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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GODFREY MARTEN, UNDERGRADUATE ***

GODFREY MARTEN

UNDERGRADUATE

BY

CHARLES TURLEY

AUTHOR OF 'GODFREY MARTEN, SCHOOLBOY'

**LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1904**

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CHAPTER I

OXFORD

The night before I left home for Oxford I had a talk with my father. He was not of the sentimental kind, but I knew that he had a rare fondness for my brother, my sister Nina and myself, and I have never had a moment when I did not return his affection. He had always been bothered by my lack of seriousness, and he doubted whether I should really get the best out of 'Varsity life. After telling me that the time had come for me to treat things more seriously, he finished up by saying: "I am going to give you two hundred pounds a year, which is more than I can afford, and which, with your exhibition, must be enough for you. I have put that amount to your credit in the bank at Oxford, and I don't expect to hear anything about money from you either during the term or when you are at home. You ought to know by this time what money is worth, and that debt is a thing you must avoid. Be a man, Godfrey, and don't forget that the first step towards becoming one is to behave like a gentleman."

I shook his hand to show that I understood, for he wanted neither promises nor protestations, and if I had been able to be sentimental he would have left the room without listening to me.

He didn't say much, but what he did say was beautifully simple, and on leaving him I felt very solemn and, since I must tell the truth, very important. The idea of having a bank account was one which did not lose its glamour for several days. There was something about my first cheque-book which pleased me immensely, for I had not been brought up in a nest of millionaires, and am glad to confess that until I went to Oxford the possibilities attached to a five-pound note were almost without limit.

Fred Foster—who had been staying with me—and I parted at Oxford railway-station without falling on each other's necks, but although we did not cause any further obstruction on a platform already far too crowded, we understood that the friendship which had prospered during so many years at school was not going to be interrupted because he had got a scholarship at Oriel while I was an exhibitor of St. Cuthbert's.

I began by losing my luggage, which was exactly the way some people would have expected me to begin, and when I arrived at the college lodge I must have looked as if I had come to spend a Saturday to Monday visit. One miserable bag was all I possessed, and the porter viewed me, as I thought, with suspicion. He was a grumpy old person, and when I told him that I had lost my luggage he grunted, "Gentlemen do, especially when they're fresh," which I thought very fair cheek on his part, though I did not feel at that moment like telling him so.

Then having said that my name was Marten, he hunted in a list and told a man to take my bag to Number VII. staircase in the back quadrangle. I followed, feeling rather dejected, and I cannot say that the first sight of my rooms tended to raise my spirits. They were small and dismal, the window opened on to a balustrade which, if it prevented me from falling into the quadrangle, also managed to shut out both light and air. The furniture can be described correctly by the word

adequate; there were some chairs and a table, college furniture for which I was privileged to pay rent. The chairs looked as if nothing could ever wear them out or make them look different. They had been built to defy time and ill-usage.

I went into my bedroom and was more satisfied, by some strange freak it was bigger than my sitting-room, and after I had seen other freshers' bedrooms I acknowledged my good luck. There was at least room to have a bath without splashing the bed. I was still looking disconsolately about me when my scout came in and treated me with a calm contempt which immediately raised my spirits. His air was so obviously that of the man who knew all about things, and he told me what to do with a gravity which was intended to be most impressive. His name was Clarkson and I stayed on his staircase during the three years I was in college, though at the end of my first year I moved into larger rooms. He was in a mild kind of way an endless source of amusement to me, because every one knew that under his veil of imperturbability was hidden, not very successfully, a flourishing crop of failings. Whenever his chief failing overpowered him his gravity increased, until he became one of the most indescribably comic people I have ever seen.

He told me that chapel was at eight o'clock on the following morning, and asked me if I should be breakfasting in. I found out afterwards that unless I wanted to go to chapel I could go to a roll-call in any garments which looked respectable, and then go back to bed; but I did not hear this from Clarkson. He was far too keen on getting men out of bed and their rooms put straight to give such very unnecessary information. However, he was useful at the beginning, and had he not told me where to go for dinner I don't suppose I should have troubled to ask him.

My first dinner in hall was not a pleasant experience. The senior men came up a day after us, and most freshers, until they settle down, seem to spend their time in waiting for somebody else to say something. That dinner really made me feel most gloomy; things seemed to have been turned upside down, and in the process I felt as if I had fallen with a thud to the bottom. There were two or three freshers from Cliborough to whom I had scarcely spoken during my last two years at school, and these fellows all sat together and enjoyed themselves, while I counted for nothing whatever.

I began to learn the lesson that being in the Cliborough XI. and XV. was not a free passport to glory. The man opposite to me looked as if he had never heard of W. G. Grace, and when I tried to speak to the fellow on my right about the Australians, he thought that I was talking about any ordinary Australian, and had no notion that I meant the cricket team which had been over in the summer. He was quite nice about it, I must admit, and when he found out what I was driving at, said: "I am afraid I don't know much about cricket; I have been over in Germany the last two or three months, trying to get hold of the language. I want to read Schiller and those other people in the original."

He did not suit me at all, and as I had not the courage to give myself away by asking the names of the other people our conversation dropped. I was, in fact, dead off colour, and the sight of those three Cliborough fellows almost took away my appetite. Until that moment it had never occurred to me that I had been in the habit of thinking a lot of myself at Cliborough, and in self-defence I must add that I do not see how a public school can prosper unless some of the fellows stick together and try to make things go on properly. Any "side" I may have had was certainly unconscious, but I haven't an idea whether that is the worst or the best kind. I know that I should have felt like having a fit if any one had told me that I was conceited, and apart from that I don't know anything about it, except, as I have said, that I was angry that these fellows did not seem to remember that I had been at Cliborough. I told myself that they had lost their sense of proportion, which was a phrase my father used about any one who argued with him; and I also said vehemently that they were worms; but unless you are quite sure of it, and can get some one to agree with you, there is not much satisfaction to be got from calling people worms.

I went out of the hall and found a tall, dark fellow bowling pebbles aimlessly about the quadrangle. I bowled a pebble, and hitting him on the back, had to apologize. It is rather odd, now I come to think about it, that the first words I ever said to Jack Ward were in the nature of an apology. We strolled out of the quadrangle into the lodge, and after he had looked at me he asked me to come up to his rooms and have some coffee. I was not at all sure that I wanted to go, but I went. He shouted to his scout at the top of a very powerful voice, and I felt that he was much more at home than I was. I determined, moreover, to shout at my scout upon the earliest possible opportunity.

"I had a brother up here," he said as soon as we were sitting by the fire, "and he gave me some tips. One of them was to shout at your scout for at least a week to show that you are not an infant, another was not to row, and the last was not to play cards all day and night. My brother's an odd kind of chap, the sort of man who doesn't know the ace of spades by sight, but it's as easy to shout as it is not to row. Your name's Marten, isn't it?"

"Yes," I replied; "how did you know that?"

"I scored when you came over last term to play for Cliborough against Wellingham. I was twelfth man to the XI., though you needn't believe it if you don't want to. It's wonderful what a crop of twelfth men there are kicking around; you may just as well say you are a liar smack out, as tell any one you are a twelfth man."

I told him that I believed him.

"That's only your politeness," he went on; "in a week you will be talking about me as 'that man Ward who says he was twelfth man at Wellingham.'"

I sat in his rooms and listened to him talking until eleven o'clock; for almost the first time in my life I had nothing to say, and that must have been the reason why I felt amused and uncomfortable at the same time. He seemed to know all sorts of people, and he spoke of them by their Christian names, which impressed me, and he referred to London as a place well enough to stay in for a time, but a terrible bore when one got accustomed to it. Now I had only been to London three times, and one of those could hardly be said to count since it was to see a dentist. As I went back to my rooms, I thought that my education had been neglected in many ways, and that Ward had been having a much better time than I had. But I soon changed my mind and decided that he was the kind of fellow whom I should have thought a slacker at Cliborough, and I cannot put up with a man, who when he is doing one thing always wants to be doing another.

When I got back to my rooms I found a letter from my uncle. He was a bishop, and there had been trouble between us when I was a small boy at Cliborough; he had made jokes about me which I did not bear in silence. But he had spent a month of the summer holidays with us, and had told my mother that I had greatly improved; I thought the same thing about him, so we got on together very well. I may as well say at once that I had laid siege to the bishop. Instead of waiting for him to go for me I went for him, and my mother said that I had discovered the boy in the bishop. If he was idle I employed him, and on his last day with us I finished off by making one hundred and thirty-six against him at stump cricket. When he went away I had changed my opinion of him, but my father was annoyed that he could behave like a boy when it was time for me to forget that I was one. "You are as silly as the bishop," became one of my father's favourite remarks, until my mother asked him to think of something which was not quite so rude.

The bishop had really been splendid while he was staying with us, because Nina, having arrived at the age of eighteen, was very difficult to please. Some man in my brother's regiment had been down and said that her pug was an angel, and I being unable to reach such heights as that was compared to my disadvantage with this man. I am nearly sure, too, that she wanted to flirt with Fred, quite regardless of the fact that he was no use at flirting, and I should have had something to say if he had been. In a short year she had changed most dreadfully, and was no longer satisfied with being liked very much. She was a puzzle to me, and had it not been for the bishop, who smoothed things over, I should probably have worried her far more than I did.

His letter did not contain one word of cant; he just wished me good luck, and told me to write to him whenever I felt that he could be of use to me. A less sensible man might have preached to me and talked about the "threshold of a career"; but, thank goodness, he knew what I wanted, and that if I had not made up my mind to let Oxford do something for me, I was hopeless from the start.

CHAPTER II

INTERVIEWS

I soon found out that Jack Ward was of a most friendly disposition, for he came over to my rooms before ten o'clock the following morning and bounced in with an air of having known me all my life. At the moment I was talking to a man called Murray, whose acquaintance I had made an hour before. My introduction to Murray could hardly be called formal; he lived in the next rooms to me and at precisely the same time each of us had poked our heads into the passage and shouted for our scout. We then looked at each other and laughed, and the deed was done. I wish that I could have made all my friends at Oxford as easily; it would have saved so much time.

Murray was going as Ward came in, and they nodded and said "Good-morning" in the way men do when they don't altogether love one another.

"You seem to know everybody," I said, without much reason, as soon as Murray had disappeared.

"I can't well help knowing that fellow, considering that he was at Wellingham with me for five years."

"He didn't tell me he was at Wellingham."

"He would have in another minute, and that he was captain of the school and the footer fifteen, and what he was fed on as a baby and how many muscles he had got in his big toe," Ward jerked out as he pulled furiously at his pipe, which he had already tried to light two or three times.

"I thought he seemed a nice sort of man," I said.

"I expect you think everybody you see nice sort of men," he replied rather queerly, though he laughed as he spoke.

"I hope so; it is a jolly comfortable state to be in," I answered.

"But a very dangerous one. You must get awfully left."

I picked up *Wisden's Cricket Almanack*, which had been one of the things in my bag, and began to read it, for I had taken a fancy to Murray and did not see much use in listening to what I felt Ward wanted to say about him.

"You will probably be friends with Murray for about a month, and then it will end with a snap," he said.

"I can promise you that if I am friends with him for a month it won't end with a snap, even if his toes simply bulge with muscles," I replied.

"If anybody warned you against a man you would take no notice."

"It depends who warned me, and whom I was warned against. And since it is no use pretending things," I added, "I don't see much wrong in a fellow because he happens to remember something about baby's food."

"He might be a bore."

"So may anybody," I answered, for Ward's persistence was beginning to annoy me. He got up from his chair with a great laugh, and put his hands on my shoulders.

"We mustn't begin by having a row with each other," he said.

I stood up so that I could get rid of his hands, and felt inclined to say that I did not want to begin at all, but I stopped myself. There was something in the man that attracted me. I may be peculiar, but I like people who shake the furniture when they laugh, having suffered much from a master at Cliborough who never let himself go farther than a giggle.

"I suppose we must go and see these blessed dons. They want to see us at half-past ten, don't they?" he said.

I looked at my watch and found that it was nearly eleven o'clock, so we bolted down-stairs and across the quadrangle as hard as we could. It was a very bad start but I had completely forgotten that we had to go to the hall at half-past ten, and Ward gave me no comfort by saying that he did not suppose it mattered when we went as long as we turned up some time. Dons would have to be very different from masters if that was the case, and as I imagined that they would be of much the same breed only glorified, I had no wish to begin by making them angry.

There were thirty or forty freshers in the hall when we got there, and a few dons sitting at the high table at the end of it. Murray and two or three other men were up talking to them when I arrived, and I guessed that they were taking the scholars and exhibitioners alphabetically, and that I was too late for my turn; though Ward, who was a commoner and fortunate enough to begin with a W, was probably in heaps of time.

When Murray came down he told me that they had called out my name several times, which made me, quite unreasonably, feel angry with Ward, but presently they shouted for me again and I went up.

Though I felt rather agitated as I walked up the hall and saw these gowned people waiting for me, the idea flitted across my mind that they looked most extremely like a row of rooks sitting on a long stick. My prevailing impression as I approached them was one of beak, they seemed to me like a lot of benevolent and expectant birds. As a matter of fact this impression was false, and I got it because I was looking at the Warden—as the Head of St. Cuthbert's was called—and not at the group of dons on each side of him.

The Warden was a little man whose head had apparently sunk down into his neck and got a tilt forward in the process. His eyes were grey and shrewd, the sort of eyes which one watches to see the signs of the times; his nose, being that of the Warden, I will only call prominent, and he had a habit of passing his hand over his mouth and chin, which was merely a habit, but suggested to me at first sight that he was pleased with his morning shave. He was nearly sixty years old, and when he wanted to be nice his efforts were not intelligible to everybody, but there was no mistaking him when he really wished to be nasty. However, he was one of those men who are spoken of at Oxford as having European reputations, and possibly the burden of an European reputation gives the owner of it a right to behave differently from ordinary people who have no reputation at all, or if they have one would prefer that it should be forgotten.

The Warden held out a hand to me and almost winced at my manner of grasping it. My father always said that he knew a man by his hand-shake, but I ought to have been wise enough to spare the Warden.

"I was in doubt whether or no we were to have the privilege of seeing you this morning. Perhaps the fatigues of a long journey by rail caused you to remain in your bedroom for a longer time than is usual, or indeed beneficial."

I was on the point of saying that I had been up at eight o'clock, when it occurred to me that an apology would be shorter than an explanation, so I mumbled that I was very sorry for being late. My chief desire was to get away from an atmosphere which I found overpowering.

I had to listen to some more remarks from the Warden, all of which were spun out in his extraordinary way, and at last I was introduced to my tutor, Mr. Gilbert Edwardes, who took me on one side and set to work telling me what lectures I was to attend. I think he meant to be friendly but he had a dreadfully stiff manner, and I am sure that he found it very difficult to unbend. He reminded me most strongly of a shirt with too much starch in it, or whatever it is that makes shirts as stiff as boards.

Later on in the day I went to see him in his rooms in college and he gave me a little advice and exhorted me to work. It was all a cut-and-dried sort of affair which did not appeal to any feelings I had, but since he was my tutor I thought I had better tell him something about myself.

He was even smaller than the Warden and quite the most prim-looking man I have ever beheld. His face was colourless and smooth, and as I sat opposite him in his gloomy room he looked so tidy and sure of himself that I found a great difficulty in speaking to him. Having said the usual things he was very obviously expecting me to go, but I did not want him to begin by thinking that I was a saint, though why I imagined that he was in any danger of thinking so I cannot explain. He had, however, said so much about work and the great care I must take in avoiding men who distracted me from my duty, that I thought I had better tell him that I was a very human being.

I never remember having twiddled my thumbs before but I caught myself doing it in his room. He was so placid and demure that I could not imagine that he had ever done a foolish thing in his life. It was impossible for me to think that he had ever been young, and I wanted him to know that I was both young and foolish. He must have known the one and I expect he guessed the other, but at any rate my intention was to begin fair. Then whatever happened he would not be able to say that I had not warned him.

But he made me so nervous that I did not get the right words, and I made him look more like a poker than ever. "Thanks, most awfully," I began, and it was a bad beginning, "for all your advice. But I want to tell you that I do the most stupid things without meaning to do them. I mean that they only strike me as being stupid after I have done them."

Mr. Edwardes made noises in his throat which sounded like a succession of "Ahems," and I floundered on: "I am afraid it is very hard for me not to like amusing myself as much as possible, but of course I will try to work and all that sort of thing as well." He stood up when I got as far as that and smiled at me, but I cannot say that he seemed to be pleased. "I thought I had better tell you, so that you would know," I added before I left him, and I went away with the hopeless feeling that I had made a complete idiot of myself. I hated Mr. Edwardes as I went back across the quadrangle, for I felt that I had tried to take him into my confidence and that he had responded by getting rid of me.

When I reached my rooms my luggage had arrived and I let off steam—so to speak—by having a dispute with the man who had brought it. I did not get the best of that dispute, but I did make an effort to practise the economy which my people had advised, and Clarkson saw me in a rage, which must have been very good for him. For a solid hour I unpacked things which I had thought beautiful in my study at Cliborough and put them about my room, but somehow or other most of them did not seem as beautiful as I had thought them, and there was a picture—I had won it in a shilling raffle, and been very proud of it—which filled me with sorrow. It had been painted by the sister of a fellow at Cliborough, and when he was frightfully hard-up he arranged a raffle, and everybody said I was jolly lucky to win it. I was even bid fifteen shillings for the picture by the original owner, but as I suspected that he wanted to get up another raffle I refused the offer. When I saw the thing hanging on my wall I wished that I had not been such a fool. Having got the thing I did not like to waste it, but if some one would have come in and stuck a knife into it I should have been very pleased. The name of this burden was "A Last Night at Sea," and the subjects represented were a small boat and two or three people huddled together at one end of it, while in the middle of the boat a woman with long streaming hair was stretching out her arms towards a terrific wave. If I had not remembered the name it might not have been so bad, but under the circumstances no one could say that it was a cheerful thing to live with. I suppose the satisfaction of having it in my study at Cliborough had been enough, for I did not recollect having looked at it before, and when a lot of fellows are swarming around saying what a lucky chap you are to have won a thing, it is not very likely to give you the blues then, whatever it may have in store for you afterwards. I turned "A Last Night at Sea" with its face to the wall and went on decorating my room. Photographs of my father and mother which I put on my mantelpiece made me feel rather better, but Nina resplendent in a green plush frame made me think again. I had been very proud of that frame some years before when Nina had given it to me; she had sold two rabbits and borrowed sixpence from Miss Read, her governess, to buy it, and it had never occurred to me that I could grow out of my admiration for green plush. The question of what to do with it puzzled me tremendously; I didn't want to treat Nina badly but the frame was

an abomination. Fortunately there was a ring attached to the frame and I hung it up in a dark corner, but I promised myself that it should come out the following morning.

I had just sat down to survey my labours when Murray came in and proposed we should go for a walk in the town, and as I was perfectly sick of my room I was quite ready to go. Although the time was barely four o'clock and the sun doesn't set for another hour in the middle of October, it was half dark and drizzling with rain as we walked down Turl Street and came into The High. But I had got rid of my gloom and was eager to spend money. I did not quite know what I wanted but that was not of much consequence. We went into a shop which seemed to be exactly the place for any one who wished to buy things, and did not care much what he bought. Before I came out of it I had bought two chairs, a standard lamp, a small book-case, an enormous bowl—which got in my way for two years until somebody smashed it—a tea-set, a small table and half-a-dozen china shepherdeses. I then went to other shops and made more purchases, while Murray looked on and smiled until I was waylaid by an accommodating man in the Cornmarket, who wanted to sell me a fox-terrier pup, and was ready to keep it for me if I had no place for it; and then I was told not to be a fool. That man's opinion of Murray is not worth mentioning.

When we got back to college it was past five o'clock, and between us we managed to find everything that was necessary for tea. I had a fire in my room, but Murray had not one in his; he had tea-cups, but I had none; while I had things to eat, which our cook at home had declared would be useful and I had most reluctantly brought with me. We were in the middle of this very substantial meal when Fred Foster came in, and from his glance round my room I saw that he thought it was a fairly dismal spot.

"Rather like an up-stairs dungeon," I said. "Have you got a better place than this?"

"It is bigger and not so stuffy," he answered; "but it won't make you very jealous."

"You wait until I have got all the things I have just bought, and then you will think this no end of a place," I remarked.

"If any one can get inside," Murray put in.

"It will be rather a squash," I admitted; "I've spent over twelve pounds already."

"That's just the sort of thing you would do," Foster said.

We sat and talked for an hour until Ward burst in, knocking and opening the door at the same moment.

Murray and Foster had been getting on splendidly together, but directly Ward came they hardly said a word. Possibly they did not get much chance, but any one could see that Foster had taken a dislike to Ward at sight.

Murray went away very soon and left the three of us together.

"I've been over to Woodstock in a dog-cart with Bunny Langham and Bob Fraser," Ward said. "By Jove, that cob of Bunny's can move. We got back in five-and-twenty minutes."

As I didn't know how far it was to Woodstock and didn't care, I said nothing, so Ward went on, "Bunny's a rare good sort; you ought to meet him."

"What college is he at?" I asked.

"At the House—Christchurch, you know." I did know, and thought the explanation cheek. "I have hired a gee from Carter's to-morrow, and am going to drive over to Abingdon with Bunny, will you come?"

"To-morrow's Sunday," I said.

"Yes, there is nothing else to do. The better the day the——" But I interrupted him.

"Don't talk rot, I hate those things. Are you going in a dog-cart?" I asked.

"Yes, it is Bunny's cart."

"I am jolly well not going to sit on the back seat of a dog-cart if I can help it; I would rather go about in a perambulator," I said.

"You are so confoundedly particular," he went on with a great guffaw of laughter, "but since it is Bunny's cart and I am going to drive I don't see how we can offer you any other seat."

"Who the blazes is Bunny?" I asked, for his name was beginning to get on my nerves, and Fred Foster sitting as dumb as a mute was enough to upset any one.

"I know him at home, his father is the Marquis of Tillford and his real name is Lord Augustus Langham, only his teeth stick out and every one calls him Bunny," Ward answered.

"Heaps of money?" I said.

"Plenty, I should think."

"Then he is no use to me, though he may be the best fellow in the world," I declared.

"You are a rum 'un, why he is just the sort of man who is some use."

"That depends," Foster said suddenly.

"Yes, it depends," I repeated, though I didn't know exactly what depended.

"What depends?" Ward asked Foster.

"Well, if a man hasn't got much money it is no use knowing a lot of men who have got no end."

"It never struck me that way. Perhaps you are right," and then turning to me, he added, "Come to breakfast anyhow to-morrow morning, Bunny won't be there then."

I promised to go, and then he left us. I walked back to Oriel with Foster and he had got a lot to say about Jack Ward. "Where in the world did you find that man?" was his first remark after we were alone.

"He found me," I said.

"I should lose him as soon as possible," Fred went on.

"I don't think that would be very easy," I answered, "and I don't believe he is a bad sort really."

"I'll bet he never came back from Woodstock in five-and-twenty minutes," Foster said.

CHAPTER III

THE RESULT OF THE FRESHERS' MATCH

If I had to describe in detail the first two or three weeks of my life at Oxford, I think that accusations might be brought against me of having eaten too much, or at any rate too often. Fortunately I had a good digestion, I cannot imagine the fate of a dyspeptic freshman if he had to attend a series of Oxford breakfasts. I have, however, only once encountered a fresher who suffered from dyspepsia, and if there was any other man so afflicted at St. Cuthbert's he probably did not admit his complaint. For we were supposed to be very cultivated at St. Cuthbert's, and at that time it was not good form to hold a roll-call of our diseases at breakfast, to discuss surgical operations at luncheon, and to provide tales of sea-sickness by way of humour at dinner. We kept our complaints to ourselves and were in truth more than a little ashamed of them.

St. Cuthbert's had a reputation of its own. Men in other colleges criticized us very freely. They said that we were prigs, that the 'Varsity boat would never be any good as long as there was a St. Cuthbert's man in it, and other pleasant things which did not annoy me, since I, having been a butt for much personal criticism all my life, can even get some satisfaction from finding that a crowd of other people are as bad as I am. Besides, we had nearly one hundred and fifty men at St. Cuthbert's, and I thought it was absolutely stupid to say we were all prigs and that none of us could row.

The truth of the matter was, as far as I could judge, that at St. Cuthbert's there were often a large number of clever men, and clever men when young can get on one's nerves most terribly. It is all right for men to be clever when they are old or even middle-aged, then allowances are made for them and they may be as odd as they please. But if any one happens to be clever when he is at Oxford, he will have to watch himself closely or he will be called either a genius or a lunatic, and the one is almost as fatal as the other.

In a college as large as St. Cuthbert's it was natural that there should be a number of different sets. We had several men who are best described by the word "bloods"; two or three of them belonged to the Bullingdon, a few of them to Vincent's, of which Club most of "the blues" in the 'Varsity were members, and nearly all had plenty of money and every one of them lived as if they had plenty. I cannot call them athletic, though they and the really athletic set were more or less mixed up together. We had also a very serious set who, I thought, gave themselves far too many airs. Perhaps serious is not quite the right word to apply to them, for one of this gang wrote a comic opera and another wrote a farce; but these were just thrown out in their spare time, and when I attended a reading of the libretto of the comic opera I went so fast asleep that I cannot

say how comic it was. But if it had been very funny I should think some one would have laughed loud enough to wake me up. Generally speaking this set seemed to be bent on the reformation of England, a thing which has happened once and is rather a difficult matter for a college debating society to bring about again. The reformation which they were bent upon was not, however, religious, for they thought little of the religion which satisfies ordinary people. One of them told me that religion was merely emotional and sentimental, a crutch for a weak man, and went on to say that their scheme was moral and social, a cry for a better life and against the oppression of the poor. That man bored me terribly, but since one of his own set had told me that he was the cleverest man in Oxford I did not like to tell him what I thought. Besides I was only a fresher who had not yet looked around, and he was the first man I had met who was the cleverest man in Oxford, though I met several others afterwards who had arrived at the same peak of distinction. I even got so weary of meeting this particular brand of man that I asked Jack Ward to help me along my way by spreading a report that I was a most promising poet, but he said that no one who had ever seen me would believe him. He meant to be complimentary, I believe.

It was into this medley of sets that I was plunged headlong. Crowds of men called upon me and asked me to meals. Some of them wanted to know me because I played cricket and football, the captain of the college boat called because he wanted me to row, some of the "bloods" left cards on me because they had seen me walking about with Jack Ward, whom they had marked down as one of themselves. A few men called from other colleges who had known me at Cliborough, or had been asked to see something of me because their people knew mine. I got to know the oddest lot of men imaginable, and as long as they looked clean and did not try to rush me into helping them to reform the world, I liked them all.

But in spite of Ward, who pretended that Rugby football was an overrated amusement, I wanted to belong to the athletic set, and I started by playing footer in a thing which is most correctly called "The Freshers' Squash." In this struggle any fresher who had never played rigger in his life, but thought he would like some exercise, could play, while footer blues dodged round and took your names, if you were lucky enough to touch the ball, and booked you for the proper game. On the following day I played back in the real freshers' match, and was most tremendously encouraged before I started by hearing one man say to another that I had come up with a big reputation from Cliborough. Perhaps I was encouraged too much, or possibly I had eaten too heavy a luncheon, for whatever reputation I might have had before the game began, was effectually dispersed before we had finished playing; and Foster, who was playing three-quarters on the other side, was the man who assisted me in this dismally easy task. Four times he came right away from everybody, and once he slipped down in front of me, but on the other three occasions he simply swerved away from me and I missed him by yards. The man who had been full back to the 'Varsity XV. the year before had gone down, and Foster had put into my head the idea that I ought to have a jolly good chance of getting my blue. This match was a very rude blow, and when I put on my coat and walked out of the parks I felt that I had been very badly treated. I was not at all sure with whom I was most angry, but I had a general feeling that whatever I tried to do went most hopelessly wrong, and that I was much better fitted to sit in a dog-cart with Jack Ward, than I was to stand up in a footer-field and be made a fool of by Fred Foster.

As luck would have it the first man I saw when I went into the college was Ward, and he shouted with laughter when he saw me.

"I went down to the parks to see you," he said, "but for heaven's sake don't look so down on your luck. I don't see that it matters, there are other things worth doing besides trying to collar impossible people. If you don't have to play again I shall think you are thundering well out of it."

If anybody had said this to me at school I should have thought that he was mad, but during the few days I had been at Oxford I had somehow or other got hopelessly mixed up. Foster wanted me to do one thing, Murray advised me to do another, Ward kept on asking me to slack, and a fellow called Dennison, whom I had met several times, seemed to think that Oxford was a tremendous joke and that the most amusing people in it were the dons.

At any rate I was not in the least angry at Ward's way of taking my wretched exhibition, so I asked him and Dennison and two or three other freshers, who were standing around in the quad, to come and have tea with me, and that tea was the beginning of my first big row. I had not finished my bath when I was sorry I had asked them, for I remembered that before the game had begun Foster had asked me to go round afterwards to see him, and I had a sort of feeling that if he had made an idiot of himself, and I had caused him to do so, he would have most certainly not been as angry as I was. However, I had let myself in for this tea and had to go through with it, and I must say that it was very good fun.

If, as some wit said, only a dull man can be brilliant at breakfast, it seems to me that if the converse of this is true St. Cuthbert's must have contained an extraordinary number of brilliant men. The amusements of a breakfast given by a senior man to half-a-dozen freshers were principally food and silence. It is, I think, dreadfully difficult to talk to a batch of freshers, and only one man, as far as my experience went, overcame the difficulty. He resorted to the simple means of telling us what a wonderful man he was. But when we were alone we chattered like a lot of starlings, every one talked and no one listened, so we got on well together.

Ward and Dennison came up to my rooms before I was dressed, and two other men, Lambert and Collier, arrived soon afterwards. It was a party of which Ward strongly approved. While I was

trying to make the kettle boil, I heard Dennison say that we were the pick of the freshers, a statement which no one was very likely to deny. I felt badly in need of some tonic after my afternoon, and I swallowed the one provided by Dennison without any hesitation, not stopping to wonder how often he had said the same thing to other men. As a matter-of-fact we were rather an odd lot to be the pick of anybody.

Dennison looked younger than any boy in the sixth form at Cliborough, and he could, on occasions, blush most bashfully. His blush was, however, the only bashful thing about him and he used it very seldom. Ward had told me that although Dennison looked such a kid he knew a tremendous lot. I discovered this for myself later on, but I cannot say that his knowledge was the kind which is difficult to acquire. He professed a wholesale contempt for any game at which he could get his mouth full of dirt, and said that he would as soon make mud-pies as play football.

Lambert was hugely tall and walked with a stride which was as long as it was stately. He went in for dressing himself beautifully, strummed on the banjo, and had a playful little habit of arranging his tie in any mirror which he saw. His pride in himself was so monstrously open that no one with a grain of humour could be angry with him. He talked about every game under the sun as if they were all equally easy to him, but I should not think that any one was ever found who believed half of what he said.

Collier's great point was the beam which he kept on his face, he always looked so perfectly delighted to see you that he was a most effective cure for depression. He was fat and did not mind, which persuaded me that he was very easy to please. Nature had prevented him from playing football with any success, but for six or seven overs, on a cool day, he was reported to be a dangerous fast bowler.

As Jack Ward thought that no ball yet made was worth worrying when he could ride, drive, or even be driven, and since I was feeling about as sick with footer as it is possible for any one who had got a love for the game in him to be, I confess that we were a peculiar lot to think much of ourselves.

My room was not made to hold five people, who, with the exception of Dennison, were all either very broad or long, but a good honest squash certainly makes for friendship. We were a fairly rowdy party, because Lambert had brought his banjo and as soon as he had finished tea he wanted to sing; in fact it may be said of him that he was always wanting to sing and could never find any one who wished to listen to him. I had already heard him sing some sentimental rubbish about meeting by moonlight and another thing about stars and souls, and I threw a cushion at his head as soon as he began to make some noise which he called "tuning up." That began a cushion fight, which resulted in two china shepherdesses, a small lamp, and some teacups being smashed, but it persuaded Lambert that he could not sing whenever he felt inclined. We all sat down again, and Ward, who had been hanging on to the standard lamp while cushions had been flying around, said to me—

"You did look down on your luck when I saw you in the quad. I can't think why anybody should take these wretched games so seriously; it seems to me a perfectly rotten thing to do."

"No game is worth playing in which it matters to any one else whether you win or lose," Dennison said before I had a chance to answer Ward; "the only games a self-respecting man can play are court tennis, racquets and golf. Then there is no one to swear at you except yourself."

"That's rubbish," I answered. "Half the fun of the thing is belonging to a side, and a man must be mad to say that golf is a better game than cricket."

"Dennison wasn't trying to make out that golf is better than cricket, but was just saying what games a man can play without being sworn at as if he were a coolie," Ward said.

"I refuse to take amusements seriously," Dennison continued. "I would sooner shout with laughter at a funeral than lose my temper playing a game."

"The sweetest thing on earth," I said, "is to catch a fast half-volley to leg plumb in the middle of the bat."

"It isn't in the same street with a comic opera at the Savoy after a good dinner," Lambert remarked.

"At any rate it doesn't last so long," Dennison, who had a queer idea of what was funny, put in.

"A punt, good cushions, June, and a novel by one of those people who make you feel sleepy, are hard to beat," Collier stated.

"You are a Sybarite," Dennison said, "and you will be a disappointed one before long. All we do here in the summer is to give our relations strawberries and cream and run with our college eight."

"How do you know?" Collier asked, but to so searching a question he got no reply.

"The finest sight in the world is a thoroughbred horse," Ward said.

"You must have gone about with your eyes shut," Dennison declared.

"Don't sit there talking rot," I said. "If anything ever pleases you, tell us what it is."

"My greatest pleasure is in polite conversation," he answered.

"Oh, you are a sarcastic idiot," I retorted, for people who are afflicted by thinking themselves funny when I think they are idiotic always make me rude.

"Dennison never says what he means," Ward explained, "it is a little habit of his."

"Why can't you talk straight, it's much simpler, and doesn't make me feel so horribly uncomfortable?" I asked, turning to Dennison.

"Marten is getting angry," was the only answer I received, and it was so near the truth that I wanted to pick him up and drop him in the passage.

Ward, however, calmed my feelings by saying that he could not imagine any one troubling to be angry with Dennison. "The one thing he prides himself on is getting a rise out of people, and we aren't such fools as he thinks us."

"And he is a much bigger fool than he thinks," Collier said solemnly.

"You are a nice complimentary lot," Dennison remarked, smiling amiably upon us.

"It's your own fault," Collier continued; "you try to be clever and succeed in being confoundedly dull. I was at school with him for five years and I know his only strong point is that the more you abuse him the more he likes you."

"I'm fairly in love with you, Coalheaver," Dennison said.

"Naturally, but you might forget that very witty name."

"I'm going," Lambert declared, "for I'm dining in hall, and if I don't go for a walk those kromeskis and quenelles will choke me."

"Half a minute," and Ward pushed Lambert back into his seat; "now we are all here, I think we had better arrange a freshers' wine. There always is one, and nobody will get it up if we don't, so I vote we do the thing properly."

Every one seemed to approve of the idea, but as I was no use at making arrangements I suggested that Ward should manage the whole business.

"I can order everything, but we must have a committee to choose the people we shall ask and all that part of it. We can't ask everybody," Ward said.

"Half of them won't come if we do. I should think we had better ask the whole lot, and then we shall know what they are made of," Lambert advised.

"We shan't have a room big enough to hold them," Collier said.

After that we all began to talk, and though I had only a hazy notion of what we decided, I heard enough to know that Ward and Dennison meant having this wine in about ten days and only intended to ask the freshers whom they liked.

CHAPTER IV

UNEXPECTED PEOPLE

The idea of working for Mr. Gilbert Edwardes never had much attraction for me, and for the first two or three weeks at Oxford I found it very difficult to satisfy him. However, the excuse that I took a long time to settle down in a fresh place did not seem as reasonable to him as it did to me, so I had to abandon it and try to appease him. The worst of him was that I never knew whether he was pleased or not; he accepted my most determined efforts at scholarship as a matter of course and reserved his eloquence for the occasions on which my work showed symptoms of haste. In less than a fortnight I felt that my tutor and I were watching each other, an element of distrust seemed to have sprung up; he took it for granted that I would do as little as possible, while I was searching for something which could tell me that he was human as well as learned.

I could not understand him in the least, for I had been accustomed to masters who talked about things of which I knew a little even if they were bored by doing so; but when I met Mr. Edwardes I felt that he belonged to the ice period, and that he would think the smallest thaw a waste of time.

I do like a human being, I mean a man who lets you know something about him and does not barricade himself against you. But a man who puts up the shutters in front of his virtues and faults bothers me most terribly, and I always seem to be bumping my head against something invisible whenever I see him, which is a most disconcerting performance.

Mr. Edwardes was also Murray's tutor, but Murray was not afflicted, as I was, with the desire to know people more than they wanted to be known, and he told me that if I would only take Edwardes as I found him we should get on together splendidly. In spite of Jack Ward, I saw Murray every day, and the more I knew of him the more I liked him. He was in my room one evening after Ward had arranged that we were to have a freshers' wine, and I asked him if he was coming to it.

"I can't go unless I am asked," he said, "and I shan't go now if I am asked."

I resolved to say a few things to Ward, but I did not know what to say to Murray.

"Ward is asking everybody he wants, isn't he?" he inquired.

"Yes it was left to him and Dennison, I believe."

"Then I am not likely to be invited, for he and I never could do anything but have rows with each other at Wellingtonham."

"What about?" I asked, for Murray had never said much about Ward to me and I wanted to hear his side of the quarrel.

"It isn't worth repeating," he answered. "I was head of the school and Ward thought a friend of his ought to have seen. He thinks I am a smug because I have to work, and I suppose I think he is a fool because he thinks I am a smug. He is a queer sort, and it is hopeless for me to try to be friends with him, even if I wanted to be, and I don't."

"He is a fairly good cricketer, isn't he?" I asked, for I had discovered that when Murray had once made up his mind no efforts of mine would change it.

"Yes, he would have got into the XI. quite easily only he was so slack, and the master who looked after our cricket couldn't stand him. It was rather a swindle that he didn't get into the team all the same."

"I hate slackers," I said, and to prove it I set to work on some Homer for Edwardes. Murray got his books and we slaved together for nearly two hours, when a most timid knock sounded on my door, and a man came in who seemed to be most fearfully nervous. He was carrying a gown and a cap in his hand, and he looked at Murray, who was not at all an alarming sight, as if he had encountered a wild man from one of those regions where wild men are bred. I had never had much practice at putting any one at their ease, for most people hit me on the back and call me "old fellow" far too soon; but I tried very hard to calm my visitor, and though it was six o'clock I asked him to have tea and every conceivable other thing I could think of, all of which he refused. He told me his name was Owen, but apart from that I knew nothing, and the more he fidgeted with the tassel of his cap the more I wondered why he had come.

Murray, however, guessed that he was in the way and hurried off as soon as he could. Then Owen made two or three unsuccessful efforts to begin, until I felt that I must offer him something more, only I had nothing left to offer. The man who said that hospitality covers a multitude of emotions went nearer the mark than most of those word-turning people do. But at last it all came out in jerks, and I felt most thoroughly sorry for him; if I had been in his place I am certain I should never have faced such an ordeal.

"I didn't like to tell you why I had come before your friend," he began; and he still twisted his cap round and round by the tassel. "I suppose a sort of false modesty prevented me, but I might just as well have spoken before him."

"Murray is a most awfully good sort," I said lamely, for I wanted to help him so much that my head felt hot and I could not think.

"I expect he is," Owen went on, "but I haven't come to be friends with your friends. I only wanted to see you, and the reason is that over twenty years ago in India your father saved my father's life."

I did feel relieved when he told me that, for I had been imagining that he was the kind of man who is known as a freak, and had come to win me over to some stupid crank which he would call a noble cause.

"I am most tremendously glad you have come," I said, and then I began talking about my

father's old regiment, and Owen could not get a word in until I had finished.

"You don't understand," he said, as soon as he got a chance; "when you talk about a regiment you only think of the officers, my father was one of the men."

"I don't see what that matters as long as his life was saved."

"It does matter," Owen replied; "it matters here very much, where there is not much liberality except in offering meals and things not wanted." I moved my feet and kicked the fender, the fire-irons jangled together and he went on: "I ought not to have said that, it is my blundering way to say the thing I oughtn't; what I meant was that Oxford is not very liberal to a man like I am, who is here by hard work, and not because his fathers and grandfathers were here before him. It is impossible in a place of sets—social, athletic, and all the rest—for a man who has to work to keep himself, to be treated in the same way as you, for instance, are treated. I am not what the world calls a gentleman."

"Oh, confound the world," I said, "it is always mixed up in my mind with the flesh and the devil," and as Owen did not say anything for a minute I asked him what college he was at.

"I am unattached, St. Catherine's if you like; we are called 'The Toshers,'" he answered, and there was a note of bitterness in his voice. "Of course," he went on, "I am boring you to death, but I must say that I should never have come to see you if my father had not made me promise that I would. He takes a tremendous interest in both your brother and you; he knows the place your brother passed into Sandhurst and where he was in the list when he went out, and last summer he watched for your name in *The Sportsman*, and when you got any wickets he was as pleased as Punch. He writes to Colonel Marten still."

I wished I could have said that my father had mentioned him to me, but if I had I am certain that Owen would have seen that I was not telling the truth. "My father," I tried to explain, "never talks about anything he has done. If your father had saved his life I should have heard of it a hundred times."

"You have the knack of saying the right thing, I shall never get that if I live to be a hundred;" and then he stood up, and putting a hand on the mantel-piece looked at the photographs of my people, but he did not say what he thought about them.

"If I did say the right thing, it was a most fearful fluke," I said, for I could not be silent. "I simply hate men who walk about patting themselves on the back because they have had what they call success with a remark."

He did not listen to what I was saying, but stood staring into the fire; at last he turned round and held out a hand to me.

"I must thank you," he began; "and there is one other thing I have got to ask you before I say good-bye. My father asked me to make you promise that you would never mention what I have told you about his life being saved by your father, or anything about him. It seems to be a sort of compact, I don't understand it. He doesn't want your people to know anything about me, but only you."

I promised, of course, but I felt rather bothered.

"We may meet some day in the street," he said, and he pushed his hand into mine; but I let it go, and told him to sit down again. For this last speech of his was annoying, he had evidently got a wrong idea of me.

"It is no use talking rot," I said. "To begin with, what on earth have you got to thank me for?"

"If Colonel Marten hadn't saved my father's life, I should never have been born," he said.

"And you have come to thank me for that?" I said, and I did not mean to be rude.

"I was told to, you see," he answered.

I looked at him and we both laughed, though I went on laughing long after he had stopped. The idea of me being thanked for anybody's existence was beautifully comic.

"It is very good of you to have come," I said, as soon as I could; "but I don't deserve any thanks and you know that I don't."

"You haven't got much to do with it, perhaps, but you were here and I should never have been forgiven if I hadn't come to see you. I shan't come again."

"Oh, bosh," I replied. "What's the good of talking stuff like that? Of course you will come again, and I am coming to see you, if I may. How long have you been up here?"

"This is the beginning of my third year."

"What did you get in Mods?" I asked, for I felt sure that he had done well.

"A First," he answered.

"I wish I had. Where do you live?"

"I shan't tell you."

"You may just as well, for I shall easily find out."

He stood up again, and talked as he strode up and down my room.

"I have been here two years," he began, "and I know that it is impossible for us to be friends; and when you have thought it over you will think as I do. My father teaches fencing and boxing in London; I was educated at a school you never heard of; I am helped here by an old gentleman who discovered that I was more or less intelligent. He has a mania for experiments, and I am his latest hobby. Have I said enough to put you off, or must I go on?"

"I suppose I can please myself when I choose my friends," I said.

"That you most certainly can't do here," he answered. "Let me alone and I won't bother you any more. Good-night, your bell is going for dinner."

He walked straight out of my room, and before he had closed the door Jack Ward rushed in.

"Who is that man?" he asked at once.

"I am not going to tell you," I answered, for I wanted time to think.

"Well he is a funny-looking Johnny anyway, looks as pale as a codfish and as solemn as a boiled owl. You do collect an odd set of friends; there's that man Foster, who seems to be deaf and dumb, and Murray, who gives me the blues whenever I see him, and then this apparition."

"You can just shut up jawing," I answered, as I hunted round for my gown; "when I want you to criticize my friends I will tell you. Foster's worth about ten billion of you any day."

I was very angry, but Ward only laughed and told me to hurry up unless I wanted the soup to be cold.

"We are going to have a little roulette in my rooms to-night," he said, as we walked across the quad. "Will you come?"

"No, I won't," I answered, and I let him go into the hall first, and as soon as he had chosen his seat I got as far from him as I could. I saw him talking to Collier, and they seemed to be amused, which did not lessen my annoyance. If the freshers' wine had been held on that evening, I am very nearly sure that I should not have gone to it.

After dinner I waylaid Murray, and dragged him off to see Foster at Oriel. Two days before Foster had been playing rigger for the 'Varsity against the London Scottish, and I had neither seen the game, because I had to play in a college match on the same afternoon, nor had I seen him since. I wanted to hear whether he was satisfied with himself, but I wanted also to tell him about Owen.

We found him in the college lodge talking to a whole lot of men, but as soon as he saw us he grabbed one man and took us to his rooms. I did not want this fourth fellow, but since he was there I must say that Foster could not have got any one nicer. His name was Henderson, and he had been so successful as captain of his school cricket XI. that he had played three times for Somersetshire during August. His legs and arms were extraordinarily long and his face was covered with freckles; one freckle had placed itself on the tip of his nose and I did not get accustomed to it for a long time—it was the sort of thing which one kept on looking at to see if it was still there. He would not talk about his cricket, except to say that he should not have played for Somersetshire if half the regular team had not been laid up, and he kept on clamouring to play whist, so that at last we gave way to him.

I had a good opinion of my whist, though how I arrived at it I cannot explain. Henderson was my partner and he seemed to me to do the most odd things. For instance when I led a spade and he took the trick, instead of leading another spade he would begin some fresh suit, which made me wonder what in the world he was doing. And he did not seem to think his trumps half as valuable as I thought mine, but just led them whenever he felt inclined. When Nina, Foster and I played whist it was considered pretty bad form to lead trumps when we had anything else to lead, and we kept them for a big outburst at the finish. I pitied myself considerably for having Henderson as a partner, and I was very surprised to see Murray doing the same odd sort of things. So at the end of one rubber Foster and I played together, but I cannot say that we had much luck, and just at the end I made a revoke which Murray was brute enough to notice. When Henderson had gone I said that he seemed to be a rare good sort, but it was a pity he did not know a little more about whist. I hoped Murray would take that remark partly to himself, because at the end of every hand he had talked to Henderson about what might have happened if he had led a different card, and sometimes he even went on jawing when he had got his fresh hand, which quite put me off my game. But all Murray did was to laugh, while Foster said to me that he

was afraid our way of playing whist was all wrong, and I had some difficulty in persuading him that it was not. Then Murray said something about reading Cavendish carefully, but I had heard some one say that Cavendish was out of date, so I borrowed this man's opinion and expressed it as my own, which amused Murray so much that if I had not been sorry for him I believe I should have lost my temper.

At last, however, we stopped discussing whist, and after I had made Foster and Murray swear they would tell no one else, I gave them an account of Owen coming to see me. Before I began Foster declared that the reason I bound them to keep my secret was because I wanted to tell it to every one myself. In fact he expected the whole thing to be some miserable little affair, for I had a habit, which I have since abandoned, of extracting the most terrific promises of secrecy from my friends and then telling them something which they did not think as important as I did. I started that game because I had once told something really funny to a lot of fellows at Cliborough, and they went and spread it about so quickly that I could never find any one else who did not know it, which was simply nothing less than a fraud.

But as soon as I had got fairly into my tale I saw that both Foster and Murray were interested, and at the end of it I asked them what I was to do.

"Do you think he meant that he wouldn't have anything more to do with you, or that he just wanted to show you that he would leave you to decide what was to happen next?" Murray asked.

"I don't know what he meant," I answered. "He seemed to be in a rage with the whole of Oxford, only it was not a noisy sort of rage but a kind of smouldering business, and perhaps I only imagined the whole thing."

"What was he like to look at?" Foster inquired.

"Pale and dark, and he looked unwell without looking unwholesome," I replied.

"I saw him," Murray said, "and I thought he would have been rather nice if he hadn't been so nervous. He has got great big eyes and about half an acre of forehead."

"He wore a flannel shirt and a turned-down collar, and looked clean," I told Foster, for I thought he had better know everything.

"Ask him to lunch and Murray and me to meet him," Foster suggested.

"I can't ask a senior man to lunch, it would show that I thought it didn't make any difference in his case, and I think he would be on the look-out for things like that. Besides, he wouldn't come."

"I should leave him alone," Murray said.

"I shan't do that, it would make me feel a brute," I replied.

"Find out where he lives and I will come with you and see him. I know your father, so it will be all right," Foster proposed.

"He has called on me, so he can't mind me going to see him, and I should like to take you with me. I'll let you know as soon as I have found out where his rooms are;" and then, as it was getting late, Foster came down with us to the lodge, and I was half out of the door before I remembered to ask him about his footer.

"I am playing against Cooper's Hill on Wednesday," he said; "but I shall be kicked out if I don't play any better than I did on Saturday."

As we walked up King Edward Street Murray did nothing but talk about Foster, and since I was always delighted whenever I could get any one on that subject I did not look half carefully enough where I was going. Murray was in cap and gown, but I was not wearing what is sometimes magnificently called "academical attire," but had on a cloth cap. It had never occurred to me that we were likely to meet the "proggins," but as I turned into The High we ran full tilt into him, and before I had time to think of running, a "bulldog" had told me that the proctor would like to speak to me. There was no way out of it, so I turned to gratify this unforeseen gentleman and found that he was my tutor, Mr. Edwardes. He did not trouble to go through the usual formula of asking me whether I belonged to the University and all the rest of it, but told me to call upon him the next morning. He spoke so quickly that I could not hear what time he told me to come, but I supposed any time would do.

"Did you know that Edwardes was a proctor?" I asked Murray, as soon as we could go on.

"Some one told me he was; he is a junior proctor, I think."

"And a vile nuisance," I added. "He will be more down on me than ever now."

"There is no harm in walking about without cap and gown," Murray said.

"I'll bet Edwardes thinks there is," I answered, and as I was feeling furious at being caught so

simply, I gave a tremendous hammer upon the door of St. Cuthbert's, and when I wished the porter good-night he glared at me and did not answer.

CHAPTER V

THE WINE

The faculty of making people angry without meaning to do so is a most fatal possession. When I remember the men I know who seem to be constitutionally unpleasant and who walk about saying sarcastic things, I do think I am unlucky. For I annoy people quite unintentionally, and it must be the most stupid way of bringing about a bad result. I get no fun for my money, so to speak. Honestly I did not hear at what time Mr. Edwardes told me to call upon him, and when I strolled over to his rooms about eleven o'clock on the following morning, I had no idea that he was likely to be more than usually displeased. But it did not take me a moment to discover that he was very angry indeed. From what he told me it seemed that I ought to have appeared at nine o'clock with many other men as unfortunate as I was, and he evidently considered that I had not come at the proper hour because I had thought that one time would do as well as another. I told him that I did not hear him mention any particular time, but I do not think he believed me, and after I had paid him five shillings for being without my cap and gown he did not even thank me, but looked first at his watch and then at a long list which he had on his table.

"It is now a quarter-past eleven, and I believe Mr. Armitage's lecture at Merton begins at eleven o'clock. May I ask why you have decided not to attend his lecture this morning?" and he screwed his mouth up until it seemed to disappear.

His question was difficult to answer, because I could not tell him that Murray and I had decided that Mr. Armitage lectured very badly, and that I had expressed my intention of cutting his lectures whenever I felt inclined. So I said that I had forgotten Mr. Armitage's lecture, which happened to be the truth.

"I am afraid, Mr. Marten, that you take a very light view of your responsibilities," he said. "It is unusual, I imagine, for an exhibitioner of a college to interview the proctor as soon as you have done; the college authorities naturally expect their scholars and exhibitioners to obey the rules of the University, and they also expect them to apply themselves earnestly to their studies. At the present moment I am unable to consider that you have realized either of these expectations."

"Well, sir, they are early days yet," I said with a smile, for I thought it was best to take a cheery view of the situation.

"This is no jest," he replied, and his teeth snapped together very disagreeably.

"I did not mistake it for one," I said, and I wanted to be amicable; "but being without cap and gown last night is not a very awful offence, is it? The proctors would have a very dull time if they did not catch men sometimes."

I cannot imagine why I made that last remark, except that he had fixed his little eyes upon me when I began and it seemed to be dragged out of me.

"I do not think that you need trouble yourself about the duties of the proctors, Mr. Marten. Good-morning, and please remember what I have said to you."

I left his room smiling, and I am sure he thought I was laughing at him; but what really amused me was being called "Mr. Marten," for I had not grown accustomed to my prefix and the sound of it was most comical to me. I am afraid my taste for jokes was very different from that of my tutor.

When I came away from Mr. Edwardes I stood in the front quadrangle and whistled. My whistle is unmusical and penetrative, useful only when a dog has been lost, and some man, whom I did not know, put his head out of his window and said abruptly, "For heaven's sake shut up that vile noise;" another man chucked a penny into the quad and told me he should send something heavier if I did not stop. The front quad was obviously no place for me, but before I had made up my mind where I would go the Warden came out of his house and saw me before I saw him.

"Good-morning, Mr. Marten," he said before I could escape; "it is so unusual to find a beautiful quadrangle totally uninhabited that you seem to be undecided whether to leave it or not. Your whistle as I stood by the open window of my bedroom suggested to me that you are not employing your time most advantageously either to yourself or to others."

He stood by me for a moment, and then moving on with his peculiar shuffle disappeared through the doorway leading into the college gardens. My nerves were becoming upset from

these constant encounters, and as I felt that I could not sit down and work until I had some kind of an antidote, I went up to see Jack Ward, who had rooms in the front quadrangle.

I found him, as I thought, most beautifully unemployed, but as soon as he had asked me whether my temper was better in the morning than at night, of which remark I took no notice, he said that he was being worried to death.

There were two telegrams lying on his table, and I thought something awful had happened to his people, so I tried to look sympathetic and replied that if he would rather be left alone I would go at once. Then he broke forth into the language of towing-paths and barges and asked me whether I was a lunatic, which was a fairly nasty question when I thought I was treating his trouble in a becoming spirit. I was not, however, sure what was the matter with him, so I did not say what I might have said but asked him to tell me why he was bothered.

"You see it is like this," he answered, picking up both the telegrams; "one of our groom fellows at home has a brother who knows everything about Blackmore's stable, and he has just wired to me that Dainty Dick will win the Flying Welter at Hurst Park to-day, and I was off to back it when I get a wire from my tipster, Tom Webb, that The Philosopher can't lose the same race. It is Tom's 'double nap' and I am in a hole what to do."

As I had never heard before of Dainty Dick, The Philosopher, Tom Webb or Blackmore, I did not feel in a position to give advice, but I laughed until I felt quite unwell, and Ward walked about the room asking violently why I was amused.

"I thought some of your people were ill when I came in here," I said after some minutes, "and the whole thing turns out to be some gibberish nonsense about Tom Webb, a tipster, and some rotten horses."

"You are most refreshingly green," Ward replied, and he screwed the telegrams together and threw them into the fire.

"What are you going to do?" I inquired.

"That's just it, I can't make up my mind. Tom Webb has sent me twelve stiff 'uns running, and if The Philosopher won and I wasn't on it I should swear for a month."

"Then," I said wisely, "I think you had better back The Philosopher; you ought to think a little of your friends."

The only answer I received to my suggestion was that of all the fools in Oxford I was the most sublime, so I told him that if he backed either of these horses he would be proving that, at any rate, I was not absolutely the biggest fool he knew. But he had begun to read racing guides and calendars, and every now and then made notes upon a piece of paper, so he treated my retort with contempt.

"I believe," he said, with a pencil between his teeth, "that Dainty Dick can give The Philosopher about eleven pounds, and he has only to give him four, so I shall back The Philosopher."

"That doesn't seem very good reasoning," I ventured to remark.

"My opinion's always wrong," he explained, "but I have a thundering good mind to back both of 'em."

"It seems the quickest way of losing your money," I said.

"Don't be such a confounded ass. I know about some of these stables, a man is a fool if you like who bets and doesn't know." He shut up his betting-book with a bang, and I told him the only tale I knew about racing.

"I have a cousin," I began, "who owned racehorses and all the rest of it. He lost every penny he had, and a lot more besides. He knew, as you call it." I did not feel that my tale, though it had the merit of being true, was a good one.

"It is no use for you to sit there and conjure up tragedies," Ward replied. "I can't help gambling, it is in my blood; my father is about the biggest speculator in England. If you want a good tip, buy Susquehambo Consolidated Rubies."

I was not inclined to buy anything except a fox-terrier pup, and I told Ward that he would come a most howling cropper if he did not look out. But I have never yet happened to find the man who was inclined to take my warnings seriously, and Jack Ward, at any rate, was so naturally optimistic, that I might have known that he would take no notice whatever of my advice.

"I shall back both Dainty Dick and The Philosopher," he said, when I had finished; "come down to Wright's with me, and I will have a fiver on each of them. I don't get tips like these every day."

He put on his cap and tried to persuade me to go with him, but I was sick of the man, he

seemed to me to be simply throwing his money away; so I went back to my rooms, and finding that Murray had been to Armitage's lecture, I borrowed his notes and copied them into my book, though Murray said, and I thought, that I was wasting my time.

I did not see Ward again until after five o'clock, when he brought an evening paper and a cheerful countenance into my rooms and told me that Dainty Dick had won the Flying Welter, and The Philosopher had been second. "Two pretty good tips, my boy," he said; "nothing but your obstinacy prevented your being on."

Collier had been having tea with me, and was to all appearances asleep when Ward came in, but without opening his eyes he said, "Betting is a mug's game. What price did this brute start at?"

"I don't know until I get the next evening paper, but it is sure to be a good price; there were twelve runners, and they are sure to have backed The Philosopher."

"You are a rotter," Collier stated; "if you are going to stay here, don't talk racing to us. I don't know anything about it and don't want to."

"I know a real hot thing for the Manchester November Handicap, been kept for months," Ward said quite cheerfully.

"We don't want to hear it," I said.

"I am thundering well not going to tell you anyway. You two men ought to be in bed, I am going to find some one who is not half asleep," Ward answered, and he went away with unnecessary noise.

Both Collier and I had promised to go to Lambert's rooms after dinner on that evening; he had asked us because he said we ought to have a talk about the freshers' wine, but we knew well enough that he intended to twang his wretched banjo and sing little love songs which made the night hideous. If only he would have sung comic things he might not have caused such wholesale pain, though I should not like to speak positively upon that point. I did not go to this entertainment immediately after dinner, and when I arrived I found the usual gang, Ward, Dennison and Collier, and one other man who turned out to be Bunny Langham. Everybody except Collier was playing a game of cards called "Bank," the chief merit of which is its simplicity. The dealer puts some money into the pool and deals three cards to each player, who can bet up to the amount in the pool that one of his cards will beat the card which the dealer turns up against him. All that seemed to happen was that Bunny Langham kept on saying, "I'll go the whole shoot," and then complained violently of his luck. It was no game for me and I looked to Collier for amusement, but he had got a bottle of French plums in his lap and was engaged in trying to get them out with a fork which was too short for the job. The banjo had been put back into its case, and though it was not amusing to see four men play cards and Collier over-eating himself, I was content to see the banjo put away for the night, so I got the most comfortable chair I could grasp and waited until somebody thought it was time to go to bed. I sat facing Bunny Langham, and as there was nothing else to do I watched him losing his money, and I should think he was what is called a very good loser. He was a most curious-looking man and wore eyeglasses which did not seem powerful enough, for when he wanted to take any money from the pool or—which happened more frequently—pay something into it, he took them off and put up a single eyeglass which he managed with the skill of one to whom it was a necessity and not an inconvenience. His complexion was pink and white, and he had a small patch of piebald hair over his right ear, which in some lights looked like a rosette. But in spite of his odd appearance there was something attractive in his face; it must, I think, have been either his expression or his forehead, for it certainly was not his chin, and a nose never looks its best when shadowed by pince-nez. Dennison was the only winner at the table, and smiled benignly round him when he was not lighting his pipe. Lambert threw his money about with a magnificent air more comical than impressive, and Jack Ward seemed to be the one man whose attention was riveted on the game. When a remark was made on any subject except bad luck, Ward broke in asking some one how much they were going to stake or telling Bunny, who never seemed to know what was going to happen next, that they were waiting for him. I thought "Bank" must be the dreariest of all card games, but it was nearly twelve o'clock before Langham got up and said he must go. When the game was over I asked Ward how much he had won over Dainty Dick, and at once there was a roar of laughter.

"He lost over three pounds," Dennison said

"But how did he manage that?" I asked, for my knowledge of racing being limited I did not understand how he could have backed the winner of this race and yet lost money.

"Why Dainty Dick started at three to one on, so he only won about thirty shillings, and he lost a fiver backing The Philosopher. I thought he had made a fortune by the way he was talking at dinner," Dennison answered.

For a moment Ward looked furious, and the exultant way in which Dennison told me what had happened must have annoyed him tremendously. I felt that Dennison with his seraphic smile was a much bigger idiot than Ward, so I said, "Well, I can't see where the joke comes in, I think it

is thundering rough luck," which remark I considered rather noble, for I did think that Ward had been scored off beautifully, only Dennison gibing at him was such a sickening sight that I thought I would put off the few words I meant having with him about Dainty Dick until we were alone.

After Bunny Langham had gone we began to discuss the freshers' wine, but Jack Ward looked so down on his luck that I let him arrange what he liked, though as Collier said to me afterwards, Ward only thought he was deciding everything while Dennison really managed the whole affair and simply twisted him round his fingers.

"Dennison is as clever as a wagon load of monkeys," Collier complained, "he looks like a baby and is as cunning as a Chinaman. I wonder how we can put up with him."

I wondered, too, and I should think everybody else, except Dennison himself, found it difficult to explain his popularity. For he was popular, and since no other reason occurs to me I expect the fact that he was always ready to play the piano must have helped him, Lambert on his banjo was enough to depress a crowd of Sunday-school children at their annual treat, but Dennison played the kind of music which made Collier, Ward and me, who were not exactly musical, feel that we could sing quite well. At Cliborough I had established a record by being the first boy who had tried to get into the school choir and failed, but the man who made me sing "Ah, ah, ah," until I really could not go on any longer had told me that I should have a voice some day. Perhaps he said that out of kindness, but when Dennison played I always remembered it, and forgot that when I sang in church people sitting in front of me had been known to look round as if hymns were not made to be sung.

If discussion beforehand helps to make an entertainment successful our freshers' wine ought to have been a colossal success. For days the thing seemed to pervade the air and I got horribly tired of it, though Collier, who had been given rooms which compared with mine were palatial, had more reason to be sick than I had. Collier had not only a certain amount of space at his disposal but also a piano, and if either of us had been any use at guessing we might have known that his rooms would have been chosen. I may as well say now that if any one of the freshers who had been invited had also possessed a little sense Collier's rooms would not have been chosen, but the last thing we thought of was a row, until we got into one, which is one of the advantages of being a fresher.

Dennison and Ward finally asked about fifteen men to the wine, and on the appointed night we met in Collier's rooms. It was perhaps not so great a privilege to receive an invitation as we thought it was, because each man who accepted had to pay more than the thing was worth. However, there was no doubt that it was well done, Ward had been to Spinney's shop in the Turl and had benefited by Spinney's experience, and Dennison with the assistance of Collier's scout, and in spite of Collier's mild protests, had prepared the rooms in a way which made me wonder where the owner of them was going to sleep.

There was a tradition at St. Cuthbert's, and a tradition seems to me a very dangerous possession unless carefully watched, that no wine was complete without a large bowl of milk punch. Ward had been told this by Spinney, who took what he called a fatherly interest in St. Cuthbert's, though it must be an exorbitant kind of interest which makes a man recommend a lot of freshers, or anybody else, to mix punch with champagne and port. Spinney had also provided a terrific amount of fruit and other things, and if Collier's room had only been big enough to provide space for all of us and for what we were expected to eat and drink, I think our wine at the start would have been a most imposing display. As it was everybody thought it had been done well except Collier, who told me to look in his bedroom. I looked without seeing the bed, which was so piled up with superfluities that they nearly touched the ceiling.

"When this orgie is over," Collier said, "every one will have forgotten that I have to go to bed to-night."

"I will stay and help you," I answered, for I was in the mood when anything seems to be possible.

We went back into the "sitter," where everybody was already beginning to eat and, I suppose, to enjoy themselves. There were not enough chairs to go round, but there is always the floor, and a man who won't sit on the floor when there is nothing else to sit upon is no use at an Oxford wine. Some men even prefer the floor, but that usually happens later on in the evening. Ward began the musical part of the entertainment by singing "John Peel," his voice was admirable, because it was loud without being very good, and nobody had the discomfort of wondering whether they could sing well enough to join in the chorus. I like a place where you can fairly bellow without hearing your own voice. A man called Webb, who had a mole on his forehead and had been at Cliborough with me, sang the next song, but it was a sentimental thing, and had a chorus with some high notes in it, an unsuitable choice which fell flat, and when it was over Webb sat down by me in disgust, and helped himself lavishly to punch by way of consolation. I told Webb that he had taken Lambert's seat, because Lambert for some other reason had also been helping himself lavishly to punch, and had become argumentative and almost quarrelsome. Webb, however, said that he was not going to move, and when Lambert returned Dennison had to play the piano very lustily to drown the discussion which took place. Lambert was six feet two and angry, Webb was the same height and obstinate, both of them had been drinking punch, and if Ward had not intervened by asking Lambert to sing, I believe an unexpected item would have

formed part of our programme. Lambert sang, or rather tried to sing, and broke down several times; no one minded and he received tremendous encouragement to go on, but he fancied himself as a singer and at last became very indignant and abusive. He was then given champagne to soothe him, and sat on the floor with a very sad expression, and his legs stretched out in front of him. Collier threw a fig at him which he caught and threw back, hitting another man on the cheek, figs began to fly about the room until Ward begged everybody not to make a horrible rag before we had properly begun. Collier went round on his hands and knees collecting figs and calling himself a fool for spoiling his own carpet. Most people gave him a shove with their feet when he came near them, which sent him on to his back and prevented his collection from being a good one.

Then Dennison began to play "The Gondoliers," which was the popular comic opera of the day. Solos were dispensed with, and each chorus was sung many times. The wine was evidently a huge success, the noise was magnificent, and everybody was reasonably peaceful. No one noticed that Lambert and Webb were now sitting side by side on the floor, swearing eternal friendship and requiring champagne in which to pledge each other, until Webb got hold of the idea that he was Leander trying to swim the Hellespont, and Collier poured a jug of water over his head so that he might make the scene more realistic.

One or two men went quietly away, saying that it was getting late. The music stopped for a moment, while Dennison walked about the room seeking refreshment and finding very little. The noise subsided so much that a knock was heard, and a scout poked his head into the room and spoke to Dennison who was standing by the door. Every one asked what he wanted, and Dennison assured us that it did not matter, which we were all inclined to believe with the exception of Ward, who went to the piano and began the National Anthem. It was the only tune he could play, and he had to take infinite pains to get the right notes, so he was forcibly removed, and Dennison installed in his place. "The Gondoliers" and the noise began again, while Ward, protesting that it was time we went away, was disregarded entirely. From sheer distaste for punch and only a very limited taste for wine I had not been seeking my enjoyment in drinking, but I had smoked far more than was good for me, and my head felt as large as a pumpkin. It occurred to me, however, that if Ward wished our entertainment to close he was sure to be right, so I pulled over Dennison backwards from the piano. That caused a very fair hubbub and did not do much good, since everybody began to sing what they liked, without music.

Ward went round persuading men to go, until Lambert, Webb, Collier, Ward, Dennison and I were the only ones remaining. Collier was heavy with sleep, but Lambert and Webb, who still sat on the floor with their backs propped up against a sofa, were full of song. Dennison sulked in a corner; he told me afterwards that I had hurt his head. Ward and I by violent efforts got Lambert and Webb upon their legs and propped them up against each other. They stood singing, "For he's a jolly good fellow," and looking extraordinarily foolish. At last we got them to the door and shoved them out, but unfortunately the Sub-Warden, who had a habit of being in the wrong place, was standing outside the room, and Lambert, who most certainly looked upon him as an old friend, put an arm round him, and hurried him at break-neck speed down the stairs. Webb followed, and when I got into the quadrangle he was on one side of the Subby and Lambert on the other.

They were persuading him to dance. I tried to seize Lambert, while Ward went for Webb; but as I did so they suddenly released their man, and instead of grabbing Lambert I got my arm entangled in the Subby's. I let it go quickly, but he recognized me, and said something about a disgraceful occurrence. It would have been giving Lambert and Webb away to tell him that I was acting the part of rescuer, so I stood looking at him, while Ward drove the other two men out of the quadrangle. As he did not say anything I expressed a hope that he was not hurt, but it was more from a wish to prove myself sober than from any anxiety as to his condition that I made the remark. I thought he understood this, for he neither answered nor wished me good-night when he went back to his staircase. I was afraid he had been considerably jolted and was not quite himself. I turned round after watching him out of sight, and found Murray standing by my side.

"You had better come to bed," he said, and his tone suggested that I was incapable of looking after myself, so I told him that I was as sober as a judge.

"I waited up for you," he said.

"To see if you could be of any use, I suppose," I asked ungraciously.

"And when Lambert and Webb began to shout the back quad down, I came out to see what had happened. What were you talking to the Subby about?"

"Our arms got interlocked," I replied, as we walked over to our staircase. "The fact is the Subby ought to go to bed in decent time."

"He could hardly be expected to sleep with a wine going on in the rooms below him."

"I forgot all about that."

"And so apparently did everybody else who was there, though I should have thought the scout would have warned Collier."

"Dennison managed the whole thing, I said, and you can thank your stars you can go to bed without the prospect of a row and a thundering headache."

Then I went into my room and sported my oak, for the rumblings of Lambert and Webb could still be heard in the quadrangle.

CHAPTER VI

JACK WARD AND DENNISON

The morning following the wine was no morning for me. Of course I awoke with a headache, but that was nothing in comparison with a general feeling that the day was not likely to be a peaceful one. I lay awake and thought over matters as well as I could until Clarkson came in to put my bath. Then I pretended to be asleep, but out of the corner of my eye I saw him looking at me and I conceived a great dislike for him. He seemed to think I was a curiosity of some kind. He tidied my room, and having finished he asked if I should be taking breakfast. I sat up in bed and inquired why he supposed I did not want breakfast, and my question, I flatter myself, surprised him considerably. I told him to get me twice as much breakfast as usual and to be quick, but while I was dressing I wondered how I should eat it, so I went into Murray's room and persuaded him to breakfast with me. Murray had already begun to eat, but when I explained to him that this was a little matter between Clarkson and myself, and that it would not do for me to be scored off, he agreed to come. Clarkson, however, was a difficult man to defeat; he provided enough breakfast for four men, and though I hustled him as much as I could and was very dictatorial, I could see that he was quietly amused. Murray ate for all he was worth, but the amount of food which Clarkson carried away for his hungry family was evidence enough to prove who had won the battle.

Conversation did not play any conspicuous part in that meal, but I told Murray that if everybody at the wine had been as sensible as Ward we should have got through without any row. "My opinion of Ward has changed," I said more than once, for Murray was not inclined to give him any credit and he certainly deserved some.

At ten o'clock I went to a lecture, and when I returned I found a note from the Sub-Warden asking me to call upon him at noon. It was precisely what I expected, but the prospects of another row depressed me. The morning was dark and rainy, and my room was so dismal that I stood on the ledge outside my window and leant against the parapet. It was neither a comfortable nor a very safe position, but it suited my mood. I looked down on the back quadrangle below me and watched for something interesting to happen. I had not been up long enough to know that my wish was not likely to be gratified, nothing exciting ever does happen in Oxford during the morning, or if it does I was always unfortunate enough to miss it.

A man in a scholar's gown hurried across the quadrangle, rushed up a staircase, and came back with a note-book in his hand. The Warden came out of his house and stood upon his doorstep as if he was trying to remember what he wanted to do. Then he turned round and went into the house again. Miss Davenport, the Warden's sister, a lady who was reported to be talkative and in love, came out and observed the weather. Two minutes afterwards she appeared in a mackintosh, which was thoroughly business-like. She was most obviously bent on shopping. Two men, regardless of the rain, strolled out of the front quadrangle and shouted for Dennison, who did not come to his window. I told them that he was probably in bed, and they answered that I should fall over if I did not look out. It was all most painfully dull, and I was just going in when the Subby appeared and went into the Warden's house. I could guess the reason for that visit, and waited to see no more. I sat down by the fire and tried to think out what I should say to the Subby, and what he would say to me. I did not know much about him except that his name was Webster, and that he was a great authority on Etruscan pottery, facts which did not help me much. He also had one of the finest stamp collections in the world, but I had never collected anything for more than a week at a time. I felt that he was a difficult man to gauge, because he had never been what I considered a sportsman. His appearance at any rate was not imposing, and I was depressed enough to feel thankful for very small mercies. If dons only remembered what men feel like after their first wine, they would scarcely be hard-hearted enough to inflict further penalties upon them. But it was the vocation of the Subby to keep order in the college, and some one had told me that rowdy men were his pet abomination. He regarded St. Cuthbert's as the intellectual centre of Oxford, and Oxford as the intellectual centre of the world. No wonder the poor man looked serious and seldom smiled, for he must have had a lot to think about. He covered up his eyes with enormous spectacles, and the lower part of his face with a straggling moustache and beard, you got neither satisfaction nor information from looking at him.

It was nearly twelve o'clock before I saw any of the men who had been at the wine, and then Ward and Collier came into my rooms. I was still sitting by the fire, and Ward, who would have giped at my gloom under ordinary conditions, simply told me that I didn't look very cheerful, and

sat down on the edge of the table, which tilted up and nearly placed him on the floor. Collier threw himself into the nearest chair, and pulling a pipe out of his pocket, carefully rubbed the bowl of it, but showed no anxiety to smoke, and considering that I felt as if I should never smoke again, I was not surprised.

"I should like to flay Lambert, Webb, and Dennison alive," Collier said quite solemnly.

"I've got to go to the Subby in ten minutes," I said, and Collier's face brightened.

"I didn't think you would have to go," Ward remarked; "what an infernal nuisance, and why has he sent for you?"

"I tried to rescue the stupid man from Lambert and Webb, and got entangled in his blessed arm. He was as sick as blazes, and I shall hear more stuff about being an exhibitor," I answered.

"The man's a fool," Collier said, "but the biggest ass in the place is Dennison. He knew the Subby was out to dinner, and wouldn't be back till goodness knows when, but he must go on and kick up a row on that piano after he knew the Subby was in his rooms. And the beauty of it is that Dennison hasn't been sent for. I call it a confounded shame. We have just been round to see him, and the brute is still in bed as fit as anything, and thinks it the best joke he has heard for ages. He wouldn't see much humour in it if he went and smelt my rooms."

"Who has been sent for?" I asked.

"You, Collier, Lambert, and Webb," Ward replied.

"Not you?"

"I have seen the Subby already. I met him in the quad and asked if I might speak to him."

"Was he furious?" I inquired.

"I tried to explain things to him; he was not altogether furious, but stuck on a sort of injured dignity business which was rather funny."

"It isn't likely a man would want to be danced down-stairs by Lambert and Webb," Collier said; "I wonder they didn't break his neck, and it would have been a thundering good job if they had smashed themselves."

I got up and seized my gown, leaving Collier to continue his wishes for the destruction of Lambert and Webb if he felt inclined. At any other time they would have amused me, for Collier was generally difficult to move in any way, and he was quite funny when his indignation could be roused.

I am not going to describe my interview with the Subby at any length. He listened patiently to what I had to say, but if a man came to me and said that he had caught hold of me by accident I confess that I should think it a poor sort of story. I could not tell him that I was trying to save him from Lambert and Webb, because that would have been contrary to what I should have expected them to say about me, if the positions had been reversed. The Subby ought to have guessed it for himself and rewarded me, but he had been so hustled that it was perhaps too much to expect him to guess anything. My reputation for work seemed to have been of the worst. There was no denying that the Subby and I had been entangled, and it was no use for me to say that it was his fault. I spoke of it as a very unfortunate occurrence, and I assured him most warmly that it should not happen again. Assurances of that kind do not, I should say, count for much. He was so occupied by the importance of what had passed, that I could not make him see that the future was also important. And I did try hard to point this out to him, I regretted much, I promised more, and I meant everything I said most honestly. I had never been so penitent before, but I must at the same time admit that I had never previously felt quite so unwell.

Perhaps my protestations had some effect, for my sentence was that I should be gated for three weeks, and I received also what must, when translated into simple English, have been a warning that unless I changed the errors of my ways my exhibition would be taken away from me. The Subby jawed badly, he was not to be compared with Mr. Edwardes, and he hesitated and coughed, until once or twice I was almost inclined to help him out, for I knew what he was going to say and he fidgeted me. I was, however, in too great a hole to risk much, so as soon as he began I remained silent and hoped steadily that he would either end soon or be interrupted. He did not know how to begin or when to finish, and if Collier had not knocked at the door and come into the room, it seemed to me that nothing but the pangs of hunger would have warned him that he had said enough.

I have never seen a more welcome arrival than Collier's, because I had really been with the Subby a very long time, and to stand with an attentive expression for ten minutes at a stretch and listen to the usual remarks is in its way quite a feat. I found Ward waiting for me in the front quad, and he asked at once what had happened to me.

"Gated for three weeks," I answered; "I suppose I ought to consider myself lucky, he might

have sent me down."

"It knocks all your fun on the head," he said, "being in by nine o'clock every night is average rot."

"It won't matter to me, I am going to settle down and read for a first in Mods," and I turned into the common room and picked up *The Sportsman*. There were no other men in the room, and Ward stood in front of the fire and kept looking at me as if he wanted to say something and could not manage to begin. I read the names of the 'Varsity XV. chosen to play that afternoon against Richmond, and saw that Foster was still among them.

"Fred Foster's going to get his blue," I said.

"Who the deuce wants to get a blue?" Ward replied.

"Well, it's better than getting into rows, anyway," I retorted.

"You seem to have taken this thing very quietly," he said, "don't you see that your being dropped on is a most wretched swindle. Lambert and Webb are only gated for three weeks."

"It doesn't make a tuppenny-ha'penny bit of difference to me what has happened to them. If they had been gated for two years it wouldn't give me any satisfaction."

"But they had been mixing all kinds of drink."

"And the Subby thinks I had," I said.

"But you hadn't."

"No, but that doesn't make any difference. The Subby may be a fair ass, but I caught hold of him, and I must be a bigger fool than he is. It's the last time I ever try to rescue a don."

Two senior men, Bagshaw and Crane came into the room and overheard my last remark, so I had to tell them the whole thing over again. Both of them laughed tremendously, but Crane, who was captain of the college cricket eleven, and President of the Mohocks, which was the inappropriate name of the St. Cuthbert's wine club, seemed to be more amused at the solemn way I told the story, while Bagshaw said he would have given anything to have seen the Subby rushing down-stairs. They laughed loudly, and as soon as I could escape I went back to my rooms, leaving Jack Ward to talk to them.

For once I wanted to be by myself, but there was no shaking off Ward that morning, and he turned up again in about ten minutes and said that he had told his scout to bring his lunch round to my rooms. I had struggled nobly with breakfast, but I hated the suggestion of more food and told him he had better go and eat somewhere else. My head ached abominably, and I wanted to sit by the fire and go to sleep. Ward, however, decided that I wanted cheering up, though how he was likely to enliven me by eating when I had no appetite he did not tell me. As a matter of fact cheering me up was only an excuse, what he really wanted to do was to give me the explanation which he thought I must be expecting. If he had known me better he would not have expected me to wait for anything, had I imagined any explanation was necessary I should have asked him for it at once. But I was not taking any interest in explanations, my mouth felt like a cinder, and when some man had met me in the quad and told me I looked "precious cheap," which is an expression I detest, I had not the energy to retaliate.

Ward, having eaten his luncheon and gulped down a most horrible quantity of beer, lit a cigarette, and sat down by the fire.

"You must think me a most awful brute for having got out of this row," he began. I told him that if he felt as I did, he would think everybody in the world was a brute.

"Well, you see," he went on, "I got the thing up and the Subby didn't send for me."

"It was Dennison's fault," I said, for I saw no good in dividing the blame, "and if a man can't take his luck in these things he is no use to anybody. My luck's always vile, but that doesn't matter to any one except me, and I am used to it."

He took no notice of what I said, and continued, "So I told the Subby it was my fault, but when I saw him I thought only Collier, Webb and Lambert had been nailed."

I roused myself and looked at Ward, who was staring into the fire.

"You are a fool," I stated, but I didn't mean it.

"I had to do it or I should have felt awful," he said, and then he jumped up and banged round the room, tossing things about and failing to catch them.

He stood in a new light, and it took me some time to digest what he had told me. Of all the men I had met since coming to Oxford I should have said that Jack Ward was the one who would watch his own interests most closely, and he had upset all my opinions by walking into a quite

unnecessary row.

"Why did you do it?" I asked him, and I added, "it isn't as if you could do anybody else any good," for it is at first very perplexing to find a man doing exactly the reverse of what you expect.

"I have told you why I did it, I should have felt so confoundedly mean if I hadn't. But while I was with the Subby I wish I had known that he had nailed you as well, because I might have told him that you hate drinking. A don seems to me to have the fixed idea that freshers naturally drink too much, at least that was the impression the Subby gave me."

"What happened to you?"

"I'm gated for a fortnight, and he talked a lot of tommy-rot."

"Well, I think it is most frightfully decent of you," I said.

"Oh, shut up," Ward answered, "I can't stand that. I have never done anything of the kind before and shan't again. I simply couldn't have faced you men if I hadn't owned up, and that ends it."

At that moment Dennison walked in wearing an enormous overcoat and a Wellingham scarf round his neck, he looked as beautifully pink as ever, and I hated the sight of him.

"This is such a blighted day that I am going to watch a footer match," he said, "it amuses me to see thirty people tumbling about in the mud, and we can go and play pool at Wright's when we have had enough, if you will come."

I did not intend to tell Dennison that I was ill, so I said I would go if Ward would come with us, and as soon as we got into the Broad and the rain fairly beat upon us, I began to feel much better and more capable of being disagreeable to Dennison. I was in the state of mind which makes one anxious to be unpleasant, the sort of mood in which horrid people abuse servants or try to kick animals, and I was glad to have Dennison, who deserved every rudeness imaginable, at my disposal. But the worst of feeling so thoroughly disagreeable is that you are ashamed of yourself so quickly. I am either violently angry or not angry at all, and it is the people who are good at sulks and call them dignity who get their own way in this world. I once tried to be dignified at home, and I am not inclined to repeat the experiment; my father told me not to be a fool, my sister walked about as if wrestling with suppressed laughter, and my mother offered me various medicines. Rudeness is my *rôle*, its intention is not so easily mistaken.

So I hung on to Dennison very earnestly, and though Ward did all he knew to keep the peace, I had managed before we reached the Parks, to convince both of them that our walk was a mistake.

We went to the far end of the ground where very few spectators were standing, for an Oxford crowd always collect behind the goal of the visiting side, hoping magnificently that by those means they will see most of the game. It is very noble of them, but they are sometimes disappointed, and this happened to be one of the days on which those who were behind the 'Varsity goal-posts saw a good deal more than they wanted. For the day was made for the Richmond XV., who were big, bulky men, very heavy in the scrimmage, and the three-quarter backs on both sides spent most of their time trying to keep warm. Dennison said he was bored to death, and I told him Richmond never were any good outside the scrum and were playing a jolly good game. He answered that he was not a Football Encyclopaedia, and I assured him that he never could be anything half so useful. We kept up this kind of conversation for some time, while Ward stamped his feet and asked us to stop.

"How long have you been gated for?" I asked Dennison suddenly, springing the question upon him as had been the habit of one master at Cliborough when he was going to ask me something very embarrassing. Ward hit me in the ribs with his elbow, and Dennison pretended not to hear, so I moved a little further from Ward and repeated my question. "The Subby didn't send for me," he replied; "I wasn't caught and I made no row to speak of."

"Oh well, if you like to get out of the whole thing it has nothing to do with me," I said, and the thought suddenly struck me that if I really goaded Dennison into giving up his name I should feel a brute for the rest of my existence. What I wanted to do was to prove that Ward was worth about ten of him, but it is very uphill work trying to convince a man that he is only a fraction of the fellow he thinks himself, I have often seen people going sorrowfully away from tasks of that kind.

"There is no question of getting out of it," Dennison said quite calmly, "because I have never been in it."

"No question at all," Ward put in.

"At any rate you arranged it," I retorted.

"And the very deuce of a job it was," he replied.

"Of course it was," Ward said, and though I imagined I was out of elbow-shot I got another

blow which did nothing to improve my temper.

"It's like this," I began, "Ward went to the Subby and said——" But Ward burst in with, "By Jove, that is about the tenth time that man Foster has fallen on the ball, and now I believe he's hurt."

For quite two minutes Fred lay on the ground, and I forgot all about Dennison and the exasperating mood I was in. At last he got up and moved about in a dazed condition, while some people clapped and others, more enthusiastic than anxious, began to shout, "Now then, 'Varsity." The game went on again, but my desire to be nasty had vanished, and I found that I had moved away from Ward and Dennison. When I returned to them I found that my interrupted remark had created a greater disturbance than I had expected. Dennison was fuming like anything, and so far was he from thinking that Ward and I had a grievance against him that he was treating himself as a thoroughly injured man.

"It is a pretty low down game," he was saying to Ward, when I came back, "for you to go and give your name up to the Subby and tell me nothing about it. What do you think everybody will be saying about me? Marten has been talking to me as if I was a pick-pocket, while you were standing there and thinking yourself a sort of tin hero. If you want to know what I think you are, my opinion is that you're a confounded fool, but since you have done this I must go and see the Subby when I get back to college."

This is only an expurgated copy of what Dennison said, as a matter of fact he called Ward and me much worse names than a pick-pocket, and qualified them with adjectives too violent to be recorded.

I looked blankly at Ward, who had his head down and looked thoroughly ashamed of himself.

"It is one of the few times in my life," he said, "when I have tried to do the right thing, and it seems to have been all wrong."

There was only one line to take, and I started on it at once. "That's rot," I began, "because you suggested the whole thing, and if you felt like owning up to it no one else has any right to swear at you. Dennison is altogether different, and if he goes to the Subby everybody else will have to go. We are like a lot of school-boys."

I thought my last remark a sound one, for Dennison pretended to despise boys, because he said they always got up so late for morning school that they had not time to wash properly. There was always a faint smell of scent about Dennison, which did not make me take much notice of his opinion about school-boys.

I cannot even now tell whether he was really angry or whether he was just pretending a rage to put us into a hole. I did find out afterwards that he knew all the time that Ward had given up his name, so if he pretended one thing I do not see why he should not have pretended another. But the result was the same whether he was shamming or not. Ward and I implored him not to go to the Subby, for quite ten minutes during that damp and shivery afternoon we besought him to leave things as they were. And at last with great reluctance he gave way, and to please us he said that he would forgive Ward for having done rather a mean thing, and he pardoned me for having been so rude. Of course we were most properly taken in, but that was the fate of most men who had much to do with Dennison, and I was so glad to be at peace once more that it did not occur to me then that Ward and I were two colossal idiots.

I went round to see Foster after the match, but found that he was going to dine early with the Richmond team, so he did not tell me anything except that he had got a splitting headache. Each time I had been to see him for the last fortnight he had either been out, just going out, or had a room full of men with him. Whenever he had come to see me the same kind of things had happened, so we had not managed to have one respectable talk together. I determined that this was most unsatisfactory, so after dinner I wrote him a note, asking him to go for a walk with me on the following day, and then I went to see Jack Ward. My opinion of him had been changing all day, and as I went to his room I felt that whatever Foster and Murray said about him, he was at bottom a splendid sort. Roulette was going on in his rooms, and the usual crowd were playing. Ward was banker, and he did not even ask me to play, but roulette is a very difficult game to watch without playing, and after black had come up six times consecutively, I thought it must be red's turn. It was not, however, and five times I lost my money; then I had sense enough to stop for a bit until the numbers began to fascinate me, and I picked nineteen, being my age. A lot of people may say I was old enough to know better, but it is so easy to make remarks of that kind, and until they find something a little less stale, they will never do any good. I stood by the table at first, and then sat down and made up my mind to get my money back. I tried everything in turn, but luck was dead against me, and Ward once or twice said he wished I would win something. In the end I lost nearly six pounds, and went back to my rooms a sorrowful man. Before I went into my bedder I looked at my cheque-book, and it gave me no satisfaction. I had borrowed four pounds from Ward, and I wrote him a cheque for the amount, and laying it on the table beside me, I sat thinking. My door was wide open, and I must have been nearly asleep, for I did not see any one come into my room, and a hand falling on my shoulder surprised me. I looked up and saw Ward standing by my side.

"Sorry to wake you up," he said, "but I felt like coming to see you." He saw the cheque made out to him, and taking it from the table he tore it into bits.

"You have wasted a penny," I said, for I could not help guessing what he meant.

"I don't want to take your money," he replied, "and for heaven's sake don't make me."

He was most desperately in earnest, but the mere fact that I should have taken his without a thought of returning it, settled the little argument which followed.

"I can't help gambling," he said, "but I wish to goodness you wouldn't."

"But only a few days ago you sneered at me for not backing a horse," I retorted, for though it was very good of him, I felt he was treating me like an infant.

"I never asked you to," he said, "and I should like to have one friend who doesn't bet or play cards or anything."

"There's Collier," I suggested.

"He is different," Ward answered, and I suppose I wanted him to say something like that.

We talked for an hour, at least Ward talked and I listened, but during the years to come I always remembered what he said about himself on that night.

CHAPTER VII

THE INN AT SAMPFORD

I do not suppose that my waking thoughts could be called valuable, for my habit is to lie in bed and wonder vaguely what time it is, and if you start the day in that way and write it solemnly on paper you may just as well keep a diary of what you had for luncheon and where you had tea and all that kind of twaddle, which people write because blotting paper is provided on the opposite page. But on the morning following my conversation with Ward I woke up with the sort of feeling which ought to have been of value to some one, because it was such a mixture that I could not stay in bed. It was the kind of sensation with which I wake when I am going to cross the Channel, only it did not make me rush to my window to see how much wind there was. Nothing I have been told is easier in this life than to make a mountain out of a molehill, but in my short experience it is the wretched little molehills which upset me and not the great big things which sweep me away with them. I would rather have to fight one mountain than two molehills any day, you get so much more sympathy after the struggle. But I must admit that it is not always easy to tell when people will sympathize with you, for I remember that my brother was once in a railway accident, and though he got nothing more than a slight jolt he was considered a hero for a long time, while, a few days later, I sat upon a pin and hurt myself quite badly, but was told by my nurse not to be silly.

During that morning I had a most disagreeable experience. For the first time in my life I was conscious that I had done something for which there was not the least shadow of an excuse, and I found myself trying to guess what my feelings would have been had I been a winner instead of a loser at roulette. There is nothing very profitable in trying to imagine what would have happened if things had turned out differently, at the best it is a waste of time, but all the same it is a game which I, and others I know, play very often. I came to the conclusion that had I won I should have been rather pleased with myself, it is so easy to excuse oneself for winning money, while losing it seems to be foolishly immoral. I made no resolutions for the future, because on the few occasions I have tried to fortify myself in that way, something has occurred to upset me, and Mr. Sandyman, who was my housemaster at Cliborough and very wise, told me once that the weaker the man the more frequent his resolutions. He did not believe so much in pledges and promises as in a boy's honour; if a boy had not a sense of honour no promise on earth could be of any real use to him.

I wished that I had Mr. Sandyman to advise me, but if I had been able to go to him I do not suppose I should have gone, for although I was ashamed of myself, I did not think that I had committed any great offence. I had just been a fool, and with that decision from which, odd as it may seem, I derived great satisfaction, I passed on to the next thing which was bothering me.

I think it was Solomon who said there was safety in a multitude of counsellors, and I wonder what he would have said about a multitude of friends, some of whom could not bear the sight of the others. Ward, hated Murray, and Foster hated Ward, Collier said he hated Dennison, and Dennison said Collier looked more like a pig than a human being. Lambert confided to me that there was hardly a man at St. Cuthbert's whom he would care to introduce to his sister, but as he

said the same thing to Ward, Dennison and Collier, leaving each of them with the impression that he was the one man who was considered worthy of an introduction, it was no use to take any notice of Lambert. I consoled with him on having such a remarkably exclusive sister, but he did not take my sympathy in the proper spirit.

My friends were most certainly getting out of hand. In St. Cuthbert's, Murray was the most sensible of the lot, because he enjoyed himself in a steady sort of way, saw the humorous side of everything and went to bed in decent time. I knew just where I was with Murray, he was always glad to see me in his rooms, and he kept his opinions about Ward and Dennison to himself, unless I simply pumped them out of him. No one who did not object to fat men because they were fat could help liking Collier, he was so comfortable and peaceful, and Lambert, with his magnificent opinion of himself, which he expressed frequently in a half-comical, half-serious fashion, was to me more like a man on the stage than an ordinary undergraduate. From morning to night Lambert was self-conscious, even at the wine, when he was sitting on the floor with Webb, he did not forget to shoot down his cuffs. I have already said that Dennison played the piano, he was also considered a wit, and fired off things which Lambert said were epigrams, but Collier, who was full of curious information, declared that most of them were adapted from the Book of Proverbs. However that may be, Dennison had a reputation as a conversationalist, which meant that he wanted to talk all the time. He bored me terribly.

But the man who really worried me was Ward. At first I had thought that he merely wanted to amuse himself, and did not care what he did as long as he got some fun out of it. He did not seem to trouble what men he knew if they were useful to him, and having come to that conclusion about him, I felt that as far as he and I were concerned there was nothing else to bother about. It was not any wonder to me that Foster, who only knew him slightly, disliked him most vigorously, but when Ward came, asking me to take my money back and showing all the best side of his nature, he gave me more to think about than I wanted. An entirely different man had appeared, acknowledging himself a gambler, and not pretending to be sorry—for which I liked him—but with qualities which I had never suspected.

So occupied was I in wondering how I could persuade Foster to change his opinion of Ward that I forgot the day was Sunday, and that I had intended to go to morning chapel and write some letters at the Union. It was nearly twelve o'clock when Foster came into my rooms and said he had been waiting for me at Oriel until he was tired of doing nothing. He seemed to be rather angry, but soon cooled down when he saw me hurrying up to get ready, and even proposed that we should give up our walk and just lounge round the Parks. But I did not feel as if lounging would do for me, and I told him that I knew a splendid little inn about six miles off, where we could get luncheon. He did not need much persuasion, and we went down Brasenose lane and the High as if we had never lounged in our lives. But before we got to the turning to Iffley we had begun to walk at a speed which did not altogether prevent conversation.

I think I must have been setting the pace, because I had a great deal to say to Fred, and did not know exactly how to begin. He was the greatest friend I had, and I wanted him to like Ward, but I knew that when once he had made up his mind about people he very seldom changed it. He had liked nearly everybody at Cliborough, but when he disliked anybody there was something rather huge in the way he had nothing to do with them. And he had a habit, which would have annoyed me in any one else, of being nearly always right. It was such a complete change for him to come from Cliborough, where he was easily the most important boy in the school, to Oxford, where he was practically nobody at all, that I wondered how he would like it. So many freshers who have been important at school think they can bring their importance with them, but they make the very greatest mistake. A fresher who thinks a lot of himself, and lets other men know that he does, is not likely to do anything but get in his own way. Foster never had put on any side, but he had been accustomed to manage things at Cliborough, and I asked him how he liked being nobody again, as he had been when he first went to school.

He did not answer me at once, and I had a suspicion that he did not care about the change, but I was wrong.

"I like it," he said at last; "there is no bother and fuss, and I like beginning again and being sworn at when I miss the ball. I want to get my blue most awfully, but I don't suppose I have got the ghost of a chance; I never pass at the right time, and everybody here seems to me to be always off-side."

I assured him that he must have a chance for his blue or he would not have played so often.

"They look more and more sick with me every time," he answered, "and each match I play in I expect to be the last. The only thing which riles me is that you never know what they think about you, and the fellow who writes the Oxford notes for *The Globe* said last week that the 'Varsity XV. must be badly off if they could not find a better three-quarter than the Cliborough fresher, or some rot of that kind. All the men at Oriel who know about things are either cricket or soccer blues, so I don't hear much about rigger there, though every one is nice enough and wants me to get into the XV."

"Doesn't Adamson ever speak to you?" I asked, for he was captain of the 'Varsity XV.

"Yes, but it is generally to tell me not to do something. He is an 'internatter,' you see, and I

don't think he ever forgets it, he seems to me to stick on more side than any one I have ever met. Most of the men are all right, but Adamson is a first-class bounder."

"He swore at me pretty freely in the Freshers' match," I said.

"I heard him," Foster returned, "but although you played abominably then, you are really much better than Sykes of Merton, who has been playing back for the 'Varsity lately. He does the most awful things."

"He can't be worse than I am. I now play three-quarters and am thinking of chucking the game altogether. It is such a horrid grind."

"Don't be an idiot, they are bound to spot you here sooner or later," Foster said, but he knew as well as I did that I could never stop playing any game just because it was too much trouble.

"I have made an idiot of myself, already," I replied; and then I told him all that had been happening at St. Cuthbert's during the last few days. I made out myself a bigger fool than I really had been, because I wanted to show him that Ward was a much better fellow than he thought.

"You have a real gift for getting into rows," he said, when I had finished; "you seem to have got all the dons on your track already."

"That doesn't worry me," I answered. "I have only got to work and keep quiet, and the Subby will think I am as like a machine as he is."

"And you have made up your mind to work?"

"I mean to do a reasonable amount," I replied cautiously.

"It is most awfully difficult to work. I have done precious little, and I went fast asleep at a lecture the other morning."

"What was it about?"

"Logic."

"Oh, that's nothing," I assured him. "I started cutting my logic lectures altogether until I got dropped on. I didn't understand a word the man was saying. There is heaps of time to work, Mods are nearly a year and a half off. What do you think of Ward, after the thing that happened last night?"

I had to plunge right at it, for Foster had not said a word after I had told him Ward wanted to give me back my money.

"Don't let us talk about Ward," Foster answered, "you know I don't like him."

"I knew you didn't like him," I corrected, for I thought that what I had said ought to make a difference.

"You seem to be egging me on to swear at you, so that you may laugh."

"Oh, skittles," I exclaimed.

"You know perfectly well that you can't afford to gamble."

"That has nothing to do with it, because I am not going to gamble, Jack Ward himself asked me not to play roulette."

"But Ward belongs to a gambling set——"

"I suppose he can please himself about that," I retorted, and it was not altogether wise of me.

"And you will always be hearing racing 'shop,' and how much somebody won, nobody ever talks about their losses until they are stone-broke."

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Your father told me," was the answer, and instead of having got him into a hole I was badly scored off.

"Everybody has something nasty in him somewhere, Balzac said so, and he was the sort of chap who knew; if we were all perfect this wouldn't be earth," I said.

"By Jove, you have been thinking a lot," Foster replied, and he stood still in the road and laughed until I was very annoyed, for I have heard other people make remarks of that kind without any one else smiling.

"It is no use talking seriously to you," I said.

"Platitudes are not your line," he answered, and we were as far off settling about Ward as ever. I returned, however, to the main question with energy, for it seemed to me to be most important that these two men should not hate each other, if they were to be my friends. The gods did not endow me with tact, but they gave me so much courage that in a short time I can make any situation either very much better or very much worse. My mother once took in a paper which contained a Tact Problem every week, and she asked my sister and me to write down solutions and see if they were right; mine were wrong five times consecutively, so I gave up that competition, though in a negative sort of way I should have been of assistance to any competitor. I remember one of these wonderful problems was, 'At an evening party A tells B that C looks like a criminal. Shortly afterwards A finds out that C is B's husband, what ought A to do?' I said A ought to go and tell B that he liked criminals; but the answer was, 'A should do nothing.' I think it was that problem which persuaded me that I was wasting my time, I thought it too stupid for words.

I explained to Foster how difficult it would be for me if he would not change his opinion of Ward, and I talked so much that he said I had persuaded him that Ward was all right, but I had a kind of feeling that he said it for the sake of peace. The day was very warm for November, and at the end of six miles Foster was not so inclined to resist my avalanche of words as he was when we left Oxford. But I knew that having once said he would try to be friends with Ward, I could rely upon him. What he could not understand was the reason why I was so anxious for him to try, why in short I liked Ward, but I could not explain that; for if you once start explaining why you are friends with a man it seems to me to be half-way towards making excuses for yourself, and should you begin doing that you had better not have any friends, since those who know you the best will like you the least. I have a faculty for liking a large number of people, but if I had to give reasons why I liked most of them I should be terribly puzzled. You cannot, it seems to me, reduce friendship to a formula, or if you can you would knock all the fun out of it.

This was my second visit to the little inn at Sampford, and as soon as we got there I interviewed the landlord and engaged the sitting-room on the ground floor. Foster threw himself upon the sofa and picked up the book in which visitors write their names and exercise their humour, but I was so hot that I opened the French windows which led into the garden and went out. Only a fortnight before the garden had been full enough of flowers to satisfy me, but the wind and rain had beaten down everything, and in spite of the sun it looked bare and desolate. I walked across the lawn to a little arbour and surprised two belated beanfeasters and their ladies. In appearance the men were aggressive, their hats were on the backs of their heads, and enormous chrysanthemums bulged from their buttonholes, and must, I should think, have been a source of constant irritation to their chins. The girls giggled when they saw me, and one of the men asked me what I wanted. I told him I was looking for a comfortable place in which to sit down and that he seemed to have found it first. The girls giggled again and the men swore; it was a most commonplace scene. I went back across the lawn and was just going to join Foster, when I heard a tremendous burst of laughter from the room above ours. There was only one man who could laugh like that and he was Jack Ward. At that moment I wished him anywhere, for I guessed quite rightly that he had driven over to Sampford with some men whose luncheon would not consist of cold beef and beer.

I hoped to goodness we should get away without Foster seeing them, so I began to eat without saying anything, except that there was a most vile noise up-stairs. I need not have troubled to say so much since Foster was not deaf. I ate my luncheon hurriedly and gulped down my beer so fast that something went wrong with my wind-pipe. To the accompaniment of my coughs and peals of laughter from the room above, Fred sat eating with a comical expression of misery upon his face.

"Rowdy brutes," he said, and pointed to the ceiling.

I tried to answer, but failed.

"I should think they will get kicked out in a minute," he continued. "Aren't you going to have any pickles?"

"The room's so horribly stuffy," I managed to say; "I vote we go when you are ready."

"We've only just come. I haven't nearly done yet, and I am going to have a smoke when I've finished."

I resigned myself to the situation and seized the pickles; there was only one left and that was an onion. The noise increased and a huge piece of bread fell on the lawn in front of our window.

"Bloods always throw bread at each other, don't they?" he asked.

"I don't suppose they are any worse than anybody else," I answered; "there is not much harm in a bread pellet."

"That thing out there is half a loaf," he returned, "and at any rate they make a fairly bad row," which were statements I could not deny.

We heard a man go heavily up-stairs and knock at the door. He was received with clamorous approval, but after a little conversation the noise ceased and there was a most refreshing calm. I

had hopes that nothing more was going to happen, so I sat down by the fire and lit a cigarette. For ten minutes Fred and I were not interrupted, but I had already recognized the voices of Bunny Langham and Dennison, and I might have guessed that there was not likely to be much peace. Our windows were wide open, and presently I began to hear a kind of choked laughter going on at the window above. What was happening I did not know, but I suspected that some fresh game had begun and I wanted very much to know what it was. I did not, however, wish them to see me nor was I anxious for Fred to see them, so I suggested that we should start back to Oxford. Fred agreed to this, and getting up from his chair he walked out into the garden. No sooner was he on the lawn than I saw him jump like a hare and put his hand up to his neck. At the same moment the beanfeasters rushed out of their arbour and fairly went for him. While this happened I was standing at the window wondering how I could persuade him to come back into the room, but as soon as I saw these two aggressive-looking men, not to mention their ladies, talking to him in most bellicose language, I went out. One of them at once caught hold of me by the coat and spoke so fast and strangely that I did not altogether understand what he was saying. He mentioned the name of Susan a great many times, and when he had finished tugging at my coat I asked him if there was anything the matter with the lady.

"Look at 'er," he said; "just look at 'er. I'm a respectable married man, married, last Thursday as ever was, and I'll 'ave compensation for this as sure as my name's Tom 'Arrison."

I did not want to hear any more of his autobiography, so I looked at the lady pointed out as Susan. I couldn't see much of her face because she had her hand over it, but I did not think they were an ill-assorted couple.

"Has she been stung by a wasp?" I asked. "A blue-bag——"

"Look 'ere," the man interrupted and caught me again by the coat, "none of your bloomin' innocence. You spied us out in that 'ere arbour, and 'ave been peppering us with peas for the last ever so long, and one of you 'as 'it Susan sock in the eye. Enough to make 'er an object for a fortnight, and us newly married. Where, I should like to know, do I come in?" and I had great difficulty in wriggling his hand away from my coat. The man made me angry, and I told him I hadn't the least notion where he came in, but if he thought we were big enough babies to use peashooters he was jolly well mistaken. I looked round at Foster and found that he was being talked at by the remaining couple, who also looked as if they were newly married. I heard the word Bella, and saw the lady so called endeavouring to draw Foster's attention to a mark on her arm. Susan stood in the middle of the lawn and wept; I felt quite sorry for her, but the other three were really an intolerable nuisance. Tom Harrison declared it was worth two pounds any day, that Susan's beauty was spoilt, and that everybody would say they had been fighting already. I smiled when he said "already," and for a moment I thought he was going to hit me. He thought better of it, however, and I concluded that if he had intended to fight he would have begun then, so I turned my back upon him and looked at the window up-stairs. There was not a sound coming from the room, and as I turned again to attend to Harrison I heard hoots of laughter, and a dog-cart passed along the road which skirted the garden. As it went by I saw Jack Ward stand up on the back of the cart and look over the hedge. When he saw what was happening he leant forward to speak to Bunny Langham, who was driving, and as they passed out of sight I thought that he was trying to get hold of the reins.

The men went on talking; Susan wept steadily, and Bella said her arm was visibly swelling, and that she must have been hit by something far more dangerous than a pea. They were not by any means interesting and I was glad to see the landlord coming from the house to join us. He created the diversion of which we were badly in need, and Tom Harrison became more eloquent than ever. But the landlord, as soon as he could make himself heard, was most thoroughly on the side of peace; he flourished his arms and declared, until I was weary, that a mistake had been made. "These are not the gentlemen who shot at you. Do they look like gentlemen who would use pea-shooters?" I did not know what a man ought to look like who would not use a peashooter, but I did my best.

"These are two nice quiet gentlemen," he went on; "took their food quite quiet."

"And haven't paid for it yet," I interrupted; "how much is it?"

"That will be a matter of half-a-crown each," he said, and I paid him.

In the meantime Bella, who ought to have been watched, had walked into our sitting-room and found the visitors' book. She returned triumphantly. "I know one of their names, and that will be a deal more use than standing jawing here," she shouted.

I looked at Foster inquiringly. "I bought a blessed fountain pen yesterday and wanted to see if the thing would work," he explained; "it seems to have worked too well."

"'F. L. Foster, Oriel College, Oxford,' in writing as easy to read as the newspaper. Which of you two is it that writes just like me?"

Foster solemnly took off his hat.

"Then you, I guess, will 'ear more of this," Tom Harrison declared; "for the tale that it ain't you is a little too 'ot for us, isn't it?"

Susan stopped wiping her eyes and joined in a chorus of assent.

"I don't know what you expect to get," Foster said.

"You needn't bother about that. We know," Tom Harrison replied.

After a little more conversation we started on our way back to Oxford, and as we left the garden I heard Tom Harrison say, "Two beers and two bottles of stout as quick as we can 'ave em; my throat's like a limekiln." And considering the amount he had said at the top of his voice, I should think it was very likely true.

CHAPTER VIII

LUNCHEON WITH THE WARDEN

Our walk was certainly not a success, in fact I was very sick of it before we reached Oxford, because I am no good at walking and cannot stride along at a steady pace. And it also involved me in what, if real diplomatists will pardon me, I will call diplomacy, in which art or craft, or whatever the right name of it may be, I am most unskilled. I was on the point of telling Fred that I knew the party of peashooters when he, being in a much happier state of mind than he had been in the morning, began to talk about Jack Ward, and to say that I was very likely right about him, and that he was sure to be a nice kind of man when one got to know him. Hearing this made me put off what I was going to say, and when I begin to postpone anything I am lost. Second thoughts with me nearly always lead to trouble, however good they may be for other people. I think I must have taken a fatherly interest in Ward, for what else it could have been which made me wish to shield him I do not know. But I had seen him stand up in the dog-cart, and I thought he had recognized me and had tried to make Langham turn back, so I determined not to tell Fred anything until I had found out what really happened. But I felt very uncomfortable, for I do hate keeping things dark, and when he went on to say that the pea-shooting people must have been unutterable bounders to go away and leave us in the lurch, I was again on the point of telling him that Ward was one of them, only he suddenly began to sing, which gave me time to think, and frightened two children who came round a corner of the road. We were quite close to Broadmoor lunatic asylum at that moment, and Fred walking along with his hat in his hand might easily have been mistaken for some one else. His mood had become most cheerful, and he said that he did not suppose Tom Harrison would ever be heard of again, and that the whole thing had been rather fun; but he added that he should like to tell the men who had been in the room above us what he thought of them. He also told me that he had never known me so quiet, and when I continued to be silent he asked me if I was well, which annoyed me, for I am often asked that question when I do not happen to be talking, and in a lurking sort of way there seems to me to be something insulting about it. I answered that I was thinking, which was quite true, but he only laughed and said I must have changed a lot lately. I was quite tired of him before we separated in the High, and he was angry because I would not go to Oriel and have tea, but I felt that the day so far had been a hopeless failure, and I wanted to see Jack Ward.

When I got back to my rooms at St. Cuthbert's my fire was nearly out and I saw two notes lying on the table, but could not find any matches to light my lamp. I felt more gloomy than ever, and I was already feeling as if I had treated Fred most unfairly. I might say that my end was all right, or I might declare that I meant well, which is another way of saying that I was a fool, and of the two I think the latter is the more correct.

Murray had borrowed my matches and I spoke severely to him without producing any effect except amusement; whether I was thinking or angry the result seemed to be always the same—laughter, silly, idiotic chuckles. I was in a very fair rage before I got my lamp to light, and I upset a large box of matches on the floor. Murray came and helped to pick them up, and he bumped my nose with his head. I felt sure that it was his fault and told him so, and he said I could jolly well pick up my own matches; so I apologized, for though my nose hurt there were a lot of matches still on the floor, and it was no use making my nose out worse than it was to spite my face.

After that I read my notes, and they were not the usual invitations to breakfast, of which I had already received enough. The first was to ask me to play for the twenty against the Rugger XV. in the Parks on the following Tuesday, and the second was from Miss Davenport to ask me to luncheon with the Warden on the same day. These notes were more or less commands, but I neither felt very keen on playing for the XX. nor on lunching with the Warden.

"I shall be glad when Tuesday is over," I said to Murray; "I have to lunch with the Warden."

"I lunched there last Tuesday," he returned.

"What was it like?"

"Like no meal I have ever been at before. Miss Davenport talked all the time and the Warden said precious little, but I was too afraid to listen to her for fear he might ask me something and I should not catch what he said. Apart from saying 'yes' and 'no' and 'please' and 'thank you,' he only spoke once, and then it was the most extraordinarily long sentence I have ever heard. It began about pork, which Miss Davenport said was more wholesome than people imagined, it went on about the Jews, and finished up with a tale about Nero. He chuckled over his tale, but I didn't see much point in it, and Miss Davenport looked as if she had heard it before."

"I know that tale, it's a chestnut; I can't remember it, but Nero behaved like a beast to a lot of Jews who came to see him in Rome. The Warden oughtn't to tell old tales and then chuckle over them; besides, Nero was a brute."

"I don't think that would make any difference to the Warden. He terrifies me; I daren't say anything because I am sure he would remember that it was a stupid thing to say. I felt as if I was a convict, and that if I spoke I should give myself away. I can tell you it was something awful, and for all I know he may have expected me to say something."

"Probably not," I replied; "I should think he hears far too many people jawing. I hope he makes me feel like a convict, and then I shall behave myself all right, but a silence at a meal gives me fits."

"Miss Davenport is never silent," Murray asserted. "If she can talk about pork, you may guess she has plenty to say. The Warden looks at her in a forgiving sort of way—as if he knows she is talking rot, but can't help herself."

"They must be a funny pair. You don't think I shall laugh, do you?" I asked.

"I didn't feel like laughing. I never thought of it in that way, but it couldn't strike you as being funny while you are there."

"I don't know," I said; "I think I had better be ill on Tuesday." But then I remembered I had got to play footer, and I chucked the card over to Murray.

"I've got to play in this thing, too. The Warden kicks you out about two, so it will be all right. You simply must go. Where have you been to this afternoon?"

"I walked to Sampford with Foster, and we had a row there with two men, not much of a row. I must go and see Ward." I jumped up, but the chapel bell began to ring, and I had to postpone seeing him.

"I am all behind with my chapels and roll-calls," I said to Murray; "this will be my twenty-first, and five weeks of the term have gone."

"I kept six chapels last week," Murray answered; "you will have to go hard to keep nineteen in three weeks."

"I mean doing it and getting up very early in the morning. I am going to reform," and I left him at the chapel door, for he, being a scholar, sat in the seats behind all of us who were commoners or exhibitioners.

After chapel, at which the Regius Professor of Divinity preached and told us that Sunday luncheon parties were very wrong, I seized Ward and bore him off to his rooms, where we found Dennison sitting by the fire with his legs stuck up on the mantelpiece. I wanted to see Ward alone, but Dennison had been at Sampford, so he did not matter much, though Ward with Dennison never seemed to be quite the same as he was without him.

Dennison twisted round in his chair, and as soon as he saw me he began to talk. "You ought to have been with us this afternoon," he said, "we had a most lovely rag. Bunny Langham took us over to Sampford in his cart, and I had a peashooter."

The loveliness of the rag was too much for him, and he had to stop his account of it so that he might laugh. I looked at Ward, and although he did not appear to be very amused, he showed no signs of knowing that Foster and I had been at Sampford.

"After lunch," Dennison went on, "I discovered some people in an arbour, the bill and coo business, and I fairly peppered them; I am no end of a shot with a peashooter."

"You missed them about a dozen times," Ward put in.

"Those were sighting shots, you must get your range, and they were about as far off as my shooter will carry; but I got them out of the place at last, and another fellow, Oxford written all over him, walked bang into them. I gave him one on the neck and then we bolted. It was a pity we couldn't stop and see what happened."

"We ought to have stopped," Ward declared and disappeared into his bedroom.

"I can tell you what happened," I said, and I lifted Dennison's legs off the mantelpiece and stood between him and the fire. I had been angry before Dennison described Foster as having

Oxford written all over him, but the cheek of labelling Fred as if he was some tailor's dummy made me furious.

Dennison looked at me and then shouted for Ward. "Marten can tell us what happened after we went, come and hear it."

"Wait a second. I am going to dine with Bunny at the Sceptre and am changing."

In a minute he appeared and went on dressing.

"I think you are the meanest lot of brutes unhung," I began, for I had been given time to think of something which would make Dennison see at once that this joke was not such a good one after all. "Foster of Oriel was one of the men you bolted from, and I was the other, and the thing isn't ended yet, for they got Foster's name. You hit one woman in the eye; do you think that very funny?"

"Sheer bad luck," Dennison said, but he did not look quite as unruffled and smug as usual.

Ward stood with his tie in his hand and did not say a word. I knew already that he had wanted to go back when he saw that there was a row, and since he had neither recognized Foster nor me my wrath was concentrated upon Dennison.

"You may call it what you like," I continued, "but if you get up a row and then haven't the pluck to see it out I call it a dirty thing to do."

I thought that must be enough to rouse Dennison, but he actually smiled at me and told me to go on.

"What do you think?" I asked Ward.

"Of course I did not recognize you and Foster, but when I saw those people had buttoned on to the wrong man I said we ought to go back. I wish that we had gone back," he answered.

"What did they do?" Dennison inquired.

"They found out Foster's name, and one of them, an awful man called Tom Harrison, says he is going to get compensation from him because you hit Susan in the eye with a pea and hadn't the decency to stay there and own up to it. There's the dinner bell, and I'm about sick of you fellows."

"I hit Susan in the eye," Dennison said reflectively. "Was Susan Tom Harrison's inamorata?" he asked.

"Talk English and I may answer you. It doesn't matter a row of pins who Susan was as long as she has a black eye," I replied.

"It is evidently no good speaking to you until you have calmed down. You remind me of a damp squib, all fuss and no result. I am going to dinner," Dennison said, and went out of the room without looking at either Ward or myself.

"I shall do something awful to that brute before I have finished with him. He makes me mad," I said, and Ward walked across the room to me.

"I am most horribly sorry about this," he began, "and I will come back straight from the Sceptre and see you. Be in at nine o'clock."

"You didn't shoot at those people, did you?" I asked.

"No; but well, you see, Dennison is better than I am at getting in for a row, and I am better at getting out of it."

"He's a low-down hound," I asserted, and after promising to be in at nine o'clock I seized my gown and went away. As I went into the hall I met Collier, and during dinner I expressed my opinion of Dennison very freely. There are times at Oxford when you regret most tremendously that you have left school, and this was one of them.

"A fellow like that would be kicked at any decent school," I said.

"He was kicked at Charbury until he managed to become a sort of blood. He played racquets very well," Collier added, as if by way of an excuse.

"Why do we put up with him?" I asked viciously, for I could see him making Lambert and Webb shout with laughter at the table opposite me.

"I don't know," Collier answered, "I suppose it's his smile. What part of a fowl do you think this is? it looks to me like the neck." He turned it over several times and then called a servant. "Please take this back, and say I have to be very careful what I eat. I keep a list, and this isn't on it. I never saw that joint before," he added to me, and lost all interest in Dennison. I thought it a pity that Collier took so much trouble over what he ate; the sight of that unusual joint made him

quite silent and inattentive during the rest of the meal.

I went to his rooms after dinner, as I felt sleepy, and he never did anything on Sunday except sleep, eat, and go to chapel. His room was full of tinted literature, but I never saw him read it, and I believe he bought *The Sporting Times* on Saturdays so that he could give it to any man who attacked him with conversation on his day of rest. His table was covered by a most miscellaneous dessert, and I asked him if he expected a lot of men.

"Not a soul," he replied, and sank into a chair by the fire. "I have this every Sunday night, because my people pay my common-room bill, and I have to pay everything else out of my allowance. They told me to do myself well, but after this term I expect they will see that this odd sort of arrangement won't work. I can feed a regiment on almonds and raisins without it costing me a sou. Help yourself to coffee, stick the dish of anchovy toast down between us, and if you want to read there are three Sunday papers and a crowd of old magazines."

I sat by the fire and read four short stories to pass the time. Dennison poked his head into the room and withdrew it when he saw me. I congratulated myself upon that little incident, for I felt that if he understood how I hated the sight of him something would have been gained. At nine o'clock I left Collier and went to my rooms to wait for Ward. I did not expect him to be punctual, because I guessed that a dinner given by Bunny Langham would be difficult to leave. He turned up, however, in about half-an-hour, and said he was jolly glad to get away from the Sceptre. "Bunny's all right," he said, "but some of his friends are too much—even for me."

I replied that Bunny was all wrong, and said why I thought so.

"You don't know him," Ward explained; "he would never leave any one in a hole if he thought for a second. He's the most good-natured, weak kind of man on earth, but he would never do the wrong thing. He goes straight over a precious difficult country, for he hasn't got any more will than a rabbit and is as blind as a bat. He will be in trouble to the end of his days, but he will never make any one ashamed of him."

I thought this was rather a glorified conception of the Bunny I knew, so I said nothing.

"You must see that he is a good sort," Ward said.

"Everybody's a good sort," I answered impatiently. "Collier calls the fellow with the green-baize apron who collects the boots a good sort, and some man I met at home, who talked about emperors and kings as if they were all his cousins, declared that the Sultan of Morocco was the best sort he had ever met—when one got to know him."

"I don't wonder you are sick," he returned. "I should be if any one had done to me what we did to you and Foster this afternoon. It looks pretty rotten on the face of it, and I am as sorry as blazes that you had to have a row with those men."

"I'm not sick about the row," I answered; "that would have been fun if they hadn't got Foster's name."

Ward lay back in his chair, and tried to blow rings of smoke from his cigarette.

"Then you are just angry because you think we ought to have come back," he said.

"No, I'm not," I replied, and I felt horribly uncomfortable.

He looked most thoroughly puzzled. "What on earth do you mean?" he asked.

I got up and walked about the room before I spoke. "It's this way," I began. "I wanted you and Foster to like each other, because he is the greatest friend I have, and I like you. And when I had been saying what a good fellow you were, you go and make a most infernal row in a pub on Sunday afternoon and then bolt. I saw you in that confounded cart, and I ought to have told Foster that I knew you were the fellow who bolted. But I didn't."

Ward sat staring in front of him, and did not speak for some time. "I don't think I could ever be friends with Foster," he said at last; "he hated me at sight; but it is deucedly good of you all the same. I will write him a note and tell him I was the man. I was going to do that, anyhow."

"You weren't the man," I asserted; "it was that little brute, Dennison."

"He doesn't count," Ward said.

I was disposed to agree with him on that point, but I thought that he and I had better go round and see Foster in the morning, instead of writing a note. He did not like this at first, but after some talking he said that he would come, and on the next morning we went round to Oriel. We made Foster look a most awful idiot, but that could not be helped. I know that if two men came to me simply bulging with apologies, I should look for the nearest window.

Fred hardly said anything but "All right" and "For goodness' sake don't say a word more about it," but it showed that Ward was not as bad as he thought him. I stayed behind after Ward had gone so that I might put things a little more straight, but Fred would not listen to another

word. "You were in a vile temper yesterday afternoon, and now I know the cause. That's enough, so shut up. You seem to have become a kind of guardian to Ward," and then he stopped suddenly, for it struck him that he had said one of those things which funny people say, and he would never have done that on purpose. I assured him that I knew he had said it accidentally, but it stopped us talking about Ward, because, when you hate puns, it is most discomfoting to make one suddenly. I made a pun once—I can still remember it, because if I had performed this feat intentionally I should have deserved all I got. What I did get was a dig in the ribs from Collier and the remark, "You are a wag," and then I had to repeat it to his three cousins, one of whom was deaf and none of whom understood it, though they all laughed. It was a Latin pun.

I am one of those people, Oliver Cromwell was another, to whom important things happened on a certain day. Tuesday was my day, I forget which his was, but it does not matter, because it is to be found in histories and almanacs. My day is not a matter of interest to anybody, but all the same I was born on a Tuesday, and things which I have had special reason to remember or regret have generally happened to me—so my mother says—on the same day. And it was on a Tuesday that I lunched with the Warden and began a curious sort of friendship with him. I suppose that I ought not to talk of a friendship between a man like the Warden, who was a mighty man of learning, and myself, but after all he gave me one of his books, and wrote in it, "To my young friend and quondam companion." "Quondam" was rather a pity, perhaps; it sounds pedantic, and the Warden was no pedant, unless he wanted to snub people.

I went to his luncheon, and, having neuralgia, said nothing until he told me that he knew Mr. Prettyman, who was one of the masters at Cliborough. If the Warden knew Prettyman I guessed that he had also heard something about me, and I thought I might as well stick up for myself as far as possible, so I said that Mr. Prettyman was the sort of man who, when you had lost a thing, always asked you where you had put it. He had on one occasion actually done this to me, and annoyed me very much. The Warden took no notice of my remark, and I was left to my neuralgia until the end of the meal. The other men who were there talked a lot; one of them said what he thought of Irving in *Hamlet*, and another criticized the paintings of Watts; the Warden kept his opinions to himself, and at two o'clock asked us what we were going to do in the afternoon. All of us were bent on active employment, but just as I was leaving the dining-room, he called me back and asked me if I would go for a walk with him at three o'clock on the following Thursday afternoon. I was too confused to remember what I said, and I only recollect that I left his house feeling as if something very awful was going to happen. I changed to play for the XX. against the XV. in a kind of daymare, if there is a state of mind which can be so described, and I had a good deal to say to Murray, as we walked down to the Parks together, about my luck. Murray laughed all the way from St. Cuthbert's to Keble; he kept on breaking out into small cackles, which, of all the bad ways of laughing, must be the worst.

I started to play footer that afternoon without troubling to think how I should play. I could see myself marching slowly along the Woodstock road with the Warden, and however badly I played did not seem to matter much, for there was something far more awful to come. The XV. began to press at once, and I, as full-back, had plenty to do. What I did was reckless; I simply did not care what happened, and everything I tried seemed to come off. Everybody who plays games has an occasional day when things get twisted round, and it is easier to do right than wrong. Those are the days for which we live in hope, and one of mine came on that Tuesday. I knew the whole thing was a fluke, and I told Murray and Foster so after the game, but they both said that I had given Sykes of Merton, who was playing back for the XV., something to think about.

During the next day, visions of my blue floated before me, and the prospect of walking with the Warden lost its terrors, until I went round to see Fred on Thursday morning. I wanted him to give me some hints, but I am sorry so say he saw only the humorous side of my engagement, and was very exasperating when he might have been extremely useful.

CHAPTER IX

A SURPRISE

When I left my rooms to walk with the Warden, I imagined that every one I met was laughing at me, and being intensely on the alert for insults, I was very displeased with the butler when he came to the door, and surveyed me. "What can you want with the Warden?" was written plainly over his face. I have never met a man who could be more gravely condescending than the Warden's butler, and I know several first-class cricketers, two headmasters, a popular novelist, and a rising politician aged twenty-four. I should have enjoyed telling that man what I thought of him, but a doorstep is a poor place for an altercation, unless it is with a cabman, and I saw the Warden advancing upon me clad in a cloak, and carrying a most useful umbrella, which must have been rolled up by himself.

The appearance of the Warden might have surprised any one, but it could have impressed

nobody. You had to know that he was a Warden, and wrote books about religion and philosophy, before you could feel afraid of him. If he was a precisian in the choice of words, he certainly was not one in the matter of dress.

"I think," he said, with just a glance at me to see if I was the right man, "that we will enter the Parks by the gates opposite to Keble College; we shall be more or less interrupted by the noisy, if necessary, shouts of football players, but we shall escape the authoritative note of the bicycle bell."

There wasn't much that I could say in answer to this, so I walked down the Broad in silence, and tried in vain to keep step with my companion. Before we had reached Wadham his shuffle had got upon my nerves, and I wished furiously that he would say something to me. He seemed to have tucked his head into his neck, and to have retired into the world of contemplation. As we entered the Parks I was seized with a wild desire to run away. I had not uttered a word, and I had arrived at a state of mind which prompted me to give a terrific yell, just to see what would happen next. When I feel like that I must speak at least, so I said that it looked as if it might rain. It is not likely that I should have made such a remark if I could have thought of any other, and it had the merit of not being startling and also of being true. But if I had given the yell which I wished to give, I could not have produced a greater effect upon the Warden. I think that he had forgotten my existence, and for a moment he could not remember why I was with him. He poked his head forward, and looked at me until I regretted my effort at conversation, and was dreadfully afraid I should have to repeat it; a remark about the weather in some way or other seems to lose all its sparkle when it is repeated.

The Warden, however, had heard what I said, and when he had detached himself from whatever he was thinking about, he answered me.

"I am not one of those who pretend to any extraordinary knowledge of weather symptoms," he began, and he stood in the middle of the path, while a gardener leant on his spade and watched us; "indeed, I have often noticed that those who make the greatest pretensions of that kind are themselves most frequently mistaken. In fact, my friend Dr. Marshall, who wrote the meteorological reports for *The Times* newspaper, was frequently himself in doubt whether or no to take out an umbrella for a walk."

I did not venture to interrupt him again for some time, and my next outbreak was quite unpremeditated. We were passing a college rigger match, and a pass which was palpably forward escaped the notice of the referee. I joined in the cry of "forward" which was raised, and the Warden stopped once more and actually smiled. On this occasion I had forgotten all about him, and my shout probably surprised him as much as me.

"I am sorry," I said to him, "but I really couldn't help it."

"There is no occasion to express or even to feel regret," he answered, and his eyes twinkled delightfully; "if youth lost its spontaneity it would at one and the same moment lose its charm. Did your cry refer to this?" He pointed with his umbrella to a scrimmage which was taking place a few yards away from us.

"Some one threw the ball forward, which he is not allowed to do," I explained, and a man was hurled into touch close to the spot where we were standing.

"The game of football which I believe bears the honoured name of Rugby appeals, or it seems to me to appeal, to the more violent of the emotions. Do you play this game, which strikes the eye of the observant, but not initiated, as the relic of an age in which brute force rather than science was the aim of the athlete?"

He walked on as he finished speaking, and I told him that I played Rugby football and liked it. "I like nearly every game," I added.

He glanced at me quickly, and after we had walked a little way he began again.

"The excellent Lord Chesterfield in his *Letters* stated that it was very disagreeable to seem reserved, and very dangerous not to be so; most of my young friends impress me with the fact that they have learned that maxim too well. But you on the contrary——" He waved his umbrella and did not finish the sentence.

"There is no harm in liking games," I answered; "if I did not take heaps of exercise I should never be well, or able to read."

"Heaps of exercise," he repeated, and looked oddly at me.

"I mean a fearful lot of exercise," I explained.

"You did not quote 'Mens sana in corpore sano,' for which I have to thank you, even if your use of the English language affords reasonable grounds for protest. Heaps of mud, heaps of rubbish, but not, I think, heaps of exercise."

"Heaps of money," I ventured to suggest, but he shook his head sadly.

"We were talking of athletics," he said, "which represent to me the most sweeping epidemic of the century. Do not let athletics spread their deadly, if in one sense empurpling, pall over your University life. Oxford has many gifts for those who are willing to receive them; do not, my friend, be content with the least which she can give. The maxim of Mr. Browning, that the grasp of a man should exceed his reach, if not an ennobling maxim, must not be forgotten entirely."

I walked by his side in silence, for I knew that the Warden did not often give advice to an undergraduate. His language even seemed to have become less carefully chosen, and I felt that he intended to be not only human but kind, for there was no special reason why he should talk to me unless he wished.

He did not speak again until we reached St. Cuthbert's, but when we had reached the back quadrangle he stopped, and after poking the ground with his umbrella, said—

"I would do nothing willingly to lessen your enthusiasm, you have, I believe, been endowed liberally with that most exhilarating virtue; I would only suggest to you that your enthusiasm need not of necessity be expended solely upon athletics. I hope that we shall be able to enjoy very many walks together."

I thrust out my hand, but he hesitated; I forgot that I had nearly made him shout with pain a few weeks before, but he, as far as I know, never forgot anything. He trusted me, however, and I treated him very gently.

As soon as the Warden had disappeared into his house I heard a bellow of derisive laughter at a window above me, and looking up I saw Dennison standing there; but at that moment I hated him even more than I did usually, and I walked off to see Jack Ward without even saying what I thought of him.

Jack was having a bath when I got to his rooms, and while he was dressing he told me how he had been spending the afternoon. I never knew what he might do next—he flew off at tangents so often—but I was surprised to hear how he had been employing himself.

"Perhaps you will think me a fool," he began, "but that Tom Harrison affair gave me the jumps, and I couldn't wait to see if Foster was going to be tackled. So I rode over to Sampford, and the man said that Harrison lived in a village a few miles off. I had lunch at Sampford and then went on, and, to cut it short, the whole thing is settled."

"You paid?"

"Not very much; and Tom said I was the first gentleman he had ever known come from Oxford—you must pay for a remark like that. He described us as 'bloomin' 'aughty,' and 'not enough brass to buy a moke.' Do you know that you are playing for the 'Varsity on Saturday against Blackheath? I want to go up to town, so I shall come and see you play."

I thought that he was trying to prevent me from thanking him, and I did not really believe that I was going to play until he took his oath that I was. Then we had tea, and I thanked him; for if there is one thing in the world of which I will not be baulked it is thanking people. I hate doing it so much, that it has got to be done. Jack, however, did not pretend to listen to what I said, and after I had finished we talked about Dennison; both of us were sick to death of him, but when you are always meeting a man in other people's rooms, and he won't see that you don't like him, it is not very easy to get rid of him; for when you are a fresher you can't choose your friends so easily as you can when your first year is over.

After dinner Fred came round to tell me that we were both playing against Blackheath, and as Jack came in as well, I said that I would get another man to play whist. I went to Murray, because I was most anxious that he should be friends with Jack; but I did not tell him that Jack was one of the four, or I am sure that he would not have come. I liked both Murray and Jack, and I thought that when I got them together each would see what a nice man the other was, for I was again in the mood when everything seems to be easy. But I cannot say that my efforts were successful; their politeness knocked every spark of cheeriness out of the game, and we played in dreadful silence, which may be all right for very good players, but it does not suit me in the least.

When Murray looked at his watch and said that he must be going, I felt quite relieved, and I decided then that I would stop trying to make Murray and Jack like each other, for the process was too painful and slow for me.

After he had gone I told Foster what Ward had been doing, and it was really quite funny to see how confused they were. Fred said how good it was of Ward to have taken so much bother about nothing, which was not quite what he meant, but it did very well; and Ward mumbled something in reply, which neither of us could hear. Altogether they managed it most successfully, and when Fred went away Ward said that he would see him to the lodge. I found out afterwards that he stopped me going with Fred, so that he might tell him nothing would have happened if he had not seen Tom Harrison; he was the kind of man who never tried to get more credit than he deserved, unless it was from Oxford tradesmen.

Playing against Blackheath on the Rectory field before a large crowd of people was good fun, and at the end of the game I thought that I had managed to escape without making a very

pitiable exhibition of myself. But on the following Monday the sporting papers criticized me most unpleasantly. "Marten was obviously nervous, and did not seem to settle down until the game was lost." "As full-back Marten had much to learn; his tackling was good, but his kicking left much to be desired, and he seldom found touch." I turned from *The Sportsman* and *Sporting Life* to *The Daily Telegraph*, and found that I had shown "more pluck than judgment."

I felt that Sykes of Merton must be having an enjoyable morning, and even the fact that the critics unanimously praised Foster was of little assistance to me. My chance had come, and I had not taken it; there could not have been a more miserable man in Oxford, and for a whole solid week I never cut a lecture or did anything of which even Mr. Edwardes could disapprove.

Sykes reappeared in the 'Varsity team, and Foster declared that the whole thing was a swindle; but he was more prejudiced in my favour than I was myself. The last match of the term at Oxford, and the one previous to the 'Varsity match, was against the Old Cliburians, and the O. C.s having had a disastrous season Adamson, who always played centre three-quarters with Foster, did not play, but put a man from Queen's in his place. This man, whose name was Pott, had been laid up all the term, and two or three people said it was lucky for Foster that Pott had not been able to play before. I played back for the O. C.s, and the game was enough to make any Cambridge man who saw it stand on his head with delight. The 'Varsity could do nothing right; the passing broke down time after time, and the forwards got impatient and kicked too hard. I thought Foster was the one man on the side who played decently, but five minutes before the end, when we were leading by a goal to nothing, Pott made a very good run and got a try in the corner. It seemed to me that this was the only thing he did during the whole game, and it was my fault that he got the try, for I went for him a second too late and he fell over the line, but the place-kick went crooked, and we won by a goal to a try.

Adamson, who was touch-judging, said what he thought about the 'Varsity team, and he could be the most uncomplimentary man in Europe when he liked. His temper was awful, and it did not seem to be improved by the use of expletives. This game was played on a Saturday, and on the following Wednesday week we had to play the 'Varsity match at Queen's Club. The Cambridge team was published in the papers on the Monday, but some one told me that our committee were not meeting until the Monday evening. This did not interest me much, for apart from wanting to see that Fred had got his blue, and I thought he was a certainty, I did not mind who else was chosen. Sykes had played better against the O. C.s than he had ever done before, and even Fred said that he was afraid my chance had gone for this year.

After dinner on Monday evening I was sitting in my rooms with Murray, and although it was not nine o'clock, I was wondering how soon I could go to bed, when Ward suddenly burst in, fairly bubbling over with excitement. He turned me right out of my chair, and hitting me violently on the back, said he had never been so awfully glad in all his life. My first impression was that he had been made glad by wine, and I told him to clear out if he could not behave himself, which made him catch hold of me and dance me round the room. By the time we had finished I found that Dennison, Collier, Lambert, Webb and a host of other people had come to my rooms, and at last I discovered that I had got my blue. For a moment I did not believe it, but I managed to push Ward into a corner, and told him I would never speak to him again if it was not true. Then he swore that he had seen the names of the XV. to play against Cambridge stuck up in the window of Howell's shop in the Turl, and the first name he saw was G. Marten (St. Cuthbert's), back.

"And Foster, of course?" I said.

Then Jack Ward's face fell. "No, they've gone mad," he answered; "it's that man Potts, of Queen's."

Men buzzed about congratulating me, and one part of me felt most tremendously glad, and the other part most outrageously sorry. I said a lot of things about the committee, and everybody except Ward and Murray thought I had gone mad. The college clock struck nine, and old Tom's nightly warning began to sound over the city. I seized a cap and bolted down-stairs, leaving my rooms full of astonished men. But Fred Foster was the only man I wanted to see, and by making a tremendous rush for Oriel I got there before the gates were closed. I cannot describe how I was feeling that evening, but I knew that Fred was infinitely better at footer than I was, and in my wildest moments I had never imagined that I should be put in the XV. while he was left out of it.

I found him sitting in his room alone, but directly he saw me he jumped up and began to talk.

"I came to St. Cuthbert's to congratulate you," he began.

"It is a confounded swindle," I interrupted.

"But there was such a row in your rooms that I couldn't face it."

"I have never been so sick about anything in my life," I said; and he looked so miserable that in spite of the comfortable sensation of having got my blue I meant it.

"It was a vile knock for me, but I don't mind half so much now one of us is in. Your people will be most awfully glad."

"They will think the committee are mad to leave you out and put me in. It upsets things

altogether."

"Pott's in his fourth year, and I must have another shot, that's all," he said.

"You are bound to get your cricket blue," I declared.

"When a man begins to miss getting in as I have done, he very often keeps on doing it," and he mentioned the names of two or three men who, with any luck, would have played both cricket and footer against Cambridge, but were never chosen. "Don't bother about me," he went on, "but get yourself as fit as possible, and play like blazes at Queen's Club; you will be doing me a good turn if you play well, because at present they have got an idea up here that Cliborough fellows can't play footer. I heard Adamson saying so."

I expressed my opinion of Adamson and went back to college, for I ought not to have been out after nine o'clock, because my gating would not finish. But I must say that when the Subby sent for me, and I explained what had happened, he congratulated me on getting my blue, and said that under such exceptional circumstances he would excuse my forgetfulness.

For the next few days I got up and went to bed very early; I ran round the Parks before breakfast, which took me some time and was a most dreary occupation, and I kicked a ball about nearly every day. All of my people went up to town for the match, and Fred and I joined them at the Langham on the Tuesday night. My mother was dreadfully sorry for Fred, and Nina seemed to have forgotten that she was nearly grown-up, and gave herself no airs at all. I think that Fred, who forgave swindles very quickly, found some consolation in the fact that he was going to watch the match with Nina, which would have amused me had I not been so anxious about the morrow.

There cannot be a more cheerless spot in London than the Queen's Club on a foggy December afternoon, but when I arrived there and found that we had got to play in semi-darkness my nervousness almost disappeared.

After being photographed, and running about the ground to stretch our legs, we began, and for some time I should not think a full-back ever had less to do than I had. The game settled down into one long scrimmage, and apart from making a few kicks, which were neither good nor bad, I was almost a spectator, and at half-time I was, in comparison with every one else, quite disgustingly clean. We played towards the pavilion during the second half, and before ten minutes had passed I was covered with mud, if not with glory. The Cambridge three-quarters got the ball, and after a round of passing one of them got a try right behind our posts. Adamson promptly told me that it was my fault, but as a matter of fact Pott had slipped up at a critical moment and left his man unmarked, so I did not get much chance of preventing the try.

After this Cambridge pressed us hard, and I had to fall on the ball continually, which is a dismal performance until one gets warmed up to it. Pott's knee had given way, and though he stayed on the ground and limped about, the Cambridge forwards seemed to be always rushing past him and hurling me to the ground. Luck, however, was on our side, and though they were often on the point of scoring nothing really happened, and at last our forwards got the ball down to the other end of the ground. I hoped for a little peace, but the man who plays full-back and expects such a thing is an idiot. Only a few minutes were left when the Cambridge three-quarters got off again, and, Pott being useless, two men came at top speed for me. Their centre had the ball, and had only to throw it to the wing man for a try to be a certainty. The wing man was an international and about the fastest three-quarter in Scotland, so I tried a little device, which was bad football, though in this case it came off. My only chance was for the centre man to lose his head, and he lost it quite beautifully; if he had only gone on himself instead of trying to pass there was nobody to stop him, for I had made up my mind to prevent the fast man getting the ball whatever happened. I ran in between them, and the centre passed right into my hands; at the same moment the wing man slipped up, and I was going for the Cambridge line as fast as I could. No one being near me I think that I made one of the fastest runs of my life, but not having been blessed with speed I had to pass at last, and I happened to make quite a good shot, for one of our halves got the ball and ran in behind the posts. Adamson kicked the goal all right, and the game ended in a draw directly afterwards.

I don't mind saying that as I walked off the ground I should have been glad if there had been less fog; I had suffered so much after the Cambridge try, that I should have been pleased if everybody had seen the finish; but after all Fred had managed to discover what had happened, and if there had not been a fog, I expect I should not have tried to intercept that pass, for it would have looked quite awful if I had not happened to do it. All kinds of people congratulated me, and Adamson was good enough to acknowledge that I had atoned for my previous mistake; but I could not help wondering what he would have said if the Cambridge man had not happened to make such a bad pass. There was a condescension about Adamson which roused my worst passions, for of all the blues I have seen he was the only one who ever took an insane delight in himself, and unfortunately he belonged to a college which so seldom had a blue, that when they did get one they almost worshipped him.

After the game was over I went back to the Langham, for Fred and I had arranged to go to a theatre with Jack Ward; but I have only the vaguest idea of the performance I watched. I had slept badly the night before, and now that the match was over, nothing could keep me awake, so I had to be given up as hopeless, though Fred gave me an occasional dig with his elbow just to

keep me from snoring. By the time the play was over I was properly awake again, and so satisfied with myself, that when I met Dennison going out of the theatre I was even glad to see him.

"Ward told me you were coming here," he said. "What are you going to do now?"

"Going home, I suppose," I answered; but I cannot say that I cared much where I went.

"Let's go to the Parma, there is sure to be a rag on there," he said to Jack, and after some discussion we walked down Shaftesbury Avenue.

I think the air of the town must have got into Dennison's head, for I had not walked far before I was in more than my usual state of rage with him. He ordered us about most abominably, and seemed to think that I was sure to lose my way unless I kept close to him. As a matter of fact, neither Fred nor I knew London well, but I resented being treated like an infant, and if Dennison only looked after us out of kindness, I did not see why he should do it at the top of his voice. I had an inexplicable feeling that it was the duty of every one to know something about London, and although I should not have recognized Piccadilly Circus when I saw it, I was quite prepared to put that down to the fog; for if Dennison had not taken so much for granted, I should never willingly have given myself away to him.

When we reached the Parma I was very thirsty, but there were so many people in the place that it was impossible to get near the bar. We were jolted about by men who, having nothing else to say, shouted "Good old Cambridge!" and "Now then, Oxford!" The pandemonium was deafening, and Jack said to me that the whole thing wasn't good enough, and unless you happened to feel like shoving into people and then pretending that you were very sorry he was quite right.

A man standing on the steps at the top of the room began to make a speech until somebody shoved him down, and his top-hat, having been knocked off, was kicked about by everybody who could get near it. Men whom I never remembered having seen before, shook me warmly by the hand and treated me as if I was their greatest friend, but none of them could get me anything to drink. This scene was subsequently described as disgraceful, but it was really very dull, and after a few more minutes spent in trying to make my voice heard in the noise, the lights were turned out. The word "Johnnys" ran round the place, and there was a big rush for the door leading into Piccadilly Circus. Fortunately I got out at once, and I found myself marching clown Piccadilly in the second row of a procession. Foster was next to me, though how he got there I cannot conceive, and Ward and Dennison were in the front row. We sang as we walked, and people cleared out of our way. I heard one man who met us say "Poor fools!" and the fellow who was with him answered "We did that kind of thing years ago, didn't we?" Outside The St. John's we came to a dead stop, and the men in front of me began arguing with an enormous man who stood at the entrance.

"No one else is to be admitted to-night," I heard the giant say.

"But it is not closing time," some one answered.

"These are my orders, gentlemen," he said, and it was really rather nice of him to address us as he did.

Ward did not say a word, but tried quite amicably to get past the giant. It was a kind of Goliath and David business anyhow, but whatever chance Ward had of getting into the restaurant ended abruptly; a bevy of policemen who seemed to drop out of the skies simply pounced upon him, and if he had been guilty of some real crime he could not have been treated more severely. It was my first experience of policemen, and unless some one had very kindly caught hold of me, my first impulse was to go for the men who had seized Ward.

"You had better keep quiet, or you will be taken to the station as well," one policeman said to me, but I went on talking until some one I did not know touched me on the arm.

"Was the man they collared a friend of yours?" he asked.

"Yes, and it is a most wretched swindle," I said.

"I don't think he did anything to speak of," Foster added.

"I was just coming out of the door as it happened," our friend said, "and I have never seen a more unfair thing in my life. If you will come to the police-station to-morrow to give evidence, I will come too. You had better go now and see if you can do anything for him."

We assured him that we would turn up the next morning, and then Foster and I made our way to the police-station. I cannot say that the Inspector, or whoever the official was who talked to us, took much notice of what we said, but we found a more sympathetic man outside the station who asked us if we wanted to bail out our friend. The official had told us that Jack Ward would be quite comfortable during the night, but when I saw another person brought in by the police we doubted this statement very much, and we discussed things with our sympathetic friend, who was a shabby-looking man when he happened to get near the light, and he gave us much advice in exchange for half-a-sovereign. I gave him the half-sovereign, though what

prompted me to do so I cannot remember, but I had met so many aggressive people during that evening that a kind man appealed to me strongly. He was, I heard afterwards, a professional bailer-out, and I do not think he could have been a very good one, for although Fred and I went about with him for over an hour, and rang up various people who treated us with unvarying rudeness, in the end we had to leave Jack Ward where he was.

It was no easy matter to escape from my people in the morning, but we got to the place all right, and soon after we got there Jack Ward appeared, and was charged with creating a disturbance in Piccadilly. Policemen gave evidence, and the man who had told us that he would come and speak up for Ward turned out to be a barrister, and did not appear to be in the least afraid of the magistrate. His evidence was very different to that of the police, and I thought Jack Ward, who looked as if he had been having a dreadful time, was bound to get off.

When my turn came to kiss the book I was in a terrible state of nervousness, and the magistrate asked me my name twice, and where I lived at least three times. I am sure he must have been deaf, for I spoke plainly enough, but I thought him a most disagreeable man. After bothering me until I really felt quite unwell, he asked me how many drinks I had seen Jack Ward have, and when I answered "None," he said very angrily, "I shall not want to ask you any more questions." He might just as well have told me that he did not believe a word I said.

In the end Ward was bound over to keep the peace for a month, and the magistrate said what he thought of the disturbance which had been made. He supposed undergraduates to be a far more vicious lot than they really are, for at the very worst we were only extremely noisy and very foolish, and Jack Ward was just the victim of horribly bad luck.

I was glad to get away from the police-court, and I am not searching for such an experience as this again, but principally we were sorry for Ward, who said he had never spent such a night in his life. However he was very cheerful about it, and took the view that it might have happened to any one.

After luncheon Foster and I had to start on tour with the 'Varsity XV. in Wales, and I was exceedingly glad that Adamson had to stay in town to play for the South against the North, or Fred would not have come. On that tour I played very badly and Fred very well, which is what some people would call the irony of fate. But I must say in excuse for myself that more difficult people to get hold of than those Swansea, Newport and Cardiff three-quarters I cannot conceive, and I had no end of chances of trying to collar them. How many of those chances I took can be guessed by any one who is curious enough to look up records and see the lamentable results of those three matches.

CHAPTER X

MY MAIDEN SPEECH

As soon as the 'Varsity football tour was finished, I went home and Fred Foster came with me. Any exultation I might have been inclined to show over my blue was completely checked by the way I played on the tour, and I was very glad when we got away from Wales and the sarcastic remarks of the Welsh newspapers. As a matter of curiosity it may be satisfactory to find out what famous Oxford teams of former years think of the one you happen to be in, but it was exceedingly disagreeable of the Welsh papers to suggest that we should not like to hear the opinions of these heroes, and one sporting reporter went out of his way to be nasty to me. "When I saw Marten at back and remember the brilliant exponents of the game who have filled his position in previous Dark Blue fifteens, I really cannot refrain from smiling. But it is a pity all the same." If I could have got hold of that fellow I think I might have curtailed the length of his smile, but Foster gave me a little satisfaction by saying that if a man was ass enough to write about "exponents of the game," he was probably paid a penny a line for what he wrote, and had sacrificed me for the sake of threepence.

We had a very good time during our first "vac." I think that Nina expected me to come back from Oxford with a very fine equipment of airs; in fact I know that she did for she told me so, but I was in a humble mood and gave her no chances to squash me, and she and Fred got on splendidly together. My first term had taught me that I did not know in the least what I wanted, which was an upsetting lesson for any one to learn who had always done what came next without bothering about the consequences. This result had been brought about by the Warden and Dennison, the one had in his curious way tried to urge me on, the other had sickened me of men who rag from morning to night, and I felt bothered for several days in succession. Then, however, I stopped worrying myself and regained my normal spirits, to the annoyance of my father who was at that time inveighing against Russia and the ritualistic vicar of our parish, and had a lot to say about the thin end of the wedge. He told me that I must take more interest in politics, and he made both Fred and me promise that we would speak at debating societies during our first year.

But when I recollected the discussions I had listened to at our college debating society I could not remember a single one at which I could have said anything to the point; how could I know whether "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all," or what could I say about marriage being a failure? There was, indeed, only one man at St. Cuthbert's who could possibly know anything about marriage, and he had a wife and three children, but from the appearance of the lady I do not think that he was likely to give us his honest opinion.

I wrote to Jack Ward but did not get an answer, and when we got back to Oxford I found that he had been staying with a mining magnate whose name I could not pronounce. He had been gambling every night, I forget how much he won in a week, but it is of no consequence as he lost all of it and a lot more before he had finished. During this term he became a complete blood, and was constantly dining at wine clubs or with somebody like Bunny Langham. He joined the Mohocks, and men who did not know him, and thought that our wine club made far too much noise and was a nuisance to the college, said that he would get sent down at the end of his first year for being ploughed in pass Moderations. I, however, saw a good deal of him at odd times, and the fact that he absolutely refused to have anything more to do with Dennison than he could help delighted me. When Jack had no use for any one he had a very expressive way of letting them know it, and Dennison at last was so offended that he invaded my rooms one afternoon when I was changing after footer and couldn't escape from him.

"You don't see much of Ward now, do you?" he began, as he placed himself upon my bed.

"I see him every day," I answered.

"I can't understand why you care to do it."

"Well, I do care to do it; you are sitting on my socks, do you mind getting up?"

"You ought to hear what most of the freshers are saying about the side Ward is putting on, it isn't as if he had any good reason for sticking on side."

"What do you think is a good reason for sticking on side?" I asked.

"Ward can't do anything; you are a blue already, and I shall probably get my racquet blue, but of course that's got nothing to do with it."

"Then I shouldn't say anything about it," I answered, and putting on my coat I went into my sitter.

"Don't be a fool," he said as he followed me, "you stick so tremendously close to rotten old-fashioned ideas. I am not exactly committing a crime in not liking a man whom you profess to like."

"I have never professed to like any one in my life if I didn't like him," I returned, and instead of getting angry with me, he laughed and sat down in my biggest arm-chair. It was not his habit to have two quarrels going on at the same time, and when he wished to be amiable you had to work hard before you removed his smile. We had tea together, and I did work hard, but he refused to be offended, and told me that I was far too good a sort to be wrapped up in old prejudices, which were the laughing-stock of everybody who really thought about them. Oxford, he said, was the place for a good time and not for airing ridiculous fads which were all right at school, where there was nothing else to do but pretend to like a fellow for ever because you had happened to like him for a few weeks. And he also told me that being a blue, I ought to take my proper position in the college, and not to go about with men who were no use whatever.

In return I told him some beautifully plain things, but when a man has the terrific impudence of Dennison, he makes me too angry to be coherent. I let him know, however, that I intended to choose my own friends and that I thought a blue, if he was also a bounder, might do his college more harm than good. To which he replied that if a man was a bounder he found it exceedingly difficult to become a blue. When Dennison went away I rushed off to see Murray, and although he did not pretend to like Jack, he agreed with me that ten Wards in a college would not make it as unpleasant a place as one Dennison. After this attempt to get me on his side against Jack, Dennison left me more or less alone, but he smiled upon me whenever he saw me, and to Webb, Lambert and a man called Learoyd, who were at that time his particular friends, I believe that he described me as a lunatic who might be of use in the future.

I was very energetic during this term, and at the same time very quiet. The weather was so bad that astronomical people said that the sun had got spots upon it or had gone wrong somehow; at any rate we hardly ever saw it, and we lived in a deluge of rain. The Torpids had to be postponed, nearly every footer match was scratched, and the people who had been talking about water-famines for the last two years held their peace. Oxford seemed to be a most cheerless place, and Collier slept nearly the whole term. However, I most strenuously did labour, but I should never have stuck to it had not Murray helped me, and the result was that after we had been up five weeks I found myself in high favour with Mr. Gilbert Edwardes.

It is a dreadful thing to please your tutor if you do not happen to like him, because he asks you to breakfast by way of showing his pleasure, and at meals I could not put up with Mr. Edwardes. I sat next him at one breakfast, and he never ate anything except a piece of dry toast,

and he talked about patent foods. I never saw a man who looked more as if he needed a really big meal of beef and plum-pudding; but he was an authority on diet, and told me that food if too nutritious was very bad for the brain. He could not, I thought, have imagined that our brains were worth much; for I must say that though he did not eat himself he gave us every chance of doing so, and if we had been the torpid, who breakfast and dine hugely, he could not have provided us with more food. Murray, who was one of many at this meal, seemed to be very interested in what Mr. Edwardes said about diet, and I told him afterwards that he was an arch-humbug; but it turned out that he had been bothered all his life—at least he said so—by indigestion, and that at Wellingham he had lived on some peculiar biscuit for nearly a fortnight, which recalled to my mind what Ward had said to me about him.

I played in all the 'Varsity rigger matches which were not scratched, and we finished up by beating the Wellingham Nomads after a muddy and desperate struggle. Murray was playing for the Nomads and Foster for the 'Varsity, and so many Wellingham people came round to Murray's rooms after the match that I had to hold a kind of overflow meeting in my rooms, after the manner of political gatherings. Murray was in great spirits until everybody had gone, and then he said he had got a most frightful attack of indigestion. So I let him talk it off. It was curious that I had known him so long without ever having got him on the subject of health; but he told me that when he came up to Oxford he made up his mind to forget all about his ailments and eat anything. I told him that he had better stick to that resolution, because I was sure that his best way was never even to think about himself, but that advice was not altogether unselfish. After he had spent a solid half-hour in telling me what pains he suffered, he seemed so much better that I was compelled to add that whenever he felt most awfully bad he had better come and talk to me. I did not say that from conceit but out of sympathy, and when he laughed I told him that if he thought it was amusing for me to hear about his pains and spasms he was jolly well mistaken.

"My father has talked about his liver for the last ten years," I said, by way of proving that whatever information he gave me about himself was bound to be stale.

"Then you will have one some day," Murray answered, and I imagined that he looked at me as if in the future we could have a royal time nursing our dyspepsia together. But I was not going to be a twin dyspeptic with anybody.

"I hope I have got one now," I returned, "but I am not going on the roof to shout about it. Every one ought to keep their liver dark, and then the vile thing wouldn't be a nuisance to every one else."

He only laughed again. I am afraid he had read a lot of medical books and knew far too much about the colour of things, but I do really believe that I did him some good, for apart from seeing him put extraordinary pieces of paper on his tongue and look very concerned when they revealed whatever secret they have to reveal, he never talked intimately to me again about his complaints, and as time went on he laughed at himself, which was very wholesome of him.

Six weeks of the term had passed before I thought of fulfilling the promise I made to my father, and when the time drew near for me to speak at our college debating society, if I meant to do so, I became extremely nervous. There was only one more meeting of the society during that term, and the subject for debate was, "The modern novel has a depressing and decaying influence upon the mind of the British nation." Lambert, who spoke very fluently and not at all to the point, was booked to speak first at this debate, and any one who knew him could see his magnificent style in the way the motion was drawn up. He revelled in alliteration, and I should think that he preferred subjects which were more general than particular, for he had on one occasion come hopelessly to grief at a debate on French politics, and had to hide his confusion by saying that no one could be expected to take an interest in a Latin nation, which made some people think that he was more stupid than he really was.

I resolved to support the modern novel, not because I knew much about it, but because I did not intend to be on the same side as Lambert, and I went to the Union and listened to a debate in which two men from Cambridge spoke and one man from London. Speaking seemed to be easy to these people, but perhaps the presence of the London man—he was very distinguished—acted as a check to orators who were not quite sure of themselves. At any rate the distinguished man made a great impression, he deplored the spread of taste among the lower classes, and he was very sad and eloquent about organized excursions which he said consisted chiefly of meals. To my mind he went on deploring far too long, for if anybody does remember Rome by what he had for dinner there, and forgets everything about Venice except his tea, his temporary absence from England is not exactly a disaster, and the Italians are glad to have him. Craddock of Balliol, who spoke before the man from London, was crushed for dealing with the subject in a frivolous manner, but I was not persuaded that a serious debate about English Tourists would make them any less humorous or plentiful. That debate did me good in one way, for I was so angry with this man of distinction that I wished I could have told him what I thought, and for three consecutive mornings I addressed an imaginary audience while I was having my bath. But if my remarks had been made at the Union I am afraid they would have caused a tumult, they were more suited to the House of Commons, where, if the worst happens, you have the consolation of being led out by a dignified official, and can read about your departure in the newspapers of the following morning. I was so worried about my speech that I mentioned it to several men, and most of them said that they would come to the debate, which was the last thing I wanted them to do. I had, however, to go through with it, so I consoled myself by the thought that I couldn't be duller than

some of the people whom I had heard speaking at our debates; but when I went into the common room and found a larger crowd of men there than I had ever seen at a previous meeting, I wished that I had never come near the place. Before Lambert spoke we had to go through a lot of private business, which consisted chiefly of attempts by the college wags to be funny. Some men cultivate the special form of humour which shines at private business, but on this occasion all our wags were either absent or silent, and the President and Secretary of the debating society had a very peaceful evening.

When Lambert got up to pulverize the modern novel a great many men, who had only come in for a rag, left the room, but Dennison, Webb and some others who knew that I intended to speak, remained, and I made up my mind that they should wait a very long time if they meant to hear me. There was not a trace of nervousness about Lambert; he shot his cuffs, stroked his upper lip with one finger, and was really rather a comical figure, though I should think that every one was not so much amused at the things he said as at his magnificent manner while saying them, for he had nothing new to say about the influence of popular fiction. He referred to authors who draw their inspiration from the Bible in terms of lordly condescension, and then, changing his manner suddenly, he spoke of the rise and fall of Stratford-upon-Avon in such mournful tones that any one who did not know him might have imagined that he was on the verge of tears.

No speech of his, however, was complete without a peroration, and on this evening he surpassed himself. "You," he began, "who buy books without a thought of what you are buying, who are guided in your taste for fiction by the advertisements and buy a novel with as little care as you would buy a pair of scissors, who think, if you ever think, and I have already said that you do not, that because there are fifty thousand tasteless people in the world there is no reason why you should not swell that crowd, you are responsible for the decay of the novel. Traditions are dying, helped to their death by prize competitions and personal paragraphs, and Oxford is the home of tradition, for Oxford was invented before Eton. We care no longer for what is best but for what is most talked about, in our fiction we look for scandals and not for literature, and unless there is a reaction the man who can blush will become a curiosity, fit only for exhibition on the Music Hall stage or in the Zoological Gardens. It is a serious matter. The Philistines must be met and routed, we know that of old this was their usual fate, it seems to have been the chief reason for their existence. For my part I think a day ill-spent in which I have not read a few pages of Fielding or Thackeray. I have the most kindly feelings towards Dickens, Jane Austen and George Eliot, and when I am tired I write little things myself."

He sat down and looked blandly in front of him; if he had been less pleased with himself he would not have been anything like so amusing.

A senior man called Ransome got up to defend the modern novel, and the debate at once became serious. In about five minutes Ransome would have made most men feel crushed and unhappy, but Lambert only spread out his legs and shut his eyes. Ransome was not only a good speaker but also one of the cleverest men in the 'Varsity, and he scored time after time without disturbing Lambert's equanimity. I think that Lambert's enormous and somnolent bulk must have annoyed Ransome, for he went on to make an attack which was virulently sarcastic. In his speech Lambert had been foolish enough to say nothing in favour of modern novels, he had taken it for granted that all of them were bad, and Ransome fastening on this accused him of never having heard of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy, and he finished by appealing to us not to be guided in our tastes and opinions by a man whose assumptions were based on tremendous ignorance.

After Ransome had finished Lambert woke up, which was silly of him, but I must admit that he looked exactly as if he had been roused from a deep sleep. A number of men spoke, and most of them said something which I had intended to say, until there was very little of my speech left which could sound original. As each man sat down, Dennison and Webb had the impertinence to shout "Marten," but they were always called to order by the President, who was in no hurry to hear my maiden effort. Collier, who had not come to hear me from inclination but a sense of duty, dozed peacefully in a corner, a number of men recorded their votes and left the room, the President yawned prodigiously, and the Secretary looked as if he had got a headache. If I intended to speak before Lambert replied to all the criticisms passed upon him, my time had come. I got up as quietly as I could, but I was greeted with so much applause that I felt quite embarrassed. Jack Ward had come in from dining somewhere, and when he saw Dennison and Webb clapping because they expected to be amused, he resolved to make more row than they did. I could not complain of my reception, but why I received it is not worth discussing. However the mere sight of Dennison made me determined not to make a fool of myself and I got rid of my first sentence without a hitch, and then I was all right for some time because the walls of my bedder had heard my speech very often and I knew it well. Jack Ward kept on applauding violently, he meant well but he did it in the most awkward places, and he made me forget one thing which Foster had provided. Dennison laughed a little, but he had to wait before he got an opportunity of trying to make me appear especially ridiculous.

"We read too much and think too little," I said, and this was the opening of a sentence which had caused me a lot of trouble until Murray helped me to put it right, but Dennison saw his chance and interrupted me by saying, "We talk too much and think too little, is what you mean," which was an exasperating remark when I had very nearly finished without any bother. So I turned round and told him that I could say what I liked without asking him. The President shouted "Order," but he looked too sleepy to care much what happened.

"At any rate I suppose you cribbed it from last week's *Spectator*, and I know it was 'Talk too much,' because I saw it."

"If Mr. Marten thinks he can improve upon anything taken from the *Spectator* he is at perfect liberty to do so," the President said very sarcastically, and I felt badly scored off.

"It's all very well," I said to him, "but these interruptions have made me forget where I have got to."

"About the bottom of your second cuff, I should think," Dennison called out, and I could not stand that libel, so I addressed the rest of my speech to him. It was, at any rate, fluent, and although the President tried to stop me I had a merry if short innings before I finished. Dennison was too much for me, he never lost his temper while I was so angry that I forget exactly what happened, but when I met the President in the quad on the following morning and apologized to him, he was kind enough to say that he hoped I should speak again during the next term, although as he would be reading hard he was afraid that he would not have the pleasure of hearing me. He was a curious man, and I could not help wondering whether he would have wished me to speak if he had not been too busy to listen, but I did not care to risk asking him that question.

The Lent Term at Oxford is rather a dull one for men who do not row, run, or play soccer. In my time golfers were thought dull whether they played golf or only talked about it. I did run in our college sports because Collier said I wouldn't, and Collier ran because I said he couldn't, the result was that we competed in a half-mile handicap in which he received the munificent start of eighty-five yards, while I had to worry through the whole distance with the exception of twenty yards. Collier bet me five shillings that he would defeat me in that race, and I thought I had found an easy way of making a little money, but a half-mile is a long distance for two men without much wind, and when I caught Collier up about two hundred yards from the finish we agreed to cancel our bet and walk to the pavilion. Collier could not speak without gasping for a quarter of an hour, and then he expressed the determination of retiring permanently from the running path.

CHAPTER XI

A CRICKET MATCH AT BURTINGTON

The summer term at Oxford would be even more pleasant than it is if it did not start in April and finish when the summer is just beginning. I do not wish to say anything about weather, but without taking an interest in the abnormal quantities of rain or wanting to know why the sun shines so seldom, I do think that if the success of a term depends largely upon an English May, it is apt to be very limited. I have been told so often by quite truthful men that there are other people besides undergraduates to be considered in Oxford, that I have never felt so convinced about anything, except that Queen Anne is dead; but all the same it seems to me that the undergraduate is not given a chance of being comfortably warm for any length of time. And if the authorities who fix the terms, or if they like it better, the academical year, would understand that an undergraduate is a far nicer man when he is comfortable, they might be inclined to cease from compelling him to play cricket when it is impossible to think of anything but the biting wind.

For my own part I am certain that I have never wanted to break rules or windows when the sun shines, but some men, when they become depressed by the weather, turn their thoughts to throwing things about, and there are so many windows in a quad that wherever you throw you seem to hit one of them. The only window I smashed was not entirely my fault, for Ward ducked his head just as a tennis-ball was going to hit it; the Subby, however, who was trying to instil logic into a lot of pass "mods" men, was annoyed by broken glass falling into his lecture-room. This was a bad beginning to the summer term, but had it not rained for nearly two days I should have been playing cricket that morning, and if Ward's head had happened to be in front of the Subby's lecture-room I should not have been there to throw at it. I tried to explain this to the Subby, but there is a certain kind of reasoning which does not make much impression on either dons or schoolmasters. I asked him if he thought any man who was booked to play cricket all day could sit down at once and work when he heard that his match was scratched, and he answered, "Undoubtedly." The Subby was a nice enough man in some ways, but in others he was simply hopeless. He was not so absolutely unapproachable as Mr. Edwardes, for although you had got to imagine for all you were worth you could think of him as an "undergrad," but when Murray and I tried to persuade ourselves that Mr. Edwardes had once been only twenty years old we wasted our time, and Murray told me that I was always trying to do impossible things.

Oxford, however, is a good place when you are only playing at summer, and it is really splendid if you are lucky enough to have a fine May and early June. I went back there full of enthusiasm, I meant to do a hundred things, but I am afraid my programme was a little too full; to carry it out successfully I required the co-operation of the Subby and Mr. Edwardes, and no

one but an enthusiast, or a fool, would have thought he was likely to get it. My experiences with Mr. Edwardes during my second term had been placidly uneventful, but they had been gained by very great effort on my part, and they did not seem to have been worth the effort, since my tutor was almost as great an iceberg at the end of the term as he had been at the beginning. He could not thaw, but I never found out that until I had spent many unsuccessful interviews with him. I thought after going through one term without offending him that I was what golfers, I believe, would call "one up," and I felt that it would be an easy matter to increase my score, but I made a great mistake. Mr. Edwardes did not realize in the least that cricket is a very important and tiring game. I told him frankly that I wanted to enjoy myself during my first summer term, and that if my work was neglected a little I hoped he would understand the reason. He failed to understand it, and instead of being pleased with my candour, he took up a sort of pouncing attitude. He was fairly on the look-out, and when a don gets into that state it is not likely he is going to watch for nothing.

In the freshers' match Foster and I were on opposite sides, which seemed to me a very poor kind of arrangement even before we began, and what I thought of it after the match was over is not worth saying. The weather on the first day of the game was never intended for cricket, and I have very rarely seen a nose glow quite so gorgeously as the umpire who no-balled me twice in my first over. I actually began the bowling, though I think the reason for this honour must have been that Cross of Magdalen, who was secretary to the 'Varsity XI. and captained our side, knew my name. Foster and Henderson began the batting, and my first ball which was supposed to be directed at Foster's wicket was a most abominable wide, the second and third he hit to the boundary, the fourth was a no-ball, and I really forget what happened after that, but I know that it was the sort of over which seemed as if it would never end. I had not been no-balled before, and this unexpected misfortune made my bowling quite comically bad. Cross kept me on for seven overs, because as I heard him say afterwards he thought the beginning was too bad to be true. Foster made 128 and Henderson 93, I got one wicket for 78 runs, but the man I got out was not supposed to be a batsman, and he confided to me as we went back to the pavilion that his highest score for his school during the last season had been 5. This information on the top of my inglorious performance was really rather trying; he might, I thought, have kept it to himself, but he had made 11 and was unduly elated. Their side made 358, and our two innings only totalled 301; I went in last, with the exception of Cross, and made such furiously ineffective efforts to hit some leg-breaks, that Rushden of New College, who was a most serious cricketer and captain of the 'Varsity XI., was compelled to laugh. But I did land one ball into the shrubbery, which was the only moment during the match when I felt that cricket in a cold wind was worth playing. After it was all over, however, I was delighted that Fred had started so well, and it did not surprise me at all when I saw that my name was not down to play for the Sixteen Freshmen against the 'Varsity XI.; in fact I should have been very surprised if Rushden had not made up his mind about me. Both Fred and Henderson did well in this second trial match and were chosen to play for the Varsity against the M.C.C., while I went back to college cricket and lived upon what reputation I had brought from Cliborough for quite three weeks. I could not get any wickets however much I tried until we played Pembroke, who were not exactly a strong batting side, and to make things easier for me they had their three best men away. After this match I got my college colours, but I am afraid that it is doubtful if I deserved them.

Jack Ward played for the College XI., but his best scores were made for the St. Cuthbert's Busters, who played villages round Oxford, and were not very depressed if they were beaten. Collier, Lambert and Dennison also played for the Busters, and a kind of truce had been patched up between Jack and Dennison, because Jack said that it was too much trouble to keep up a quarrel with any one whom he was always meeting, and Dennison was at that time so occupied with other schemes that he treated Jack as if he was his dearest friend.

Some senior men in the college were getting very dissatisfied with the state of it, for they said that it was all right to have an occasional rag if we had anything to rag about; but as we did not seem able to row, play footer or cricket, we had better keep quiet. They did nothing except talk, and Dennison played up to them with all his might; he had got his half-blue for racquets, and they, not knowing him as well as Jack, Collier and I did, thought that he was really keen on the college. But, as a matter of fact, he howled with laughter when our torpid went down six places, and said that if men were fools enough to row they deserved to be laughed at, whatever happened to them.

No one wants to belong to a college which can do nothing but howl at night, since the greatest slackers in the 'Varsity howl the loudest. Dennison worked hard for popularity among senior men, but he cared nothing for the college, and several of the freshers knew that if he got a set round him who intended to manage the place, St. Cuthbert's was doomed as far as athletics were concerned. He was made for some college which is in the habit of having only one blue every ten years or so, and may possibly treat him as if he is a very fine specimen when they have got him.

We could not help doing well in the schools, because we always had scholars who took Firsts with beautiful regularity; but no one thought very much about it, since it was a thing to which every one in the 'Varsity was accustomed.

Even Fred Foster told me that it was a pity St. Cuthbert's was going downhill so fast; but apart from being angry there was nothing for me to do, except wait. Our dons, taken in the mass, wanted us to work and be quiet; they did not care what happened to our eight or our eleven, and

when a man got his blue he was generally told that he must not allow it to interfere with his reading. Unless dons meet undergraduates half-way a college is bound, sooner or later, to suffer; but a little humanity can do wondrous things. During my first year the Warden was the only don who was kind to me, and though I liked him so much that I forgave him for not appreciating the difference between bumping and being bumped, I must confess that his kindness was of a peculiar kind. St. Cuthbert's, in the opinion of the 'Varsity, had begun to go down rapidly, and we got very little sympathy from anybody outside the college. The outlook was gloomy enough, for I was bound to have rows with Mr. Edwardes as long as I had anything to do with him, and if I could have been of any use in trying to improve things, I knew that unless some new dons came I should have to spend most of my time in looking after myself. I wished that Fred had come to St. Cuthbert's, for Murray was too quiet to do anything, Collier was too sleepy, and Jack Ward seemed to be as happy-go-lucky as I was.

It looked as if Dennison was bound to win in the long run, for he was a thousand times cleverer at getting what he wanted than any of us, and he had the great advantage of knowing what he did want. His aim, I knew, was to be the leader of a set who gambled and yelled and played games which he thought were fit for bloods to play. Slackness during the day and liveliness at night were briefly his programme, and though it is all very well to be lively at night, it seemed to some of us that if we were to sink to the bottom of the river and care nothing for the reputation of the college, we were in for a very bad time. By nature both Jack Ward and I were cheerful, and if it had not been for hating Dennison I don't think that I should have wanted to check my cheerfulness. As it was, I had a vague sort of feeling that what Dennison liked must be wrong.

I saw Dennison as seldom as I could, but Jack Ward came to me one morning when there was no college match, and when I had nothing to do which could not conveniently be put off, to ask me to play for the Busters. Somebody had scratched at the last moment, and even if I had not wanted to play I should have found a difficulty in resisting Jack.

We drove seven miles to a village called Burlington, and had great difficulty in finding the wicket when we arrived, but our driver had been there before, and insisted on us getting out by a field which looked as if it might produce a bountiful crop of hay. Lambert—who had talked a lot about being asked to play for his county—pretended to be very disgusted, and strode about as if he owned the whole place; we had to be very rude to him, so that we might prevent him from hurting the feelings of the Burlington men.

In the middle of the field a small space had been mown, and the pitch itself, apart from a few holes, was not at all bad, but Bagshaw, who was captaining the Busters, decided at once that he should keep wicket because he did not want to stand up to his knees in grass. The captain of the Burlington team was the local publican, a hearty man who told us in the same breath that he was very glad to see us, and that he had played cricket for thirty years, boy and man. His name was Plumb, and I liked him very much; he played in both braces and a belt, because he told us belts were ticklish things and braces sometimes burst. I answered that it was always well to be on the safe side, and we had quite a confidential talk, until Lambert and Dennison came up and interrupted us. Lambert began to complain about the long grass, and I was afraid Mr. Plumb might be offended, but I expect he had seen a good many people like Lambert, and he only smiled compassionately at him.

"You see it's like this," he said, "this damp, not to call it a wet spring, has made this yer grass grow, and what I say is that weather that is good for farmers up to June is bad for us cricketers. But, bless me, there's nothing to complain of here—I've played cricket in some funny places if you like, and many a dap on the side of the head I've had in my time."

"This man," Dennison remarked, pointing at me, "is a very fast bowler."

Mr. Plumb shut one eye and looked at me with interest. "Then," he said, "I think you had better bowl up the hill; I have seen them kick a bit at the other end, nothing to speak of, but Bill Higgs got his nose cut open come next Saturday three weeks; he's a fast bowler if you like, I've seen Spofforth and I've seen Mold, but for pace give me Bill Higgs."

"Is he playing to-day?" Lambert asked as unconcernedly as he could.

"Oh yes, he's playing, he's the terror of the neighbourhood. There he is, the tall man, he's our policeman when he's not playing cricket. My eye, his arms are like tree-trunks," and Mr. Plumb left us and walked over to talk to Bill Higgs, but I am not at all sure that he did not wink at me before he went.

"You didn't score much there," I said to Dennison.

"Cricket isn't good enough in these outlandish holes," he answered, and seized Collier to tell him about Bill Higgs. Lambert went off hastily to get a drink, and was not seen again until Bagshaw had won the toss and decided to go in.

We began our innings with Lambert and Collier, and Bagshaw could not have chosen a funnier pair. There was some difficulty in getting them ready, for Collier had left his pads behind, and we had a desperate job to find any which were large enough to fit him, while Lambert was so

engaged in persuading us that Higgs on a bumping wicket was nothing to a man who had been asked to play for his county that at one time he had lost both his bat and his gloves. Before they started Collier insisted on tossing to see who should have first ball, and when he won Lambert said it was of no consequence as he had always meant to have the first ball. The Burtington XI. waited patiently, and threw catches to each other with extraordinary violence, but although Mr. Plumb had announced that Higgs would begin the bowling, the terror of the neighbourhood had not allowed us to see how fast he bowled. There was an air of mystery about Higgs, which the nine of us who were not at the wickets found very entertaining, though Dennison, who was in next, looked anxious.

When our batsmen had got to the wickets it seemed as if the game would never begin, for Lambert took guard three times and looked round the ground so often to see where the fielders were placed that two or three of the Burtington men from sheer weariness began to turn somersaults. Higgs stood with the ball in his hand and talked to Collier, he knew that he was a great man and was quite unmoved by Lambert's little tricks. At last there was no excuse for waiting any longer, and the umpire, after Lambert had refused to have a trial ball, which I suppose he thought would have been an undignified thing for him to do, called "Play." The mystery was solved immediately, Higgs bowled very fast underhand, the kind of ball which is correctly termed a "sneak," but unfortunately for Lambert the first one was straight and his bat was still in the air when his middle stump was knocked to the ground. The Burtington XI. seemed to me to take this beginning as a matter-of-course, and started throwing catches to each other without even troubling to applaud Higgs. Lambert walked very slowly from the wickets, and when he got back to us he was smiling in his most magnificently contemptuous manner.

"I thought you asked me to play cricket," he said to Bagshaw. "I keep a special bat for that sort of bowling, and I did not want to smash this one."

He sat down on the grass, but we were all so suffocated by laughter that none of us could condole with him, and if any one had ventured to say "Bad luck," I am sure Lambert would have treated him with scorn.

Dennison had two balls which did not bowl him, but Higgs made no mistake with the next one, and the Burlington men played catch once more. In the end we managed to make 33, though hardly any of the runs were made off Higgs, and twelve of them came from two balls which were lost quite close to the wickets. Nine of the Burtington men made 18 runs, for Collier bowled very straight until he got hopelessly out of breath, and then Bagshaw, who laughed all the time Collier was bowling, would not take him off, though the wretched man was panting like a grampus. "This last fellow is sure to be a 'sitter,'" Bagshaw said, "here is Collier's chance to bowl right through an innings, I don't suppose he has ever done it before."

But Collier, who was searching after breath and not troubling about records, was indignant with Bagshaw, and when Lambert, who said that the sun was in his eyes, missed two catches off consecutive balls, Collier said something to him at the end of the over which disturbed the harmony of our XI. for several minutes. Unfortunately the last Burtington batsman was more of a wag than a "sitter," he was the funny man of the team, and was so delighted with his own wit that Bagshaw said it would be a shame not to let him enjoy himself.

"Every village team has its funny man," he said, "and we are jolly lucky to get him in last." I am sure Bagshaw was what is called a good sportsman, but he was too kind to be a good captain. I thought Sam Jenks was a harmless idiot when he came in with only one pad, and that on the wrong leg, but by the time he had fooled us out of eight or nine runs I was simply sick to death of him. Lambert stated in a loud voice that it was not cricket, and Collier, who was most completely disorganized both in body and temper, retorted that if it had been cricket Lambert would not have been playing; while Sam, who in some ways was not such an ass as he tried to make out, played the next ball slowly to Lambert at short leg, and ran down the pitch exhorting him to throw it at Collier's head as soon as he got hold of it. Possibly this advice, combined with a natural inability to stoop quickly, made Lambert even slower than usual in picking up the ball, but when he did pick it up he threw it violently at the wicket to which Sam was running. There was some doubt whether he threw at Sam or at the wickets, but he missed whatever he intended to hit and the ball went yards away into the long grass, where it remained until four runs had been made and Burtington had won the match.

Immediately afterwards Sam fell over his wickets in trying to make a stylish stroke with one leg poised in the air, and an excursion of Burtingtonians, headed by Mr. Plumb, sallied forth and carried him shoulder-high to the tent, where he was given much refreshment.

One or two men on our side tried to persuade Bagshaw that there was plenty of time left to make as many runs as we wanted and to get the Burtington men out again, but when Mr. Plumb was told what we were talking about he came out of the tent and joined us. He was inclined to be elated, and seizing Bagshaw by the arm said he should like to have a word with him. They walked away from the rest of us, and, as a friend of Mr. Plumb's, I went with them.

"Cricket is cricket, that's what I say, sir," Mr. Plumb began, and Bagshaw, whose manners were perfectly splendid, assented without a smile.

"But in this yer little village there are what the parson calls local considerations, which I as

captain of this team have got to consider."

Bagshaw inquired quite patiently what these considerations were.

"Well, it's like this, I keep The Reindeer, and the parson he's a teetotaller, not one of those stumping men who think because they drink nothing nobody else ought to, but what I should call broad-minded for a man who drinks nothing but water. Now what the parson says to me is this: 'You give these young gentlemen luncheon for which they pays half-a-crown ahead, and it's worth it, and my missis drives up in the pony-cart at five and gives everybody tea.' It's like a bargain, you understand."

Bagshaw understood most thoroughly and tried to stop the flow of Mr. Plumb's conversation, but that excellent captain talked on for another five minutes, until two of our men who knew Bagshaw better than I did, took upon themselves to walk to the wickets. Then Mr. Plumb began to collect his men, which seemed to be a difficult matter, and it was half-past four before we began again. At five o'clock tea was ready and the game was interrupted for so long that we gave up all thoughts of winning it, but I heard afterwards from the parson himself that as a general rule only the batting side had tea and the other XI. had to take their chance of getting some. I believe we should have won that match if Mr. Plumb had captained our side, but the Busters were generally beaten, which possibly accounted for the fact that most of the villages round Oxford said they were a splendid eleven. No team which contained Lambert could help being splendid, but as regards cricket we were the most futile side it is possible to imagine, and Bagshaw, who was a really good sort, was also exactly the right man to captain it.

In our second innings Lambert made nine runs, which was not a great score for a man who said he had been asked to play for his county, but was unfortunately enough to make him very pleased with himself, and when he got into that state of mind he was a dangerous man, for he always wanted to do something which was better left undone. On this occasion he persuaded Jack Ward that a little dinner at The Reindeer would be the most sporting way of finishing the evening, and I have never seen any one support a suggestion more heartily than Mr. Plumb did this one of Lambert's. He had a couple of beautiful ducklings waiting to be cooked, some lamb which would be wasted upon any one but real gentlemen, and some port which would make our hair curl. Collier listened to this and thought it too good to miss, so he backed up Lambert, and Ward, who did not seem enthusiastic over the hair-curling port, said he would stay if I would. There were good reasons why I should not stay and I mentioned them one by one, but although in the lump they ought to have been enough to stop me, when mentioned singly they did not seem to be very important. Ward, however, saw that I did not want to stay, and he was on the point of chucking up the whole thing when Dennison said to Mr. Plumb, "You see, some of us are frightened to death of the dons; it is a fairly rotten state to be in, because we daren't call our lives our own."

That remark was directed at me, and if I had been sensible I should have taken no notice of it, but unluckily I am one of those wretched people who hate to hear that I am frightened of anybody or anything, and for Dennison to tell Mr. Plumb such silly nonsense made me furious. Of course I said that I would stay, and I saw Dennison wink at Lambert; the brute was for ever scoring off me, he had a most unrighteous way of getting what he wanted.

For some reason or other Bagshaw was always very decent to me, and when he heard that Ward, Dennison, Collier, Lambert and I were going to finish the evening at The Reindeer he asked me to come home in the brake, but that gibe of Dennison's was heavy upon me and I had determined to stick to my promise and do whatever came my way. I did not expect that the evening was going to be anything but a rowdy one, for when Lambert did undertake a thing he went at it most zealously. First of all he got Ward to wire and ask Bunny Langham to drive over about ten o'clock and fetch us all back, and then he asked four or five of the most comical people in the Burtington team to come to The Reindeer after dinner and help at a smoking concert. All of the Burtington team came and a number of their friends, in fact I should think that nearly all the labourers in the village were entertained by us during the evening. Mr. Plumb began by being very pleased, and the evening ended in what local newspapers call "harmony," which is the most polite way of saying that any one sang who liked and that the discord was something terrible. I sang a solo, the first and last time I have ever done such a thing, but I was rapturously applauded by an audience who were more kind and thirsty than critical. My song was "Tom Bowling," at least Ward said it was more like "Tom Bowling" than anything else.

At half-past ten Bunny Langham had not come, and by some means or other it was necessary that we should reach Oxford before twelve o'clock. Dennison suggested that we should have a "go-as-you-please" contest back to St. Cuthbert's, but Collier was not disposed to enter for a race in which he was bound to be last, and told us that if we were fools enough to go seven miles in an hour and a half, he would trouble us to rout up some don when we got back to college and say that he had been taken seriously unwell in Burlington, but hoped to be better in the morning. A man, who called himself a veterinary surgeon, but was described by Mr. Plumb as a cow-doctor, said he would give Collier a certificate of ill-health; I do not remember from what disease he was supposed to be suffering. The idea, however, of rushing seven miles as hard as we could was crushed by Lambert, who was in a kind of "coach and four" mood and very abusive. He secured Mr. Plumb and having pushed him into a corner stated that he required a pair of horses and a wagonette, but Mr. Plumb was not in a condition to be addressed in terms of authority. His sense of importance had been increasing as the evening went on, and from being a most innocently

amusing man he had become an obstinate and bibulous publican. He would have nothing to say to Lambert and declared that getting to Oxford was our business and that we ought to have thought about it before. The best thing to do with such a man was to leave him to the remorse of the following morning, but Lambert had an insane desire to talk and, I must admit, a forcible way of talking. There seemed to be a reasonable chance of a row, for Mr. Plumb wasn't without supporters who were as tired of us as we were of them, but Jack Ward managed to get hold of the cow-doctor and persuaded him to find some vehicle to help us on our way. As soon as Mr. Plumb heard of this he declared that the cow-doctor was taking the bread out of his mouth, but Ward told him if that was the case he ought to have another drink, and after having it he became comatose and unobstructive.

Finally we started from The Reindeer at eleven o'clock in a light farm-cart, Ward and Dennison sitting on the seat with the driver, while Collier, Lambert and I sat on the floor of the conveyance. Lambert, when not singing Bacchanalian songs, complained of the indignity and discomfort of this performance, but I, having taken the precaution of propping myself against Collier, who was accustomed to being used as a cushion and very kind about it, was more sleepy than uncomfortable. Besides, men who begin to think of being dignified towards midnight are a nuisance, so I told Lambert he was a speechless idiot, which statement I found to be positively untrue.

We had reached the outskirts of Oxford, and even Lambert had passed from the state of song and abuse to that of sleep, when the cart was drawn up with such a jerk that my head collided with Collier's, and I heard Ward say—

"Why, Bunny, what the blazes are you doing here at this time of night?" and Bunny answered with no unnecessary length, "Walking."

"But why?" Ward said.

"Exercise. Any room for another pig in the bottom of that cart?"

"Jump up, quick," Ward answered, "it is a quarter to twelve, and jolly lucky there is a moon or I should have missed you."

Bunny said that he was not going to hurry for any one, and wasted two or three valuable minutes before we got him safely into the cart. He was in an exceedingly bad temper, and it was only by dint of innumerable questions that we found that he had actually started to drive to Burtington and that something disastrous had happened on the journey. The exact nature of that disaster none of us ever discovered, but what Bunny wished us to believe was that he went to sleep and was driven into by a furniture van, and since he had been kind enough to start to Burtington we should have been a complete set of bounders if we had not suppressed Dennison when he said that no one was likely to believe such a tale as that. Anybody with a grain of decency could see that Bunny had been having a very bad time, and though we all thanked him tremendously when we got out at St. Cuthbert's, and told the driver to take him on to Christchurch as fast as he could, he just sat in the bottom of the cart and said nothing.

"I am afraid Bunny's ill," Ward said to me as soon as we got into college, and we blamed ourselves for not seeing him to "The House," though had we done so we could not have got back to St. Cuthbert's until a quarter-past twelve.

On the following morning Ward went round to see Bunny and found him drinking beer with his breakfast, which was a thing he never dared to do unless he felt aggressively well. Ward lunched with me and said that Bunny was all right except that his feelings were in a state of disorder.

"There is only one thing he is conceited about and that is his driving," Ward explained, "and last night he was driving a cob which a baby in arms could steer. Well, Bunny got upset, and is so ashamed of himself that he is angry with everybody else. He will be all right by dinner-time if he is left alone."

CHAPTER XII

THE USE AND ABUSE OF AN ESSAY

The day following the Burtington match was a very peaceful one, but the evening brought with it a disturbance which was altogether unexpected. I was engaged at nine o'clock to read an essay to Mr. Edwardes, and I had been so energetic that I had written it two days before, which made me feel virtuous. The subject of the essay was "Impressions of Roman Society as gathered from Cicero's Letters," and I had taken more than ordinary trouble over it, for it was the sort of question which I could not answer without definite knowledge.

I went to Murray's rooms after dinner, and I remember telling him that I believed I had written something which would persuade my tutor that I had at least made an attempt to satisfy him. And Murray, who was always trying to keep me out of rows and giving me help when I was in them, read a little of it, and said that it was ever so much longer than the one he had written. As length meant work, I was very satisfied with this remark of his, and I went off to Mr. Edwardes with a feeling that he might be mildly pleased.

He greeted me coldly and sat down by the side of the table, with his back almost turned to me; we did not even exchange our opinions about the weather, and he was evidently as anxious for me to begin as I was to finish. My opening sentence was stamped by my own style. If I say that no one else would have written it, I only wish to record that no one else would have thought it worth while; I will not quote it, because when I tried to read this essay a year after I had written it, I was struck by the fact that it was altogether too florid for every-day use. Mr. Edwardes objected strongly to phrases which seemed to me beautifully rounded, and I gave them up slowly as one of my most cherished possessions. I could not share his feelings about them at that time, whatever I may think of them now, and they formed a part of a scheme to make my essays less dull, and what I was fain to think even a little amusing. But apart from my opening sentence I had in this essay deprived myself of the pleasure of ornate phrasing and been as solid as possible. I had, however, taken great pains over my first words. I wished them to convey to Mr. Edwardes that I could still annoy him if I liked, and afterwards I intended to show him that though this power remained to me I was too kind to use it. These were not perhaps the reasons why I was compelled to write essays, and I doubt whether he would ever have discovered my scheme even if I had read him what I had written. And I never did read it, for after I had finished the first sentence and deprived it of much of its effect by getting the stops mixed up, which made me want to read it over again, he turned round in his chair so quickly that he bumped his arm against the table, and if he had not been a don I should have asked him if he had hurt himself. But as my efforts to please dons by inquiring after their health had not been successful, I went on reading until Mr. Edwardes stood up, and feeling then that something had gone hopelessly wrong, I stopped to look at him.

I could see that he was exceedingly angry, but why in the world he had become so suddenly afflicted I had not an idea.

"I do not require to hear any more of that. You may go," he said, and he actually pointed to the door. "But—" I began—

"You may go," he repeated, and since he looked as if he would continue pointing towards the door until I obeyed him, I collected the pages on which I had spent so much labour and walked slowly out of the room. I was too surprised to say anything more, and I did not even feel like banging the door. The only thought which occurred to me was that there must have been something very improper in that cherished sentence, but if my tutor imagined that I took any pleasure in indecencies, or would write them consciously, I felt that he was a very silly man. I stopped on the stairs and began reading my essay again; there was simply nothing in the beginning of it which could offend the most inquisitive and conscientious Mrs. Grundy. It might have bored any one, but the person who could have blushed at it had not yet been born.

I was most completely puzzled, and when I went back to my rooms and laid my rejected essay upon the table, I felt as if the only literature I wished to see again was the Communion Service. It had often been my fate to displease masters and dons, but it was a new experience for me to be turned out of a room without knowing in the least why I was expected to go. I came to the unsatisfying conclusion that Edwardes had gone mad, and I determined to see Murray so that I might tell him what had happened; but before I had finished writing a note which had to be written, both Murray and Foster came into my rooms.

"Foster has got something to tell you," Murray said.

"Not half as much as I have got to tell you," I answered.

"I will bet you a shilling you think it more important, and you can decide yourself," Murray replied.

I crammed my note into an envelope and looked at Fred, who was gazing, rather stupidly I thought, at a photo of Nina which she had sent me a few days before.

"How many did you make against Surrey this afternoon?" I asked him.

Murray began to laugh, which suggested to me that I was asking an awkward question. "Was it another blob?" I inquired.

"I made a hundred and two," Foster said, and looked quickly at me and then again at that wretched photo. I expect he was very anxious not to seem too pleased with himself, but there was no reason why I should not be as pleased as I liked, and for a minute I forgot all about Mr. Edwardes. I told Fred that he was simply a certainty for his blue, and Murray again seemed to be amused.

"I have got it," Fred said quietly, and he stepped away from me, fearing that my delight might be painful to him.

There is an extraordinarily small choice of things to do when you are very delighted; just talking seemed to be hopelessly futile, and even shouting was not satisfactory. But I had to do something, so I opened a bottle of port, which I knew both Fred and Murray disliked, and made them drink some of it. After Murray had tasted his and congratulated Fred again, he put his glass down by the large bowl which I had bought on my first expedition to the shops of Oxford, and presently fears of dyspepsia gripped him so furiously that he emptied the wine into the bowl, when he thought I was not looking. It was '63 port given me by my father, and if he had seen Murray getting rid of it in this way I am sure that there would have been trouble; but I, not being oppressed by a knowledge of vintages, just filled Murray's glass up again and kept an eye on him to see what he would do with it. I might, however, have spared myself the trouble, for he had no intention of pretending to drink two glasses, though he told me afterwards that some curious impulse had compelled him to get rid of one, and he had decided that it would be safer in the bowl than elsewhere. In fact, he wished me to believe that he had done this as a compliment to Foster, but I could not follow his line of reasoning.

I sat and talked for a long time about the rottenness of the Cambridge bowling—which, by the way, I had never seen—and the runs Fred was sure to make in the 'Varsity match, until he tried very hard to stop me saying anything more about cricket, and Murray set me going on another subject when he remarked that it had not taken me long to read my essay.

"Edwardes has gone completely cracked," I stated. Fred had often heard me express a similar opinion about masters at Cliborough, and was not inclined to think seriously of Edwardes' condition, but Murray had curiosity enough to ask me what had happened. "You saw the beginning of my essay," I said to him, "and there was nothing in it which could offend a baby in arms, was there?"

Murray said that as far as he knew I had been most modest, and he added, quite unnecessarily, that the only criticism he had to make upon it was that I had been asked to give Cicero's impression of Roman society, and had preferred my own. I was not going to set myself up against Cicero even to please Murray, so I took no notice of his remark, and went on with my grievance very slowly, for a grievance does not get proper treatment if you spring it upon people; they just say "What a confounded swindle," and go on talking about their own affairs. I had been badly treated, and I intended to make the most of it, so I did not mind being a bore if I could extract a little surprise and sympathy from Fred and Murray.

"I took a lot of trouble over this essay, I changed my style——"

"The first sentence was fairly magnificent; it reminded me of Lambert walking across the quad," Murray interrupted me by saying.

"I wrote that sentence on purpose so that Edwardes might enjoy the contrast afterwards."

"There aren't many men who would have thought of that," Fred said, and, as he was trying to rot me, I agreed with him quite seriously, and added that I thought it was very kind of me to think so much about Edwardes.

"But didn't he like the contrast?" Murray asked, and I thought the way he looked at Fred, as if something was amusing him, was fairly hard upon me.

"He would have liked it," I said emphatically, "if I had ever given him a chance. I mean if he had ever given me one."

"What do you mean?" Fred asked, and I could see that it was time for me to come to the point of my tale.

"After I had read a sentence and a half, Edwardes hopped out of his chair, glared at me and said he wanted to hear no more. He then kicked me out of the room, and what I want to know is the reason why he did it; and if you two fellows can tell me that instead of grinning like two Chinese idols, you will be of some use." The recital of my ill-treatment had made me annoyed with both Fred and Murray.

Neither of them said anything for a moment, but both of them were, I regret to say, amused. They missed the serious injustice of my story altogether, and though there was some excuse for Fred, who must have found it difficult to think of anything except his blue, there was no reason why Murray should not do or say something to show how sorry he was for me.

"He couldn't have turned you out of the room for that," was all he said.

"I tell you he did, and he was angry, very angry. The man has gone utterly and hopelessly cracked; it is just my luck to get a lunatic for a tutor," I replied, forgetting for the instant that Murray also had a share in Edwardes.

"He was sane enough yesterday," Murray said.

"Perhaps he is one of those fellows who is affected by the sun," Foster put in.

"There has been precious little sun to-day," Murray, who was in a most aggravating mood,

declared.

"I never said anything to him, but just began to read my essay, and then he jumped on me. I shall complain to the Warden and see what he has to say about it. I like the Warden," I added, by way of showing Murray that I could appreciate a reasonable don when I found one.

Fred said that the whole thing was extraordinarily queer, and that there must be some explanation of it; but Murray, after being quiet for a minute, began to fidget like a man who has been puzzling over an acrostic, and is beginning to discover what it is all about. My people used to do acrostics, and, when they were completely defeated, I did not mind being in the same room with them; but, as soon as they got some clue, my father fairly ramped around seeking books which he could not find, or asking me for information which I could not give him. He had the acrostic mania quite badly.

"I can tell you why Edwardes kicked you out; at least I believe I can," he said at last.

"Well, let us have it quick," I answered.

"In the common-room the night before last you said that you were going to town to-day and that you wouldn't be able to read your essay to Edwardes."

"I was going up to see a dentist, and he wrote that he couldn't see me," I replied.

"And Dennison heard you say that you were going?"

"The silly fool tried to make out that I was manufacturing the dentist story. He simply makes me sick, but I don't see what he can have to do with this."

"Did you see either Dennison or Learoyd in hall to-night?"

"They weren't there, because I heard Webb asking Collier whether he had seen them."

"I've never heard of Learoyd," Foster said, and considering that he had just got his blue I am afraid he must have spent a very dull time, for he was accustomed to see me in trouble, and might reasonably have been annoyed to find that even on this special evening I was in my usual state. However, he did not seem to mind very much.

"Learoyd is Dennison's latest discovery," I said; "but he has been found by the wrong man."

"He is an exhibitioner and Edwardes is his tutor," Murray added; "and this afternoon about six o'clock I met Dennison coming out of here and Learoyd was waiting at the bottom of the staircase."

"What on earth was Dennison doing in here?" I asked.

"You aren't much good at guessing," Murray answered; "but I should say that having heard that you were not going to read your essay to Edwardes, and Learoyd not having done one to read, Dennison told him he would borrow yours. I heard you tell Ward that it was just like your luck to have written an essay when you wouldn't be able to read it, and Dennison must have heard you say the same thing."

"Do you mean that Learoyd had been reading out my stuff two or three hours before I went to Edwardes?" I asked, for port always makes my head feel stuffy however little I drink, and I wanted everything put quite clearly before me.

"I should say so," Murray replied.

My next remarks do not matter, but as soon as I had passed the explosive state I said, "That all comes from altering my style, and if I hadn't Edwardes must have known that it was my essay."

"Confound your style," Foster replied, "it seems to me that this is likely to land you in a very fair row unless we do something at once. What sort of man is Learoyd?"

"I hardly knew him until this term, and when I didn't know him I rather liked him, but he has been about a lot with Dennison, and seems to be going to the bad as hard as he can be pushed," I answered.

"That's true enough," Murray said; "Learoyd was one of the nicest men up here until this term, and then Dennison took a fancy to him and the idiot has chucked up working and spends his time trying to be a blood. I know his people, and have tried all I know to persuade him that he will never make a successful blood—he isn't made for one—but I have done no good. Marten isn't in it with Learoyd for rows with Edwardes, and the worst of it is that if his exhibition was taken away it would be serious. His people are most frightfully hard up."

"That makes the whole thing a thousand times more complicated," I replied, "I can't give a man away who is in a hole already. I had better sit still and see what happens."

"I should think you had better go and see Learoyd," Foster said, "he can't be in a bigger hole than you are." He got up to go, and I said that I should wire to my people in the morning and tell them he had got his blue, but he told me that they knew already, and asked me if I had heard that Nina was coming up during the next week to see the last nights of the eights.

"I had a letter from her last night," he continued, "and she said that Mrs. Marten was going to write to you."

"Who is coming up with her?" I asked, and I felt that if I never wrote to Nina, there was no reason why she should not write to me.

"She is going to stay at the Rudolf with the Faulkners. They are coming next Monday morning," and having told me this, which he knew I should not like, he was kind enough to go away before I told him again what I thought of Mrs. Faulkner. For when Fred had been staying with me at home the Faulkners were a fertile source of dispute between us. The Faulkners had plenty of money, nothing to do, and no children; they entertained a great deal, and had a mania for taking people up, as it is called. I am almost certain that Mrs Faulkner tried to take me up once, but unfortunately I was expected to run in double harness with a fellow who wore a yellow tie and was no use at anything except talking. I put up with him for nearly the whole of an afternoon, until he told me that an ordinary dahlia, over which he was gushing, reminded him of the sun rising over the Hellespont, and that was altogether too much for me. I left him and offended Mrs. Faulkner by telling her what I thought of him, and she told my mother that it was such a pity that I was so *gauche*. It took me a long time to forgive her for saying that, and I wished Nina was coming to Oxford with some one who did not bother my mother with her opinions.

I sat and pondered over this visit for some time, while Murray kept on telling me that Learoyd would be in bed if I did not hurry over to see him. But what good I could get out of seeing him I could not understand, and Murray became quite abusive before I started.

I knew Learoyd only in the most casual way, and I had never been in his rooms in my life, so I should not have been disappointed if he had been out. I found him, however, sitting by himself, and my first impression was that he was either very sleepy or very sad, but whatever was the matter with him he could hardly have wanted to see me. He was good enough, however, to say he was glad that I had come.

The conversation flagged for two or three minutes until he roused himself suddenly. "I have got the most vile attack of the blues to-night," he said, "and somehow or other I can't shake them off." He seized a decanter of whisky and began pouring some of it into a glass, and then I did one of those things which I do impulsively and which are occasionally right. I put my hand on his arm and said, "That stuff will only put them off until to-morrow morning." He looked at me for a moment and sat down again. "Why does every one preach to me?" he asked. "I shouldn't have thought you were that sort, though you are a friend of Dick Murray's." He was not angry, but just hopelessly tired of everything, and he looked so wretched that I felt really sorry for him.

"I don't preach," I answered, "though if I could remember half the things which have been fired off at me they would make a mighty fine sermon. When people take any notice of me they think that I want looking after and they begin to do it, the others leave me alone and say that I shall come to a bad end."

He was evidently feeling so miserable about everything that I thought he might like to hear these dismal prophecies about my future. I even thought they might cheer him up, and make him see that we were in the same boat. But I made a mistake, for he was annoyed at the idea that my future could possibly be as great a failure as his.

"You wouldn't say these things if you really thought you were in a hopeless muddle. I have gone through it all this term, and I know. I have tried to laugh, and I have drunk until I didn't care what happened, but it is all no use. I have made a mess of everything, and there is no one to blame except myself. And then this utterly idiotic row comes on the top of everything."

He sat looking in front of him, and did not seem to remember that I was in the room, and the thought passed through my mind that I should be glad to wring Dennison's neck. I asked him twice what row he was talking about before he spoke.

"Hasn't Dennison told you?" he asked. "I left him about an hour ago, and he said he would go and see you. I thought that was what you had come here for, though of course nothing can be done."

"I haven't seen Dennison," I said, and added, "I never do if I can help it," for Learoyd's statement that nothing could be done had given me no satisfaction.

"You said that you had done an essay for Edwardes which you weren't going to read. I hadn't done mine, so Dennison said you wouldn't mind me using yours. He got it, and I went to Edwardes at six o'clock to read it, but as soon as I started he began to jump about as if something was stinging him, and after I had read about half a page he kicked me out of the room."

"The man is mad after all," I said.

"No, he isn't, I wish he was," Learoyd continued. "This is what happened: Collier stayed in his rooms this afternoon to do his essay, but went to sleep, and never woke up until it was too late to do it, and then he remembered that you had one which wanted using so he read it to Edwardes at five o'clock. I wish to goodness he hadn't put it back in your rooms."

This was too much for me, and although Learoyd looked as miserable as ever, I had to laugh.

"You wouldn't be so amused if you were in for the row I am," he said, "they will probably take away my exhibition."

"I am in for exactly the same row," I answered. "I tried to read that essay to Edwardes after dinner, and he looked as if he was going to have a fit. I was out of the room in no time."

Then Learoyd and I just sat for two or three minutes and laughed until he felt ever so much better.

"What are we to do next?" he asked. "After all, it was your essay."

"It was no wonder Edwardes jumped about," I said, "I thought he was mad."

"So did I, until I saw Collier. But what are we to do?"

"You say you are in a fairly tight hole," I replied.

"Yes," he said, "I have been in for row after row all this term."

"Then I won't claim this wretched essay, and it can't matter to Collier, because he hasn't got anything which the dons can take away."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Why, Collier has got to tell Edwardes he borrowed the thing, and I shall sit tight, so they will naturally think it is yours."

"I can't stand that," he replied.

"Why not?" I asked. "They won't do anything desperate to me, and of course Collier won't mind at all."

I talked until I thought that Learoyd saw how much better my arrangement was than anything he could suggest, and although he would not promise to do what I proposed, I thought that I had arranged everything when I left him. But Learoyd was not the sort of man who would get out of a row by sacrificing any one else, and on the following morning both he and Collier went to Edwardes and told him exactly what had happened. It was very nice of them to do it, but it deprived me of the comfortable feeling of having done Learoyd a really good turn, and brought me to the ground again rather too abruptly to please me. So having been kicked out of the room for nothing, I went at once to Edwardes and tried to convey to him, as one man would to another, that I would forget his treatment of me if he would let off Collier and Learoyd, but especially Learoyd, as lightly as possible. That mission of mine, however, was a mistake. Mr. Edwardes said he was not in a position to bargain with any undergraduate, and that he had no doubt that should the dons require my assistance in managing the college they would ask me to help them. After I had left him I should think he must have regretted saying such sarcastic things, for Learoyd only got a final warning that his exhibition would be taken away at the end of the term unless he worked properly, and nothing whatever happened to Collier. But I am afraid Edwardes never gave me the credit for my essay which I felt that I deserved.

CHAPTER XIII

NINA COMES TO OXFORD

There can be few men in Oxford who do not enjoy themselves during Eights' Week, and I imagine that the only miserable people to be found are those who happen to be in an eight which is bumped several times during the week. If any one is so misguided that he wants to make a study of depression I should advise him to take a seat on the barge of a college which has a very bad eight, and if he waits until the boat comes back to the barge he will see some of the most unsmiling faces in the world.

Rowing is a most serious form of sport, and no one can wonder that a crew which has been bumped is unable to look very cheerful. It seems to me that a rowing man deserves a lot of credit even if he rows very badly; indeed I am not sure that the man who rows the worst does not deserve the most credit, for he has gone through the same drudgery as the rest of the crew, and

has probably been sworn at a thousand times more often. I should be very surprised if a rowing man at the end of so much forcible criticism and strenuous labour could smile when his boat is bumped. I know that if I had ever been in a boat which had been bumped, and the only reason why I have not been is because I have never rowed in a bumping race, I should want to hit somebody over the head with my oar or denounce the cox. Coxes, indeed, have told me that although they have never seen my first wish put into practice, my second is such an ordinary occurrence that the cox who has not suffered from it must be either deaf or a genius. And if a reasonable man cannot help being sorry for an eight which has toiled many weeks only to be bumped, I think he ought to be far more sorry for the cox, whose cool appearance when the rest of his crew are hot and angry, is in itself an aggravation.

I must say, however, that the only cox I ever knew well could not have failed to deserve all he ever heard, he was one of those pretentious little people who can only be described by the word "perky," and his side was simply terrific. But all the same, if a very small man goes up to Oxford and guesses that it will be his fate to steer slow eights during the time he is there, I should advise him to start a society for the protection of coxes, and elect himself the first president. He will not do the slightest good, but he will get some fun from being president, and he will also be able to choose colours for the society and wear a gorgeous tie, if there is any combination of colours which has not already been annexed, and there can't be many left to choose from.

It is the easiest thing in the world to start clubs if all you want to get out of them is a remarkable tie and hatband, and I knew a man—by sight—who started three clubs in two years. The first he called "The Roysterers," and they were supposed to dine twice a term in waistcoats decorated with R.D.C. buttons; the second he named "The Oddfish," a club which was intended to be eccentric, and from the extraordinary colours they adopted I should think they were aptly named. Their chief function was drinking, and although I never went to any of their carousals I believe they discharged it thoroughly. The third club which this energetic man founded was not given up to eating and drinking, but devoted itself to the discussion of moral and artistic subjects. They called themselves "The Bumble-Bees," though I never could understand the reason why they chose such a name, unless it was, as Murray suggested, that after they had touched a thing there was no sweetness left in it. I should not like to say how many more clubs this man would have started had he been given the opportunity, but he was sent down at the end of his second year, and I have met him since in Florence wearing a Bumble-Bee tie and Oddfish ribbon round his straw-hat. I regret to say that he belonged to St. Cuthbert's, and he was really a nuisance, because there was so strong a feeling against these miscellaneous colours during my first summer term that nearly all the men who could do anything respectably wore black bands on their straw-hats, and the effect was most dismal.

Dennison heard that my sister was coming up for Eights' week, and he told me calmly that he should like to meet her. I may have imagined that he considered this an act of condescension on his part, for I cannot pretend that I was always fair to him. I distrusted him so thoroughly that I never believed a word he said, and the only possible way for peace between us was for each of us to leave the other alone. But this way did not suit him, for I suppose that I knew too many men to be left out entirely from his consideration, and it seems to me that it is more annoying for a man to be friendly when you want to have nothing to do with him, than it is for anybody to take no notice of you when you would be glad to be his friend. I did not, however, mean to let Nina meet Dennison, for I never knew whom she might like or dislike, and it would have been a most horrible complication if she had fallen a victim to Dennison's smile. So I told him that Nina would not be in Oxford for more than two or three days, and that I did not know her plans, which was true enough as far as it went, and must have been enough for him to understand what I meant.

Although I was useless in a boat, I was always most vigorously excited during Eights' week. Three years before I went to Oxford St. Cuthbert's had been head of the river, but we had by slow degrees dwindled down to fifth, and in spite of one or two men who assured me that we had a much better eight than we were thought to have, I knew that we were more likely to go down than up. Still I am sorry for the man who does not feel his nerves tingle at the prospect of a race, and you tingle all the more if you do not expect to be beaten, so I tried to forget the general opinion about our eight and to imagine that the boat in front of us was going to have an anxious time.

Brasenose was head of the river, and after them came New College, Magdalen, and Christ Church; we were fifth, and I took no interest in the boat behind us, though I did know that it was Trinity. So keen was I that I resolved to run with our boat if I could get any one to run with me, and I asked quite half-a-dozen men before I found somebody who was not looking after his own or somebody else's sisters. The man who said he would run with me was Jack Ward, and he surprised me very much when he told me that he would far rather see some of the racing than sit on a barge with a crowd of ladies, and he even consented to run all the first three nights and then help me to look after Nina when she came up. He knew, I expect, that I was not likely to run very far, and that there was no danger of his being left somewhere near Iffley to walk up by himself.

I have a feeling that if I had to sit in a boat and hear the seconds counted out before the starting-gun is fired that my first stroke would be a most terrific crab. Even standing on the bank is nervous enough work, and what it must be like for those who have got to row I cannot imagine. I kept moving about so much before the start that Ward told me I should be tired before I began to run, but I am unable to keep still when things are going to happen, and just before the last gun went I had an inspiration and moved up to the place from which Christ Church started. By this

means I kept up for quite a long way, but it would be untrue to say I enjoyed myself. We began to gain on Christ Church at once, and were very soon within half-a-length of them, but I had no breath to use for shouting, and not having a rattle I could make no row at all; moreover I am an erratic runner, so whenever I looked at the boats I kicked or ran into somebody, and I could not retort when they said things to me. I pounded along as far as the Long Bridges, which was really quite a long way, and when I stopped I was sure that we should catch Christ Church. I stood away from the path and tried to persuade myself that I was not feeling very unwell, but I waited until the crowds with the other boats had passed by, and then I walked as fast as I could up the towing-path. I even ran once, for a short way, because I wanted to get back before all the excitement had stopped on our barge. I felt certain that we were going head of the river, and that comfortable sensation seemed to improve my wind, but it took me some time to get up the towing-path. The first disconcerting thing I saw were a lot of people cheering frantically on what I thought was the Trinity barge, but I did not know all the barges properly, and I came to the conclusion that whoever had told me that this one belonged to Trinity could not have spoken the truth. So I forced my way up the path until I got opposite to our barge, and there I found Jack Ward looking very purple in the face.

"Did we catch them?" I asked, and I thought that all our men who were waiting to be punted across to the barge might have made a little more noise.

"Catch what?" he said.

"Why, the House of course," I answered, for it was not very likely we should catch any one else.

"Trinity caught us," he replied, and as the punt came over at that moment he gave a huge shove and managed to get into it. I looked across the river and saw a very silent crowd on our barge, so I decided it was no place for me and walked solidly to the end of the towing-path and went home over Folly Bridge. It was a long way round, and I cannot imagine any one going back to St. Cuthbert's by such a route if he felt happy. When I saw Jack Ward at dinner I said that I should not run any more, and he replied that I was a fairly poor sort of sportsman; so I did run on both Friday and Saturday, and on Saturday night St. Cuthbert's was eighth on the river instead of fifth, and as we could find no other excuse we said that our crew was stale, but I am afraid the truth was that they were fairly fast for about half the course and then went to pieces.

I had not told Nina that our eight was a bad one, and what she would say I did not care to think, for she never paid any attention to excuses, and was rather inclined to consider that I was insulting her personally when I was connected with anything which was not successful. At any rate I was thankful that we were still a long way above Oriel, for I knew that Nina would never understand that Oriel had given themselves up, more or less, to cricket and soccer, and were not very afflicted by the fact that their boat was nearly bottom of the river.

I was sure that when Fred explained things to her she would say, "But why don't you row as well, I should hate to have my college at the bottom?" and this was almost exactly what happened. Fred made an effort to get out of it by saying that Oriel was only a small college and could not be expected to be good at everything, but Nina evidently thought that it was large enough to have eight men who could row, and she was not inclined to be pleased with either Fred or me when we went to the Rudolf and lunched with Mrs. Faulkner on the Monday. It was characteristic of Mr. Faulkner that he had not been able to come to Oxford, and his chief function in life, as far as I ever discovered it, was to get out of accompanying his wife on her countless expeditions.

"It seems stupid coming up here to see St. Cuthbert's bumped and Oriel nearly last on the river. I understood from Godfrey that St. Cuthbert's had a great reputation for rowing," Nina said.

I avoided Fred's eye, for I thought that he might be amused, and to turn the conversation away from a dangerous subject, I took upon myself to make what seemed to me a wise remark.

"There are other things to see in Oxford besides the bumping races," I answered.

Nina sniffed very audibly, but Mrs. Faulkner hastened to the rescue.

"I think Godfrey is quite right," she said; "it is disappointing to find that the colleges in which we are especially interested are so unlucky, but Nina hasn't seen Oxford before, and I am sure she will be delighted with it;" and Nina, who really could be quite nice when she liked, forgave Fred and me for the iniquities of our eights, and answered that she was longing to go out.

Of course Mrs. Faulkner fell to my lot, and while we walked down the Broad it pleased her to talk about Nina and to make me say that she was very pretty. I did think that Nina was not bad-looking, but she was my sister and I should as soon have thought of saying that she was wonderfully pretty, as I should of declaring that there was a striking resemblance between the Apollo Belvedere and myself, and my imagination has never carried me as far as that. As I was not saying much about Nina Mrs. Faulkner tried to make me talk about myself, but I interrupted her.

"This is St. Cuthbert's," I said; "shall we go in?"

She looked at me and smiled. "You are really rather extraordinary, Godfrey; if any one tries to flatter you, you shut up like a hedgehog. I am sure you have improved immensely and I am beginning to like you very much," she declared.

I simply detested her at that moment, for when people make remarks like that I feel as if some one was pouring cold water down my spine, and as I meant to show Nina round St. Cuthbert's I managed to change companions in the lodge, and left Fred to listen to the improvements in himself, which Mrs. Faulkner, with her great gift for romance, was sure to say that she had discovered.

As soon as I got Nina into the big St. Cuthbert's quad she forgot that she had started by almost quarrelling with me. I was born, unfortunately, without a keen eye for beautiful things, and even when I see something which I like to look at again and again, some scene which gives you a peaceful feeling or a picture which helps you to forget that there is anything ugly in the world, I cannot express myself. When I like anybody I want to tell them so, but once when I saw a splendid sunset in Bavaria and said, "How simply ripping," my father told me not to make a fool of myself, and somehow or other I felt that he was right. So I was very glad that I had to show Nina the beauties of St. Cuthbert's while it was her duty to admire them. She had never been inside an Oxford quadrangle before, and though I think any one with two eyes and a grain of common-sense would say that Oxford is beautiful, I must admit that Nina saw St. Cuthbert's for the first time under the most favourable circumstances possible. She looked at the old walls and the flower-boxes which were outside nearly all the windows, and did not talk any nonsense about them; even the creepers seemed to be greener than usual in the sunlight of the afternoon. In the chapel somebody was playing the organ, which may have been a meretricious effect, but it pleased Nina, and that was all I cared about. The whole college was most wonderfully peaceful, no one could imagine that the quadrangle had ever been made hideous by Bacchanalian yells. And I felt proud of it, which was quite a new sensation to me, and I suppose it was Nina's delight that made me see things differently. I took her to my rooms, which seemed to be small and gloomy enough after the hall and the quadrangle, but she said that they were far more comfortable than she had expected them to be, and she sat down in the most comfortable of my easy-chairs and looked as if she intended to stop for ever. I suggested to her that we should go down to the river and see Oriel struggling in the second division, but she decided that one dose of racing would be enough for her, and said that Fred could take Mrs. Faulkner to the river if she wanted to go. She had not been so fond of my society for a long time, and for quite ten minutes, with the aid of cherries, we got on splendidly together. Then the conversation languished and I began to show her things which she did not want to see; it is so very hard to please anybody who does not pretend to like things which they do not like. Nina began to hum at last, and if there is one noise which I detest it is humming. To make matters worse her tune was one I especially disliked, but as I was her host I made a gallant attempt not to listen to it. So I whistled, and I expect we had nearly reached a crisis when Mrs. Faulkner and Fred appeared. I was very fond indeed of Nina, and I am sure that she would have been indignant if any one had told her that she was not fond of me, but when we had not seen each other for some time and were left alone together we often irritated each other. It was a terrible nuisance, but it is no use denying that I was glad to see Mrs. Faulkner again, and if any one had told me that such a thing was possible when I left her at the lodge I should have denounced him with many words. I could see that Fred had not been enjoying himself, and while Mrs. Faulkner and Nina were discussing loudly what they should do next, he told me that he had been asked a perfect fusillade of questions none of which he could answer. "How old is that fig-tree in your garden?" he asked thoughtlessly, and Mrs. Faulkner's attention was turned upon me.

"What fig-tree?" I asked.

Fred tittered audibly, and Mrs. Faulkner seemed to forget that only a short time before she had discovered an immense improvement in me.

"Do you mean to say that you live close to that beautiful fig-tree and don't even know of its existence?" she demanded.

"Oh yes, I know about it," I answered; "it has stuff put round to keep it warm in the winter, but I have never asked how old it is. You see the dons more or less monopolize our gardens, so you can't expect us to know much about them."

"Notices are put up to say that certain parts of them are reserved for the dons of the college, aren't they?" Foster said, and he laughed again, but I said nothing. "I shall tell Nina the tale if you don't," he added.

"I should like to hear something amusing," Nina said, as if there was not the slightest chance of her wish being gratified.

"It's not very funny," I began, for I had a feeling that Mrs. Faulkner would not like this tale.

"Well, anything's better than nothing," Nina declared wisely, and so, to pacify her, I continued.

"These notices annoyed some men, so they dug a hole and bought a large sort of milk-pail arrangement to fit into it and a box of sardines. Then we filled the pail with water and put in the

sardines, and Jack Ward put up a little notice, 'This fishing is reserved for the dons of the college. Licences may be obtained at the lodge.' The dons should not be so greedy about the garden," I added, because Mrs. Faulkner looked very disgusted.

"Did you really make a large hole in that beautiful turf?" she asked at once. "You began in the third person, but I expect you and this Mr. Ward did it; you ought to have been rusticated, or whatever the word is."

"We were never found out, and the dons didn't mind; they thought it not a bad joke of its kind," I answered.

"Then their sense of humour must have become perverted," she replied. "I think Mr. Ward must have a very bad influence over you."

Nina laughed and said she insisted upon meeting Jack.

"I sincerely hope you won't do anything of the kind," Mrs. Faulkner stated. "The dons must know what is best for the undergraduates, and such tricks are very unbecoming; I am sure my husband always admitted this when he was at Cambridge."

It was hardly fair to pull in Mr. Faulkner, so I said that I would get some tea, which put an end to the discussion, for I did not think it wise to say that I had asked Jack to meet Nina at luncheon on the following day. By the time we had finished tea Fred was tired of Mrs. Faulkner, and he slipped off with Nina in a way which was really too clever to be very nice. Mrs. Faulkner, however, was quite amiable, and she smiled on me steadily from the beginning of the Broad Walk to the end of it, which as a feat of endurance I feel it my duty to mention.

When we got down to the river the band was playing on the 'Varsity barge, and Mrs. Faulkner really began to enjoy herself. The flags flying from all the barges pleased her, and the smartness of the ladies made her compare the scene to church parade on a June morning in Hyde Park. I knew nothing about church parades and very little about Hyde Park, but I said that I thought this must beat anything in London. Then I got a chair for her and looked round to find Nina and Fred, but as I could not see them anywhere, I said that I must go and hunt for them. Mrs. Faulkner, however, had no intention of letting me go, and I had to be a kind of Baedeker for over half-an-hour. I was not a very good Baedeker, I confess, but I had found out that one way to make things uncomfortable with this lady was not to answer every question she asked, so I supplied her with a good deal of information which I sincerely hope she never passed on to any one else. Unfortunately our barge is near the 'Varsity's, and during the races a string of little flags fly from the 'Varsity barge to show the order of the colleges on the river. I knew them well enough down to ours, and I even knew the ninth and tenth, but when Mrs. Faulkner wanted to know the whole lot, I had to use my imagination. I know that I said Hertford twice and I finished up with All Souls, who only have about three undergraduates, so if they had rowed at all they would have been several men short.

"I should like to write the colleges down if I had a pencil," she said; "you rattle them off so fast. Didn't you say that one flag belonged to the University, but the University flag is surely dark blue?"

And then I had to explain that University was a college and not the whole place, and she replied that she knew so much more about Cambridge than Oxford, and complained that our colleges had very confusing names. "Oriell!" she said scornfully, "it reminds me of a window, and then you have no originality. Exeter, Worcester, Lincoln, why they are just names of towns, you can find them all in Bradshaw."

"Well, at any rate Bradshaw's got nothing to do with it," I replied. "These colleges are hundreds of years old, and Bradshaw's a chicken compared with them."

"What dreadful slang. Fancy calling Bradshaw a chicken!" she exclaimed. "Besides, you have a college called Keble, and my father knew Dr. Keble, so that *can't* be hundreds of years old. No, Cambridge have chosen their names better than Oxford."

"Sidney Sussex," I said, for I thought it necessary to make some reply; "it's more like the name of one of Ouida's heroes than a college."

She shook her head gently. "I can't get over your colleges sounding like railway-stations," she answered.

"You must blame the bishops who founded them and not Bradshaw or me," I replied, for I was getting very tired.

"Some one told me Keble is built of red-brick," she said.

"Red-brick is so bright," I answered, but I wanted to say something quite different, and at last a dim noise which quickly developed into a tremendous roar told us that the boats were coming.

Brasenose paddled home first, and not one of the next six boats were in any danger of being caught. It was reserved for us and Merton to give the people on the barges some excitement, but

when I saw Merton pressing us fearfully I wished that I was not hemmed in by a crowd of ladies. I yelled tremendously because I could not help myself, and Mrs. Faulkner, after saying something which I did not catch, put her hands over her ears. But shouting was useless. The abominable thing happened right in front of our barge, and when I saw our cox's hand go up to show that all was over, it was a very bad moment indeed.

"Poor St. Cuthbert's, how very unfortunate they are," I heard a girl say; and some one else answered, "Yes, it's quite pathetic, so different from what one used to expect from them, but I am told that they are not the college they were." That remark made me feel furious, and it was not until Mrs. Faulkner pulled my coat violently that I remembered that she was sitting close to me.

"Did you make a bump?" I heard her asking me.

"No, Merton bumped us. We shall soon be sandwich boat," I answered, for I spoke without thinking.

"Sandwich boat, my dear Godfrey, is this a picnic?" she returned, and I did not know whether she was serious or only trying to be funny.

"There's not much picnic about it," I replied; "we've gone down four places in four nights."

"But what is a sandwich boat. They don't have such things at Cambridge."

"They do, at any rate my cousin rowed eight times in four nights and nearly died after it. A sandwich boat is bottom of one division and top of the other, so it has got to row in both; it's got nothing to do with ham. Shall we go?"

Every one was leaving the barges, but Mrs. Faulkner remained in her chair.

"Isn't that girl in mauve a perfect dream?" she said to me, but I pretended not to hear. I had to wait for several minutes while dresses and the people who wore them were criticized, and I am sure that nothing but the National Anthem or force could have stirred Mrs. Faulkner from her seat.

We found Nina and Fred waiting for us, and Nina said she had been having a splendid time on the Oriel barge. But I could think of nothing except that we were not the college we used to be, and I left Fred to talk to both Mrs. Faulkner and Nina.

CHAPTER XIV

GUIDE, HOST AND NURSE

When I got back to my rooms after leaving Mrs. Faulkner and Nina I found a note from Owen asking me to go and see him at once. Since he had, until then, avoided me in every possible way I guessed that something serious had happened, and when I got to his rooms in Lomax Street, I found him in bed with a cough which ought to have frightened his landlady instead of making her in a very bad temper. He was, however, more worried about the interruption to his reading than anxious about himself, and he said flatly that he could not afford to have a doctor. I tried to cheer him up—but you can't cheer up a man with a cough—and I told him I would come to him whenever he wanted me, and made him promise he would send for me if I could do anything for him. He did not seem to have a single friend in Oxford, and the loneliness of the man made me feel absolutely wretched.

I went to a very confidential chemist who knew nearly every man who had ever been at Oxford, and everything under the sun, and explained to him what sort of cough Owen had. He understood instantly, and said that he would send a mixture which worked miracles, but I could not get Owen off my mind at once, and when Jack Ward came in very late to see me I sat up talking to him until a most unrighteous hour, with the result that I lay in bed the next morning until I was perfectly tired of my scout coming to call me.

A letter from my mother was on my table in which she said that I was on no account to allow Nina to interrupt my reading, but I had only just finished breakfast, when Mrs. Faulkner and Nina came into my rooms. Mrs. Faulkner fixed her eyes on the tea-pot and said nothing; Nina, however, asked if everybody in Oxford breakfasted at eleven o'clock. I had not expected them, and was consequently a little flurried; the truth is that I was not properly dressed, which handicapped my movements considerably. Decency compelled me to keep my legs under the table, until I could slip into my bedder. I was not in a condition to treat visitors who goaded at my laziness with any courage; tact was the only thing possible. In my agitation I did not notice that Nina had put on the clock quite twenty minutes, and when she asked me if I was going to sit in front of the marmalade for the rest of the day, I had to reply that I thought it was rather a good

place to sit. I had managed to hide myself behind the table-cloth when I stood up to wish them good-morning, but I simply did not dare to move again.

Mrs. Faulkner fluttered round the room looking at photographs; the bare knees of the Rugger XV. compelled her to say that she did not think them at all nice. I put my legs farther under the table and felt like blushing. She began to suspect that I was hiding something, and I am afraid she was the sort of woman who did not understand, until she had discovered them, that there are some things which had better remain hidden. She tried little tricks to entice me from my seat, and even came and examined the table-cloth, which was ordinary enough, though she said it was a beautiful one. I did not see how a white table-cloth could be beautiful, but I clutched it most fervently and her ruse failed. She then asked me if a plate which had cost elevenpence-farthing was Wedgwood, and asked me to take it off the wall so that she might see the mark on the back. I told her I had bought it at the Japanese shop and mentioned the sum it cost, but she declared that I had got a bargain and she must have it down. I replied that it was a fixture, though I meant that I was, and that no one had ever been known to find a bargain in a Japanese shop. Then she grew plaintive; "I think you might please me in this, Godfrey," she said.

The time had come for me to take Nina into my confidence. Mrs. Faulkner's eyes were fixed on the plate and her back was turned to me; I poked out one leg tentatively and Nina understood. There was one splendid thing about Nina, you could always rely upon her in a crisis. She took up a chair at once and said that she would get the plate down; she added that unless I sat still after meals I might have very bad indigestion, but that was too much for Mrs. Faulkner.

"I shouldn't think Godfrey has had indigestion in his life," she said. "I don't believe he has ever heard of pepsine. He is in a disgracefully bad temper; there is nothing else the matter with him as far as I can see."

"He was a very delicate child," Nina answered, "and has always been quite disgracefully spoilt. He never does anything which he doesn't like." I felt that Nina was over-playing her part, but I could not defend myself.

"It is so nice having Nina here to do things for me," I said meekly; "and I hope you don't mind me treating you as if you are a relation," I added to Mrs. Faulkner.

"I do mind very much; nothing is an excuse for being lazy and ill-natured. I was brought up in the old school, I suppose," she answered, and I wished to goodness she had never left it.

Nina got up on the chair and pretended that she could not reach the plate.

"Now if you stood up here you could reach it," she said, turning round to Mrs. Faulkner.

"But Godfrey will surely not allow me to do that," she replied.

"I always said that you were taller than Nina," I could not help remarking, for Nina prided herself on being about three inches taller than she was; and she had said all sorts of things about me.

"I wonder if I could reach the plate," Mrs. Faulkner said.

"It would be rather a sporting thing to try," I answered. "Nina couldn't reach it."

"I think not," she returned; "I might fall over backwards." And she sat down carefully in my biggest arm-chair.

My scout came in to clear away breakfast, and the situation was desperate. I picked up a piece of toast hastily and told him to come back in half-an-hour. Mrs. Faulkner had taken her seat behind me, and I could only turn with difficulty to talk to her; while Nina's enthusiasm on my behalf seemed to have waned since her plot to get Mrs. Faulkner on the chair had failed. If I had only dressed the lower part of myself properly instead of the top part it would not have mattered so much, but as it was a collar and a St. Cuthbert's XI. tie were superfluous when other more necessary garments were lacking. I was on the point of throwing myself upon the mercy of Mrs. Faulkner and of explaining to her that a lot of men I knew wore very short pyjama trousers and no socks in the mornings if they intended to read, when Murray burst into my rooms and almost asked me why I had cut a lecture before he saw that I had visitors.

I introduced him, and in the same breath declared that he would be delighted to show his rooms. I was becoming reckless, and did not care if he thought me mad. I went on to say that he had some splendid prints which Mrs. Faulkner would like to see, and Nina was kind enough to ask him if he would mind very much if they invaded his rooms. He saw that something odd was happening; but Mrs. Faulkner was looking at me, and I could make only one sign to him. I reached as far as I could under the table and having kicked off a bedroom slipper, I stuck out enough toes to tell him as much as he wanted to know.

"Will you come?" he asked Mrs. Faulkner. "I am afraid I have only one print; but I should like you to see my rooms."

Mrs. Faulkner said that she would be delighted.

"Let us all go," she added; "I am sure Godfrey has been sitting long enough at that table."

"I will be with you in two minutes," I answered.

Murray stood aside for them to go out, and closed the door behind him, and I fairly bolted into my bedroom. But in two minutes I was dressed and able to go to Murray's rooms, armed with the most beautiful suggestions for spending the day.

"Will your digestion really allow you to walk about so soon?" Mrs. Faulkner asked.

"He never has anything the matter with him," Murray said, with all the thoughtlessness of a dyspeptic. "He used to eat huge lunches, and then play footer; there's not much wrong with a man like that."

"You don't know what I have suffered in secret," I replied; and Nina now that I was clothed again turned upon me and said, "Have you known him all these years and not found that out, Mrs. Faulkner?"

"There is a good deal about Godfrey that I don't quite understand," was the answer, and since I could not wonder at that, I begged to be allowed to take her wherever she wished to go.

We strolled about Oxford until lunch-time, and I answered every question asked me, and most of my answers were accurate. For I had been careful enough to take an Oxford guide-book to bed with me, and had not entirely wasted the early morning. In fact Mrs. Faulkner's visit forced me to see that I knew very little about Oxford. My guide-book knowledge was so condensed that it was more satisfying than satisfactory, and if I had been asked what I charged per hour, I should have had no right to be angry.

However, I did march Mrs. Faulkner and Nina round some of the sights of the place. I showed them the Bodleian, All Souls, Shelley's memorial, and finally brought them to a shady seat in Addison's Walk. I had been compelled to hurry for two reasons; in the first place we had not very much time, and secondly, my knowledge was not proof against the string of questions which only want of breath could stop Mrs. Faulkner from asking. I should imagine that a large number of men never find out how great their ignorance of Oxford is until they have to show people round it, and I candidly confess that on this day I was ashamed of myself. I was more at home in Addison's Walk than in any other place to which I had taken them, for it was in the open air, and also there was something about Addison and Steele and Gay which made me like them. The coffee-houses at which they met must have had some mysterious attraction for me, I think, and led me on to read what they had written. I should have liked to have Sir Roger de Coverley for my uncle, and I cannot imagine a nicer man to have a day's fishing with than Will Wimble. I hated Pope as much as I liked Addison, and though Mrs. Faulkner said he was a great satirist, I thought of him only as a man who wrote most disagreeable things about his friends.

"It is necessary to separate the man from his work, if you are to be a good critic," Mrs. Faulkner said, and though this remark may be true enough I did not answer it, for Nina was looking extremely bored by the conversation we had been having about Addison.

"We may as well go to Oriel and find Fred," I suggested, and Nina got up at once.

"Unfortunately the art of satire is dead, drowned by exaggeration," Mrs. Faulkner said as we went through the cloisters.

"I think it's a better death than it deserves, don't you, Nina?" I replied.

"I know nothing whatever about it," she answered.

"Abuse has taken the place of satire," Mrs. Faulkner continued.

"And a jolly good job, too," I said, for Nina's face of disgust made me forget to whom I was talking; "it is those sly digs in the ribs which make me ill."

"My dear Godfrey, what dreadful slang you use. A few minutes ago you surprised me by being interested in English literature, and now you talk as if there had never been such a thing."

"You surprised me, too," I said, for I felt as if I had concealed enough for one day.

"How? Do tell me," Mrs. Faulkner said quickly.

"I should not have thought that you cared about Addison or any of those old people," I answered, but I began to wish I had been more cautious.

"Why not?"

"Oh, I don't know."

"But, why not?"

"Well, I thought you were more modern."

"I don't know what you mean," she said.

"I am sure I don't," I answered; and as we passed Long Wall Street I managed to get on the far side of Nina, and to beseech her to say something.

"I insist on you telling me what you mean," I heard Mrs. Faulkner say, but before I could even think of my answer Nina had come to my rescue by declaring that she admired the hat of a girl who was walking in front of us. It was a flower-garden hat, and looked more like an advertisement for somebody's seeds than a decent covering for the head. Nina's remark, however, turned Mrs. Faulkner's attention away from me, and we listened to a lecture on taste until we were safely in Oriel.

But Fred was not forthcoming, and Mrs. Faulkner promptly decided that he was working. Comparisons, in which I took no kind of interest, were drawn between his industry and my laziness. I endured them in silence, though I could have given Fred away had I liked, for his cap and gown were both in his rooms, and I knew that he was more probably batting in a net than taking notes at a lecture.

After looking round Oriel, Mrs. Faulkner and Nina went back to the Rudolf, and I said that I must go to St. Cuthbert's and see that their luncheon had not been forgotten. Mrs. Faulkner smiled at me sorrowfully when I left her, and I believe she intended me to believe that I had hurt her feelings very much. If I live to threescore years and ten I shall not understand Mrs. Faulkner. I felt very bothered that morning, for Nina and Mrs. Faulkner would not be in a good temper at the same time; but I met Dennison in the quad, who introduced me to his mother, two sisters, two cousins and an aunt. He looked quite tired, and asked me to luncheon, but unless he had engaged the biggest room at the Sceptre I should think he must have been glad when I refused. He was, however, most palpably short of men. I had hardly got rid of Dennison when I ran into Lambert, escorting four more ladies with prodigiously long names; I think he must have found them at the theatre, and he looked more pleased with himself than ever. When I got back to my rooms I felt quite thankful that my party had not reached an unwieldy size, and I had not to wait long before Mrs. Faulkner, Nina and Fred all arrived together.

It is no use trying to give a luncheon party in a very small room, which was not built for parties of any kind, unless every one is prepared to be thoroughly uncomfortable. You have got to put dishes wherever they will go and worry through as best you can. I had taken quite a lot of trouble over the food, and the size of the room was not my fault. My scout had made many subtle dispositions of furniture, but the fact remained that the table was not made to hold five people, unless the whole lot were really good sorts. So I was delighted to find that Mrs. Faulkner was in her amiable mood and to hear her say that she was prepared for anything, though had I not been so sure that she would be inconvenienced, not to say squashed, before she finished, I am not sure that I should have accepted this reckless mood as much of a compliment. The table was so crowded that it was not easy to see how many people were expected to sit at it, and I was not surprised when Nina suggested that we should begin luncheon. I pretended not to hear what she said, and poked my head into a cupboard in the vain hope that I might find something which I did not know I had lost. Mrs. Faulkner, however, ranged herself by the table and counted the napkins.

"Five," I heard her say, and I withdrew my head from the cupboard and whispered "Jack Ward" to Nina.

"Five," Mrs. Faulkner repeated and looked at Nina, Fred and me, as if she was holding a roll-call.

"Who's the fifth?" Fred asked; "at any rate, I vote we begin."

At that moment I heard some one rushing up-stairs several steps at a time. Outside my door he stopped to get some breath, and when I introduced him to Mrs. Faulkner and Nina he was so apologetic for being late that it was quite difficult for me to stop him. I must say that Mrs. Faulkner tried to adapt herself to the spirit of this luncheon. There was not much shyness about Jack Ward, and in a very few minutes Mrs. Faulkner was fairly beaming upon him. She found out that she knew his cousins, and Jack, who would say anything to please any lady, declared that he had often heard of her. As he asked me afterwards what her name was, I had to tell him that he was a regular humbug, but he said that he was sure that she was the kind of lady who liked to think she was never forgotten, and it was a pity to miss a harmless chance of making her feel pleased.

At first I think Jack made her almost too pleased, and later on there was rather a distinct reaction. She was not content with discovering his cousins, but also found out that his father was what she called a most generous benefactor. "The sort of man who does so much good quietly, so unlike those noisy, discomfoting people who will give something if somebody will give something else. Charity ought not to be limited by conditions," I heard her say.

"I don't think my father exactly throws his money about," Jack said.

"I am sure he doesn't," Mrs. Faulkner agreed readily.

"I mean that if he gives a lot away he expects to make a lot besides. He is a business man,

you see," Jack returned.

"Business men are the backbone of England," Mrs. Faulkner said at once.

"But they aren't heroes or anybody of that kind," Jack answered.

Mrs. Faulkner shook her head sorrowfully. "You young men are all alike, you will never allow your parents to have any virtues."

I was on the point of breaking a silence which had been extraordinarily prolonged, but Jack got ahead of me.

"I know every one is always saying that," he began, "but I don't think it is true. If you praised my father for being generous he would simply laugh at you. He isn't built that way, you see, and he would think anybody a fool who gave a tremendous lot without hoping to get something back. It is a matter of business with him and he is honest enough to admit it."

"You do allow that he is honest," Mrs. Faulkner put in.

"Of course," Jack replied quite good-temperedly, "only no one cares to brag about their relations unless they want to be called a snob or a bore. It wouldn't do, you see, for a man to go about declaring that he had an uncle who was miles ahead of everybody else's uncle, or an aunt who could give a start to any other aunt in the world."

"It depends upon what sort of start the aunt gave," Nina, who had been talking to Fred, remarked, and I knew by her smile that she intended this for humour; but Fred did not hear what she said, or I expect he would have laughed. Sometimes he was very weak with Nina.

"I am to believe then," Mrs. Faulkner said, "that all of you are very proud of your parents, only it is what you call bad form to admit it."

Jack gave a great laugh which made everything rattle on the table, and Mrs. Faulkner, being unaccustomed to him, looked surprised.

"Why is it such a joke?" she asked.

"I am sorry," Jack replied; "I laugh sometimes quite unexpectedly, in my bath and places like that. I think my nerves must be wrong."

"Cigarettes," Mrs. Faulkner declared. "I think I shall write to the papers about the University man of the day; I don't understand him in the least," and I unfortunately caught Fred's eye and smiled. Her statement seemed to account for so much unnecessary correspondence.

"Do," Jack answered, "and Foster, Godfrey and I will answer it."

"There wouldn't be much to write, which any one who hasn't been at Cambridge or here would believe," Fred said.

"Why not?" Mrs. Faulkner asked.

"Because they wouldn't understand that a great many men amuse themselves in odd ways and yet are not complete idiots. If you saw us dancing round a bonfire you might think we were all mad, but we aren't a bit."

"I shouldn't choose a bonfire to dance round," Mrs. Faulkner said.

"That's just it," Fred replied; "but it's very good sport when you happen to like it."

The college messenger came into the room with a note for me which was marked "urgent," and I asked if I might read it. Jack Ward was the only man who ever wanted me in a hurry, and so confident was I in the infallibility of my chemist that I was not thinking of Owen. When I had finished reading the note I found that the conversation had taken a more lively turn.

"It is so fortunate I brought something fit to wear," Mrs. Faulkner was saying.

"I have only got four tickets, I wish I had got one for you," Fred said to Jack Ward, and then I remembered that Fred had promised to get tickets for the Brasenose ball which was taking place that evening.

"You can have mine," I told Jack Ward.

"Of course I can't do that," Jack answered; "I expect I can get one all right, if I may join you."

Nina, who was nothing if not expeditious, said that he had better go at once and see if he could get a ticket, but I stopped him by repeating that he could have mine.

"It won't be used unless you take it," I added.

Every one except Fred, who saw that something had happened, led me to believe that I was

very disagreeable and foolish.

"We arranged last night that we should go if Fred could get the tickets," Nina said, and then by way of propitiating me she told me that I knew how well I danced.

"You will spoil Nina's evening," Mrs. Faulkner declared, and Nina, I must say, was pouting most magnificently.

"Why can't you come?" she asked. "Has it got anything to do with that wretched note?"

"Not another row?" Jack Ward put in most inconsiderately.

"Fred never said anything about it till too late," I answered; "he kept the whole thing so dark."

"I knew before luncheon," Nina replied, as if she had settled me completely.

I managed to let Fred know that I wanted him to read the note, and having opened the Oxford "Mag" no one saw that he had got the letter inside the pages. For a minute I persuaded Jack steadfastly to take my ticket and he refused with determination. If it had not been that Nina was upset very easily, and Mrs. Faulkner had been known to have hysteria without giving any one a moment's notice, I would have brandished the note in their faces instead of standing first on one leg and then on the other and looking a most hopeless fool.

I did not know what to say next, when Fred put down the magazine and joined us by the window.

"If you can't well manage to come to-night," he said, "and it was most awfully stupid of me not to tell you at once that we were going, I am sure Ward will have this ticket," and he pulled it out of his pocket and simply made Jack take it.

"I don't really think I can go, though I will turn up if I can," I said, and Fred made the most of my promise and talked so much that before I had to say anything else I found that he had persuaded Mrs. Faulkner and Nina to go down to the river and watch Oriel rowing in the earlier division. I went with them as far as the college lodge and then I disappeared, for the note which I had received upset all my hopes of enjoying myself for the rest of the day.

The first part of it was from Owen, who said he was feeling dreadfully ill, but the second part was written by his landlady, and she seemed to be in a terrible temper. As far as I could make out Owen was very much worse and still refused to have a doctor. "He says," his landlady wrote, "that if I send for a physician he won't pay him and I was up last night five times and who is going to stand it cough he coughs something awful and what's going to happen I don't know I expect he's got typhoid fever or something horrible." She did not use any stops, but that might have been because she was in a hurry; clearly, however, she was very angry, and there was only one thing for me to do.

I went round to Lomax Street as fast as I could, and I had no sooner got inside the house than I heard Owen coughing. I found his landlady in the state her letter had suggested I should find her, she was infinitely more sorry for herself than she was for Owen, and since he was too ill for her to get any satisfaction from visiting her grievance upon him she started off upon me.

"You are his friend," she said as she met me in the passage, "and you ought to have been here before. I was just doing myself up before putting on my bonnet to go out and report this case."

"To whom were you going to report it?" I asked, for I felt very much as if I should like to know.

"You can report it now, I put all responsibility upon you," she stated loudly, and she took me up-stairs and announced me in a voice which would have shaken the nerves of a strong man. I could not put up with her any longer and I told her abruptly to go. She went energetically, her shoulders protesting against my rudeness, and she marched down the stairs with as much noise as she could make without hurting her feet. I am glad that there are very few landladies left, at least in Oxford, who look upon any illness as an opportunity for showing how nasty they can be. I simply hated that woman, and before I had done with her I was weak enough to tell her so. I was defeated in that battle of plain speaking. To me, unaccustomed to illness, Owen looked as bad as anyone could look, and apart from his cough and his temperature he had got all sorts of worries on his mind which he wanted me to hear. I listened to what he said without interrupting him, but I was impressed with the fact that I must creep about a sick-room, and I am afraid I was ostentatiously quiet. His troubles had to do with the expenses of his illness, and he beseeched me not to send for a doctor or a nurse. I tried to set his mind at rest, but I failed; he saw that I thought him very ill, and when I moved round the room on tiptoe he asked me to make as much noise as I liked. I was no use as a sick nurse, and my efforts to make the room look fit to live in, though meant splendidly, seemed to me to make the place more uncomfortable and cheerless than ever.

I promised faithfully that I would stay with him during the night, but he could not make me say that I would not see a doctor, and as soon as I could I went off and got a man whom I had

once met at a smoking conceit. This doctor was a bustling little man who did not sympathize with nonsense, and I had to explain a lot of things before I made him understand that this was a peculiar case.

"What is the good of you sitting up all night, even if it is necessary," he said to me as we walked from his house to Lomax Street; "you would certainly go to sleep and do more harm than good."

"Owen has a fairly bad cough," I answered.

"If it is bad enough to keep you awake he ought to have a proper nurse."

"He doesn't want to have a proper nurse, he is rather hard up," I said.

"Pish," was his only answer, but when he got to Owen's rooms I should think he must have known that I had spoken the truth.

I got leave from the Subby to stay with Owen during the night, but I cannot say that I was a successful nurse. I took some books with me because I thought it would be a good opportunity to do some reading, but of course I went to sleep, and woke up with a snort which would have made me unpopular in any dormitory in the world. Owen was so much worse in the morning that he had to be moved out of his wretched lodgings into a place where he would be properly looked after.

I went back to St. Cuthbert's about eleven o'clock in a state of horrible depression. I had promised to pay all the expenses of this illness, and how I was to do it I had not an idea. The year was nearly over and my funds were exceedingly low, but I could not help making Owen believe that I had more money than I knew how to spend.

Outside St. Cuthbert's I met Mrs. Faulkner and Nina, and while Mrs. Faulkner was commenting upon my dejected appearance Nina told me frankly that I looked dirty.

"I have been up all night," I said, for there was no longer any reason why I should not explain what had happened.

"We were not in bed until four o'clock," Nina answered proudly.

"What have you been doing?" Mrs. Faulkner asked.

"I have been nursing a man who is ill," I replied.

"Infectious?" Mrs. Faulkner asked breathlessly.

"Pneumonia, double pneumonia, I believe," I answered.

"And you heard about it yesterday afternoon?" Nina said.

"Yes."

"Then why didn't you tell us?" Mrs. Faulkner asked. "Fred and Nina have been quarrelling about you, and I have said the most awful things. You really might have more consideration."

"I thought it would spoil your dance if I told you; I didn't know what was the matter with the man."

"You are a dear, Godfrey," Nina said, and she linked her arm in mine.

"I am an idiot if you want to call me any names," I replied.

"You were always that," Nina said in the manner which is called playful; "we are just going to see Mr. Ward, who is perfectly charming; won't you come with us?"

"I am going to have a bath, and then I must see Fred."

Nina looked displeased.

"What's the matter with Fred?" I asked.

"He's as perfect as usual," Nina answered, and swung her parasol to show that she was not interested in him.

"We are blocking the street, and you nearly hit a man in the eye with that thing," I said.

"You will be in a better temper when you are cleaner," Nina retorted.

"We go down at 4.15," Mrs. Faulkner said as we went into the lodge; "we are going on some river, the one that isn't deep, in a punt with Mr. Ward, and he is taking luncheon for us. Do you think it is quite safe, Godfrey?"

"Quite, if Nina doesn't try to punt," I answered.

"Must we go away this afternoon?" Nina asked.

"My dear, I have three, if not four, people arriving to-night," Mrs. Faulkner replied.

"I will be at the station to see you off," I said, for even if they wanted me I did not feel like punting on the Cherwell.

I pointed out Jack Ward's rooms to Nina, and had walked half-way across the quad when Mrs. Faulkner called me back.

"I hope your friend is better?" she asked.

"He has only just begun to be ill," I answered.

CHAPTER XV

MISHAPS

After I had been to my rooms and had a bath I went round to Oriel to see Fred, but he was not in his rooms, so I left a note to tell him that he must come to luncheon with me. Then I rushed back to St. Cuthbert's and went to hear Mr. Edwardes lecturing. I missed the beginning of the lecture, and I might just as well have stayed away altogether, for Mr. Edwardes asked me to speak to him at the end of it, though what he meant was that he was going to speak while I was to listen. Grave things were happening, at least I thought them grave, and Mr. Edwardes had nothing whatever to do with them. While he talked to me I was trying by a process of mental arithmetic to discover how much money I had to my credit in the bank; the voice which I heard seemed to me to belong to bygone ages, and I was so worried by actual and present facts that I could not screw up a vestige of interest in antiquities. I know that it was always my fate to arouse either the irony or the anger of my tutor, for to other men he was far more pleasant than he was to me, but I could not help thinking of him as representative of a system which could never influence me in the least. He soon discovered that I was paying no attention to him, and I suppose that I must have got most vigorously on his nerves, for he really became quite humanly angry, I must have been nearer to an understanding with him at that moment than I had ever been. But when his rage abated, his lips snapped and the thunderbolts ceased. He went on too long and became sarcastic again, as if ashamed of being properly angry, and I left him with the usual hopeless feeling that we should never understand each other.

I went into the common room as I was crossing the quad, and before I had been there two minutes Dennison came in with Lambert and two or three other men of their set. No one else was in the room except Murray, who was reading, and absolutely refused to talk to me about Edwardes, so I turned over various papers until Dennison asked me if I did not think our eight was quite the most comically bad boat I had ever seen.

"The whole college is going to the deuce," I answered.

"You look as if you were up late last night, and have got a fair old head on this morning," Dennison declared.

"I haven't been to bed at all, if you want to know," I said.

"Going to the deuce with the rest of the college, well, you have the consolation of being quite the most amusing man in it."

I think I was fool enough to say that I was not amusing.

"Not consciously," Dennison replied, "but I get more fun from you than from anybody, and when you are in a serious mood you are the most comic man I know. He's delicious, isn't he, Lambert?"

"If you can't see the funny side of our eight, you must be a madman," Lambert said to me.

"We used to be head of the river, and now we can't row for sour apples," Dennison chuckled, "the thing's a perfect pantomime."

"And you are the stupidest clown in it," I said suddenly, for although I did not want to lose my temper the "sour apples" expression, on the top of being told that I had "a fair old head," compelled me to say something.

"One to Marten," Lambert said, as he stalked about the room; they were a most trying lot to

have anything to do with. Everything they said was just the thing that made me want to get away from them, and Dennison had told me once that he considered conversation a very fine art.

It would have been wise of me to have gone away without waiting for Dennison's attempts to get level with me, but I felt like staying where I was.

"Poor old fellow," Dennison groaned, "he sits up all night, and then his conscience smites him and his head aches, and he thinks the college is going to the deuce and is to be saved from perdition by his being rude. What you want, old chap, is a sedlitz powder; go and have one, and you won't be so gloomy, you may even smile when you see our eight bumped to-night."

"You laugh and jeer at our boat when it goes down, but I'll bet you would be the first to kick up a row if we ever make any bumps again, though you don't care whether we go to the bottom of the river and stop there," I answered.

"I don't see that it matters," Lambert put in, "and I would much rather be bottom than bottom but one or even two, there's something dignified about being absolutely last."

"Take a sedlitz powder and become a philosopher," Dennison suggested.

"I always thought your philosophy was founded on something confoundedly odd," I returned, "and now I know all about it."

"I suppose you think that very witty," he replied, and he almost lost his temper, "but though I may not be much of a philosopher I am a first-rate doctor, so when a man wants medicine I tell him so."

"Thanks," I said.

"You are on the wrong track," he went on, beginning to smile again, "the wretched school-boy notion of being sick to death when you are beaten at anything is all humbug here, the thing to do is to laugh whatever happens, and to-day you look as if you hadn't a laugh left in you."

"That's sitting up all night," Lambert said, "you can't laugh all day and night."

Then I told them that if they wanted to see the college perfectly useless at everything they must be the biggest fools in Oxford, and I appealed to Murray to support me, because Dennison never spoke to him if he could help doing so.

"It is much easier to laugh than it is to row," was all Murray said, and he went out of the room at once.

"That man's the most complete prig in the 'Varsity," Dennison declared, "and as long as a college has a lot of men like him in it nothing else matters. We don't want smugs here."

"Murray," I said solidly, "is neither a prig nor a smug, and as you have never said half-a-dozen words to him you can't possibly know anything about him."

"A smug is always labelled," he answered, "and that man looks one from his hat to his boots, don't you think so, Lambert?"

Of course Lambert thought so, and I, having already said much more than I intended, was just going to say a lot more, when a whole crowd of men came into the room and saved me from the impossible task of making Dennison believe that he could make a mistake.

I went back to my rooms and found Fred waiting for me, but from the way I banged my notebook on the table and threw my gown into a corner, I should not think that he expected me to be very pleasant. Fred, however, understood me, and it seems to me that I have always been very lucky in having one friend who never tried to make out that I was in a good temper when I was in a bad one. Some people when they suspect that you are angry ask silly little questions just to find out if their suspicions are true, but Fred always left me alone. He simply took no notice of me at all, and though that was very annoying, it was not half as bad as a string of questions or a lot of stupid remarks about things which I did not want to hear. I banged about the room tremendously, but Fred went on reading *The Sportsman* and waited for me to become fit to speak to.

At last I threw myself into a chair close to him.

"For goodness' sake stop reading that blessed paper," I said; "why I take the wretched thing I don't know, who cares whether Kent beats Lancashire or whether Cambridge makes four hundred against the M.C.C."

"You and I do," Fred answered, and tossed *The Sportsman* on to the table.

"I have been waiting here for half-an-hour to hear what has happened, but you seem to be in such an infernally bad temper that I should think I had better go. There is a very fair chance of a row if I stay here, for I can't stand much to-day," he went on, when I had picked up the paper to see who had made the runs for Cambridge.

"What's wrong with you?" I asked.

"Everything."

"Did you have a good ball?"

"Perfectly rotten."

"Did Nina get plenty of partners?"

"Crowds."

"And you didn't feel like going on the 'Cher' this morning?"

"I have had two pros bowling to me," he answered, "I was bowled about a dozen times. Besides I wasn't asked to go on the 'Cher.'"

"Nina and Mrs. Faulkner said all sorts of things about me last night?"

"Who told you so?"

"They did."

"Sometimes Nina's temper isn't any better than yours," he said. "What happened to you? How's Owen?"

"Owen is very bad," I answered, and while we had lunch I told him what I had been doing. "In a few hours I have made a fool of myself three times," I said, "I've promised to pay for Owen, and I have had rows with both Edwardes and Dennison. This college is going to blaze, and it is men like Edwardes, who is a great lump of ice, and Dennison, who just wants to be a blood in his own miserable little way, who will be responsible. Edwardes never cares what happens, and Dennison is collecting a set round him who can do nothing but wear waistcoats, eat and drink. You have all the luck in belonging to a college where men don't become bloods by drinking hard, and where everybody takes an interest in the place. St. Cuthbert's will never get a decent fresher to come to it if we don't do something to make it alive again."

Fred stretched himself and yawned, all the life seemed to have gone out of him in some way.

"You wouldn't like to belong to a college which has been something and is on the road to be nothing," I said.

"It takes a lot to ruin a college," he answered; "every one knows that St. Cuthbert's is a good enough place, and one man like Dennison won't make much difference."

"Won't he? you don't know him as well as I do. He'd ruin the Bank of England if he could be the only director for a year."

"But there are heaps of other men besides him."

"No one seems to care; we just live on our reputation, and when Dennison is no longer a fresher he will wreck the whole place, he is clever enough to do it."

"You are in a villainous temper and exaggerate everything," Fred said.

"You know that Oriel is all right, and you don't care what happens to us," I retorted, and then Fred woke up and we very nearly had a terrific row.

The remembrance of this day still makes me feel uncomfortable, and I am quite certain that Fred was the only man in Oxford who could have put up with me. I simply walked from quarrel to quarrel, and I seemed to want each one to be more violent than the last. Now I come to think of it, it is possible that Dennison's advice was sound; I must certainly have needed something which I did not take, but after all I think a long sleep was probably what I wanted. At any rate I was a most unpleasant companion, and Fred told me afterwards that he had not known me for so many years, without finding out that I could be thoroughly unreasonable when I had a really bad day.

Undoubtedly that day was a very bad one, and when any one stays up all night I advise him to go to bed during the next day, just to save trouble.

We had arrived at a state of silence, for I had nothing left to say, and Fred refused to say anything, when Jack Ward strolled into the room, as if he had nothing more than usual to do, and had just come to waste his time and mine. He must have tried to make what is called a dramatic entry, for most people who were in his condition would have hurried up for all they were worth. He was wet through from head to foot, his collar hung round his neck like a dirty rag, and his whole appearance reminded me of a scarecrow which has suffered dreadfully from the weather.

"What has happened?" I asked at once, for he walked straight up to an empty bottle and shook his head mournfully.

"Nothing," he answered, "except that your sister fell into the 'Cher' and I hauled her out, and

Mrs. What's-her-name shrieked and had hysterics. They are all right now, but as soon as I got your sister to the bank, I had to throw water over the other lady; I began by sprinkling her face, but as she rather liked that I had to give her a regular good dose, and then she opened her eyes and said her dress was spoilt. I must have some hot whisky, or I shall catch cold."

We besieged Jack with questions, but we did not get much satisfaction from his replies.

"It was all my fault," he said. "I thought I could teach your sister to punt, and she fell in and I pulled her out. I have told you that before."

"Nina can swim," I said.

"There wasn't much time to think about that, besides, she had a long dress on. I am afraid we made rather a sensation when I got a cab for them down at Magdalen."

"We must go round at once," I said to Fred.

"I don't think it is much good doing that," Jack went on. "I am awfully sorry that it happened, because Mrs. Faulkner was annoyed at first, and that was bad enough, but just before I left it suddenly occurred to her that I was very plucky and ought to be thanked, which was much worse. She says they are both going to bed until it is time for them to get up and catch the train. In that way she hopes to avoid the most serious consequences. Your sister thinks it rather a good joke; I hope she won't catch a bad cold."

"You had better go and change," I said, and I asked Fred if he would come to the Rudolf, but he said that it was no use for him to go if Mrs. Faulkner and Nina were in bed, and that he would meet me at the station. Then I said something to Jack about it being awfully good of him to have jumped into the "Cher" to fish Nina out, but I was very glad when he asked me to shut up, for Fred was looking more gloomy than ever, and I am sure that he, having seen Nina swimming heaps of times, thought the whole thing was thoroughly stupid. I did not quite know what to think about it, but I wished most sincerely that Nina had never tried to punt.

Fred walked with me for a short way down the Broad, but stopped by Balliol, and said he was going in to see a man.

"This affair is a horrid nuisance," I remarked.

"Nina wouldn't drown very easily," he returned.

"But she had a long dress on," and of this remark Fred took no notice.

"I don't think I shall come down to the station," he said; "will you wish Mrs. Faulkner and Nina good-bye from me?"

"No, I won't," I replied, and we stared at each other so hard that we were nearly run over by a cab; "you must come, do come to please me."

"You do such a precious lot to make me want to please you," he retorted, and he looked most desperately down on his luck.

"Do forget all about this afternoon. I didn't mean one word I said."

"You said a precious lot. I'll come all right, but they won't want to see me," and he walked off before I could tell him that they had better want to see him, or I would have even another row.

When I got to the Rudolf I sent up a card to Nina on which I wrote something which at the moment I thought funny. But she did not seem to see the humour of it, for she sent me down an angry little note in which she told me to go away and meet her at four o'clock. I went away sorrowfully, for there was a sense of importance about that note which told me that Nina was not going to tumble into the Cher for nothing, and I knew I should hear more than enough about it before long.

But I did not think that I should be made to suffer until I got to the station. But when your luck is dead out it is wise to be prepared for anything.

I strolled aimlessly down the Corn-market, and having nothing whatever to do, I turned into the Union to read the papers, or write a letter to my brother, or do anything to pass the time. I stood in the hall for some minutes looking at, but not reading, the telegrams; I was trying to remember whether it was my turn to write to my brother or his to write to me, and two or three men who found me planted in front of the telegrams shoved me a little, so I moved away and met a man whom I knew.

"Halloa, Marten," he said, "I've just seen the pluckiest thing; that man Ward, you know him, fairly saved a girl's life. She fell out of a punt on the Cher, a pretty girl too. Ward's a lucky brute, you ought to have been there."

"I've heard all about it," I answered.

"But it only happened an hour ago."

"Ward told me, he didn't think much of it."

"Well, you should have seen him, I tell you he did it splendidly; I always thought he was a friend of yours, but you don't look very keen. However, it's something to talk about," he said, as he strolled off to find some one who would suit him better than I did.

I drifted from the hall to one of the smoking-rooms, where I sat down next to a big, bearded man, who was wearing a most extraordinary wide pair of trousers, and who looked as if he would discourage the attempts of any one who wanted to talk. He looked at me over the top of *The Times*, and having had the courage to sit next to him, I felt that if he would only look at other men as he did at me I should get all the protection I required. I read in the aimless way which makes me turn the paper over frequently in the futile hope of finding something interesting, and I could not help knowing that my neighbour's eyes were far oftener on me than on *The Times*. But I had no intention of leaving him, for we were members of a defensive alliance, though he knew nothing about it; two or three men I knew walked through the room and left me alone; I was, I thought, in an almost impregnable position and I closed my eyes, but before I had passed from the stage of wondering whether I should snore if I went to sleep, I felt a touch on my arm, and found Learoyd standing by me.

"Go away," I said sleepily, "I am very tired."

He leant over my chair and began to whisper; his back unfortunately was turned to my ally, or I think I could have stopped him.

"Do you know," he began, "that your sister has been nearly drowned in the Cher, and Ward jumped in after her? Everybody says he saved her life and will get a medal."

"Who's everybody?" I asked, and I heard a noise, which was more like a grunt than anything else, from the chair behind Learoyd.

"Pratt told me, and I knew it must have been your sister because I saw Ward start out of the college with her and some one else. It was your sister, wasn't it?"

"Yes," I answered, and my friend in the wide trousers got up and walked by us.

"I am awfully glad it was your sister now that I have told Pratt so," Learoyd said. "He told me that he didn't think it could have been, because you didn't tell him."

"I never tell an ass like Pratt anything," I replied, "he would die if he hadn't got something to talk about."

"I am very glad she wasn't drowned."

"You are only glad she fell in," I could not help saying.

He looked rather bothered for a minute. "No, I didn't mean that, only Pratt isn't the man to tell anything which isn't true, he's such a gossip," he answered.

"I suppose every one is bound to know all about it. I shouldn't wonder if it isn't in the papers this evening," I said, as I got out of my chair.

"It is sure to be," Learoyd replied cheerfully. "Jack Ward will have to pretend not to like it."

"He won't like it," I said, and I gave Learoyd my paper to read and made my escape into the garden. I sat down as far away from every one as I could and asked a waiter to bring me some tea, and for quite five minutes I was not molested. It was very early for tea, and the waiter was talkative when he came back.

"Going down to the river this afternoon, sir?" he said, as I fumbled in my pockets for some money.

"No," I replied.

"Nearly a sad accident on the Cherwell this morning I heard some gentleman saying. A gentleman from St. Cuthbert's College saved a young lady from drowning; he ought to marry the young lady, I say," he concluded with a waggish shake of the head, and he began to grope in his pockets for sixpence.

"Don't bother about the change," I said, "you're a humorist."

"A what, sir?"

"A humorist," I answered so loudly that nearly every one in the garden looked round.

"I am a bit of a comic, thank you, sir. I sings a bit and acts a bit when I get the chance. But people ought to be more careful when they go boating, many a good life's been lost by drowning,

leaving sorrow behind it."

"Some one is calling you," I said desperately, and just then I saw Pratt come into the garden and fix his eyes on me. I rose hurriedly, and leaving my tea bolted for the door which leads into Castle Street. I turned round when I reached the door and saw the waiter tapping his forehead with one finger and talking to Pratt. It was not difficult to guess what he was saying.

I did not know what to do next, so I walked very slowly to the station and stood in front of the book-stall. Business unfortunately was slack when I arrived and one of the boys would not leave me alone, he offered me so many papers that in sheer desperation I bought several; I told him that I would have two shillings' worth, and left the selection of them to him. Then I walked off to a seat at the end of the platform to do a little thinking, but before I had really got settled I saw Fred walking towards me with his head somewhere near the second button of his waistcoat. I shouted to him, and after we had sat on the bench for quite a minute without speaking we both began to laugh at the same time, until a porter and a ticket-collector came to see what was happening. The porter was a burly man with a cheerful countenance, and he seemed so pleased to see any one enjoying themselves that he came close to us, but the ticket-collector stood afar off.

"Nice weather, gentlemen," he said, and having agreed with him we began to laugh again.

"I've not 'eard a good joke for many a fine day, you seem to be a-enjoying of yourselves, my missis 'as got the mumps," and he took off his cap and scratched his head.

Fred said that mumps were very painful.

"Nearly what you call a tragedy on the river to-day, seemingly," he went on, and I groaned aloud, but Fred, who had no idea what was coming, asked him what had happened.

"It's like this," he began, "one of my mates, who 'as a brother what belongs to one of them boat-'ouses where they let out most anything to anybody what'll pay for it, 'eard in 'is dinner 'our as 'ow a young woman would 'ave gone to 'er death only 'er young man 'opped into the river and saved 'er life. That's what my mate told me, but 'e's a bit of a liar."

I jumped up from the seat before he had time to tell us anything more, and pushing a shilling into his hand said that the ticket-collector was beckoning to him. He was so surprised that he had not enough breath to thank me, but he was kind enough to go away. When he thought I was not looking I saw him tapping his forehead and grinning like that abominable waiter in the Union. After two or three minutes of peace the ticket-collector thought he might as well try his luck with us, and began to stroll casually in our direction, but just as he was going to begin a conversation I seized Fred by the arm, and having fled to the end of the platform, we sat down on a luggage-barrow.

"I should have hit that man," I said, "I can't stand any more," and then I told him what I had been through since I had left him. "It isn't half as comic as you seem to think," I finished up, "every blessed man I know in the 'Varsity will talk to me about it. Nina can swim as well as you can, and I shall tell her what I think of her."

"Don't get into another rage," Fred replied; "I shouldn't say anything nasty to her if I were you, she didn't fall into the Cher on purpose. What is that huge great bundle of papers you are hugging?"

"They are for Mrs. Faulkner to read on the way down, to show that I don't bear her any malice. I wish I had never seen her."

Fred took the bundle, and as he looked through the papers he gave way to such unrighteous laughter that the barrow tipped up, and he, I, and all the papers were scattered about the platform. I hurt myself and told him so rudely, but he laughed at nothing that afternoon, and as soon as he had picked up the papers he went back to the barrow and proceeded to chuckle to himself until I had to ask whether he had gone mad.

"For Mrs. Faulkner," he said, and really he was enough to annoy any one.

"Why shouldn't I give her what I like?" I asked.

"She won't thank you for this lot," he answered. "*Cricket, The Sportsman, The Sporting Life, The Pink 'Un, A Life of W. G. Grace, The Topical Times, Pick-me-up, The Pelican*,—by Jove she will have something to tell your people when she gets home."

"It's that boy at the bookstall," I said, "let's go and change some of them, though I believe you have only picked out the ones which Mrs Faulkner wouldn't read. I let the boy choose what he liked."

We made the bundle look as respectable as we could, and started down the platform, but before we got to the bookstall we saw Mrs. Faulkner, Nina and Jack Ward.

"Oh, here you are at last," Nina said, "if it hadn't been for Mr. Ward I don't know what we

should have done with our luggage."

"If it hadn't been for Mr. Ward we should not only have lost our luggage but yourself, my dear," Mrs. Faulkner exclaimed, and she put her hand on Nina's arm.

"I am sure we are horribly obliged to you, Jack," I said, for I had to say something.

"I hope you won't catch cold," Fred said to Nina.

"Thanks, I think I shall be all right now," she answered.

"It is the terrible nervous shock which may be disastrous," Mrs. Faulkner remarked.

"Won't you have some tea?" I asked, and it seemed to me that I was always asking Mrs. Faulkner to have tea when I didn't know what to do with her.

"We should miss the train, it goes in twelve minutes," she replied.

We stood on the platform for an interminable time trying to talk, but neither Mrs. Faulkner nor Nina seemed to take any interest in Fred and me, and I must say that Jack looked terribly uncomfortable at all the things which were said to him. Just before the train was due, however, Nina took my arm and drew me away from the others, and I hoped that she was going to tell me something pleasant, but her first words banished that idea.

"I want you to ask Mr. Ward to stay with us in July," she said.

"I shall do nothing of the kind," I answered.

"He jumped into the river to save me."

"You can swim all right."

"But he didn't know that."

"Mrs. Faulkner makes me ill. I think you might stop her making such a fuss; she has made Jack feel uncomfortable, and Fred never says a word. I think you are treating Fred jolly badly," I said.

"I suppose he will be down in July," she replied, rather disagreeably.

"Of course he will."

"And you won't ask Mr. Ward?"

"For goodness' sake, Nina, don't be stupid," I answered, "and let me ask what friends I like."

"I shall get mother to ask him if you don't."

Before I had time to reply the train came into the station, and Fred, Jack and I had to work hard to get a compartment to suit Mrs. Faulkner. It took some time to get her properly settled, and after she had thanked Jack once more and wished us all good-bye, Nina came to the carriage-window and said that I was not to forget what she told me.

"Are those papers for us?" she called out as the train started.

I took off my hat and pretended not to hear, for I had completely forgotten to change them, but before I could stop him Jack had taken the bundle out of my hand, and by means of running much faster than I thought possible he got the whole lot into the carriage.

"I felt such a fool on that platform that I never remembered anything," he said, when he came back.

"I wish you had forgotten how to run," I replied, and when Fred told him why I had kept my bundle to myself we managed to talk about the way Mrs. Faulkner would criticize my taste until we separated.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SCHEMES OF DENNISON

My life for several days after Nina went away was just what I expected it would be. Everybody I knew wanted to be told about the accident, and congratulated me on her narrow

escape. I was gloriously rude to several men, but nothing I could do was really any good. The first man at whom I let myself go was Dennison, and in this I made a very great mistake, because in letting him know that I was sick of the whole business I gave him a chance which he did not miss. He went round finding men who had not seen me, and persuaded them to come to me and say how sorry they had been to hear of the accident, and how glad they were that Jack Ward had saved Nina, and a lot of other desperate twaddle. Finally, Dennison having worked this joke most diligently, decided that a dinner must be given in Jack's honour, and when he met me in the quad on Sunday and told me about it I refused flatly to go.

"Of course you will come," he said, "it would be a disgrace to the college if we didn't do something to celebrate Ward's pluck and your sister's escape."

"It is a disgrace to the college to make a wretched fuss about nothing," I replied.

"You are the only man who thinks that. Next Thursday night, half-past seven, at the Sceptre," he said, and walked off.

Ward and I had been avoiding each other ever since the Wednesday night, when he having first of all been to Brasenose because they were Head of the River and lively, came to see me afterwards and talked very stupidly. I was in bed, and he woke me up to talk to me for over half-an-hour about love. Any one would have been angry, and though I tried to be polite, because he had jumped into the Cher, I told him to go away several times before he went. I had never thought it possible that I could have so much trouble about Nina. I suppose he knew that he had made an idiot of himself that evening, for if there is any time when it is decent to wake a man up and talk to him about wonderful subjects, I am sure it can never be after a huge celebration at Brasenose. I didn't know much about love, but I thought that there must be the wrong and the right kind, and that Jack had made a bad start.

So we kept out of each other's way as much as possible, and I did not know that he hated the idea of this dinner even more than I did. We might together have done something to stop it, but we had no chance unless we combined. I thought Jack wanted to be fêted, and in consequence I felt absolutely savage with him, while he told me afterwards that he was simply dragged into the thing by Dennison. However, I am not altogether sorry that the dinner took place, for though neither Jack nor I were anything like wily enough to score off Dennison, we got some rare fun out of him before that evening finished.

Collier, Lambert and Learoyd all came to tell me that I must go to the dinner before I could be persuaded to have anything to do with it, and it was really comical to hear why each of them was so keen on the affair. Collier gloried openly in the fact that it would be a huge feed, and said he was glad Dennison had engaged Rodoski to play the fiddle because music gave him a better appetite, and he advised me strongly not to miss such a good chance of enjoying myself, and thought me mad to hesitate. Lambert said that Dennison had asked him to propose Ward's health, and that he hoped his speech—though quite unprepared—would not be unworthy of the evening. "The dinner itself will be nothing, just like any other kind of dinner, but don't you miss it," he concluded, and I felt sure that he had already got his speech in his pocket. Learoyd begged me not to stay away from a jolly good rag. "If we can't row, we can rag," he said, and when I told him that I was sick to death of ragging, he took such a serious view of my case that I promised that I would go so that I could get rid of him.

There were about fourteen men at the dinner-party, including Ward, Dennison, Lambert, Learoyd, Collier, Webb, and Bunny Langham, and since Dennison had taken a free hand in arranging everything, it was a tremendous affair. I never doubted that his idea was to make Ward and me look as foolish as possible, for he was the kind of man who was never really contented unless he was trying to make some one feel uncomfortable. The whole thing, I knew, was an elaborate joke at our expense, but I was not going to starve because Nina had fallen into the "Cher" and Jack had pulled her out, so I set to work to enjoy myself, though I had to sit next to Dennison. In fact, having once got to the Sceptre, I think I made more row than any one at dinner, and this must have disappointed Dennison, who started by saying those half sweet and half bitter things to me, which I never know how to answer, but which make me long to put the man who says them under the table. So I talked and shouted loud enough to drown Dennison's remarks, for it would never have done to put him out of sight during the dinner. I suppose that being unable to get any fun out of me, and having Collier, who did not like to speak much at meals, on the other side of him, he must have found some fresh amusement, for he became very quiet as the evening went on, and there was only one thing which ever made him silent and that was the kind of thing which makes most people talk.

He was, however, capable of asking Lambert to propose the toast of the evening, but nothing would make Lambert stir before some one had proposed the royal toasts, which Dennison had forgotten; and three or four men who did not want any one to talk except themselves shouted, "No speeches," until Bunny Langham got up and surprised every one by making them laugh. He did not stick to his subject very much, but he managed to make everything he said ramble round in an odd sort of way to an apology for Dennison's forgetfulness, and if only he had been sitting on the other side of me I should not have been compelled to shout during the whole of dinner, for I believe he would have been able to help me in answering the gibing remarks which had been made to me. Dennison smiled across the table at Langham, but his smile looked as if it had been glued on to his face, and if I had been in his place I should have thrown something solid, like a

pine-apple, at Bunny.

My penance, however, was to come, and when Lambert at last got up to finish off the business of making fools of Jack Ward and me, I thought of pretending that my nose had begun to bleed and of hurrying out of the room, only it seemed to be rather a weak thing to do. So I just sat there and imagined that everybody was looking at me, which made me feel most uncomfortably hot. Lambert admitted afterwards that he was in his very best form that evening, and I think he must have been, for I never heard anybody talk such a lot of nonsense in all my life. I looked at Jack Ward once, and he was evidently having a very bad time, but every one else except Collier, who was sleepy, seemed to think that Lambert was amusing. He referred to Jack in a patronizing way as "our young hero," and said that my mind had been so completely upset by this brave deed that for some days I had been a cause of considerable anxiety to my friends. When he made that remark I took a very ripe pear from a dish in front of me, but Learoyd persuaded me not to throw it. I couldn't have missed Lambert, and I think he deserved to be mobbed, but he saw what was happening and I think it made him forget some of the things he was going to say about me. At the end of his speech he actually began to recite a piece of poetry of his own, though the first line was about the brave deserving the fair and sounded like somebody else's, which was a way his poems had. He had arranged for slow music to be turned on while he did this, and there was such a general feeling against the combination that he had to sit down before he had finished. Bunny Langham, who was a member of the Horace Club, and disliked any poems made in Oxford except those which he wrote himself, led the hubbub, and after we had drunk Jack's health there was such a noise that he escaped having to reply. When any one shouted for him, as they did fitfully for some time, their voices were always drowned in the general cheerfulness of the evening, and he finally came round from the other side of the table and sat down by me.

"You have been making a most awful row," he said.

"Self-defence," I answered, "I didn't want to hear anything which Dennison said."

"A most rotten evening, the proggins will come in a few minutes if he is within shouting distance. They have been trying to get us out for the last quarter of an hour."

"Several men seem to have gone already."

We talked for some minutes, and then a waiter came in and said the proctor was coming down "The High," so we all bolted as hard as we could. Instead of turning down the Turl, I saw Dennison run down the High, with Lambert pursuing him and telling him to stop. But Dennison had been careful during the last part of the evening, and had arrived at the state when any one shouting at him made him run all the faster, while Lambert, excited by oratory and the after-effects of it, declared very loudly that he would catch Dennison if he had to run a mile.

"Dennison thinks that the proggins and all his bulldogs are after him," Bunny Langham said; "the whole thing was only a trick to get us out before anything happened."

"They can catch me if they like," Ward replied, "I can't run to-night."

So the three of us walked back to St. Cuthbert's, and Bunny complained bitterly that he could not come in and wait until Lambert and Dennison turned up. The first man to come into college after us was Collier, who said he had been dodging round the Radcliffe for a quarter of an hour, and soon afterwards Learoyd and Webb strolled in and pretended that they had been sitting under the table in the Sceptre, but they looked exceedingly warm. We all went to Ward's rooms, which were a kind of club for any men he knew and very often used when he was not even in them, to wait for Dennison and Lambert; but we had to stay until nearly twelve o'clock before either of them came, and then there was a tremendous thumping on the door, and Dennison, in a most exhausted condition, tottered in and nearly collapsed in the porter's arms.

It was some time before he had breath enough to walk across to Ward's rooms, but when we had got him settled in an arm-chair he began to feel better.

"At any rate I did the brute," he said, "that bulldog will remember me for the rest of his life."

I should have given the whole thing away by laughing if I had said anything, and I moved to the window so that I could put my head outside if I really had to laugh, while Collier, who had been scored off by Dennison very often, began to ask him questions. He had not to ask many, because when Dennison once began to talk, he told us everything without needing much encouragement.

"That big bull-dog has had his eye on me for ages," he said, "ever since I dodged him one night last term in the Corn, and I know that he has been saying that he would catch me some day." He stopped for a minute, being still rather breathless, and Collier asked him where he had been. "Directly I went out of the Sceptre he started off after me, and I made up my mind I would give him the deuce of a time before I had done with him, so I ran like blazes down the High, and when I turned round by Magdalen to see if he was coming I saw the brute in the distance. So off I went again, and when we got to the running-ground I heard him panting and swearing and shouting a hundred yards away. I let him get a bit closer and then went on towards Iffley; but I got a most horrible stitch, so I went as hard as I could for a bit, and then climbed over a gate and

sat down under a hedge. I waited until he had gone past, and then came back to college. It is the easiest thing in the world to score off a bull-dog, they are simply the stupidest men in the world."

"He must have got a long way past Iffley by now," Collier said.

"I don't care where he is, but I shall have to look out that he doesn't get level with me," Dennison replied.

"You will always have to wear a cap and gown now," Learoyd remarked.

But Dennison took no notice of this advice.

"Where's Lambert?" he asked; "everybody else seems to be here except him and that fool, Bunny Langham."

"We don't know, he has not come in yet," Collier answered, and at that moment there was a rap at the door, and as soon as Lambert got into the porch I put my head out of the window and told him to come up to Ward's rooms. As he walked across the quad I saw that he had been having a rough time of it, for his clothes did not look as immaculate as usual. He was carrying an overcoat over his arm, and his shirt and collar had given way so badly that the first thing he did when he got into the room was to go to a looking-glass, and see how he could improve the appearance of things. A lot of men asked him where he had been, but he had forgotten that any of us had seen him start after Dennison, and he answered that he had just been for a stroll. "I like to have a walk by myself after a noise," he added; "the heat of that room made me feel absolutely ill."

Then Ward could not restrain himself any longer, and told Dennison that we all knew Lambert had been running after him, and that there had been no proctor and bull-dogs in the High.

"Coming suddenly out of a hot room into the open air always affects me," Lambert said. "I made up my mind I would catch Dennison if I ran until my legs gave way."

"It's all a silly lie," Dennison exclaimed; "I was chased by the big bull-dog; I should have seen that shirt, which was white when you started."

"I had on an overcoat," was Lambert's reply.

"Did you go to Iffley?" Collier asked.

"Iffley? Good heavens, no, I never went any further than Magdalen Bridge."

There was such a shout of laughter that I believe I should have thought anybody else except Dennison had been rotted enough.

"Then I *was* chased by a bull-dog!" he said emphatically.

"You weren't chased by any one after I stopped, for I sat on the bridge for quite ten minutes, and then I thought I would come home by Long Wall Street, the High being rather exposed at night. I made an unfortunate choice." He shot his cuffs down, but they were terribly limp, and he looked at them with disgust.

"What happened?" Ward asked.

"I met the proggins, and having got my wind I charged right past him. Then I ran round by the Racquet Courts, and finally hid in a garden by Keble. I ought not to have done that, because the bull-dogs know me, and I found them waiting outside when I came in. It is all your fault for running away when I told you to stop," he said to Dennison.

"I expect you were hiding in the garden at the same time Dennison was hiding from you behind a hedge in the Iffley Road," Collier said, and the idea pleased Lambert so much that he took off his tie and went to the looking-glass again. But he soon made up his mind that no tie, however beautifully tied, had a chance with a collar which looked like a piece of moderately white blotting-paper, so he stalked out of the room without wishing any one good-night, though he did wave his tie in Jack Ward's direction as he went, and since it was very late I followed him.

During the rest of the term I hardly saw anything of Fred, as he was playing cricket for the 'Varsity, and whenever I tried to see him I nearly always failed. I did not try much, for I did not see why he wanted to avoid me, and I thought he was treating me very badly. Besides, my people were bothering me a lot during the last few days of the term, and I didn't see any use in telling Fred that my mother wanted Jack Ward to come down to Worcestershire during the summer. As a matter-of-fact I was in an awkward position, for my mother had written to Jack Ward to thank him for pulling Nina out of the "Cher," and to say that she would be very glad if he could come down sometime to stay with us. But I thought Jack Ward would not come unless I asked him myself, and that rotten jumble he talked about love on my bed, and a sort of feeling that Fred would not like him to come kept me from saying anything to him. Jack only told me that my mother had written to him, and I heard from her that she had asked him to stay, so I had some time to think of what I had better do, and the more I thought the more bothered I became.

I had one idea which pleased me for a quarter of an hour; it was that Jack should come while Nina was away, but as soon as I thought of the temper Nina would be in when she found out this little plan I abandoned it quickly. Another idea, which did not please me for so long, was that I should tell Jack that my people simply hated any one who flirted, but that seemed both to be taking a good deal for granted and to be rather hard on Nina; besides, it reminded me unpleasantly of those advertisements for servants which end up, "No followers allowed," and which, I should think, are a great waste of money. In addition to this bother which I manufactured more or less for myself, I had another trouble which did not worry so much because I understood it better. Mrs. Faulkner had told my mother, quite privately, that I was in her opinion doing very little work at Oxford, and my mother was not as disturbed at this as her informant thought she ought to have been. At least I suppose that must have been the reason why Mrs. Faulkner told my father the same tale, and even took the trouble to show him some of the papers which were in that wretched parcel. I could not expect him to approve of all those papers, and I did not dare to tell him that I had not chosen them myself, because he would then have accused me of laziness and extravagance and a whole host of unpleasant things, so I accepted his rebukes with a contrite spirit and wrote and told him, quite truthfully, that I read very serious papers nearly every week. But when you have been fairly caught buying a host of sporting and theatrical literature, it isn't much good trying to persuade your father that it was a fluke. I sent him *The Spectator* soon afterwards, but he never acknowledged it, and my mother in her next letter drew my attention to the fact that he had subscribed to this review for the last seven years. My luck was very bad just then, I seemed unable to do anything right.

There was only one thing which cheered me up, and it was that Owen had got over the worst part of his illness. But I could not even think of this without being bothered, for when a man is ill you don't mind promising to do anything, and it is only when he is getting better that you begin to realize how much you have promised. It was certain that I must pay the expenses of his illness, and it was equally certain that I should not have enough money to pay my college bills as well; the whole thing made me very pensive.

Murray was in my rooms one night just before the end of the term, and I was talking over my difficulties, for he was always hard-up himself and not likely to offer to lend me anything, when a note was brought in from Fred, and the first thing which fell out of the envelope was a cheque for fifty pounds. I did not know what to think of that, but the note upset me altogether.

"Dear Godfrey," Fred wrote, "you told me some time ago that you were hard up, so I am sending you a cheque in case you want it. My people have just sent me more money than I shall use this year, and you can pay me back when you like. I am afraid I shan't be able to come down to you after the 'Varsity match, as I have promised to go with a reading party to Cornwall for two months. I believe the only thing to do down there is to play golf, which isn't much fun, but Henderson is coming, and we shall try to get some cricket. Please remember me to your people. Yours ever, F. F."

"P.S. I suppose you won't come down to Cornwall; the men are all right, five of them."

Now Fred had spent nearly all his school-holidays with me, and since we had been at Oxford he had been down for both vacs, so for him to write and say calmly that he had made arrangements to go on a wretched reading party and then to ask me in a postscript to join it, made me want to go to Oriel at once and speak to him. But, fortunately, it was nearly eleven o'clock and I could not get out of college, so as Murray had gone back to his room I went along the passage to work off some of my agitation on him. Murray, however, was one of those annoying men who know exactly when they have had enough of anybody, and I found his oak sported. I beat upon it for some time without any result, and having told Murray my opinion of him in a voice loud enough to penetrate almost anything, I went back to my own rooms and sat down to write to Fred. In the course of an hour I wrote and tore up several letters. Some of them I intended to be dignified, some of them were abusive; in some I kept the cheque, but in most of them I sent it back; in one I enclosed it with the words, "you will find the cheque you were good enough to offer me;" that was the first I wrote, for I was quite incapable of even thanking him until the labours of the imposition which I had set myself began to tell upon me.

I had just torn up the seventh letter, and after a desperate struggle whether I should begin the eighth "Dear Fred" or "Dear Foster" had compromised matters by writing "Dear F. F.," when Jade Ward began to yell my name down in the quad, and I went to the window at once and told him to shut up. For the Warden's house was in the back quad, and although I was pleased to think the Warden my friend I knew he always slept with his window open, because he had told me so in a very great outburst of confidence, and I did not want my wretched name to break in upon his night's rest. I had not got so many dons on my side that I could afford to make the Warden angry; besides, I really liked him, and he was always nice to me, though he did tell the Bishop in the Easter vac that, until I lost a certain exuberance of animal spirits, any credit I did to the college would be more physical than intellectual. But I did not bear him any grudge for that, because he could not help using long phrases, and if he had just said that I liked athletics I should have been rather pleased, which was what he really meant, only the Bishop did not think so.

I shoved the fragments of my letters into a drawer, and when Jack Ward came in I said I was going to bed. The sight of him reminded me of Nina, and to think of Nina gave me a headache. I had never imagined it possible that I should find it difficult to manage her, and here she was at

the bottom of all my troubles. As I stood in my room and looked at Jack sitting in my most comfortable chair, the reason why Fred had written that note suddenly occurred to me. Of course she was the reason, and leaving Jack to amuse himself I sat down and wrote another note; but when I read it through it seemed as hopeless as the others, so I tore it up, and having no more note-paper I decided to see Fred in the morning. Then I went into my bedroom and began to undress noisily, so that Jack might know what I was doing, but he gave a huge snore just as I was ready to go to bed and I had to throw a cushion at his head.

"Turn the lamp out, when you go," I said, and I got into bed. I left the door partly open, because my room wanted all the air it could get, and I heard him waking up slowly and stretching himself. After that he attacked a soda-water syphon until it gave a protesting gurgle.

"I've found the whisky, but you don't seem to have any soda," he called to me, but I pretended that I was asleep. However, he ransacked my cupboard until he found another syphon, and then he came and sat on my bed. I told him I was very tired, because I had not forgotten the last time he had invaded me in this way, and two doses of talking about love would be a trial to any man.

"I wanted to talk to you, only you were so busy, and then I went to sleep," he began.

"Well, cut it short, it must be nearly one o'clock."

"Your people have asked me to stay with them in the vac, and I want to know what time would suit you best."

He had cut it far too short to suit me, and I asked him not to sit on my foot, which he was not sitting upon, so that I could think for a moment. Then I turned my face to the wall. But I brought myself round pretty quickly, and felt very displeased with Jack. Things were much worse than I thought they were, if he could throw away all decency and simply insist on coming. Had I wanted him I should have asked him.

"I had a letter from Mrs. Marten this morning, asking me to settle the time with you," he said.

"Any time will suit me," I answered, "except that I may go away with a reading party, and I am afraid you will find it most awfully slow."

"I shan't find it slow," he asserted with conviction.

"There's nothing much to do except loll about," I said.

"That will suit me down to the ground," he said, and I turned over once more. It isn't much good talking to a man who confesses that he likes lolling about; but I thought I would make things out as bad as possible.

"We do nothing but slack down there," I said; "there's not much cricket, and we only keep one fat cob, which is a sort of horse-of-all-work."

"Got a river?"

"A sort of glorified brook."

"And a boat?"

I had to say that we had a boat, but I explained that it was very old.

"That's all right," he said most cheerfully, and I believe he would have been pleased if I had told him that we lived in a barn with several holes in the roof.

He was beginning to think it was time for him to go to bed, when I heard somebody else blunder into my sitter, and in a moment Lambert appeared at the door. Now Lambert, who was only gorgeous by day, frequently became aggressive at night, and I told him to clear out jolly quickly. But instead of doing what he was wanted to he lit a huge cigar, and began smoking the thing in my bedder. He also made a number of stupid remarks about my personal appearance, and though I hate getting out of bed when once I am comfortable I really could not put up with the man, for he compared me to several people, ancient and modern, who suffered from various defects. Jack Ward told him several forcible things, but he went on insulting me, and then cackled as if he had made a joke. So at last I hopped out of bed, and he, escaping from my bedder, continued to cackle in the next room; I just stopped to put on a pair of shoes, and then I went after him; he ran down the dark staircase as hard as he could, and I, anxious to give him one kick, for the sake of honour, pursued him. Both of us got safely to the bottom of the stairs, and I fairly raced him across the back quad, but just as we were going into the front one Lambert stopped suddenly and doubled back, while I was running so furiously that I did not turn quickly enough, and before I could follow him I saw another man standing in front of me with a little straggly beard and great big spectacles. We looked at each other, and then I gave up thinking about Lambert and walked back to my rooms; there was a horrid wind, and I shivered in my pyjamas as I went back to my staircase. Lambert seemed to have disappeared altogether, but I met Jack striking matches and groping his way down.

"Did you catch him?" he asked.

"Just like my luck," I answered. "I met the Subby."

"What's he doing at this time of night?"

"That's what he will ask me to-morrow if he recognized me. There wasn't much light."

"He ought to have been in bed."

"I don't believe dons ever go to bed," I replied. "Give me a match, so that I can get up without breaking my neck."

The next morning Lambert came round while I was at breakfast. He was full of apologies and hopes that the Subby had not recognized me.

"He told me that he sleeps so badly, that he often gets up in the middle of the night and takes a walk," he said, without the slightest regard for truth.

"Then there is no reason why I shouldn't take a run if I like," I replied.

"But you were shouting," he said, as if he wished I had not been.

"I'm a somnambulist, only I somnambulate faster than most people."

"I'm afraid that won't wash," he said, and he started striding up and down my room until he found he was always coming to a wall, and then he stopped in front of the looking-glass, and stared earnestly at himself. "Can't we think of anything better than that?" he asked.

"Doesn't your own face help you?" I asked, and he turned round slowly.

"One of my front teeth has got a chip off it," he said.

"By Jove!" I answered, for Lambert both the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning, was too much for me.

"But about the Subby?"

"He hasn't sent for me yet. Just poke your head out of the door and yell for Clarkson; yell, don't think you are singing."

He did yell, and I had breakfast cleared away.

"I am afraid he must have seen you if you saw him," he went on, and the bulk of the man seemed to cover up all my mantelpiece.

"Get out of the light, I want some matches," I said. "Perhaps he saw you."

"No, I caught a glimpse of his beard coming round the corner."

"I wish men wouldn't come and talk rot to me in the middle of the night."

"I have apologized for that; of course I shall tell the Subby it was my fault."

"You are a big enough fool to do anything," I retorted, but he only smiled at me, and after helping himself to a cigarette he went away.

About half-past ten I got a wretched notice from the Subby to say he wished to see me at one o'clock, and I decided to stay in my rooms to work, and not to go round to Oriel until the afternoon. My work however, was sadly interrupted, for as soon as I had really settled down, and I settle down slowly, Dennison came in to condole with me about my bad luck, but when I told him that I had got to go to the Subby I caught him grinning, which exasperated me. So he soon disappeared, and then Jack Ward came, and after he had gone I went and had a talk with Murray. I have never known a morning go so quickly.

I had scarcely looked at the Subby's notice when I got it, for I only read the time I was to go to him, and then shoved the card into my pocket; but at one o'clock I went off to see him, wondering how I could explain matters best. On my way across the front quad I met Lambert and Dennison lounging about arm-in-arm; they wished me luck, and I told them to go to blazes. I simply hate men who can't stand without propping themselves up, the one against the other.

I knocked at the Subby's door without having made up my mind why I had been running about in pyjamas at one o'clock in the morning; the somnambulist tale did all right to annoy Lambert, but I was not such an idiot as to try it on a don. I had to knock twice before he told me to come in, and when he saw me he only said "good-morning." So I said "good-morning" and waited.

"What is it?" he asked, when he discovered that I did not want to go to some impossible place because my teeth ached, or my great-aunt wanted me.

"You sent for me," I said.

"No," and he shook his head until a lock of hair fell over his forehead.

"At one o'clock."

"I didn't send for you."

"I have the notice in my pocket," and I took it out and looked at it. Then I saw that some one had been scratching at the top of the card, but they had done it very neatly.

"Some one has been having a joke with you," he said, and he smiled as if he thought it a better joke than I did.

"They will be watching for me to come out," I said, and I took my courage in my two hands.

"I suppose they will," he answered, "but I don't want to know their names."

"I didn't mean that," I replied.

"What did you mean?" he asked, and I thought he was behaving splendidly.

"I wish you would ask me to lunch if you aren't engaged," I said, "and then they will have to wait for longer than they bargained."

"Of course," he answered, "they certainly deserve to wait."

I enjoyed that meal very much, the Subby only wanted knowing a little and then he became quite a good sort, and I think he was amused at a fresher calmly asking himself to luncheon with him, but it ought to have shown that I had a certain amount of confidence in him, for even I could not have asked myself to a meal with Mr. Edwardes. I doubt, however, if he ever thought of it in that light, for he had been Subby for five rather troubled years, and had so much to do with dealing with men who did things they ought not to have done, that he could have had no time to wonder why they did them.

We began by condemning practical jokes, which was very tactful of him; he said that he knew only one good practical joke, and that was played upon himself, but he would not tell me what it was though I promised that I would never try it on anybody. Then we talked about all sorts of things, until I had been with him nearly an hour, and the conversation was inclined to droop.

"Do you sleep very badly?" I asked, because I had heard several dodges for getting rid of insomnia, and I should like to have done something for him.

He blinked at me for an instant, and I think he was wondering what I was driving at, for I suppose it would not do for a Subby to sleep too soundly. "I am thankful to say I have never been troubled with sleeplessness," he said, and he looked rather drowsy at that moment.

"Some men do tell the most awful lies," I meant to say to myself, but somehow or other I said it much louder than I intended.

But he took no notice, and after thanking him very much I left him, feeling that I had another ally; but it is never prudent to reckon upon a man who has to look after the conduct of the college, he gets worried and then does not understand things quite right.

Lambert's head was poking out of Learoyd's window as I went back through the front quad, and thinking that I might as well get this thing finished off at once, I ran up-stairs and found Dennison and him in possession of Learoyd's rooms.

"Much of a row?" Dennison said, with a kind of sickly sarcastic smile which meant that he had scored off me pretty badly.

"Row?" I asked.

"Was the Subby furious?"

"I have been lunching with him," I answered; "I hope your lunch was not spoiled by waiting for me to come out."

They did not know what to say to this, so Dennison went on smiling and Lambert stroked his upper lip with one finger.

"You were nicely scored off," Dennison said at last.

"I had a jolly good lunch," I replied.

"Dennison doesn't make a bad Subby, and I imitate his writing pretty well," Lambert said.

"The Subby himself must decide that, when he finds out who was ass enough to buy a beard like his."

This reduced them to silence again, until Lambert said that he did not see how anybody could

find out.

"The Subby is much more wide-awake than you think. I wouldn't care to be in Dennison's place, he has just done the one thing which dons can't stand. However, the Subby is a rare good sort, and I shouldn't wonder if he let the thing drop, especially as it is the end of term," I said.

"You looked fairly sick this morning," Dennison remarked, but he was more vicious and less smiling than he had been at the beginning.

"You took me in all right," I acknowledged, "and I hope you won't hear any more about it."

"What did you tell the Subby?" he asked.

"Not much," and if he was fool enough to think that there was any chance of the Subby trying to find out anything, I thought I had better leave him to his doubts, so I went round to my rooms, and having got a straw-hat, I started off to see Fred; and fortunately I found him at Oriel trying to make his cricket-bag hold more things than it was meant to hold. He did not look particularly pleased to see me, but I have never yet met a man who can pack and be in a good temper at the same time.

"Where are you off to?" I asked, for there were still some days before the end of the term.

"I am going to Brighton to-night with Henderson."

"How did you manage to get leave?"

"We have both been seedy, and Rushden wanted us to go before we play Surrey again. In my last three innings I've made seven runs, and I should think Rushden begins to wish he had never given me my blue. I don't feel as if I should ever make another run."

"Your dons must be good sorts," I said.

"They're all right," he answered, and he sat down in a chair by the window and looked so unlike himself that I knelt down on the floor and took everything out of the bag. Then I packed my best, which must have been worse than anybody else's except Fred's, and when I had finished, though the bag still bulged and was not a thing to be proud of, it did not bulge so very badly; at any rate Fred said it would do, but when I looked at him again I forgot entirely that I had intended to be angry with him.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Nothing to speak of. I've had a cold and a headache, and just rotten little things like that. Brighton will cure me," but he didn't speak as if he cared whether it did or not.

"You've got to come to us directly that reading party is over or I won't have this cheque, and if I don't take the cheque I shall be in an awful hole," I said, for I can't lead up to things.

"I would very much rather not come," he answered.

"Why?"

"Oh, I don't know," he said, and then he got up and gave the bag a kick which, landing on a bat, hurt his toe. "You're the best fellow in the world, Godfrey, but you don't understand."

"There is something odd the matter with you, or you wouldn't say that. We don't say things like that to each other."

"Won't you come down to Cornwall?"

"No, I won't."

"Is Ward going to stay with you?"

"My people have asked him."

"And is he going?"

"He seems to think he is. I told him the boat was rotten and the cob fat, and that there was nothing on earth to do," I added most stupidly, but I had no idea then that any one could really be troubled by things which had never affected me in the least.

"And he is going all the same," Fred said, and he did not look a bit more cheerful.

So I sat forward in my chair and talked to him. It does not matter what I said, but I kept clear of Nina, and told him my people would be desperately sick with him, which made him uncomfortable, because he and my mother liked each other very much. I also told him that he was treating me badly; but I soon had to drop that, because he did not seem to think that it would make any difference how he behaved to me. However, I stirred him up, and if ever a man wanted stirring up he did; so at last he promised that he would come to us in September and stay until

the end of the vac, if he was wanted. I told him that if no one else wanted him I always should; but this remark did not appear to cheer him up at all, and I began to think he must be bilious. I know that whenever I had a cold at one of my private schools, the wife of the head-master always said it came from eating too much. But she was a curious woman with a large imagination, and when I wouldn't eat boiled rice and rhubarb-jam she told me that it was rice that made the niggers such fine men; this, however, did not have the effect upon me which she desired, for I was only eight years old, and had got an idea that if I agreed to eat rice I should become black. That lady has made me think ever since that from whatever cause an illness comes it is never from over-eating.

So I soon rejected the theory of Fred being bilious, though any reason for his unfitness except Nina would have been welcome. After a few minutes spent in the unsatisfactory pursuit of finding out that my batting average for St. Cuthbert's was 2.4, which I discovered not for my own gratification but to please Fred, Henderson came in, looking more freckled than ever and not in the least ill.

"You have got to come to Cornwall with us, hasn't he?" he said at once.

"The brute won't come," Fred said.

"You will have to; you know all the men, and they all want you to come. We will have a rare good time—only Fred and Hawkins have to work hard, the rest of us are not going to do much."

"I have to work all the vac," I said sorrowfully, and Fred, who had smiled at my average, began to laugh once more, and he really seemed to be much more cheerful when I saw him and Henderson off at the station, than he had been earlier in the afternoon.

The last few days of the term were terribly dull, because some of us had to do collections, and my papers did not altogether please Mr. Edwardes. I promised again that I would do a lot of work in the vac; but Jack Ward arranged that he would come down and stay with us directly after the 'Varsity match was over, and I could not be expected to allow him to loll in a boat and play the fool without restraint.

I had not been at home in June for years, and June is the month in which to see my mother's garden. Everything went swimmingly for a day or two; Fred made a lot of runs against Sussex, and Henderson—whose blue was very uncertain—made seventy-six. I was enormously pleased, and suggested at dinner that we should all go up to town to see Fred play in the 'Varsity match. My father and mother were rather delighted with the idea, and said they would go if Nina cared to come with us.

"It's the middle of the season," I said promptly, for I suppose I was getting artful.

"I would rather not go," Nina said decidedly, "but do take Godfrey up with you."

"I shan't leave you here by yourself," my mother answered.

"It's a pity Miss Read has gone," I put in, and Nina looked very savagely across the table at me.

"You had better go up by yourself," my father said.

"Don't you want to see Fred playing in his first 'Varsity match—you came up in December to see me play?" I asked Nina.

But she simply went on eating her fish as if I had not spoken, and I wished again that Miss Read had not left us.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PROFESSOR AND HIS SON

There is not much room for a feud in a small family, and, thank goodness, I did not belong to a large one. Collier had five brothers and four sisters, some of whom were never on speaking terms with the others except at Christmas or a birthday when, from habit, they declared a truce. "The truce is no good," Collier said to me when he told me about it, "because the only thing which happens is that they change sides. I believe they pick up." "What happens to you?" I asked. "Oh, I'm neutral, a sort of referee, and have a worse time than anybody," he replied, and I was glad that fate had not decreed that I should be born into the Collier family.

I am sure that had I been able to find any one else to talk to, I should have left Nina alone after she had refused to go to the 'Varsity match. It would have been a great effort, but I thought

that Nina was going out of her way to be particularly horrid, and she liked talking as much as I did. Silence, an air of offended dignity, the sort of not-angry-but-very-sorry business, would have been a heavy punishment for her if I could only have inflicted it, but when my father and mother were engaged there was often nobody, except Nina, to ask to do anything. So after wasting one beautiful afternoon I decided that the best thing I could do was to come to a plain understanding with her.

Fortified by my idea, but at the same time rather nervous, because I knew that unless you are a master and the other person happens to be a boy it is much easier to talk about a plain understanding than to arrive at it, I strolled on to the lawn, and after taking a circuitous route I sat down by Nina. I had got her at a disadvantage because she was reading a book which my mother had said was good for her, and if I sat there long enough and bounced a tennis-ball up and down in front of me I knew she was bound to talk. For some reason or other I did not feel like beginning, and this disinclination did not come from chivalry, but I must confess from fear, Nina being armed with all sorts of weapons which if I had possessed I should not have known how to use.

"You seem to be very busy," she said after I had bounced my ball up and down two hundred and eleven times without missing it. I took no notice of that remark except to count out loud. "Twelve, thirteen, fourteen" I went on carefully, and when I was half-way through fifteen she threw her hat at the ball and, by a miracle, hit it.

"You are as big a baby now as you were ten years ago," she said.

"I only wish you were," I answered, and threw the ball away from me.

"So that I might everlastingly fetch and carry for you and Fred," she replied quickly.

"That isn't true," I retorted; "at least if it is true of me it isn't of Fred. He always treats you well."

"You will talk to me about Fred until I shall positively hate him."

"I want to talk about him now," I said.

"Of course you do, he is your favourite topic of conversation," and really I believe she knew that if she attacked me I should forget to talk about Fred.

"You don't seem to see what a friend he is of mine," I answered.

"If I liked all the friends of every one I know, I should never have any time to do anything else."

"You forget that I happen to be your brother," I said, but I might have known better than to make such a remark, for she seemed to think it was amusing.

"Sometimes you are quite delicious," she returned, and I began to feel that we were as far off a plain understanding as we had ever been.

"Look here, Nina, you are beginning to give yourself airs, and it is time some one told you," I began desperately. "You will be known as a nice girl gone wrong; you were nice once, and now you talk as if you know a lot of people and try to make out you are about twice as old as you really are. It won't do, it really won't; what's the good of pretending things, it's such a waste of time?"

She looked away from me when I had finished, and I had not the vaguest idea how she would reply, but at any rate she did not laugh.

"You are really serious for once," she said half questioningly.

"I often try to be serious, only no one ever suspects it," I answered, unable to keep myself out of it.

"But you are always one-sided."

I very nearly said that I had only spoken for her good, but managed to stop myself, because no one ever believes you when you say it. Besides, it would have annoyed her, so I was silent.

"You see you have not got much older, and I have. I couldn't bounce a ball up and down two hundred and thirteen times now."

Again I used abstinence and stopped myself from telling her that she could never have done it, for she was quite solemn, and I thought we were getting at something. I hoped, too, that we should get it quickly, for a tired feeling was creeping over me.

"You are only eighteen," I said.

"I am nineteen next week," she answered, and I knew that she meant this both as a rebuke

and a reminder.

"That's not very old."

"It's old enough for me to know that you and I will never quarrel about trifles," she said.

"Then will you come to the 'Varsity match?" I asked.

"You don't think the 'Varsity match a trifle, do you?"

"I'm not going to sit here and quibble; you're too clever altogether," I said, and I got up and wondered in which direction there was most to do, but Nina stood up, too, and put her hand through my arm.

"Let us go for a walk by the river before dinner," she said, and after asking what good she thought that would do I went.

"My dear Godfrey, you are simply splendid," she went on, "the dearest old bungler I know. You remind me of the Faulkners' ostrich, which goes on tapping at the window when it has been opened and there is nothing to tap at."

I did not know what she meant, and if that ostrich had not been rather a friend of mine I should have been insulted. As it was I did not feel pleased.

"You will spend your life running your head against brick walls," she continued.

"I am not going down to the river if you are going to preach to me," but we were already half-way there. "What about the 'Varsity match?"

"You don't understand things, Godfrey."

"Fred has told me that already," I said sulkily.

"Oh, has he?" she replied, and I saw that I had stumbled upon something which made her think. We sat down by the river and did not speak to each other for a long time, and when Nina broke the silence her mood had changed completely. She cajoled me; I think that must have been what she did, and I was weak enough to like it. It was so nice to have me home again; we were going to have a splendid time together, we always had been together; Mrs. Faulkner said Oxford spoiled so many men at first, it made them prigs; but there was no chance of me becoming a prig, I was just the best sort of brother in the world, because when I did meddle in other people's business I hated doing it, and did it all wrong; in the future she would try to do everything to please me, for she was never happy unless I was. As regards my digestion, I certainly must have resembled the Faulkners' ostrich, for I swallowed all this; and when we had walked back home I felt as if my attempt to come to an understanding had not been a failure.

When, however, I thought over what she had said I was not so pleased, for I began to see that if the summer was to be splendid and I was not to be called a prig I must give up the idea of taking her to the 'Varsity match. In fact, in ten minutes I had come to the conclusion that I had been made a fool of, but no one could expect me to begin the thing all over again. I made a resolution then, which is worth recording because I kept it, that I would never tackle Nina again about my friends; she was too much for me, I acknowledged to myself, and apart from determining that she should at least behave decently to Fred, I made up my mind to keep clear of things which seemed altogether out of my line.

It was arranged finally that I should go alone to town for the 'Varsity match, and should bring Jack Ward back with me. My mother said I must stay with the Bishop, and if she had not wanted me to go very much I think I should have found a number of reasons why I had better stay with him at some other time. For though the Bishop in the country had made himself quite pleasant, I had a sort of feeling that he had his eye on me and that this visit would be one of inspection. My reluctance was apparent to Nina, and one evening she mentioned it before dinner.

"I don't see what there is to be afraid of. Think of him as an uncle," she said.

"I am not afraid of a hundred bishops," I answered.

"Then you needn't be nervous about going to stay with half one, because he's only a suffragan."

"You shouldn't speak of your uncle in that way, Nina," my mother said. "It makes no difference whether he is an archbishop or a curate, but I won't have him spoken of as if he is a fraction."

"Godfrey used to hate him, at any rate," she replied, simply to create a diversion.

"I am sure he didn't," and my mother's eyes turned questioningly upon me.

"I did rather bar him at one time until he was decent in the summer, he used to think himself so funny," I explained.

"I wish you would talk English," my father said. "Dinner is already a quarter of an hour late, I am going into the dining-room." He marched off quickly and Nina began to laugh, but I think she must also have been a little ashamed of herself.

"I am a scapegoat for everybody," I said to her; "for you, the cook, and the gardener's boy, whose whistle is always mistaken for mine."

"Never mind," she answered, "you don't look very depressed."

"It isn't fair, all the same; you don't play the game," and as my mother had already gone into the dining-room to sit rebukefully at a foodless table I followed her.

These solemn waitings, which did not happen unfrequently, were comical to me, and since my father never could understand why Nina and I were amused at them, he had generally forgotten his original grievance before dinner began.

When I got to London I could not help being struck by the difference between a bishop at work and a bishop at play. The chief impression I got of my uncle was of a man most strenuously at labour; if he wanted to lecture me he never had time to do it, and nearly the first thing he said was that I was to do exactly as I liked, and he gave me a latch-key so that I might feel that I was a bother to nobody. He was so extraordinarily kind and simple that I wondered how on earth it was that I had really hated him at one time, for I had hated him quite honestly, and I came to the conclusion that as soon as he had ceased to be a pompous humorist he had become a very nice man. At any rate he no longer made jokes, and I never had been able to think them good ones, because those which I remembered had been nearly always directed at me.

The 'Varsity match was a complete failure owing to the weather, and was never likely to be finished. Fred made fifteen in the one Oxford innings, and as the whole side made under a hundred, he didn't do so badly. But I think Cambridge might have won if the game had been played out, so when it poured with rain on the third day, I did not mind very much, apart from the fact that Lord's in wet weather is a terribly dismal place. I went back about one o'clock to my uncle's house and having found a huge London directory, I hunted for the name of Owen. I soon found an address in Victoria Street, which seemed to be the one for which I was looking. "Professor of Gymnastics, Boxing and Fencing" was pretty well bound to be right, and in the afternoon I started off to find Owen.

I wanted to ask him to come and stay with us as soon as Jack Ward had gone, and I had already told my mother about his illness, though I had never mentioned the life-saving tale. I had often wanted to ask my father what really happened, only having made a promise, I had got to stick to it, and I wished I had never been fool enough to make it; it seemed to be making a lot of fuss about nothing. But, if I could persuade Owen to come, the whole thing would have to be cleared up, and I thought being in the country would do him so much good, that the Professor would make him come whether he wanted to or not. I did not know quite what my father would say when he heard all about Owen, for in some ways he belonged to what, I believe, is called "the old school," and clung tenaciously to the belief that there was not a Radical yet born who did not work night and day for the destruction of the British Empire. We never talked politics at home, though sometimes we listened to a lecture. But, as Owen said that he would never have lived if it had not been for my father, they ought, I imagined, to have a sort of friendly feeling for each other, though I cannot say that I felt any great confidence in this idea. I relied more on the fact that as soon as you had removed the crust from my father, you found a huge lot of kindness underneath it. He liked to complain, and some people, who knew him very slightly, thought he liked nothing else, but they were most hopelessly wrong.

My chief recollection of that walk along Victoria Street is that my umbrella was constantly bumping into other umbrellas; I must have tried to walk too fast, and the result was that by the time I reached the Professor's, I was hot and splashed, and my umbrella had a large rent in it. The door of the house was open, and I saw a notice hanging on the side of the wall which told me to walk up-stairs. What I was to do when I had walked up-stairs puzzled me, so I went back into the street, and having rung a bell as a sort of announcement that some one was coming, I went up slowly. The house seemed to be full of stuffiness and gloom, so much so that had I been unable to find either the Professor or his son, I should not have been at all sorry. I was, however, met on the first landing by a servant who must have been cleaning a grate when I interrupted her. Her hair was straying over her face, and as she stood waiting for me to explain my business, she tried to arrange it properly, but she only succeeded in putting two large streaks of black upon her nose and forehead.

"I want to see Professor Owen," I said untruthfully.

"E's porely this afternoon."

"Never mind," I replied quickly, "is Mr. Owen in—his son?"

"E don't live 'ere, 'e lives at West-'Am with 'is ornt."

"Would you give me his address, I won't interrupt the Professor if he is not well?"

"Who may you be, I don't remember your fice?"

"I know Mr. Owen at Oxford, I have never been here before."

She laughed for a moment and then said she should have to ask the Professor for the address, but just as I was going to say I would write and ask him to forward my letter, a door opened on my right, and an enormous man in a blue pair of trousers and a flannel shirt came out into the passage.

"This gent wants Mr. 'Ubert's address," the servant said, and disappeared very quickly up another flight of stairs.

"Are you the Professor?" I asked.

"That's me."

I held out my hand, but the passage was dark and his attempt to get hold of it went wide.

"Will you come into my room? Business, I suppose?"

I said it was business, and walked into a small sitting-room, which seemed to be furnished principally with a table, a big arm-chair, and empty bottles.

"I'm cleaning up a bit to-day, you must excuse the bottles," he said, and put his hands on the table. I would have excused everything if only the room had not been so dreadfully close, and I stood while the Professor looked at the bottles and finally picked one up and put it down again in the same place. Then, as if the exertion was too much for him, he sank with a thud into the chair.

"You aren't well, I am afraid."

"No," he answered, "not at all well; damp heat always affects my head."

I sat down on a box labelled "soda-water" and looked at him. My first impression of him had been one of huge strength, my second was one of flabbiness, and no one could help guessing the reason. Everything about him was huge except his eyes, and they might have been had I been able to see what they were like, but all I could see was the puffiness beneath them, and that was enough to make me wish I had never come. I stared at him for some time, but he did not speak, and at last he began to breathe so heavily that I had to interrupt him. "I say, Professor," I began, and he jumped up and began to rub his eyes. Then he sat down again and putting his elbows on his knees looked at me as if he was trying to remember what brought me there.

"This is my afternoon off," he said; "I have no pupils until to-morrow at ten o'clock, and then I give a fencing-lesson to the Honourable Mr. Bostock. Perhaps you know him?"

I said that I did not, and I thought the Professor was a snob.

"What can I do for you? Fencing or boxing? I trained Ted Tucker years ago—you remember Ted Tucker, the Bermondsey Bantam as they called him? My eye, he was a hot 'un with his fists."

I had never heard of Ted Tucker, and said so.

"You don't seem to know anybody," he replied, and for the life of me I could not help laughing.

"Look here, young man, I'm not going to be laughed at. I may have my little weakness, but I keep my self-respect, and I'd like you to remember that, if you can remember anything. Who are you, I've asked you that before, and where did you come from?" He glared angrily in my direction and I did not like the look of him at all.

"I came to see your son," I answered; "I don't want to fence or box, but his address."

His manner changed at once. "Are you from Oxford?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And you call on my afternoon off, that's most unlucky." He talked all right but his legs were uncertain, and when he stood up he found the mantelpiece useful. "Rheumatism, I'm a martyr to it," he said.

"Very painful," I remarked, and got off my soda-water case.

"Don't get up, it's passing off. If you're from Oxford, I must put on a coat and collar. Would you oblige me with your name?"

"Godfrey Marten," I said.

"Colonel Marten's son? Here, sit in this chair. I must put on two coats," and he made a most gurgly kind of sound which must have meant that he was amused with himself. Then he looked towards the door as if wondering whether he could reach it.

"Please don't put on anything for me," I said, and I took his arm and directed him back to the

chair.

"Your father saved my life, and you're the very image of him. It's enough to upset an old man like me," and without the slightest warning tears began to roll down his checks.

"Cheer up," I said, for I felt very uncomfortable.

"And you'll go and tell him that you found me—that you called on my afternoon off."

"I shan't," I said stoutly.

"And you've been a good friend to Hubert."

"That's nothing; I want his address in West Ham."

"Don't say it's nothing, no deed of kindness was yet cast away in this world of sin," and two more tears began to roll.

"Stop that kind of thing, I simply can't stand it. Pull yourself together," I said, "and if you will give me his address I'll go."

"Don't go, you must stay and have a cup of tea. The Colonel, I hope he's well?"

"He's all right; you write to him still, don't you?"

"No, I never write to him."

"Hubert told me you did."

"He made a mistake. The Colonel and I quarrelled, but you must never say a word. I was treated badly, but I don't bear anybody any grudge, leastways not to the man who saved my life. Hasn't he ever told you about it?"

"Never."

"That's like him, but he will never want to hear my name again; I should take it as a favour if you will not mention it."

"Why shouldn't I?" I asked.

He stood up again and was ever so much better.

"I was misunderstood," he said.

"How did you ever know anything about me?"

"The gymnasium instructor at Cliborough is my brother-in-law. He was in the old regiment. He told me about you."

"He taught me fencing," I said, and added, "But why did you want Hubert to see me?"

"You do want to get to the bottom of things; would you like some tea?"

I did not want any tea, but I asked if I might open the window, and then I took my case across the room and got some air.

"It's right for every man to have one ambition," he said, in the way which made me loathe him.

"What's yours?" I asked promptly.

"That Hubert shall be a gentleman, that's why I wanted him to know you, only he's so shy ___"

"Good gracious!" was all I could exclaim, and it did not express my astonishment in the least.

"You'd have done very well for my job if he'd only buttoned on to you."

"He is not the kind of man to 'button on.'"

"Don't you teach your grandfather to suck eggs," he said angrily. "I like your impudence, but I'm busted if I can put up with it," but before I could answer him he was apologizing and shaking my hand most vigorously.

At that moment Hubert opened the door, and both saw and heard what was happening.

The Professor turned round quickly and forgot to drop my hand, with the result that I was pulled from my soda-water case on to the floor.

"I thought," he gasped, "it was old Ally Sloper."

I managed to escape from him and to stand up. Hubert, however, did not say anything, but began to brush my coat with his hand.

"Who is Ally Sloper?" I asked, for I began to think that the Professor, who was looking ashamed of himself, was a lunatic.

"He's Mr. King, the man who helps me at Oxford, he dresses rather funnily," Hubert explained.

"He bothers me when I am not well," the Professor added, but he did not seem certain what line to take and kept his back turned to both of us.

"If you would only be well, he wouldn't bother you," Hubert said at once.

"I am better than I used to be. You know how the weather upsets me, I haven't had an afternoon off for six weeks. Ask Emily," and when he turned round the tears were once more rolling down his cheeks, and I was desperately afraid that I was in for a regular scene.

"You are nearly all right now," I said, "and I must be going if Hubert will walk a little way with me."

He took my hand again and held it. "You will not think very badly of an old man who has served his country," he said.

"No, but I do think you ought to be——" and then I stopped.

"What?"

"It's no business of mine."

"You are the son of the man who saved my life."

"Oh don't," I replied, and a tear dropping plump on the back of my hand settled me. "I was going to say ashamed of yourself."

"To think that any one should say that in the presence of my son," he said, and dropped my hand.

"I have said it a hundred times, but no one else has ever had the pluck to," Hubert put in.

"Kick a worm when he doesn't turn," he said confusedly.

"That's all rot," I answered, and something compelled me to walk up to him and tap him on the shoulder. "You aren't a worm, and I wouldn't dare to kick you. Wouldn't dare, do you see; you're a fine, big chap, why in heaven's name don't you pull yourself together? I don't know much about it, but I'll bet it's worth it. A man like you oughtn't to go crying like a baby."

"No sympathy," he moaned.

"Rot," I said again. "I shall tell my uncle about you, he'll be a jolly useful friend."

"What's he?"

"A parson."

"Two pennuth of tea and a tract. No thanks," he shook his head decidedly.

"He's not that kind. A man isn't bound to be an ass because he is a parson."

"You seem to have kind of taken charge of me," he said.

"I don't mean any harm," and then, for it was no time for facts, I added, "I like you, you are an awfully good sort, really."

"Me and the parson uncle," he said, and he gave a hoarse chuckle. "We should do well in double harness. I'd pull his head off in about ten minutes."

"May I ask him to call on you?"

"You'd better see what Hubert says. I'm only a dummy."

"A good big dummy," I answered, with the intention of taking myself off pleasantly.

"Oh, be rude. Trample on me, call me names," and then swelling out his chest and glaring at me, he added, "Hit me."

"I shouldn't care to risk it," I returned, and asked Hubert, who had been walking aimlessly round the room, if he was ready.

We left at last, and were pursued down-stairs by volleys of apologies. I had to stop twice and shout back that I was not offended and that I forgave everything, though from the way I had talked to him it struck me that he had about as much to forgive as I had.

We walked towards Victoria without speaking, and when I did try to talk I was most horribly hoarse, I must have fairly shouted at the Professor.

"My father's often like that after an afternoon off," Owen said presently. "He's first angry and then apologetic, and in the end he's most horribly ashamed of himself. Wednesday afternoon is his worst time, and I generally try to be with him and then he's all right, but I got stopped to-day. He comes down to my aunt's on Sundays, though he hates it."

"I believe he would like my uncle, he wouldn't jaw and cant."

"Do as you like. I've never thanked you, except in letters, for seeing me through that illness."

"How are you now?"

"All right; I feel as if I have been ill, that's all."

"You've got to come down to Worcestershire," I said; "a fortnight there will do you more good than years of West Ham."

"I can't do that," he answered at once.

We turned into Victoria Station and sat down on a bench. For some minutes I listened to his objections and answered them; in all my life I do not think I have ever been quite so sorry for any one, though I had sense enough not to tell him so. I felt rather a brute when I left him; it seemed to me that I had been having a most splendid time without knowing it, while he had been having a very wretched one, but I can't keep on feeling a brute long enough for it to do me any good, if feeling a brute ever does any good.

I overcame all Owen's objections, and I made him promise to come to Worcestershire, but as soon as I had time to think about it I wondered what on earth I should do with him when I had got him. I could count on my mother as an ally. I did not altogether know what my father would think, and Nina, as far as I was concerned, was represented by x in a problem to which no one had ever found an answer which was anything like right.

The first thing to do, however, was to go for the Bishop, and I think I can say that I went for him at some length. I didn't explain well, or he was very stupid, because he got dreadfully mixed up before he got the facts of the case clearly, and I can't say that he seemed altogether pleased when I told him that I had as good as promised that he would be a friend to the Professor.

"As it is, I am rushed off my legs. Who was it you said he had trained?"

"Ted Tucker." I had brought that in as a piece of local colour or whatever it is called, just to liven things up a bit, but I am afraid it was a mistake.

"You see, I don't know anything about prize-fighters. I did box once, but that's years ago."

"Why, you're the very man," I exclaimed. "He'd love you; he's not a bit more like a prize-fighter than he is like a Professor, he's more like a sort of prehistoric man in blue trousers and a shirt."

But prehistoric men did not seem to appeal to my uncle any more than prize-fighters. He looked very sombre indeed, so much so that I was quite impressed, but I had taken this job in hand and really had to see it through. So I talked, and I won in the way all my few triumphs have been won, by talking until the other man wanted to go to bed.

"I like your enthusiasm, Godfrey," he said at last, "and I wouldn't check it for the world. I will do all I possibly can, both with the Professor and with your people. But you can't persuade me that your father will like the son of a man, who has been dismissed from the army for some cause, to come down and stay with you."

"Don't you tell that to anybody else," I said. "Owen only told me this afternoon, he's only just found it out himself."

"Are you going to tell your father all this?"

"Everything except that the Professor gets drunk now, and you're going to stop that," I added cheerfully.

"Oh, am I?" he answered, "I can't help wishing that it had not rained this afternoon and that you had been safely at Lord's."

"Well you can't say that I've wasted my time."

"You have got your hands too full, considering that you have promised to work this summer."

Don't forget you have got to work, we don't want any fourth in Mods," and then he wished me good-night, and on the next day I went home with Jack Ward, who had a most astounding lot of luggage.

I am not going to describe my first summer vac at any length, because if I once began I should not have any idea when to stop, it was the kind of time which made gloomy people cheerful and cheerful people gloomy; silly, ridiculous things happened, and Mrs. Faulkner was at the bottom of most of them. She even found a niece for me, but that came to nothing, for the niece was a very nice girl and in a week we understood each other beautifully. She stayed a month with the Faulknors and thought of me as a brother, which was most satisfactory; sometimes, however, she treated me like one and then I was not so pleased.

Jack Ward and Nina, in my opinion, behaved none too well; but my father liked Jack and my mother did not say much about him, which explains the whole thing. He was always ready to do anything, and his only fault in my father's eyes was that he was never in time for breakfast.

I was chiefly engaged during his visit in paving the way for Owen's. I told my mother everything and wanted to tackle my father at once, but she said I must wait for a favourable opportunity. I waited a whole week, and it had a most depressing effect on me, so I just walked into his study at last and got it over. It happened to be a damp day, during which he had felt two twinges of lumbago, but he forgot those twinges before he had done with me. I bore everything he said silently, because when he is in a furious rage in the beginning he tails off wonderfully at the end. It seemed that he had a very low opinion of the Professor, and he declared emphatically that he was not going to have his house made into a sanatorium. I listened to a crowd of disagreeable facts about my new friend, and my father declared that even the sight of his son would give him an attack of gout. "It is true," he said, "that I did save his life, and he had, as far as that went, cause to be grateful, and he wasn't grateful but a disgrace to the regiment. I want to forget all about the man and then you rake him up again, and you say that stupid uncle of yours, who plays cricket when he ought to be writing sermons, is going to be a friend to him. It's more than I can or will put up with," and he banged *The Nineteenth Century* down on his writing-table so violently that he upset a vase of roses and some of the water went into his ink-pot. After that he was incoherent for a minute, and I, not knowing what to say, remarked that the Bishop could not be expected to write sermons during his holidays.

"A bishop ought always to be writing sermons," was his only answer, and I guessed that his rage had reached its climax. I tried to lower the flood on his table by means of my pocket-handkerchief, and waited.

"What sort of a fellow is this son who pushes himself upon you in this way? It's monstrous."

"He's quiet and all right, and he has never pushed himself at all. I made him promise to come; he didn't want to, only it's his chance to get well and he must take it. You would have done the same thing."

"What's he like?"

"He's not exactly like any one else I know at Oxford, but——"

"Of course he isn't."

"I was going to say no one could possibly dislike him."

"I suppose he will have to come, but I want you to understand that in future I insist on knowing whom you want to ask here before you ask them. I am exceedingly annoyed, I shall go and see your mother."

I went with him, as when I am about I generally manage to absorb most of his anger, but after a few outbursts my mother soothed him, and in the end he even gave a grim sort of smile when I said that unless he had saved the Professor there would have been no bother about his son.

"Don't call that man a Professor," he said, "he's a humbug, he always was and always will be, and if it wasn't that I am sorry for a son who has such a father I wouldn't be talked over by you. But you have given your uncle something to think about," and that idea sent him smiling to the window.

One most splendid thing happened while Jack Ward was staying with us, for just before he was going away Nina fell into the river again and Jack was superb enough idiot to repeat his previous performance and jump in after her. I met them trying to get into the house by a back way, and from the look of them I saw that they were feeling rather silly. It is all very well to fall into one river, but when you start going overboard anywhere the thing becomes comical, and they fell from their high position as rescued and rescuer and had to put up with a good deal of wit, as we understood it at home. I didn't say much, because Nina was better than I was at saying things, but whenever I saw her I gave way to fits of silent laughter. I can't think how I thought of that dodge, it was so extraordinarily successful and so far above my average efforts, and as soon as I saw that it was working properly, I did not mind being called anything she liked. And my father, being particularly well just then, helped me by what, I was determined to believe, were

very humorous remarks. Jack did not hear many of them, but the few he did hear must have upset him a little, for he tried to explain himself by saying that he would jump into anything to save a kitten, which from the look of Nina did not seem to satisfy her much. In the end I don't believe she was as sorry for Jack to go as I was. She could not stand being a family joke, and I, having suffered in that way many times, could have sympathized with her if I had not thought that it was much the best thing which could happen.

I felt dull after Jack went, for he was the sort of man who does brighten up a place, and he was never by any chance bored; besides, I was wondering how I could make Owen enjoy himself, because the only thing I knew about him was that he did not care for any exercise except walking, and I hoped that he would be reasonable about the distances he wanted to go.

However, the day before he was to come, Miss Read arrived, which was an idea of my mother's, and a very good one. Miss Read had been Nina's governess for eight years, and she knew all of us better than we knew ourselves. She was a kind of tonic when any of us were depressed, and a cooling draught when we were angry; in my case she had seldom been a tonic, but all the same when she had left us at Easter I was very sorry. She was the only person I have ever seen of whom Nina was really afraid. I am sure she could have told some funny tales if she had felt inclined. She was supposed to be coming to see Nina, who was going to Paris in a few weeks to be "finished," but I am sure that my mother thought Owen would like her, and that she would like him. And as it happened, they were both botanists and butterfly-catchers, at least Miss Read knew a lot about butterflies, though her time for catching them had gone by, and they were always doing things together.

Worcestershire must certainly be a better place than West Ham for a botanist, and after Owen had got used to us I believe he enjoyed himself. We worked together in the mornings, which pleased my father, and he let my mother give him as much medicine as she wanted to, which pleased her, and I feeling virtuous after reading every morning for nearly four hours, was very pleased with myself. But he was in a mortal terror of Nina, though she really never gave him any cause to be, and made the most valiant efforts to learn the Latin names of plants. Miss Read and he made excursions and grubbed about in hedges, and Nina and I often met them at some place to have tea. It wasn't very exciting, for I had always to carry the kettle and the things to eat; but the sun shone most of the time, which was really a blessing, because on wet days Owen persuaded me to work in the afternoons as well as the mornings, and that was more than I had ever thought of doing in a vac.

I suppose Owen was what is generally called a smug, but he was not one by choice but by compulsion, which is the best kind I should think. He was so totally different from any other kind of friend I have ever had that I sometimes caught myself wondering whether I really liked him. But I could always satisfy myself about that, for there was one thing about him which no one could help liking; he was most tremendously clever and never tried to make out that he was, and having already seen plenty of people who were about as clever as I was, and who talked as if they were Solomon and Solon rolled into one, I was grateful to him. We got on very well together, though we had not got a single thing in common, except that we both liked sunshine; and that can't be said to be much, for I have only met one man in England who did not like the sun, and he had been affected, permanently, by too much of it.

Men get blamed freely enough for putting on side about playing cricket and football well, and they deserve all they get, but the men who put on intellectual side ought, I think, to be spoken to more severely, because they get worse as they get older, while the first sort of side generally dies an early death. Owen was a kind of encyclopaedia, who did not air or advertise himself, and I thought him a very rare specimen. Athletics meant no more to him than botany or butterflies meant to me, but when he went away my father said emphatically that it was refreshing to think Oxford turned out some men who took interest in useful things. I did not answer that remark, because he did not really know very much about Oxford, and his occasional hobby was that the country was being ruined by too many games. "A very well-conducted young man," he said of Owen, "always up in the morning, and always ready to go to bed at night."

"He looked much better when he went away than when he came," my mother said; "I hope we shall see him down here again."

"I think he means to make a name for himself," Miss Read added; "he knows exactly what he wants."

Nina yawned, and although I thought my father need not have described Owen as a well-conducted young man, I was thankful that his visit had passed off so well, and I said nothing.

After Owen had gone away we had a fellow to stay with us out of my brother's regiment. He was home on sick-leave, but had quite recovered from whatever had been the matter with him, and was as full of bounce as a tennis-ball. Mrs. Faulkner loved him and wanted Nina to follow her example, as far as I could make out, for she gave a dance and a moonlight supper party on the river. Mr. Faulkner, who was always more or less semi-detached, disappeared before the supper-party, which he told me was a midsummer madness.

"There will be a mist and the food will be damp and horrid, and everybody will be wanting foot-warmers and hot-water bottles before they have done, you had better put on your thickest

clothes and borrow my fur overcoat," he said to me. And he was a true prophet, for Nina caught a violent cold in her head, which checked and really put a stop to a more violent flirtation.

Nina went to Paris a few days after Fred came to us, and we all agreed that she would enjoy herself there, though I do not believe that any of us really thought she would. As a matter-of-fact she was so home-sick that my mother would have gone to fetch her back if it had not been for Miss Read, who was blessed with much courage and common-sense. Mrs. Faulkner tried her hardest to persuade my mother to bring Nina home again, and she came to our house and wept so much that I thought she was sure to win. But Miss Read met tears with arguments, until Mrs. Faulkner stopped crying, and having lost her temper, forgot that Miss Read had not only been Nina's governess, but was also one of my mother's greatest friends. So Nina stayed in Paris, and I wrote to her twice a week for a fortnight, but after that she began sending me messages in other people's letters, and I was sorry for her no longer.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ENERGY OF JACK WARD

After Nina went to Paris Fred spent most of his time in trying to be cheerful, but for some days he looked as if he had lost something and expected to find it round the next corner. I was very patient, though I do not believe he understood how often I wanted to argue with him. By the end of the vac, however, he had forgotten to be gloomy, and I hoped that Oxford would cure him altogether, for he had a good chance of getting his Rigger blue, and he had got to read; besides, I have never been able to see that perpetual gloom is of any use to anybody.

I went back to St. Cuthbert's full of desperate resolutions. I wanted to make every one in the college understand that it was the slackest place in Oxford, and having done that I wished to find the men who would make it keener. The scheme was a gigantic one for me to take up; it needed tact, and I went at it so vigorously that in a few days I had offended some men and had succeeded in making others look upon me as a freak. Dennison told me that I had a bee in my bonnet. If he had said that I was mad I should not have minded, but those horrid little expressions of his always tried me very much, and I am bound to confess that my first efforts to rouse the college met with more ridicule than success. Very few men seemed to care what happened to us, and nearly everybody pretended that our eight would rise again, and our footer teams cease to be laughed at, though no one tried to make them any better. Dennison wrote a skit called "The Decline and Fall of St. Cuthbert's"; and some artist, who thought that my nose was as big as my arm, made a drawing of me in which I was trying to carry the college on my back, and was so overburdened by the weight of it that nothing but my nose prevented me from being crushed to the ground. It was very funny and also very unfair in more ways than one, because I did not start my crusade with any idea of becoming important, and I have no feature which is superlatively large.

This skit of Dennison's really settled me for a time, but I did stir up one or two men whom I had never expected to do anything. Jack Ward stopped driving about with Bunny Langham, and began to play footer, and Collier actually went down to the river every afternoon. Physical incapability prevented him from rowing well, but he persuaded several other men, who did not suffer as he did, to go through the same drudgery, and for self-sacrifice I thought he was hard to beat, because he was quite a comical sight in a boat. What good did come from my first crusade was due chiefly to him; a kind of revivalist spirit was upon him, and many unsuspecting freshers who had only thought of the river as a place to avoid, were unable to resist his entreaties.

The dons heard of my crusade, and I know that Mr. Edwardes did not like it, but I had two of them on my side, and the others did not take any active measures against me. Mr. Edwardes took the trouble to tell me that I was mistaken in thinking that the reputation of St. Cuthbert's depended upon athletics, and I answered that I had never supposed anything of the kind, but that I thought a college which was slack about other things would end by being slack in the schools. This reply of mine surprised him so much that he told me that any campaign to be successful must be managed by the right people, and I agreed with him cordially, for although I knew that plenty of men would have worried everybody out of their slackness much more successfully than I could, I was not going to tell him so.

The Bursar supported me soundly, and we had a new don at the beginning of my second year who took a most invigorating interest in the college. He was known to us as "The Bradder," and though his real name was Bradfield it was seldom used, and as far as we were concerned he could have done quite well without it. I had become so accustomed to aged dons that I could not understand him at first, he was so very young. He was also reported to be very clever, but I was so impressed by his youthfulness that it took me some time to believe that he would ever count for much. I ought, however, to have known that The Bradder was not the kind of man who would allow himself to become a nonentity, for he was full of energy and determination.

I was never able to find out how the dons heard of my scheme, but they find out most things by some extraordinary means, and The Bradder spoke to me very encouragingly about it, though he looked at me as if I amused him in some odd sort of way. He also asked me to breakfast, which I thought was carrying kindness a little too far. I anticipated the usual thing—a crowd of men with large appetites, and a host who abstained from food in his efforts to provide conversation; but when I went to The Bradder's rooms I found that I was in for a *tête-à-tête*, and my opinion of the other kind of breakfast rose considerably. As a don I was not in the least nervous of him, but as a host I thought he might be overwhelming.

That he ever lived through this meal without laughing was a marvel, for when I was sitting opposite to him my nervousness vanished, and I told him exactly what I thought about every subject he suggested, and it was not until I had left him that it occurred to me that I had been talking nearly all the time, and that he had said very little. I determined that he was a most thoroughly good sort, but the idea of his being a don struck me as being absurd. I put him on my side with the Warden and the Bursar, and thought that Mr. Edwardes was in a hopeless minority of one in persecuting me, for I looked upon the Subby as a man who had been born to be neutral. I do not suppose that I should ever have started my first crusade if I had known that it was going to cause the mildest of sensations. As far as I had thought about it at all, I had imagined that everybody in St. Cuthbert's would be glad to see the college take its usual place again, and certainly I had no idea that I should be violently supported and opposed. The captains of everything were in favour of less slackness, but Dennison and all his set said that an Oxford college was not a public school, and talked a lot of nonsense about the iniquity of compulsory games. No further proof is needed to show how unfair they were, for a man must be mad to dream of compulsory games at Oxford, and such an idea never entered my head. But all this talking made me wish that I had never said or done anything, and before long I was heartily tired of the whole thing, for my own affairs became rather more than I could manage.

At the beginning of the term I had moved into larger rooms, and I was elected to both Vincent's and the St. Cuthbert's wine club. Murray advised me not to join the wine club, because I was an exhibitioner, and the dons would be sure to fix their eyes steadfastly upon me if I did. But Jack Ward was very anxious for me to join, and every other member, except Dennison, who was only elected when I was, spoke to me about it. So I became one of the twelve Mohocks, which only meant that I could give a guest a good dinner three or four times a term, and after that take him to the rooms of the club where there was a big dessert, and old Rodoski, who was concealed in the bedder, unless some one asked him to show himself, provided music. When we had finished with Rodoski we went out of college and played pool, and then we came back and played cards. There was not much harm about the whole thing, and occasionally it was quite dull, but some of our dons had got hold of the idea that a Mohock must be a rowdy and riotous person. Mr. Edwardes was one of them, and I found out very soon that he considered that I ought not to have joined the club. I did not, however, feel in the least like resigning, for though there were one or two members who took delight in nothing which was not an orgie, they were generally suppressed before they made much noise. A club of this kind depends a good deal upon its President, and we had a man who thought far too much of the reputation of the Mohocks to insult his guests by a common pandemonium.

My position with Mr. Edwardes had become a critical one when I broke my collar-bone playing against Richmond, and suddenly ceased to be a culprit and became an invalid. At the time I was very sick at my footer ending so abruptly, but my accident was really a stroke of good luck, for I feel certain that I should have been turned out of the 'Varsity fifteen anyhow. An Irish international named Hogan had come up who was, I thought, a really good full-back, and each time I was asked to play for the 'Varsity I expected to be my last. But as soon as there was no chance of my playing against Cambridge I got no end of sympathy, and nearly all the team told me that my absence weakened the side, though previously some of them had said the same thing about my presence. My accident settled the question of who was to be the 'Varsity back quite conveniently; it also made me give up all thoughts of my crusade, and gave me plenty of time to read. I should not think anybody's collar-bone has ever been broken at such an opportune moment. Fred played against Cambridge, but our forwards were hopelessly beaten, and no one distinguished himself for us except Hogan, who lost two teeth and covered himself with glory.

At the end of the Lent term both Fred and I got seconds in Moderations; mine was not a good second and Fred's was almost a first, so what would have happened if Fred had been smashed up instead of me is not worth inquiring, for there is no doubt that I did more work than he did. Murray got a first, which was what everybody expected; he was one of the few men I have ever seen who read logic because he liked it.

I cannot say that Mr. Edwardes was very pleased about my second, for he had told me I should be lucky to get a third, and in my case I believe he would rather have been a truthful prophet than a moderately successful tutor. When I asked him if I might read history for my final examinations he was doubtful if I was not seeking a degree by the least fatiguing way, but The Bradder was a history tutor, and although I had found out that he was a very strenuous man, I meant to work with him. So after many warnings against idleness I was allowed to do as I wanted, and Mr. Edwardes got rid of me, which must have pleased him very much. I do not think that any one else ever upset him so completely as I did, and I have never been able to find out why he disapproved of me to such an extent, unless it was that until I got accustomed to him I thought him funny, and when I think anybody or anything funny I have to laugh. No one else

laughed at Mr. Edwardes except me, and I should not have done so if I could have helped it, but an unintentionally comic don causes a lot of trouble.

Mr. Grace, the senior history don in St. Cuthbert's, was more like a very benevolent parent than a tutor. Perhaps he was rather old for his work, but he was so extraordinarily peaceful that you could not help liking him, and I had a vague feeling that he was my grandfather. The change from Mr. Edwardes to him was like going to bed in a choppy sea and waking up in a punt on the Cherwell. I can't explain the feeling I had for him, but he seemed to be surrounded by a homely atmosphere, and he reminded me of hot-water bottles and well-aired beds without making me feel stuffy. You worked for him because it struck you as being hopelessly unfair to annoy him if you could help it. He was a most pleasant old gentleman, and a very convenient tutor to have in a summer term. The Bradder, however, to whom I had also to read essays, scoffed when I told him that I had two years and a term before my examinations, and generally speaking allowed me to see that he was going to stand no nonsense. If he had been less of a sportsman I should have thought him more inconvenient, for I never found an excuse which he considered a reasonable one, and after I had done two very short essays for him he let me understand that I must do more work if I wanted him to be pleasant.

"Look here, Marten, it won't do," he said to me when I had read my second essay to him, which even surprised me by its early closing. "This could not have taken you a quarter of an hour to write, and you have read it in five minutes."

I had tried to lengthen my essay by stopping to discuss any point which might make him talk, but he knew all about that time-worn device, and had told me to finish reading before we discussed anything, and when I had finished there did not seem much to discuss.

"It's the summer term, and I read very fast," I said, because he was waiting for me to say something.

"Don't," he answered; "poor excuses are worse than none. When I began to read history, I wrote telegrams instead of essays, and I tried to make my tutor talk so that he should fill up the time, just as you have done. But I found out in a month that history is not a joke, and that my tutor was not a fool. You have got to read seriously, whatever else you may do; we may as well understand each other from the start."

I gathered up my essay slowly, for he had, as he spoke, scattered what there was of it over the table.

"It would be better to use a note-book than any odd piece of paper that happens to come your way," he said, and added, "if you are slack about your work, you may end by being slack at other things."

"So you have been talking to Mr. Edwardes about me," I said, and I was annoyed.

"Perhaps it would be truer to say that Mr. Edwardes has been talking to me about you," he answered. "You will probably like history very much if you will only give yourself a chance; don't think a fourth is any good to you—or me."

"I'm only just through Mods," I replied, "you do go at a fearful rate."

"You will have to be hustled until you get interested," he answered, "and I will hustle you all right, you can trust me to do that."

I expect that The Bradder knew that I should not care about being hustled by him, and the result of his conversation with me was that he got a great deal of essay out of me with very little trouble to himself, though I thought that he was mistaken in making me start at such a furious pace, and I asked him, without any effect, if he had ever heard of men being overtrained.

Although no one expected our eight to make any bumps, I think they astonished everybody by going down four places, and as we were being bumped by colleges which were generally in danger of being bottom of the river, a wholesome feeling spread over most of us that as a joke our rowing was nearly played out. We began to talk about what we would do next year, but Jack Ward was so disgusted with everything that he suddenly determined that he had wasted nearly two years, and meant to make up for lost time by doing everything with all his might.

I thought these terrific resolutions came from a row he had with Dennison about cards, a disagreeable row in which Dennison said such nasty things that had I been Jack, I should have picked him up and dropped him out of the window; but by some extraordinary means Jack kept his temper until he told him to shut up, and that ended the whole thing, for Dennison knew when it was wise to be silent. I did not think much of Jack's resolutions, for he had been doing no work for such a long time and with such perfect success, that a complete change was more than I was able to grasp. Every one in St. Cuthbert's was supposed to read for honours in some school or other, and Jack, having scrambled through pass "Mods," had for a year pretended to read law. I never saw him doing it, but he had a most effective way of fooling dons, and, as far as his work was concerned, he never seemed to be worried. When, however, he came to me three weeks before the end of the term, and told me he was going to give up law and read history, I thought he was seeking trouble.

"You will have to work if you have anything to do with The Bradder," I told him.

"For the last ten minutes I have been trying to make you understand that I want to work," he answered, but still I did not believe him.

"All your law will be wasted," I said.

"I don't know any, so that's all right."

"But the dons won't let you change."

"I can manage them; the history people won't want me, but the law people will be glad to get rid of me, I have sounded them already."

"You will end by reading theology," I said.

He gave a great laugh and said he didn't know where he should end, and that all he wanted to do was to work. But he spoke of working as if it was a new sort of game, and I thought his desire to try it would vanish as quickly as it had come, so I was surprised when he tackled The Bradder, and persuaded him that history was the only subject in which he could ever take a decent class. Without the consent of anybody, he stopped going to the lectures to which he was supposed to go, and came to my rooms at all hours of the day to borrow books and read them. Apparently he had become a kind of free-lance, having shaken off his old tutors and not having got any new ones, but he read through a short history of England three times in a week because he said he wanted a good solid ground-work to build upon. Perhaps The Bradder asked that he might be left alone, for certainly no one bothered him and he bothered nobody with the exception of me. I admit that I found him a very great nuisance, for I had been compelled to read during the last two terms, and I had not been smitten with any enthusiasm for an examination which was in the far distance. In fact I wanted to slack, and I did not see why Jack should choose my rooms to work in. The mere sight of him annoyed me; he took his coat off and turned up his shirt-sleeves to read, and whenever I made the slightest noise he told me to be quiet. I impressed upon him most earnestly that he could go anywhere he liked or didn't like, but he had settled upon me, and nothing I did could make him go or lose his temper. After a few days I got quite accustomed to him, and I believe that I should have missed him if he had not come to annoy me, but he showed no signs of slackening off, and I was watching for them every day.

We were within a few days of the end of term before I believed that Jack had any serious intentions of changing his manner of living, and then he explained the whole thing to me.

"I have worked for a solid fortnight," he said to me, "and if I can go on for a fortnight I can go on for two years. I didn't want to explain anything until I knew whether it was any good, for I have never worked before in my life and I didn't know what it was like. My father has suddenly got very sick with me, and says I have got to read or go down altogether; besides I am tired of doing nothing, and there are enough slackers in the college without me. We have got to pull this place together somehow." He threw himself into an arm-chair and picked up *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*. "George Meredith," he said, "I tried him once," and he shook his head.

"Try him again."

"I shan't have time, you are always coming out in unexpected places. I should have thought you would have liked a good sporting novel, I can't understand Meredith."

"The Bradder told me to read this."

"The Bradder's an idiot; you be careful, or you'll write stuff which the examiners won't trouble to read. An examiner doesn't like any other style except his own."

"How do you know?" I asked.

"I guess from the look of them, they must get so horribly tired; facts are what I mean to give them, piles of dates and things like that. Just let 'em know what I know at once and no rot about it."

"You have got to write essays, not answer questions like a Sunday-school class," I said, and yawned.

"The Bradder will have to teach me all about essays, but I am going to stick to plain English, no going round corners for me. I mean to row next year, and I am going to be coached in the vac; if I don't get into the college eight next summer, I—"

"Aren't you going to do a lot?" I interrupted him by asking.

"I have always done a lot; hunting three times a week is a lot when you play footer and cards as well. We will read after dinner for three hours."

I yawned again, for I had had very little fun for some time, and I felt as if a little relaxation would do me good. An Irish M.P. was coming to speak during that evening about the advantages of Home Rule, and although I thought Home Rule meant the disruption of the Empire and many

other things, I wanted to hear what this man had to say, and to see if anything exciting happened. The Bradder had told me that there was a good deal to be said in favour of Home Rule, but I put him down as a Radical and did not take any notice of him. The first thing I can ever remember about politics was my father saying that Radicals talked nothing but nonsense, and that had remained with me and was mixed up with the things which I most truly believed. The Bradder, however, made me think that Radicals were not bound to be hopeless persons. I don't know how he did it, but I think it was by telling me that I was one at heart. I never thought half so badly of them after that.

But if what I must apologize for calling my politics were rather wobbly just then, ten thousand Bradders could not make me a Home Ruler, and had I not known that other things happen at political meetings in Oxford besides the ordinary programme, I might have been content to stay in college and go on being dull and peaceable. As it was I thought that Jack and I had earned something in the way of excitement, and after a good deal of persuasion he started with me, but when we got to the meeting the place was packed with an audience which, from the noise, seemed to consist largely of undergraduates singing "Rule Britannia." We talked eloquently to the men at the doors, without getting past them. One of them told me that they had already admitted far too many of our kind, and then added that there was no room for anybody else whatever kind he might be, so we went over to Bunny Langham's rooms, which—for he was not living in college—were opposite the hall in which the M.P. was speaking. There were more than half-a-dozen men in Bunny's rooms when we got to them, and I found out that he had been scattering invitations broadcast during the afternoon. A lot of other men came in soon afterwards, but nobody did anything more extraordinary than sing out of tune until the meeting had finished. I was sitting by the window looking down on the people who had been in the hall, and nearly everybody had gone out of St. Aldgate's when Bunny came up to me and said he thought he should make a short speech. He went away and came back with a horn, which he blew so lustily that in two or three minutes he had collected a small crowd in front of the house.

"They are not enough," he said, and he blew on his horn until I should think fifty or sixty people were standing in the street. Then he put his head out of the window and shouted, "Silence. I will, if you will permit me, say a few words to you on burning questions of the day." The crowd was almost entirely made up of loafers from the town, and they received him with loud cries of approval.

"Fellow-citizens of Oxford," he began, and was told at once to speak up, and asked if his mother knew he was out and other ancient questions, which interrupted but did not discourage him.

"Fellow-citizens of Oxford," he repeated, "who have assembled in your thousands—" His next words were drowned by a rude man, with a blatant voice, telling him that he was a blooming liar.

"Fellow-citizens and burgesses of Oxford, who have assembled in your thousands to hear—" Bunny began once more, but the rude man shouted that he was not at a concert, and when he wanted to listen to the same thing over and over again he was not too shy to say so.

"I shall have to ask you to remove that gentleman, he is mistaking me for one of his unfortunate family," Bunny shouted back, and was told to go on and not mind Tom Briggs. It was not possible, however, for him to make himself heard, and instead of continuing his speech he and Tom Briggs talked to each other, until some one behind me threw a banana at Tom and knocked his hat off. At the same moment I saw the proctor and his bull-dogs coming down the street, and in a minute we had turned out all the lights in the room and gone up-stairs. There we stayed until we heard the proctor leave the house.

"That's a bit of luck," said Jack, as we sat down again.

"I can't make out what the deuce has happened," Bunny answered, "he must have spotted the house."

"Perhaps he didn't want to catch us; after all we were not doing much," some man, whose experience of proctors must have been limited, said.

We got back to the room and heard a tremendous boing in the street, for the crowd, deprived of their fun, were letting the proctor know what they thought of him.

"That's splendid," Bunny said, "it's a real score if he doesn't send for us in the morning. If he does he will be sick to death with me, I've been progged three times already this term. Pull the curtains and let's light up again."

"It's about time we went," Jack said; "has the crowd gone?"

I looked out of the window and told him there were only a few people left in the street, but just as we were going there was a knock at the door and a man came into the room.

"Halloa, Marsden," Bunny said; "I am afraid we have been making rather a row in here, perhaps you put a towel round your head and went on reading. Didn't you tell me you tied cloths over your ears when you wanted to be quiet?"

"It's not much of a joke having rooms in the same house with you," Marsden answered, and looked very solemn.

"Don't say that," Bunny answered. "Have a drink, I'm generally as quiet as a lamb."

Marsden sat on the table and refused to drink.

"It's no joke being in the same house with you," he said again, and began to laugh.

"I'm not going to set fire to the place or blow it up," Bunny replied.

"But the house becomes infested with proctors."

"Did you see the 'proggins?'"

"He came into my room and progged both Carslake and me. He said we were disturbing the peace of the town."

"He didn't, did he?" Bunny exclaimed, and then went off into such fits of laughter that for some time he could do nothing but cough and choke.

"He couldn't have chosen a funnier man. A sneeze is about the biggest row you have ever made in your life. Didn't you tell him you had nothing to do with the rag?" he asked at last.

"I left you to do that; he wouldn't listen to me, he seemed to be in a hurry to get it over," Marsden said.

"Was he Carter of Queen's, or the other man?"

"Carter."

"I'll be at Queen's at nine o'clock to-morrow, so you and Carslake needn't bother to go; Carter knows me. I am awfully sorry he has been shoving himself into your rooms; the worst of this place is, there is no privacy, Carter just goes where he pleases," and Bunny rang the bell and told his servant that he wanted a hansom in the morning at ten minutes to nine. There were only a few of us left in his rooms, but every one said they would be at Queen's to meet him, though he told us not to make fools of ourselves. "I asked Carter the last time I went to him to let me off a shilling because he had kept my cab waiting, and he fined me double for impertinence. I should think this would cost about two pounds, and I've got about thirty sixpences up-stairs, he shall have all those," he continued. "I'll have some fun for my money, so you fellows had better let me see it through by myself, I made the speech and blew the horn," but as we had all been in the affair we couldn't back out of it because we had been caught.

I walked as far as St. Cuthbert's with a New College man, who thought we should have to pay more than two pounds. "Carter will be so precious sick at being hooted in the street, we shan't get off under a fiver each," he said, and when I got back to college I went up to Jack's rooms to wait and see what he thought we should have to pay.

I was nearly asleep when Jack came in.

"Phillips says we shall have to pay a fiver each, what do you think?" I said, without turning round, and instead of answering me Jack went straight into his bedder and seemed to be washing himself vigorously.

"What are you doing?" I shouted, but Jack went on washing, so I shut up asking questions.

In a few minutes he came back into the room, and stood in front of me with a candle held up in front of his face. His lips were swollen, and there was a great cut, which kept on bleeding, over his right eyebrow.

"I look nice, don't I?" he said. "I've had a fight with a man who told me that his name was Briggs."

By degrees I got the whole tale out of him, but it is no fun trying to talk when a great coal-heaving man has hit you in the mouth with his fist. Jack had come home by himself, and as he was turning out of the High by B.N.C. Tom Briggs, who had followed him all the way, charged into him. Then there was a little conversation, and Briggs called Jack something especially horrid, and gave him a shove at the same time, so Jack hit him on the nose. After this there was a rough-and-tumble, until that most inquisitive man Carter and his bull-dogs came up and caught Jack. What happened to Briggs he did not know.

"You mustn't tell Carter that you were at Bunny's," I said, after I had blamed myself, until Jack was tired, for having persuaded him to start to that wretched meeting.

"That's a trifle compared with this," he answered, and he was right.

There was a huge row, and it ended in Jack being sent down for the rest of the term. A man, who had been lurking about somewhere, said that he saw Jack hit Briggs first, which was true as

far as it went, but hard luck on Jack all the same.

Bunny wanted to have a procession to the station when Jack went away, but he absolutely refused to have any fuss whatever, and altogether took his luck like a sportsman.

If I had only waited for him, or never bothered him to go out at all, this would never have happened, and tired as I have often been of myself, I do not think I have ever felt more utterly wretched than I was during the last few days of that term when I, who ought really to have been in Jack's place, was still in Oxford, and Jack was with his very angry people.

I went to the Warden and told him that Jack would never have gone out of college that night if it hadn't been for me, but all he said was that the Proctor had taken a serious view of the case, and he would not have anybody in the college brawling in the streets. I also wrote to Jack's people and told them that the whole thing was my fault, but his father's answer was very short and disagreeable; he had entirely lost his temper.

Dennison and his friends made the most of this misfortune, and I suppose it was natural that they should think it a comical finish to Jack's attempts at working. For the rest of the term I did not care what happened to anybody or anything. I was thoroughly sick with my luck, and when you are born with a faculty for disobeying rules and offending authorities and have trampled upon your inclinations for a long year without any result except disaster, it is enough to make you think that fighting Nature is a perfectly absurd thing to do. It was very fortunate that the term was nearly over, for I had a mad idea that the best way to make up to Jack for getting him sent down was to get sent down myself; but The Bradder, who knew how foolish I could be, nipped my demonstrations in the bud, and gave me some of the straightest advice I have ever listened to. He was very rude indeed. One of the few good things about this term was that Fred batted splendidly, he was not successful afterwards against Cambridge, but we had every reason for thinking that they were an exceptionally strong eleven. I bowled faster than ever, and a little straighter than the year before; I was said to be the fastest bowler at Oxford, and I heard two men saying in Vincent's that their idea of bliss was my bowling on a good wicket. But when I lowered a newspaper and showed myself they pretended that it was a joke.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WARDEN AND THE BRADDER

Of all penalties, sending a man down from the 'Varsity for a short time seems to me the most unfair. For some people treat the culprit as if he was almost a criminal, while others are glad to see him and aren't in the least annoyed. Had I been sent down from Oxford I am sure my father would have stormed and told me that I was going to that universal rubbish-heap, called "The dogs," while my mother would have been very hurt and very kind; but I know one man who went home unexpectedly and was told by his father that if he had not been sent down he would have missed the best "shoot" of the year. In some cases the penalty is nothing, and in other cases it is far too heavy.

From the little I knew of Jack's people I did not expect that they would be as unpleasant as they were, for as far as I could see he had not done anything which was much of a disgrace to anybody. Unfortunately, however, he went home at an unlucky moment, for his father was mixed up with the Stock Exchange, and there was a slump or something equally disagreeable in the City. Jack wrote to me: "I have often seen my father in a bad temper, but I have never seen him keep it up for so long before. There is a large bear syndicate formed in the City, and my father is a bull, and fumes like one. I am very useful if he would only see it, because he can work his rage off on me, and that is a great relief to everybody else. But it is no use thinking of what is to happen next; he has told me that I am going to start to Canada in a month, and Australia in a fortnight, but wherever I go I am to have only £10 besides my passage-money—he does the thing thoroughly. The last scheme, announced at breakfast this morning, is that I am going to Greece, to a quarry which has something to do with either marble or cement; I didn't listen much, because I shall probably be booked for Siberia before night. Anywhere but back to Oxford is really his idea, and the more often he changes the place the better. Meanwhile I flaunt history books before him. I left *Taswell Langmead* on the lawn, because it is the fattest book I have got, and it looks so like one of the Stock Exchange books that I knew he would look at it. He did and growled, but he put it back on the chair, which rather surprised me, for I expected him to launch forth on the uselessness of me reading such things. If I sit tight for a bit and don't get ready to go anywhere, perhaps I shall get back to Oxford after all."

I knew nothing about the Stock Exchange, but I sympathized very much with any one who had to live in the same house with a fuming bull. Even Fred agreed with me that Jack was being treated unfairly, and he never spoke about him at all if he could help it. When Jack and he had met during the last year at Oxford, as they had often, they were so astonishingly polite to each

other that had I not known the reason I should have been very amused, but as it was, I thought they were making a great fuss about something quite unimportant.

To pretend not to notice a thing which is as clear as daylight is not a part which I can play with any comfort, so Jack and Fred fidgeted me terribly, but they had got some idea firmly fixed in their heads, with which I was wise enough not to meddle. They were both such friends of mine that I hoped they would see as quickly as possible that there was something very humorous in the way they treated each other.

Owen took a first in his final schools, and as soon as the list was out he wrote to me and said that he hoped to come up for a fifth year to read for a first in History. This, I thought, was tempting Providence, for he had already got two firsts, and he seemed to me to be collecting them as I had once collected birds' eggs. He decided, however, to give up his plan, and accepted a mastership at a school in Scotland. I must say that I was relieved at this, for I intended to take two more years before my examinations, and if he had got a first in one year I am sure that I should have heard a very great deal about him, when my father felt unwell or wished to make me feel uncomfortable.

I spent most of my second summer vac in France, partly because my mother was not well, and also because an old scheme for improving my French had been revived. When Fred and I had gone to Oxford there had been some idea of us trying for the Indian Civil Service, but for various reasons this was abandoned, and although Fred had determined that he would go back to Cliborough as a master if he could manage it, I had drifted through two years without having made up my mind what was to happen to me when I got my degree. The Bishop wanted me to be a clergyman, my mother thought that if Fred was going to be a school-master there was no reason why I should not be one, and although my father did not say anything he was not the man to see me finish my time at Oxford and then sit down to wait for some employment to turn up. It was really no use for me to decide what I should do, for unless I showed an especial craving for some profession I knew that he would settle everything, and as I had two years before me I thought that there was no particular hurry, which is, I suppose, the dangerous state of mind of many undergraduates.

I did not understand that my father's wish for me to talk French was part of any definite scheme, and for the life of me I cannot make out why he settled upon my profession and told me nothing about it, but I suppose that unless I ever become a parent there are some things which will puzzle me all my life.

"One of the reasons the English are hated on the Continent is because they can only speak their own language, and when they are not understood they shout," he said to me, and I am afraid I did not care much what the English were thought of on the Continent; at any rate I did not see what I could do to make them more popular. "I intend that you shall at least be able to speak French properly," he went on; "you are not going to stay with us at the hotel, but live with a French family about three miles out of the town."

I detested the idea and had to submit to it, but I acknowledge that I enjoyed my visit to France, though I was told that I spent too much time at the hotel. The fact was that my family lived three miles up hill from the town, and on a bicycle I could reach the sea or my people in a few minutes, but after I had bathed I had to think a lot before I started back. I was arrested twice, once for riding furiously and also for not having my name on my bicycle, accidents which my father assured me would never have happened had I been able to talk French fluently, though it was absolutely impossible that I could under any circumstances or in any language have talked as fluently as the policeman who stopped me. My French family were very nice to me, and we got on splendidly together after they discovered that I did not mind them laughing at my pronunciation. After two months, during which I had attacked the language vigorously, Nina came from Paris to join us. I expected that she would find my accent amusing, but I made a mistake. What my mother had once mentioned to me as her awkward age had been lived through, and after a few days I began to wonder why I had ever found it easy to be irritated with her. If things go well I generally have an attack of thinking them perfect, but all the same Nina and I became better friends than we had been since I had left school, and we were together so often that nothing but a promise to talk French to her prevented my people from forbidding me to come near the hotel.

On Saturday afternoons, however, I stipulated that I should do and talk what I pleased, but unless I went to the Casino there was not much to do on my first holiday after Nina had arrived; so I persuaded her to come to a concert, have tea on the terrace, and then watch the "petits chevaux." She was ready to do anything, but my mother detested any kind of gambling, and begged me not to take her into the room in which the tables were. I could have imagined the time when to be told that something was not good for her was the surest way to make Nina want it, but now she said at once that she would much rather sit on the terrace than stay in a room with a crowd of people, and after tea I left her for a few minutes while I went for a walk through the rooms. There was a crowd round each table, and not being able to see anything I was going back to Nina at once when I felt some one touch me on the arm. I turned round quickly for I suspected that my pocket was being picked, though that would not have caused me any serious inconvenience, and before I could remember what I ought not to say I had exclaimed "Good Heavens," but if people will turn up in utterly unlikely places they ought not to be too critical of the way in which they are greeted. I should as soon have expected to see Mr. Edwardes at a

Covent Garden Ball as the Warden in a French Casino, and I had an intense and immediate desire to ask him what he was doing there. I suppressed it, however, and only shook him so violently by the hand that he winced perceptibly.

"I have been guilty of watching your movements for the last four minutes," he said, as we walked towards the door leading to the terrace. "I observed you as you entered this chamber of horrors, and I was afraid that you were about to give an exhibition of your generosity."

"Did you think I was going to play?" I asked.

"Yes, if that is the right expression for an act of madness. There are, if I have observed exactly, eight chances against you, and the fool, for believe me he is a fool, who is fortunate enough to win is paid seven times his stake. The man who tries to make money in that way must be generous and a fool."

"The bank must win to pay for the croupiers and keep the place going," I said.

"In my opinion there is no acute necessity for the place to be kept going, as you express it. I entertain a hope that if you have ever taken part in that orgie, at which every one with the exception of the croupiers looks greedy and hungry, that you will in the future abstain from it. Gambling is the meanest of all vices," he said slowly, and he tapped my arm seven times.

He did not seem to be going anywhere in particular, and as I cannot bear anybody tapping at me, I thought Nina might help to calm him. So I walked down the terrace and introduced her to him suddenly, for he had a reputation for bolting from strange ladies, and I thought it best to leave nothing to chance. But as soon as he saw Nina the cloud disappeared from his face, and his aggressively moral mood changed. In fact I distinctly heard him say "delightful," though I am sure that he did not intend his remark to be audible. He inspected Nina as if she was for sale or on show, but he so clearly approved of her that she did not seem to mind him.

"Won't you sit down?" she said.

"Only on one condition," he answered.

"What is it?"

"That you tell me the name of your dressmaker," but before Nina could speak he had settled himself beside her, and continued: "You are not only successful in being cool but also in looking cool; now I have ten nieces, delightful girls, but they cannot take exercise without rivalling the colour of a peony. They look what I can only describe to you as full-blown."

"But I have not been taking exercise," Nina said.

"That, I suppose, is true," he replied, and forgot promptly what he had been talking about.

After a minute's silence his head began to sink forward, and I was afraid he was beginning to think hard or go to sleep, so I told Nina that it was time for us to go back to the hotel; for much as I liked the Warden I had no wish to watch over him while he slept on the Terrace of the Casino, and I thought that he might expect to find me there when he woke up. Nina held out her hand to wish him good-bye, but he said that he was coming with us, and while we were walking to the hotel I left him to her, for I was debating whether I had better ask him to meet my father and mother or not. I knew that he had offended a great many people who had come to see him in Oxford about their sons, and he was reported to have said that the greatest difficulty in dealing with undergraduates was the parent difficulty. "If I was dictator of Oxford it should be a city of refuge for young men, and no father or mother should be allowed to enter it during twenty-four weeks of the year," was one of the things he was supposed to have said, and if my father happened to get him upon that subject I foresaw trouble.

But the question settled itself, for my mother was sitting on the verandah in front of the hotel and came down the garden to meet us. I had heard the Warden chuckle three times as we had walked up the road, and though I could not imagine how Nina was amusing him, I thanked goodness that he seemed to be thinking about ordinary things.

"I have the pleasure of knowing your brother," he said as soon as he was introduced; "he and I disagree upon every subject I have ever had the privilege of discussing with him."

"I do not think my brother would ever discuss a subject with any one whom he expected to agree with. It would be hardly worth while," my mother answered, and the Warden looked at her quickly.

"Surely the benefit arising from a discussion does not depend wholly, or I may say chiefly, from disagreement upon the subject discussed. A Cabinet Council, for instance, may conceivably arrive at a satisfactory and at the same time an unanimous conclusion."

"My brother would not call that a discussion," my mother answered shortly, and the Warden said "Ah," which meant, I believe, that however the Bishop defined the word discussion, it was useless to discuss anything with ladies.

"You will have some tea?" my mother said, as soon as we had reached the verandah.

"You will excuse me, my absence from the hotel at which I have taken a room for to-night, has already been too prolonged. You drink tea in France, madam?"

"We brought our tea with us."

"Admirable foresight, but it remains for you to see the water boiling," and then as if he knew that he had hurt my mother's feelings and wished to make some recompense, he continued, "The Bishop, madam, is a man for whom I have a most sympathetic regard, neither politics nor pageants divert him from the work he has pledged himself to do; I know of no man more fitted to be a Bishop."

My mother bowed slightly, and said nothing, and really it was not easy to guess from the Warden's tone whether he considered any man fit to be a Bishop.

"We think differently on many subjects, and on one, I may say, I think with perfect truth, we have differed so widely that a little less self-restraint on the one side or on the other would have brought us to the verge of a very vulgar quarrel. The Bishop preaches what is called Humanity, he practises Humanity, he would have a manufactory—which he would manage on a profit-sharing system—for Humanity pills, and make every young man in Oxford swallow two of them every morning. But there is another meaning to the word Humanity which has been lost sight of in this age of upheaval, it is 'classical learning.' Oxford has a duty to perform; it has something to teach in addition to the development of kindly feelings which must be taught at the mother's knee, and grow naturally if they are ever to be effective. We are attacked at Oxford by many kinds of outside influence, and you know enough of young men, madam, to realize that there is no influence which appeals to them so strongly as that which is outside, what I must call, constituted authority. The Bishop, in short, if I judge him with accuracy, thinks that Oxford is the finest playground for the East-end of London which can be imagined by the wit of man. On this point I disagree with him entirely, not from any dislike to the people of the East-end, but from a profound conviction that young men in Oxford, if they are to do their work with success, have already more than enough to occupy their minds."

He leaned forward in his chair and looked hard at me; he did not apparently expect any answer to his oration, but he had touched on a subject which was near my mother's heart, and I felt so uneasy that I moved from my seat and leaned against one of the posts of the verandah.

"Don't you exaggerate what my brother wants?" my mother asked. "He knows too well the value of time to wish to waste that of anybody, and he loves Oxford."

"Too well," the Warden jerked out, as if he was an automatic arrangement and some one had touched a spring.

"I don't think any one could love Oxford too well, and I should be sorry if Godfrey did not learn something from his life there which could help him to sympathize with other people."

I knew that I was bound to be pulled in sooner or later, and I thought of disappearing behind my post and of leaving the Warden to say what he liked.

"The sympathies of your son are already as wide as those of a Charity Organization Society, and, I venture to say, as misdirected," the Warden returned, and seemed to have forgotten that I was standing in front of him, but if he was going to say things about me I decided to stay and hear them. "I find him the most pleasant companion, he has the gift of silence—Meredith wrote—'Who cannot talk!—but who can?'—he is also amusing, always unconsciously. I have great hopes that he may become a man who will not waste his youth in vain struggles with a ball. Had I the power I would banish all balls from England for one short year, the experiment would be entertaining."

"It would result in a national dyspepsia," my mother said, laughing.

"Godfrey would play catch with an orange," Nina remarked.

The Warden looked up and saw me. "An orange bursts," he said. "I must return to my hotel. Would you find me a conveyance, one with a coachman as unlike a furious driver as possible?" he asked, and as Nina came with me he was left alone with my mother. I don't know what he said during those few minutes, but when we got back I found my mother smiling placidly, though when I had gone away I was certain that she disapproved of the Warden most thoroughly.

"The Warden wishes you to dine with him to-night," she said to me, and without waiting for me to reply she went on to say how sorry my father would be to miss him. The Warden began to express regrets at my father's absence, but forgot what he was talking about in the middle of his sentence, and finished up by telling the driver to go very slowly. As he stepped into the vehicle I had found for him, he expressed a fervent hope that it was more robust than it appeared to be.

"What a funny old man!" Nina exclaimed as soon as he had gone, "and what nonsense he talks. He is a dear, but he does look odd!"

"He looks like a gentleman, and is one," my mother replied.

"You didn't like him at first," I said to her.

"I thought he spoke slightly of your uncle and that he meant all he said, which of course was stupid of me. He was delightful after you had gone, and talked most kindly and sensibly about you, I wish your father could have heard him."

But my father had gone to Rouen and was not coming back until ten o'clock, and I am not sure that he would have liked the Warden, so perhaps it was as well that they did not meet.

My dinner was wearisome, for Miss Davenport, the Warden's sister, was with him, and she talked while I listened. I am sorry to say she was in a very bad temper, and it seemed that the naughty Warden had kept her waiting for two hours during the afternoon. She was by no means in love with France, and though I tried to soothe her I only succeeded in making her sarcastic; I thought the Warden ought to have protected me, but he had known his sister longer than I had, and probably had forgotten that she could make any one suffer. He took no part in the conversation, and most obviously did not listen to it. My mother was disappointed when I told her about the dinner, but I think that she had expected the Warden to give me advice as well as a meal. She had formed the highest opinion of him, and said that he was so wise that he was the only man she knew who could afford to say foolish things. But when my father heard that the foolish things were said about the Bishop he did not believe in the folly of them, for he could not forget that my uncle had once played stump cricket for three hours at a stretch.

When the time came for us to go back to England I could talk French without putting in one or two English words to fill up every sentence, but I did not think that Dover Station was the place in which to be told that I must not be satisfied until I could think in French—though what the station at Dover is the proper place for, I leave to people who are cleverer than I am. I was so glad to get home again that the idea of thinking in French was quite comical. My father and I were going to shoot together, and when he is shooting he forgets all the little grievances with which he has riddled his life and he is—though it makes me blush to confess it—the best companion in the world. If he could only shoot all the year round I believe that Ritualists and Radicals would lose their powers of annoying him, and he might even end by admitting that our long-suffering cook makes curry which is fit to eat, and no more generous admission than that could be expected from an Anglo-Indian.

For nearly three weeks we lived in a state of peace and contentment which none of us thought dull, but during the first week of October I had a letter from The Bradder in which he said that he was on a walking tour and should be passing near our house. There was only one answer for me to give, but I gave it reluctantly, for though I liked him I thought that if he and my father once started upon politics our calm season would be interrupted abruptly.

"Does he shoot?" my father asked, and I said that as he was walking for amusement he would probably only stay a few hours. "We can't treat him like that; tell him to stay a week and send for his gun. For the matter of that he can have one of mine. I don't expect he will be able to hit a haystack," was his reply.

So I wrote again, and to my surprise The Bradder accepted the invitation and appeared a few days afterwards with no marks of the tourist upon him; for there is no mistaking people who are on walking tours, their anxiety to get on stamps itself upon their faces, and their luggage is generally on their backs or in their pockets. He told us that his companion had broken down three days before, and that he had been back to Oxford to get his gun. I never remember having seen anybody who looked quite so fit as he did, and my father, who had a kind of general impression that every tutor in Oxford was anaemic, seemed to be thoroughly pleased with him. Thus I was lulled into a false state of security, for I had intended to warn The Bradder not to speak of politics while he was with us, but as every one took a fancy to him at sight I thought that I need not trouble to say anything.

There was a lot of speculation about The Bradder's shooting, he shot whenever he got the ghost of a chance, but he added more to the noise than to the number of the bag. He tried to persuade my father before he started that he was the worst shot in the world, but he was not believed until he had proved that he had spoken the truth. He was, however, much happier in a bad than in a good place, and he seemed to be perfectly pleased as long as he could see an occasional bird to shoot at. My father said that he was a good sportsman, though had he not liked him he would have called him a rank bad shot.

Two days passed by successfully, and then The Bradder discovered that there was an old abbey near us, and arranged with Nina to go over and see it. Why in the world any one should want to see an abbey when he could shoot at pheasants, was more than my father could understand.

"The abbey will be here the next time you come, let it wait," he said at breakfast.

"I should like to see it," The Bradder replied; "besides, I never kill anything."

"You needn't bother about that."

"I have promised Miss Marten to go, she said she would drive me over," he replied, and any one could see that he didn't mean to shoot.

"As you like," my father said, and told me to be ready in ten minutes, though we were not going to start for an hour.

On the top of this we had a very disappointing day, and finished up by getting wet through, so at dinner there were many more danger signals flying than were usual in the shooting season. The Bradder, however, did not notice them, or if he did he thought them ridiculous, and he amused my mother and Nina very much, which under the circumstances was a grievous offence. I found myself in the position of trying to catch my tutor's eye, so that I could warn him to be careful with my father, and although I realized the comedy of the position I did not appreciate it. To make matters worse The Bradder would not drink any port, and as it was a wine of which my father was proud, he had to say that he never drank any wine at all before his refusal was accepted. Teetotalism in the abstract was a thing which I was encouraged to believe in, but teetotalers, who did not know when to make an exception to general rules, were not approved of at our table when '63 port was before them. Everything seemed to be going most hopelessly wrong, and I was so anxious to get into the drawing-room that I made several exceedingly fatuous remarks.

"You talk like a Radical," my father said in answer to one of them; "you want this changed and that changed, you had better go up to Hyde Park and take a tub with you, if you want to talk nonsense."

"I probably shouldn't get two people to listen to me," I replied.

"Strahan told me yesterday," he went on, "that they are teaching a lot of this Radical tomfoolery in Oxford now; he says his son has come home stuffed with it, thinks agricultural labourers are underpaid and all the rest. Is it true, Bradfield?"

"I should not say that the feeling at Oxford is as out-and-out Tory as it was, but the young Radical is often a very ridiculous man," The Bradder replied, and took a pear off the dish in front of him and began to peel it.

"Always," my father said.

"Not always; he may conceivably be very sane indeed."

"Never."

The Bradder was quite willing to let the subject drop, but his pear was a mistake and prevented me from suggesting that we should go.

"You sympathize with this Radical feeling?" my father asked him.

"To some extent I share it."

"I can't believe it, I really can't—why, the Radicals want to ruin the army, spend no money on the navy, make magistrates of Tom, Dick, and Harry, and top everything by letting Ireland do what it likes. They are a dangerous crew."

"I am not a Home-Ruler, though every one must admit that our way of managing Ireland up to the present has not been fortunate."

"But you wouldn't try experiments with a volcano?"

"I would try any experiment with Ireland which it wants, and which I did not think dangerous," The Bradder said, and he seemed to be wholly occupied in trying to say as little as possible without appearing to be ashamed or afraid of his opinions.

"So you are a Radical, but not a Home-Ruler. Well, from the look of you, I should never have thought it. You can go if you like, Godfrey; I should be glad to talk to Mr. Bradfield for a few minutes; he is the first Radical I have ever liked," and he smiled at The Bradder, anticipating triumph.

I did not go, and I am glad that I stayed, for both of them had to fight hard to keep their tempers, and their struggles fascinated me. From the beginning The Bradder made up his mind to treat the duel lightly, but my father pressed him hard, and occasionally provoked a retort which flashed. For more than an hour they talked, and indignant servants, showing heads of expostulation, had to go away unnoticed. But The Bradder met explosions with what my father called afterwards rank obstinacy, and the man who explodes is naturally angry if he cannot get some one to explode back at him.

"The Warden, from what I have heard of him, would not approve of your opinions," my father said at last.

"He does not meddle with our politics," The Bradder answered.

"He's a wise man," my father returned, and The Bradder laughed.

"The Warden talks about politicians as if they were an army of tuft-hunters, hunting for tufts which they will never find. He refuses to speak seriously about politics."

"The habit of being amused at our failures or cynical about them is becoming too common."

I could not help smiling at the quickness with which the Warden had been toppled off his seat of wisdom, and my father pushed his chair back impatiently.

"The Warden is, I believe, a strong Tory, and reserves his contempt for what he calls 'modern politicians.'"

"I said he was a wise man," my father replied, and the Warden was reinstated.

"He is certainly," The Bradder answered, as we went into the drawing-room.

During the next day I heard from Nina that The Bradder had been denounced as a very dangerous man, all the more dangerous because he was so attractive.

"Father wants him to go," she said.

"He will have to go soon, because term begins in a few days," I answered.

"But why shouldn't a man be a Liberal if he wants to be? We are about a hundred years behind the times down here."

"And had better stay there if we want peace," I added.

"Are you a Liberal?"

"Goodness knows."

"I like a man who knows what he is."

"You mean you like The Bradder; why not say so?"

"Because I meant nothing of the kind. We are going to walk over to Chipping Norbury, if you will come with us."

"I can't. I have promised to call on Mrs. Faulkner, who won't see me."

"Mrs. Faulkner has been rude to mother, and has behaved very foolishly," Nina said, in a way which she considered impressive and I thought humorous.

So The Bradder and Nina went to Chipping Norbury without me, and he stayed for three more days, by which time even my father did not want him to go, though he talked to my mother about him as one of those misguided young men who want England to stand on its head just to see what it would look like.

I found out afterwards that The Bradder described my father to some one as a mixture of cayenne pepper and kindness, and, since there was no harm in it, I passed it on.

"I won't have people making up these things about me," he said, but he chuckled, and I am sure he liked the cayenne pepper part of the mixture.

CHAPTER XX

THE HEDONISTS

Fred Foster's people came back from India during the summer, and he spent all the vac with them, though I tried to make him come to us for the shooting. He had, however, got an idea that Nina did not want him, and nothing I could do was successful in removing it. I told him that Nina had been greatly improved by Paris; I did not like the expression, but I did not see why he should think it ridiculous. Still, if he meant to be obstinate it was no use wasting time in writing letters at which he gibed, so I left him alone.

Jack Ward managed to appease his father, and having done it he set out on a campaign which for thoroughness beat anything I have ever discovered. He went off at the end of July to stay with a tutor who coached him in history and rowing, and he stayed with him until the Oxford term began. The tutor was a rowing blue who did not, from Jack's account of him, mind how little work his pupils did as long as they were ready to go on the river, but Jack assured me that he had read

for four or five hours every day. To start with a history coach two years before his schools struck me as being magnificent, but Jack would not hear a word against his way of spending the vac.

"He may not know much history," he said to me when we got back to Oxford, "but he's a rare good sort, and he says I'm a natural oar. Besides, he's a sportsman."

"What's that?" I asked, for I used the word "sportsman" to mean so many things.

"He doesn't bother people; you can play cards if you like, and he has a billiard table. He is a nailer at cork pool."

"Is he?" I said, and asked no more about him, for I have a horror of nailers at any sort of pool, having once been hopelessly fleeced by some of them.

"I won a pot," Jack went on gaily, "in the scratch fours at Wallhead regatta—I rowed in two regattas. Not so bad; and now I've got to go down to the river every day and be coached by men who don't know the difference between an oar and a barge pole. Well, it's all part of the game."

"What's the game?" I asked.

"Look here, Godfrey, something's happened to you. You've gone stupid; it's *your* game. To buck St. Cuthbert's up, get rid of these confounded slackers, squash them flat, and we are going to do it, you see if we don't. Dennison was drunk last night or pretended to be, and he and his gang invaded a lot of freshers and then asked them all to breakfast. That crowd are no more use to a college than a headache. Fancy coming to Oxford to be ragged by Dennison!"

"It does seem rather futile."

"Futile!" Jack exclaimed scornfully, and then proceeded to say what he called it; "but if you have given up caring what happens I shall chuck up the whole thing," he concluded.

"I have not given up caring, but I have tried once and got laughed at for my trouble. I don't believe you can squash men like Dennison when they once get into a college; they are like black beetles, and you can't get rid of them unless you kill them."

"We can try," Jack said.

"I tried, and most men thought me a fool. The only thing to do is to leave them alone; but the worst of it is that we can't help meeting Dennison at dinners and things. He smiled on me the other day as if I was his best friend."

"He didn't smile at me."

"I think he hates you; I can't get properly hated, when I try to show Dennison I loathe him he smiles. There's something wrong with me somewhere."

"You are too rottenly good-natured."

"I never thought of that," I said.

"That's it," Jack declared; "I saw Lambert hitting you on the back in the quad this morning."

"I told him that if he did it again I should throw Stubbs' Charters at his head," I replied in self-defence.

"But, don't you see, Lambert would never hit me on the back. He is one of the most gorgeous slopers we have got, and twangs his banjo for Dennison to sing what they call erotic ballads. You've not got enough dignity."

"Steady on," I said, for with too much of one thing and not enough of another I was beginning to think that it was about time for him to discover something of which I had the proper amount.

"Don't get angry," he returned, "I only meant to explain why your shot to buck the college up failed. You're too popular, that's it."

I spoke plainly to him.

"It's no use talking like that," he went on; "say you'll help me, and we'll have a go at squashing this ragging lot. It wouldn't matter so much if they could do anything decently, but they are the very men who ought to go and bury themselves because they won't try to do anything. Let us do something first and then have a good wholesome rag, but for heaven's sake let us shut up until we have done it."

Jack had only just left my rooms when, as if to prove what he had said, Lambert strolled in and asked me if I would let him have lunch with me. My table-cloth was laid and I couldn't tell him that I was lunching out, so I told him that Murray was coming. He replied that he liked Murray, and since that had failed I said that I was going to play footer and had very little time, but he answered that he would not be able to stay for more than half-an-hour. Meals with

Lambert were apt to get less simple as they went on, for he had a habit of saying that he wanted nothing and then of demanding port with his cheese and liqueurs to save him from indigestion, but I could not get rid of him, so apart from making up my mind that his luncheon should be as short as possible, I left him alone.

He read the paper for a few minutes and then asked me if I did not like his waistcoat. It looked to me like some new kind of puzzle, so I asked him if he had the answer in his pocket, but he was looking at it thoughtfully and did not answer.

"Nice shade, isn't it?" he said presently.

I thought that there was more glare than shade about it and told him so.

"It's unique," he declared, and at last I was able to agree with him.

"Have you called on that man Thornton?" he asked, and stood up so that he could see his waistcoat and himself in the glass.

"I never call on anybody. I have had a lot of freshers to meals, but I don't know Thornton; he is supposed to be cracked, isn't he?"

"Of course he is. We've got a splendid rag on. I thought of it, and Dennison is going to work it out. Do you think this coat fits properly in the back? I met Collier this morning and he swore it didn't."

"What's the rag?" I asked.

Clarkson came in with a message from Murray to say that he could not come to luncheon.

"That's a good job," Lambert remarked.

"I thought you liked Murray," I answered.

"He would not have cared about our rag. I don't suppose Collier knows when a coat fits, he's so fat that a petticoat would suit him better than a pair of trousers."

"Here's lunch," I said, and as soon as I had got him away from the spot where he could examine his clothes, I asked again what was going to happen.

"Thornton is absolutely green, Dennison will be able to do exactly what he likes with him."

"Poor brute."

"I can never make out why you pretend to hate Dennison, he wouldn't mind being friends with you; besides, it makes things very disagreeable for me."

"I don't pretend anything," I said.

"At any rate it's very stupid of you; you are both Mohocks, and ought to be friends."

I thought he had come on a peace mission, so, to prevent waste of time, I said what I thought of Dennison.

"You make a mistake about him altogether," he said. "Got any port?"

"You'll get as fat as Collier if you aren't careful, and it wouldn't suit you a bit," I replied, and stayed in my chair.

"Port doesn't make people fat," but he spoke doubtfully.

"You know best, but I should advise you to be careful. What's the rag?"

He shot his cuffs down and stroked his upper lip, as he always did when he was going to say anything which he thought interesting.

"Dennison is getting it up, which means that it will be jolly well done. He has found out that Thornton knows nothing, so he is teaching him a lot. To begin with, he has invented a society called 'The Hedonists,' which is supposed to get pleasure out of anything extraordinary, and he has filled up Thornton with the idea that he is the very man to be President if we can get him elected."

"Does he believe all that?"

"He believes it all right; Dennison is splendid at that sort of thing. But we must make some opposition, or Thornton might think it was too easy a job, so we are getting Webb to stand against Thornton, and Dennison and I want you to propose him. We thought it would be a chance to show that you didn't mean all that rot you talked about us last year."

"I meant every word of it," I replied, but Lambert shook his head.

"Really you didn't," he said. "Dennison declares that you hate smugs and prigs and the sort of men who wear red ties and baggy trousers. Besides, you have fair rows with the dons yourself. You are made to enjoy yourself; that's all about it, and it is time some benefactor told you so."

"I shan't have anything to do with this rag; it seems to be playing a pretty low-down game on a fresher, and if I can stop it I shall. Tell Dennison that from me," I replied.

Lambert got up and put his fingers into the pockets of his waistcoat. "Don't be a fool, Marten," he said sadly, "if you had thought of this yourself you would have been delighted with the idea; it's so funny."

"Ask Jack Ward to help you."

"Ward! Between ourselves Dennison and I think that Ward is rather a bounder."

"I'll tell him; he will be glad to hear it."

"You make me ill; can't you see that this is too good to miss?"

"You'd better leave this wretched lunatic alone; but if you stand there talking until you spoil the pockets of your waistcoat I shan't help you."

He took his fingers from his pockets and rearranged his tie. "You disappoint me greatly," he said, and strode out of the room.

Our footer match that afternoon was against Oriel, who play soccer better than rigger, so we beat them without much trouble. Fred didn't play for them, because the captain of the 'Varsity team objected to his team playing in college matches, but he watched the game and came back to tea with me afterwards. I wanted to give him a cheque for the fifty pounds I still owed him, for I had just got my year's allowance, and I thought I ought to pay him. But he would not listen to what I said, and only tore up my cheque when I gave it to him. "It's no use," he said, "you will only be short at the end of the year."

That, I knew, was the truth, for economy was a thing which evaded me, however zealously I pursued it.

"But I hate owing you money," I said, "and by the end of the year something may have happened."

He only laughed, and told me that if I couldn't borrow money, which he did not want, from him, I must be a fool, and before I could say any more Jack Ward appeared. Fred and he did not seem to be very pleased to see each other again, and since they always got on my nerves I went into my bedder to finish dressing.

"Been staying with Godfrey this vac?" I heard Jack ask.

"No; have you?" Fred answered.

"Rather not," Jack said; "I've had no time to stay with anybody. I'm trying to become a decent oar, and reading history—it simply takes all the time I've got. I rowed a bit at school, but have never touched an oar for two years until last July."

"It's rather a grind, isn't it?" Fred said; but from that moment he seemed to change his opinion of Jack, and if I could be a fool about some things I feel quite certain that Fred had been bothering his head about nothing for a very long time, which was not very sensible of him. I don't believe that Jack ever understood why Fred disliked him, and after he had pulled Nina out of the river the second time, I think he began to regard her solely as a safe and easy way to a Humane Society's medal. If Fred would only have believed that there are some things which cannot stand repetition, I should have been saved a lot of trouble.

When I went back to my sitter I found that the blight which had always settled upon them when they were together was disappearing quickly. They were talking quite amiably, and although I should have been glad to have said something to show that I noticed the change, I expect that it was prudent of me to be silent. For the first time, as far as I could remember, we met without wondering how soon we could separate, and I had the sort of feeling which I should think a great-grandfather must have when he is celebrating his ninetieth birthday in the presence of his not too numerous descendants. I just sat and felt placid for some time, until I woke up and told Fred that we were supposed to have a mad fresher in college.

"You are always getting hold of freaks," he answered, and I asked him what he meant.

"You've got about half-a-dozen men here whose names look as if they have been turned hind-before; St. Cuthbert's has always been a home for a peculiar brand of potentate."

"Potentate!" I said scornfully; "besides, colour is not everything."

"Prince, if you like." But I knew that he was trying to draw me on, so I said nothing. To hear me in defence of my own college was, I am sorry to say, a great pleasure to him.

"Do you know how this report of Thornton being mad began?" Jack asked. "I'm rather keen on this, and believe it can be made into a much better rag than Lambert and Dennison think. It may be a chance to squash them altogether."

"Lambert has been trying to persuade me to help," I said. "I told him I would have nothing to do with his blessed rag."

"The best of the whole thing is that I don't believe Thornton is a lunatic. Collier says he isn't, and both Learoyd and Murray say he's not mad, but awfully clever or a humorist."

"Murray!" I exclaimed, but Jack was losing the power to astonish me very much.

"He's all right, I met him in Learoyd's room," Jack said, and began to laugh.

"So Thornton isn't mad after all, and you needn't talk about freaks," I told Fred.

"Do you mind hearing about this?" Jack asked him; "it will be splendid if it only comes off. It's like this: Lambert and Dennison are always looking out for freaks"—I wished he would not give Fred such chances to grin at me—"and Thornton's hair sticks up on end, and he never seems to know what he is going to do next. Murray told me that he is like a very good pianist he met once, except that he can't play the piano. At any rate he's odd, and that was the reason why Dennison asked him to lunch. And Lambert, do you know him?"

Fred shook his head.

"He is the kind of man who is built for processions and platforms and Lord Mayors' Shows," Jack explained; "he's gorgeous altogether."

"I saw him at your smoker," Fred said.

"He's one of the sights of the place, and he began to talk to Thornton about champagne."

"He always talks about clothes or wine," I put in.

"Thornton pretended—at least, I'll bet he pretended—to know nothing about champagne. So Lambert told him the best brand was Omar Khayyam of '78, and that by a stroke of luck it could still be got at a place in the High. They thought Thornton swallowed that all right, so Dennison told him that if he couldn't get Omar Khayyam he must get some Rosbach of '82. After that they asked what sort of fly he used for quail; of course the man must have been simply too sick of them to say anything."

"Lambert never told me anything about the champagne," I said.

"I expect that was because he and Dennison nearly had a row about it; he swore that he thought about Omar Khayyam, and Dennison swore that he did—a rotten sort of thing to quarrel about, anyway. I never heard of the man until yesterday. I've often heard of Rosbach," he added.

"What's going to happen now?" Fred asked, and from some cause or other he was shaking with laughter.

Jack told him about the Hedonists, and finished up by saying that he must go to see Thornton.

"What's the good of that?" I asked.

"I want to see if he isn't having a huge joke all to himself; if he is we may as well help him with it."

As soon as Fred had gone away Jack persuaded me to go with him and call on Thornton. He had got hold of a scheme which Murray and Learoyd had started, and as its object seemed to be to score off Dennison I was not going to be out of it. We found Thornton sitting in an arm-chair with his feet on the mantelpiece, and Jack seeing that he was alone sported the oak so that we could not be interrupted.

"I should think," Thornton said, as he pushed his chair back, "that I must have had over thirty men in here to-day. There were seventeen before twelve o'clock. I am thinking of putting a visitors' book in the passage, so that they can write their names and go away. Are you going to back me up to-morrow night?" he asked Jack.

"They have persuaded you to stand?"

"Dennison says it would be such a bad thing for the college if this man Webb got in. Of course it is a great honour for a fresher, but I am used to speaking; we have a debating society at home." He spoke as if the whole thing was not in the least important, and ran his fingers through his hair until it stood straight up on end. It was the sort of hair which looked like stubble.

Jack was so discouraged that he did not know what to say, so I asked Thornton if he expected to be elected.

"There doesn't seem to be any doubt about that; there are only about thirty members, and quite half of them have promised to support me. Webb of course is better known, but in some cases it does no harm to keep oneself in the background until the last moment. Then I shall speak." He seemed to think that his speech would settle everything completely.

I wandered round the room waiting for Jack to bring forward his scheme if he could remember it, but he was sitting on the table sucking at a pipe which had no tobacco in it, so I drifted over to a book-case, and nearly the first book I saw was an edition of *Omar Khayyam*. This surprised me so much that I turned round to see if Thornton really looked like a lunatic, but I got no satisfaction from him, for I had once seen a man who might have been his brother, and then I had been playing cricket against an asylum. He was lying back in his chair gazing at the ceiling, and I pulled *Omar Khayyam* out of the case and put it on the table for Jack to see. Then I sat down and waited for results, but I had to make no end of signs before he would take any notice of the book, for he was in such a state of despondency that I believe he thought I was trying to talk on my fingers. At last his eye fell on the book, and after I had nodded furiously at him, he jumped off the table and stood in front of Thornton.

"You read *Omar Khayyam*?" he said, holding the book in his hand.

Thornton stopped staring at the ceiling and sat forward with his elbows resting on his knees. "Yes," he answered; "at least, I used to until I knew it by heart."

"He's a good brand of champagne," Jack went on.

"Are you a friend of Dennison's?" Thornton asked, and there was a kind of hunted look in his eyes.

"I'm not," I hastened to tell him, and at that moment I looked at my watch and discovered that I had already kept The Bradder waiting for ten minutes, so I had to go just as things were becoming interesting.

Jack assured me afterwards that Thornton was not mad. "But," he added, "he's very odd, and I believe he's in a mortal terror that, unless he goes on pretending to be a fool, these men will do something much worse to him than make him president of a society which doesn't exist. So I've put Murray to speak to him; this will be the talk of the 'Varsity, and I don't see what good there is in keeping prize idiots. I have told him to go on playing up to Dennison for a bit, and then we would help him."

I did not think, however, that it would be very easy to save Thornton, and when Collier and I went to the meeting of the Hedonists on the following evening we agreed that whether he was mad or only very simple, he was sure to be in for a bad time. Although Dennison had moved into some of the biggest rooms in college, they were crowded when we got to them, and it was very difficult to get Collier inside the door. Dennison and a few other men were sitting at a table at the far end of the room, and just as we arrived a fourth-year man got up to speak.

I suppose that his business was to explain why the Hedonists existed. At any rate, he said that it was his duty before he, as the out-going President, broke his wand of office to remind the Society that it existed for two definite objects—the pursuit of pleasure, and the suppression of vulgarity. He then went on to state that Mr. Wilkins, formerly of St. Cuthbert's, had kindly consented to give an account of his travels in Central Africa.

"Formerly of St. Cuthbert's," described Wilkins correctly, for he had been sent down after one term, and since then had been living an alcoholic existence in a farm-house a few miles outside Oxford. His appearance was comical, but he was really a dreadful barbarian, who thought that it was better to gain notoriety as a hard drinker than to be forgotten entirely. He began by telling us that he had never been to Central Africa, and hoped sincerely that he never should go. He also told us that the reason why he was addressing the Society was a rumour that his aunt had met several African explorers at dinner, but he wished to say that she was no more of a lion-hunter than he was. In this way he strove desperately to be amusing, but the struggle was very painful, and I was glad when he had finished.

The President then broke his wand of office, which for some obscure reason was a bulrush painted white, and Thornton and Webb, who had been sitting behind the table, were put up for election and called upon to speak. Webb developed a stammer, and although he had his speech written on his shirt-cuff, no one could hear what he said. He was, however, received with a lot of applause, so that Thornton might think the election was genuine; Dennison had certainly packed the meeting with great care.

Thornton's speech was, in its way, almost too amusing, for I found it very hard to believe that any one who was not more or less mad could possibly make it. He spoke at a tremendous pace, sometimes talking utter nonsense, and then as if by chance saying something almost sensible. Voting-papers were given to twenty-five picked men after he had finished, and Thornton was elected President by fourteen votes to eleven. The meeting finished by Thornton thanking everybody in a voice which sounded tearful, and then he announced that the annual dinner of the Hedonists would be held at The Sceptre on the following Friday evening, at which the ceremonies of inauguration would be held, and he would be the only guest of the Society in accordance with

its ancient and honourable traditions.

"Don't you think he is mad?" I said to Jack as I walked across the quad with him.

"The only danger is that they may find out that he is rotting the whole lot of them. He overdid the thing to-night. Come and see Murray."

We found Murray waiting to hear what had happened at the meeting, and from the account we gave him he said that it could not have gone off more successfully. "If you think Thornton mad when you know that he isn't, there is no reason for Dennison to change his mind. Besides, these men are quite certain that he is cracked, and as long as we are careful they won't suspect anything."

"We shall have to be most tremendously careful," Jack said, and he seemed to find the prospect oppressive.

"I'll manage Thornton," Murray continued, "and what you men have got to do is to get asked to this dinner. We shall have to take some others into this."

We sat down and chose several men who disliked the Dennison gang, and who could be trusted not to give our scheme away by talking about it, and during the next few days we had to work hard. Dennison and Lambert, however, were so confident that this dinner was going to be the finest rag ever held in Oxford that they did not mind who came to it. Collier got several invitations for us, because he had a nice solid way of sitting down in a man's rooms and waiting until he was given what he wanted; but apart from Jack it was not difficult for us to get to The Sceptre, and at last even Jack was invited. Murray said that his part was to prepare Thornton, and he refused to go to the dinner, because Dennison might wonder why he wanted to be there. I thought that Murray carried caution to extremes.

I should think that there were nearly forty men at this function; but the only guest was Thornton, so he began by scoring something. It was an elaborate affair; Dennison as Secretary of the Hedonists, and two or three men who called themselves Ex-Presidents, wore enormous badges, and Thornton's shirt was covered with orders and decorations which were supposed to have been worn by eighty-eight consecutive Presidents. How any one who was sane could possibly consent to be made such a fool puzzled me altogether, and it required all Jack's assurances to make me believe that we should not be scored off all along the line.

After the dinner was finished Dennison got up to introduce the President of the year, but all he did was to give a short biography of Thornton, which for impudence was simply terrific. Everything had gone so well up to then that I suppose he could not keep himself in hand any longer; but as he was bolder enough to pull Thornton's people into his speech, he succeeded in disgusting several men who had been helping him in the rag. He finished up by saying that Thornton would give his inaugural address, and that afterwards the historic ceremonies of the Hedonists would be performed.

A man with a voice which was a mixture of a street hawker's and a parish clerk's stood up and chanted, "I call upon Mr. Edward Noel Kenneth Thornton to put on the purple presidential cap and to deliver his inaugural address to this ancient and historic Society." The cap, which had a long black tassel, was then handed to Thornton, and he put it on amidst tremendous applause. It made him look more ridiculous than ever, but he seemed to be perfectly calm when he got up and bowed solemnly in every direction.

"Mr. Ex-Presidents and fellow-members of this justly-celebrated Hedonist Society," he began, and every word he said could be heard plainly, "we are here to-night in obedience to custom and in pursuit of pleasure. Custom is one thing and pleasure is another, but we are fortunate in belonging to a Society which makes its customs pleasant, and which has such skilled hands to guide its pleasures that the word customary fails entirely to describe them." He paused for a moment, and a man near me asked what he was talking about, but Webb answered quickly that he was a hopeless madman, and that the ceremonies would be the real joke. "That I, a freshman," he continued, "should be elected President of this Society fills me with gratitude and even dismay, for I fear that the duties of so distinguished an office will be but inadequately performed during the coming year." Loud cries of "No" followed this remark, and he went on, "You are good enough to disagree with me, and perhaps the ceremonies connected with my office may help me to fulfil my duties. I will tell you what those ceremonies are." Dennison tried to stop him, but he was speaking quickly and took no notice of the interruption. "After my address has been given I put on my robes of office and ride on a mule from here to St. Cuthbert's; I am to be accompanied by the band of the Society, and attended by six men who will carry syphons of Apollinaris water and prevent my robes from being soiled by the dust of the streets. Had I known before I came here that so much honour was about to be showered upon me I do not think that I should have considered myself worthy of being your President. I forgot to say that I am provided with an umbrella." I looked at Dennison, and he did not seem to be feeling very comfortable; Thornton, however, had kept up the *rôle* of a madman thoroughly, and had spoken of the ceremonies as if he was quite prepared to carry them out. Some men were shouting with laughter, but Jack was almost pale with anxiety, and whispered to me that he was afraid Thornton would get flurried and finish his speech too soon. As soon as the laughter had stopped he went on speaking, and although he looked terribly pale and bothered, he was never at a loss for words. "I am, I have

been told, the eighty-ninth man to fill this important office, and when I think of my predecessors, some of whom have doubtless passed away, I am filled with a sense of my unfitness for the post which I fill. The whole fate of this Society depends upon its President; without him to guide the members in their pursuit of pleasure they would be left to drift into undignified amusements, and might even end by taking such absurd things as degrees. At all cost we must avoid banality." As if in the excitement of the moment, he swept his hands over his head and knocked off his cap. "However, my fellow Hedonists, I think I may say that your last President has entered earnestly into the spirit of this Society. Its aim, you remember, is pleasure—not any vulgar or ordinary pleasure, but refined and exclusive amusement—that is written in the rules of the Society as they were given to me, and I need not remind those who are present to-night that it is their duty to obey them." He rested his right hand on his shirt, and continued quickly, "I, at any rate, have obeyed them to the letter. I have, if I may say so, got more amusement out of this evening than I have ever had in my life, and as your eighty-ninth President I declare this magnificent Society at an end." Dennison, Lambert, and one or two others jumped up, but Thornton told them loudly not to interrupt him, and several of us shouted for him to go on with his speech. "I have had an exceedingly good dinner, and my last word must be one of sympathy with Mr. Dennison, who, thinking that I was a bigger fool than he was, has invented a society of which, I am sure you will all acknowledge, he is the only man worthy to be President. I hope that you will see that he performs the ceremonies which he has arranged for me." As he finished he took off all his badges and tossed them across the table to Dennison.

There was a good deal of noise during the concluding sentences of his speech, but the so-called Hedonists were so astonished that they did nothing, and Thornton very prudently did not wait to see what would happen next. Dennison was in a miserable state because he was violently angry and trying to grin, and before the general hubbub had stopped, two men out of our eight, who had never forgiven him for laughing at their rowing, picked him up and carried him out of the room. In a minute Dennison, with the purple cap on his head, was sitting on the donkey, and a procession had started to St. Cuthbert's. When we got back to college we succeeded in taking possession of the porter who answered our knocks, and in getting both the moke and Dennison into the quad. I was so engaged with the porter that I did not see whether Dennison entered in state, but at any rate he had to ride round the quad two or three times, and crowds of men were there to see him do it. Finally, the Subby and The Bradder appeared, and gave orders that the donkey should leave the college; so as soon as Dennison had dismounted, his steed was handed over to its owner, who was waiting in the street. Then some of us paid a call on the porter to see if he could develop a bad memory for faces, but the only thing we found out from him was that his temper was bad, and that we had known before. As I went back to my rooms I met Lambert, who drew himself up in front of me as if he was on parade.

"Don't think," he said, "that you have heard the last of this."

"We shall never hear the last of it," I answered,

"We know that you played this dirty trick."

"You can know what you please," I said.

"I told you about Thornton, and then you prepare this behind our backs."

"The whole college, and nearly the whole 'Varsity knew about Thornton, so you needn't talk such rot to me. Crowds of out-college men were here to see him come in to-night."

"You arranged the whole thing."

"You may think whatever you like," I replied; and he strode away with a warning that I had better look out for myself.

CHAPTER XXI

ONE WORD TOO MANY

The collapse of the Hedonists placed me in a very curious position, for by some freak of fortune an idea spread through the 'Varsity that I had been responsible for it, and whenever I went to Vincent's I was always button-holed by men who asked me to tell them what had happened. It was almost as bad as Nina falling into the "Cher," for a tale thirty times told is as flavourless as sauce kept in an uncorked bottle. I could not say that Murray was the man to explain the whole thing, for he was most extraordinarily anxious that his name should not be mentioned. I thought that he carried discretion beyond the bounds of decency, but Jack said that if it had not been for him we should never have made a fool of Dennison, and this was so far true that I stopped myself from making one or two forcible remarks. The immediate result of our procession was that a great many people seemed to be incoherently angry. I had interviews with

both the Warden and the Subby, and I am sorry to say that our porter had told them that I had hit him in the ribs. I had done nothing of the kind, but it was necessary that he should be taken for a short walk, and I did put my arm through his and keep myself between him and the donkey until it was safely in the quad. I am sure that the Warden understood that I would not hit any one in the ribs, and I think his annoyance was due chiefly to the fact that some one had told a reporter a lot of things which were not true, and there were accounts of the Hedonists in some of the London papers. But the fact of a donkey being in our quad had got on the Subby's nerves, and he gated me for a month without listening to what I had to say. He also told me that I ought to consider myself very lucky not to be sent down for the term. Several other men, including Dennison, were gated for a fortnight, and I had great difficulty in keeping Jack from going to the Subby, to ask him if he would not do something to him. It was very silly of Jack to think of pushing himself into this row, but instead of thanking his stars that he had not been seen, he was furious with me when I told him to keep away from the Subby; and a lot of other men in St. Cuthbert's who would have been glad to help in squashing Dennison, were angry because they had never been told of our plans.

Collier, who had not been gated, told me by way of comfort that virtue is its own reward, but if this is true, I really think that virtue is badly handicapped, and that those who practise it should get something more substantial to satisfy them. I began to think that if ever there was another attempt to do anything for the college I should be too busy to take any part in it. There was, however, one thing which cheered me during these days of bad temper, and that was a report that Dennison and Lambert were vowing vengeance upon me. I hoped most sincerely that they would try to do something, for I should have received them with pleasure. But their threats never came to anything, for as the days passed by and every one knew how completely they had been scored off, their desire for revenge seemed to wane. Ridicule smothered them, and try as they would to live it down, their influence, as far as the college was concerned, disappeared entirely. Some of the set pulled themselves up and became more or less silent, while others continued to shriek at night, and to go to the theatre for the purpose of making a row, which seems to me to be nearly the end of all things.

In a week the Hedonists were almost forgotten, and when the storm had blown over, Murray was not so anxious that I should have all the credit of having caused it. But by that time no one cared to know who had thought of preparing Thornton for the dinner, and Murray treated me as if I had robbed him of something. I think he must have been working too hard, or suffering from some secret illness, for I had already told a hundred men that it was not in me to make a plot of any kind, and that if I had been responsible for this one it would never have been successful. Murray's indignation came too late to have any effect, and as I thought he was quite unreasonable I made no attempt to pacify him.

After things had settled down again no one could help seeing that the fall of Dennison and his friends had done no end of good to the college. The men who can be only described as absolute slackers do not often get the chance of having any influence in a college, but for some reason or other Dennison had become the fashion among a certain set in St. Cuthbert's, and if we were ever to do anything properly again it was time for the fashion to change. There are many ways of making yourself conspicuous in Oxford, and Dennison chose the one which the majority of men never have been able to put up with. I think St. Cuthbert's during my first two years had most unusually bad luck; we were suffering, like the agricultural interest, from years of depression, and we tobogganed down the hill instead of trying to pull ourselves to the top of it again. I suppose other colleges have their troubles, but while I was at Oxford no college had such a desperate struggle as St. Cuthbert's.

My interviews with The Bradder during the first two or three weeks of this term were most strictly business-like. I was afraid that he would speak to me of the Hedonists, and as I had no intention of saying a word to him about them I never stayed with him longer than I could possibly help. Dons, however, find out things without asking undergraduates, and the man who imagines that they are not troubling themselves about him is in danger of having rather a rude awakening, if he happens to be doing things which do not please them. Our dons must have known all about Dennison, and I believe they fixed their eyes most steadfastly upon him. At any rate, his father, who was a barrister, must have heard something, because he paid a surprise visit to Oxford. There is something horribly mean about surprise visits, whatever information may be got from them, and for the first time in my life I felt a little sympathy for Dennison.

Whether his father thought this visit successful or not I do not know, but he certainly found out a lot in a short time and came to a very definite decision. He called on Dennison at ten o'clock and found him sleeping, he called again at twelve o'clock with the same result; at one o'clock he discovered him sitting at breakfast in his dressing-gown. Lambert was unfortunate enough to hear some of the interview which followed, and he said that Dennison's defence was very clever, but that he broke down under cross-examination.

"I have never seen such a man as old Dennison," I heard Lambert telling some one in the common-room; "he looked like a piece of marble, and when I went in and wanted to bolt he treated me as if I was an office-boy, and said that as he believed I was a particular friend of his son's it would do me good to stay. The worst of it was that Dennison wasn't very well, and was having a pick-me-up with his brekker. He wasn't in bed until four this morning, so it's no wonder he didn't look very fit."

On the following afternoon Dennison left Oxford; he was not sent down by the dons, but had to go for the simple reason that his father said he would not let him stay any longer. His friends took him down to the station, and there was a procession of cabs and a noise, but I am sure that there was a feeling of relief in the college when he had gone. Jack and I told each other that we were sorry that his end had come so suddenly, although if any one had asked me what I meant, I am sure that I could not have given any explanation. It is not very hard to guess what would have happened to him if his father had not acted as he did, and if you have to leave Oxford abruptly I should think the best way is to be hurried off by your people; it must save so many explanations when you get home.

What happened to Dennison I cannot say; somebody said that he was going round the world or on to the Stock Exchange, but Lambert denied both these reports, and declared that he had reformed so violently that he had become a teetotaler and intended to wear a blue riband in his button-hole. I doubted the blue riband part of the story, and if Dennison ever wore one I think it would only be on Boat-race day, for it takes a tremendous lot of courage to wear a badge of any kind.

After Dennison had disappeared, Jack and I saw The Bradder nearly every day. His keenness on the college increased instead of wearing off with time, and he seemed to be exactly the right kind of man to be a don. His energy was really terrific, and I received more goads than I could endure conveniently, so I passed some of them on to Jack and chose those which I liked the least, not, I am afraid, the ones which Jack might be inclined to receive with patience.

The Bradder persuaded me to join both a Shakespearian and a Browning Society, and as I could not plunge into such things by myself I dragged Jack with me. The Shakespearian Society was pleasant enough, but after two meetings of the Browningites Jack said flatly that he would not go again. Some of the Browning men objected to the windows being opened, and it is very difficult to keep awake in a stuffy room when you have been taking hard exercise in the afternoon. Jack, at any rate, snored so loudly at the second meeting that he shocked the President, and when he woke up he interrupted a discussion by giving a very fluent lecture on the advantages of ventilation. I expect that he would have been turned out of the society if he had not resigned, and I ought not to have dragged him into it, for he was so violently bored by the whole thing that he declared he must have a little pleasure to make him forget all about it.

"Something in the open air," he said to me, when he came to my rooms on the morning after he had snored, and he looked at a volume of *Stubbs' Constitutional History* as if he was very tired of it. I was also feeling rather dull, for I had already got through a fortnight of my gating, and to be kept in college after nine o'clock night after night is not very exciting.

"A little change is what we want," Jack went on, as I said nothing.

"I can't do much," I answered; "I'm gated and you have got to row."

"I've got a day off to-morrow; the stroke of my boat has to go to town and bow's ill."

"Why not have a day's hunting?" I asked.

"There is a little race-meeting down below Reading; you pulled me into that Browning thing and it is only fair for you to come to this."

"But I shan't be back in time."

"It's only about twenty miles beyond Reading, and there's no footer match, because I've looked to see. Let's get Bunny Langham and have a rest, it will do us all no end of good. Bunny is going in for politics—his father was President of the Union, and he has got to be, if he can. I should think that there are more Presidents of things in Oxford than any other place in the world, unless it's Cambridge; but Bunny will stick some of his own poetry into his speeches, and the men at the Union don't like it. You can tell him that if ever he expects to be President he must stop that game, he takes no notice of what I say about poetry. You'll come?"

We looked up trains and found out that we could be back by half-past six, so I said that I would go, and Jack went off to see Bunny Langham. As far as racing was concerned the Horndean meeting was not very interesting, for there was not a close finish in any race which I saw, but if any one has a fancy for picking up very inexpensive horses I should advise them never to miss Horndean.

I was strolling about with Bunny and Jack after one race, and saw the winner of it brought out for sale. It fetched a hundred and sixty guineas, and Jack said it was "dirt cheap." Then another horse was put up, and I was surprised to hear some one bid ten guineas. Such an offer seemed to me ridiculous for a race-horse, so without thinking, and just to help things on a bit, I said "eleven," and strolled on with Jack; but before we had gone far some one was asking my name, and another man was asking me what I wished him to do with the horse. So many questions bothered me, and I tried to explain that I had made a mistake when I had said "eleven," but it seemed as if such mistakes did not count for much.

"The horse is yours," one man said.

"And he's got the temper of a fiend," the other man added, "and I should like you to find some one to take him at once."

I was quite prepared to give him away if I could find any one foolish enough to have him, but Bunny wouldn't hear of it, and declared we would take him back to Oxford with us. "He may be a gold mine, who knows?" he said.

Jack laughed so much, that while I was surrounded by a lot of impatient people he was unable to help me at all, and I can tell those who have never had to suffer as I did, that to become an owner of a race-horse suddenly is a very awkward experience.

My brute was called "Thunderer," and the man who had got hold of him said that his name was the only good thing about him, for he roared like the sea. I wished heartily that some one would steal my horse, but every one seemed to be most distressingly anxious to keep as far away from him as possible.

I suppose Bunny knew all about racers, for in a few minutes he had arranged for a horse-box to be put on our train, and Thunderer disappeared. I seemed to spend the remainder of the afternoon in being asked for money by people who said they had done or were going to do something for me. I found that my exalted position brought many burdens with it, and I was very glad when we left the race-course. Unfortunately, however, we trusted to Bunny's watch, and when we got to the station, which was on a little branch line, our train to Reading had gone. There had been some bother about the horse-box, and the station-master and a number of people who took an unabating interest in me were quarrelling when we arrived. I sat down on a bench and left Bunny to talk to them; I have never been so tired of anything in my life.

Even if the next train was punctual we had to wait for an hour, and by no chance could we reach Oxford before half-past seven. We should have been annoyed in any case, but Jack and I were very irritated because the Mohocks were meeting that evening, and we had men dining with us. The only thing to do was to telegraph and ask some one to look after our guests until we came, but the station had no telegraph-office, and if we wanted to send a telegram we had to go down to the village.

A porter assured us that we could get to the post-office in ten minutes, and that the road was quite straight. I don't know what he was thinking about, possibly of a bicycle and daylight, for the way to the village needed a lot of finding, and it took us quite half-an-hour to reach the post-office. By that time a thick fog had risen. We tried, and failed, to get any kind of vehicle to take us back to the station, so we started to run and lost our way. The natural result was that we missed another train, and the stationmaster, who must have had an especial dislike for me, had not sent on the horse-box, and was more angry than ever. Of all the obstinate people in the world I think a station-master at a small station can be easily first, and our efforts to soothe him produced no effect whatever. Everything he said began with "I know my business," and I have always been inclined to doubt people who try to crush me with such unnecessary information.

We got away eventually, but my misfortunes were not finished. Our train was very late at Reading and there was no longer any chance for me to be in college by nine o'clock. Jack, too, was bothered about the men whom he had asked to dinner, and Bunny alone remained in a state of unruffled contentment.

When the train came at last I got into a carriage with only a glance at the people in it, and tried to go to sleep, but Bunny kept on talking about Thunderer and had magnificent schemes for my future benefit. I regret to say that he was in what must have been a sportive mood, and asked me to choose my racing colours and my trainer. He kept up a long series of questions which I did not answer, but which prevented me from going to sleep. I opened my eyes reluctantly and saw Jack slumbering in a corner, but when I looked at the man opposite to me I became most thoroughly awake. This man, as far as I remember anything about him when I got into the carriage, had his head buried in a newspaper; now he was revealed as Mr. Edwardes, and having wished me "good-evening," he added—quite superfluously—that he was surprised to see me.

Bunny with more curiosity than good manners put on his glasses to look at Mr. Edwardes, and I, having to say something, thought that I might as well introduce them to each other, though I took care to mumble Bunny's name so that it could not be heard. Mr. Edwardes bowed and opened his paper again, but Bunny having arrived at the fact that I was face to face with a don of some kind, thought he would try to pass the time pleasantly. Considering what he had already said about race-horses nothing could have been more fatuous than his attempts to explain why I was not in Oxford. He began by talking about British industries, and in a minute was saying that he thought a visit to Huntley and Palmer's biscuit manufactory was well worth a visit to Reading. I kicked and nudged him incessantly, for the snubs which he received from Mr. Edwardes only seemed to encourage him.

The distance between Reading and Oxford is happily not great, but by the time we had finished our journey I was in a state of profound discomfort, and though I had no love for Mr. Edwardes, I thought that Bunny might have had the sense to know that if he was amusing himself he was making things more difficult for me. His explanation was that a man who looked like a frozen image was just as likely to believe that I had been inspecting Huntley and Palmer's manufactory as buying a race-horse, and at any rate it was a good thing to try and mix him up a

little, but I can't say that I thought the explanation a good one.

When we got to Oxford a man from a livery-stable was waiting for Thunderer, and Jack and I reached St. Cuthbert's just as the Mohocks were coming back to college after playing pool. It was half-past ten before I could explain things to the men whom I had asked to dine with me, and when they heard that I had been buying a race-horse they thought that my excuses were good enough.

The Bradder was dining with the Mohocks that evening, and when the out-college men had gone away he asked me to come to his rooms and have a smoke. I looked at Jack, and The Bradder said at once, "Ask Ward to come with you," and walked off across the quad.

We told him exactly what we had been doing, and I think Mr. Edwardes would have been rather surprised to see how he laughed.

"What would Colonel Marten say if he knew you had bought a race-horse?" he asked me.

"I hope to goodness he never will know," I answered.

"What are you going to do with him?"

"Sell him—if I can; Langham's got him in the stables where he keeps his horses, and if you would like to have a look at him, I'll take you round."

But The Bradder shook his head.

"You say Mr. Edwardes saw you at Reading, and that you are gated, and were not in college until ten o'clock. I wish you would not do such stupid things," he said quite seriously.

"It was the reaction," I replied.

"From what?"

"Browning," I said, and The Bradder did not look altogether pleased.

"I am sorry you can't appreciate Browning."

"I can't appreciate very many things at once. Besides, Jack and I felt very dull."

"Mr. Edwardes saw you, I suppose?" he asked Jack.

"I should think so, but I don't think he knows me by sight."

"Oh yes, he does," The Bradder said. "Both of you are bound to hear more about this."

"It's very unfortunate," Jack remarked; "you see there was a fog, and all sorts of unexpected things happened. It has been a real bad day," he added, as we left the room.

On the following morning directly after breakfast Jack and I went round to see Bunny, and we found him talking to a man who looked like a groom from his head to his heels. I groaned.

"Sit down, Sam," Bunny said. "That's Mr. Marten, the owner of the horse you are talking about."

"Well, all I can say is what the Guv'nor told me to say. I was to say this 'oss must leave our place this morning or there'll be trouble."

"There seems to have been trouble already," Bunny replied.

"E's done enough damage for twenty 'osses. Kick, you should see 'im; 'e's kicked a loose box silly. Our Guv'nor's fairly got 'is rag out."

"He must wait until I've finished breakfast. You'd better have a cigarette, Sam."

"No, thank you," Sam answered, and looked at a cigar-box.

"Help yourself," Bunny said.

Sam helped himself and remarked that he had been up since five o'clock with that blessed 'oss, and that it was thirsty work. So he helped himself again. After that he did not seem to mind so much what the Guv'nor said, and told Bunny that he had never met a nobleman who didn't know how to treat people properly.

We talked to Sam for some time, and just as Bunny was finishing breakfast another man came into the room.

"I had forgotten all about you," Bunny said. "I'm afraid this place is rather full of smoke," and he introduced his cousin, Mr. Eric Bruce.

"I can't congratulate you on your memory," Bruce replied; "you forgot I was going to stay with you last night, and you forget I want any breakfast. Funny chap, Augustus, isn't he?" he said to me.

"Your wire never came until I had gone yesterday, so I couldn't forget you were coming," Bunny said, and rang the bell.

"I'll tell the Guv'nor you'll be round in 'alf a jiffy," Sam said, and went out of the room jerkily, as if he had got a stiff leg.

"What curious friends you have, Augustus, and what is 'alf a jiffy'?" Bruce asked.

"Don't be a fool," Bunny answered, "and don't call me Augustus."

"It's better than Gussy," Bruce declared, and though I should have been glad to contradict him, for I disliked him at sight, there is no doubt that he was right.

"Is the man, who has gone, an elderly undergraduate or only a don?" Bruce went on.

"He's from some stables round the corner. Any one with two eyes could see that."

"Rude as usual; my cousin's the oddest man," Bruce said to Jack.

"Like to buy a horse?" Bunny asked him.

"I'm ready to buy anything if I can sell it at a profit," he answered.

"Well, swallow your breakfast and come and have a look. You'll get your profit all right. I've never known you when you didn't."

In a few minutes we all went to the stables, and Bunny began haggling operations. Bruce bid a "fiver" for Thunderer, and was told he would fetch that for cats' meat, and then the game went on. In the end Bruce said he would give fifteen guineas, and take him to London that day. I nearly seized him by the hand, and told him he was a rare good sort, which I was quite convinced he was not. The livery-stable man did not seem to care what happened as long as Thunderer went away, and I must say that he made the least of his eccentricities.

"That's a bit of luck," Bunny said to me when the bargain was settled, "I get rid of my cousin and a horse on the same day, both real bad lots. He's our family pestilence," and he nodded at Bruce's back.

For Jack's benefit I added up the result of my investment, and came to the conclusion that I was about eighteen-pence to the bad when I had paid for the damage Thunderer had done, and all the little incidental expenses connected with him. You can't own a race-horse for nothing, and I think that I—or rather Bunny—did well. I was told afterwards that Bruce raffled my horse and sold fifty tickets for a sovereign each, but I am not inclined to believe that story, and at any rate I should not have known where to find fifty fools. I certainly could not have discovered them in Oxford, where some people, who have never been there, make the mistake of thinking they are to be found in crowds.

I believe the dons held a meeting about Jack and me, for The Bradder told us there was a great difference of opinion about the sort of men we were. I tried to get more out of him, but failed. However, we got off lightly, for Jack was only gated for a week, while I was given a lecture by the Subby, and had a week added to my term of imprisonment.

The Bradder also advised me to give up going to race-meetings.

CHAPTER XXII

A TUTORSHIP

I was beginning to forget that I had ever been the owner of a race-horse when I got a furious letter from my father. The Warden had told my uncle, and my uncle lost his head and wrote to my people instead of to me. A tale of this kind always flies round at a tremendous pace, and it was difficult to make every one believe that I had never meant to buy the horse, and that as soon as I had bought him my one desire was to get rid of him. I found out afterwards that the Warden only told my uncle because he thought the tale would amuse him, but apparently he expressed himself in such very curious language that he gave the impression of being annoyed. After I had soothed my people the Bishop wrote to me that the turf had been the ruin of many young men, but when I thought of the part I had played upon it I came to the conclusion that I was not likely to be added to the number. My uncle referred to racing as "a fascinating and very expensive pleasure," and I

assured him that I had not found it fascinating, and that my experience had cost me eighteen-pence, the cheapness of which he had to admit. I am glad that I added up my expenses, for that eighteen-pence was very useful, it was such a delightfully ridiculous sum to brandish at any one who thought that I was trotting down the road to perdition.

During the rest of the term we were very quiet in St. Cuthbert's. I was able to play rigger for the college in nearly every match, for my days in the 'Varsity fifteen had ended. Hogan was better than ever, while I had fallen away to the kind of man who Blackheath ask to play for them when half their team are crocked and the other half have influenza. I did not mind, however, for our college fifteen was only beaten by Trinity and Keble, and our soccer team, chiefly owing to three or four freshers, was also much better than it had been for years.

Things were improving all round, and Jack's energy was almost exhausting to those who watched it. He seemed to me to be hunting for societies to join, and he went round sampling them and finding out that they did not suit him. Bunny Langham succeeded in getting himself elected Secretary of the Union, and he told me that he was going to have several cabinet ministers down to speak in the following term, and should give them a jolly good dinner. He asked Jack and me to meet them, but only one of them came, and he did not dine with Bunny. His father, who was in the Government and held the record for the number of speeches he had made in the House of Lords, came down once and wanted to come again, but he spoke for such a tremendously long time that Bunny declared that he should give up all hopes of being elected President if he ever came again.

In the Lent term Jack rowed six in our Torpid, and also told me that he thought he should try and get his blue for throwing the hammer. He had never thrown the hammer in his life, but he said that he knew what it was like and any one could throw it. I suppose that was true, but Jack, when he tried, found that there were other men who could throw it a greater distance than he could, which did not trouble him in the least. He remarked that the hammer was a silly thing after all, and that he should think of something else.

But the Torpid occupied so much of his time and attention that he gave up seeking for a curious way in which to get his blue, and settled down to train in a most determined manner. The sight of me eating muffins for tea seemed to be almost an insult to him, I really believe that he would have liked me to train with him, though I had nothing whatever to train for. He did persuade me once to run round the Parks before breakfast, but I didn't repeat the experiment, for I felt quite fit without being restless in the early morning. Of course I had the Torpid to breakfast, and their confidence in themselves was as great as their appetites. You can't, I think, give breakfast to a Torpid and like them at the same time, and I have never acted as host to a Torpid or an Eight without being struck by the fact that of all men in the world I was the most supremely unimportant. Occasionally Jack and another man remembered that I was not very interested in the amount of work the Corpus stroke did with his legs, and made as great an effort to drag me into the conversation as I made to keep in it. But the effort was very apparent on both sides, and I gave up when I heard that seven in the Merton boat used his oar like a pump-handle, and that there was not a single man in the Pembroke crew who pulled his own weight. This last statement compelled me to ask if Pembroke hoisted a sail on their boat and waited for a favourable wind, but my question was treated with scorn, and I came to the usual conclusion that the best place to see a Torpid collectively is in a boat.

The confidence of our men depressed me, for I had most conscientiously played the part of host to previous Torpids and Eights, who had been equally confident until the racing began. After that they had either complained of their luck or their cox, and I asked Jack when I got him by himself if he really thought our boat was going up.

"I don't know," he replied, "we plug hard, and thinking you are bound to bump everybody is part of the game. It's no use starting to race with your tail down."

The papers considered that we were bound to rise, but for two years they had been saying that and all we had done was to lose more places. I wished that I could meet some one who was not sure about the success of our boat, and at last I discovered him in Lambert, who said our crew looked like a picnic party, which had gone too far out to sea, and had to plug for all they were worth to get back before night. Then I defended them and felt more happy. The fact was the Torpids were a sort of test case; if we went up I felt we should have fairly turned the corner, but if we went down I was afraid our fit of enthusiasm would cool rapidly. No one who was rowing in them could have been more excited than I was. The Bradder noticed it and complained, but for the moment I was incapable of caring much about things which had happened, and after all there is something to be said for anybody who is really keen on one thing, if he does not make himself a very terrific bore.

On the first night of the races we got a dreadfully bad start, and for two or three minutes we were in danger of being bumped. Then we settled down and began to draw close to Corpus, but our cox was too eager and made unsuccessful shots at them. After the second shot I could not run another yard, so perhaps a little training might have done me good, but we did catch Corpus at the "Cher," and that began a triumphant week. We made seven bumps, and though a lot of men said our crew showed more brute force than science, it must have been nonsense, because we went up from fourteenth to seventh, and when a boat gets fairly high in the First Division there is sure to be some one in it who can row properly. The stroke of the 'Varsity eight told me that the

best man in our Torpid was Jack and I believed him very easily.

"He could be made useful in the middle of a boat with a bit of coaching," he said to me.

"You'll be up next year, so look out for him," I answered, and I told him that I thought Jack was a splendid oar, which was no use because he only laughed.

I had become so accustomed to a dismal return to college from both the Eights and Torpids that the change was quite delightful, and on the last day of the races we had a huge "bump" supper in hall. From that supper some of our dons stood aloof and were even said to disapprove of it, but the Warden was present for the greater part of it, and the Bursar and The Bradder entered into the spirit of the thing with a zest which was splendid. There were also two or three more dons, who had been undergrads of St. Cuthbert's, but who now belonged to other colleges, and they seemed to know that there are times when it is well to forget that you are a don. We entertained two members of each of the crews which we had bumped, and I cannot say that any of them seemed to be dispirited by their bad fortune. Indeed, as the evening went on they became exceedingly lively, and some of them were inclined to swear everlasting friendship with any one who liked demonstrations.

After supper we had a lot of speeches, but it was impossible to hear many of them, for everybody wanted to speak and no one to listen. I did hear the opening sentence of one speech, "Gentlemen, I used to be able to row once," but I heard no more, for the next words were drowned in loud cries of "Shame" and "No, no," and the don who wished to tell us his personal reminiscences just stood and smiled at us. He had been in the St. Cuthbert's boat when it had been head of the river and did not mind anything. Before we left the hall there were two men speaking at once at our table, it was a great chance to practise oratory. I have never been at a more convivial supper, and since we had not been given an opportunity of celebrating anything for ages it is no wonder that we made a tremendous noise. Some people may wag their heads at bump suppers and call them silly, or whatever they please, but they have forgotten the joy of living, and find their chief delight in criticizing the pleasures of those who are younger and happier than themselves. I suppose they are useful in their way, but thank goodness their way is not mine. You can't expect an undergraduate to celebrate seven bumps by standing on the top of a mountain and watching a sunrise, or by some equally peaceful enjoyment. He wants noise, and he generally manages to get it. I know that I was very pleased with that evening and felt as if it had been well-spent, but when I tried to describe it to Mrs. Faulkner, she shrugged her shoulders and said that it was most childish, for she couldn't understand that it was very nice to let yourself go a little when there was a good reason for doing it. I believe she was one of those people who are ashamed of ever having been children, and if she lived to be a hundred years old and kept all her faculties she would never understand what a peculiar mixture makes up life at Oxford. I did not tell her about the bonfire which we had in the back quad after supper, because I am sure she would have thought that either I was lying or that most of the men in St. Cuthbert's were a set of lunatics.

Two or three dons, who could appreciate festivities, danced round the bonfire quite happily, and evidently enjoyed themselves. They were very popular; too much so possibly for their own comfort, for one of them who was, except on especial occasions, a most prim and proper person, was seized by a man, who looked upon him as his very dearest friend, and carried round the bonfire at galloping pace. After that the dons disappeared and we had a dance in the hall. I should think the band must have been as keen on exercise as we were, for the music got faster and faster as the evening went on, and it was impossible to keep time, but that did not matter. In our battels at the end of the week we were all charged half-a-crown for refreshing the band, so that they could not have gone away hungry—or thirsty.

An outburst of this kind is something more than a custom honoured by time, for it clears the air and you can settle down afterwards quite easily. I had smuggled myself into the festivities which other colleges had given, but I had never enjoyed myself half as much as I did at our own. We had done something at last which was worth a bonfire, and a bonfire with no one to dance round it has never yet been lighted in an Oxford quad.

The Bradder thought that our supper had gone off very well, although he had seen one of his fellow-dons treated too affectionately, and had rescued him. But he knew such things did not really mean anything, for you can't expect men who have just come out of strict training to behave quite like ordinary mortals.

I wanted to fish during the Easter vac, but my vacs were beginning to get out of hand, for make what plans I would—and I made very pleasant ones—somebody was always at work to upset them. I meant to take Fred home with me and play cricket in a net if the weather was warm, and fish a little stream near us, but the Bishop had found something else for me to do, and my schemes came to nothing. At the end of the term I only went home for two days, and then had to start off on a tutorship. It is no use pretending that I went without vigorous protests. I said that I had never tutored anybody in my life, and was met by the answer that everything had to have a beginning, which is such an appalling truism that it ought never to be uttered. I then stated that I was sorry for the boy who had me as a tutor, though I meant, of course, that I was sorry for myself, and my mother replied that she should miss me very much, but that she had talked the whole thing over with my father, and they both thought the experience would be good for me. What could I say to that? Besides, it was too late to back out. The people, I was told, were

charming, and I was to take charge of a boy aged twelve, who was home from school because he had been having measles. The boy was also charming, everybody and everything seemed to be exactly right; but I thought I saw the Bishop peeping through all these descriptions, and charming is a word which has no great attractions for me, it is so comprehensive and can mean such a multitude of things.

But as I had to go I went cheerfully, and I should not think that any one ever started on a tutorship knowing less than I did about the people to whom I was going. My whole stock of knowledge consisted of their name, which was Leigh-Tompkinson, of the place where they lived, and of the fact that the boy had been ill. I had, however, no doubt that I should be able to get on with them if they could only put up with me; they were, I was assured, friends of the Bishop, and I did not think that he would urge me to go to any people whom I should not like.

When I arrived at the house I was shown into a drawing-room in which there were at least eight ladies and not a single man. My reception was almost effusive. Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson insisted that I was cold, tired, and dying of hunger, but I had only travelled forty miles, and the day was warm. I wanted nothing except a sight of Mr. Leigh-Tompkinson, and I had an awful feeling that there was not such a man. It struck me suddenly that no one had ever spoken of him to me, and my courage decreased.

"You would like to see Dick," one lady said to me, and everybody asked where he was, and nobody knew or seemed to care very much. The desire for him passed off as quickly as it had come, and in half-an-hour I was playing a four-handed game at billiards with Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson as a partner, and two ladies as our opponents. My partner played better than I did, and we won; we then played two other ladies, and in the middle of the second game Dick came into the room. One glance at him told me that he was all right, and I should have been very glad to go away with him. He remarked to me at once that I was "at it" already, which told me a good deal. No one took any notice of him except to tell him not to fidget, and as he was not fidgeting I thought he was very amiable to receive such unnecessary orders in silence. Before dinner I was able to have a few minutes alone with him, and my fears about Mr. Leigh-Tompkinson were realized—he was dead. We also made some plans for the next day, which were never carried out. In fact, try as I would for many days, and I adopted many artifices, I could hardly ever spend more than an odd half-hour with him, there was always something which his mother thought much more important for me to do. The house was full of people, most of whom were ladies, though none of them were what I called young; but there were two men there all the time, who were the mildest beings I have ever met. I don't think either of them liked me, and I am sure I did not like them; their wildest amusement was a little, a very little golf, and their chief employment was to make themselves generally useful. Everybody, with the exception of Dick and me, seemed to be trying to be young again, it was a most melancholy spectacle. For some time I could not understand how Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson could be a friend of my uncle's, but at last a Miss Bentham, who was always ready to talk, told me that the house-party were having their holidays before they went back to London for the season.

"In London my cousin has so much to do," she continued. "Of course the season is always fatiguing, but Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson makes it more so by her devotion to good works."

I nearly laughed aloud, and thought of saying that if she would be a little more devoted to her son she would not be wasting her time, but I suppressed myself and asked to hear more about the good works.

"She gives so much away, but then she's so rich," Miss Bentham said. "She's devoted to your uncle, but then he's so handsome. Don't you think so?"

"He's fifty," I replied, without remembering to whom I was talking.

"A woman is as old as she looks and a man as he feels," she said, and looked at me.

I knew that I was expected to say that the Bishop must be about thirty, and that she could be scarcely twenty-five, but I really could not do it. The whole place made me feel absolutely unwell.

"My uncle works hard and often feels tired," I remarked after a moment.

"You mustn't think we always enjoy ourselves like this. Here we are quite children again, so very refreshing," but her interest in me had gone. I had been given my opportunity and had not taken it. I should have liked very much to see an interview between Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson in her "good works" mood and my uncle; it would have been a delightful entertainment. But I am sure that he had never seen her when she was taking her holidays, or I should have been left to play cricket and fish with Fred.

In spite, however, of the facts that I was always trying to fulfil the duties which were supposed to account for my presence, and that I liked Dick far better than any one else in the house, I was for some time most popular with Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson. I was new, I suppose, for what other reason there could have been for my popularity I cannot imagine; but at any rate the reason is not worth guessing, for in a brief ten minutes I managed to fall completely out of favour.

The way in which this happened was rather absurd, but it showed clearly enough what an

odd kind of woman Dick had for a mother. As a rule I had to play billiards after dinner, but one evening there was somebody staying in the house who persuaded Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson to play round games, and when I went into the drawing-room I discovered that preparations had been made for this form of dissipation. Dick had been allowed to come down to take part in them, and was walking round asking everybody to begin at once; but my experience of round games is that people are generally far more anxious to stop than to begin them. Each person wanted to play a different game, for by this means I fervently believe that they imagined they would get out of playing any at all. I sat down while I had the chance, feeling sure that in a few minutes I should be asked to go outside the door and stay there. I thought that I knew every game of the kind, and when Dick had at last got a few people to look like beginning, I was asked if I knew "it." I had no idea that "it" meant anything out of the ordinary, and I said unblushingly that I did, whereupon Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson asked me to take the chair on her right hand. One of the mild men had already taken up his position on this seat, and to my sorrow he was told to move, though I had no idea that my position was in a peculiar way the place of honour. A lady, who proclaimed many times that she had never done such a thing in her life, stood in the middle of the circle and asked questions, and from the confusing answers she received I discovered promptly that I did not know what game we were playing. At last she came to me and said, "Is it beautiful?" so as we were only allowed to say "Yes" or "No," and the last answer had been "Yes," I said "No." I shall never forget the gasp which followed. Dick, I am ashamed to say, gave way to merriment, but the rest of the people looked at me as if I had committed a crime. It was not hard for me to guess that I ought to have said "Yes"; the agitation had even spread to Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson. The second question asked me was, "Is it old?" and this time I said "Yes," with some fervour; but my answer again caused consternation. Some one indeed declared that it was too hot for games, and in a minute the circle was broken up. Then Dick told me that "it" was always the left-hand neighbour of the person who was asked the question, and I saw that my answers, if true, had also been unfortunate.

Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson went into the billiard-room at once, and I am afraid that even an immediate explanation and apology would not have been considered compensation enough for making her ridiculous. During the next two days Dick and I were left very much to ourselves, and then I asked Miss Bentham, who was, I think, secretly pleased at my answers, to suggest that I should take him to the sea for the rest of his holidays. This request was made in the morning, and we started during the afternoon of the same day, for I had sinned past forgiveness. But unless I had played this game of "It" I should never have had time to make friends with Dick, and he wanted a friend rather badly. He was lonely among a crowd of people, all of whom were ready to give him anything he asked for, except companionship. I started by being sorry for him, and ended by liking him very much; he only wanted some one to take an interest in him, and that I was able to do quite easily. After my tutorship was over Mrs. Leigh-Tompkinson wrote to me and hoped that I should often be able to take him away with me, but she expressed no wish for me to stay with her again.

At the beginning of my third summer term I was able to pay Fred the money he had lent me. He protested, but I insisted, for he was Captain of the 'Varsity XI., and was also so popular that during the next few weeks he was bound to have plenty of opportunities for thinking of anything but economy. Besides, this money had been at times a load on my conscience. Economy, either practical or political, has never been a strong point of mine, but I often regretted that I had during my first two years bought a number of things which were more or less useless, because I was not compelled to pay for them at the moment. My difficulties were not overwhelming but they were a nuisance, until the Bishop, who knew both Oxford and me by heart, solved them by giving me a birthday present. Every one, however, has not got a convenient uncle, and without his present I should, owing to the recklessness of my first two years, have been compelled to leave Oxford with bills unpaid, and the prospect of a stormy interview with my father in front of me. I was so genuinely fond of Oxford, and there are so many pleasant things to do there, that I should have been very sorry to leave it with anything hanging over me.

Fast bowlers, both good and bad, were scarce during the whole time I was up, and I was not altogether surprised when Fred chose me to play in the Seniors' Match. In that game I succeeded in getting a few wickets, and soon afterwards I got my Harlequin cap, which pleased me hugely. I am sure that had I not been such an outrageously bad batsman, Fred would have liked to try me for the 'Varsity, but there happened to be another man who did not bowl any worse than I did and who batted much better. So I was left to bowl for the college, and I was not altogether sorry, for if Fred had yielded to his feelings and given me a trial a lot of men would have said it was a swindle. There are a number of people in Oxford who spend their time in looking out for swindles, and of all things in the world they seem to be the easiest to find. In Fred's case, however, I should have had a much better chance of playing if I had not been one of his greatest friends, for he was the very last man to turn his eleven into a sort of family party.

Our eight expected to make seven bumps, and succeeded in making five of them, with which Jack, who rowed six, pretended to be discontented. But we celebrated those five bumps all right, and altogether the college was a splendid place to live in. I stayed in bed much later than usual on the morning after our second celebration, and I suppose every one else was sleepy, for I could hear Clarkson calling his boy a lazy young vagabond, and that always happened when through other people's laziness the unfortunate boy could not get on with his work.

"Who is up?" Clarkson shouted.

"Nobody," the boy answered.

"Then fetch Mr. Thornton's breakfast," for Thornton had moved into rooms next to mine at the beginning of the term.

"Mr. Thornton's in bed."

Clarkson stamped heavily. "What the deuce does he mean by being in bed? Go and fetch his breakfast, and don't answer me when I give you orders."

The boy hurried down the stairs, and I thought Thornton had acted very unwisely in changing his rooms, for if Clarkson got hold of a man of whom he could take charge he was quite certain not to miss his chance. I knew one or two men who lived in greater fear of him than of any don, and I determined to advise Thornton not to be bullied. My efforts, however, were quite useless, for Thornton assured me that he liked our scout and got a great deal of amusement from him.

"Clarkson knows exactly what is best for himself and me, and he is always clean," he said.

"He treats his boy abominably," I replied.

"I wonder what you would be like if you were a scout," he said, and as he obviously thought that I should only be remarkable for my failings, I gave up trying to talk to him.

Thornton was a great puzzle to me, for his one desire was to be left to himself, and apart from speaking at debates and belonging to various literary societies he never seemed to me to do anything. Murray always lost his temper with me when I said that Thornton was extraordinarily odd, and declared that he was one of the cleverest men in the college and would probably be governing some colony when we had sunk out of sight.

In some moods Murray was not a cheerful companion, and I could not help telling him that to be bullied by your scout is not a good preparation for governing anything. And as a matter of fact Thornton became gradually so very eccentric, that even Murray had to admit that if he was a genius he was one who had lost his way.

After our eight had been successful Jack Ward was very anxious that they should go to Henley, but both the Bursar, who had done more to improve our rowing than anybody, and The Bradder wanted them to wait for another year.

"We shall have nearly the same eight next summer, and two or three good freshers are coming up," The Bradder argued.

"I shall be in the schools," Jack replied sadly, and though The Bradder turned away suddenly I saw him smiling, for Jack's essays were some of the most comical things ever written.

Anything which resembled style he said was unwholesome, and although Mr. Grace talked to him like a parent and The Bradder tried persuasion and abuse, he stuck to his solid way of giving information. But he confided in me that the reason was that he couldn't write a proper essay to save his life.

"All I want," he exclaimed, "is a degree, and that's what these men don't understand. Besides, I spell badly; it's a disease with me, and when you have got it, you may be able to think of a word, but you would be a precious fool to use it when another man has to read what you have written. So my vocabulary gets limited, and I'm going to stick to facts, and I shouldn't wonder if the examiners don't like them. They so seldom get them."

I don't think he understood what a very great deal some of the history men manage to know, but, at any rate, his way of tackling the examiners was novel, and considering the disease from which he was suffering, perhaps it was also the best he could choose. So he went on learning things by heart, and put up long lists of things on his looking-glass, or any place where he was likely to see them. I saw the extraordinary word "Brom" pinned on to a photograph of Collier, and found out that it stood for Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet.

"I can't help thinking that Marlborough finished off with Blenheim, because it is the sort of battle any one who is not even reading history has heard of," he explained, "and I have to get that idea out of my head. You will find all sorts of funny words stuck about the place. I've got 'Kajakk' pinned on to a lobelia in my flower-box, because I am always leaving out Anne of Cleves; she never seemed to have a chance, and you must have the man's wives all right."

"Do you think they matter much?" I asked.

"Of course they do. They are guide-posts to the reign, but they would do much better if half of them were not Katharines."

I suggested that he should call one of them Kate and another Kathleen to avoid confusion, but he said that "Kajakk" would pull him through all right, and that if there was any question about Henry VIII. he did not mean to miss it. I am certain that had he been given an opportunity, the examiners would have had a correct list of these ladies, with a brief note attached to explain why there were so many of them.

Soon after the Eights were over, I heard that The Bradder had invited my people to come up at the end of the term, and as I had never stayed up for "Commem," I wrote back cheerfully, and said we would enjoy ourselves. This letter, however, was answered by my father at once, and my plans were again thrown into confusion. "I want you to leave for Germany when term is over. To get even a smattering of the language you must be there nearly three months, and, unless you go immediately, you will miss all the shooting. I want you to know three modern languages well enough to get into the Foreign Office without any difficulty." This was the beginning of the longest letter I had ever had from him, and in many ways the nicest, but I cannot say that I wanted to spend my summer with a German family, and after consulting Fred, I went to The Bradder to see if he would not help me to stay in England.

"I can't read history and learn German at the same time," I said to him, "and all my work will be wasted unless I do some this vac."

"Your father has evidently made up his mind," he said, but I think that he must have been sorry for me.

"You write and tell him that I shall forget all I have been doing. He will listen to you."

"German is very valuable to you."

"So is history. How can I be expected to work next year when I am packed off every summer to live with a lot of people who don't want me? I get no fun."

"You will like it when you get there, and for this summer you can manage to do enough history to keep up what you know. I will help you as much as I can."

"Why can't I be allowed for once to like a thing in the place where I want to like it?" I asked, and I nearly told him that environment was everything, but he did not like those profound statements any better than I did. I only saw The Bradder really nasty to one man, and he had been fool enough to say that the reason why he cut his lectures was because the whole atmosphere of Oxford was against work, which really was a sickening sort of excuse.

My attempts to get help from The Bradder failed, and as soon as I had worked myself up into a rage he began to laugh.

So after one night at home I started to Germany and my people went to Oxford for "Commem" on the same day, which was a most topsy-turvy state of things. Nina promised to write to me, but I did not expect anything from her except postcards. I was, however, mistaken, for she wrote me a kind of "Oxford day by day," which I, struggling with a strange language in a strange land, was very glad to have. I don't know whether The Bradder taught her to refer to the Vice-Chancellor as the "Vice-Chuggins," but in her description of the Encænna that most important gentleman was certainly not mentioned with the respect which I consider that people, who don't belong to Oxford, ought to feel for him. In fact Nina succeeded in catching the Oxford language so badly that she told me that my father had been having "indijuggers," and I am sure that he would have had a worse attack if he had known what Nina called it. I am sorry to say that she treated the Encænna in a very light and airy way, though some most mightily distinguished men were receiving honorary degrees at the function.

"I like the Sheldonian because it is so round," she wrote to me, "but I was not impressed by the Encænna. The area of the theatre was reserved for the dons, who wore what I believe you call academic dress, but they did not look as if they had room enough to be comfortable. I sat in a gallery with a lot of people, and there was a man, who somebody told me was a Pro-proctor—at any rate he wore robes and looked, I thought, rather nice—to keep order. You do mix up things queerly at Oxford; some of the jokes which were made were really not very funny, and mother was afraid that some one might be offended. She was quite nervous. I liked the Public Orator, who seemed to me to be introducing the people who were to receive honorary degrees to the Vice-Chuggins, and I was sorry for the University prizemen, who wore evening dress and had to read out their prize poems and things. I couldn't hear a word the Public Orator said, but perhaps that was because I had a man near me who made jokes all the time and a bevy of relatives kept up a chorus of giggles. Mr. Bradfield had to go to luncheon afterwards at All Souls. I met Mr. Ward in the Turl yesterday; he was only up for two or three hours, and I thought he said he was going to coach. I am sure he said something about coaching, and as I remembered how fond he was of horses I thought he was going for a driving tour. But it turned out that he was going to read with somebody; very silly of me. Do you remember when he jumped into the 'Cher'? It seems ages ago. Mr. Bradfield punts splendidly, we all like him very much, and father has dined with the Warden, who had toothache and hardly spoke all the evening. Most unfortunate. We are going to the 'Varsity match, and Mr. Bradfield says that Fred is the best bat and captain you have had for ages. I believe mother nearly fainted with delight when she heard this. Mr. Bradfield dances as well as you do."

The next letter Nina wrote was full of The Bradder's perfections, but in the following one he was scarcely mentioned, and my mother, who had never seen Oxford in June, was so delighted with everything that she did not tell me much about anybody. Still I could not help wondering what had happened, for Nina was not usually reticent without a reason.

CHAPTER XXIII

OUR LAST YEAR

Fred did not have the satisfaction of seeing his eleven beat Cambridge, but there had not been such a close finish in a 'Varsity match for nearly twenty years, and Nina said the excitement was really painful. "I was quite glad when it was over," she wrote to me. "Mother never spoke for quite half-an-hour, and Mr. Bradfield nearly ruined his hat by constantly taking it off and putting it on again. I warned him that he was spoiling it, but he said that such a finish was worth a hat. And we lost in the end; a big Cambridge man hit a four and father said awful things at the top of his voice. Somehow or other that seemed to relieve everybody. There was only one other Cambridge man to come in, and if the big man had been bowled instead of hitting a four it would have been splendid. We waited for Fred afterwards and saw him for a minute. He said that the big man had been the best cricketer at Cambridge for four years, and now that he was going down Oxford ought really to win next year. Fred was very disappointed, but he told us that this man was a thoroughly good sort, which annoyed me because I felt as if he must be perfectly horrid."

If my people could be excited at a cricket match I knew that I had missed something worth seeing, but when I tried to talk about the 'Varsity match to the only member of my German family who spoke English, she thought I was explaining lawn tennis to her. I felt very sad indeed, and had to go for a long bicycle ride to shake off a vigorous attack of the blues.

I suppose those months in Germany must have been useful to me, yet in spite of a great amount of kindness I was very glad when they were over. I learned a great deal, I honestly believe, for I often went to a restaurant and talked politics with three professors, and that is no mean feat even if you do it in your own language. For some reason which I have never been able to understand, these men were very pleased with me; possibly they liked me because I never agreed with anything they said. I asked them to come and see us if they were ever in England, an invitation given out of joy in wishing them good-bye. The prospect of leaving the German language made me very liberal in the way of invitations to those who spoke it, and if all the people whom I asked had happened to come at the same time, they would have caused a considerable sensation in our small household. There were, however, dangers in plunging me into foreign families which my father did not discover; for I like everybody so much, when I am leaving them, that I feel certain that they are the nicest people in the world. I had not been at home for a day before I found out that something very like a mystery had attached itself to The Bradder, so I went to my mother and asked her what had happened.

"I meant to tell you," she answered. "My dear, he wants to marry Nina, we were quite astonished." I did not think Nina would have cared to hear that. "He was here for a fortnight, but we never suspected anything, Nina is so very young. It only happened a week ago."

"Are they engaged?"

"No, we thought it best that there should be no engagement for at least a year. I hope we decided right, for I must have time to think about Nina being the wife of a don. I think they are very much in love with one another."

"Nina is not so very young."

"Very young to be the wife of a don," my mother replied, and I believe that she thought such a lady, to be suitable, ought to have numbered at least forty years.

"The Bradder would have to go out of college if he married," I said; "we shan't get such another man in a hurry," but my mother did not think this as important as I did.

When I talked to Nina about this new state of things she was very disappointed to find that I was not surprised. She seemed to think that I was depriving her of something due to her, but her letters had made me think that something startling was going to happen, and I was prepared for almost anything.

"Our engagement is not to be announced for a year," Nina said.

"I thought there wasn't any engagement," I answered.

"There isn't, until it is announced, but we have quite made up our minds," and then she took my arm and I listened to a glorification of The Bradder. "He is very fond of you," it finished up, and that is all I can remember of it.

"I am glad of that, as he is my tutor and is going to be my brother-in-law," I said.

"You don't seem to see how happy I am," Nina answered. "I wanted to telegraph to you at once."

"I am most tremendously glad you are happy. The Bradder's a splendid man," I said, and added, "I should like to tell Fred directly he comes next week."

"Yes, tell him," she replied, "but he won't mind; perhaps I oughtn't to say that, but I know that you think he will. Fred's a dear, he's just like another brother."

"For pity's sake don't say that to him," I exclaimed.

"Of course I shan't say anything to him, but he will understand all right," and I gathered that if he could not understand it was my duty to make him, which, considering how peculiarly he had behaved to Jack, I did not expect to be an easy matter. But there was a difference between Fred and Nina, for he seemed to fall out of love as he grew older, while she fell in. I don't know enough about such things to say whether he was ever actually in the state called "in love," but I do know that he was inclined to regard Nina with a jealous eye, and that I suffered many unpleasant moments in consequence. So I drove down to the station to meet him and intended to break the news to him gently, but we had such a lot of other things to talk about that I had not mentioned Nina, except to say that she was well, when we met her in the drive. Fred got out of the dog-cart to speak to her, and I, having totally neglected my mission, was wise enough to disappear for an hour.

In that time he must have found out what had happened, for when we were left alone in the smoking-room after dinner and I was wondering whether I had better begin the gentle process, which I was sure I should muddle hopelessly, he said, "It will take me some time to get used to the idea of Nina marrying a don."

"I meant to tell you as we drove down, but I forgot clean all about it," I answered.

"Bradfield's a good sort, isn't he? It would be a most vile shame if he isn't."

"He's a splendid chap."

"I saw him with Nina at Lord's, and I got a kind of idea into my head then. He looks all right anyhow."

"He is all right."

Fred sat and smoked for ages without saying a word, which made me uneasy.

"Don't you feel horribly old?" he said to me at last. "This is a kind of end to all the good time we have had here. I mean that everything will be different; I can't imagine Nina being married."

"She won't be for ages, and when she is it will be just the same," I answered. "The Bradder's the best sort in the world, except you. Let's go to bed, we have to shoot to-morrow."

I stayed in Fred's room, however, for a long time, and I expect some of the things we said would have amused those who can jump without regret from one state of things to another. But all the same this talk did us good, for we finished off the subject of Nina's engagement at one sitting, and Fred pleased me by saying that he must have been a fool to hate Jack Ward so violently. That told me all I wanted to know, and though he was not in very good spirits for a day or two he soon recovered, and I believe that Nina and he enjoyed themselves more than they ever had since they began to wonder whether they were grown up or not.

Before going back to Oxford Fred and I went to stay with Mr. Sandyman, our old house-master at Cliborough. I had been to Cliborough several times since I left school, but my first visits made me feel almost sad. The glory of being a blue, and I could not help feeling it, was not enough compensation for the way in which I seemed to have entirely dropped out of things. I loved Cliborough, and when you are fond of places or people it is horrid to see that they can get on quite well without you. You may not be forgotten, but you must necessarily cease to count for much, and it was not until I went back after having left for three years that I was quite happy there. Our feelings—for Fred felt as I did—may have been wrong, but no one would have them who was not fond of their school and who did not in some way or other wish to be worthy of it. Sandy was as nice to us as possible, and it was quite funny to see what a hero Fred was thought to be by some of the fellows in our house. I think I was regarded as a hero more or less decayed, but Fred nearly reinstated me by saying that I was the fastest bowler he had ever played against, and by forgetting to add further details.

We went back to Oxford from Cliborough, and during my last year I saw more of Fred than ever, for in nearly every college men in their fourth year have to go into lodgings, and Jack and I took rooms in the same house in the High as Fred and Henderson. Fred was President of Vincent's, Henderson was to be captain of the 'Varsity XI., and Jack was immediately put into one of the trial Eights and finally, rowed six in the winning boat. The shadow of approaching examinations was over all of us except Henderson, who was not reading for Honours, and had nothing but two papers on political economy between him and a degree. But I should not think any four men ever got on together better than we did, and the mere sight of Jack was enough to

make any one feel cheerful. He had fairly and squarely found himself at last, and whether he was sitting in front of piles of books or getting up and going to bed at strange times because he was in training, he was an endless delight to all of us. His methods of reading history made Fred laugh so much that I thought he might possibly abandon them, but nothing would persuade him that his road to a degree was not the safest he could take. On one subject Jack only opened his heart to me. He had set his mind on getting into the 'Varsity Eight, and his keenness was terrific. I assured him time after time that he must have a splendid chance of his blue, but I don't believe that the mere fact of getting his blue meant very much to him. He wanted to show his people and his college that he could really do something.

"If I could only get into the 'Varsity boat I should have done something," he said to me, "because I'm not a natural oar. I have to learn it all, and it's frightfully hard work remembering all you're told. Some of you men think a fellow who rows is just a machine, but it's not so easy to become a good machine."

To Fred and Henderson he hardly ever mentioned the river, but they knew how desperately keen he was, and when he was tried in the 'Varsity boat at four, during the beginning of the Lent Term, we all hoped most vigorously that he would keep his place. For nearly a fortnight the same crew rowed every day, but neither the President nor the Secretary had yet taken their places, and I was in a state of terror that Jack would have to go when they went into the boat. The Secretary, however, took his place and Jack remained where he was, and a few days afterwards the President went in at seven, seven went to three, and one unfortunate man disappeared. Then we openly rejoiced, and at the beginning of Lent Jack was told to go into training. We had a mild celebration on the evening of Shrove Tuesday, and Bunny Langham, who had been President of the Union and had developed a habit of making very long speeches, for which he apologized by saying that he believed in heredity, came round and helped to make a noise. Whenever he got the ghost of an opportunity he began to congratulate Jack, and he required a very great deal of suppressing.

For a whole week Jack rowed in the boat, and then he had a sudden attack of influenza. Somehow or other I had never thought it possible that he could be ill, and I have never seen any one hurry up so much to get well again. In ten days he was nearly all right, but when he was put back into the boat he said he felt miserably weak, and I think he went to work to prepare himself for a disappointment. At any rate when it came Jack took his luck like a hero, for hardly anything more crushing could have happened to him just then. I must say that the President was as kind about it as any man could be; he knew what it meant to Jack, and his sympathy was very real. But Jack himself surprised all of us, he seemed to throw the whole thing behind him, and I never heard him complain of anything except his wretched illness.

"I shall be fit next term," he said, "and if we get our boat near the head of the river again it won't be so bad after all."

My last year in rooms with Fred, Jack and Henderson was the best of four good years at Oxford. Everything, except Jack's luck, was so exactly right, and I was most delightfully happy. The college was doing as well as we could want, and most of the dons, led I am certain by The Bradder, behaved splendidly. The Freshers' Wine became an organized institution and ceased to be a sort of "hole and corner" entertainment, at which every one made a most horrible noise because they ought not to have made any at all. In my spare time, and I had not much, I caught myself regretting that I had ever been stupid enough to carry on long battles with Mr. Edwardes, it seemed to me that I might have been more peaceful, but the fact remains that he and I were not made for each other.

Until the time began to grow near for me to go down from Oxford I never felt as strong an affection for the 'Varsity as I had for Cliborough. I think the reason was that Oxford is such a huge place, that it took me some time to realize how splendid it is. I missed the feeling of unity which there was at Cliborough, and I supplied my loss by going furiously to work in trying to make the college less slack. Certainly St. Cuthbert's, owing more to Jack's efforts than mine, had changed very much, but in setting our minds absolutely on one thing for two years we had missed a lot, even if we had been successful in what we wanted to do. Our last year, however, made up for everything, and when we came back for the summer term examinations had lost their horrors, and the only thing I regretted was that in eight short weeks my time at Oxford would be over.

The Bradder, who watched over me like a prospective brother-in-law, encouraged me to think that I should not do very badly in the "schools," but I think he was rather agitated when Henderson chose me to play for the 'Varsity against the Gentlemen of England, and in a very bad light I got more wickets than I ever expected to get in a first-class match. That performance gave me a good start in the 'Varsity XI., and The Bradder was desperately afraid that I should stop reading altogether. But Fred and Jack were both hard at work, and except on one evening a week Henderson had to go into a separate room when he wanted to entertain his numerous friends. Jack rowed in our Eight, and they went up to fourth. They would have been second if they had been lucky, but as it was they intended to go to Henley.

I think that I was fortunate in having to struggle for my blue during my last term, for this gave me so much to think about that I escaped some of the feelings which Fred had about leaving Oxford. I felt that I was by no means ready to go, but I was also desperately eager to get into the XI., and that I knew would not be decided until the term was over. One leaves Oxford slowly, if I

may express it so; you have to come back for a *vivâ voce*, and then for your degree; there is no abrupt break as there is at school, and the fact that I was playing for the 'Varsity after the term was over, helped me more than it did Fred, who had played in the XI. for three years. Nearly every Sunday afternoon during May and June, Fred and I quite solemnly went out for a walk together, and we nearly always found ourselves by the river. I believe this was because we were never tired of looking at Corpus and Merton from the Christchurch meadows. There is no view so keenly rooted in my memory as this, nor one which I am so glad to look upon again. I don't care in the least whether it is the most beautiful in Oxford or not, for it means something to me, and you can ask no more from a view than that. I can never look at it without remembering many things which were all of them very pleasant, and Oxford is the place to build up memories.

The term slipped by far too fast, and we found ourselves plunged into the schools. For once in my life I should have been glad not to see the sun, but the week during which we had to put on paper the results of over two years' work was most cruelly hot, and all of us were glad when it was over. It is no use guessing how you have done in honour schools, for those who think they have got a first are too often surprised when the lists come out, and unless you are going to guess something nice, it is much better to leave it alone altogether. With one consent Fred, Jack and I refused to talk about our chances, and set out to enjoy the few days which remained to us without being harrowed by doubts and fears. I did, however, have secret dips into a political economy book, for I thought if the examiners shared my opinion they would wonder how little of this subject I knew. I couldn't keep away from the wretched thing, try as I would, and was always reading "Adam Smith" and "Walker" at odd moments. I think my nerves must have been upset.

Directly after the schools were over, Jack and I had to go to a dinner which Murray got up. I was ready to go to anything, but I had no idea that this was a sort of entertainment organized in honour of us until I got to it. The Bradder took the chair, and I am sure that I tried to feel grateful to Murray, but if you don't care much about being set on a small pedestal it is very hard to pretend that you do. I did, however, enjoy that dinner because every one was so very cheerful, and I made a speech which lasted—counting the applause—nearly ten minutes. The Bradder spoke more about Jack than me, which was very thoughtful of him, and Jack told me afterwards that this evening almost made up for having missed his blue. The things which were said about him took him most completely by surprise, and the fact that he was really appreciated and that the college owed something to him, sent him off to Henley a happier man than he had ever been in his life.

My place in the eleven was in doubt until the last game before the 'Varsity match, and then I bowled one of the best batsmen in England—I must add off his pads—and got three men caught in the slips. Henderson gave me my blue in the pavilion at Lord's and simply banded me on the back as he did it, a very unorthodox and pleasant ending to what had been a great anxiety. Fred, too, was most uproariously delighted, and I should think that some of the people, who seem to think that the pavilion at Lord's is a kind of cathedral, must have decided that the Oxford XI. had suddenly gone mad. But I disentangled myself after a time from men who wanted to congratulate me, and started sending telegrams. I was guilty at that moment of trying to think of people to whom I could telegraph with decency, but I had wanted to play against Cambridge very much. We had been beaten in all the last three matches, and as Fred had never really played well at Lord's, I think some men were inclined to say that he was not anything like as good a cricketer as he was supposed to be. But in this match he settled that question once and for ever. We went in first and started terribly, Henderson was caught at the wicket, and another man was bowled before we had made a run. I could not have smiled at the best joke in the world. Then Fred and a left-hander got well set, and before we had finished our total was over 350. Fred never gave a chance until he had made well over a hundred, and though some men told me that he was out l.b.w. at least four times, there are always plenty of people who think that they know more than the umpires.

The Cambridge men failed in the first innings, and I only bowled six overs, which annoyed my mother and Nina, because they said that I was there to bowl. But after Cambridge went in again they played an uphill game most splendidly, and my people had plenty of opportunity to see me bowl. I got four men out, and Henderson was very pleased with me, but I was not a first-class bowler, though I tried hard to look like one. We had nearly two hundred runs to win, and I confess that I was afraid that I might have to go in when there were two or three runs still wanted. In the first innings my efforts as a batsman had been brief and glorious, I had received three balls, two of which I had hit to the boundary and the third I meant to go to the same place, only somebody caught it. I hoped sincerely that my part in the 'Varsity match was over, but whenever a wicket fell I had a very bad moment. I did not, however, have to make that long journey from the pavilion to the wickets again, for Henderson, who kept himself back in the second innings, played beautifully, and we won with some wickets in hand. I don't want to forget the wholesome thrill which I had when Henderson made the winning stroke, and I am quite certain that I never shall forget it.

My father and mother, too, were pleased, and I was very glad to see their delight, for I thought that I might have added more to their anxiety than to their pleasure during the last four years.

In July both Fred and Jack came to stay with me, because in a few weeks I had to start on one of my journeys in search of a language which I did not know. I wanted Jack to be with us when the History List came out, in case anything disastrous should happen. But Jack had filled himself

so full of facts that when the telegram from the Clerk of the Schools came he was delighted to find that he had got a third, and he declared that I must be a genius to have got a second, but that was only his way of expressing his surprise. The Greats' List was a triumph for St. Cuthbert's, Murray and five other men getting firsts. Fred got a second, and considering that he had been playing footer and cricket for the 'Varsity so much, everybody thought that he had done most thoroughly well. Cliborough was so satisfied with him that he was offered a mastership at once, which was a stroke of luck both for Fred and the school.

Nothing remained for us to do except to take our degrees, and we arranged with Henderson that we should go back together once more and take them at the same time. I think that we clung to that expedition as our last remaining link with the 'Varsity. But there is a link, which those who learn to love Oxford, as Fred, Jack and I loved her, cannot break; it is the debt which we owe to her, for we shall never be able to repay it in full.

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