to write, and she was sure she would never speak to him again, were it ever so, and she'd go and get the note ready now, and heaps of other things. And when she was better, she went downstairs to write to Mr Batkins.
I believe she found it very difficult to make up the letter, because I didn't see her again that night, and she only gave it to me when we came home for lunch next day. We had decided to take Bill home in the motor to lunch, unless he had gone in in the morning and was not out, when he wouldn't have time. We sat in the seats to the right of the pavilion. The girl Bill was engaged to was there, with her mother, and I was introduced to her. She was very anxious that Bill should make lots of runs. She was a very nice girl. I only wished I could use my influence with Mr Batkins, as I had done before, to make him bowl badly. But he did just the opposite. They put him on after about half an hour, and everybody said he was bowling splendidly. It got rather dull, because the batsmen didn't seem able to make any runs, and they wouldn't hit out. I thought our matches at home were much more interesting. Everybody tries to hit there.
Bill was in the pavilion all the morning; but when the umpires took the bails off, he came out to us, and we all went back in the motor. Bill was more gloomy than I had ever seen him.

'It's a little hard,' he said. 'Just when Hirst happens to have an off-day -- he was bowling tosh this morning -- and the wicket doesn't suit Rhodes, and one thinks one really has got a chance of taking a few, this man Batkins starts and bowls about fifty per cent above his proper form. Did you see that ball that got MacLaren? It was the sort of beastly thing you get in nightmares. Fast as an express and coming in half a foot. If Batkins doesn't get off his length after lunch, we're cooked. And he's a teetotaller, too!'

I tried to cheer him up by talking about the girl he was engaged to, but it only made him worse.

'And it's in front of a girl like that,' he said, 'who believes in a chap, too, mind you, that I'm probably going to make a beastly exhibition of myself. That ball of Billy Batkins'll get me five times out of six. And the sixth time, too.'

Saunders gave me the letter as I was going out. I reminded Bill that he had promised to get hold of Mr Batkins for me.

'I'd forgotten,' he said. 'All right. When we get to the ground, come along with me.'

So we left Aunt Edith in the covered seats and walked round to behind the pavilion.

'Wait here a second,' said Bill. 'I'll send him out. You'll have to hurry up with whatever you're going to say to him, because the Players will be taking the field in about three minutes.'

I waited there, prodding the asphalt with my parasol, and presently Mr Batkins appeared, blushing violently and looking very embarrassed.

'Did you want to see me, miss?' he said. I said 'Yes,' feeling rather gharked and not knowing how to begin.

'You're Mr Batkins, aren't you?' I said at last. It was rather silly, because he couldn't very well be anybody else.

'You played against us last summer,' I said, 'for Sir Edward Cave, at Much Middlefold.'

He started. I suppose the name made him think of Saunders.

The bell began ringing in the pavilion. He shuffled his feet. The spikes made a horrid noise on the asphalt, like a squeaking slate-pencil.

'Was there anything?' he said. 'I shall have to be going out in a minute to bowl.' He pronounced it as if it rhymed with 'fowl'.

So I saw there was no time to waste, and I plunged straight into the thing.

I said: 'You know Saunders doesn't really care a bit for Mr Harry Biggs. She told me so.'

He turned crimson, He had been rather red before, but nothing to this.

'Me and Ellen, miss -- ' he began.

'Oh, I know,' I said. 'She has told me all about it. She's awfully miserable, Mr Batkins. And she would have written long before, to make it up, only she didn't know your address. I've got a letter from her here, which -- '
He simply grabbed the letter and tore it open. I wish I knew what was in it. He read it again and again, breathing very hard, and really looking almost as if he were going to cry.
'Can I tell Saunders it's all right?' I said.
He wouldn't answer for an age. He kept on reading the letter. Then he said: 'Oh, yes, miss,' very fervently. He was what Bob calls 'absolutely rattled.' I suppose he must have been fretting awfully all the time, really, only he wouldn't write and tell Saunders so, but let concealment, like a worm i' the bud, feed on his damask cheek.
(I used to know the whole bit once, to say by heart, I learned it when I did lessons, before I put my hair up. But I've forgotten all but that one piece now.)
'And you'll come to supper tonight? You've got the address on the letter. It's on the right-hand side of Sloane Street, as you go down.'
'Oh, yes, miss. Thank you, miss.'
And off he dashed in a great hurry, because the Players were just going out into the field.
So that's why Batkins' deliveries were 'wild and inaccurate' after lunch. Poor man, he was so flurried by the whole thing that he could hardly bowl at all. The bowler at the other end got a man caught in his first over, and then Bill went in. And Bill hit him in all directions. It was a lovely innings. I don't think I ever enjoyed one more -- not even father's forty-nine not out against the Cave men. They took poor Mr Batkins off after a time, but Bill was set by then, and they couldn't get him out. He went on and on, till at last he got his century and won the match. And everybody rushed across the ground from the cheap seats, and stood by the pavilion railings, yelling. And Bill had to lean out of a window and bow.
'I withdraw what I said about friend Batkins being a teetotaller,' said Bill after dinner that night to me. 'No man could have bowled as rottenly as he did after lunch, on lemonade. It was the sort of stuff you get in a village game -- very fast and beautifully inaccurate,'
Then I told him how it had happened, and he owned that his suspicions were unjust. We were in the drawing-room at the fire. The drawing-room is just over the kitchen. Bill stretched out his hands, palms downwards, and looked at the floor.
'Bless you, my children!' he said.

Bill is really an awfully good sort. When I was leaving Aunt Edith's, he came up and gave me a mysterious little paper parcel. I opened it, and inside it was a jeweller's cardboard box. And inside that, in cotton wool, was the duckiest little golden bat.
'A presentation bat,' he explained, 'because you made a century for Gentlemen v. Players.'

Keeping It From Harold

"Ma!"

Mrs. Bramble looked up, beaming with a kind of amiable fat-headedness. She was the stupidest woman in Barnes, and one of the best-tempered. A domestic creature, wrapped up in Bill, her husband, and Harold, her son. At the present moment only the latter was with her. He sat on the other side of the table, his lips gravely pursed and his eyes a trifle cloudy behind their spectacles. Before him on the red tablecloth lay an open book. His powerful brain was plainly busy.

Mrs. Bramble regarded him fondly. A boy scout, had one been present, would have been struck by the extraordinary resemblance to a sheep surprised while gloating over its young.

"Yes, dearie?"

"Will you hear me?"

Mrs. Bramble took the hook.

"Yes, mother will hear you, precious."

A slight frown marred the smoothness of Harold Bramble's brow. It jarred upon him, this habit of his mother's of referring to herself in the third person, as if she were addressing a baby, instead of a young man of ten who had taken the spelling and dictation prize last term on his head.

He cleared his throat and fixed his eyes upon the cut-glass hangings of the chandelier.

"'Be good, sweet maid,'" he began, with the toneless rapidity affected by youths of his age when reciting poetry, "'and let who will be clever' -- clever, oh yes -- 'do noble things, not dream them' -- dream them, oh yes -- 'dream them all day long; and so make life, death, and that vast f'rever, one' -- oh yes -- 'one grand, sweet song.' I knew I knew it, and now I can do my Scripture."

"You do study so hard, dearie, you'll go giving yourself a headache. Why don't you take a nice walk by the river for half an hour, and come back nice and fresh? It's a nice evening, and you could do your Scripture nicely afterwards."

The spectacled child considered the point for a moment gravely. Then, nodding, he arranged his books in readiness for his return and went out. The front door closed with a decorous softness.

It was a constant source of amazement to Mrs. Bramble that she should have brought such a prodigy as Harold into the world. Harold was so different from ordinary children, so devoted to his books, such a model of behaviour,

so altogether admirable. The only drawback was that his very perfection had made necessary a series of evasions and even deliberate falsehoods on the part of herself and her husband, highly distasteful to both. They were lovers of truth, but they had realized that there are times when truth must be sacrificed. At any cost the facts concerning Mr. Bramble's profession most be kept from Harold.

While he was a baby it had not mattered so much. But when he began to move about and take notice, Mrs. Bramble said to Mr. Bramble, "Bill, we must keep it from Harold."

A little later, when the child had begun to show signs of being about to become a model of goodness and intelligence, and had already taken two prizes at the Sunday-school, the senior curate of the parish, meeting Mr. Bramble one morning, said, nervously -- for, after all, it was a delicate subject to broach -- "Er -- Bramble, I think, on the whole, it would be as well to -- er -- keep it from Harold."

And only the other day, Mrs. Bramble's brother, Major Percy Stokes, of the Salvation Army, dropping in for a cup of tea, had said "I hope you are keeping it from Harold. It is the least you can do," and had gone on to make one or two remarks about men of wrath which, considering that his cheek-bones were glistening with Mr. Bramble's buttered toast, were in poor taste. But Percy was like that. Enemies said that he liked the sound of his own voice, and could talk the hind-leg off a donkey. Certainly he was very persuasive. Once he had wrought so successfully with an emotional publican in East Dulwich that the latter had started then and there to give all that he had to the poor, beginning with his stock-in-trade. Seven policemen had almost failed to handle the situation.

Mr. Bramble had fallen in with the suggestion without demur. In private life he was the mildest and most obliging of men, and always yielded to everybody. The very naming of Harold had caused a sacrifice on his part. When it was certain that he was about to become a father he had expressed a desire that the child should be named John, if a boy, after Mr. John L. Sullivan, or, if a girl, Marie, after Miss Marie Lloyd. But Mrs. Bramble saying that Harold was such a sweet name, he had withdrawn his suggestions with the utmost good-humour.

Nobody could help liking this excellent man; which made it all the greater pity that his walk in life was of such a nature that it simply had to be kept from Harold.

He was a professional pugilist! That was the trouble.

Before the coming of Harold he had been proud of being a professional pugilist. His ability to paste his fellow-man in the eye while apparently

meditating an attack on his stomach, and vice versa, had filled him with that genial glow of self-satisfaction which comes to philanthropists and other benefactors of the species. It had seemed to him a thing on which to congratulate himself that of all London's teeming millions there was not a man, weighing eight stone four, whom he could not overcome in a twenty-round contest. He was delighted to he the possessor of a left hook which had won the approval of the newspapers.

And then Harold had come into his life, and changed him into a furtive practiser of shady deeds. Before, he had gone about the world with a match-box full of press-notices, which he would extract with a pin and read to casual acquaintances. Now, he quailed at the sight of his name in print, so thoroughly had he become imbued with the necessity of keeping it from Harold.

With an ordinary boy it would have mattered less. But Harold was different. Secretly proud of him as they were, both Bill and his wife were a little afraid of their wonderful child. The fact was, as Bill himself put it, Harold was showing a bit too much class for them. He had formed a corner in brains, as far as the Bramble family was concerned. They had come to regard him as a being of a superior order. Bill himself could never think without getting a headache, and Mrs. Bramble's placid stupidity had been a byword at the A.B.C. shop in which she had served before her marriage. Yet Harold, defying the laws of heredity, had run to intellect as his father had run to muscle. He had learned to read and write with amazing quickness. He sang in the choir. He attended Sunday-school with a vim which drew warm commendation from the vicar. And now, at the age of ten, a pupil at a local private school where they wore mortar-boards and generally comported themselves like young dons, he had already won a prize for spelling and dictation, and was considered by those in the know a warm man for the Junior Scripture. You simply couldn't take a boy like that aside and tell him that the father whom he believed to be a commercial traveller was affectionately known to a large section of the inhabitants of London as "Young Porky." There were no two ways about it. You had to keep it from him.

So Harold grew in stature and intelligence, without a suspicion of the real identity of the square-jawed man with the irregularly- shaped nose who came and went mysteriously in their semi-detached, red-brick home. He was a self-centred child, and, accepting the commercial traveller fiction, dismissed the subject from his mind and busied himself with things of more moment. And time slipped by.

Mrs. Bramble, left alone, resumed work on the sock which she was darning. For the first time since Harold had reached years of intelligence she was easy in her mind about the future. A week from to-night would see the end of all her anxieties. On that day Bill would fight his last fight, the twenty-round contest with that American Murphy at the National Sporting Club for which he was now training at the White Hart down the road. He had promised that it should be the last. He was getting on. He was thirty-one, and he said himself that he would have to be chucking the game before it chucked him. His idea was to retire from active work and try for a job as instructor at one of these big schools or colleges. He had a splendid record for respectability and sobriety and all the other qualities which headmasters demanded in those who taught their young gentlemen to box; and several of his friends who had obtained similar posts described the job in question as extremely soft. So that it seemed to Mrs. Bramble that all might now be considered well. She smiled happily to herself as she darned her sock.

She was interrupted in her meditations by a knock at the front door. She put down her sock and listened. It was late for any of the neighbours to pay a call, and the knock had puzzled her. Martha, the general, pattered along the passage, and then there came the sound of voices speaking in an undertone. Footsteps made themselves heard in the passage. The door opened. The head and shoulders of Major Percy Stokes insinuated themselves into the room. The major cocked a mild blue eye at her.

"Harold anywhere about?"

"He's gone out for a nice walk. Whatever brings you here, Percy, so late?"

Percy made no answer. He withdrew his head. His voice, without, said "All right." He then reappeared, this time in his entirety, and remained holding the door open. More footsteps in the passage, and through the doorway, in a sideways fashion suggestive of a diffident crab, came a short, sturdy, redheaded man with a broken nose and a propitiatory smile, at the sight of whom Mrs. Bramble, dropping her sock, rose as if propelled by powerful machinery, and exclaimed, "Bill!"

Mr. Bramble -- for it was he -- scratched his head, grinned feebly, and looked for assistance to the major.

"A brand from the burning," said that gentleman.

"That's right," said Mr. Bramble; "that's me."

"The scales have fallen from his eyes."

"What scales?" demanded Mrs. Bramble, a literal-minded woman. "And what are you doing here, Bill, when you ought to be at the White Hart, training?"

"That's just what I'm telling you," said Percy. " I been wrestling with Bill, and I been vouchsafed the victory."
"You!" said Mrs. Bramble, with uncomplimentary astonishment, letting her gaze wander over her brother's weedy form.
"I been vouchsafed the victory," repeated the major. "It was hard work, but did I falter? No, I did not falter. There were moments when it didn't seem 'ardly possible I could bring it off, but was I down-hearted? No, I was not down-hearted. I wrote him letters, and I sent him tracts. I tried to wrestle with him in speech, too, but there was a man of wrath, a son of Belial in a woollen jersey and a bowler hat, who come at me, using horrible language, and told me to stand still while he broke my neck and dropped me into the river."
"Jerry Fisher's a hard nut," said Mr. Bramble, apologetically. "He don't like people coming round talking to a man he's training, unless he introduces them or they're newspaper gents."
"After that I kept away. But I wrote the letters and I sent the tracts. Bill, which of the tracts was it that snatched you from the primrose path?"
"It wasn't so much the tracts, Perce. It was what you wrote about Harold. You see, Jane -- "
"Perhaps you'll kindly allow me to get a word in edgeways, you two," said Mrs. Bramble, her temper for once becoming ruffled. "You can stop talking for half an instant, Percy, if you know how, while Bill tells me what he's doing here when he ought to be at the White Hart with Mr. Fisher, doing his bit of training."
Mr. Bramble met her eye and blinked awkwardly.
"Percy's just been telling you, Jane. He wrote -- "
"I haven't made head or tail of a word that Percy's said, and I don't expect to. All I want is a plain answer to a plain question. What are you doing here, Bill, instead of being at the White Hart?"
"I've come home, Jane."
"Glory!" exclaimed the major.
"Percy, if you don't keep quiet, I'll forget I'm your sister and let you have one. What do you mean, Bill, you've come home? Isn't there going to be the fight next week, after all?"
"The fight's over," said the unsuppressed major, joyfully, "and Bill's won, with me seconding him."
"Percy!"
Mr. Bramble pulled himself together with a visible effort.
"I'm not going to fight, Jane," he said, in a small voice.
"You're not going -- !"

"He's seen the error of his ways," cried Percy, the resilient. "That's what he's gone and done. At the eleventh hour it has been vouchsafed to me to snatch the brand from the burning. Oh! I have waited for this joyful moment. I have watched for it. I -- "
"You're not going to fight!"
Mr. Bramble, avoiding his wife's eye, shook his head.
"And how about the money?"
"What's money?" said the major, scornfully.
"You ought to know," snapped Mrs. Bramble, turning on him. "You've borrowed enough of it from me in your time."
The major waved a hand in wounded silence. He considered the remark In poor taste. It was true that from time to time a certain amount of dross had passed from her hands to his, but this harping on the fact was indelicate and unsisterly.
"How about the money?" repeated Mrs. Bramble. "Goodness knows I've never liked your profession, Bill, but there is this to be said for it, that it's earned you good money and made it possible for us to give Harold as good an education as any duke ever had, I'm sure. And you know yourself you said that the five hundred pounds you were going to get if you beat this Murphy, and even if you lost it would be a hundred and twenty, was going to be a blessing, because it would let us finish him off proper and give him a better start in life than you or me ever had, and now you let this Percy come over you with his foolish talk, and now I don't know what will happen."
There was an uncomfortable silence. Even Percy seemed at a loss for words. Mrs. Bramble sat down and began to sob. Mr. Bramble shuffled his feet.
"Talking of Harold," said Mr. Bramble at last, "that's really what I'm driving at. It was him really what I was thinking of when I hopped it from the White Hart. There's a good deal in what Perce says about men of wrath and the primrose path and all, but it was Harold that really made me do it. It hadn't hardly struck me till Perce pointed it out, but this fight with Jimmy Murphy, being as you might say a kind of national affair, in a way of speaking, was likely to be written up in all the papers, instead of only in the sporting ones. As likely as not there would he a piece about it in the Mail, with a photograph of me. And you know Harold reads his Mail regular. And then, don't you see, the fat would be in the fire. That's what Percy pointed out to me, and I seen what he meant, so I hopped it."
"At the eleventh hour," added the major, rubbing in the point.
"You see, Jane -- " Mr. Bramble was beginning, when there was a knock at the door, and a little, ferret-faced man in a woollen sweater and cycling

knickerbockers entered, removing as he did so a somewhat battered bowler hat.
"Beg pardon, Mrs. Bramble," he said, "coming in like this. Found the front door on the jar, so came in to ask if you'd happened to have seen -- "
He broke off and stood staring wildly at the little group.
"I thought so!" he said, and shot through the air towards Percy.
"Jerry!" said Bill.
"Mr. Fisher!" said Mrs. Bramble.
"Be reasonable," said the major, diving underneath the table and coming up the other side like a performing seal.
"Let me get at him," begged the intruder, struggling to free himself from Bill's restraining arms.
Mrs. Bramble rapped on the table.
"Kindly remember there's a lady present, Mr. Fisher."
The little man's face became a battlefield on which rage, misery, and a respect for the decencies of social life struggled for the mastery.
"It's hard," he said at length, in a choked voice. "I just wanted to break his neck for him, but I suppose it's not to be. I know it's him that's at the bottom of it. Directly I found Bill, here, had cut his stick and hopped it, I says to myself, 'It's him!' And here I find them together, so I know it's him. Well, if you say so, Mrs. B., I suppose I mustn't put a head on him. But it's hard. Bill, you come back along of me to the White Hart. I'm surprised at you. Ashamed of you, I am. All the time you and me have known each other I've never known you do such a thing. You such a pleasure to train as a rule. It all comes of getting with bad companions. And your chop cooking on the fire all the while! It'll be spoilt now, and all the expense of ordering another. It's hard. Come along, Bill. Step it."
Mr. Bramble looked at his brother-in-law miserably.
"You tell him," he said.
"You tell him, Jane," said the major.
"I won't," said Mrs. Bramble.
"Tell him what?" asked the puzzled trainer. A sudden thought blanched his face. "You haven't been having a glass of beer, Bill?"
"No, no, Jerry. Not me. It's only that -- "
"Well?"
"It's only that I'm not going to fight on Monday."
"What!"
"Bill has seen a sudden bright light," said Percy, edging a few inches to the left, so that the table was exactly between the trainer and himself. "At the eleventh hour he has turned from his wicked ways. You ought to be singing

with joy, Mr. Fisher, if you really loved Bill. This ought to be the happiest evening you've ever known. You ought to be singing like a little child."
A strange, guttural noise escaped the trainer. It may have been a song, but it did not sound like it.
"It's true, Jerry," said Bill, unhappily. "I been thinking it over, and I'm not going to fight on Monday."
"Glory!" said the major, tactlessly.
Jerry Fisher's face was a study in violent emotions. His eyes seemed to protrude from their sockets like a snail's. He clutched the tablecloth.
"I'm sorry, Jerry," said Bill. "I know it's hard on you. But I've got to think of Harold. This fight with Jimmy Murphy being what you might call a kind of national affair, in a way of speaking, will be reported in the Mail as like as not, with a photograph of me, and Harold reads his Mail regular. We've been keeping it from him all these years that I'm in the profession, and we dursen't let him know now. He would die of shame, Jerry."
Tears appeared in Jerry Fisher's eyes.
"Bill," he cried, "you're off your head. Think of the purse!"
"Ah!" said Mrs. Bramble.
"Think of all the swells that'll be coming to see you. Think of the Lonsdale belt they'll have to let you try for if you beat this Murphy. Think of what the papers'll say. Think of me."
"I know, Jerry, it's chronic. But Harold -- "
"Think of all the trouble you've took for the last weeks getting yourself into condition."
"I know. But Har -- "
"You can't not fight on Monday. It 'ud be too hard."
"But Harold, Jerry. He'd die of the disgrace of it. He ain't like you and me, Jerry. He's a little gentleman. I got to think of Harold."
"What about me, pa?" said a youthful voice at the door; and Bill's honest blood froze at the sound. His jaw fell, and he goggled dumbly.
There, his spectacles gleaming in the gaslight, his cheeks glowing with the exertion of the nice walk, his eyebrows slightly elevated with surprise, stood Harold himself.
"Halloa, pa! Halloa, Uncle Percy! Somebody's left the front door open. What were you saying about thinking about me, pa? Ma, will you hear me my piece of poetry again? I think I've forgotten it."
The four adults surveyed the innocent child in silence.
On the faces of three of them consternation was written. In the eyes of the fourth, Mr. Fisher, there glittered that nasty, steely expression of the man who sees his way to getting a bit of his own back. Mr. Fisher's was not an

unmixedly chivalrous nature. He considered that he had been badly treated, and what he wanted most at the moment was revenge. He had been fond and proud of Bill Bramble, but those emotions belonged to the dead past. Just at present he felt that he disliked Bill rather more than anyone else in the world, with the possible exception of Major Percy Stokes.

"So you're Harold, are you, Tommy?" he said, in a metallic voice. "Then just you listen here a minute."

"Jerry," cried Bill, advancing, "you keep your mouth shut, or I'll dot you one."

Mr. Fisher retreated and, grasping a chair, swung it above his head.

"You better!" he said, curtly.

"Mr. Fisher, do be a gentleman," entreated Mrs. Bramble.

"My dear sir." There was a crooning winningness in Percy's voice. "My dear sir, do nothing hasty. Think before you speak. Don't go and be so silly as to act like a muttonhead. I'd be ashamed to be so spiteful. Respect a father's feelings."

"Tommy," said Mr. Fisher, ignoring them all, "you think your pa's a commercial. He ain't. He's a fighting-man, doing his eight-stone-four ringside, and known to all the heads as 'Young Porky.'"

Bill sank into a chair. He could see Harold's round eyes staring at him.

"I'd never have thought it of you, Jerry," he said, miserably. "If anyone had come to me and told me that you could have acted so raw I'd have dotted him one."

"And if anyone had come to me and told me that I should live to see the day when you broke training a week before a fight at the National I'd given him one for himself."

"Harold, my lad," said Percy, "you mustn't think none the worse of your pa for having been a man of wrath. He hadn't seen the bright light then. It's all over now. He's give it up for ever, and there's no call for you to feel ashamed."

Bill seized on the point.

"That's right, Harold," he said, reviving. "I've give it up; I was to have fought an American named Murphy at the National next Monday, but I ain't going to now, not if they come to me on their bended knees. Not if the King of England come to me on his bended knees."

Harold drew a deep breath.

"Oh?" he cried, shrilly. "Oh, aren't you? Then what about my two bob? What about my two bob I've betted Dicky Saunders that Jimmy Murphy won't last ten rounds?"

He looked round the room wrathfully.

"It's thick," he said, in the crisp, gentlemanly voice of which his parents were so proud. "It's jolly thick. That's what it is. A chap takes the trouble to study form and saves up his pocket-money to have a bit on a good thing, and then he goes and gets let down like this. It may be funny to you, but I call it rotten. And another thing I call rotten is you having kept it from me all this time that you were 'Young Porky,' pa. That's what I call so jolly rotten! There's a fellow at our school who goes about swanking in the most rotten way because he once got Bombardier Wells's autograph. Fellows look up to him most awfully, and all the time they might have been doing it to me. That's what makes me so jolly sick. How long do you suppose they'd go on calling me 'Goggles' if they knew that you were my father? They'd chuck it to-morrow, and look up to me like anything. I do call it rotten. And chucking it up like this is the limit. What do you want to do it for? It's the silliest idea I ever heard. Why, if you beat Jimmy Murphy they'll have to give you the next chance with Sid Sampson for the Lonsdale belt. Jimmy beat Ted Richards, and Ted beat the Ginger Nut, and the Ginger Nut only lost on a foul to Sid Simpson, and you beat Ted Richards, so they couldn't help letting you have next go at Sid."

Mr. Fisher beamed approval.

"If I've told your pa that once I've told him twenty times," he said. "You certainly know a thing or two, Tommy."

"Well, I've made a study of it since I was a kid, so I jolly well ought to. All the fellows at our place are frightfully keen on it. One chap's got a snapshot of Freddy Welsh. At least, he says it's Freddy Welsh, but I believe it's just some ordinary fellow. Anyhow, it's jolly blurred, so it might be anyone. Pa, can't you give me a picture of yourself boxing? I could swank like anything. And you don't know how sick a chap gets of having chaps call him 'Goggles.'"

"Bill," said Mr. Fisher, "you and me had better be getting back to the White Hart."

Bill rose and followed him without a word.

Harold broke the silence which followed their departure. The animated expression which had been on his face as he discussed the relative merits of Sid Sampson and the Ginger Nut had given place to the abstracted gravity of the student.

"Ma!"

Mrs. Bramble started convulsively.

"Yes, dearie?"

"Will you hear me?"

Mrs. Bramble took the book.

"Yes, mother will hear you, precious," she said, mechanically.
Harold fixed his eyes upon the cut-glass hangings of the chandelier.
"'Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever' -- clever. 'Do noble things ...,'"

A Job Of Work

I have always admired the "Synopsis of Preceding Chapters" which tops each instalment of a serial in a daily paper. It is so curt, so compelling. It takes you by the scruff of the neck and hurls you into the middle of the story before you have time to remember that what you were really intending to read was "How to Make A Dainty Winter Coat for Baby Out of Father's Motor-Goggles" on the next page. I can hardly, I think, do better than adopt the same method in serving up the present narrative.

As follows : --

BEGIN TO-DAY

LORD FREDDIE BOWEN, visiting New York, has met, fallen in love with, proposed to, and been accepted by, MARGARET, daughter of FRANKLYN BIVATT, an unpleasant little millionaire with a weak digestion, a taste for dogmatic speech, and a personal appearance rather like one of Conan Doyle's pterodactyls. Lord Freddie has called on Mr. Bivatt, told him the news, and asked for his consent.

Now Go On With The Story.

Mr. Bivatt looked at Lord Freddie in silence. He belonged to the second and more offensive class of American millionaire. There are only two kinds. One has a mauve face and an eighteen-stone body, and grinds the face of the poor on a diet of champagne and lobster a la Newburg; the other -- Mr. Bivatt's type -- is small and shrivelled, weighs seven stone four, and fortifies himself, before clubbing the stuffing out of the widow and the orphan, with a light repast of hot water, triturated biscuit, and pepsine tabloids.

Lord Freddie also looked at Mr. Bivatt in silence. It was hard to believe that this curious little being could be the father of a girl who did not look really repulsive even in a photograph in a New York Sunday paper.

Mr. Bivatt broke the silence by taking a pepsine tabloid. Before speaking he took another look at Freddie -- a thoroughly nasty look. The fact was that Freddie had chosen an unfortunate moment for his visit. Not only had Mr. Bivatt a bad attack of indigestion, but he had received that very morning from Margaret's elder sister, who some two years before had married the Earl of Datchet, a letter which would have prejudiced the editor of "Debrett" against the British Peerage. Lord Datchet was not an ideal husband. Among other things, he was practically a lunatic, which is always such a nuisance in the home. This letter was the latest of a number of despatches from the seat of war, and the series, taken as a whole, had done much to diminish Mr.

Bivatt's simple faith in Norman blood. One titled son-in-law struck him as sufficient. He was not bitten by a craze for becoming a collector. Consequently he looked at Lord Freddie and said "H'm!"
Freddie was somewhat disturbed. In the circumstances "H'm!" was scarcely an encouraging remark.
"You mean -- ?" he said.
"I mean just this. When Margaret marries she's going to marry a real person, not" -- his mind wandered to the absent Datchet -- "not a pop-eyed, spindle-shanked jackrabbit, all nose and front teeth and eyeglass, with hair the colour of butter, and no chin or forehead. See?"
Freddie started, and his eye moved hastily to the mirror over the mantelpiece. What he saw partly reassured him. True, he was no Apollo. He was square and bullet-headed, and his nose had never really been the same since he had ducked into instead of away from the Cambridge light-weight's right swing in the inter-'Varsity competition; but apart from that he attained a pretty fair standard. Chin? If anything, he had too much. Teeth? Not at all prominent. Hair? Light, certainly; at school he had been called "Ginger." But what of that? No, the description puzzled him.
"Am I a jackrabbit?" he inquired, curiously.
"I don't know," said Mr. Bivatt. "I don't know anything about you. I've never heard your name before. I've forgotten it now. What is your name? I only know it's got a 'Lord' tacked on to it."
"By Nature. Not by me. It runs in the blood. Don't you like lords?"
Mr. Bivatt eyed him fixedly and swallowed another tabloid. Do you know the Earl of Datchet?" he asked.
"Only by reputation."
"Oh, you do know him by reputation? What have you heard about him?"
"Well, only in a general way that he's a pretty average sort of rotter. A bit off his chump, I've heard. One of the filberts, don't you know, and all that sort of thing. Nothing more."
"You didn't hear that he was my son-in-law? Well, he is. So now perhaps you understand why I didn't leap at you and fold you in my arms when you suggested marrying Margaret. I don't want another Datchet in the family."
"Good Lord! I hope I'm not like Datchet!"
"I hope you're not, for your sake, if you want to marry Margaret. Well, let's get down to it. Datchet's speciality was aristocratic idleness. He had never done a day's work in his life. No Datchet ever had, apparently. The last time any of the bunch had ever shown any signs of perspiring at the brow was when the first Earl carried William the Conqueror's bag down the gangway. Is that your long suit, too -- trembling when you see a job of work? How

old are you? Twenty-seven? Well, keep it to the last six years, if you like. What have you done since you came of age?"
"Well, I suppose if you put it that way -- "
"I do put it just that way. Have you earned a cent in your life?"
"No. But -- "
"It isn't a case of but. I know exactly what you're trying to say, that there wasn't any need for you to work, and so on. I know all that. That's not the point. The point is that the man who marries Margaret has got to be capable of work. There's only one way of telling the difference between a man and a jackrabbit till you get to know them, and that is that the man will work." Mr. Bivatt took another tabloid. "You remember Jacob?" he said.
"Jacob? I've met a man called Jacob at the National Sporting Club."
"I mean the one in the Bible, the one who worked seven years for the girl, got the wrong one, and started in right away to do another seven years. He wasn't a jackrabbit!"
"Wonderful Johnny," agreed Lord Freddie, admiringly.
"They managed things mighty sensibly in those days. You didn't catch them getting stung by any pop-eyed Datchets. It's given me an idea, talking of Jacob. That's the sort of man I want for Margaret. See? I don't ask him to wait seven years, let alone fourteen. But I will have him show that there's something in him. Now, I'll make a proposition to you. You go and hunt for a job and get it, and hold it long enough to make five hundred dollars, and you can marry Margaret as soon as you like afterwards. But you've got to make it by work. No going out and winning it at poker, or putting your month's allowance on something to win and for a place. See?"
"It seems to me," said Freddie, "that you bar every avenue of legitimate enterprise. But I shall romp home all the same. You mean earn five hundred, not save it?"
"Earn will do. But let's get this fixed right. When I say earn, I mean earn. I don't mean sit up and beg and have it fall into your mouth. Manual work or brain work it's got to be -- one of the two. I shall check your statement pretty sharply. And you'll drop your title while you're at it. You've got to get this job on your merits, if you have any. Is that plain?"
"Offensively."
"You mean to try it? You won't like it."
"I don't suppose Jacob liked it -- what?"
"I suppose not. Good morning."
And Mr. Bivatt, swallowing another tabloid, turned his attention once more to harrying the widow and the orphan.

Freddie, when he set out on his pilgrimage, had his eyes open for something soft and easy. But there are no really easy jobs. Even the man who fastened a snake into a length of hose-pipe with a washer, and stood in the background working a police-rattle -- the whole outfit being presented to the public in a dim light as the largest rattlesnake in captivity -- had to run for his life when the washer worked loose and the snake escaped.

It amazed Freddie, the difficulty of getting work. Work had always seemed to him so peculiarly unpleasant that he had supposed that the supply must exceed the demand. The contrary appeared to be the case.

Eventually, after wearing a groove in the pavements, he found himself, through a combination of lucky chances, in charge of the news-stand at a large hotel. Twelve dollars a week was the stipend. Working it out on a slip of paper, he perceived that his ordeal was to be a mere few months' canter of unexacting work in quite comfortable surroundings. Datchet himself could have done it on his butter-coloured head.

There is always a catch in these good things. For four days all went well. He found his duties pleasant. But on the fifth day came reaction. From the moment he began work a feeling of utter loathing for this particular form of money-making enveloped him as in a cloud. The customers irritated him. He was hopelessly bored.

The end was in sight. It came early on the afternoon of the sixth day, through the medium of one of the regular customers, a man who, even in happier moments, had always got on his nerves. He was a man with a rasping voice and a peremptory manner, who demanded a daily paper or a penny stamp with the air of one cursing an enemy.

Freddie had fallen into gloomy meditation, business being slack at the time, when this man appeared before him and shouted: --

"Stamp!"

Freddie started, but made no reply.

"Stamp!"

Freddie's gaze circled round the lobby and eventually rested on the object before him.

"Stamp!"

Freddie inspected him with frigid scorn.

"Why should I?" he asked, coldly.

The hotel in which Freddie had found employment was a sporting hotel in the heart of that section of New York known as the Tenderloin. Its patrons were mainly racing men, gamblers, and commercial travellers, men of action rather than words. This particular patron was essentially the man of action. Freddie's question offending him, he hit him in the eye, and a minute later

Freddie, breathing slaughter, had vaulted the barrier of newspapers, and the battle was raging all over the lobby, to the huge contentment of a mixed assortment of patrons, bell-boys, barkeepers, pages, and waiters from the adjoining cafe. Six minutes later, when Freddie, panting a little and blinking to ease the pain of his injured eye, was waiting for his opponent to rise, which he did not do, the manager entered the arena. The manager was a man with sporting blood and a sense of the proprieties. The former had kept him an interested spectator during the late proceedings; the latter now made him step forward, tap Freddie on the shoulder, and inform him that his connection with the hotel was at an end.

Freddie went out into the world with twelve dollars and a black eye. As he passed through the swing door a slight cheer was raised in his honour by the grateful audience.

I would enlarge on Freddie's emotions at losing his situation, were it not for the fact that two days later he found another. There was a bell-boy at his late hotel to whom he had endeared himself by allowing him to read the baseball news free of charge; a red-headed, world-weary, prematurely aged boy, to whom New York was an open book. He met Freddie in the street.

"Halloa, you!" he said. "I been huntin' after you. Lookin' fer a job? My cousin runs a cafe on Fourteenth Street. He's wantin' a new waiter. I seen the card in the window yesterday. You try there and say I sent you. It's a tough joint, though."

"After what happened the day before yesterday, it seems to one that the tougher the joint the more likely I am to hold my job. I seem to lack polish."

"The East Side Delmonico's is the name."

"It sounds too refined for me."

"It may sound that way," said the bell-boy, "but it ain't."

Nor was it. The East Side Delmonico's proved to be a dingy though sizable establishment at a spot where Fourteenth Street wore a more than usually tough and battered look. Fourteenth Street has that air of raffish melancholy which always marks a district visited for awhile and then deserted by fashion.

It appeared that the bell-boy, who had been clearly impressed by Freddie's handling of the irritable news-stand customer, had given him an excellent character in advance and he found, on arrival, that he was no stranger to Mr. "Blinky" Anderson, the proprietor. The bell-boy's cousin welcomed him, if not with open arms, with quite marked satisfaction. He examined the injured eye, stamped it with the seal of his approval as "some lamp," and, having informed him that his weekly envelope would contain five dollars and that

his food was presented free by the management, requested him to slip out of his coat, grab an apron, and get busy.

Freddie was a young man who took life as it came. He was a sociable being, and could be happy anywhere so long as he was not bored. The solitude of the news-stand had bored him, but at the East Side Delmonico's life was too full of movement to permit of ennui. He soon perceived that there was more in this curious establishment than met the eye, and this by design rather than accident. The fact was that "Blinky's," as its patrons tersely styled Anderson's Parisian Cafe and Restaurant, the East Side Delmonico's, offered attractions to the cognoscenti other than the mere restoration of the inner man with meat and drink. On the first floor, for instance, provided that you could convince the management of the excellence of your motives, you could "buck the tiger" -- a feat which sounds perilous but is not, except to the purse. On the floor above, again, if you were that kind of idiot, you might play roulette. And in the basement, in a large, cellar-like room, lit with countless electric lights, boxing contests were held on Saturday nights before audiences financially, if not morally, select.

In fact, the East Side Delmonico's was nothing more nor less than a den of iniquity. But nobody could call it dull, and Freddie revelled in his duties. He booked orders, served drinks, smashed plates, bullied the cook, chaffed the customers when they were merry, seized them by the neck and ran them into the street when they were too merry, and in every other way comported himself like one who has at last found his true vocation. And time rolled on.

We will leave time rolling for the moment and return to Mr. Bivatt, raising the curtain at the beginning of his tete-a-tete dinner with his fellow-plutocrat, T. Mortimer Dunlop. T. Mortimer was the other sort of millionaire. You could have told he was a millionaire just by looking at him. He bulged. Wherever a man can bulge, there did T. Mortimer Dunlop bulge. His head was bald, his face purple, his hands red. He was accustomed to refer to himself somewhat frequently as a "dead game sport." He wheezed when he spoke.

I raise the curtain on Mr. Bivatt at the beginning of dinner because it was at the beginning of dinner that he allowed Mr. Dunlop to persuade him to drink a Dawn of Hope cocktail -- so called because it cheers you up. It cheered Mr. Bivatt up.

Mr. Bivatt needed cheering up. That very afternoon his only son Twombley had struck him for a thousand dollars to pay a poker debt. A thousand dollars is not a large sum to a man of Mr. Bivatt's wealth, but it is your really rich man who unbelts least joyously. Together with the cheque Twombley had received a parental lecture. He had appeared to be impressed by it but it was

the doubt as to its perfect efficacy which was depressing Mr. Bivatt. There was no doubt that Twombley was a trial. It was only the awe with which he regarded his father that kept him within bounds. Mr. Bivatt sighed and took a pepsine tabloid.

It was at this point that T. Mortimer Dunlop, summoning the waiter, ordered two Dawn of Hope cocktails.

"Nonsense!" he wheezed, in response to Mr. Bivatt's protest. "Be a sport! I'm a dead game sport. Hurry up, waiter. Two Dawn of Hope."

Mr. Bivatt weakly surrendered. He was there entirely to please Mr. Dunlop, for there was a big deal in the air, to which Mr. Dunlop's co-operation was essential. This was no time to think about one's digestion or the habits of a lifetime. If, to conciliate invaluable Mr. Dunlop, it was necessary to be a dead game sport and drink a cocktail, then a dead game sport he would be. He took the curious substance from the waiter and pecked at it like a nervous bird. He blinked, and pecked again -- less nervously this time.

You, gentle reader, who simply wallow in alcoholic stimulants at every meal, will find it hard to understand the wave of emotion which surged through Mr. Bivatt's soul as he reached the half-way point in the magic glass. But Mr. Bivatt for thirty years had confined his potions to hot water, and the effect on him was remarkable. He no longer felt depressed. Hope, so to speak, had dawned with a jerk. Life was a thing of wonderful joy and infinite possibilities.

We therefore find him, at the end of dinner, leaning across the table, thumping it with clenched fist, and addressing Mr. Dunlop through the smoke of the latter's cigar thus: --

"Dunlop, old man, how would it be to go and see a show? I'm ready for anything, old man, Dunlop. I'm a dead game sport, Dunlop, old fellow! That's what I am."

One thing leads to another. The curtain falls on Mr. Bivatt smoking a Turkish cigarette in a manner that can only be described as absolutely reckless.

These things, I should mention, happened on a Saturday night. About an hour after Mr. Bivatt had lit his cigarette Freddie, in the cafe at the East Side Delmonico's, was aware of a thick-set, short-haired, tough-looking young man settling himself at one of the tables and hammering a glass with the blade of his knife. In the other hand he waved the bill of fare. He was also shouting, "Hey!" Taking him for all in all, Freddie set him down as a hungry young man. He moved towards him to minister to his needs.

"Well, cully," he said, affably, "and what will you wrap yourself around?"

You were supposed to unbend and be chummy with the customers if you were a waiter at "Blinky's." The customers expected it. If you called a patron of the East Side Delmonico's "sir," he scented sarcasm, and was apt to throw things.

The young man had a grievance.

"Say, can you beat it? Me signed up to fight a guy here at a hundred and thirty-three, ring-side, and starving meself for weeks to make the weight. Say, I ain't had a square meal since Ponto was a pup -- and gee! along comes word that he's sprained a foot and will we kindly not expect him. And all I get is the forfeit money."

He snorted.

"Forfeit money! Keep it! It ain't but a hundred plunks, and the loser's end was three hundred. And there wouldn't have been any loser's end in mine at that. Why say, I'd have licked that guy with me eyes shut."

He kicked the table-leg morosely.

"Your story moves me much," said Freddie. "And now, what shall we shoot into you?"

"You attending to this table?"

"I am."

The young man scanned the bill of fare.

"Noodle-soup - bit-o'-weakfish - fried chicken - Southern-style - corn-on-the-cob - bit-o'-steak - fried-potatoes - four fried-eggs - done-on-both-sides - apple-dumpling - with hard-sauce - and a-cup- of-custard," he observed rapidly. "That'll do to start with. And say, bring all the lager-beer you can find. I've forgotten what it tastes like."

"That's right," said Freddie, sympathetically; "keep your strength up."

"I'll try," said the thick-set young man. Get a move on."

There was no doubt about the pugilist's appetite. It gave Freddie quite a thrill of altruistic pleasure to watch him eat. He felt like a philanthropist entertaining a starving beggar. He fetched and carried assiduously for the diner, and when at length the latter called for coffee and a cigar and sank back in his chair with a happy sigh, he nearly cheered.

On his way to the kitchen he encountered his employer, Mr. "Blinky" Anderson, looking depressed. Freddie gathered the reason for his gloom. He liked "Blinky," and thought respectful condolence would not be out of place.

"Sorry to hear the news, sir."

"Hey?" said Mr. Anderson, moodily.

"I hear the main event has fallen through."

"Who told you?"

"I have been waiting on one of the fighters upstairs."

Mr. Anderson nodded.
"That would be the Tennessee Bear-Cat."
"Very possibly. He had that appearance." Like the Bear-Cat, Mr. Anderson was rendered communicative by grief. Freddie had a sympathetic manner, and many men had confided in him.
"It was One-Round Smith who backed down. Says he's hurt his foot. Huh!" Mr. Anderson grunted satirically, but pathos succeeded satire again almost at once. "I ain't told them about it yet," he went on, jerking his head in the direction of the 1nvisible audience. The preliminaries have started, and what those guys will say when they find there ain't going to be a main event I don't know. I guess they'll want to lynch somebody. I ought to tell 'em right away but I can't seem to sorter brace myself to it. It's the best audience, too, we've ever had. All the sports in town are there. Rich guys, too -- none of your cheap skates. I just seen old man Dunlop blow in with a pal, and he's worth all sorts o' money. And now there won't be no fight. Wouldn't that jar you?"
"Can't you find a substitute?"
"Substitute! This ain't a preliminary between two dubs. It was the real thing for big money. And all the sports in town come to watch it. Substitute! Ain't you ever heard of the Bear-Cat? He's a wild Indian. Who's going to offer to step up and swap punches with a terror like him?"
"I am," said Freddie.
Mr. Anderson stared at him with open mouth.
"You!"
"Me."
"You'll fight the Tennessee Bear-Cat?"
"I'd fight Jack Johnson if he'd just finished the meal that fellow has been having," said Freddie, simply.
Mr. Anderson was not a swift thinker. He stood, blinking, and allowed the idea to soak through. It penetrated slowly, like water through a ceiling.
"He'd eat you," he said, at last.
"Well, I'm the only thing in this place he hasn't eaten. Why stint him?"
"But, say, have you done any fighting?"
"As an amateur, a good deal."
"Amateur! Say, can you see them sports down there standing a main event between the Tennessee Bear-Cat and an amateur?"
"Why tell them? Say I'm the heavy-light-weight champion of England."
"What's a heavy-light-weight?"
"It's a new class, in between the lights and the welters."

By this time the idea had fairly worked its way through into Mr. Anderson's mind, and its merits were beginning to appeal to him. It was certain that, if Freddie were not allowed to fill the gap, there would be no main event that night. And in the peculiar circumstances it was just possible that he might do well enough to satisfy the audience. The cloud passed from Mr. Anderson's face, for all the world as if he had taken a Dawn of Hope cocktail.

"Why, say," he said, "there's something in this."

"You bet there is," said Freddie. "There's the loser's end, three hundred of the best."

Mr. Anderson clapped him on the shoulder.

"And another hundred from me if you last five rounds," he said. "I guess five'll satisfy them, if you make them fast ones. I'll go and tell the Bear-Cat."

"And I'll go and get him his coffee and the strongest cigar you keep. Every little bit helps."

Freddie entered the ring in a costume borrowed from one of the fighters in the preliminaries, and, seating himself in his corner, had his first sight of Mr. "Blinky" Anderson's celebrated basement. Most of the light in the place was concentrated over the roped platform of the ring, and all he got was a vague impression of space. There seemed to be a great many people present. The white shirt-fronts reminded him of the National Sporting Club.

His eye was caught by a face in the first row of ring-side seats. It seemed familiar. Where had he seen it before? And then he recognized Mr. Bivatt -- a transformed Mr. Bivatt, happier-looking, excited, altogether more human. Their eyes met, but there was no recognition in the millionaire's. Freddie had shaved his moustache as a preliminary to the life of toil, and Mr. Bivatt, beaming happily up at him from beside that dead game sport, T. Mortimer Dunlop, had no recollection of ever having seen him before.

Freddie's attention was diverted from audience to ring by the arrival of the Tennessee Bear-Cat. There was a subdued murmur of applause -- applause had to be merely murmured on these occasions -- and for one moment, as he looked at him, Freddie regretted the contract he had undertaken. What Mr. Anderson had said about wild Indians came home to him. Certainly the Bear-Cat looked one. He was an extraordinarily-muscled young man. Freddie was mainly muscle himself, but the Bear-Cat appeared to be a kind of freak. Lumps and cords protruded from him in all directions. His face wore a look of placid content, and he had a general air of happy repletion, a fate-cannot-touch-me-I-have-dined-to-day expression. He was chewing gum. A shirt-sleeved gentleman of full habit climbed into the ring, puffing slightly.

"Gents! Main event. Have an apology offer -- behalf of the management. Was to have been ten-round between Sam Proctor, better known as th' Tennessee Bear-Cat, and One-Round Smith, at one-thirty-three ring-side. But -- seems to have been a -- naccident. One-Round havin' sustained severe injury to foot. Rend'rin' it -- impossible -- appear t'night before you. Deeply regret unavoid'ble dis'pointment."

The portly man's breath was going fast, but he still had sufficient for a brilliant flight of fancy, a vast improvement on Freddie's humble effort.

"Have honour, however, present t'you Jimmy Smith, brother of One-Round -- stranger to this city -- but -- well known on Pacific Coast -- where -- winner of forty-seven battles. Claimant to welter-weight belt. Gents, Jimmy Smith, the Santa Barbara Whirlwind!"

Freddie bowed. The speech, for some mysterious reason probably explainable by Christian Science, had had quite a tonic effect on him. The mere thought of those forty-seven victories gave him heart. After all, who was this Tennessee Bear-Cat? A mere walking repository of noodle soup, weakfish, fried chicken, eggs, corn, apple-dumplings, lager-beer, and cup-custards. A perambulating bill of fare. That was what he was. And, anyway, he was probably muscle-bound, and would be as slow as a top.

The introducer, however, presented him in another aspect. He had got his second wind now, and used it.

"Gents! The Tennessee Bear-Cat! You all know Sam. The toughest, huskiest, wickedest little old slugger that ever came down the pike. The boy who's cleaned up all the light-weights around these parts, and is in a dead straight line -- for -- the champeenship of the world."

He waved his hand dramatically. The Bear-Cat, overwhelmed by these tributes, shifted his chewing-gum to the other cheek, and simpered coyly, as who should say, "Stop your nonsense, Archibald!" And the gong clanged.

Freddie started the fight with the advantage that his plan of campaign was perfectly clear in his mind. Rapid attack was his policy. When a stout gentleman in shirt-sleeves has been exhausting his scanty stock of breath calling you a whirlwind, decency forbids that you should behave like a zephyr. He shook hands, and, on the principle of beginning as you mean to go on, proceeded without delay to poke his left earnestly into the middle of the Bear-Cat's face. He then brought his right round with a thud on to what the latter probably still called his ear -- a strange, shapeless growth rather like a leather cauliflower -- and sprang back. The Bear-Cat shifted his gum and smiled gratefully.

A heavy swing on the part of the Bear-Cat was the next event of note. Freddie avoided it with ease and slipped in a crisp left. As he had expected,

his opponent was too slow to be dangerous. Dangerous! He was not even making the thing interesting, thought Freddie as he side-stepped another swing and brought his right up to the chin. He went to his corner at the end of the round, glowing with satisfaction. This was easy.

It was towards the middle of the second round that he received a shock. Till then the curious ease with which he had reached his opponent's head had caused him to concentrate on it. It now occurred to him that by omitting to attack the body he was, as it were, wasting the gifts of Providence. Consequently, having worked his man into an angle of the ropes with his back against a post, he feinted with his left, drew a blow, and then, ducking quickly, put all his weight into a low, straight right.

The effect was remarkable. The Bear-Cat uttered a startled grunt; a look came into his face of mingled pain and reproach, as if his faith in human nature had been shaken, and he fell into a clinch. And as Freddie vainly struggled to free himself a voice murmured in his ear: --

"Say, cut that out!"

The stout referee prised them apart. Freddie darted forward, missed with his left, and the Bear-Cat clinched again -- more, it appeared, in order to resume the interrupted conversation than from motives of safety.

"Leave me stummick be, you rummy," he hissed, rapidly. "Ain't you got no tact? 'Blinky' promised me fifty if I'd let you stay three rounds, but one more like that, and I'll forget meself and knock you through the ceiling."

Only when he reached his corner did the full meaning of the words strike Freddie. All the glow of victory left him. It was a put-up job! "Blinky," to ensure his patrons something resembling a fight, had induced the Bear-Cat to fight false during the first three rounds.

The shock of it utterly disheartened him. So that was why he had been making such a showing! That was why his jabs and hooks had got home with such clockwork precision! Probably his opponent had been laughing at him all the time. The thought stung him. He had never been remarkable for an even temper, and now a cold fury seized him. He would show them, by George!

The third round was the most spectacular of the fight. Even the regular patrons of "Blinky's" Saturday night exhibitions threw aside their prudence and bellowed approval. Smiling wanly and clinching often, the Bear-Cat fixed his mind on his fifty dollars to buoy himself up, while Freddie, with a nasty gleam in his eyes, behaved every moment more like a Santa Barbara Whirlwind might reasonably be expected to behave. Seldom had the Bear-Cat heard sweeter music than the note of the gong terminating the round. He moved slowly to his corner, and handed his chewing-gum to his second to

hold for him. It was strictly business now. He thought hard thoughts as he lay back in his chair.

In the other corner Freddie also was thinking. The exhilarating exercise of the last round had soothed him and cleared his brain and he, too, as he left his corner for the fourth session, was resolved to attend strictly to business. And his business was to stay five rounds and earn that hundred dollars. Connoisseurs in the ring-seats, who had been telling their friends during the previous interval that Freddie had "got him going," changed their minds and gave it as their opinion that he had " blown up." They were wrong. He was fighting solely on the defensive now from policy, not from fatigue.

The Bear-Cat came on with a rush, head down, swinging with left and right. The change from his former attitude was remarkable, and Freddie, if he had not been prepared for it, might have been destroyed offhand. There was no standing up against such an onslaught. He covered up and ducked and slipped and side-stepped, and slipped again, and, when the gong sounded, he was still intact.

Freddie came up for the fifth round brimming over with determination. He meant to do or die. Before the end of the first half-minute it was borne in upon him that he was far more likely to die than do. He was a good amateur boxer. He had been well taught, and he knew all the recognized stops for the recognized blows. But the Bear-Cat had either invented a number of blows not in the regular curriculum, or else it was his manner of delivering them that gave that impression. Reason told Freddie that his opponent was not swinging left and right simultaneously, but the hard fact remained that, just as he guarded one blow, another came from the opposite point of the compass and took him squarely on the side of the head. He had a disagreeable sensation as if an automobile had run into him, and then he was on the floor, with the stout referee sawing the air above him.

The thought of a hundred dollars is a reviving agent that makes oxygen look like a sleeping-draught. No sooner had it returned to his mind than his head cleared and he rose to his feet, as full of fight as ever. He perceived the Bear-Cat slithering towards him, and leaped to one side like a Russian dancer. The Bear-Cat collided with the ropes and grunted discontentedly. Probably if Freddie had had a sizable plot of ground, such as Hyde Park or Dartmoor, to manoeuvre in, he might have avoided his opponent for some considerable time. The ring being only twenty feet square, he was hampered. A few more wild leaps, interspersed with one or two harmless left jabs, and he found himself penned up in a corner, with the Bear-Cat, smiling pleasantly again now, making hypnotic passes before his eyes.

The Bear-Cat was not one of your reticent fighters. He was candour itself.

"Here it comes, kid!" he remarked, affably, and it came. Freddie's world suddenly resolved itself into a confused jumble of pirouetting stars, chairs, shirt-fronts, and electric lights, and he fell forward in a boneless heap. There was a noise of rushing waters in his ears, and, mingled with it, the sound of voices. Some person or persons, he felt dimly, seemed to be making a good deal of an uproar. His brain was clouded, but the fighting instinct still worked within him; and, almost unconsciously, he groped for the lower rope, found it, and pulled himself to his feet. And then the lights went out.

How long it was before he realized that the lights actually had gone out, and that the abrupt darkness was not due to a repetition of "it," he never knew. But it must have been some length of time, for when the room became suddenly light again his head was clear and, except for a conviction that his neck was broken, he felt tolerably well.

His eyes having grown accustomed to the light, he saw with astonishment that remarkable changes had taken place in the room. With the exception of some half-dozen persons, the audience had disappeared entirely, and each of those who remained was in the grasp of a massive policeman. Two more intelligent officers were beckoning to him to come down from the platform.

The New York police force is subject to periodical attacks of sensitiveness with regard to the purity of the city. In between these spasms a certain lethargy seems to grip it, but when it does act its energy is wonderful. The East Side Delmonico's had been raided.

It was obvious that the purity of the city demanded that Freddie should appear in court in a less exiguous costume than his present one. The two policemen accompanied him to the dressing-room.

On a chair in one corner sat the Tennessee Bear-Cat, lacing his shoes. On a chair in another corner sat Mr. Franklyn Bivatt, holding his head in his hands.

Fate, Mr. Bivatt considered, had not treated him well. Nor, he added mentally, had T. Mortimer Dunlop. For directly the person, to be found in every gathering, who mysteriously gets to know things in advance of his fellows had given the alarm, T. Mortimer, who knew every inch of "Blinky's" basement and, like other dead game sports who frequented it, had his exits and his entrances -- particularly his exits -- had skimmed away like a corpulent snipe and vanished, leaving Mr. Bivatt to look after himself. As Mr. Bivatt had failed to look after himself, the constabulary were looking after him.

"Who's the squirt?" asked the first Policeman, indicating Mr. Bivatt.

"I don't know," said the second. I caught him trying to hook it, and held him. Keep an eye on him. I think it's Boston Willie, the safe-blower. Keep these three here till I get back. I'm off upstairs."
The door closed behind them. Presently it creaked and was still. The remaining policeman was leaning against it.
The Tennessee Bear-Cat nodded amiably at Freddie.
"Feeling better, kid? Why didn't you duck? I told you it was coming, didn't I?"
Mr. Bivatt groaned hollowly. Life was very grey. He was in the hands of the police. And he had indigestion and no pepsine tabloids.
Say, it ain't so bad as all that," said the Bear-Cat. "Not if you've got any sugar, it ain't."
"My doctor expressly forbids me sugar," replied Mr. Bivatt.
The Bear-Cat gave a peculiar jerk of his head, indicative of the intelligent man's contempt for the slower-witted.
"Not that sort of sugar, you rummy. Gee! Do you think this is a tea-party? Dough, you mutt."
"Do you mean money, by any chance?" asked Freddie.
The Bear-Cat said that he did mean money. He went further. Mr. Bivatt appearing to be in a sort of trance, he put a hand in his pocket and extracted a pocket-book.
"I guess these'll do," he said, removing a couple of bills.
He rapped on the door.
"Hey, Mike!"
"Quit that," answered a gruff voice without.
"I want to speak to you. Got something to say."
The door opened.
"Well?"
"Say, Mike, you've got a kind face. Going to let us go, ain't you?"
The policeman eyed the Bear-Cat stolidly. The Bear-Cat's answering glance was more friendly.
"See what the fairies have brought, Mike." The policeman's gaze shifted to the bills.
"Say," he said, severely, as he held out his hand, "you don't reckon I'd take a bribe, I hope?"
"Certainly not!" said the Bear-Cat, indignantly.
There was a musical rustling.
"Don't mind if we say good night now, do you?" said the Bear-Cat. "They'll be getting anxious about us at home."
The policeman with the kind face met his colleague in the basement.

"Say, you know those guys in the dressing-room," he said.
"Uh-huh," said the colleague.
"They overpowered me and got away."
"Halves," said the colleague.
Having lost the Bear-Cat -- no difficult task, for he dived into the first saloon -- Mr. Bivatt and Freddie turned their steps towards Broadway. A certain dignity which had been lacking in the dressing-room had crept back into Mr. Bivatt's manner.
"Go away," he said. "I will not have you following me."
"I am not following you," said Freddie. "We are walking arm in arm."
Mr. Bivatt wrenched himself free. "Go away, or I will call a police -- er -- go away!"
"Have you forgotten me? I was afraid you had. I won't keep you long. I only wanted to tell you that I had nearly made that five hundred dollars."
Mr. Bivatt started and glared at Freddie in the light of a shop-window. He gurgled speechlessly.
"I haven't added it all up yet. I have been too busy making it. Let me see. Twelve dollars from the hotel. Two weeks as a waiter at five a week. Twenty-two. Tips, about another dollar. Three hundred for the loser's end -- I can't claim a draw, as I was practically out. And 'Blinky' Anderson promised me another hundred if I stayed five rounds. Well I was on my feet when the police broke up the show, but maybe, after what has happened, he won't pay up. Anyway, I've got three hundred and twenty-three -- "
"Will you kindly stop this foolery and allow me to speak?" said Mr. Bivatt. When I made our agreement I naturally alluded to responsible, respectable work. I did not include low prize-fighting and -- "
"You said manual work or brain work. Wasn't mine about as manual as you could get?"
"I have nothing further to say."
Freddie sighed.
"Oh, well," he said, "I suppose I shall have to start all over again. I wish you had let me know sooner. I shall try brain work this time. I shall write my experiences and try and sell them to a paper. What happened to-night ought to please some editor. The way you got us out of that dressing-room. It was the smartest thing I ever saw. There ought to be money in that. Well, good night. May I come and report later?"
He turned away, but stopped as he heard an odd choking sound behind him.
"Is anything the matter?"
Mr. Bivatt clutched him with one hand and patted his arm affectionately with the other.

"Don't -- er -- don't go away, my boy," he said. "Come with me to the drug-store while I get some pepsine tabloids, and then we'll go home and talk it over. I think we may be able to arrange something, after all."

A Job Of Work

I have always admired the "Synopsis of Preceding Chapters" which tops each instalment of a serial in a daily paper. It is so curt, so compelling. It takes you by the scruff of the neck and hurls you into the middle of the story before you have time to remember that what you were really intending to read was "How to Make A Dainty Winter Coat for Baby Out of Father's Motor-Goggles" on the next page. I can hardly, I think, do better than adopt the same method in serving up the present narrative.

As follows : --

Begin To-Day

LORD FREDDIE BOWEN, visiting New York, has met, fallen in love with, proposed to, and been accepted by, MARGARET, daughter of FRANKLYN BIVATT, an unpleasant little millionaire with a weak digestion, a taste for dogmatic speech, and a personal appearance rather like one of Conan Doyle's pterodactyls. Lord Freddie has called on Mr. Bivatt, told him the news, and asked for his consent.

Now Go On With The Story.

Mr. Bivatt looked at Lord Freddie in silence. He belonged to the second and more offensive class of American millionaire. There are only two kinds. One has a mauve face and an eighteen-stone body, and grinds the face of the poor on a diet of champagne and lobster a la Newburg; the other -- Mr. Bivatt's type -- is small and shrivelled, weighs seven stone four, and fortifies himself, before clubbing the stuffing out of the widow and the orphan, with a light repast of hot water, triturated biscuit, and pepsine tabloids.

Lord Freddie also looked at Mr. Bivatt in silence. It was hard to believe that this curious little being could be the father of a girl who did not look really repulsive even in a photograph in a New York Sunday paper.

Mr. Bivatt broke the silence by taking a pepsine tabloid. Before speaking he took another look at Freddie -- a thoroughly nasty look. The fact was that Freddie had chosen an unfortunate moment for his visit. Not only had Mr. Bivatt a bad attack of indigestion, but he had received that very morning from Margaret's elder sister, who some two years before had married the Earl of Datchet, a letter which would have prejudiced the editor of "Debrett" against the British Peerage. Lord Datchet was not an ideal husband. Among other things, he was practically a lunatic, which is always such a nuisance in the home. This letter was the latest of a number of despatches from the seat of war, and the series, taken as a whole, had done much to diminish Mr.

Bivatt's simple faith in Norman blood. One titled son-in-law struck him as sufficient. He was not bitten by a craze for becoming a collector. Consequently he looked at Lord Freddie and said "H'm!"
Freddie was somewhat disturbed. In the circumstances "H'm!" was scarcely an encouraging remark.
"You mean -- ?" he said.
"I mean just this. When Margaret marries she's going to marry a real person, not" -- his mind wandered to the absent Datchet -- "not a pop-eyed, spindle-shanked jackrabbit, all nose and front teeth and eyeglass, with hair the colour of butter, and no chin or forehead. See?"
Freddie started, and his eye moved hastily to the mirror over the mantelpiece. What he saw partly reassured him. True, he was no Apollo. He was square and bullet-headed, and his nose had never really been the same since he had ducked into instead of away from the Cambridge light-weight's right swing in the inter-'Varsity competition; but apart from that he attained a pretty fair standard. Chin? If anything, he had too much. Teeth? Not at all prominent. Hair? Light, certainly; at school he had been called "Ginger." But what of that? No, the description puzzled him.
"Am I a jackrabbit?" he inquired, curiously.
"I don't know," said Mr. Bivatt. "I don't know anything about you. I've never heard your name before. I've forgotten it now. What is your name? I only know it's got a 'Lord' tacked on to it."
"By Nature. Not by me. It runs in the blood. Don't you like lords?"
Mr. Bivatt eyed him fixedly and swallowed another tabloid. Do you know the Earl of Datchet?" he asked.
"Only by reputation."
"Oh, you do know him by reputation? What have you heard about him?"
"Well, only in a general way that he's a pretty average sort of rotter. A bit off his chump, I've heard. One of the filberts, don't you know, and all that sort of thing. Nothing more."
"You didn't hear that he was my son-in-law? Well, he is. So now perhaps you understand why I didn't leap at you and fold you in my arms when you suggested marrying Margaret. I don't want another Datchet in the family."
"Good Lord! I hope I'm not like Datchet!"
"I hope you're not, for your sake, if you want to marry Margaret. Well, let's get down to it. Datchet's speciality was aristocratic idleness. He had never done a day's work in his life. No Datchet ever had, apparently. The last time any of the bunch had ever shown any signs of perspiring at the brow was when the first Earl carried William the Conqueror's bag down the gangway. Is that your long suit, too -- trembling when you see a job of work? How

old are you? Twenty-seven? Well, keep it to the last six years, if you like. What have you done since you came of age?"
"Well, I suppose if you put it that way -- "
"I do put it just that way. Have you earned a cent in your life?"
"No. But -- "
"It isn't a case of but. I know exactly what you're trying to say, that there wasn't any need for you to work, and so on. I know all that. That's not the point. The point is that the man who marries Margaret has got to be capable of work. There's only one way of telling the difference between a man and a jackrabbit till you get to know them, and that is that the man will work." Mr. Bivatt took another tabloid. "You remember Jacob?" he said.
"Jacob? I've met a man called Jacob at the National Sporting Club."
"I mean the one in the Bible, the one who worked seven years for the girl, got the wrong one, and started in right away to do another seven years. He wasn't a jackrabbit!"
"Wonderful Johnny," agreed Lord Freddie, admiringly.
"They managed things mighty sensibly in those days. You didn't catch them getting stung by any pop-eyed Datchets. It's given me an idea, talking of Jacob. That's the sort of man I want for Margaret. See? I don't ask him to wait seven years, let alone fourteen. But I will have him show that there's something in him. Now, I'll make a proposition to you. You go and hunt for a job and get it, and hold it long enough to make five hundred dollars, and you can marry Margaret as soon as you like afterwards. But you've got to make it by work. No going out and winning it at poker, or putting your month's allowance on something to win and for a place. See?"
"It seems to me," said Freddie, "that you bar every avenue of legitimate enterprise. But I shall romp home all the same. You mean earn five hundred, not save it?"
"Earn will do. But let's get this fixed right. When I say earn, I mean earn. I don't mean sit up and beg and have it fall into your mouth. Manual work or brain work it's got to be -- one of the two. I shall check your statement pretty sharply. And you'll drop your title while you're at it. You've got to get this job on your merits, if you have any. Is that plain?"
"Offensively."
"You mean to try it? You won't like it."
"I don't suppose Jacob liked it -- what?"
"I suppose not. Good morning."
And Mr. Bivatt, swallowing another tabloid, turned his attention once more to harrying the widow and the orphan.

Freddie, when he set out on his pilgrimage, had his eyes open for something soft and easy. But there are no really easy jobs. Even the man who fastened a snake into a length of hose-pipe with a washer, and stood in the background working a police-rattle -- the whole outfit being presented to the public in a dim light as the largest rattlesnake in captivity -- had to run for his life when the washer worked loose and the snake escaped.

It amazed Freddie, the difficulty of getting work. Work had always seemed to him so peculiarly unpleasant that he had supposed that the supply must exceed the demand. The contrary appeared to be the case.

Eventually, after wearing a groove in the pavements, he found himself, through a combination of lucky chances, in charge of the news-stand at a large hotel. Twelve dollars a week was the stipend. Working it out on a slip of paper, he perceived that his ordeal was to be a mere few months' canter of unexacting work in quite comfortable surroundings. Datchet himself could have done it on his butter-coloured head.

There is always a catch in these good things. For four days all went well. He found his duties pleasant. But on the fifth day came reaction. From the moment he began work a feeling of utter loathing for this particular form of money-making enveloped him as in a cloud. The customers irritated him. He was hopelessly bored.

The end was in sight. It came early on the afternoon of the sixth day, through the medium of one of the regular customers, a man who, even in happier moments, had always got on his nerves. He was a man with a rasping voice and a peremptory manner, who demanded a daily paper or a penny stamp with the air of one cursing an enemy.

Freddie had fallen into gloomy meditation, business being slack at the time, when this man appeared before him and shouted: --

"Stamp!"

Freddie started, but made no reply.

"Stamp!"

Freddie's gaze circled round the lobby and eventually rested on the object before him.

"Stamp!"

Freddie inspected him with frigid scorn.

"Why should I?" he asked, coldly.

The hotel in which Freddie had found employment was a sporting hotel in the heart of that section of New York known as the Tenderloin. Its patrons were mainly racing men, gamblers, and commercial travellers, men of action rather than words. This particular patron was essentially the man of action. Freddie's question offending him, he hit him in the eye, and a minute later

Freddie, breathing slaughter, had vaulted the barrier of newspapers, and the battle was raging all over the lobby, to the huge contentment of a mixed assortment of patrons, bell-boys, barkeepers, pages, and waiters from the adjoining cafe. Six minutes later, when Freddie, panting a little and blinking to ease the pain of his injured eye, was waiting for his opponent to rise, which he did not do, the manager entered the arena. The manager was a man with sporting blood and a sense of the proprieties. The former had kept him an interested spectator during the late proceedings; the latter now made him step forward, tap Freddie on the shoulder, and inform him that his connection with the hotel was at an end.

Freddie went out into the world with twelve dollars and a black eye. As he passed through the swing door a slight cheer was raised in his honour by the grateful audience.

I would enlarge on Freddie's emotions at losing his situation, were it not for the fact that two days later he found another. There was a bell-boy at his late hotel to whom he had endeared himself by allowing him to read the baseball news free of charge; a red-headed, world-weary, prematurely aged boy, to whom New York was an open book. He met Freddie in the street.

"Hallo a, you!" he said. "I been huntin' after you. Lookin' fer a job? My cousin runs a cafe on Fourteenth Street. He's wantin' a new waiter. I seen the card in the window yesterday. You try there and say I sent you. It's a tough joint, though."

"After what happened the day before yesterday, it seems to one that the tougher the joint the more likely I am to hold my job. I seem to lack polish."

"The East Side Delmonico's is the name."

"It sounds too refined for me."

"It may sound that way," said the bell-boy, "but it ain't."

Nor was it. The East Side Delmonico's proved to be a dingy though sizable establishment at a spot where Fourteenth Street wore a more than usually tough and battered look. Fourteenth Street has that air of raffish melancholy which always marks a district visited for awhile and then deserted by fashion.

It appeared that the bell-boy, who had been clearly impressed by Freddie's handling of the irritable news-stand customer, had given him an excellent character in advance and he found, on arrival, that he was no stranger to Mr. "Blinky" Anderson, the proprietor. The bell-boy's cousin welcomed him, if not with open arms, with quite marked satisfaction. He examined the injured eye, stamped it with the seal of his approval as "some lamp," and, having informed him that his weekly envelope would contain five dollars and that

his food was presented free by the management, requested him to slip out of his coat, grab an apron, and get busy.

Freddie was a young man who took life as it came. He was a sociable being, and could be happy anywhere so long as he was not bored. The solitude of the news-stand had bored him, but at the East Side Delmonico's life was too full of movement to permit of ennui. He soon perceived that there was more in this curious establishment than met the eye, and this by design rather than accident. The fact was that "Blinky's," as its patrons tersely styled Anderson's Parisian Cafe and Restaurant, the East Side Delmonico's, offered attractions to the cognoscenti other than the mere restoration of the inner man with meat and drink. On the first floor, for instance, provided that you could convince the management of the excellence of your motives, you could "buck the tiger" -- a feat which sounds perilous but is not, except to the purse. On the floor above, again, if you were that kind of idiot, you might play roulette. And in the basement, in a large, cellar-like room, lit with countless electric lights, boxing contests were held on Saturday nights before audiences financially, if not morally, select.

In fact, the East Side Delmonico's was nothing more nor less than a den of iniquity. But nobody could call it dull, and Freddie revelled in his duties. He booked orders, served drinks, smashed plates, bullied the cook, chaffed the customers when they were merry, seized them by the neck and ran them into the street when they were too merry, and in every other way comported himself like one who has at last found his true vocation. And time rolled on.

We will leave time rolling for the moment and return to Mr. Bivatt, raising the curtain at the beginning of his tete-a-tete dinner with his fellow-plutocrat, T. Mortimer Dunlop. T. Mortimer was the other sort of millionaire. You could have told he was a millionaire just by looking at him. He bulged. Wherever a man can bulge, there did T. Mortimer Dunlop bulge. His head was bald, his face purple, his hands red. He was accustomed to refer to himself somewhat frequently as a "dead game sport." He wheezed when he spoke.

I raise the curtain on Mr. Bivatt at the beginning of dinner because it was at the beginning of dinner that he allowed Mr. Dunlop to persuade him to drink a Dawn of Hope cocktail -- so called because it cheers you up. It cheered Mr. Bivatt up.

Mr. Bivatt needed cheering up. That very afternoon his only son Twombley had struck him for a thousand dollars to pay a poker debt. A thousand dollars is not a large sum to a man of Mr. Bivatt's wealth, but it is your really rich man who unbelts least joyously. Together with the cheque Twombley had received a parental lecture. He had appeared to be impressed by it but it was

the doubt as to its perfect efficacy which was depressing Mr. Bivatt. There was no doubt that Twombley was a trial. It was only the awe with which he regarded his father that kept him within bounds. Mr. Bivatt sighed and took a pepsine tabloid.

It was at this point that T. Mortimer Dunlop, summoning the waiter, ordered two Dawn of Hope cocktails.

"Nonsense!" he wheezed, in response to Mr. Bivatt's protest. "Be a sport! I'm a dead game sport. Hurry up, waiter. Two Dawn of Hope."

Mr. Bivatt weakly surrendered. He was there entirely to please Mr. Dunlop, for there was a big deal in the air, to which Mr. Dunlop's co-operation was essential. This was no time to think about one's digestion or the habits of a lifetime. If, to conciliate invaluable Mr. Dunlop, it was necessary to be a dead game sport and drink a cocktail, then a dead game sport he would be. He took the curious substance from the waiter and pecked at it like a nervous bird. He blinked, and pecked again -- less nervously this time.

You, gentle reader, who simply wallow in alcoholic stimulants at every meal, will find it hard to understand the wave of emotion which surged through Mr. Bivatt's soul as he reached the half-way point in the magic glass. But Mr. Bivatt for thirty years had confined his potions to hot water, and the effect on him was remarkable. He no longer felt depressed. Hope, so to speak, had dawned with a jerk. Life was a thing of wonderful joy and infinite possibilities.

We therefore find him, at the end of dinner, leaning across the table, thumping it with clenched fist, and addressing Mr. Dunlop through the smoke of the latter's cigar thus: --

"Dunlop, old man, how would it be to go and see a show? I'm ready for anything, old man, Dunlop. I'm a dead game sport, Dunlop, old fellow! That's what I am."

One thing leads to another. The curtain falls on Mr. Bivatt smoking a Turkish cigarette in a manner that can only be described as absolutely reckless.

These things, I should mention, happened on a Saturday night. About an hour after Mr. Bivatt had lit his cigarette Freddie, in the cafe at the East Side Delmonico's, was aware of a thick-set, short-haired, tough-looking young man settling himself at one of the tables and hammering a glass with the blade of his knife. In the other hand he waved the bill of fare. He was also shouting, "Hey!" Taking him for all in all, Freddie set him down as a hungry young man. He moved towards him to minister to his needs.

"Well, cully," he said, affably, "and what will you wrap yourself around?"

You were supposed to unbend and be chummy with the customers if you were a waiter at "Blinky's." The customers expected it. If you called a patron of the East Side Delmonico's "sir," he scented sarcasm, and was apt to throw things.

The young man had a grievance.

"Say, can you beat it? Me signed up to fight a guy here at a hundred and thirty-three, ring-side, and starving meself for weeks to make the weight. Say, I ain't had a square meal since Ponto was a pup -- and gee! along comes word that he's sprained a foot and will we kindly not expect him. And all I get is the forfeit money."

He snorted.

"Forfeit money! Keep it! It ain't but a hundred plunks, and the loser's end was three hundred. And there wouldn't have been any loser's end in mine at that. Why say, I'd have licked that guy with me eyes shut."

He kicked the table-leg morosely.

"Your story moves me much," said Freddie. "And now, what shall we shoot into you?"

"You attending to this table?"

"I am."

The young man scanned the bill of fare.

"Noodle-soup - bit-o'-weakfish - fried chicken - Southern-style - corn-on-the-cob - bit-o'-steak - fried-potatoes - four fried-eggs - done-on-both-sides - apple-dumpling - with hard-sauce - and a-cup- of-custard," he observed rapidly. "That'll do to start with. And say, bring all the lager-beer you can find. I've forgotten what it tastes like."

"That's right," said Freddie, sympathetically; "keep your strength up."

"I'll try," said the thick-set young man. Get a move on."

There was no doubt about the pugilist's appetite. It gave Freddie quite a thrill of altruistic pleasure to watch him eat. He felt like a philanthropist entertaining a starving beggar. He fetched and carried assiduously for the diner, and when at length the latter called for coffee and a cigar and sank back in his chair with a happy sigh, he nearly cheered.

On his way to the kitchen he encountered his employer, Mr. "Blinky" Anderson, looking depressed. Freddie gathered the reason for his gloom. He liked "Blinky," and thought respectful condolence would not be out of place.

"Sorry to hear the news, sir."

"Hey?" said Mr. Anderson, moodily.

"I hear the main event has fallen through."

"Who told you?"

"I have been waiting on one of the fighters upstairs."

Mr. Anderson nodded.
"That would be the Tennessee Bear-Cat."
"Very possibly. He had that appearance." Like the Bear-Cat, Mr. Anderson was rendered communicative by grief. Freddie had a sympathetic manner, and many men had confided in him.
"It was One-Round Smith who backed down. Says he's hurt his foot. Huh!" Mr. Anderson grunted satirically, but pathos succeeded satire again almost at once. "I ain't told them about it yet," he went on, jerking his head in the direction of the 1nvisible audience. The preliminaries have started, and what those guys will say when they find there ain't going to be a main event I don't know. I guess they'll want to lynch somebody. I ought to tell 'em right away but I can't seem to sorter brace myself to it. It's the best audience, too, we've ever had. All the sports in town are there. Rich guys, too -- none of your cheap skates. I just seen old man Dunlop blow in with a pal, and he's worth all sorts o' money. And now there won't be no fight. Wouldn't that jar you?"
"Can't you find a substitute?"
"Substitute! This ain't a preliminary between two dubs. It was the real thing for big money. And all the sports in town come to watch it. Substitute! Ain't you ever heard of the Bear-Cat? He's a wild Indian. Who's going to offer to step up and swap punches with a terror like him?"
"I am," said Freddie.
Mr. Anderson stared at him with open mouth.
"You!"
"Me."
"You'll fight the Tennessee Bear-Cat?"
"I'd fight Jack Johnson if he'd just finished the meal that fellow has been having," said Freddie, simply.
Mr. Anderson was not a swift thinker. He stood, blinking, and allowed the idea to soak through. It penetrated slowly, like water through a ceiling.
"He'd eat you," he said, at last.
"Well, I'm the only thing in this place he hasn't eaten. Why stint him?"
"But, say, have you done any fighting?"
"As an amateur, a good deal."
"Amateur! Say, can you see them sports down there standing a main event between the Tennessee Bear-Cat and an amateur?"
"Why tell them? Say I'm the heavy-light-weight champion of England."
"What's a heavy-light-weight?"
"It's a new class, in between the lights and the welters."

By this time the idea had fairly worked its way through into Mr. Anderson's mind, and its merits were beginning to appeal to him. It was certain that, if Freddie were not allowed to fill the gap, there would be no main event that night. And in the peculiar circumstances it was just possible that he might do well enough to satisfy the audience. The cloud passed from Mr. Anderson's face, for all the world as if he had taken a Dawn of Hope cocktail.

"Why, say," he said, "there's something in this."

"You bet there is," said Freddie. "There's the loser's end, three hundred of the best."

Mr. Anderson clapped him on the shoulder.

"And another hundred from me if you last five rounds," he said. "I guess five'll satisfy them, if you make them fast ones. I'll go and tell the Bear-Cat."

"And I'll go and get him his coffee and the strongest cigar you keep. Every little bit helps."

Freddie entered the ring in a costume borrowed from one of the fighters in the preliminaries, and, seating himself in his corner, had his first sight of Mr. "Blinky" Anderson's celebrated basement. Most of the light in the place was concentrated over the roped platform of the ring, and all he got was a vague impression of space. There seemed to be a great many people present. The white shirt-fronts reminded him of the National Sporting Club.

His eye was caught by a face in the first row of ring-side seats. It seemed familiar. Where had he seen it before? And then he recognized Mr. Bivatt -- a transformed Mr. Bivatt, happier-looking, excited, altogether more human. Their eyes met, but there was no recognition in the millionaire's. Freddie had shaved his moustache as a preliminary to the life of toil, and Mr. Bivatt, beaming happily up at him from beside that dead game sport, T. Mortimer Dunlop, had no recollection of ever having seen him before.

Freddie's attention was diverted from audience to ring by the arrival of the Tennessee Bear-Cat. There was a subdued murmur of applause -- applause had to be merely murmured on these occasions -- and for one moment, as he looked at him, Freddie regretted the contract he had undertaken. What Mr. Anderson had said about wild Indians came home to him. Certainly the Bear-Cat looked one. He was an extraordinarily-muscled young man. Freddie was mainly muscle himself, but the Bear-Cat appeared to be a kind of freak. Lumps and cords protruded from him in all directions. His face wore a look of placid content, and he had a general air of happy repletion, a fate-cannot-touch-me-I-have-dined-to-day expression. He was chewing gum. A shirt-sleeved gentleman of full habit climbed into the ring, puffing slightly.

"Gents! Main event. Have an apology offer -- behalf of the management. Was to have been ten-round between Sam Proctor, better known as th' Tennessee Bear-Cat, and One-Round Smith, at one-thirty-three ring-side. But -- seems to have been a -- naccident. One-Round havin' sustained severe injury to foot. Rend'rin' it -- impossible -- appear t'night before you. Deeply regret unavoid'ble dis'pointment."

The portly man's breath was going fast, but he still had sufficient for a brilliant flight of fancy, a vast improvement on Freddie's humble effort.

"Have honour, however, present t'you Jimmy Smith, brother of One-Round -- stranger to this city -- but -- well known on Pacific Coast -- where -- winner of forty-seven battles. Claimant to welter-weight belt. Gents, Jimmy Smith, the Santa Barbara Whirlwind!"

Freddie bowed. The speech, for some mysterious reason probably explainable by Christian Science, had had quite a tonic effect on him. The mere thought of those forty-seven victories gave him heart. After all, who was this Tennessee Bear-Cat? A mere walking repository of noodle soup, weakfish, fried chicken, eggs, corn, apple-dumplings, lager-beer, and cup-custards. A perambulating bill of fare. That was what he was. And, anyway, he was probably muscle-bound, and would be as slow as a top.

The introducer, however, presented him in another aspect. He had got his second wind now, and used it.

"Gents! The Tennessee Bear-Cat! You all know Sam. The toughest, huskiest, wickedest little old slugger that ever came down the pike. The boy who's cleaned up all the light-weights around these parts, and is in a dead straight line -- for -- the champeenship of the world."

He waved his hand dramatically. The Bear-Cat, overwhelmed by these tributes, shifted his chewing-gum to the other cheek, and simpered coyly, as who should say, "Stop your nonsense, Archibald!" And the gong clanged.

Freddie started the fight with the advantage that his plan of campaign was perfectly clear in his mind. Rapid attack was his policy. When a stout gentleman in shirt-sleeves has been exhausting his scanty stock of breath calling you a whirlwind, decency forbids that you should behave like a zephyr. He shook hands, and, on the principle of beginning as you mean to go on, proceeded without delay to poke his left earnestly into the middle of the Bear-Cat's face. He then brought his right round with a thud on to what the latter probably still called his ear -- a strange, shapeless growth rather like a leather cauliflower -- and sprang back. The Bear-Cat shifted his gum and smiled gratefully.

A heavy swing on the part of the Bear-Cat was the next event of note. Freddie avoided it with ease and slipped in a crisp left. As he had expected,

his opponent was too slow to be dangerous. Dangerous! He was not even making the thing interesting, thought Freddie as he side-stepped another swing and brought his right up to the chin. He went to his corner at the end of the round, glowing with satisfaction. This was easy.

It was towards the middle of the second round that he received a shock. Till then the curious ease with which he had reached his opponent's head had caused him to concentrate on it. It now occurred to him that by omitting to attack the body he was, as it were, wasting the gifts of Providence. Consequently, having worked his man into an angle of the ropes with his back against a post, he feinted with his left, drew a blow, and then, ducking quickly, put all his weight into a low, straight right.

The effect was remarkable. The Bear-Cat uttered a startled grunt; a look came into his face of mingled pain and reproach, as if his faith in human nature had been shaken, and he fell into a clinch. And as Freddie vainly struggled to free himself a voice murmured in his ear: --

"Say, cut that out!"

The stout referee prised them apart. Freddie darted forward, missed with his left, and the Bear-Cat clinched again -- more, it appeared, in order to resume the interrupted conversation than from motives of safety.

"Leave me stummick be, you rummy," he hissed, rapidly. "Ain't you got no tact? 'Blinky' promised me fifty if I'd let you stay three rounds, but one more like that, and I'll forget meself and knock you through the ceiling."

Only when he reached his corner did the full meaning of the words strike Freddie. All the glow of victory left him. It was a put-up job! "Blinky," to ensure his patrons something resembling a fight, had induced the Bear-Cat to fight false during the first three rounds.

The shock of it utterly disheartened him. So that was why he had been making such a showing! That was why his jabs and hooks had got home with such clockwork precision! Probably his opponent had been laughing at him all the time. The thought stung him. He had never been remarkable for an even temper, and now a cold fury seized him. He would show them, by George!

The third round was the most spectacular of the fight. Even the regular patrons of "Blinky's" Saturday night exhibitions threw aside their prudence and bellowed approval. Smiling wanly and clinching often, the Bear-Cat fixed his mind on his fifty dollars to buoy himself up, while Freddie, with a nasty gleam in his eyes, behaved every moment more like a Santa Barbara Whirlwind might reasonably be expected to behave. Seldom had the Bear-Cat heard sweeter music than the note of the gong terminating the round. He moved slowly to his corner, and handed his chewing-gum to his second to

hold for him. It was strictly business now. He thought hard thoughts as he lay back in his chair.

In the other corner Freddie also was thinking. The exhilarating exercise of the last round had soothed him and cleared his brain and he, too, as he left his corner for the fourth session, was resolved to attend strictly to business. And his business was to stay five rounds and earn that hundred dollars. Connoisseurs in the ring-seats, who had been telling their friends during the previous interval that Freddie had "got him going," changed their minds and gave it as their opinion that he had " blown up." They were wrong. He was fighting solely on the defensive now from policy, not from fatigue.

The Bear-Cat came on with a rush, head down, swinging with left and right. The change from his former attitude was remarkable, and Freddie, if he had not been prepared for it, might have been destroyed offhand. There was no standing up against such an onslaught. He covered up and ducked and slipped and side-stepped, and slipped again, and, when the gong sounded, he was still intact.

Freddie came up for the fifth round brimming over with determination. He meant to do or die. Before the end of the first half-minute it was borne in upon him that he was far more likely to die than do. He was a good amateur boxer. He had been well taught, and he knew all the recognized stops for the recognized blows. But the Bear-Cat had either invented a number of blows not in the regular curriculum, or else it was his manner of delivering them that gave that impression. Reason told Freddie that his opponent was not swinging left and right simultaneously, but the hard fact remained that, just as he guarded one blow, another came from the opposite point of the compass and took him squarely on the side of the head. He had a disagreeable sensation as if an automobile had run into him, and then he was on the floor, with the stout referee sawing the air above him.

The thought of a hundred dollars is a reviving agent that makes oxygen look like a sleeping-draught. No sooner had it returned to his mind than his head cleared and he rose to his feet, as full of fight as ever. He perceived the Bear-Cat slithering towards him, and leaped to one side like a Russian dancer. The Bear-Cat collided with the ropes and grunted discontentedly. Probably if Freddie had had a sizable plot of ground, such as Hyde Park or Dartmoor, to manoeuvre in, he might have avoided his opponent for some considerable time. The ring being only twenty feet square, he was hampered. A few more wild leaps, interspersed with one or two harmless left jabs, and he found himself penned up in a corner, with the Bear-Cat, smiling pleasantly again now, making hypnotic passes before his eyes.

The Bear-Cat was not one of your reticent fighters. He was candour itself.

"Here it comes, kid!" he remarked, affably, and it came. Freddie's world suddenly resolved itself into a confused jumble of pirouetting stars, chairs, shirt-fronts, and electric lights, and he fell forward in a boneless heap. There was a noise of rushing waters in his ears, and, mingled with it, the sound of voices. Some person or persons, he felt dimly, seemed to be making a good deal of an uproar. His brain was clouded, but the fighting instinct still worked within him; and, almost unconsciously, he groped for the lower rope, found it, and pulled himself to his feet. And then the lights went out.
How long it was before he realized that the lights actually had gone out, and that the abrupt darkness was not due to a repetition of "it," he never knew. But it must have been some length of time, for when the room became suddenly light again his head was clear and, except for a conviction that his neck was broken, he felt tolerably well.
His eyes having grown accustomed to the light, he saw with astonishment that remarkable changes had taken place in the room. With the exception of some half-dozen persons, the audience had disappeared entirely, and each of those who remained was in the grasp of a massive policeman. Two more intelligent officers were beckoning to him to come down from the platform.
The New York police force is subject to periodical attacks of sensitiveness with regard to the purity of the city. In between these spasms a certain lethargy seems to grip it, but when it does act its energy is wonderful. The East Side Delmonico's had been raided.
It was obvious that the purity of the city demanded that Freddie should appear in court in a less exiguous costume than his present one. The two policemen accompanied him to the dressing-room.
On a chair in one corner sat the Tennessee Bear-Cat, lacing his shoes. On a chair in another corner sat Mr. Franklyn Bivatt, holding his head in his hands.
Fate, Mr. Bivatt considered, had not treated him well. Nor, he added mentally, had T. Mortimer Dunlop. For directly the person, to be found in every gathering, who mysteriously gets to know things in advance of his fellows had given the alarm, T. Mortimer, who knew every inch of "Blinky's" basement and, like other dead game sports who frequented it, had his exits and his entrances -- particularly his exits -- had skimmed away like a corpulent snipe and vanished, leaving Mr. Bivatt to look after himself.
As Mr. Bivatt had failed to look after himself, the constabulary were looking after him.
"Who's the squirt?" asked the first Policeman, indicating Mr. Bivatt.

"I don't know," said the second. I caught him trying to hook it, and held him. Keep an eye on him. I think it's Boston Willie, the safe-blower. Keep these three here till I get back. I'm off upstairs."
The door closed behind them. Presently it creaked and was still. The remaining policeman was leaning against it.
The Tennessee Bear-Cat nodded amiably at Freddie.
"Feeling better, kid? Why didn't you duck? I told you it was coming, didn't I?"
Mr. Bivatt groaned hollowly. Life was very grey. He was in the hands of the police. And he had indigestion and no pepsine tabloids.
Say, it ain't so bad as all that," said the Bear-Cat. "Not if you've got any sugar, it ain't."
"My doctor expressly forbids me sugar," replied Mr. Bivatt.
The Bear-Cat gave a peculiar jerk of his head, indicative of the intelligent man's contempt for the slower-witted.
"Not that sort of sugar, you rummy. Gee! Do you think this is a tea-party? Dough, you mutt."
"Do you mean money, by any chance?" asked Freddie.
The Bear-Cat said that he did mean money. He went further. Mr. Bivatt appearing to be in a sort of trance, he put a hand in his pocket and extracted a pocket-book.
"I guess these'll do," he said, removing a couple of bills.
He rapped on the door.
"Hey, Mike!"
"Quit that," answered a gruff voice without.
"I want to speak to you. Got something to say."
The door opened.
"Well?"
"Say, Mike, you've got a kind face. Going to let us go, ain't you?"
The policeman eyed the Bear-Cat stolidly. The Bear-Cat's answering glance was more friendly.
"See what the fairies have brought, Mike." The policeman's gaze shifted to the bills.
"Say," he said, severely, as he held out his hand, "you don't reckon I'd take a bribe, I hope?"
"Certainly not!" said the Bear-Cat, indignantly.
There was a musical rustling.
"Don't mind if we say good night now, do you?" said the Bear-Cat. "They'll be getting anxious about us at home."
The policeman with the kind face met his colleague in the basement.

"Say, you know those guys in the dressing-room," he said.
"Uh-huh," said the colleague.
"They overpowered me and got away."
"Halves," said the colleague.
Having lost the Bear-Cat -- no difficult task, for he dived into the first saloon -- Mr. Bivatt and Freddie turned their steps towards Broadway. A certain dignity which had been lacking in the dressing-room had crept back into Mr. Bivatt's manner.
"Go away," he said. "I will not have you following me."
"I am not following you," said Freddie. "We are walking arm in arm."
Mr. Bivatt wrenched himself free. "Go away, or I will call a police -- er -- go away!"
"Have you forgotten me? I was afraid you had. I won't keep you long. I only wanted to tell you that I had nearly made that five hundred dollars."
Mr. Bivatt started and glared at Freddie in the light of a shop-window. He gurgled speechlessly.
"I haven't added it all up yet. I have been too busy making it. Let me see. Twelve dollars from the hotel. Two weeks as a waiter at five a week. Twenty-two. Tips, about another dollar. Three hundred for the loser's end -- I can't claim a draw, as I was practically out. And 'Blinky' Anderson promised me another hundred if I stayed five rounds. Well I was on my feet when the police broke up the show, but maybe, after what has happened, he won't pay up. Anyway, I've got three hundred and twenty-three -- "
"Will you kindly stop this foolery and allow me to speak?" said Mr. Bivatt. When I made our agreement I naturally alluded to responsible, respectable work. I did not include low prize-fighting and -- "
"You said manual work or brain work. Wasn't mine about as manual as you could get?"
"I have nothing further to say."
Freddie sighed.
"Oh, well," he said, "I suppose I shall have to start all over again. I wish you had let me know sooner. I shall try brain work this time. I shall write my experiences and try and sell them to a paper. What happened to-night ought to please some editor. The way you got us out of that dressing-room. It was the smartest thing I ever saw. There ought to be money in that. Well, good night. May I come and report later?"
He turned away, but stopped as he heard an odd choking sound behind him.
"Is anything the matter?"
Mr. Bivatt clutched him with one hand and patted his arm affectionately with the other.

"Don't -- er -- don't go away, my boy," he said. "Come with me to the drug-store while I get some pepsine tabloids, and then we'll go home and talk it over. I think we may be able to arrange something, after all."

Jackson's Extra

The Story Of How Wrykyn Beat Ripton At Cricket

The Ripton match was fixed for July the second, on the Ripton ground. Wrykyn was more anxious than usual to beat Ripton this year. Wrykyn played five schools at football, and four at cricket, and at both games a victory over Ripton would have made up for two defeats in other games. Every public school which keeps the same fixtures on its card year after year sooner or later comes to regard a particular match as the match to be won. Sometimes this is because the other school has gained a long run of victories, or it may be because neither can get far ahead in its score of wins, but wins and loses every other year.

This was the case with Wrykyn and Ripton.

Last year Ripton had won by eleven runs. In the year before that Wrykyn had pulled it off by two wickets. Three years back the match had ended in a draw. And so on, back to the Flood.

Wrykyn had another reason for wanting to win this year. A victory over Ripton would make the season a record one, for each of the other three schools had been defeated, and also the MCC and Old Wrykinians. Wrykyn had never won both these games and all its school-matches too. Twice it had beaten the schools and the old boys, only to fall before what was very nearly a county team sent down by the MCC. That is the drawback to a successful season. The more matches a school wins the stronger is the team sent against it from Lord's.

This year, however, the match had come on early, before the strength of the school team had got abroad, and Wrykyn, having dismissed the visitors before lunch for ninety-seven, had spent a very pleasant afternoon running up three hundred for six wickets.

It was in this match that Jackson, of Spence's, had shown the first sign of what he was going to do during the season. He made a hundred and eighteen without giving a chance. A week later he scored fifty-four against the Emeriti; and after that his career, with the exception of two innings of three and nought respectively, had been a series of triumphs. Wrykyn rubbed its hands, and wondered what would happen at Ripton. Now Jackson, apart from his cricket, did not shine in school. He was one of those cheerful idiots without one atom of prudence in his whole composition.

If he were bored by anything he could not resist from showing the fact. He would instantly proceed to amuse himself in some other way. Form-work

always bored him, and he was, as a result, the originator of a number of ingenious methods of passing the time.
Fortunately for him, Mr Spence -- who was the master of his form as well as of his house -- was the master who looked after the school cricket. So, where other masters would have set him extra lessons on half-holidays, Mr Spence, not wishing to deprive the team of its best man, used to give him lines to write. Jackson would write them in preparation the same evening, and all would be joy and peace.
But, unhappily, the staff was not entirely composed of masters like Mr Spence.
There were others.
And by far the worst of these others was Mr Dexter.
It was not often that Jackson saw Mr Dexter, being neither in his house nor his form. But he did so once. And this is what happened:
The Ripton match was fixed, as I have stated, for July 2nd. On the afternoon of June 30th, Henfrey, of Day's, who was captain of cricket, met Jackson on his way to the nets.
"Oh, I say, Henfrey," remarked Jackson, as if he were saying nothing out of the common. "I shan't be able to play on Saturday."
"Don't be more of an ass than you can help," pleaded Henfrey. "Go and get your pads on."
"I'm not rotting. I'm in 'extra'."
If you had told Henfrey that the Bank of England had smashed he would have said: "Oh!"
If you had told him that the country was on the brink of war he would have replied: "Really! After you with the paper." But tell him on the eve of the Ripton match that his best batsman was in extra lesson, and you really did interest him.
"What!" he shouted.
"Sorry," said Jackson.
"Who's put you in?"
"Dexter."
"What for?"
"Ragging in French."
"Idiot you are to go and rag!"
"What else can you do in French?" asked Jackson.
"Go on," said Henfrey, with forced calm; "you may as well tell me all about it."
And Jackson did.

"For some reason or other," he began, "old Gaudinois couldn't turn up today -- got brain fag or something."
M. Gaudinois was the master to whom the Upper Fifth, Jackson's form, was accustomed to go for their bi-weekly French lesson.
"Well?" said Henfrey.
"So I'm hanged if the Old Man didn't go and send Dexter to take the Upper Fifth French. Bit low, don't you know, sending a man like that. You know what Dexter is. He's down on you for every single thing you do. It's like eight hours at the seaside to him if he catches you at anything. I do bar a man like that. I don't mind a man being strict; but Dexter doesn't play the game."
"Well, buck up!" said Henfrey impatiently; "don't be all night. I know all about Dexter. What happened?"
The injured youth resumed, in the injured tone of one who feels that he has been shamefully used.
This was the burden of his story:
From his earliest years he had been in the habit of regarding French lessons as two hours specially set apart in each week for pure amusement. His conduct in the form room was perfect compared with what he did in French.
"And it didn't occur to me somehow," said he, "that one couldn't rag with Dexter as one can with Gaudinois. I always thought it my right, so to speak, to rag. But the other chaps in the form lay low when they saw Dexter, and chucked rotting for the afternoon. That's why he spotted me, I suppose."
This was indeed the case. Their exemplary behaviour had formed a background for Jackson. His conduct, which in a disorderly room might have passed without notice, became now so apparent that, exactly a quarter of an hour after his entrance, he was sent out of the room, and spent the rest of afternoon school in the passage.
So far all was well. It was no novelty for him to be sent out of that room. Indeed, he had come to look upon being sent out as the legitimate end to his afternoon's amusement, and, as a rule, he kept a book in his pocket to read in the passage. A humble apology to M. Gaudinois at four o'clock always set him free.
But with Mr Dexter it was different. Apologies were useless. He attempted one, but got by it nothing but a severe snub. It now became clear that the matter was serious.
One of Mr Dexter's peculiarities was that, while he nearly always sent a boy whom he had fallen foul of into extra lesson -- which meant spending from two to four o'clock on the next half-holiday doing punishment work in a form room -- he never told him of his fate. With a refinement of cruelty, he

liked to let him linger on in the hope that his sins had been forgotten until, on the afternoon before the fatal half-holiday, the porter copied the names of the victims out of the extra-lesson book and posted them up outside the school Shop.

Jackson, therefore, though Mr Dexter had not said a word to him about it, was pretty sure that he was a certainty for the "black list" on the following Saturday, and would thus be unable to go with the team to Ripton.

Henfrey, having heard the story, waxed bitter and personal on the subject of lunatics who made idiots of themselves in school and lost Ripton matches by being in extra on the day on which they were played.

He was concluding his bright and instructive remarks on Jackson's character when O'Hara, of Dexter's, another member of the eleven, came up.

"What's the matter?" enquired he.

O'Hara, as his name may suggest, was an Irish boy. In the matter of wildness he resembled Jackson, but with this difference that, while the latter sometimes got into trouble, he never did. He had a marvellous way of getting out of scrapes and quite a reputation for helping other people out of them.

Five years' constant guerrilla warfare with Dexter, who regarded his house as a warder might a gang of convicts, and treated them accordingly, had rendered him a youth of infinite resource. Henfrey went away to bat at the nets, leaving Jackson to tell his tale over again to O'Hara. "So you see how it is," he concluded: "he's said nothing about it yet, but I know he means to stick me down for extra."

"Dexter always does," said O'Hara. "I know the man. There's no getting away from him if you give him an opening. I suppose you tried apologising?"

"Yes. No good -- rot, I call it. Gaudinois always takes an apology."

"Well, I'll try and think of something. There's bound to be some way out of it. I've got out of much tighter places."

Jackson departed with an easier mind. He felt that his affairs were in the hands of an expert.

After he had had his innings at the nets O'Hara strolled off to the porter's lodge. He wished to see whether Jackson's fears had been realised. The porter offered no objection to his inspecting the extra-lesson book. Old Bates was always ready to oblige the genial O'Hara.

O'Hara turned the pages till he came to the heading "Saturday, July 2nd." One of the first items was "Jackson: gross misbehaviour. R. Dexter." He thanked Bates, closed the book, then walked thoughtfully back to his house.

"Well?" asked Jackson when they met next morning.

"Has Dexter said anything about it yet?" said O'Hara.
"Not a word. But that doesn't mean anything."
"It means a lot. I think I've got it now."
"Good man! What is it?"
"I can't tell you. I wish I could. Ye'd be amused. But the whole point of it is that ye can say, if they ask afterwards, that ye knew nothing about it at all. But anyhow, go with the team to-morrow."
"But, if my name's up for extra?"
"That's all right. Never mind that."
"But, I say, you know" (simply to cut extra lesson was a feat more daring than even he had ever dreamed of), "there'll be a ghastly row."
"I've allowed for that. What you've got to do is to keep clear of Dexter today and go to Ripton tomorrow. I give ye my word 'twill be all right."
Jackson breathed heavily, struggled with his timidity, and gave his decision.
"Right!" he said. "I'll go."
"Good!" said O'Hara. "Now, there's one other thing. How much will ye give not to be in extra tomorrow? Oh, it's not for me, ye know, it's necessary expenses. Will ye give me half-a-crown?"
"Half-a-crown! Rather! Like a bird!"
"Hand it over, then."
"You might tell me what it's all about," complained Jackson as he produced the coin. "I bar mysteries."
But O'Hara would not say a word. Tombs were talkative compared with him.
That afternoon the extra-lesson list went up, with Jackson's name on it; and at 8.30 the following morning the Wrykyn team, Jackson amongst them, started for Ripton.
When Wrykyn played away from home two telegrams were always sent to the school, one at the luncheon interval, the other when the match was over. The first of these telegrams read as follows:
"Ripton, one-six-eight for five. Lunch."
A hundred and sixty-eight for five wickets! It was a good start. The Wrykyn team would have to do all they knew, the school felt, when their turn came to bat.
At seven o'clock Mr Dexter, returning to his house for dinner, looked in at the school Shop to buy some fives-balls. Fives was his one relaxation.
As he waited to be served his eyes were attracted by two telegrams fixed to the woodwork over the counter. The first was the one that had been sent at the luncheon interval.

The other was the one that had caused such a sensation in Wrykyn. And it created a considerable sensation in the mind of Mr Dexter. The sensation was a blend of anger, surprise, and incredulity.
This was the telegram:
"Ripton 219. Wrykyn 221 for 2. Trevor 52; Henfrey 20; Jackson 103 not; O'Hara 41 not."
Only that and nothing more!
Mr Dexter, having made sure, by a second perusal, that he was not mistaken, went straight off to the Headmaster.
"I sent Jackson into extra lesson this afternoon, and he did not go." That was the gist of a rather lengthy speech.
"But, Mr Dexter," said the Head, "surely you are mistaken. Jackson was in the extra lesson today -- I saw him."
"Jackson in the cricket team?"
"I was referring to a younger boy, W. P. Jackson, who is in your house. Was he not the boy you sent into the extra lesson?"
Mr Dexter's face darkened. Like the celebrated M.P., "he smelt a rat; he saw it floating in the air."
"This is a trick," he said. "I will see Jackson."
He saw Jackson -- W. P. Jackson, that is to say; aged fourteen; ordinary fag; no special characteristics.
"What is this I hear, Jackson?" he said.
Jackson gaped.
"You were in extra lesson this afternoon?"
"Yes, sir."
"Who told you to go?"
"Please, sir, I saw my name on the list."
"But you knew you had done nothing to deserve this."
"Please, sir, I thought I might have done."
This was so true -- the average fag at Wrykyn did do a good many things for which he might well have received extra lesson -- that Mr Dexter was baffled for the moment. But he suspected there was more in this than met the eye, and he was resolved to find out who was the power behind Jackson.
"Did anybody tell you that you were in 'extra'?" he asked.
"Please, sir, O'Hara."
A gleam of triumph appeared in the master's eye. The aroma of the rat increased. O'Hara and he were ancient enemies.
"Tell O'Hara I wish to see him."
"Yes, sir."
Exit W. P. Jackson, and, later, enter O'Hara.

"O'Hara, why did you tell Jackson that he was in the 'extra' lesson this afternoon?"
"I saw his name on the list, sir."
"And, may I ask, O'Hara, if it is your custom to inform every boy on these occasions?"
"No, sir," said O'Hara stolidly.
"Then why did you tell Jackson?"
"I happened to meet him in the house, and mentioned it casually -- in a joking way," added O'Hara.
"Oh, in a joking way?"
Silence for two minutes.
"You may go, O'Hara," said Dexter finally. "You will hear more of this."
O'Hara made no comment; but Mr Dexter was wrong -- he heard no more of the matter. It dawned on the Housemaster by degrees that he had no case. A second conversation with the Head strengthened this view.
"I have been speaking to Jackson," said the Head, "and he says that you did not tell him to go into detention."
"But," added Mr Dexter, "his name was on the list for extra lesson."
"I have examined the list, and I find that you omitted to insert any initials before Jackson's name. You wrote 'Jackson,' and nothing more. That explains this somewhat ludicrous situation, I think," said the Head. "If no particular Jackson is specified it is naturally the Jackson with the guiltier conscience who accepts the punishment. It is a curious miscarriage of justice; but I do not see that there is anything to be done."
And that was the end of the affair.
It was an accident, of course -- a very curious -- and lucky -- accident. And, of course, it was simply a guilty conscience that induced the younger Jackson to go into extra lesson that Saturday. However, it would be interesting to know how it came about that that worthy, who was notoriously penniless on the Thursday, was able to spend exactly half-a-crown at the school Shop on the Friday.

The Military Invasion Of America

A Remarkable Tale Of The German-Japanese Invasion Of 1916

Editor's Note -- It may be thought that in this story Mr. Wodehouse has painted in too lurid colors the horrors of a foreign invasion of the United States. Realism, it may be argued, can be carried too far. We prefer to think that our readers will acquit the author of a desire to rouse America to a sense of peril, and only by setting down without flinching the results of an invasion can this be done. If McClure's and all the other magazines can do it, why shouldn't Vanity Fair have a shot at it? Mr. Wodehouse holds an established position as a military expert, his two most recent articles, "What to do When the Zeppelin Comes," and "Is It Contrary to International Law for Germany to Use Culture as a Weapon of Offense," having caused widespread comment and alarm among military students everywhere.

Part One

Chapter One

The invasion of America was complete. The navy, its morale completely sapped by grape-juice, had offered but slight resistance to the German Armada; and the army, too proud to fight, had stood around while the Japanese established their foothold on the soil of God's Own Country. Once begun, it had proceeded apace. New York had been bombarded -- but fortunately, as it was summer, nobody of any importance was in town. Philadelphia, though ably defended by military correspondents of the Saturday Evening Post, had fallen at last. America was beneath the heel of the invader, whose only casualties consisted of a detachment of infantry who had been rash enough to travel on the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad -- with the usual results.

Far-seeing patriots took a gloomy view of this state of affairs. For some years the receipts of baseball had been falling off, and it was argued that this counter-attraction must hit the national sport hard. The desire to see the invaders as they marched through the country must inevitably draw away thousands who would otherwise have paid their half-dollars to sit in the bleachers.

By the end of August, a powerful army of Germans under Prince Otto of Saxe-Pfennig had established itself at Kew Gardens, while an equally powerful horde of Japanese under General Owoki was in possession of Yonkers and all points west.

This was a very serious state of things.

Chapter Two

It has been well said that the crisis always produces the man, or necessity is the mother of man or something like that: and never has this admirable truth (of which I cannot remember the exact wording) been better exemplified than in this hour of America's sorest straits.

At a moment when everything seemed blackest, along came Clarence Chugwater.

To-day the name of Clarence Chugwater is familiar to all. Everyone has seen the Chugwater Column in Central Park, the equestrian statue in Chugwater Avenue (formerly Broadway), and the Chugwater picture- postcards in the shop-windows. But at the time of the great invasion Clarence was practically unknown except in the newspaper office where he was employed as an office-boy. And even there he was not known by name. The staff habitually addressed him as Young Bone-Head.

To-day, it is hard to understand how even a City editor (notoriously one of the least intelligent of human beings) could have failed to detect in the lad's face the promise of future greatness. That bulging forehead, distended with useful information (for Clarence attended night-school); those eyes, gleaming behind their tortoise-shell-rimmed spectacles; that massive chin; that tout ensemble; that je ne sais quoi.

Why, if the City editor had had a grain of sense, he would have flooded New York with electric signs, bearing the legend:

DO YOU KNOW THAT CLARENCE CHUGWATER IS WITH THE SENTINEL?

Instead of which, he called him Bone-head, and often with shocking adjectives prefixed. What a world!

Clarence Chugwater, that many-sided boy, was not only a prop of the Daily Sentinel, he was the Pride of the Boy Scouts. When off duty, he might be seen walking abroad, dressed neatly but not gaudily, in a flat-brimmed hat, a flannel shirt, a bunch of ribbons, a knapsack, knickerbockers, brown shoes, a whistle, and a long stick. He could do everything that the Boy Scout must learn to do. He could low like a bull. He could gurgle like a wood-pigeon. He could imitate the cry of the turnip in order to deceive rabbits. He could spoor, fell trees (unless their owner saw him at it), tell the character by the sole of the shoe, and fling the squaler. He did all these things well, but what he was best at was flinging the squaler.

America's defenders at this time were practically limited to the Boy Scouts and to a large civilian population, prepared at any moment to turn out for their country's sake and wave flags. A certain section of these, too, could sing patriotic songs. It would have been well, then, had the Invaders, before

making too sure that America lay beneath their heel, stopped to reckon with Clarence Chugwater.

But did they? Not by a jug-full. They had never even heard of Clarence.

What was to be the result of this over-confidence?

Ah!

Chapter Three

It was inevitable that at a time like August, when there is never anything very much going on, such a topic as the simultaneous invasion of America by Germany and Japan, should be seized upon by the press. Few of the papers failed to give the matter several columns of space, and the public found the fascination of staring at the invading troops a pleasant change from the garish attractions of South Beach and Coney Island. When you consider that a crowd of five hundred New Yorkers will assemble in the space of two minutes, abandoning entirely all its other business, to watch a man putting a new tire on his automobile, it is not surprising that the interest taken in the invaders was somewhat general.

A piquancy was added to the situation by the fact that the Germans and Japanese were not acting in any way as allies. What had happened was a curious outcome of the modern custom of striking a deadly blow before actually declaring war. By a mere chance it had occurred independently to both the Kaiser and the Mikado that it would not be half a bad idea to invade America -- and they had done it. The position of the Prince of Saxe-Pfennig and General Owoki was consequently delicate in the extreme.

All Prince Otto's early training and education had implanted in him the fixed idea that, if he ever invaded America, he would do it either alone or with the sympathetic cooperation of allies. He had never faced the problem of what he should do if there were rivals in the field. He could not very well ask the Japanese to withdraw, and, if he withdrew himself, that meant a mauvais quart d'heure with the Kaiser when he got back to Germany.

"It all comes of this 'Swoop of the Vulture' business," he grumbled to General von Poppenheim, his chief of staff, "this silly business of invading a country before you declare war on it. I suppose there's nothing for it," said the Prince, "but to have a talk with Owoki. Get him on the 'phone, Pop, and ask him to lunch with us at the Ritz to-morrow, to talk things over."

The momentous conversation took place, accordingly on the following day. It was conducted in the language of diplomacy, which, as anyone who has seen this year's crop of war plays is aware, stands in a class by itself. It is a language specifically designed to deceive the chance listener.

Thus, when the Prince, turning to Owoki, as the latter consumed his portion of buckwheat cakes and maple syrup, said "I hear the crops are coming on

nicely down Tokio way," none of the waiters perceived anything remarkable in the words. But Owoki, nursed from the cradle in an atmosphere of diplomatic subtlety, understood at once that what the Prince meant was "Now, about this business of America. What do you propose to do about it?" Owoki hesitated for a moment, then replied blandly: "The food here is good, but I am not sure that I do not prefer the Honble Childs."

The Prince frowned at this typical piece of shifty Oriental diplomacy. "How are you getting along with your fox trotting?" he inquired guardedly.

The Japanese general smiled a subtle smile.

"Poorly," he said, "poorly. The last time I tried it, I thought somebody had thrown honble building at me."

Prince Otto flushed. He was a plain, blunt man, and he hated this beating about the bush.

But what could he do? His Imperial Master would not wish him, save in the direst extremity, to fight the Japanese. Perhaps he had better yield the point. It was with a conciliatory smile, then, that, having ordered a second cup of coffee, he observed: "Speaking of Mrs. Vernon Castle, I hear that she's in again."

And then the two shook hands.

And so it was settled, the Japanese general having, as we have seen, waived his claim to bombard New York in his turn, and the Prince having withdrawn his demand for a season pass to the Polo Grounds. There was now no obstacle in the way of an alliance.

Prince Otto went to bed that night conscious of good work well done. He now saw his way clear before him.

But he had made one miscalculation, He had omitted to reckon with Clarence Breamworthy Chugwater, the Boy Scout.

Chapter Four

Night!

Night in Gramercy Park!

In the center of that vast tract of unreclaimed park there shone feebly, seeming almost to emphasize the darkness and desolation of the scene, a single light.

It was the camp-fire of the Boy Scouts.

The night was raw and windy. A fine rain had been falling for some hours. The date was October the First. In the camp of the Boy Scouts a vast activity prevailed.

Few of Manhattan's teeming millions realize how tremendous and far-reaching an organization the Boy Scouts are. With the possible exception of the Black Hand and the war-correspondents of the Saturday Evening Post,

the Scouts are perhaps the most carefully organized secret society in the world.

The power of the Scouts is enormous. Let us suppose that you are a business-man, and, arriving at the office one morning in a bad temper, you cure yourself by taking it out of the office-boy. He says nothing; he apparently does nothing. But that evening, as you enter your train for Forest Hills, a burly artisan treads on your gouty toe. Reaching home, you find that the chickens have been at your early peas, the cat has stolen the fish, and the cook has jumped her job. You do not connect these things, but they are all alike the results of your unjust behavior to Little Scoutmaster Cyril in the morning.

Or, meeting a ragged newsboy, you pat his head, give him a dime, and ask him if he means to be President when he grows up. Next day an anonymous present of champagne arrives at your address.

Terrible in their wrath, the Boy Scouts never forget a kindness.

A whistle sounded softly in the darkness. The sentry, pacing to and fro before the camp fire, halted and peered into the night.

"Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"Advance, friend: give the countersign."

"Death to Germany and Japan."

"Pass, friend! All's well."

An indistinct figure walked into the firelight. The sentry started, then stood at attention, The newcomer was Clarence Chugwater.

"Your name?" said Clarence, eyeing the sturdy young warrior.

"Private William Buggins."

"You watch well, Private Buggins. America has need of such as you."

Clarence pinched the young Scout's ear tolerantly. The boy flushed with pleasure.

"My orders have been carried out? The patrols are here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Enumerate them."

Standing in an attitude of deep thought, with his feet apart, his hands clasped behind him, and his chin sunk upon his breast, Clarence made a strangely impressive picture. The Scouts hearing of his arrival were charging desperately in all directions, at last they assembled, and were soon standing, alert and attentive. Clarence returned their salute moodily. He raised his hand.

"Men," he said, in his clear, penetrating alto, "you are all aware by this time that our country has been invaded. It is for us to crush the invader. (Cheers,

and a voice 'You said it!') I would call on you here and now to seize your sticks and rush upon the alien intruders, but at present their forces are too strong. We must wait. And something tells me that we shall not have to wait long. (Applause.) Soon jealousy must inevitably spring up between the Germans and the Japanese. It will be our task to aggravate that feeling. Sooner or later this smouldering jealousy will burst into flames, and then will come our time, See that it finds you ready. I have finished."
"Chugwater, Chugwater, Rah! Rah! Rah!" shouted the now thoroughly aroused troops.
It was the voice of Young America -- of Young America alert, desperate, and at its post!

Part Two

Synopsis of what has already happened: Germany and Japan have simultaneously invaded the United States. Japan has reached Yonkers and Germany has established her army at Kew Gardens. Germany is commanded by Prince Otto of Saxe-Pfennig. Japan is commanded by General Owoki. Our country lies helpless beneath the feet of the cruel invaders. Her sole hope is in Clarence Chugwater, the fearless leader of the boy scouts. What will Clarence do? Ah, we cannot tell you that. You must read this story and see!

Chapter One

Historians, when they come to deal with the opening years of the Twentieth Century, will probably call this the Vaudeville Age. At this time the vaudeville-halls dominate America. At the time of our story, the public appetite for sight-seeing had to be satisfied somehow, and the vaudeville-house provided the best solution. If, for example, an impulsive gentleman slew his wife and children with the ice-pick, only a small portion of the public could gaze upon his pleasing features during the trial. But when he had been acquitted under the Unwritten Law, it was necessary, to enable the great public to enjoy this intellectual treat, to engage him, at enormous expense, to appear in Vaudeville.
It was not till the middle of October, 1916, that anyone conceived what one would have thought the obvious idea of offering vaudeville engagements to the invading generals, Prince Otto, and General Owoki.
The first man to think of it was Solly Quhayne, the rising young vaudeville agent. Solly was the son of Abraham Cohen, an eminent agent of the later nineteenth century. His brothers, Abe Kern, Benjamin Colquhoun, Jack Coyne, and Barney Cowan, had gravitated to the curb market, but Solly had carried on his father's vaudeville business, and was making a big name for himself.

The idea of securing Prince Otto and General Owoki for his theatres came to him in a flash!

Solly was a man of action. Within a minute he was talking to the managing director of the Keith circuit, on the telephone. In five minutes the managing director had agreed to pay Prince Otto of Saxe-Pfennig twenty-five hundred dollars a week. In ten minutes the Japanese general had been engaged by the Orpheum Circuit at a weekly salary of two thousand dollars. And in a quarter of an hour Solly Quhayne, having pushed his way through the crowd in his ante-room, was bowling off in a taxi to the Japanese lines, at Yonkers.

General Owoki received his visitor civilly, but at first without enthusiasm. it seemed that he was shy about becoming an artist. Would he have to wear a property bald head and sing rag-time? He didn't think he could. He had only sung once in his life, and that was twenty years ago, at a class reunion at Tokio.

"Why, general," said Solly, "it won't be anything of that sort. You ain't going to be head-lined as a comic. You're a refined lecturer and Society Monolog Artist. 'How I Invaded America,' with lights down and the cinematograph going. Is it a deal?"

Two thousand dollars would come in uncommonly useful.

"Where do I sign?" the general said, extending his hand for the contract.

Five minutes later, Solly Quhayne was exceeding the speed limit in the direction of the German encampment.

* * *

Clarence Chugwater read the news of the two vaudeville engagements on the tape at the office of the Sentinel, a newspaper where he worked as an office boy. He chuckled grimly. To sow jealousy between two rival vaudeville headliners should be easy.

Among the general public the announcement created a profound sensation. At first the popular impression was that the generals were going to do a comedy-duo act of the Who-Was-It-I-Seen-You-Coming-Down-The- Street-With? type, and there was disappointment when it was found that the engagements were for different houses. Rumors sprang up. It was said that General Owoki had for years been an enthusiastic amateur buck-and-wing dancer, and had, indeed, come to America mainly for the purpose of securing bookings: that Prince Otto had a secure reputation in Berlin as a singer of the Al Jolson type: that both were expert trick-cyclists.

Then the truth came out. Neither had any specialties: they would simply appear and deliver monologs.

* * *

It was Clarence Chugwater's custom to leave the office of his newspaper at one o'clock each day and lunch at a neighboring Codington's. As he sipped his milk, he read the newspaper reports of the appearances in vaudeville of the two generals. According to the paper each was drawing a salary of five thousand dollars a week.

Clarence had just finished reading the reports when he looked up and saw, standing before him, a boy of about fifteen years.

After a moment or two the boy saluted.

"Private Biggs of the Eighteenth, sir," he said. "I have information."

"Say on, Private Biggs," said Clarence.

"I am employed, sir, as a sort of office-boy and junior clerk by Solly Quhayne, the vaudeville agent, the man who secured the engagements of the invading generals. This morning, happening to pass Mr. Quhayne's room, I overheard him talking to his brother, Mr. Colquhoun. They were talking about the generals. 'Yes, I know they are press-agented at five thousand a week,' Mr. Quhayne was saying, 'but between you and me that isn't what they are getting. The German's pulling down twenty-five hundred, and the Jap gets two thousand. Can't say why he gets less. I should have thought he was a better draw. He's a good comic, in his way.'"

Clarence's eyes gleamed.

"Magnificent, Private -- no, Sergeant Biggs. You have given me valuable information."

He raised his glass.

"To America!"

"To America!" echoed his subordinate.

Deep in thought, Clarence hurried to the offices of the Encore, the vaudeville weekly.

Chapter Two

The days following Clarence's visit to the offices of the Encore were marked by a growing feeling of unrest. The first novelty of the foreign occupation of the country was beginning to wear off, and the sturdy independence of the American character was reasserting itself. Deep down in his heart the genuine American has a rugged distaste for seeing his country invaded by a foreign army. People were asking themselves by what right these aliens had overrun American soil. An ever-growing feeling of annoyance had begun to lay hold of the nation. New York had become a human powder-magazine, and it was Clarence Chugwater who with a firm hand applied the match that was to set it in a blaze.

The Encore is published on Thursdays. It so happened that on the Thursday following his momentous call at the office, there was need of someone on

the staff of the Sentinel, Clarence's paper, to go and obtain an interview with the Japanese general. Clarence's editor was at a loss. Finally he had an inspiration.

"Send young bone-head Chugwater," he said.

(It was thus that America's deliverer was spoken of at the Sentinel office!)

General Owoki's act at the Palace Theatre started every evening at ten sharp. Clarence, having been detained by a review of the Boy Scouts, arrived as the general was going on the stage, and waited in the dressing room. Presently, a long-drawn chord from the invisible orchestra announced the conclusion of the act, and the general returned, obviously in high good humor.

"You went well?" enquired Clarence respectfully.

"I was honble riot," responded the general affably.

"You are so popular," said Clarence, "that it seems extraordinary to me -- and I think I may say that I speak for the whole of the vaudeville public -- that you should be receiving five hundred dollars a week less than Prince Otto of Saxe-Pfennig."

Not all the traditions of the Samurai could prevent the general from starting and uttering an exclamation.

"What!"

"It is in this paper," said Clarence, producing the Encore. "Let me read it to you. It is headed 'What the Encore Would Like to Know,' and it runs as follows: 'Whether Prince Otto of Saxe-Pfennig go particularly big at the Colonial last week? And whether it is not a fact that, though they are press-agented at the same figure, his Nibs of the Fatherland is not drawing down five hundred cold iron men more than the Jap? And whether, seeing the way he does, the Prince isn't worth twice that much more than the Japanese lemon?'"

A hoarse cry interrupted him.

"It says that?"

"I have read it verbatim. It strikes me as most unjust. Prince Otto is not worth more than you, general."

"I believe that honble German boob wrote distinguished paragraph himself!"

"Very possibly. Professional jealousy is a sad thing. Though," went on Clarence, "I believe the Prince is going very big. They tell me that last night he took eleven calls."

General Owoki pulled himself together with a supreme effort.

"To-morrow night," he said between his teeth, "he will take more than that. But they will be honble cat-calls!"

* * *

Accounts vary so much as to what exactly did take place at the Colonial Theatre on the following night that it is hard to get at the exact truth. All eye-witnesses, however, are agreed that, just as Prince Otto of Saxe-Pfennig strode upon the stage and said 'Ladeez 'n gemmen, with your kind indulgence -- ', there arose from every part of the house such a storm of disapproval that he was unable to continue. From floor to roof the building was packed with Japanese soldiers, and shouts of 'Get off honble stage!' 'Procure distinguished hook!' and the like rendered it impossible for the Prince to proceed. Finally the stage-manager dropped the curtain, to the accompaniment of the Japanese National Anthem, thunderously delivered.
It had been the custom of the two generals, since joining the vaudeville profession, to proceed after their act to a neighboring saloon, where they would stand talking about themselves and blocking up the gangway, as etiquette demands that a successful artist shall. The Prince, leaving the Colonial, after his disastrous fiasco, had no doubt that he would find the man responsible for his downfall there.
He was right. The Japanese general was at the bar, chatting affably to the bar-keeper. He nodded at the Prince with well-assumed carelessness.
"Knock 'em to-night?" he enquired casually.
Prince Otto clenched his fists.
"Look here," he said, "did you or did you not send your soldiers to give me the bird tonight? You did! I know you did! Well, I'll give you and your precious soldiers one chance, -- twenty-four hours from midnight to leave this country. If you are still here then -- "
General Owoki slowly drained his high-ball.
"Have you seen my professional advertisement in the Dramatic Mirror, Prince? It says 'Permanent Address, General Delivery, Yonkers.' You get my distinguished meaning, Stephen?"
"You mean -- "
"I mean that I see no occasion to alter that advertisement in any way. I beg to wish you honble goodnight."
Chapter Three
The great battle was over. I have not considered it necessary to describe it, from the first shot to the final capitulation of the practically annihilated Japanese, for that has been done more ably than I can do it by Senator Beveridge, Richard Harding Davis, Corra Harris, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Ernest Poole, Perceval Gibbon, Robert Dunn, John Reed, Irvin Cobb, and every other able-bodied American citizen with the price of a typewriter.

The German victory had not been gained bloodlessly. It was but a shattered wreck of an army that remained after the final charge up the wooden steeps of Yonkers.

* * *

Prince Otto of Saxe-Pfennig lay sleeping in his tent. He was worn out. In addition to the strain of the battle, which had taken place in perfectly beastly weather, there had been the heavy work of seeing the interviewers, signing autograph-books for school-girls, sitting to photographers, signing contracts for the moving-pictures, writing testimonials for patent medicines and Tuxedo tobacco, and the thousand and one tasks, burdensome but unavoidable, of the man who is in the public eye. Also he had caught a bad cold during the battle. A bottle of quinine was on the table beside him.

As he lay there, the flap of the tent was pulled softly aside. Two figures entered. Each was dressed in the regulation costume of the Boy Scout. One, however, wore tortoise-shell-rimmed spectacles and a quiet superiority which showed that he was the leader.

"Corporal Wagstaff," he said, "wake him."

The boy shook the sleeper's shoulder. The Prince sat up, blinking.

"What -- what -- what is the beadig of this?" he stammered. "I told the sedtry particularly not to let anybody in. If you're frob sub paper, call toborrow. I cadt see you."

The spectacled leader drew himself up.

"I am America," he said with a sublime gesture.

"Aberica? How do you bead you're Aberica?"

Clarence -- for it was he -- continued, with a frown.

"I say I am America. I am the Chief Scout, and the Boy Scouts are America. Prince Otto, you thought our country lay prone and helpless. You are wrong. The Boy Scouts were watching and waiting. And now their time has come. Corporal Wagstaff, do your duty."

The Prince looked up. Two feet away, Corporal Wagstaff was standing, with a toy sling in hand, ready to shoot.

"Well, what do you want?" he snarled.

"Resistance is useless," said Clarence. "The moment for which I have plotted has arrived. Your troops, worn with fighting, are mere shadows of their former selves. They have fallen an easy prey. An hour ago your camp was silently surrounded by Boy Scouts. One rush and the battle was over. Your entire army -- like yourself -- are prisoners.

"The diggids they are!" said the Prince blankly.

"America, my America!" cried Clarence, his face shining with a holy patriotism. "America, thou art free! Let the nations learn from this that it is when apparently crushed that America is to more than ever be feared!"
"That's bad grabbar," said the Prince critically.
Clarence's eyes flashed fire.
"I don't want you getting fresh with me," he said. "Corporal Wagstaff, remove your prisoner."
"All the sabe," said the Prince, "it is bad grabbar. It's a split infinitive, and it's spoiled your big speech."
Clarence pointed silently to the door.
"Come on, can't you," said Corporal Wagstaff.
"I ab cubbing, aren't I? I was odly sayig -- "
"I'll give you such a whack over the shin in a minute," said Corporal Wagstaff warningly. "Come on!" The Prince went.
The brilliantly lighted auditorium of the Colonial Theatre.
Everywhere a murmur and a stir.
In the seats fair women and brave men converse in excited whispers. One catches sentences here and there.
"Quite a boy, I believe!"
"I've heard he's getting $10,000 a week!"
"Why, that's more than either of those horrid generals ever got!"
"It's a lot of money. But then, of course, he did save our country."
The orchestra stops. The number 7 is displayed. A burst of applause, swelling into a roar as the curtain rises.
A stout man in crinkled evening-dress walks on the stage.
"Ladies and gentlemen, I have the honor to present to you to-night one whose name is, as the saying is, a household word. It was this hero's genius and I may say -- er -- genius that, unaided, hit upon the only way of removing the cruel conqueror from our beloved hearths and homes. It was this hero who, having first permitted the invaders to claw themselves into hash, after the well-known precedent of the Kilkenny cats, thereupon firmly and without flinching stepped in with his brave Boy Scouts and gave them what was coming to them. I have only to add that this hero has been engaged exclusively by the Colonial Palace of Varieties at a figure previously undreamed-of in the annals of the vaudeville stage. I have little to add. This hero will first perform a few physical exercises which have made the Boy Scouts what they are. He will low like a bull. He will gurgle like a wood-pigeon. He will spoor, tell the character by the sole of the shoe, and fling the squaler. He will then give imitations of very real living animals. In this connection I have to assure you that he has nothing whatsoever in his mouth,

as it has sometimes been suggested. Before uttering the cries, he will gargle in full view of the audience, thus rendering deception impossible. Ladies and gentlemen, it only remains for me to introduce to you America's Darling Son, the Nation's Hero, our champion and proudest possession, -- Clarence Chugwater."

A moment's breathless suspense, a crash from the orchestra, and the audience are standing on their seats, cheering, and shouting.

A small, sturdy, tortoise-shell-spectacled figure is on the stage.

It is Clarence, the Boy of Destiny.

Between The Innings

It seemed to be the general opinion that the country wanted rain. Meaning by the country the half-dozen of us who were gathered together in the billiard-room at Heath Hall smoking, playing pool, and talking cricket 'shop', with particular reference to the match which would come to an end on the following day.

It was, indeed, a most solemn and important occasion. This was the last night but one of the Hall cricket-week, and, so far, success had crowned the efforts of the Hall team as never before.

The Zingari had come and gone, routed -- a five-wickets affair. The Band of Brothers had headed us on the first innings, but failed in the next, and we had come through for the second time with half our wickets in hand. We were now in the middle of the Incogniti match, and our one aim in life was to win this and set up a Hall week record. Never before had the Hall been able to score more than a couple of victories in the three matches.

The best week up to the present had occurred six years before, when Ronald Heath was captain of the Oxford team, and Jack Heath half-way up the list of the same. Then we had won two and drawn the third favourably.

What made this season's week such a triumph was the fact that, on paper, we were not so strong as usual. Jack was in India playing polo instead of cricket, and Ronald was obliged to confine his efforts to umpiring, having strained a muscle in a county match of the previous week. We should have missed them more had it not been for the unusually fine form in which young Tommy Heath, the third of the brothers, happened to find himself at this crisis.

Tommy had captained Winchester that season and scored a century against Eton; but even that had not prepared us for his feats during this week. He had followed up two brilliant innings in the earlier games with a masterly eighty-four in the match now in progress, which match was now in such a position that it might be said to be anybody's game. We had batted first. Wicket hard and true.

The Hall ground is small, and scoring is generally fast there. Starting at a quarter to eleven, we had made two hundred and ten by lunch-time for six wickets. By three o'clock we were all out for two hundred and fifty.

It was not a large score for the ground. Having lived all my life at my father's rectory across the Park, I could remember many Hall weeks including at least three when the side that had won the toss had nearly succeeded in putting four hundred on the board before going the way of all

batting sides. But two hundred and fifty proved good enough in the present case. The Incogs had replied with two hundred and twenty-three. In an hour and a half of the second innings we had put up a hundred and thirty for seven wickets by the time stumps were drawn for the day.

Wherefore we prayed for rain. A steady downpour in the night, and the wicket would play easy for the first hour on the morrow, during which period our last three men might be expected to put on at least another fifty. Which, if the sun came out, as it probably would, ought to be enough, we thought, to give us a winning lead.

Dalgliesh flung up the window and peered earnestly out into the night.

'It looks like rain,' he said. 'There's thunder hanging about somewhere.'

'Yellow to play,' said Felstone, moving round the table after chalking his cue -- 'dot vos me. No good. I don't think pool's my forte. Hullo! Lightning.'

He joined Dalgliesh at the window. Summer lightning flickered across the dark opening. It was oppressively hot. Too hot to last. The rain was bound to come soon. But it might delay its advent for another twenty-four hours, by which time, like most late-comers in this world, it would find its services not required and even unpopular.

'Give us three hours' good, steady, soaking downpour,' said Dalgliesh meditatively, 'and we shall have those Incogs by the short hairs. We shall then call upon our Mr Peter Baynes to give his celebrated imitation of Braund.'

'On a nice, sticky pitch,' I replied, being the Peter Baynes alluded to and the slow bowler of the Hall team, 'with a hot sun drying it up while you look at it, I'll see what I can do for you. But if the wicket's going to be the mixture of concrete and granite it was this afternoon, gallery performances are off and I shall take to golf.'

For the Hall ground on a day such as we had just had was enough to break the heart of any slow bowler, who likes assistance from the pitch when he embarks upon his duties. The combination of good wicket and short boundaries had done neither myself nor my analysis any good that afternoon.

'Did your father read the prayer for rain last Sunday?' asked Melhuish in his solemn way.

'Yes,' I said, 'he did.'

'Good!' said Melhuish. 'We shall need it.'

The door opened as he spoke, and Wentworth Flood came in. Flood was a man I cordially disliked, and I have reason to believe that my feelings were shared by at least a good working majority of those present. How he came to be tame cat in a house the very atmosphere of which breathed sport, I had

never been able to understand. I take it, however, that women, however many sons they may have playing in first-class cricket, and however interested they may be in the game, cherish a secret liking for a man who can always be relied on to make himself useful in the drawing-room instead of seeking his pleasure out-of-doors.

Wentworth Flood dressed well, looked neat, never broke things, handled tea-cups admirably, played a number of card-games with more than average skill, acted if there were theatricals, and was always ready to play an accompaniment on the mandolin; so, I suppose, Lady Heath saw reasons for having him about the house which we did not.

He was a small man, with an almost irritating lack of anything wrong in his personal appearance. His hair was parted exactly in the middle. His tie was tied with a nicety which almost suggested the made-up article. His voice was 'ever soft, gentle, and low,' which, though it may be an 'excellent thing in a woman,' is not such an endearing quality in man.

'Been playing bridge, Flood?' asked Dalgliesh, breaking one of those awkward pauses which occur when the uncongenial spirit breaks in upon the social gathering.

'No,' said Flood precisely. 'I have not been playing bridge. I have been playing the mandolin.'

There did not seem much that could be said by way of comment on this. Somehow the mention of mandolins in the middle of the profound and serious discussion of a cricket match struck us as almost blasphemous. Dalgliesh snorted, and Manners, whose turn it was to play, nearly cut the cloth. Otherwise there was no attempt at criticism.

'Tommy Heath tells me we shall win the cricket match tomorrow,' said Flood, after a silence lasting for the space of two strokes of the cue.

'So we shall,' said Dalgliesh, 'if it rains.'

'But I thought you could not play cricket in the rain?'

'No, but rain occasionally stops, and then the wicket gets soft,' said Manners.

'And then Baynes leaves off those half-volleys which worry Sir John's nesting pheasants,' said Dalgliesh, 'and gets some work on the ball.'

'But why should it matter if the ground is soft?' inquired Flood.

'Because,' I said, 'a merciful Providence, watching over slow bowlers, has ordained that batsmen make fewer runs on a soft pitch, and get out quicker. That's why.'

Flood looked thoughtful, and I noticed that he went to the window, and stood for some time gazing at the sky. At the moment I wondered why, and what possible interest he could take in the weather. A drawing-room is just as pleasant on a wet as on a dry day.

It was at eleven o'clock, when I left the billiard-room to begin my homeward journey, that I found out his reason. In the hall I met Tommy Heath. He looked worried and rather pale.
'Going already?' he said, 'It's quite early. Come for a bit of a stroll with me first. I've got something I want to tell you.'
We walked slowly round to the back of the house, and came to an anchor on a garden-seat that stood against the wall, facing the Park.
'Well?' I said.
Tommy and I had been to different schools, and I was some years his senior, but we had known one another since his sailor-suit days; and we generally told each other things.
Tommy lit a cigarette, an act which would possibly have disturbed his headmaster if he had seen it.
'I'm in rather a hole,' he said.
'What's up now?' I asked.
'It's that man Flood. Hope he's not a friend of yours, by the way?'
'Not in the very least,' I said. 'Don't let that worry you. What has Flood been doing to you?'
'Well, it was like this. He'd been trying to be funny the whole evening, and then he started shooting off his confounded epigrams about cricket. I'm hanged if I can remember how it all came about, but we met on the stairs going to the drawing-room, and he began chipping the Hall team. Beastly bad form, considering I was captain. I couldn't think of anything much to say, don't you know, but I had to say something, so I said: "Well, I bet you ten to one the Hall wins tomorrow, whatever you think of the team."'
'What happened then? That wouldn't squash him.' 'It didn't,' said Tommy briefly. 'The man took me up like a shot, "Ten to one?" be said. I believe he's a Jew. He looked just like one. "Ten to one? In what? Shall we say fivers?"'
I sat up.
'You don't mean to say you were idiot enough to make it fivers?' I said.
'Not so loud, man,' said Tommy, 'I don't want everyone to hear. Yes, I was. I don't know why I did it. I must have been cracked. But, somehow, looking at him standing there, and knowing that I should feel scored off if I backed out, I said, yes, fivers if he liked. Do you know, the man actually planked it down in a beastly little pocket-book, and asked me to initial it. So, there you are. That's the situation. And if we don't win tomorrow I'm in for rather a pleasant thing.'
'But, Tommy,' I gasped, 'this is absurd! You haven't got fifty pounds in the world. Suppose we lose tomorrow? And we probably shall if it don't rain tonight. What will you do?'

'Oh, it's simple enough. I shall go to the governor. I've got a couple of hundred quid in the bank, but I can't draw without his leave. He'll want to know why I'm asking for a big sum like that. I shall tell him it's for a bet.'
'And then what?' I said.
'And then he'll give me the fifty pounds, and not let me go to the 'Varsity. Ever since he had to pay up for Ronald's Oxford debts -- he ran them up a bit, as you probably remember -- he's told us plainly that the first sign we show of not being able to take care of money scratches us as far as the 'Varsity's concerned. Jack had to be awfully careful when he went up. That's what'll happen.'
I was silent, I knew that he had set his heart on going up to Oxford and adding a third to the family list of cricket Blues. And I knew that Sir John, rigid as steel in matters of this sort, would keep his word.
'You can't back out?' I said at length. 'Flood surely must know that ten to one was simply a way of speaking. He can't imagine that you were really offering him odds.'
'Of course he didn't,' said Tommy bitterly. 'Flood's not a fool. He's the other thing. But, all the same, I can't get out of it now. I'm not going to give a man like Flood the whip-hand of me, even if I lose my chance of a Blue through it. There's only one way out. We must win tomorrow.'
'I wish we could water that wicket,' I said. 'If only that infernal concrete turf would get a soaking I could make the ball do a bit. As it is, I'm helpless.'
I made my way across the Park in a very gloomy frame of mind. It was warmer than ever. The sky was inky black, except when a flash of summer lightning lit it up. I knew every inch of the Park, or I might not have been able to find my way.
My nearest path lay across the cricket-field. When I got to the pitch where we had been playing that afternoon I stopped. But for the white creases, which showed faintly through the darkness, I should have passed by without seeing it. I stooped, and pressed a finger into the turf. It was dry as tinder. On such a wicket, with a whole day in which to make the runs, the Incogniti could hardly help winning, even if our tail were to wag more energetically than the most sanguine among us hoped.
Poor Tommy's chances of a Blue seemed small. Somehow, perhaps on account of the excitement of the day or the electricity with which the thunder-clouds filled the air, I felt disinclined for bed. The church clock struck half-past eleven. I sat down by the side of the pitch and lit my pipe. It was pleasant, if a little eerie, out there in the middle of the Park. I sat on where I was long after my pipe had gone out, listening dreamily to the thousand and one faint noises of a summer night.

I think I must have been falling asleep, when suddenly a new sound came to my ears, and I was broad awake in a moment. It was none of those thousand and one noises which are all unaccountable yet not startling. It was the soft tread of a human foot on the turf, and a heavy breathing, as of one working hard. I could just see a dim figure coming slowly towards me. A few yards away it halted, and I heard a thud, as it set down its burden on the ground. It was the noise that followed the thud that made me dart forward so rapidly. It was the unmistakable sloppy splash of water forced out of the spout of a can. I realised the situation at once. Somebody had come to water the wicket.

I am glad to say that I abandoned the notion that it was Tommy a clear three seconds before I became aware of the criminal's real identity. I felt instinctively that it would take a deal more than the thought of his bet to make him sink to such depths.

'Oh!' gasped a frightened voice. 'Who's that?'

I recognised the voice. The intruder was the youngest of the four Heaths; Tommy's sister Ella.

'Ella!' I cried. 'What on earth -- ?'

I heard her draw a long breath of relief. 'Oh, is that you, Peter? How you frightened me!'

'What are you doing out here at this time of night?'

'It was so hot, I couldn't sleep. I -- '

'And what is that can for?' I inquired coolly.

'I don't care!' she said defiantly. 'I meant to do it, and I would have done it if you hadn't caught me. Don't glare at me like that, Peter. I don't care a bit. I heard every word you and poor old Tommy were saying. You didn't know my bedroom window was over that seat. I heard you say that you wished you could water the pitch. It's no use looking shocked, Peter, because I'm not sorry. Not a bit.'

The main points of the affair had found their way to my understanding by now. I was conscious of a curious, dazed feeling. It was like a vivid dream.

'But, Ella,' I said at last, 'it's impossible. You can't have understood. Don't you see what a frightful thing -- It isn't as if you knew nothing about cricket. You know as well as I do what it means to doctor the pitch between the innings.'

'I don't care!' she repeated. 'I would do anything to save Tommy from that beast, Mr Flood.

'As if Tommy wouldn't rather lose his Blue a hundred times sooner than be saved like that.'

There was a pause.

'Peter.'
'Well?'
'You know -- you know you said you'd do anything for me?'
I may state here -- briefly -- that, like the great majority of the youth of the neighbourhood, I was head over ears in love with Tommy's sister Ella. The occasion to which she referred had been a painful one for me. We had been sitting out the eighth waltz in the conservatory on the night of the Hunt Ball. To put the thing in a nutshell, I had proposed with all the clumsy energy of an enthusiastic novice, and had been rejected.
'You know you did.'
I said nothing.
There was a very long pause.
'Peter!' said a still small voice.
'Yes?' I said,
'Don't you think -- just one canful?'
I am ashamed to say that for a single moment I wavered. I verily believe that Mr Apted of the Oval would have thought seriously about ruining one of his masterpieces if the request had come to him in such a form. But I rallied myself.
'Let me just sketch for you,' I said, in the calm, dispassionate voice of a professor lecturing on astrology or some kindred subject, 'what would be the result of that canful . We should probably win the match. Tommy would win his bet, and go to Oxford. Every single man in the Incogniti team would see that the wicket had been tampered with, and every single man would be too polite to say a word about it. But, little by little the story would get about, and after that I should imagine that the teams which come here during the Hall week would have previous engagements for a few years. When Tommy went away to play in matches, people would ask one another if he was one of the Heaths of that place where they water the wicket when it suits their fancy. And then -- '
'Peter, stop!'
I stopped.
'Would you mind carrying that can to the stable-yard, please?'
I took up the can.
'Good-night!' I said.
'Come back. Listen! I -- I'm very grateful to you, Peter. You've saved me from disgracing the family. I'm very, very grateful to you!'
I murmured inarticulately. Then I started, for something wet had fallen upon my hand. From every side came a faint patter, growing in volume with each succeeding second. A warm rivulet trickled between my collar and my neck.

'By George!' I cried, 'here's the rain!'
And, indeed, the downpour had began in earnest. We were standing in a vast shower-bath.
'You must go in at once!' I said. 'You'll be catching cold.'
'Peter!'
I stopped.
'You will bowl your best tomorrow, won't you?'
'That is my present intention,' I said.
There was a pause, broken by the swishing of the rain on to the turf.
'Peter, I -- you know -- sometimes -- I don't always say what -- what I mean.'
Another pause.
'If you save Tommy tomorrow, I'll -- '
'Will you?' I said eagerly.
'I'll see,' said Ella, and vanished into the darkness in the direction of the Hall.
At three-fifty on the following afternoon Mr Wentworth Flood lost five pounds, which annoyed him. At precisely the same moment I won something of a greater value, which pleased me very much.

Creatures Of Impulse

Sir Godfrey Tanner, K.C.M.G., was dining alone in his chambers at the Albany. Before him a plate of soup, so clear and serene that it seemed wrong to ruffle its surface, relieved the snowy whiteness of the tablecloth. Subdued lights shone on costly and tasteful furniture. Behind him Jevons, for the last fifteen years his faithful servant, wrestled decorously with a bottle of hock. A peaceful scene.

The thought passed through Sir Godfrey's mind as he allowed his spoon to volplane slowly down into the golden lake that life was very pleasant. He had ample means. As a Colonial governor he had just that taste of power and authority which is enough for the sensible man; more might have spoiled him for the simpler pleasures of life; less would have left him restless and unsatisfied. He had had exactly enough, and was now ready to dream away the rest of his life in this exceedingly comfortable hermit's cell, supported by an excellent digestion, ministered to by the faithful Jevons.

A muffled pop behind him occurred here almost as if there had been a stage direction for it. The sound seemed to emphasize the faithfulness of Jevons, working unseen in his master's interests. It filled Sir Godfrey with a genial glow of kindliness. What a treasure Jevons was! What a model of what a gentleman's servant should be! Existence without Jevons would be unthinkable.

As he mused Jevons silently manifested himself, bottle in hand. He filled Sir Godfrey's glass.

"A little ice, Jevons."

"Very good, Sir Godfrey."

Sir Godfrey addressed himself once more to his soup. He glowed with benevolence. What an admirable fellow Jevons was! How long was it that they had been together? Fifteen years! And in all that time --

"Wow!" shrieked Sir Godfrey, and leaped from his chair with an agility highly creditable in one who strained his tailor's tact almost to breaking-point every time he had to submit himself to the tape-measure.

For one moment he doubted his senses. It was incredible that that should have happened which had happened. Jevons was Jevons. An archbishop might have done this thing, but not Jevons.

But the evidence was incontrovertible. It was -- at present -- solid, not to be brushed aside.

Facts were facts, even if they seemed to outrage the fundamental laws of Nature.

Jevons, for fifteen years paragon of every possible virtue, had put a piece of ice down the back of his neck!
Sir Godfrey turned like a wounded lion. There was a terrible pause.
Jevons was certainly wonderful.
He met his employer's gaze with grave solicitude.
"I think it would be wise, Sir Godfrey," he said, "if you were to change your upper garments. The night is mild, but it is unwise to risk a chill. I will go and lay out another shirt."
He disappeared silently into the bedroom, leaving Sir Godfrey staring at the spot where he had been.
Sir Godfrey received a clean shirt from his hands without a word. He had not intended the episode to proceed on these lines, but the practical sense of Jevons was too strong for him. Already the thaw had set in in earnest, and his back was both clammy and cold.
In fearful silence he changed his clothes. Then he wheeled round upon his companion of fifteen years.
"Now, then!" he snorted.
"I am extremely sorry that this should have happened, Sir Godfrey. I regret it exceedingly."
"You do, eh? You'll regret it more in a minute."
"Just so, Sir Godfrey."
There was something in the man's imperturbability which ruined the speech which the ex-governor had intended to deliver. He had meant, when he once began, to go on for about ten minutes. But somehow Jevons's attitude made it impossible to begin.
He condensed the meaning of the proposed speech into a question.
"What did you do it for? What -- the -- devil did you do it for?"
"I am extremely sorry, Sir Godfrey, but I just felt I had to. It sort of came over me. It is difficult to explain myself."
"Difficult!"
"It was a kind of what I might describe as an impulse, sir. I was just coming from behind with the piece of ice in the tongs, thinking of nothing except to put it in the glass, when it suddenly crossed my mind that I'd been doing the same thing night in and night out for fifteen years, and it came over me what a long time it was and all. And then you leaned forward to drink the soup. And somehow I just couldn't resist it. I now regret it exceedingly."
Sir Godfrey gulped.
"You'll go to-morrow."
Jevons bowed.
"Shall I serve the fish, Sir Godfrey?"

He seemed to regard the incident as closed.
Dinner was resumed in silence. Sir Godfrey's mind was still in a whirl. All he realized clearly was that the end of the world had come. He had dismissed Jevons, and without Jevons life was impossible. But he was not going to alter his decision. By Gad, no! not if he had to spend the rest of his existence in beastly hotels being maddened to distraction by a set of blanked incompetents who were probably foreign spies. And that seemed to him at the moment his only course, for the idea of engaging a successor to the victim of impulse was too bizarre to be grappled with yet. At whatever cost to himself, Jevons must go. That was settled and done with.
"I mean it," he snapped, over his shoulder, as the other filled his liqueur-glass.
"Sir?"
"I say I mean it. What I said. You must go."
"Just so, Sir Godfrey."
He placed the cigars on the table. Sir Godfrey selected one, cracked the end of it, and placed it in the flame which his still faithful servant held for him. It was a magnificent cigar, and the first puff almost softened him to the extent of changing his mind. But dignity jerked at the reins.
"Of course I'll give you a character."
"Thank you, Sir Godfrey, but I do not feel as if I could take service with anybody but yourself. I have saved money. I shall retire."
"Please yourself."
"Just so, Sir Godfrey."
"Leave me your address."
"Sir?"
Sir Godfrey scowled. He was feeling nervous. More, there was a suggestion of a death-bed parting about this interview which he found strangely weakening. Fifteen years! As Jevons had said, it was a long time.
"Your address. You know perfectly well that I promised you a small -- er -- confound it! -- the pension, man!"
"I had imagined that after what has occurred -- "
"Don't be a fool. That will be all. I am going to the club. I shall not want you any more to-night."
"Very good, sir."
He closed the door softly. Sir Godfrey sat on, chewing the end of his cigar.
A week later Sir Godfrey sat in his private sitting-room at the Hotel Guelph and kicked moodily at a foot-stool.
"This," he said to himself, "is perfectly infernal."
He got up and began to pace the room.

"If I stop any longer in this pot-house I shall go mad."
Of course he was doing the place an injustice. The Guelph is one of the three best hotels in London. The management pride themselves on making guests as comfortable as modern ingenuity will allow. There was every possible convenience in this suite to which Sir Godfrey had fled from an Albany which for him was now haunted.
And Sir Godfrey spoke of it as a pot-house. But then, the Hotel Guelph had one defect which outweighed all its merits. It could not supply him with a valet who had been with him for fifteen years. Losing Jevons was like losing a leg.
But he was not going to take him back. All his life he had been a victim to what his admirers called determination and his detractors pig-headedness, and he never reversed a decision.
"I'll get out of here to-day," he said to himself.
A thought struck him. "I'll go and spend a week or two with George."
He wondered why he had not thought of it before. He saw now where his initial mistake had lain: he had tried to carry on, without Jevons, the sort of life with which Jevons had been so closely associated. It was all very well to leave the Albany and move to the Guelph, but that was not enough. He was still in the groove in which he had been in the days before Jevons had left him. He still spent his evenings at his club, rode in the Row, and so on -- actions irretrievably connected with Jevons. What he must do, he decided, was to get temporarily into some entirely different milieu. He must go to the country. And it was the thought of the country which had suggested George.
George Tanner kept a private school in Kent. What was more, he had started this school on money lent to him by Sir Godfrey. The money had since been returned, with interest, for George's venture had proved a success; but Sir Godfrey considered that his nephew had cause to be grateful to him, and consequently saw no reason why he should not descend upon him in the middle of term demanding food and shelter. He did not even prepay the telegram in which he announced his visit, but arrived on the heels of it, sure of his welcome.
George received him with a rather worried geniality. He stood in awe of his uncle, as did most of those who knew him. Sir Godfrey in years gone by had spanked him with a hair-brush for breaking his bedroom- window with a tennis-ball, and this and similar episodes of the stormy past coloured George's attitude towards him, even though he was now in the thirties and had begun to grow grey at the temples. Besides, in a school even the most genial visitor is not an unmixed blessing. And George's school was peculiar in the respect that there was no sharp division between the boys' part of the

house and that of the proprietor. It was a rambling old mansion, in which the inhabitants lived like a large family. Sir Godfrey had not anticipated this. There were boys everywhere, in the house and out of it; boys who yelled unexpectedly in a man's ear; boys who shot out of doorways at incredible rates of speed within a hair's breadth of a man's prominent and sensitive solar plexus; boys who, when once their shyness had worn off, asked a man endless questions on every subject under the sun. Nephew George seemed rather to enjoy this sort of thing, but in the first few days of his visit it nearly drove Sir Godfrey mad.

A hundred times he was on the point of leaving, but every time the thought of solitude in an hotel kept him where he was. And then, one morning as he lay in bed, he achieved an attitude of mind which he felt would enable him to bear his present mode of life with fortitude, if not with enjoyment.

This visit to George's school, he told himself, must be regarded in the light of a sort of mental discipline. It was a kind of Purgatory. A man of his years could not change his habits smoothly, like a motor- car changing speeds. There must be an interval, the more unpleasant and unlike his old life the better, for thus would it stick the more firmly in his memory, and form the more admirable corrective to vain regret. For the rest of his life, as he sat in his solitary hotel sitting-room, instead of mourning the fact that he was not at the Albany with Jevons he would be thanking a kindly Providence that he was not at his Nephew George's school.

It was the same process of thought which leads the philosopher suffering from a blend of toothache and earache to cheer himself up by reflecting how much worse it would be if he had a combination of rheumatism and St. Vitus's dance.

He had found the solution. It was simply wonderful what a difference it made. His whole nervous system became miraculously soothed. Where when a sprinting boy whizzed past his waistcoat he had puffed and trembled for minutes afterwards in an ecstasy of fear and indignation, he now stood firm and calm, and sometimes even achieved an indulgent smile.

As the days passed the indulgent smile became more and more frequent. The process was so subtle that he could not have said when it had begun, but frequently now he could almost have declared that he was enjoying himself. He was beginning to revise his views upon the boys. These boys here, whom he had lumped together in his mind with all other existing small boys under the collective head of nuisances, began to develop individual characters. With something of the thrill of a scientific discovery, he awoke to the fact that boys were human beings, who did things for definite reasons and not purely from innate deviltry. The reason, for instance, why Thomas Billing,

aged eleven, had eaten a slice of bread covered with brown boot-polish, thereby acquiring a severe bout of sickness and a heavy punishment, was that Rupert Atkinson, aged fourteen, and Alexander Jones, aged twelve, had betted him he wouldn't. He had done it, in short, not for the pleasure of making himself ill, but to keep his word and preserve his self- respect. Nations have gone to war for reasons less compelling.

Thomas Billing explained the ethics of this particular episode to Sir Godfrey in person; and it may be said that the latter's rejuvenation really began from that conversation. For it led to what was practically a friendship between them, and in the constant society of Thomas Sir Godfrey renewed his youth. It was so long since he had been a boy that the process of rejuvenation hung fire at the start; but, once started, it was rapid. In the third week of his uncle's visit, Nephew George, with the feeling of one who sees miracles, gazed, fascinated, at the spectacle of his guest playing cricket in the stable-yard. He was playing unskilfully, but with extreme energy, and his face, when he joined George, was damp and scarlet.

A belated sense of his dignity awoke in Sir Godfrey. He felt that it behoved him to keep George in a state of respectful subjection.

"I have been doing my best to amuse these little fellows, George."

"I was watching you."

Sir Godfrey coughed a little self-consciously.

"They seemed to wish me to join in their game. I did not like to disappoint them. I suppose, many years ago, one would have found a positive pleasure in ridiculous foolery of that sort. It seems hardly credible, but I imagine there was a time when I might really have enjoyed it."

"It's a good game."

"For children, possibly. Merely for children. However, it certainly appears to be capital exercise. My doctor strongly recommended me exercise. I -- I have half a mind to play again to-morrow."

"If you enjoy it -- "

"Enjoy is altogether too strong a word. If I decide to play, it will be entirely for the sake of exercise. A man of my build requires a certain amount of exercise. My doctor was emphatic."

"Quite right."

"By Gad, I'll do it every day!" said Sir Godfrey.

One morning, towards the end of the fourth week of his visit, the ex-governor, sunning himself after breakfast, came upon his young friend, Thomas Billing, plainly depressed. The morning was so perfect, and he himself was feeling so entirely at peace with the world, that Sir Godfrey noted the depression as a remarkable phenomenon. That he should have

noted it at all is proof of the alteration in his outlook. A week or so before he would simply have seen a small boy, with his hands in his pockets, kicking pebbles; and, if he had given the matter a second thought, would merely have felt relieved that the boy was not shouting or rushing about. The humanizing process had, however, sharpened his faculties, and he now perceived clearly that on Thomas Billing's youthful mind there was a burden, that for some reason Black Care was perched upon Thomas Billing's youthful back.

"What's the matter, my boy?" he inquired.

"It's an air-gun," said Thomas, with a certain vagueness.

"An air-gun?"

"My air-gun. He's confiscated it."

The pronoun "he," used without reference to a foregoing substantive, indicated Nephew George.

Sir Godfrey acted in a manner which would have amazed him if he could have foreseen it a few weeks back. Now there seemed nothing unusual about it at all. He took out a shilling. He was feeling quite surprisingly in sympathy with the boy.

"Cheer up, my boy," he said. "Buy yourself something with this, and forget about it."

He proceeded upon his way, leaving Thomas in a state of speechless gratitude.

Sir Godfrey went to his nephew's study. He had not yet finished reading the morning paper, and it was usually to be found there. It was not immediately visible. He looked round the room. His eye was caught by a lethal weapon lying on the window-sill.

He picked it up.

There is probably no action possible to a man which so unfailingly restores his vanished youth as the handling of an air-gun. There is something in the feel of the wood and the gleam of the steel which rolls away the years as if by some magic spell. Toying with the confiscated gun of Thomas Billing, Sir Godfrey was a boy again. How long was it since he had handled one of these things? Years? Centuries? Not a bit of it. A few minutes, he was prepared to swear.

"By Gad," he murmured, as he took imaginary aim, "I've killed sparrows with these things! By Gad I have! It all comes back to me, by Gad!"

He ran his eye lovingly along the barrel.

Crime is the result, in nine cases out of ten, of impulse. It is the chemical outcome of opportunity reacting upon a mood. A man commits murder

because, when in a certain mood, he finds a knife ready to his hand. Neither the mood nor the knife alone would produce the crime.

Sir Godfrey was in a dangerously-excited mood. He was not himself. He was, indeed, at that moment, a matter of fifty years younger than himself. And to him, in this state of mind, Fate presented, almost simultaneously, a box of ammunition and Herbert, the school gardener.

The box lay open on the window-sill. The broad back view of Herbert appeared beside a flower-bed not twenty yards away.

No boy could have resisted the temptation; and Sir Godfrey in the last five minutes had become a boy.

He took careful aim and fired.

It was stupendous. Herbert, a good two hundred pounds of solid flesh, leaped like a young gazelle. From behind the curtain where he lurked Sir Godfrey, with gleaming eyes, saw him turn and turn again, scanning the world for the author of this outrage. For a full minute he looked accusingly at the house, while the house looked back at him with its empty windows. Then, his lips moving silently, he bent to his work again.

Sir Godfrey crept from his hiding-place and dipped his fingers into the box of bullets.

If it were not for the aftermath, crime would be the jolliest thing in the world. Sir Godfrey discovered this. His actual crime gave him the happiest five minutes he could recall in a long and not ill-spent life. The phut of the bullets on Herbert's corduroys had been music to his ears. During the actual engagement he had been quite drunk with sinful pride at the accuracy of his aim and the Red Indian cunning with which he secreted his portly form behind the curtain at the exact moment when his victim faced wrathfully round.

And then his wild mood vanished as swiftly as it had come. One moment he was a happy child, pumping lead into the lower section of a gardener; the next, a man of age, position, and respectability, acutely conscious of having committed an unpardonable assault on a harmless fellow-citizen. He sank back into a convenient chair, his face a light mauve, the nearest approach Nature would permit to an ashen pallor.

Ghastly thoughts raced, jostling each other, through his brain. Discovery -- action for assault and battery -- vindictive prosecutor -- heavy fine -- query: imprisonment? -- strong remarks from the Bench -- ruined reputation -- or, worse, verdict of insanity -- evening of life spent in padded cell!

And he was the man who had dismissed Jevons, good, faithful, honest Jevons, after fifteen years of service, for a mere peccadillo.

At dinner that night Nephew George appeared amused.

"It's nothing to laugh at, really," he said, "but you can't help it. I was laughing when I licked him -- Young Tom Billing. Apparently he spent a happy morning shooting at the gardener with an air-gun. With a confiscated air-gun, too! You never know what the little brutes -- "
Sir Godfrey uttered a strangled gurgle.
"George! George, my dear boy! What are you saying?"
"Your friend Tom -- "
"But how -- ?"
"The gardener came to me and made a complaint. I harangued the school and invited the criminal to confess. The Billing child stepped forward."
"He said that he did it!"
"Yes. Why, what's the matter, uncle?"
Sir Godfrey drew a deep breath.
"Nothing, my boy; nothing at all," he said.
Sir Godfrey writhed in his bed, a chastened man. Relief, shame, and a stunned admiration for the quixotic generosity of the younger generation forbade sleep. He could understand the whole thing so clearly. This boy Billing must have seen the episode, realized the consequences if it were brought home to the real criminal, and, prompted by pure amiability -- supplemented possibly by gratitude for that shilling -- sacrificed himself to save his friend. Among the few pleasant thoughts which came to Sir Godfrey that night was the resolve to make Thomas Billing his sole heir, give him a pony, buy him everything he could suggest, and take him to the pantomime next Christmas.
He met the young hero next morning after breakfast. To his surprise, his benefactor seemed more than a little sheepish. He shuffled his feet. He even blushed.
Finally he spoke.
"I hope you aren't frightfully sick about it, sir. I know it was frightful cheek my pretending I had done it, after you'd thought of it and all that; but I thought you wouldn't mind. It was awfully decent of you not to give me away. You don't know what a difference it makes to a chap if chaps think he's done a thing like that. It makes them look up to you frightfully. I only came here this term, and I'm too small to be much good at games just yet, so of course they don't think much of me. But now, you see, it's all right."
Sir Godfrey was silent.
"You don't really mind my saying it was me, do you?" said Thomas, anxiously. "Of course, if you say I must, I'll tell them that it was really you. It'll make things rather rotten for me, but if you want me to -- "
"By no means. By no means. By -- ah! -- by no means."

"Thanks awfully, sir," said Thomas, gratefully.
There was a pause.
"I expect you really think it was frightful cheek, don't you sir? I honestly didn't mean to do it, because I'd seen the whole thing and I knew I'd no right to pretend it was me. But when He asked who had done it, it -- it sort of came over me."
Sir Godfrey uttered a startled cry.
"The impulse of the moment!"
"Yes, sir."
Sir Godfrey had produced paper and was writing.
"I want you to take a telegram for me at once to the village, my little man," he said. "I will tell Mr. Tanner I sent you. It is most important. Here it is. Can you read it? My handwriting is shaky this morning. I am much disturbed, much disturbed."
Thomas scanned the message.
"Jones, 193, Adelaide Street, Fulham Road, London."
"Jevons, Jevons. Jevons, my boy; not Jones. J-e-v-o-n-s."
" 'Be prepared to rejoin me in -- in -- ' "
" 'Instantly. Everything forgiven. Await letter. Godfrey Tanner.' There, you have it now. Run with it at once. It is most -- it is vitally important."

All About The Income Tax

A New Parlour Game for the Family Circle

As I sit in my poverty-stricken home, looking at the place where the piano used to be before I had to sell it to pay my income-tax, I find myself in thoughtful mood. The first agony of the separation from my hard-earned, so to speak income, is over, and I can see that I was unjust in my original opinion of the United States Government. At first, I felt toward the U.S.G. as I would feel toward any perfect stranger who insinuated himself into my home and stood me on my head and went through my pockets. The only difference I could see between the U.S.G. and the ordinary practitioner in a black mask was that the latter occasionally left his victim carfare.

Gosh! I was bitter.

Now, however, after the lapse of weeks, I begin to see the other side. What the Government is going to do with it, I do not know -- I can only hope that they will not spend it on foolishness and nut sundaes and the movies -- but, apparently, they needed a few billion dollars, and you and I had to pay it. That part remains as unpleasant as ever. But what I, like so many others, have overlooked is the thoughtfulness of the authorities in having chosen March for the final filling-up of their printed forms.

The New Indoor Sport

You know how it is in the long winter evenings, if you have nothing to occupy you. You either play auction bridge, or you go in for one of those games played with coloured counters and a painted hoard (than which nothing is more sapping to the soul), or else you sit and scowl at each other and send the children early to bed. But, last March, with the arrival of Form 10536 X-G, dullness in the home became impossible. Our paternal government, always on the lookout for some way of brightening the lives of the Common People, had invented the greatest round-game in the world. Tiddleywinks has been completely superseded.

In every home, during this past winter, it was possible to see the delightful spectacle of a united family concentrated on the new game. There was Father with his spectacles on, with Mother leaning over his shoulder and pointing out that, by taking Sec. 6428 H and shoving it on top of Sub-Sec. 9730, he could claim immunity from the tax mentioned in Sec. 4587 M. Clustered around the table were the children, sucking pencils and working out ways of beating the surtax.

"See, papa," cries little Cyril, "what I have found! You are exempt from paying tax on income derived from any public utility or the exercise of any

essential governmental function accruing to any state or territory or any political subdivision thereof or to the District of Columbia, or income accruing to the government of any possession of the United States or any political subdivision thereof. That means you can knock off the price of the canary's bird-seed!"

"And, papa," chimes in little Wilbur, "I note that Gifts (not made as a consideration for service rendered) and money and property acquired under a will or by inheritance (but the income derived from money or property received by gift, will, or inheritance) are taxable and must he reported. Therefore, by referring to Sub-Sec. 2864905, we find that you can skin the blighters for the price of the open work socks you gave the janitor at Christmas."

And so the game went on, each helping the other, all working together in that perfect harmony which one so seldom sees in families nowadays.

Nor is this all. Think how differently the head of this family regards his nearest and dearest in these days of income-tax. Many a man who has spent years wondering why on earth he was such a chump as to link his lot with a woman he has disliked from the moment they stepped out of the Niagara Falls Hotel, and a gang of children whose existence has always seemed superfluous, gratefully revises his views as he starts to fill up the printed form.

His wife may be a nuisance about the home, hut she comes out strong when it is a question of married man's exemption. And the children! As the father looks at their grubby faces, and reflects that he is entitled to knock off two hundred bones per child, the austerity of his demeanour softens, and he pats them on the head and talks vaguely about jam for tea at some future and unspecified date.

There is no doubt that the income-tax, whatever else it has done, has taught the family to value one another. It is the first practical step that has been taken against the evil of race-suicide.

One beauty of this income-tax game is that it is educational. It enlarges the vocabulary and teaches one to think. Take, for instance, the clause on Amortisation.

In pre-income-tax days, if anyone had talked to me of amortisation, I should, no doubt, have kept up my end of the conversation adroitly and given a reasonable display of intelligence, but all the while I should have been wondering whether amortisation was new religion or a form of disease which attacks parrots.

Now, however, I know all about it. You should have seen me gaily knocking off whatever I thought wouldn't be missed for amortisation of the kitchen sink.

You would hardly believe -- though I trust the income-tax authorities will -- what a frightful lot of amortisation there was at my little place last year. The cat got amortised four times, once by a spark from the fire, the other three times by stray dogs; and it got so bad with the goldfish that they became practically permanent amorters.

Heaven Help the Corporations!

As regards income-tax, I am, thank goodness, an individual. I pray that I may never become a corporation. It seems to me that some society for the prevention of cruelty to things ought to step in between the authorities and the corporations. I have never gone deeply into the matter, having enough troubles of my own, but a casual survey of the laws relating to the taxing of corporations convinces me that any corporation that gets away with its trousers and one collar-stud should offer up Hosannahs.

The general feeling about the income-tax appears to have been that it is all right this time, but it mustn't happen again. I was looking through a volume of Punch, for the year 1882, the other day, and I came across a picture of a gloomy-looking individual paying his tax.

"I can just do it this time," he is saying, "but I wish you would tell Her Majesty that she mustn't look on me as a source of income in the future."

No indoor game ever achieves popularity for two successive years, and the Government must think up something new for next winter.

Homoeopathic Treatment: A School Story

In most of the houses of Wrykyn boys who had been at the school two years, and who were consequently in a sort of transition stage between fags and human beings, shared studies in couples. The fags "pigged" in a body in a common room of their own.

This rule was pleasant enough, provided you got a study-companion of tastes and habits similar to your own. But it often happened that, once in your study, an apparently perfect individual developed some deadly trait, such as a dislike for "brewing" or a taste for aesthetic furniture, and then life on the two-in-a-study system became troubled.

Liss and Buxton shared study eight at Appleby's. For some time all went well. They had much in common with one another. It is true that they were not in the same form, which is what usually cements alliances of this sort, Liss being in the Upper Fourth and Buxton in the Lower Fifth.

But otherwise the understanding seemed perfect. Both did a moderate amount of work, and both were perfectly willing to stop at a moment's notice, in order to play stump cricket or "soccer" in the passage. Liss collected stamps; so did Buxton. Buxton owned a Dr. Giles's crib to the play of "Euripides," which the Upper Fourth were translating that term. Liss replied with a Bohn's "Livy," Book One. "Livy," Book One, was what the Lower Fifth were murdering. In short, all Nature may be said to have been at first one vast substantial smile.

An ideal state of things, but one that was not destined to last.

Liss came back from school one afternoon, entered his study, and threw his books down on the table. Then he sniffed in a startled manner. The first sniff proving unsatisfactory, he encored himself. He was embarking on a third, when Buxton came in. It seemed to Liss that the aroma became stronger on his entry.

"Why, I believe it's you!" he cried.

"What's up now?" asked Buxton.

"Beastly smell somewhere. I was trying to find where it came from."

"Oh, that!" said Buxton, "that's all right. It's only some stuff I've got on my handkerchief. The man at the shop called it Simpkins Idle Moments. Don't you like it?"

Liss flung open the window, and leaned out as far as he could with safety, breathing hard.

"It's not bad when you get used to it," said Buxton. Liss, having fortified himself with a stock of fresh air, wriggled back into the study and directed an indignant glance at his friend.
"It's beastly," he said. "It's the sort of stuff an office-boy out for Bank Holiday uses."
"Oh, no," said Buxton deprecatingly, "think it's rather pleasant myself."
"But what do you want to do it for?" inquired Liss. "You make me sick."
"Sorry for that. The man I want it to do that to is Day."
Mr. Day was the master of the Lower Fifth.
"The fact is," proceeded Buxton, in the manner of the man who says to the hero of the melodrama, "sit down, and I will tell ye the story of me life,"
"I've been having rather a row with Day. He shoved me into extra last Wednesday for doing practically nothing. It wasn't my fault that the bit of paper hit him; I was aiming at Smith, and he strolled into the zone of fire just as I shot. I told him I was sorry, too. Well, anyway, he jammed me in extra and yesterday he slanged me about my Latin prose before the whole form, so I thought this was getting a bit too thick, so I thought something had got to be done. So I thought it over a good time, and at last I thought it would be a sound idea if I came into the form-room with some scent on me. Day bars scent awfully, you know."
"So do I," said Liss coldly.
"Calls it clarified fat," continued Buxton, "and that kind of thing, and says using it's a filthy and effete habit only worthy of a degenerate sybarite!"
"So it is," said Liss.
"Well, it acted splendidly. I sat tight, you know, waiting for developments. I could see him getting restive, and peering round the room over his spectacles, and then he spotted me. I don't know how.
"He glared at me for a second; then he said, 'Buxton.'
"'Yes, sir,' I said.
"He beckoned me solemnly and I went up. When I got to his desk he took me by the tip of the ear and examined me.
"'Boy,' he said, 'what -- what is this abomination on your handkerchief?'
"'Simpkins Idle Moments, sir,' I said.
"The chaps yelled.
"'A scent, I presume?'
"'Yes, sir.'
"'And will you kindly inform me, Buxton, for what reason you have adopted this clarified fat?'
"I told him it was for the good of my health. I said doctors recommended it.

"'Boy,' he said, 'your story leaves me sceptical. I do not credit it. Go to your seat. Pah! Throw open the door and all the windows. Buxton, translate from "Ille tamen -- " and do not dare to enter this room in such a state to-morrow.'
"I went on to translate, and got ploughed, of course. He gave me the lesson to write out."
"Serve you jolly well right," said Liss.
"I don't think it would be safe," said Buxton, "to try him again with Simpkins after what he said."
"I should think not," said Liss.
"So," continued Buxton triumphantly, "I'm going to appear to-morrow in -- (here, regardless of his friend's look of disgust, he drew a small bottle from his pocket and examined the label) -- in 'Riggles's Rose of the Hills.' That'll make him sit up. And, curiously enough, doctors say it's very nearly as good for you as Simpkins would be."
When the somewhat searching perfume of Riggles's masterpiece reached Mr. Day on the following morning, he stiffened in his chair.
"Boy!" he shouted. With the natural result that all the form except Buxton looked up. Buxton was apparently too busy with his work to spare a moment.
"Come here, Buxton," added Mr. Day.
Buxton advanced to the desk with the firm step that tells of an easy conscience.
"In spite of what I said to you yesterday, you have The Audacity," began Mr. Day, speaking in capitals, "to Come Here Again in this DISGUSTING State."
"Si-i-r!!" interjected Buxton, moaning with righteous indignation.
"Well, boy?"
"I don't see what I've done, sir." "You-Don't-See-What-You've-Done? Did I not tell you yesterday that I would not have you enter my form-room with Simpkins -- er -- I forget the precise name of that abomination -- on your handkerchief?"
"Oh, but, sir," said Buxton, in the pleased tone of one who sees exactly where he and a bosom friend have misunderstood one another, and sees also his way to put matters right, "This isn't Simpkins Idle Moments. It's 'Riggles's Rose of the Hills.'"
Mr. Day raved. What did it matter whether the abomination he affected were manufactured by Riggles, or Diggles, or Biggles, or Robinson? WHAT did it matter what name its degraded patentee had applied to it? The point was that it was scent, and-he-would-not-have-scent in his form-room. So-kindly-

remember-that-once-and-for-all-and-go-to- your-seat-and-don't-let-me-have-to-speak-to-you-again.

Buxton protested. Was he a slave? That was what Buxton would like to know. He was sure that there was no school rule against the use of scent as a precaution against germs. He didn't want germs. He was certain that his mother would not like it if he had germs. It was a shame that you were sent to schools where you were made to have germs.

The situation was at a deadlock. Much as he disliked scent, Mr. Day was obliged to admit to himself that the law was not on his side. He was a serious man without a spark of humour in his composition, and with a tremendous enthusiasm for fairness, and he did not wish to do anything tyrannical. If the boy really was afraid of germs, he had no right to prevent him doing his best to stave them off.

He gave up the struggle in despair. Buxton walked back to his seat, and two days later entered the form-room with a cold which not only made it necessary for him to use eucalyptus, but also to speak unintelligibly through his nose. Mr. Day spent the morning with his handkerchief to his face, a pathetic figure which would have softened the heart of a less vengeful person than Buxton.

Public opinion was divided on the subject of Buxton's manoeuvres. The Lower Fifth, glad of anything to relieve the tedium of school-time, hailed him as a public benefactor. Liss openly complained that life was not worth living, and that he might just as well spend his time in a scent-factory. Greenwood, the prefect of Buxton's dormitory, took a stronger line. Having observed without preamble that he was not going to be asphyxiated for the amusement of Buxton or anyone like him, he attached himself to the scruff of that youth's neck, and kicked him several times with much vigour and enthusiasm. He said, that if Buxton came into the dormitory like that again, he would have much pleasure in wringing his neck and chucking him out of the window.

In this delicate position, Buxton acted in statesmanlike fashion. Scented as before during the day, he left his handkerchief in the study on retiring to rest. So that, with the exception of Mr. Day and Liss, everyone was satisfied.

Liss brooded darkly over his injuries. At last, struck with an idea, he went across to the Infirmary to see Vickery. Vickery, a noted man of resource, was an Applebyite member of the Upper Fourth, and he had been down for a week or two with influenza. He was now convalescent, and visitors were admitted at stated intervals.

"I say, Vickery," began Liss, taking a seat.

"Hullo!"

"When are you coming back to the house?"
"Oh, soon. Next Monday, I believe."
"Well, look here." And Liss set forth his grievance. Vickery was amused.
"It's all very well to laugh," said Liss, complainingly, "but it's beastly for me. I say, what I really wanted to see you for was to ask if you'd mind swopping studies for a bit." (Vickery owned study three, one of the smaller rooms, only capable of accommodating one resident.) "You see," pursued Liss hurriedly, in order to forestall argument, "it wouldn't be the same for you. I don't suppose you can smell a thing after the 'flu', can you?"
"It would have to be pretty strong to worry me," agreed Vickery.
"Then will you?" said Liss. "You'll find Buxton a good enough sort of chap when he isn't playing rotten games of this sort. And he's got Giles's crib to the 'Medea.'"
This was Liss's ace of trumps, and it settled the matter. Vickery agreed to the exchange instantly, and gave his consent to the immediate removal of his goods and chattels from study three and the substitution of those of Liss. Liss went over to the house and spent the evening shifting furniture, retiring to his dormitory grubby, but jubilant, at "lights-out."
On the following Monday, Vickery was restored to Appleby's, with a doctor's certificate stating that he was cured.
Buxton welcomed him with open arms, explained the state of the game to him, and assured him that he was an improvement upon Liss.
"You don't mind this scent business, do you?" he said. "Rather not," said Vickery, "I love scent. I use it myself."
"Good man," said Buxton.
But he altered his opinion next day.
"Great Caesar," he cried, as he came into the study after a pleasant afternoon with Mr. Day. He rushed to the window, and opened it. Vickery surveyed him with amused surprise.
"What's up?" he asked.
"Can't you smell it, you ass?" said Buxton, wildly.
"Smell it?" repeated Vickery. A light seemed to dawn upon him. "Oh," he said, "you mean the stuff I've got on my handkerchief. Don't you like it? Doctors say it's awfully good for keeping off germs."
Buxton, in a voice rendered nasal by a handkerchief pressed tightly over his face, replied that he did not. He hung out of the window again. Vickery grinned broadly, but became solemn as his companion turned round.
"Well, I didn't think you would have minded," he said, in a reproachful voice, "I thought you rather liked scent."
"Scent! Do you call it a scent! What on earth is the muck?"

"It's only sulphuretted hydrogen. The doctor recommended it, to keep off any bad effects after the flu. I can't smell it much, but it seems rather decent. You wouldn't like some, would you?"
"Look here," said Buxton, "how long is this going on?"
"I couldn't say exactly, till I'm quite fit again. Two or three weeks, probably."
"Weeks! Did you say weeks?"
"Yes. Not longer, I shouldn't think. A month at the outside. Hullo, you aren't off?"
Buxton left the room, and went down the passage to number three.
"Get out," said Liss briefly. "I don't want this study -- "
"Then would you mind swopping with me?" put in Buxton eagerly. "I don't think I shall quite hit it off with Vickery. He's much more a pal of yours than mine."
"Oh, hang it," said Liss, "I can't always be changing about. I've got all my things fixed up here. It's too much fag to move them again."
"I'll do that. You needn't worry about it. I'll shift your things into number eight to-night, if you'll swop. Will you?"
"All right," said Liss, "don't go breaking any of my pictures."
"Rather not," said Buxton. "Thanks awfully. And, I say, you can keep that Giles, if you like."
"Thanks," said Liss, "it'll come in useful."
"What made Buxton clear out like that?" he asked Vickery, as they brewed their first pot of tea after the exchange. "Did you have a row?"
"No. It was only that he didn't like the particular brand of scent I used."
Liss's jaw dropped.
"Great Scott," he said, "you don't use scent, too, do you?"
"Only when Buxton's there," said Vickery. He related the story briefly.
"I thought it would be better for us two together than having to share the study with Buxton," he concluded; "so I laid in a little scent, as he was so fond of it. I chucked it away yesterday."
"What a ripping idea," said Liss. "I hope it made him feel jolly ill. Anyway, it paid him back for the time he gave me."
"Yes, scent per scent," murmured Vickery; and, the last round of toast being now ready, and the kettle boiling over, study number eight proceeded to keep the wolf from the door.

The Guardian

In his Sunday suit (with ten shillings in specie in the right-hand trouser pocket) and a brand-new bowler hat, the youngest of the Shearnes, Thomas Beauchamp Algernon, was being launched by the combined strength of the family on his public-school career. It was a solemn moment. The landscape was dotted with relatives -- here a small sister, awed by the occasion into refraining from insult; there an aunt, vaguely admonitory. "Well, Tom," said Mr Shearne, "you'll soon be off now. You're sure to like Eckleton. Remember to cultivate your bowling. Everyone can bat nowadays. And play forward, not outside. The outsides get most of the fun, certainly, but then if you're a forward, you've got eight chances of getting into a team."

"All right, father."

"Oh, and work hard." This by way of an afterthought.

"All right, father."

"And, Tom," said Mrs Shearne, "you are sure to be comfortable at school, because I asked Mrs Davy to write to her sister, Mrs Spencer, who has a son at Eckleton, and tell her to tell him to look after you when you get there. He is in Mr Dencroft's house, which is next door to Mr Blackburn's, so you will be quite close to one another. Mind you write directly you get there."

"All right, mother."

"And look here, Tom." His eldest brother stepped to the front and spoke earnestly. "Look here, don't you forget what I've been telling you?"

"All right."

"You'll be right enough if you don't go sticking on side. Don't forget that, however much of a blood you may have been at that rotten little private school of yours, you're not one at Eckleton."

"All right."

"You look clean, which is a great thing. There's nothing much wrong with you except cheek. You've got enough of that to float a ship. Keep it under."

"All right. Keep your hair on."

"There you go," said the expert, with gloomy triumph. "If you say that sort of thing at Eckleton, you'll get jolly well sat on, by Jove!"

"Bai Jove, old chap!" murmured the younger brother, "we're devils in the Forty-twoth!"

The other, whose chief sorrow in life was that he could not get the smaller members of the family to look with proper awe on the fact that he had just passed into Sandhurst, gazed wistfully at the speaker, but realising that there was a locked door between them, tried no active measures.

"Well, anyhow," he said, "you'll soon get it knocked out of you, that's one comfort. Look here, if you do get scrapping with anybody, don't forget all I've taught you. And I should go on boxing there if I were you, so as to go down to Aldershot some day. You ought to make a fairly decent featherweight if you practise."
"All right."
"Let us know when Eckleton's playing Haileybury, and I'll come and look you up. I want to see that match."
"All right."
"Goodbye."
"Goodbye, Tom."
"Goodbye, Tom, dear."
Chorus of aunts and other supers: "Goodbye, Tom."
Tom (comprehensively): "G'bye."
The train left the station.
* * * * *
Kennedy, the head of Dencroft's, said that when he wanted his study turned into a beastly furnace, he would take care to let Spencer know. He pointed out that just because it was his habit to warm the study during the winter months, there was no reason why Spencer should light the gas-stove on an afternoon in the summer term when the thermometer was in the eighties. Spencer thought he might want some muffins cooked for tea, did he? Kennedy earnestly advised Spencer to give up thinking, as Nature had not equipped him for the strain. Thinking necessitated mental effort, and Spencer, in Kennedy's opinion, had no mind, but rubbed along on a cheap substitute of mud and putty.
More chatty remarks were exchanged, and then Spencer tore himself away from the pleasant interview, and went downstairs to the junior study, where he remarked to his friend Phipps that Life was getting a bit thick.
"What's up now?" enquired Phipps.
"Everything. We've just had a week of term, and I've been in extra once already for doing practically nothing, and I've got a hundred lines, and Kennedy's been slanging me for lighting the stove. How was I to know he didn't want it lit? Wish I was fagging for somebody else."
"All the while you're jawing," said Phipps, "there's a letter for you on the mantelpiece, staring at you."
"So there is. Hullo!"
"What's up? Hullo! is that a postal order? How much for?"
"Five bob. I say, who's Shearne?"
"New kid in Blackburn's. Why?"

"Great Scott! I remember now. They told me to look after him. I haven't seen him yet. And listen to this: 'Mrs Shearne has sent me the enclosed to give to you. Her son writes to say that he is very happy and getting on very well, so she is sure you must have been looking after him.' Why, I don't know the kid by sight. I clean forgot all about him."
"Well, you'd better go and see him now, just to say you've done it."
Spencer perpended.
"Beastly nuisance having a new kid hanging on to you. He's probably a frightful rotter."
"Well, anyway, you ought to," said Phipps, who possessed the scenario of a conscience.
"I can't."
"All right, don't then. But you ought to send back that postal order."
"Look here, Phipps," said Spencer plaintively, "you needn't be an idiot, you know."
And the trivial matter of Thomas B. A. Shearne was shelved.
* * * * *
Thomas, as he had stated in his letter to his mother, was exceedingly happy at Eckleton, and getting on very nicely indeed. It is true that there had been one or two small unpleasantnesses at first, but those were over now, and he had settled down completely. The little troubles alluded to above had begun on his second day at Blackburn's. Thomas, as the reader may have gathered from his glimpse of him at the station, was not a diffident youth. He was quite prepared for anything Fate might have up its sleeve for him, and he entered the junior day-room at Blackburn's ready for emergencies. On the first day nothing happened. One or two people asked him his name, but none enquired what his father was -- a question which, he had understood from books of school life, was invariably put to the new boy. He was thus prevented from replying "coolly, with his eyes fixed on his questioners": "A gentleman. What's yours?" and this of course, had been a disappointment. But he reconciled himself to it, and on the whole enjoyed his first day at Eckleton.
On the second there occurred an Episode.
Thomas had inherited from his mother a pleasant, rather meek cast of countenance. He had pink cheeks and golden hair -- almost indecently golden in one who was not a choirboy.
Now, if you are going to look like a Ministering Child or a Little Willie, the Sunbeam of the Home, when you go to a public school, you must take the consequences. As Thomas sat by the window of the junior day-room reading a magazine, and deeply interested in it, there fell upon his face such a rapt,

angelic expression that the sight of it, silhouetted against the window, roused Master P. Burge, his fellow-Blackburnite, as it had been a trumpet-blast. To seize a Bradley Arnold's Latin Prose Exercises and hurl it across the room was with Master Burge the work of a moment. It struck Thomas on the ear. He jumped, and turned some shades pinker Then he put down his magazine, picked up the Bradley Arnold, and sat on it. After which he resumed the magazine.

The acute interest of the junior day-room, always fond of a break in the monotony of things, induced Burge to go further into the matter.

"You with the face!" said Burge rudely.

Thomas looked up.

"What the dickens are you doing with my book? Pass it back!"

"Oh, is this yours?" said Thomas. "Here you are."

He walked towards him, carrying the book. At two yards range he fired it in. It hit Burge with some force in the waistcoat, and there was a pause while he collected his wind.

Then the thing may be said to have begun.

Yes, said Burge, interrogated on the point five minutes later; he had had enough.

"Good," said Thomas pleasantly. "Want a handkerchief?" That evening he wrote to his mother and, thanking her for kind enquiries, stated that he was not being bullied. He added, also in answer to enquiries, that he had not been tossed in a blanket, and that -- so far -- no Hulking Senior (with scowl) had let him down from the dormitory window after midnight by a sheet, in order that he might procure gin from the local public-house. As far as he could gather, the seniors were mostly teetotallers. Yes, he had seen Spencer several times. He did not add that he had seen him from a distance.

* * * * *

"I'm so glad I asked Mrs Davy to get her nephew to look after Tom," said Mrs Shearne, concluding the reading of the epistle at breakfast. "It makes such a difference to a new boy having somebody to protect him at first."

"Only drawback is," said his eldest brother gloomily -- "won't get cheek knocked out of him. Tom's kid wh'ought get 'sheadsmacked reg'ly. Be no holding him."

And he helped himself to marmalade, of which delicacy his mouth was full, with a sort of magnificent despondency.

By the end of the first fortnight of his school career, Thomas Beauchamp Algernon had overcome all the little ruggednesses which relieve the path of the new boy from monotony. He had been taken in by a primeval "sell" which the junior day-room invariably sprang on the new-comer. But as he

had sat on the head of the engineer of the same for the space of ten minutes, despite the latter's complaints of pain and forecasts of what he would do when he got up, the laugh had not been completely against him. He had received the honourable distinction of extra lesson for ragging in French. He had been "touched up" by the prefect of his dormitory for creating a disturbance in the small hours. In fact, he had gone through all the usual preliminaries, and become a full-blown Eckletonian.

His letters home were so cheerful at this point that a second postal order relieved the dwindling fortune of Spencer. And it was this, coupled with the remonstrances of Phipps, that induced the Dencroftian to break through his icy reserve,

"Look here, Spencer," said Phipps, his conscience thoroughly stirred by this second windfall, "it's all rot. You must either send back that postal order, or go and see the chap. Besides, he's quite a decent kid. We're in the same game at cricket. He's rather a good bowler. I'm getting to know him quite well. I've got a jolly sight more right to those postal orders than you have."

"But he's an awful ass to look at," pleaded Spencer.

"What's wrong with him? Doesn't look nearly such a goat as you," said Phipps, with the refreshing directness of youth.

"He's got yellow hair," argued Spencer.

"Why shouldn't he have?"

"He looks like a sort of young Sunday-school kid."

"Well, he jolly well isn't, then, because I happen to know that he's had scraps with some of the fellows in his house, and simply mopped them."

"Well, all right, then," said Spencer reluctantly.

The historic meeting took place outside the school Shop at the quarter to eleven interval next morning. Thomas was leaning against the wall, eating a bun. Spencer approached him with half a jam sandwich in his hand. There was an awkward pause.

"Hullo!" said Spencer at last.

"Hullo!" said Thomas.

Spencer finished his sandwich and brushed the crumbs off his trousers. Thomas continued operations on the bun with the concentrated expression of a lunching python.

"I believe your people know my people," said Spencer.

"We have some awfully swell friends," said Thomas. Spencer chewed this thoughtfully awhile.

"Beastly cheek," he said at last.

"Sorry," said Thomas, not looking it.

Spencer produced a bag of gelatines.

"Have one?" he asked.
"What's wrong with 'em?"
"All right, don't."
He selected a gelatine and consumed it.
"Ever had your head smacked?" he enquired courteously.
A slightly strained look came into Thomas's blue eyes.
"Not often," he replied politely. "Why?"
"Oh, I don't know," said Spencer. "I was only wondering."
"Oh?"
"Look here," said Spencer, "my mater told me to look after you."
"Well, you can look after me now if you want to, because I'm going."
And Thomas dissolved the meeting by walking off in the direction of the junior block.
"That kid," said Spencer to his immortal soul, "wants his head smacked, badly."
At lunch Phipps had questions to ask.
"Saw you talking to Shearne in the interval," he said. "What were you talking about?"
"Oh, nothing in particular."
"What did you think of him?"
"Little idiot."
"Ask him to tea this afternoon?"
"No."
"You must. Dash it all, you must do something for him. You've had ten bob out of his people."
Spencer made no reply.
Going to the school Shop that afternoon, he found Thomas seated there with Phipps, behind a pot of tea. As a rule, he and Phipps tea'd together, and he resented this desertion.
"Come on," said Phipps. "We were waiting for you."
"Pining away," added Thomas unnecessarily.
Spencer frowned austerely.
"Come and look after me," urged Thomas.
Spencer sat down in silence. For a minute no sound could be heard but the champing of Thomas's jaws as he dealt with a slab of gingerbread.
"Buck up," said Phipps uneasily.
"Give me," said Thomas, "just one loving look."
Spencer ignored the request. The silence became tense once more. "Coming to the house net, Phipps?" asked Spencer.
"We were going to the baths. Why don't you come?"

"All right," said Spencer.
Doctors tell us that we should allow one hour to elapse between taking food and bathing, but the rule was not rigidly adhered to at Eckleton. The three proceeded straight from the tea-table to the baths.
The place was rather empty when they arrived. It was a little earlier than the majority of Eckletonians bathed. The bath filled up as lock-up drew near. With the exception of a couple of infants splashing about in the shallow end, and a stout youth who dived in from the spring-board, scrambled out, and dived in again, each time flatter than the last, they had the place to themselves.
"What's it like, Gorrick?" enquired Phipps of the stout youth, who had just appeared above the surface again, blowing like a whale. The question was rendered necessary by the fact that many years before the boiler at the Eckleton baths had burst, and had never been repaired, with the consequence that the temperature of the water was apt to vary. That is to say, most days it was colder than others.
"Simply boiling," said the man of weight, climbing out. "I say, did I go in all right then?"
"Not bad," said Phipps.
"Bit flat," added Thomas critically.
Gorrick blinked severely at the speaker. A head-waiter at a fashionable restaurant is cordial in his manner compared with a boy who has been at a public school a year, when addressed familiarly by a new boy. After reflecting on the outrage for a moment, he dived in again.
"Worse than ever," said Truthful Thomas.
"Look here!" said Gorrick.
"Oh, come on!" exclaimed Phipps, and led Thomas away.
"That kid," said Gorrick to Spencer, "wants his head smacked, badly."
"That's just what I say," agreed Spencer, with the eagerness of a great mind which has found another that thinks alike with itself.
Spencer was the first of the trio ready to enter the water. His movements were wary and deliberate. There was nothing of the professional diver about Spencer. First he stood on the edge and rubbed his arms, regarding the green water beneath with suspicion and dislike. Then, crouching down, he inserted three toes of his left foot, drew them back sharply, and said "Oo!" Then he stood up again. His next move was to slap his chest and dance a few steps, after which he put his right foot into the water, again remarked "Oo!" and resumed Position 1.
"Thought you said it was warm," he shouted to Gorrick.
"So it is; hot as anything. Come on in."

And Spencer came on in. Not because he wanted to -- for by rights, there were some twelve more movements to be gone through before he should finally creep in at the shallow end -- but because a cold hand, placed suddenly on the small of his back, urged him forward. Down he went, with the water fizzing and bubbling all over and all round him. He swallowed a good deal of it, but there was still plenty left; and what there was was colder than one would have believed possible.

He came to the surface after what seemed to him a quarter of an hour, and struck out for the side. When he got out, Phipps and Thomas had just got in. Gorrick was standing at the end of the coconut matting which formed a pathway to the spring-board. Gorrick was blue, but determined.

"I say! Did I go in all right then?" enquired Gorrick.

"How the dickens do I know?" said Spencer, stung to fresh wrath by the inanity of the question.

"Spencer did," said Thomas, appearing in the water below them and holding on to the rail.

"Look here!" cried Spencer; "did you shove me in then?"

"Me! Shove!" Thomas's voice expressed horror and pain. "Why, you dived in. Jolly good one, too. Reminded me of the diving elephants at the Hippodrome."

And he swam off.

"That kid," said Gorrick, gazing after him, "wants his head smacked."

"Badly," agreed Spencer "Look here! Did he shove me in? Did you see him?"

"I was doing my dive. But it must have been him. Phipps never rags in the bath."

Spencer grunted -- an expressive grunt -- and, creeping down the steps, entered the water again.

It was Spencer's ambition to swim ten lengths of the bath. He was not a young Channel swimmer, and ten lengths represented a very respectable distance to him. He proceeded now to attempt to lower his record. It was not often that he got the bath so much to himself. Usually, there was barely standing-room in the water, and long-distance swimming was impossible. But now, with a clear field, he should, he thought, be able to complete the desired distance.

He was beginning the fifth length before interruption came. Just as he reached halfway, a reproachful voice at his side said: "Oh, Percy, you'll tire yourself!" and a hand on the top of his head propelled him firmly towards the bottom.

Every schoolboy, as Honble. Macaulay would have put it, knows the sensation of being ducked. It is always unpleasant -- sometimes more, sometimes less. The present case belonged to the former class. There was just room inside Spencer for another half-pint of water. He swallowed it. When he came to the surface, he swam to the side without a word and climbed out. It was the last straw. Honour could now be satisfied only with gore.

He hung about outside the baths till Phipps and Thomas appeared, then, with a steadfast expression on his face, he walked up to the latter and kicked him. Thomas seemed surprised, but not alarmed. His eyes grew a little rounder, and the pink on his cheeks deepened. He looked like a choirboy in a bad temper.

"Hullo! What's up, you ass, Spencer?" enquired Phipps.

Spencer said nothing.

"Where shall we go?" asked Thomas.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Phipps the peacemaker.

Spencer and Thomas were eyeing each other warily.

"You chaps aren't going to fight?" said Phipps.

The notion seemed to distress him.

"Unless he cares to take a kicking," said Spencer suavely.

"Not today, I think, thanks," replied Thomas without heat.

"Then, look here!" said Phipps briskly, I know a ripping little place just off the Ledby Road. It isn't five minutes' walk, and there's no chance of being booked there. Rot if someone was to come and stop it half-way through. It's in a field; thick hedges. No one can see. And I tell you what -- I'll keep time. I've got a watch. Two minute rounds, and half-a-minute in between, and I'm the referee; so, if anybody fouls the other chap, I'll stop the fight. See? Come on!

Of the details of that conflict we have no very clear record. Phipps is enthusiastic, but vague. He speaks in eulogistic terms of a "corker" which Spencer brought off in the second round, and, again, of a "tremendous biff" which Thomas appears to have consummated in the fourth. But of the more subtle points of the fighting he is content merely to state comprehensively that they were "top-hole". As to the result, it would seem that, in the capacity of referee, he declared the affair a draw at the end of the seventh round; and, later, in his capacity of second to both parties, helped his principals home by back and secret ways, one on each arm.

The next items to which the chronicler would call the attention of the reader are two letters.

The first was from Mrs Shearne to Spencer, and ran as follows --

My Dear Spencer -- I am writing to you direct, instead of through your aunt, because I want to thank you so much for looking after my boy so well. I know what a hard time a new boy has at a public school if he has got nobody to take care of him at first. I heard from Tom this morning. He seems so happy, and so fond of you. He says you are "an awfully decent chap" and "the only chap who has stood up to him at all." I suppose he means "for him." I hope you will come and spend part of your holidays with us. ("Catch me!" said Spencer.)

Yours sincerely,

Isabel Shearne

P.S. -- I hope you will manage to buy something nice with the enclosed.

The enclosed was yet another postal order for five shillings. As somebody wisely observed, a woman's P.S. is always the most important part of her letter.

"That kid," murmured Spencer between swollen lips, "has got cheek enough for eighteen! 'Awfully decent chap!'"

He proceeded to compose a letter in reply, and for dignity combined with lucidity it may stand as a model to young writers.

5 College Grounds, Eckleton.

Mr C. F. Spencer begs to present his compliments to Mrs Shearne, and returns the postal order, because he doesn't see why he should have it. He notes your remarks re my being a decent chap in your favour of the 13th pros., but cannot see where it quite comes in, as the only thing I've done to Mrs Shearne's son is to fight seven rounds with him in a field, W. G. Phipps refereeing. It was a draw. I got a black eye and rather a whack in the mouth, but gave him beans also, particularly in the wind, which I learned to do from reading "Rodney Stone" -- the bit where Bob Whittaker beats the Eyetalian Gondoleery Cove. Hoping that this will be taken in the spirit which is meant.

I remain

Yours sincerely,

C. F Spencer.

One enclosure.

He sent this off after prep, and retired to bed full of spiritual pride.

On the following morning, going to the Shop during the interval, he came upon Thomas negotiating a hot bun.

"Hullo!" said Thomas.

As was generally the case after he had had a fair and spirited turnout with a fellow human being, Thomas had begun to feel that he loved his late adversary as a brother. A wholesome respect, which had hitherto been wanting, formed part of his opinion of him.

"Hullo!" said Spencer, pausing.
"I say," said Thomas.
"What's up?"
"I say, I don't believe we shook hands, did we?"
"I don't remember doing it."
They shook hands. Spencer began to feel that there were points about Thomas, after all.
"I say," said Thomas.
"Hullo?"
"I'm sorry about in the bath, you know. I didn't know you minded being ducked."
"Oh, all right!" said Spencer awkwardly.
Eight bars rest.
"I say," said Thomas.
"Hullo!"
"Doing anything this afternoon?"
"Nothing special. Why?"
"Come and have tea?"
"All right. Thanks."
"I'll wait for you outside the house."
"All right."
It was just here that Spencer regretted that he had sent back that five-shilling postal order. Five good shillings.
Simply chucked away.
Oh, Life, Life!
But they were not, after all. On his plate at breakfast next day Spencer found a letter. This was the letter --
Messrs J. K Shearne (father of T. B. A. Shearne) and P. W. Shearne (brother of same) beg to acknowledge receipt of Mr C. F. Spencer's esteemed communication of yesterday's date, and in reply desire to inform Mr Spencer of their hearty approval of his attentions to Mr T. B. A. Shearne's wind. It is their opinion that the above, a nice boy but inclined to cheek, badly needs treatment on these lines occasionally. They therefore beg to return the postal order, together with another for a like sum, and trust that this will meet with Mr Spencer's approval.
(Signed) J. K. Shearne, P. W. Shearne. Two enclosures.
"Of course, what's up really," said Spencer to himself, after reading this, "is that the whole family's jolly well cracked."
His eye fell on the postal orders.
"Still! -- " he said.

That evening he entertained Phipps and Thomas B. A Shearne lavishly, at tea.

-- End --