Scrum

The Scrum Guide

The Scrum Guide Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland 4028343The Scrum GuideKen Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland Versions of The Scrum Guide include: The Scrum Guide

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A Prefect's Uncle/Chapter 18

properly in the first scrum of a big match—and rushed the ball down the field. Norris fell on it. Another hastily-formed scrum, and the Nomads' front

At this point Wilson finished the toast, and went out. As he went he thought over what he had just heard. Marriott and Gethryn frequently talked the most important School politics before him, for they had discovered at an early date that he was a youth of discretion, who could be trusted not to reveal state secrets. But matters now seemed to demand such a revelation. It was a serious thing to do, but there was nobody else to do it, and it obviously must be done, so, by a simple process of reasoning, he ought to do it. Half an hour had to elapse before the bell rang for lock-up. There was plenty of time to do the whole thing and get back to the House before the door was closed. He took his cap, and trotted off to Jephson's.

Norris was alone in his study when Wilson knocked at the door. He seemed surprised to see his visitor. He knew Wilson well by sight, he being captain of the First Eleven and Wilson a distinctly promising junior bat, but this was the first time he had ever exchanged a word of conversation with him.

'Hullo,' he said, putting down his book.

'Oh, I say, Norris,' began Wilson nervously, 'can I speak to you for a minute?'

'All right. Go ahead.'

After two false starts, Wilson at last managed to get the thread of his story. He did not mention Marriott's remarks on football subjects, but confined himself to the story of Farnie and the bicycle ride, as he had heard it from Gethryn on the second evening of the term.

'So that's how it was, you see,' he concluded.

There was a long silence. Wilson sat nervously on the edge of his chair, and Norris stared thoughtfully into the fire.

'So shall I tell him it's all right?' asked Wilson at last.

'Tell who what's all right?' asked Norris politely.

'Oh, er, Gethryn, you know,' replied Wilson, slightly disconcerted. He had had a sort of idea that Norris would have rushed out of the room, sprinted over to Leicester's, and flung himself on the Bishop's bosom in an agony of remorse. He appeared to be taking things altogether too coolly.

'No,' said Norris, 'don't tell him anything. I shall have lots of chances of speaking to him myself if I want to. It isn't as if we were never going to meet again. You'd better cut now. There's the bell just going. Good night.'

'Good night, Norris.'

'Oh, and, I say,' said Norris, as Wilson opened the door, 'I meant to tell you some time ago. If you buck up next cricket season, it's quite possible that you'll get colours of some sort. You might bear that in mind.'

'I will,' said Wilson fervently. 'Good night, Norris. Thanks awfully.'

The Nomads brought down a reasonably hot team against Beckford as a general rule, for the School had a reputation in the football world. They were a big lot this year. Their forwards looked capable, and when, after the School full-back had returned the ball into touch on the half-way line, the line-out had resulted in a hand-ball and a scrum, they proved that appearances were not deceptive. They broke through in a solid mass—the Beckford forwards never somehow seemed to get together properly in the first scrum of a big match—and rushed the ball down the field. Norris fell on it. Another hastily-formed scrum, and the Nomads' front rank was off again. Ten yards nearer the School line there was another halt. Grainger, the Beckford full-back, whose speciality was the stopping of rushes, had curled himself neatly round the ball. Then the School forwards awoke to a sense of their responsibilities. It was time they did, for Beckford was now penned up well within its own twenty-five line, and the Nomad halves were appealing pathetically to their forwards to let that ball out, for goodness' sake. But the forwards fancied a combined rush was the thing to play. For a full minute they pushed the School pack towards their line, and then some rash enthusiast kicked a shade too hard. The ball dribbled out of the scrum on the School side, and Marriott punted into touch.

'You must let it out, you men,' said the aggrieved half-backs.

Marriott's kick had not brought much relief. The visitors were still inside the Beckford twenty-five line, and now that their forwards had realized the sin and folly of trying to rush the ball through, matters became decidedly warm for the School outsides. Norris and Gethryn in the centre and Grainger at back performed prodigies of tackling. The wing three-quarter hovered nervously about, feeling that their time might come at any moment.

The Nomad attack was concentrated on the extreme right.

Philips, the International, was officiating for them as wing-three-quarters on that side, and they played to him. If he once got the ball he would take a considerable amount of stopping. But the ball never managed to arrive. Norris and Gethryn stuck to their men closer than brothers.

A prolonged struggle on the goal-line is a great spectacle. That is why (purely in the opinion of the present scribe) Rugby is such a much better game than Association football. You don't get that sort of thing in Soccer. But such struggles generally end in the same way. The Nomads were now within a couple of yards of the School line. It was a question of time. In three minutes the whistle would blow for half-time, and the School would be saved.

But in those three minutes the thing happened. For the first time in the match the Nomad forwards heeled absolutely cleanly. Hitherto, the ball had always remained long enough in the scrum to give Marriott and Wogan, the School halves, time to get round and on to their men before they could become dangerous. But this time the ball was in and out again in a moment. The Nomad half who was taking the scrum picked it up,

and was over the line before Marriott realized that the ball was out at all. The school lining the ropes along the touch-line applauded politely but feebly, as was their custom when the enemy scored.

The kick was a difficult one—the man had got over in the corner—and failed. The referee blew his whistle for half-time. The teams sucked lemons, and the Beckford forwards tried to explain to Hill, the captain, why they never got that ball in the scrums. Hill having observed bitterly, as he did in every match when the School did not get thirty points in the first half, that he 'would chuck the whole lot of them out next Saturday', the game recommenced.

Beckford started on the second half with three points against them, but with both wind, what there was of it, and slope in their favour. Three points, especially in a club match, where one's opponents may reasonably be expected to suffer from lack of training and combination, is not an overwhelming score.

Beckford was hopeful and determined.

To record all the fluctuations of the game for the next thirty-five minutes is unnecessary. Copies of The Beckfordian containing a full report, crammed with details, and written in the most polished English, may still be had from the editor at the modest price of sixpence. Suffice it to say that two minutes from the kick-off the Nomads increased their score with a goal from a mark, and almost immediately afterwards Marriott gave the School their first score with a neat drop-kick. It was about five minutes from the end of the game, and the Nomads still led, when the event of the afternoon took place. The Nomad forwards had brought the ball down the ground with one of their combined dribbles, and a scrum had been formed on the Beckford twenty-five line. The visitors heeled as usual. The half who was taking the scrum whipped the ball out in the direction of his colleague. But before it could reach him, Wogan had intercepted the pass, and was off down the field, through the enemy's three-quarter line, with only the back in front of him, and with Norris in close attendance, followed by Gethryn.

There is nothing like an intercepted pass for adding a dramatic touch to a close game. A second before it had seemed as though the School must be beaten, for though they would probably have kept the enemy out for the few minutes that remained, they could never have worked the ball down the field by ordinary give-and-take play. And now, unless Wogan shamefully bungled what he had begun so well, victory was certain.

There was a danger, though. Wogan might in the excitement of the moment try to get past the back and score himself, instead of waiting until the back was on him and then passing to Norris. The School on the touch-line shrieked their applause, but there was a note of anxiety as well. A slight reputation which Wogan had earned for playing a selfish game sprang up before their eyes. Would he pass? Or would he run himself? If the latter, the odds were anything against his succeeding.

But everything went right. Wogan arrived at the back, drew that gentleman's undivided attention to himself, and then slung the ball out to Norris, the model of what a pass ought to be. Norris made no mistake about it.

Then the remarkable thing happened. The Bishop, having backed Norris up for fifty yards at full speed, could not stop himself at once. His impetus carried him on when all need for expenditure of energy had come to an end. He was just slowing down, leaving Norris to complete the thing alone, when to his utter amazement he found the ball in his hands. Norris had passed to him. With a clear run in, and the nearest foeman yards to the rear, Norris had passed. It was certainly weird, but his first duty was to score. There must be no mistake about the scoring. Afterwards he could do any thinking that might be required. He shot at express speed over the line, and placed the ball in the exact centre of the white line which joined the posts. Then he walked back to where Norris was waiting for him.

'Good man,' said Norris, 'that was awfully good.'

His tone was friendly. He spoke as he had been accustomed to speak before the M.C.C. match. Gethryn took his cue from him. It was evident that, for reasons at present unexplained, Norris wished for peace, and such

being the case, the Bishop was only too glad to oblige him.

'No,' he said, 'it was jolly good of you to let me in like that. Why, you'd only got to walk over.'

'Oh, I don't know. I might have slipped or something. Anyhow I thought I'd better pass. What price Beckford combination? The home-made article, eh?'

'Rather,' said the Bishop.

'Oh, by the way,' said Norris, 'I was talking to young Wilson yesterday evening. Or rather he was talking to me. Decent kid, isn't he? He was telling me about Farnie. The M.C.C. match, you know, and so on.'

'Oh!' said the Bishop. He began to see how things had happened.

'Yes,' said Norris. 'Hullo, that gives us the game.'

A roar of applause from the touch-line greeted the successful attempt of Hill to convert Gethryn's try into the necessary goal. The referee performed a solo on the whistle, and immediately afterwards another, as if as an encore.

'No side,' he said pensively. The School had won by two points.

'That's all right,' said Norris. 'I say, can you come and have tea in my study when you've changed? Some of the fellows are coming. I've asked Reece and Marriott, and Pringle said he'd turn up too. It'll be rather a tight fit, but we'll manage somehow.'

'Right,' said the Bishop. 'Thanks very much.'

Norris was correct. It was a tight fit. But then a study brew loses half its charm if there is room to breathe. It was a most enjoyable ceremony in every way. After the serious part of the meal was over, and the time had arrived when it was found pleasanter to eat wafer biscuits than muffins, the Bishop obliged once more with a recital of his adventures on that distant day in the summer term.

There were several comments when he had finished. The only one worth recording is Reece's.

Reece said it distinctly reminded him of a thing which had happened to a friend of a chap his brother had known at Sandhurst.

The Gold Bat/Chapter 16

caught it on his twenty-five line, and promptly handed it forward. The first scrum was formed in the heart of the enemy's country. A deep, swelling roar from

It was a curious thing in connection with the matches between Ripton and Wrykyn, that Ripton always seemed to be the bigger team. They always had a gigantic pack of forwards, who looked capable of shoving a hole through one of the pyramids. Possibly they looked bigger to the Wrykinians than they really were. Strangers always look big on the football field. When you have grown accustomed to a person's appearance, he does not look nearly so large. Milton, for instance, never struck anybody at Wrykyn as being particularly big for a school forward, and yet today he was the heaviest man on the field by a quarter of a stone. But, taken in the mass, the Ripton pack were far heavier than their rivals. There was a legend current among the lower forms at Wrykyn that fellows were allowed to stop on at Ripton till they were twenty-five, simply to play football. This is scarcely likely to have been based on fact. Few lower form legends are.

Jevons, the Ripton captain, through having played opposite Trevor for three seasons—he was the Ripton left centre-three-quarter—had come to be quite an intimate of his. Trevor had gone down with Milton and

Allardyce to meet the team at the station, and conduct them up to the school.

“How have you been getting on since Christmas?” asked Jevons.

“Pretty well. We’ve lost Paget, I suppose you know?”

“That was the fast man on the wing, wasn’t it?”

“Yes.”

“Well, we’ve lost a man, too.”

“Oh, yes, that red-haired forward. I remember him.”

“It ought to make us pretty even. What’s the ground like?”

“Bit greasy, I should think. We had some rain late last night.”

The ground was a bit greasy. So was the ball. When Milton kicked off up the hill with what wind there was in his favour, the outsides of both teams found it difficult to hold the ball. Jevons caught it on his twenty-five line, and promptly handed it forward. The first scrum was formed in the heart of the enemy’s country.

A deep, swelling roar from either touch-line greeted the school’s advantage. A feature of a big match was always the shouting. It rarely ceased throughout the whole course of the game, the monotonous but impressive sound of five hundred voices all shouting the same word. It was worth hearing. Sometimes the evenness of the noise would change to an excited crescendo as a school three-quarter got off, or the school back pulled up the attack with a fine piece of defence. Sometimes the shouting would give place to clapping when the school was being pressed and somebody had found touch with a long kick. But mostly the man on the ropes roared steadily and without cessation, and with the full force of his lungs, the word “Wrykyn!”

The scrum was a long one. For two minutes the forwards heaved and strained, now one side, now the other, gaining a few inches. The Wrykyn pack were doing all they knew to heel, but their opponents’ superior weight was telling. Ripton had got the ball, and were keeping it. Their game was to break through with it and rush. Then suddenly one of their forwards kicked it on, and just at that moment the opposition of the Wrykyn pack gave way, and the scrum broke up. The ball came out on the Wrykyn side, and Allardyce whipped it out to Deacon, who was playing half with him.

“Ball’s out,” cried the Ripton half who was taking the scrum. “Break up. It’s out.”

And his colleague on the left darted across to stop Trevor, who had taken Deacon’s pass, and was running through on the right.

Trevor ran splendidly. He was a three-quarter who took a lot of stopping when he once got away. Jevons and the Ripton half met him almost simultaneously, and each slackened his pace for the fraction of a second, to allow the other to tackle. As they hesitated, Trevor passed them. He had long ago learned that to go hard when you have once started is the thing that pays.

He could see that Rand-Brown was racing up for the pass, and, as he reached the back, he sent the ball to him, waist-high. Then the back got to him, and he came down with a thud, with a vision, seen from the corner of his eye, of the ball bounding forward out of the wing three-quarter’s hands into touch. Rand-Brown had bungled the pass in the old familiar way, and lost a certain try.

The touch-judge ran up with his flag waving in the air, but the referee had other views.

“Knocked on inside,” he said; “scrum here.”

“Here” was, Trevor saw with unspeakable disgust, some three yards from the goal-line. Rand-Brown had only had to take the pass, and he must have scored.

The Ripton forwards were beginning to find their feet better now, and they carried the scrum. A truculent-looking warrior in one of those ear-guards which are tied on by strings underneath the chin, and which add fifty per cent to the ferocity of a forward’s appearance, broke away with the ball at his feet, and swept down the field with the rest of the pack at his heels. Trevor arrived too late to pull up the rush, which had gone straight down the right touch-line, and it was not till Strachan fell on the ball on the Wrykyn twenty-five line that the danger ceased to threaten.

Even now the school were in a bad way. The enemy were pressing keenly, and a real piece of combination among their three-quarters would only too probably end in a try. Fortunately for them, Allardyce and Deacon were a better pair of halves than the couple they were marking. Also, the Ripton forwards heeled slowly, and Allardyce had generally got his man safely buried in the mud before he could pass.

He was just getting round for the tenth time to bottle his opponent as before, when he slipped. When the ball came out he was on all fours, and the Ripton exponent, finding to his great satisfaction that he had not been tackled, whipped the ball out on the left, where a wing three-quarter hovered.

This was the man Rand-Brown was supposed to be marking, and once again did Barry’s substitute prove of what stuff his tackling powers were made. After his customary moment of hesitation, he had at the Riptonian’s neck. The Riptonian handed him off in a manner that recalled the palmy days of the old Prize Ring—handing off was always slightly vigorous in the Ripton v. Wrykyn match—and dashed over the line in the extreme corner.

There was anguish on the two touch-lines. Trevor looked savage, but made no comment. The team lined up in silence.

It takes a very good kick to convert a try from the touch-line. Jevons’ kick was a long one, but it fell short. Ripton led by a try to nothing.

A few more scrums near the halfway line, and a fine attempt at a dropped goal by the Ripton back, and it was half-time, with the score unaltered.

During the interval there were lemons. An excellent thing is your lemon at half-time. It cools the mouth, quenches the thirst, stimulates the desire to be at them again, and improves the play.

Possibly the Wrykyn team had been happier in their choice of lemons on this occasion, for no sooner had the game been restarted than Clowes ran the whole length of the field, dodged through the three-quarters, punted over the back’s head, and scored a really brilliant try, of the sort that Paget had been fond of scoring in the previous term. The man on the touch-line brightened up wonderfully, and began to try and calculate the probable score by the end of the game, on the assumption that, as a try had been scored in the first two minutes, ten would be scored in the first twenty, and so on.

But the calculations were based on false premises. After Strachan had failed to convert, and the game had been resumed with the score at one try all, play settled down in the centre, and neither side could pierce the other’s defence. Once Jevons got off for Ripton, but Trevor brought him down safely, and once Rand-Brown let his man through, as before, but Strachan was there to meet him, and the effort came to nothing. For Wrykyn, no one did much except tackle. The forwards were beaten by the heavier pack, and seldom let the ball out. Allardyce intercepted a pass when about ten minutes of play remained, and ran through to the back. But the back, who was a capable man and in his third season in the team, laid him low scientifically before he could reach the line.

Altogether it looked as if the match were going to end in a draw. The Wrykyn defence, with the exception of Rand-Brown, was too good to be penetrated, while the Ripton forwards, by always getting the ball in the scrums, kept them from attacking. It was about five minutes from the end of the game when the Ripton right centre-three-quarter, in trying to punt across to the wing, miskicked and sent the ball straight into the hands of Trevor's colleague in the centre. Before his man could get round to him he had slipped through, with Trevor backing him up. The back, as a good back should, seeing two men coming at him, went for the man with the ball. But by the time he had brought him down, the ball was no longer where it had originally been. Trevor had got it, and was running in between the posts.

This time Strachan put on the extra two points without difficulty.

Ripton played their hardest for the remaining minutes, but without result. The game ended with Wrykyn a goal ahead—a goal and a try to a try. For the second time in one season the Ripton match had ended in a victory—a thing it was very rarely in the habit of doing.

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The senior day-room at Seymour's rejoiced considerably that night. The air was dark with flying cushions, and darker still, occasionally, when the usual humorist turned the gas out. Milton was out, for he had gone to the dinner which followed the Ripton match, and the man in command of the house in his absence was Mill. And the senior day-room had no respect whatever for Mill.

Barry joined in the revels as well as his ankle would let him, but he was not feeling happy. The disappointment of being out of the first still weighed on him.

At about eight, when things were beginning to grow really lively, and the noise seemed likely to crack the window at any moment, the door was flung open and Milton stalked in.

"What's all this row?" he inquired. "Stop it at once."

As a matter of fact, the row had stopped—directly he came in.

"Is Barry here?" he asked.

"Yes," said that youth.

"Congratulate you on your first, Barry. We've just had a meeting and given you your colours. Trevor told me to tell you."

The Gold Bat/Chapter 11

but they'll have to play their best. Day's have got some good men." "Fine scrum," said Clowes. "Yes. Quick in the open, too, which is always good business

It was something of a consolation to Barry and his friends—at any rate, to Barry and Drummond—that directly after they had been evicted from their study, the house-matches began. Except for the Ripton match, the house-matches were the most important event of the Easter term. Even the sports at the beginning of April were productive of less excitement. There were twelve houses at Wrykyn, and they played on the "knocking-out" system. To be beaten once meant that a house was no longer eligible for the competition. It could play "friendlies" as much as it liked, but, play it never so wisely, it could not lift the cup. Thus it often happened that a weak house, by fluking a victory over a strong rival, found itself, much to its surprise, in the semi-final, or sometimes even in the final. This was rarer at football than at cricket, for at football the better team generally wins.

The favourites this year were Donaldson's, though some fancied Seymour's. Donaldson's had Trevor, whose leadership was worth almost more than his play. In no other house was training so rigid. You could tell a Donaldson's man, if he was in his house-team, at a glance. If you saw a man eating oatmeal biscuits in the shop, and eyeing wistfully the while the stacks of buns and pastry, you could put him down as a Donaldsonite without further evidence. The captains of the other houses used to prescribe a certain amount of self-abnegation in the matter of food, but Trevor left his men barely enough to support life—enough, that is, of the things that are really worth eating. The consequence was that Donaldson's would turn out for an important match all muscle and bone, and on such occasions it was bad for those of their opponents who had been taking life more easily. Besides Trevor they had Clowes, and had had bad luck in not having Paget. Had Paget stopped, no other house could have looked at them. But by his departure, the strength of the team had become more nearly on a level with that of Seymour's.

Some even thought that Seymour's were the stronger. Milton was as good a forward as the school possessed. Besides him there were Barry and Rand-Brown on the wings. Drummond was a useful half, and five of the pack had either first or second fifteen colours. It was a team that would take some beating.

Trevor came to that conclusion early. "If we can beat Seymour's, we'll lift the cup," he said to Clowes.

"We'll have to do all we know," was Clowes' reply.

They were watching Seymour's pile up an immense score against a scratch team got up by one of the masters. The first round of the competition was over. Donaldson's had beaten Templar's, Seymour's the School House. Templar's were rather stronger than the School House, and Donaldson's had beaten them by a rather larger score than that which Seymour's had run up in their match. But neither Trevor nor Clowes was inclined to draw any augury from this. Seymour's had taken things easily after half-time; Donaldson's had kept going hard all through.

"That makes Rand-Brown's fourth try," said Clowes, as the wing three-quarter of the second fifteen raced round and scored in the corner.

"Yes. This is the sort of game he's all right in. The man who's marking him is no good. Barry's scored twice, and both good tries, too."

"Oh, there's no doubt which is the best man," said Clowes. "I only mentioned that it was Rand-Brown's fourth as an item of interest."

The game continued. Barry scored a third try.

"We're drawn against Appleby's next round," said Trevor. "We can manage them all right."

"When is it?"

"Next Thursday. Nomads' match on Saturday. Then Ripton, Saturday week."

"Who've Seymour's drawn?"

"Day's. It'll be a good game, too. Seymour's ought to win, but they'll have to play their best. Day's have got some good men."

"Fine scrum," said Clowes. "Yes. Quick in the open, too, which is always good business. I wish they'd beat Seymour's."

"Oh, we ought to be all right, whichever wins."

Appleby's did not offer any very serious resistance to the Donaldson attack. They were outplayed at every point of the game, and, before half-time, Donaldson's had scored their thirty points. It was a rule in all in-school matches—and a good rule, too—that, when one side led by thirty points, the match stopped. This prevented those massacres which do so much towards crushing all the football out of the members of the beaten team; and it kept the winning team from getting slack, by urging them on to score their thirty points before half-time. There were some houses—notoriously slack—which would go for a couple of seasons without ever playing the second half of a match.

Having polished off the men of Appleby, the Donaldson team trooped off to the other game to see how Seymour's were getting on with Day's. It was evidently an exciting match. The first half had been played to the accompaniment of much shouting from the ropes. Though coming so early in the competition, it was really the semi-final, for whichever team won would be almost certain to get into the final. The school had turned up in large numbers to watch.

"Seymour's looking tired of life," said Clowes. "That would seem as if his fellows weren't doing well."

"What's been happening here?" asked Trevor of an enthusiast in a Seymour's house cap whose face was crimson with yelling.

"One goal all," replied the enthusiast huskily. "Did you beat Appleby's?"

"Yes. Thirty points before half-time. Who's been doing the scoring here?"

"Milton got in for us. He barged through out of touch. We've been pressing the whole time. Barry got over once, but he was held up. Hullo, they're beginning again. Buck up, Sey-mour's."

His voice cracking on the high note, he took an immense slab of vanilla chocolate as a remedy for hoarseness.

"Who scored for Day's?" asked Clowes.

"Strachan. Rand-Brown let him through from their twenty-five. You never saw anything so rotten as Rand-Brown. He doesn't take his passes, and Strachan gets past him every time."

"Is Strachan playing on the wing?"

Strachan was the first fifteen full-back.

"Yes. They've put young Bassett back instead of him. Sey-mour's. Buck up, Seymour's. We-ell played! There, did you ever see anything like it?" he broke off disgustedly.

The Seymourite playing centre next to Rand-Brown had run through to the back and passed out to his wing, as a good centre should. It was a perfect pass, except that it came at his head instead of his chest. Nobody with any pretensions to decent play should have missed it. Rand-Brown, however, achieved that feat. The ball struck his hands and bounded forward. The referee blew his whistle for a scrum, and a certain try was lost.

From the scrum the Seymour's forwards broke away to the goal-line, where they were pulled up by Bassett. The next minute the defence had been pierced, and Drummond was lying on the ball a yard across the line. The enthusiast standing by Clowes expended the last relics of his voice in commemorating the fact that his side had the lead.

"Drummond'll be good next year," said Trevor. And he made a mental note to tell Allardyce, who would succeed him in the command of the school football, to keep an eye on the player in question.

The triumph of the Seymourites was not long lived. Milton failed to convert Drummond's try. From the drop-out from the twenty-five line Barry got the ball, and punted into touch. The throw-out was not straight, and a scrum was formed. The ball came out to the Day's halves, and went across to Strachan. Rand-Brown hesitated, and then made a futile spring at the first fifteen man's neck. Strachan handed him off easily, and ran. The Seymour's full-back, who was a poor player, failed to get across in time. Strachan ran round behind the posts, the kick succeeded, and Day's now led by two points.

After this the game continued in Day's half. Five minutes before time was up, Drummond got the ball from a scrum nearly on the line, passed it to Barry on the wing instead of opening up the game by passing to his centres, and Barry slipped through in the corner. This put Seymour's just one point ahead, and there they stayed till the whistle blew for no-side.

Milton walked over to the boarding-houses with Clowes and Trevor. He was full of the match, particularly of the iniquity of Rand-Brown. "I slanged him on the field," he said. "It's a thing I don't often do, but what else can you do when a man plays like that? He lost us three certain tries."

"When did you administer your rebuke?" inquired Clowes.

"When he had let Strachan through that second time, in the second half. I asked him why on earth he tried to play footer at all. I told him a good kiss-in-the-ring club was about his form. It was rather cheap, but I felt so frightfully sick about it. It's sickening to be let down like that when you've been pressing the whole time, and ought to be scoring every other minute."

"What had he to say on the subject?" asked Clowes.

"Oh, he gassed a bit until I told him I'd kick him if he said another word. That shut him up."

"You ought to have kicked him. You want all the kicking practice you can get. I never saw anything feebler than that shot of yours after Drummond's try."

"I'd like to see you take a kick like that. It was nearly on the touch-line. Still, when we play you, we shan't need to convert any of our tries. We'll get our thirty points without that. Perhaps you'd like to scratch?"

"As a matter of fact," said Clowes confidentially, "I am going to score seven tries against you off my own bat. You'll be sorry you ever turned out when we've finished with you."

The White Feather/Chapter 15

were in the team. That's the way things happen. I only wonder the whole scrum didn't have it." "What beastly luck," said Allardyce. "We had measles like

On the Saturday following this episode, the first fifteen travelled to Ripton to play the return match with that school on its own ground. Of the two Ripton matches, the one played at Wrykyn was always the big event of the football year; but the other came next in importance, and the telegram which was despatched to the school shop at the close of the game was always awaited with anxiety. This year Wrykyn looked forward to the return match with a certain amount of apathy, due partly to the fact that the school was in a slack, unpatriotic state, and partly to the hammering the team had received in the previous term, when the Ripton centre three-quarters had run through and scored with monotonous regularity. "We're bound to get sat on," was the general verdict of the school.

Allardyce, while thoroughly agreeing with this opinion, did his best to conceal the fact from the rest of the team. He had certainly done his duty by them. Every day for the past fortnight the forwards and outsides had turned out to run and pass, and on the Saturdays there had been matches with Corpus, Oxford, and the Cambridge Old Wrykinians. In both games the school had been beaten. In fact, it seemed as if they could

only perform really well when they had no opponents. To see the three-quarters racing down the field (at practice) and scoring innumerable (imaginary) tries, one was apt to be misled into considering them a fine quartette. But when there was a match, all the beautiful dash and precision of the passing faded away, and the last thing they did was to run straight. Barry was the only one of the four who played the game properly.

But, as regarded condition, there was nothing wrong with the team. Even Trevor could not have made them train harder; and Allardyce in his more sanguine moments had a shadowy hope that the Ripton score might, with care, be kept in the teens.

Barry had bought a Sportsman at the station, and he unfolded it as the train began to move. Searching the left-hand column of the middle page, as we all do when we buy the Sportsman on Saturday—to see how our names look in print, and what sort of a team the enemy has got—he made a remarkable discovery. At the same moment Drummond, on the other side of the carriage, did the same.

"I say," he said, "they must have had a big clear-out at Ripton. Have you seen the team they've got out today?"

"I was just looking at it," said Barry.

"What's up with it?" inquired Allardyce. "Let's have a look."

"They've only got about half their proper team. They've got a different back—Grey isn't playing."

"Both their centres are, though," said Drummond.

"More fun for us, Drum., old chap," said Attell. "I'm going home again. Stop the train."

Drummond said nothing. He hated Attell most when he tried to be facetious.

"Dunn isn't playing, nor is Waite," said Barry, "so they haven't got either of their proper halves. I say, we might have a chance of doing something today."

"Of course we shall," said Allardyce. "You've only got to buck up and we've got them on toast."

The atmosphere in the carriage became charged with optimism. It seemed a simple thing to defeat a side which was practically a Ripton "A" team. The centre three-quarters were there still, it was true, but Allardyce and Drummond ought to be able to prevent the halves ever getting the ball out to them. The team looked on those two unknown halves as timid novices, who would lose their heads at the kick-off. As a matter of fact, the system of football teaching at Ripton was so perfect, and the keenness so great, that the second fifteen was nearly as good as the first every year. But the Wrykyn team did not know this, with the exception of Allardyce, who kept his knowledge to himself; and they arrived at Ripton jaunty and confident.

Keith, the Ripton captain, who was one of the centre three-quarters who had made so many holes in the Wrykyn defence in the previous term, met the team at the station, and walked up to the school with them, carrying Allardyce's bag.

"You seem to have lost a good many men at Christmas," said Allardyce. "We were reading the Sportsman in the train. Apparently, you've only got ten of your last term's lot. Have they all left?"

The Ripton captain grinned ruefully.

"Not much," he replied. "They're all here. All except Dunn. You remember Dunn? Little thick-set chap who played half. He always had his hair quite tidy and parted exactly in the middle all through the game."

"Oh, yes, I remember Dunn. What's he doing now?"

"Gone to Coopers Hill. Rot, his not going to the Varsity. He'd have walked into his blue."

Allardyce agreed. He had marked Dunn in the match of the previous term, and that immaculate sportsman had made things not a little warm for him.

"Where are all the others, then?" he asked. "Where's that other half of yours? And the rest of the forwards?"

"Mumps," said Keith.

"What!"

"It's a fact. Rot, isn't it? We've had a regular bout of it. Twenty fellows got it altogether. Naturally, four of those were in the team. That's the way things happen. I only wonder the whole scrum didn't have it."

"What beastly luck," said Allardyce. "We had measles like that a couple of years ago in the summer term, and had to play the Incogs and Zingari with a sort of second eleven. We got mopped."

"That's what we shall get this afternoon, I'm afraid," said Keith.

"Oh, no," said Allardyce. "Of course you won't."

And, as events turned out, that was one of the truest remarks he had ever made in his life.

*****

One of the drawbacks to playing Ripton on its own ground was the crowd. Another was the fact that one generally got beaten. But your sportsman can put up with defeat. What he does not like is a crowd that regards him as a subtle blend of incompetent idiot and malicious scoundrel, and says so very loud and clear. It was not, of course, the school that did this. They spent their time blushing for the shouters. It was the patriotic inhabitants of Ripton town who made the school wish that they could be saved from their friends. The football ground at Ripton was at the edge of the school fields, separated from the road by narrow iron railings; and along these railings the choicest spirits of the town would line up, and smoke and yell, and spit and yell again. As Wordsworth wrote, "There are two voices". They were on something like the following lines.

Inside the railings: "Sch-oo-oo-oo-oo-l! Buck up Sch-oo-oo-oo-oo-l!! Get it OUT, Schoo-oo-oo-oo-l!!!"

Outside the railings: "Gow it, Ripton! That's the way, Ripton! Twist his good-old-English-adjectived neck, Ripton! Sit on his forcibly described head, Ripton! Gow it, Ripton! Haw, Haw, Haw! They ain't no use, RIPton! Kick 'im in the eye, RipTON! Haw, Haw, Haw!"

The bursts of merriment signalised the violent downfall of some dangerous opponent.

The school loathed these humble supporters, and occasionally fastidious juniors would go the length of throwing chunks of mud at them through the railings. But nothing discouraged them or abated their fervid desire to see the school win. Every year they seemed to increase in zeal, and they were always in great form at the Wrykyn match.

It would be charitable to ascribe to this reason the gruesome happenings of that afternoon. They needed some explaining away.

*****

Allardyce won the toss, and chose to start downhill, with the wind in his favour. It is always best to get these advantages at the beginning of the game. If one starts against the wind, it usually changes ends at half-time.

Amidst a roar from both touch-lines and a volley of howls from the road, a Ripton forward kicked off. The ball flew in the direction of Stanning, on the right wing. A storm of laughter arose from the road as he dropped it. The first scrum was formed on the Wrykyn twenty-five line.

The Ripton forwards got the ball, and heeled with their usual neatness. The Ripton half who was taking the scrum gathered it cleanly, and passed to his colleague. He was a sturdy youth with a dark, rather forbidding face, in which the acute observer might have read signs of the savage. He was of the breed which is vaguely described at public schools as "nigger", a term covering every variety of shade from ebony to light lemon. As a matter of fact he was a half-caste, sent home to England to be educated. Drummond recognised him as he dived forward to tackle him. The last place where they had met had been the roped ring at Aldershot. It was his opponent in the final of the Feathers.

He reached him as he swerved, and they fell together. The ball bounded forward.

"Hullo, Peteiro," he said. "Thought you'd left."

The other grinned recognition.

"Hullo, Drummond."

"Going up to Aldershot this year?"

"Yes. Light-Weight."

"So am I."

The scrum had formed by now, and further conversation was impossible. Drummond looked a little thoughtful as he put the ball in. He had been told that Peteiro was leaving Ripton at Christmas. It was a nuisance his being still at school. Drummond was not afraid of him—he would have fought a champion of the world if the school had expected him to—but he could not help remembering that it was only by the very narrowest margin, and after a terrific three rounds, that he had beaten him in the Feathers the year before. It would be too awful for words if the decision were to be reversed in the coming competition.

But he was not allowed much leisure for pondering on the future. The present was too full of incident and excitement. The withdrawal of the four invalids and the departure of Dunn had not reduced the Ripton team to that wreck of its former self which the Wrykyn fifteen had looked for. On the contrary, their play seemed, if anything, a shade better than it had been in the former match. There was all the old aggressiveness, and Peteiro and his partner, so far from being timid novices and losing their heads, eclipsed the exhibition given at Wrykyn by Waite and Dunn. Play had only been in progress six minutes when Keith, taking a pass on the twenty-five line, slipped past Attell, ran round the back, and scored between the posts. Three minutes later the other Ripton centre scored. At the end of twenty minutes the Wrykyn line had been crossed five times, and each of the tries had been converted.

"Can't you fellows get that ball in the scrum?" demanded Allardyce plaintively, as the team began for the fifth time the old familiar walk to the half-way line. "Pack tight, and get the first shove."

The result of this address was to increase the Ripton lead by four points. In his anxiety to get the ball, one of the Wrykyn forwards started heeling before it was in, and the referee promptly gave a free kick to Ripton for "foot up". As this event took place within easy reach of the Wrykyn goal, and immediately in front of the same, Keith had no difficulty in bringing off the penalty.

By half-time the crowd in the road, hoarse with laughter, had exhausted all their adjectives and were repeating themselves. The Ripton score was six goals, a penalty goal, and two tries to nil, and the Wrykyn team was a demoralised rabble.

The fact that the rate of scoring slackened somewhat after the interval may be attributed to the disinclination of the Riptonians to exert themselves unduly. They ceased playing in the stern and scientific spirit in which they had started; and, instead of adhering to an orthodox game, began to enjoy themselves. The forwards no longer heeled like a machine. They broke through ambitiously, and tried to score on their own account. When the outsides got as far as the back, they did not pass. They tried to drop goals. In this way only twenty-two points were scored after half-time. Allardyce and Drummond battled on nobly, but with their pack hopelessly outclassed it was impossible for them to do anything of material use. Barry, on the wing, tackled his man whenever the latter got the ball, but, as a rule, the centres did not pass, but attacked by themselves. At last, by way of a fitting conclusion to the rout, the Ripton back, catching a high punt, ran instead of kicking, and, to the huge delight of the town contingent, scored. With this incident the visiting team drained the last dregs of the bitter cup. Humiliation could go no further. Almost immediately afterwards the referee blew his whistle for "No side".

"Three cheers for Wrykyn," said Keith.

To the fifteen victims it sounded ironical.

The Head of Kay's/Chapter 23

weight there was not much to grumble at. There were several heavy men in the scrum. If only these could be brought to use their weight to the last ounce when

The chances of Kay's in the inter-house Football Competition were not thought very much of by their rivals. Of late years each of the other houses had prayed to draw Kay's for the first round, it being a certainty that this would mean that they got at least into the second round, and so a step nearer the cup. Nobody, however weak compared to Blackburn's, which was at the moment the crack football house, ever doubted the result of a match with Kay's. It was looked on as a sort of gentle trial trip.

But the efforts of the two captains during the last weeks of the winter term had put a different complexion on matters. Football is not like cricket. It is a game at which anybody of average size and a certain amount of pluck can make himself at least moderately proficient. Kennedy, after consultations with Fenn, had picked out what he considered the best fifteen, and the two set themselves to knock it into shape. In weight there was not much to grumble at. There were several heavy men in the scrum. If only these could be brought to use their weight to the last ounce when shoving, all would be well as far as the forwards were concerned. The outsides were not so satisfactory. With the exception, of course, of Fenn, they lacked speed. They were well-meaning, but they could not run any faster by virtue of that. Kay's would have to trust to its scrum to pull it through. Peel, the sprinter whom Kennedy had discovered in his search for athletes, had to be put in the pack on account of his weight, which deprived the three-quarter line of what would have been a good man in that position. It was a drawback, too, that Fenn was accustomed to play on the wing. To be of real service, a wing three-quarter must be fed by his centres, and, unfortunately, there was no centre in Kay's—or Dencroft's, as it should now be called—who was capable of making openings enough to give Fenn a chance. So he had to play in the centre, where he did not know the game so well.

Kennedy realised at an early date that the one chance of the house was to get together before the house-matches and play as a coherent team, not as a collection of units. Combination will often make up for lack of speed in a three-quarter line. So twice a week Dencroft's turned out against scratch teams of varying strength.

It delighted Kennedy to watch their improvement. The first side they played ran through them to the tune of three goals and four tries to a try, and it took all the efforts of the Head of the house to keep a spirit of pessimism from spreading in the ranks. Another frost of this sort, and the sprouting keenness of the house would be nipped in the bud. He conducted himself with much tact. Another captain might have made the fatal error of trying to stir his team up with pungent abuse. He realised what a mistake this would be. It did not need a great deal of discouragement to send the house back to its old slack ways. Another such defeat,

following immediately in the footsteps of the first, and they would begin to ask themselves what was the good of mortifying the flesh simply to get a licking from a scratch team by twenty-four points. Kay's, they would feel, always had got beaten, and they always would, to the end of time. A house that has once got thoroughly slack does not change its views of life in a moment.

Kennedy acted craftily.

"You played jolly well," he told his despondent team, as they trooped off the field. "We haven't got together yet, that's all. And it was a hot side we were playing today. They would have licked Blackburn's."

A good deal more in the same strain gave the house team the comfortable feeling that they had done uncommonly well to get beaten by only twenty-four points. Kennedy fostered the delusion, and in the meantime arranged with Mr Dencroft to collect fifteen innocents and lead them forth to be slaughtered by the house on the following Friday. Mr Dencroft entered into the thing with a relish. When he showed Kennedy the list of his team on the Friday morning, that diplomatist chuckled. He foresaw a good time in the near future. "You must play up like the dickens," he told the house during the dinner-hour. "Dencroft is bringing a hot lot this afternoon. But I think we shall lick them."

They did. When the whistle blew for No-side, the house had just finished scoring its fourteenth try. Six goals and eight tries to nil was the exact total. Dencroft's returned to headquarters, asking itself in a dazed way if these things could be. They saw that cup on their mantelpiece already. Keenness redoubled. Football became the fashion in Dencroft's. The play of the team improved weekly. And its spirit improved too. The next scratch team they played beat them by a goal and a try to a goal. Dencroft's was not depressed. It put the result down to a fluke. Then they beat another side by a try to nothing; and by that time they had got going as an organised team, and their heart was in the thing.

They had improved out of all knowledge when the house-matches began.

Blair's was the lucky house that drew against them in the first round.

"Good business," said the men of Blair. "Wonder who we'll play in the second round."

They left the field marvelling. For some unaccountable reason, Dencroft's had flatly refused to act in the good old way as a doormat for their opponents. Instead, they had played with a dash and knowledge of the game which for the first quarter of an hour quite unnerved Blair's. In that quarter of an hour they scored three times, and finished the game with two goals and three tries to their name.

The School looked on it as a huge joke. "Heard the latest?" friends would say on meeting one another the day after the game. "Kay's—I mean Dencroft's—have won a match. They simply sat on Blair's. First time they've ever won a house-match, I should think. Blair's are awfully sick. We shall have to be looking out."

Whereat the friend would grin broadly. The idea of Dencroft's making a game of it with his house tickled him.

When Dencroft's took fifteen points off Mulholland's, the joke began to lose its humour.

"Why, they must be some good," said the public, startled at the novelty of the idea. "If they win another match, they'll be in the final!"

Kay's in the final! Cricket? Oh, yes, they had got into the final at cricket, of course. But that wasn't the house. It was Fenn. Footer was different. One man couldn't do everything there. The only possible explanation was that they had improved to an enormous extent.

Then people began to remember that they had played in scratch games against the house. There seemed to be a tremendous number of fellows who had done this. At one time or another, it seemed, half the School had opposed Dencroft's in the ranks of a scratch side. It began to dawn on Eckleton that in an unostentatious way Dencroft's had been putting in about seven times as much practice as any other three houses rolled together. No wonder they combined so well.

When the School House, with three first fifteen men in its team, fell before them, the reputation of Dencroft's was established. It had reached the final, and only Blackburn's stood now between it and the cup.

All this while Blackburn's had been doing what was expected of them by beating each of their opponents with great ease. There was nothing sensational about this as there was in the case of Dencroft's. The latter were, therefore, favourites when the two teams lined up against one another in the final. The School felt that a house that had had such a meteoric flight as Dencroft's must—by all that was dramatic—carry the thing through to its obvious conclusion, and pull off the final.

But Fenn and Kennedy were not so hopeful. A certain amount of science, a great deal of keenness, and excellent condition, had carried them through the other rounds in rare style, but, though they would probably give a good account of themselves, nobody who considered the two teams impartially could help seeing that Dencroft's was a weaker side than Blackburn's. Nothing but great good luck could bring them out victorious today.

And so it proved. Dencroft's played up for all they were worth from the kick-off to the final solo on the whistle, but they were over-matched. Blackburn's scrum was too heavy for them, with its three first fifteen men and two seconds. Dencroft's pack were shoved off the ball time after time, and it was only keen tackling that kept the score down. By half-time Blackburn's were a couple of tries ahead. Fenn scored soon after the interval with a great run from his own twenty-five, and for a quarter of an hour it looked as if it might be anybody's game. Kennedy converted the try, so that Blackburn's only led by a single point. A fluky kick or a mistake on the part of a Blackburnite outside might give Dencroft's the cup.

But the Blackburn outsides did not make mistakes. They played a strong, sure game, and the forwards fed them well. Ten minutes before No-side, Jimmy Silver ran in, increasing the lead to six points. And though Dencroft's never went to pieces, and continued to show fight to the very end, Blackburn's were not to be denied, and Challis scored a final try in the corner. Blackburn's won the cup by the comfortable, but not excessive, margin of a goal and three tries to a goal.

Dencroft's had lost the cup; but they had lost it well. Their credit had increased in spite of the defeat.

"I thought we shouldn't be able to manage Blackburn's," said Kennedy, "What we must do now is win that sports' cup."

Some Aspects of Game-Captaincy (1900)

game commences. The partial slacker, scorning to insert his head in the scrum, assumes a commanding position outside and from this point criticises the

The Adventures of Sally/Chapter 2

against Oxford. I was scrum-half." "And what is a scrum-half?" asked Sally, patiently. "Yes, I know you're going to say it's a scrum-half, but can't you

Sally was sitting with her back against a hillock of golden sand, watching with half-closed eyes the denizens of Roville-sur-Mer at their familiar morning occupations. At Roville, as at most French seashore resorts, the morning is the time when the visiting population assembles in force on the beach. Whiskered fathers of families made cheerful patches of colour in the foreground. Their female friends and relatives clustered in

groups under gay parasols. Dogs roamed to and fro, and children dug industriously with spades, ever and anon suspending their labours in order to smite one another with these handy implements. One of the dogs, a poodle of military aspect, wandered up to Sally: and discovering that she was in possession of a box of sweets, decided to remain and await developments.

Few things are so pleasant as the anticipation of them, but Sally's vacation had proved an exception to this rule. It had been a magic month of lazy happiness. She had drifted luxuriously from one French town to another, till the charm of Roville, with its blue sky, its Casino, its snow-white hotels along the Promenade, and its general glitter and gaiety, had brought her to a halt. Here she could have stayed indefinitely, but the voice of America was calling her back. Gerald had written to say that "The Primrose Way" was to be produced in Detroit, preliminary to its New York run, so soon that, if she wished to see the opening, she must return at once. A scrappy, hurried, unsatisfactory letter, the letter of a busy man: but one that Sally could not ignore. She was leaving Roville to-morrow.

To-day, however, was to-day: and she sat and watched the bathers with a familiar feeling of peace, revelling as usual in the still novel sensation of having nothing to do but bask in the warm sunshine and listen to the faint murmur of the little waves.

But, if there was one drawback, she had discovered, to a morning on the Roville plage, it was that you had a tendency to fall asleep: and this is a degrading thing to do so soon after breakfast, even if you are on a holiday. Usually, Sally fought stoutly against the temptation, but to-day the sun was so warm and the whisper of the waves so insinuating that she had almost dozed off, when she was aroused by voices close at hand. There were many voices on the beach, both near and distant, but these were talking English, a novelty in Roville, and the sound of the familiar tongue jerked Sally back from the borders of sleep. A few feet away, two men had seated themselves on the sand.

From the first moment she had set out on her travels, it had been one of Sally's principal amusements to examine the strangers whom chance threw in her way and to try by the light of her intuition to fit them out with characters and occupations: nor had she been discouraged by an almost consistent failure to guess right. Out of the corner of her eye she inspected these two men.

The first of the pair did not attract her. He was a tall, dark man whose tight, precise mouth and rather high cheeks bones gave him an appearance vaguely sinister. He had the dusky look of the clean-shaven man whose life is a perpetual struggle with a determined beard. He certainly shaved twice a day, and just as certainly had the self-control not to swear when he cut himself. She could picture him smiling nastily when this happened.

"Hard," diagnosed Sally. "I shouldn't like him. A lawyer or something, I think."

She turned to the other and found herself looking into his eyes. This was because he had been staring at Sally with the utmost intentness ever since his arrival. His mouth had opened slightly. He had the air of a man who, after many disappointments, has at last found something worth looking at.

"Rather a dear," decided Sally.

He was a sturdy, thick-set young man with an amiable, freckled face and the reddest hair Sally had ever seen. He had a square chin, and at one angle of the chin a slight cut. And Sally was convinced that, however he had behaved on receipt of that wound, it had not been with superior self-control.

"A temper, I should think," she meditated. "Very quick, but soon over. Not very clever, I should say, but nice."

She looked away, finding his fascinated gaze a little embarrassing.

The dark man, who in the objectionably competent fashion which, one felt, characterized all his actions, had just succeeded in lighting a cigarette in the teeth of a strong breeze, threw away the match and resumed the conversation, which had presumably been interrupted by the process of sitting down.

"And how is Scrymgeour?" he inquired.

"Oh, all right," replied the young man with red hair absently. Sally was looking straight in front of her, but she felt that his eyes were still busy.

"I was surprised at his being here. He told me he meant to stay in Paris."

There was a slight pause. Sally gave the attentive poodle a piece of nougat.

"I say," observed the red-haired young man in clear, penetrating tones that vibrated with intense feeling, "that's the prettiest girl I've seen in my life!"

At this frank revelation of the red-haired young man's personal opinions, Sally, though considerably startled, was not displeased. A broad-minded girl, the outburst seemed to her a legitimate comment on a matter of public interest. The young man's companion, on the other hand, was unmixedly shocked.

"My dear fellow!" he ejaculated.

"Oh, it's all right," said the red-haired young man, unmoved. "She can't understand. There isn't a bally soul in this dashed place that can speak a word of English. If I didn't happen to remember a few odd bits of French, I should have starved by this time. That girl," he went on, returning to the subject most imperatively occupying his mind, "is an absolute topper! I give you my solemn word I've never seen anybody to touch her. Look at those hands and feet. You don't get them outside France. Of course, her mouth is a bit wide," he said reluctantly.

Sally's immobility, added to the other's assurance concerning the linguistic deficiencies of the inhabitants of Roville, seemed to reassure the dark man. He breathed again. At no period of his life had he ever behaved with anything but the most scrupulous correctness himself, but he had quailed at the idea of being associated even remotely with incorrectness in another. It had been a black moment for him when the red-haired young man had uttered those few kind words.

"Still you ought to be careful," he said austerely.

He looked at Sally, who was now dividing her attention between the poodle and a raffish-looking mongrel, who had joined the party, and returned to the topic of the mysterious Scrymgeour.

"How is Scrymgeour's dyspepsia?"

The red-haired young man seemed but faintly interested in the vicissitudes of Scrymgeour's interior.

"Do you notice the way her hair sort of curls over her ears?" he said. "Eh? Oh, pretty much the same, I think."

"What hotel are you staying at?"

"The Normandie."

Sally, dipping into the box for another chocolate cream, gave an imperceptible start. She, too, was staying at the Normandie. She presumed that her admirer was a recent arrival, for she had seen nothing of him at the hotel.

"The Normandie?" The dark man looked puzzled. "I know Roville pretty well by report, but I've never heard of any Hotel Normandie. Where is it?"

"It's a little shanty down near the station. Not much of a place. Still, it's cheap, and the cooking's all right."

His companion's bewilderment increased.

"What on earth is a man like Scrymgeour doing there?" he said. Sally was conscious of an urgent desire to know more and more about the absent Scrymgeour. Constant repetition of his name had made him seem almost like an old friend. "If there's one thing he's fussy about..."

"There are at least eleven thousand things he's fussy about," interrupted the red-haired young man disapprovingly. "Jumpy old blighter!"

"If there's one thing he's particular about, it's the sort of hotel he goes to. Ever since I've known him he has always wanted the best. I should have thought he would have gone to the Splendide." He mused on this problem in a dissatisfied sort of way for a moment, then seemed to reconcile himself to the fact that a rich man's eccentricities must be humoured. "I'd like to see him again. Ask him if he will dine with me at the Splendide to-night. Say eight sharp."

Sally, occupied with her dogs, whose numbers had now been augmented by a white terrier with a black patch over its left eye, could not see the young man's face: but his voice, when he replied, told her that something was wrong. There was a false airiness in it.

"Oh, Scrymgeour isn't in Roville."

"No? Where is he?"

"Paris, I believe."

"What!" The dark man's voice sharpened. He sounded as though he were cross-examining a reluctant witness. "Then why aren't you there? What are you doing here? Did he give you a holiday?"

"Yes, he did."

"When do you rejoin him?"

"I don't."

"What!"

The red-haired young man's manner was not unmistakably dogged.

"Well, if you want to know," he said, "the old blighter fired me the day before yesterday."

There was a shuffling of sand as the dark man sprang up. Sally, intent on the drama which was unfolding itself beside her, absent-mindedly gave the poodle a piece of nougat which should by rights have gone to the terrier. She shot a swift glance sideways, and saw the dark man standing in an attitude rather reminiscent of the stern father of melodrama about to drive his erring daughter out into the snow. The red-haired young man, outwardly stolid, was gazing before him down the beach at a fat bather in an orange suit who, after six false starts, was now actually in the water, floating with the dignity of a wrecked balloon.

"Do you mean to tell me," demanded the dark man, "that, after all the trouble the family took to get you what was practically a sinecure with endless possibilities if you only behaved yourself, you have deliberately thrown away..." A despairing gesture completed the sentence. "Good God, you're hopeless!"

The red-haired young man made no reply. He continued to gaze down the beach. Of all outdoor sports, few are more stimulating than watching middle-aged Frenchmen bathe. Drama, action, suspense, all are here. From the first stealthy testing of the water with an apprehensive toe to the final seal-like plunge, there is never a dull moment. And apart from the excitement of the thing, judging it from a purely aesthetic standpoint, his must be a dull soul who can fail to be uplifted by the spectacle of a series of very stout men with whiskers, seen in tight bathing suits against a background of brightest blue. Yet the young man with red hair, recently in the employment of Mr. Scrymgeour, eyed this free circus without any enjoyment whatever.

"It's maddening! What are you going to do? What do you expect us to do? Are we to spend our whole lives getting you positions which you won't keep? I can tell you we're... it's monstrous! It's sickening! Good God!"

And with these words the dark man, apparently feeling, as Sally had sometimes felt in the society of her brother Fillmore, the futility of mere language, turned sharply and stalked away up the beach, the dignity of his exit somewhat marred a moment later by the fact of his straw hat blowing off and being trodden on by a passing child.

He left behind him the sort of electric calm which follows the falling of a thunderbolt; that stunned calm through which the air seems still to quiver protestingly. How long this would have lasted one cannot say: for towards the end of the first minute it was shattered by a purely terrestrial uproar. With an abruptness heralded only by one short, low gurgling snarl, there sprang into being the prettiest dog fight that Roville had seen that season.

It was the terrier with the black patch who began it. That was Sally's opinion: and such, one feels, will be the verdict of history. His best friend, anxious to make out a case for him, could not have denied that he fired the first gun of the campaign. But we must be just. The fault was really Sally's. Absorbed in the scene which had just concluded and acutely inquisitive as to why the shadowy Scrymgeour had seen fit to dispense with the red-haired young man's services, she had thrice in succession helped the poodle out of his turn. The third occasion was too much for the terrier.

There is about any dog fight a wild, gusty fury which affects the average mortal with something of the helplessness induced by some vast clashing of the elements. It seems so outside one's jurisdiction. One is oppressed with a sense of the futility of interference. And this was no ordinary dog fight. It was a stunning mêlée, which would have excited favourable comment even among the blasé residents of a negro quarter or the not easily-pleased critics of a Lancashire mining-village. From all over the beach dogs of every size, breed, and colour were racing to the scene: and while some of these merely remained in the ringside seats and barked, a considerable proportion immediately started fighting one another on general principles, well content to be in action without bothering about first causes. The terrier had got the poodle by the left hind-leg and was restating his war-aims. The raffish mongrel was apparently endeavouring to fletcherize a complete stranger of the Sealyham family.

Sally was frankly unequal to the situation, as were the entire crowd of spectators who had come galloping up from the water's edge. She had been paralysed from the start. Snarling bundles bumped against her legs and bounced away again, but she made no move. Advice in fluent French rent the air. Arms waved, and well-filled bathing suits leaped up and down. But nobody did anything practical until in the centre of the theatre of war there suddenly appeared the red-haired young man.

The only reason why dog fights do not go on for ever is that Providence has decided that on each such occasion there shall always be among those present one Master Mind; one wizard who, whatever his shortcomings in other battles of life, is in this single particular sphere competent and dominating. At Roville-sur-Mer it was the red-haired young man. His dark companion might have turned from him in disgust: his services might not have seemed worth retaining by the haughty Scrymgeour: he might be a pain in the neck to "the family"; but he did know how to stop a dog fight. From the first moment of his intervention calm began to steal over the scene. He had the same effect on the almost inextricably entwined belligerents as, in

mediaeval legend, the Holy Grail, sliding down the sunbeam, used to have on battling knights. He did not look like a dove of peace, but the most captious could not have denied that he brought home the goods. There was a magic in his soothing hands, a spell in his voice: and in a shorter time than one would have believed possible dog after dog had been sorted out and calmed down; until presently all that was left of Armageddon was one solitary small Scotch terrier, thoughtfully licking a chewed leg. The rest of the combatants, once more in their right mind and wondering what all the fuss was about, had been captured and haled away in a whirl of recrimination by voluble owners.

Having achieved this miracle, the young man turned to Sally. Gallant, one might say reckless, as he had been a moment before, he now gave indications of a rather pleasing shyness. He braced himself with that painful air of effort which announces to the world that an Englishman is about to speak a language other than his own.

"J'espère," he said, having swallowed once or twice to brace himself up for the journey through the jungle of a foreign tongue, "J'espère que vous n'êtes pas—oh, dammit, what's the word—J'espère que vous n'êtes pas blessée?"

"Blessée?"

"Yes, blessée. Wounded. Hurt, don't you know. Bitten. Oh, dash it. J'espère..."

"Oh, bitten!" said Sally, dimpling. "Oh, no, thanks very much. I wasn't bitten. And I think it was awfully brave of you to save all our lives."

The compliment seemed to pass over the young man's head. He stared at Sally with horrified eyes. Over his amiable face there swept a vivid blush. His jaw dropped.

"Oh, my sainted aunt!" he ejaculated.

Then, as if the situation was too much for him and flights the only possible solution, he spun round and disappeared at a walk so rapid that it was almost a run. Sally watched him go and was sorry that he had torn himself away. She still wanted to know why Scrymgeour had fired him.

Bedtime at Roville is an hour that seems to vary according to one's proximity to the sea. The gilded palaces along the front keep deplorable hours, polluting the night air till dawn with indefatigable jazz: but at the pensions of the economical like the Normandie, early to bed is the rule. True, Jules, the stout young native who combined the offices of night-clerk and lift attendant at that establishment, was on duty in the hall throughout the night, but few of the Normandie's patrons made use of his services.

Sally, entering shortly before twelve o'clock on the night of the day on which the dark man, the red-haired young man, and their friend Scrymgeour had come into her life, found the little hall dim and silent. Through the iron cage of the lift a single faint bulb glowed: another, over the desk in the far corner, illuminated the upper half of Jules, slumbering in a chair. Jules seemed to Sally to be on duty in some capacity or other all the time. His work, like women's, was never done. He was now restoring his tissues with a few winks of much-needed beauty sleep. Sally, who had been to the Casino to hear the band and afterwards had strolled on the moonlit promenade, had a guilty sense of intrusion.

As she stood there, reluctant to break in on Jules' rest—for her sympathetic heart, always at the disposal of the oppressed, had long ached for this overworked peon—she was relieved to hear footsteps in the street outside, followed by the opening of the front door. If Jules would have had to wake up anyway, she felt her sense of responsibility lessened. The door, having opened, closed again with a bang. Jules stirred, gurgled, blinked, and sat up, and Sally, turning, perceived that the new arrival was the red-haired young man.

"Oh, good evening," said Sally welcomingly.

The young man stopped, and shuffled uncomfortably. The morning's happenings were obviously still green in his memory. He had either not ceased blushing since their last meeting or he was celebrating their reunion by beginning to blush again: for his face was a familiar scarlet.

"Er—good evening," he said, disentangling his feet, which, in the embarrassment of the moment, had somehow got coiled up together.

"Or bon soir, I suppose you would say," murmured Sally.

The young man acknowledged receipt of this thrust by dropping his hat and tripping over it as he stooped to pick it up.

Jules, meanwhile, who had been navigating in a sort of somnambulistic trance in the neighbourhood of the lift, now threw back the cage with a rattle.

"It's a shame to have woken you up," said Sally, commiseratingly, stepping in.

Jules did not reply, for the excellent reason that he had not been woken up. Constant practice enabled him to do this sort of work without breaking his slumber. His brain, if you could call it that, was working automatically. He had shut up the gate with a clang and was tugging sluggishly at the correct rope, so that the lift was going slowly up instead of retiring down into the basement, but he was not awake.

Sally and the red-haired young man sat side by side on the small seat, watching their conductor's efforts. After the first spurt, conversation had languished. Sally had nothing of immediate interest to say, and her companion seemed to be one of these strong, silent men you read about. Only a slight snore from Jules broke the silence.

At the third floor Sally leaned forward and prodded Jules in the lower ribs. All through her stay at Roville, she had found in dealing with the native population that actions spoke louder than words. If she wanted anything in a restaurant or at a shop, she pointed; and, when she wished the lift to stop, she prodded the man in charge. It was a system worth a dozen French conversation books.

Jules brought the machine to a halt: and it was at this point that he should have done the one thing connected with his professional activities which he did really well—the opening, to wit, of the iron cage. There are ways of doing this. Jules' was the right way. He was accustomed to do it with a flourish, and generally remarked "V'la!" in a modest but self-congratulatory voice as though he would have liked to see another man who could have put through a job like that. Jules' opinion was that he might not be much to look at, but that he could open a lift door.

To-night, however, it seemed as if even this not very exacting feat was beyond his powers. Instead of inserting his key in the lock, he stood staring in an attitude of frozen horror. He was a man who took most things in life pretty seriously, and whatever was the little difficulty just now seemed to have broken him all up.

"There appears," said Sally, turning to her companion, "to be a hitch. Would you mind asking what's the matter? I don't know any French myself except 'oo la la!'"

The young man, thus appealed to, nerved himself to the task. He eyed the melancholy Jules doubtfully, and coughed in a strangled sort of way.

"Oh, esker... esker vous..."

"Don't weaken," said Sally. "I think you've got him going."

"Esker vous... Pourquoi vous ne... I mean ne vous... that is to say, quel est le raison..."

He broke off here, because at this point Jules began to explain. He explained very rapidly and at considerable length. The fact that neither of his hearers understood a word of what he was saying appeared not to have impressed itself upon him. Or, if he gave a thought to it, he dismissed the objection as trifling. He wanted to explain, and he explained. Words rushed from him like water from a geyser. Sounds which you felt you would have been able to put a meaning to if he had detached them from the main body and repeated them slowly, went swirling down the stream and were lost for ever.

"Stop him!" said Sally firmly.

The red-haired young man looked as a native of Johnstown might have looked on being requested to stop that city's celebrated flood.

"Stop him?"

"Yes. Blow a whistle or something."

Out of the depths of the young man's memory there swam to the surface a single word—a word which he must have heard somewhere or read somewhere: a legacy, perhaps, from long-vanished school-days.

"Zut!" he barked, and instantaneously Jules turned himself off at the main. There was a moment of dazed silence, such as might occur in a boiler-factory if the works suddenly shut down.

"Quick! Now you've got him!" cried Sally. "Ask him what he's talking about—if he knows, which I doubt—and tell him to speak slowly. Then we shall get somewhere."

The young man nodded intelligently. The advice was good.

"Lentement," he said. "Parlez lentement. Pas si—you know what I mean—pas si dashed vite!"

"Ah-a-ah!" cried Jules, catching the idea on the fly. "Lentement. Ah, oui, lentement."

There followed a lengthy conversation which, while conveying nothing to Sally, seemed intelligible to the red-haired linguist.

"The silly ass," he was able to announce some few minutes later, "has made a bloomer. Apparently he was half asleep when we came in, and he shoved us into the lift and slammed the door, forgetting that he had left the keys on the desk."

"I see," said Sally. "So we're shut in?"

"I'm afraid so. I wish to goodness," said the young man, "I knew French well. I'd curse him with some vim and not a little animation, the chump! I wonder what 'blighter' is in French," he said, meditating.

"It's the merest suggestion," said Sally, "but oughtn't we to do something?"

"What could we do?"

"Well, for one thing, we might all utter a loud yell. It would scare most of the people in the hotel to death, but there might be a survivor or two who would come and investigate and let us out."

"What a ripping idea!" said the young man, impressed.

"I'm glad you like it. Now tell him the main out-line, or he'll think we've gone mad."

The young man searched for words, and eventually found some which expressed his meaning lamely but well enough to cause Jules to nod in a depressed sort of way.

"Fine!" said Sally. "Now, all together at the word 'three.' One—two—Oh, poor darling!" she broke off. "Look at him!"

In the far corner of the lift, the emotional Jules was sobbing silently into the bunch of cotton-waste which served him in the office of a pocket-handkerchief. His broken-hearted gulps echoed hollowly down the shaft.

In these days of cheap books of instruction on every subject under the sun, we most of us know how to behave in the majority of life's little crises. We have only ourselves to blame if we are ignorant of what to do before the doctor comes, of how to make a dainty winter coat for baby out of father's last year's under-vest and of the best method of coping with the cold mutton. But nobody yet has come forward with practical advice as to the correct method of behaviour to be adopted when a lift-attendant starts crying. And Sally and her companion, as a consequence, for a few moments merely stared at each other helplessly.

"Poor darling!" said Sally, finding speech. "Ask him what's the matter."

The young man looked at her doubtfully.

"You know," he said, "I don't enjoy chatting with this blighter. I mean to say, it's a bit of an effort. I don't know why it is, but talking French always makes me feel as if my nose were coming off. Couldn't we just leave him to have his cry out by himself?"

"The idea!" said Sally. "Have you no heart? Are you one of those fiends in human shape?"

He turned reluctantly to Jules, and paused to overhaul his vocabulary.

"You ought to be thankful for this chance," said Sally. "It's the only real way of learning French, and you're getting a lesson for nothing. What did he say then?"

"Something about losing something, it seemed to me. I thought I caught the word perdu."

"But that means a partridge, doesn't it? I'm sure I've seen it on the menus."

"Would he talk about partridges at a time like this?"

"He might. The French are extraordinary people."

"Well, I'll have another go at him. But he's a difficult chap to chat with. If you give him the least encouragement, he sort of goes off like a rocket." He addressed another question to the sufferer, and listened attentively to the voluble reply.

"Oh!" he said with sudden enlightenment. "Your job?" He turned to Sally. "I got it that time," he said. "The trouble is, he says, that if we yell and rouse the house, we'll get out all right, but he will lose his job, because this is the second time this sort of thing has happened, and they warned him last time that once more would mean the push."

"Then we mustn't dream of yelling," said Sally, decidedly. "It means a pretty long wait, you know. As far as I can gather, there's just a chance of somebody else coming in later, in which case he could let us out. But it's doubtful. He rather thinks that everybody has gone to roost."

"Well, we must try it. I wouldn't think of losing the poor man his job. Tell him to take the car down to the ground-floor, and then we'll just sit and amuse ourselves till something happens. We've lots to talk about. We can tell each other the story of our lives."

Jules, cheered by his victims' kindly forbearance, lowered the car to the ground floor, where, after a glance of infinite longing at the keys on the distant desk, the sort of glance which Moses must have cast at the Promised Land from the summit of Mount Pisgah, he sagged down in a heap and resumed his slumbers. Sally settled herself as comfortably as possible in her corner.

"You'd better smoke," she said. "It will be something to do."

"Thanks awfully."

"And now," said Sally, "tell me why Scrymgeour fired you."

Little by little, under the stimulating influence of this nocturnal adventure, the red-haired young man had lost that shy confusion which had rendered him so ill at ease when he had encountered Sally in the hall of the hotel; but at this question embarrassment gripped him once more. Another of those comprehensive blushes of his raced over his face, and he stammered.

"I say, I'm glad... I'm fearfully sorry about that, you know!"

"About Scrymgeour?"

"You know what I mean. I mean, about making such a most ghastly ass of myself this morning. I... I never dreamed you understood English."

"Why, I didn't object. I thought you were very nice and complimentary. Of course, I don't know how many girls you've seen in your life, but..."

"No, I say, don't! It makes me feel such a chump."

"And I'm sorry about my mouth. It is wide. But I know you're a fair-minded man and realize that it isn't my fault."

"Don't rub it in," pleaded the young man. "As a matter of fact, if you want to know, I think your mouth is absolutely perfect. I think," he proceeded, a little feverishly, "that you are the most indescribable topper that ever..."

"You were going to tell me about Scrymgeour," said Sally.

The young man blinked as if he had collided with some hard object while sleep-walking. Eloquence had carried him away.

"Scrymgeour?" he said. "Oh, that would bore you."

"Don't be silly," said Sally reprovingly. "Can't you realize that we're practically castaways on a desert island? There's nothing to do till to-morrow but talk about ourselves. I want to hear all about you, and then I'll tell you all about myself. If you feel diffident about starting the revelations, I'll begin. Better start with names. Mine is Sally Nicholas. What's yours?"

"Mine? Oh, ah, yes, I see what you mean."

"I thought you would. I put it as clearly as I could. Well, what is it?"

"Kemp."

"And the first name?"

"Well, as a matter of fact," said the young man, "I've always rather hushed up my first name, because when I was christened they worked a low-down trick on me!"

"You can't shock me," said Sally, encouragingly. "My father's name was Ezekiel, and I've a brother who was christened Fillmore."

Mr. Kemp brightened. "Well, mine isn't as bad as that... No, I don't mean that," he broke off apologetically. "Both awfully jolly names, of course..."

"Get on," said Sally.

"Well, they called me Lancelot. And, of course, the thing is that I don't look like a Lancelot and never shall. My pals," he added in a more cheerful strain, "call me Ginger."

"I don't blame them," said Sally.

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind thinking of me as Ginger?" suggested the young man diffidently.

"Certainly."

"That's awfully good of you."

"Not at all."

Jules stirred in his sleep and grunted. No other sound came to disturb the stillness of the night.

"You were going to tell me about yourself?" said Mr. Lancelot (Ginger) Kemp.

"I'm going to tell you all about myself," said Sally, "not because I think it will interest you..."

"Oh, it will!"

"Not, I say, because I think it will interest you..."

"It will, really."

Sally looked at him coldly.

"Is this a duet?" she inquired, "or have I the floor?"

"I'm awfully sorry."

"Not, I repeat for the third time, because I think It will interest you, but because if I do you won't have any excuse for not telling me your life-history, and you wouldn't believe how inquisitive I am. Well, in the first place, I live in America. I'm over here on a holiday. And it's the first real holiday I've had in three years—since I left home, in fact." Sally paused. "I ran away from home," she said.

"Good egg!" said Ginger Kemp.

"I beg your pardon?"

"I mean, quite right. I bet you were quite right."

"When I say home," Sally went on, "it was only a sort of imitation home, you know. One of those just-as-good homes which are never as satisfactory as the real kind. My father and mother both died a good many years ago. My brother and I were dumped down on the reluctant doorstep of an uncle."

"Uncles," said Ginger Kemp, feelingly, "are the devil. I've got an... but I'm interrupting you."

"My uncle was our trustee. He had control of all my brother's money and mine till I was twenty-one. My brother was to get his when he was twenty-five. My poor father trusted him blindly, and what do you think happened?"

"Good Lord! The blighter embezzled the lot?"

"No, not a cent. Wasn't it extraordinary! Have you ever heard of a blindly trusted uncle who was perfectly honest? Well, mine was. But the trouble was that, while an excellent man to have looking after one's money, he wasn't a very lovable character. He was very hard. Hard! He was as hard as—well, nearly as hard as this seat. He hated poor Fill..."

"Phil?"

"I broke it to you just now that my brother's name was Fillmore."

"Oh, your brother. Oh, ah, yes."

"He was always picking on poor Fill. And I'm bound to say that Fill rather laid himself out as what you might call a pickee. He was always getting into trouble. One day, about three years ago, he was expelled from Harvard, and my uncle vowed he would have nothing more to do with him. So I said, if Fill left, I would leave. And, as this seemed to be my uncle's idea of a large evening, no objection was raised, and Fill and I departed. We went to New York, and there we've been ever since. About six months' ago Fill passed the twenty-five mark and collected his money, and last month I marched past the given point and got mine. So it all ends happily, you see. Now tell me about yourself."

"But, I say, you know, dash it, you've skipped a lot. I mean to say, you must have had an awful time in New York, didn't you? How on earth did you get along?"

"Oh, we found work. My brother tried one or two things, and finally became an assistant stage-manager with some theatre people. The only thing I could do, having been raised in enervating luxury, was ballroom dancing, so I ball-room danced. I got a job at a place in Broadway called 'The Flower Garden' as what is humorously called an 'instructress,' as if anybody could 'instruct' the men who came there. One was lucky if one saved one's life and wasn't quashed to death."

"How perfectly foul!"

"Oh, I don't know. It was rather fun for a while. Still," said Sally, meditatively, "I'm not saying I could have held out much longer: I was beginning to give. I suppose I've been trampled underfoot by more fat men than any other girl of my age in America. I don't know why it was, but every man who came in who was a bit overweight seemed to make for me by instinct. That's why I like to sit on the sands here and watch these Frenchmen bathing. It's just heavenly to lie back and watch a two hundred and fifty pound man, coming along and feel that he isn't going to dance with me."

"But, I say! How absolutely rotten it must have been for you!"

"Well, I'll tell you one thing. It's going to make me a very domesticated wife one of these days. You won't find me gadding about in gilded jazz-palaces! For me, a little place in the country somewhere, with my knitting and an Elsie book, and bed at half-past nine! And now tell me the story of your life. And make it long because I'm perfectly certain there's going to be no relief-expedition. I'm sure the last dweller under this roof came in years ago. We shall be here till morning."

"I really think we had better shout, you know."

"And lose Jules his job? Never!"

"Well, of course, I'm sorry for poor old Jules' troubles, but I hate to think of you having to..."

"Now get on with the story," said Sally.

Ginger Kemp exhibited some of the symptoms of a young bridegroom called upon at a wedding-breakfast to respond to the toast. He moved his feet restlessly and twisted his fingers.

"I hate talking about myself, you know," he said.

"So I supposed," said Sally. "That's why I gave you my autobiography first, to give you no chance of backing out. Don't be such a shrinking violet. We're all shipwrecked mariners here. I am intensely interested in your narrative. And, even if I wasn't, I'd much rather listen to it than to Jules' snoring."

"He is snoring a bit, what? Does it annoy you? Shall I stir him?"

"You seem to have an extraordinary brutal streak in your nature," said Sally. "You appear to think of nothing else but schemes for harassing poor Jules. Leave him alone for a second, and start telling me about yourself."

"Where shall I start?"

"Well, not with your childhood, I think. We'll skip that."

"Well..." Ginger Kemp knitted his brow, searching for a dramatic opening. "Well, I'm more or less what you might call an orphan, like you. I mean to say, both my people are dead and all that sort of thing."

"Thanks for explaining. That has made it quite clear."

"I can't remember my mother. My father died when I was in my last year at Cambridge. I'd been having a most awfully good time at the 'varsity,'" said Ginger, warming to his theme. "Not thick, you know, but good. I'd got my rugger and boxing blues and I'd just been picked for scrum-half for England against the North in the first trial match, and between ourselves it really did look as if I was more or less of a snip for my international."

Sally gazed at him wide eyed.

"Is that good or bad?" she asked.

"Eh?"

"Are you reciting a catalogue of your crimes, or do you expect me to get up and cheer? What is a rugger blue, to start with?"

"Well, it's... it's a rugger blue, you know."

"Oh, I see," said Sally. "You mean a rugger blue."

"I mean to say, I played rugger—footer—that's to say, football—Rugby football—for Cambridge, against Oxford. I was scrum-half."

"And what is a scrum-half?" asked Sally, patiently. "Yes, I know you're going to say it's a scrum-half, but can't you make it easier?"

"The scrum-half," said Ginger, "is the half who works the scrum. He slings the pill out to the fly-half, who starts the three-quarters going. I don't know if you understand?"

"I don't."

"It's dashed hard to explain," said Ginger Kemp, unhappily. "I mean, I don't think I've ever met anyone before who didn't know what a scrum-half was."

"Well, I can see that it has something to do with football, so we'll leave it at that. I suppose it's something like our quarter-back. And what's an international?"

"It's called getting your international when you play for England, you know. England plays Wales, France, Ireland, and Scotland. If it hadn't been for the smash, I think I should have played for England against Wales."

"I see at last. What you're trying to tell me is that you were very good at football."

Ginger Kemp blushed warmly.

"Oh, I don't say that. England was pretty short of scrum-halves that year."

"What a horrible thing to happen to a country! Still, you were likely to be picked on the All-England team when the smash came? What was the smash?"

"Well, it turned out that the poor old pater hadn't left a penny. I never understood the process exactly, but I'd always supposed that we were pretty well off; and then it turned out that I hadn't anything at all. I'm bound to say it was a bit of a jar. I had to come down from Cambridge and go to work in my uncle's office. Of course, I made an absolute hash of it."

"Why, of course?"

"Well, I'm not a very clever sort of chap, you see. I somehow didn't seem able to grasp the workings. After about a year, my uncle, getting a bit fed-up, hoofed me out and got me a mastership at a school, and I made a hash of that. He got me one or two other jobs, and I made a hash of those."

"You certainly do seem to be one of our most prominent young hashers!" gasped Sally.

"I am," said Ginger, modestly.

There was a silence.

"And what about Scrymgeour?" Sally asked.

"That was the last of the jobs," said Ginger. "Scrymgeour is a pompous old ass who thinks he's going to be Prime Minister some day. He's a big bug at the Bar and has just got into Parliament. My cousin used to devil for him. That's how I got mixed up with the blighter."

"Your cousin used...? I wish you would talk English."

"That was my cousin who was with me on the beach this morning."

"And what did you say he used to do for Mr. Scrymgeour?"

"Oh, it's called devilling. My cousin's at the Bar, too—one of our rising nibs, as a matter of fact..."

"I thought he was a lawyer of some kind."

"He's got a long way beyond it now, but when he started he used to devil for Scrymgeour—assist him, don't you know. His name's Carmyle, you know. Perhaps you've heard of him? He's rather a prominent johnny in his way. Bruce Carmyle, you know."

"I haven't."

"Well, he got me this job of secretary to Scrymgeour."

"And why did Mr. Scrymgeour fire you?"

Ginger Kemp's face darkened. He frowned. Sally, watching him, felt that she had been right when she had guessed that he had a temper. She liked him none the worse for it. Mild men did not appeal to her.

"I don't know if you're fond of dogs?" said Ginger.

"I used to be before this morning," said Sally. "And I suppose I shall be again in time. For the moment I've had what you might call rather a surfeit of dogs. But aren't you straying from the point? I asked you why Mr. Scrymgeour dismissed you."

"I'm telling you."

"I'm glad of that. I didn't know."

"The old brute," said Ginger, frowning again, "has a dog. A very jolly little spaniel. Great pal of mine. And Scrymgeour is the sort of fool who oughtn't to be allowed to own a dog. He's one of those asses who isn't fit to own a dog. As a matter of fact, of all the blighted, pompous, bullying, shrivelled-souled old devils..."

"One moment," said Sally. "I'm getting an impression that you don't like Mr. Scrymgeour. Am I right?"

"Yes!"

"I thought so. Womanly intuition! Go on."

"He used to insist on the poor animal doing tricks. I hate seeing a dog do tricks. Dogs loathe it, you know. They're frightfully sensitive. Well, Scrymgeour used to make this spaniel of his do tricks—fool-things that no self-respecting dogs would do: and eventually poor old Billy got fed up and jibbed. He was too polite to bite, but he sort of shook his head and crawled under a chair. You'd have thought anyone would have let it go at that, but would old Scrymgeour? Not a bit of it! Of all the poisonous..."

"Yes, I know. Go on."

"Well, the thing ended in the blighter hauling him out from under the chair and getting more and more shirty, until finally he laid into him with a stick. That is to say," said Ginger, coldly accurate, "he started laying into him with a stick." He brooded for a moment with knit brows. "A spaniel, mind you! Can you imagine anyone beating a spaniel? It's like hitting a little girl. Well, he's a fairly oldish man, you know, and that hampered me a bit: but I got hold of the stick and broke it into about eleven pieces, and by great good luck it was a stick he happened to value rather highly. It had a gold knob and had been presented to him by his constituents or something. I minced it up a goodish bit, and then I told him a fair amount about himself. And then—well, after that he shot me out, and I came here."

Sally did not speak for a moment.

"You were quite right," she said at last, in a sober voice that had nothing in it of her customary flippancy. She paused again. "And what are you going to do now?" she said.

"I don't know."

"You'll get something?"

"Oh, yes, I shall get something, I suppose. The family will be pretty sick, of course."

"For goodness' sake! Why do you bother about the family?" Sally burst out. She could not reconcile this young man's flabby dependence on his family with the enterprise and vigour which he had shown in his dealings with the unspeakable Scrymgeour. Of course, he had been brought up to look on himself as a rich man's son and appeared to have drifted as such young men are wont to do; but even so... "The whole trouble with you," she said, embarking on a subject on which she held strong views, "is that..."

Her harangue was interrupted by what—at the Normandie, at one o'clock in the morning—practically amounted to a miracle. The front door of the hotel opened, and there entered a young man in evening dress. Such persons were sufficiently rare at the Normandie, which catered principally for the staid and middle-aged, and this youth's presence was due, if one must pause to explain it, to the fact that, in the middle of his stay at Roville, a disastrous evening at the Casino had so diminished his funds that he had been obliged to make a hurried shift from the Hotel Splendide to the humbler Normandie. His late appearance to-night was caused by the fact that he had been attending a dance at the Splendide, principally in the hope of finding there some kind-hearted friend of his prosperity from whom he might borrow.

A rapid-fire dialogue having taken place between Jules and the newcomer, the keys were handed through the cage, the door opened and the lift was set once more in motion. And a few minutes later, Sally, suddenly aware of an overpowering sleepiness, had switched off her light and jumped into bed. Her last waking thought was a regret that she had not been able to speak at length to Mr. Ginger Kemp on the subject of enterprise, and resolve that the address should be delivered at the earliest opportunity.

Jeremy and Hamlet/Chapter 12

for the “Rest.” It would be perfectly easy for him to hide himself in the scrum and pretend to be pushing when he was not. No one ever noticed. But the