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SOME PERSONS UNKNOWN

by E. W. HORNUNG

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A BRIDE FROM THE BUSH

THE ROGUE'S MARCH

IRRALIE'S BUSHRANGER

MY LORD DUKE

YOUNG BLOOD

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BY

E. W. HORNUNG

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1898

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KENYON'S INNINGS

I

Kenyon had been more unmanageable than usual. Unsettled and excitable from the moment he awoke and remembered who was coming in the evening, he had remained in an unsafe state all day. That evening found him with unbroken bones was a miracle to Ethel his sister, and to his great friend John, the under-gardener. Poor Ethel was in charge; and sole charge of Kenyon, who was eleven, was no light matter for a girl with her hair still down. Her brother was a handful at most times; to-day he would have filled some pairs of stronger hands than Ethel's. They had begun the morning together, with snob-cricket, as the small boy called it; but Kenyon had been rather rude over it, and Ethel had retired. She soon regretted this step; it had made him reckless; he had spent the most dangerous day. Kenyon delighted in danger. He had a mania for walking round the entire premises on the garden wall, which was high enough to kill him if he fell, and for clambering over the greenhouses, which offered a still

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more fascinating risk. Not only had he done both this morning, he had gone so far as to straddle a gable of the house itself, shrieking good-tempered insults at Ethel, who appealed to him with tears and entreaties from the lawn below. Ethel had been quite disabled from sitting at meat with him; and in the afternoon he had bothered the gardeners, in the potting-shed, to such an extent that his friend John had subsequently refused to bowl to him. In John's words Master Kenyon had been a public nuisance all day—though a lovable one—at his very worst he was that. He had lovable looks, for one thing. It was not the only thing. The boy had run wild since his young mother's death. There were reasons why he should not go to school at present. There were reasons why he should spend the long summer days in the sunshine, and open only the books he cared about, despite the oddity of his taste in books. He had dark, laughing eyes, and a face of astonishing brightness and health: astonishing because (as he said) his legs and arms were as thin as pipe-stems, and certainly looked as brittle. Kenyon was indeed a delicate boy. He was small and delicate and weak in everything but spirit. "He has the spirit," said John, his friend, "of the deuce and all!"

Ethel forgave easily, perhaps too easily, but then she was Kenyon's devoted slave, who cried about him half the night, and lived for him, and longed

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to die for him. Kenyon had toned himself down by tea-time, and when he sought her then as though nothing had happened, she was only too thankful to catch his spirit. Had she reminded him of his behaviour on the roof and elsewhere, he would have been very sorry and affectionate; but it was not her way to make him sorry, it was her way to show an interest in all he had to say, and at tea-time Kenyon was still full of the thing that had excited and unsettled him in the morning. Only now he was beginning to feel in awe, and the school-room tea had never been a seemlier ceremony.

These children seldom sat at table with their father, and very, very seldom listened for the wheels of his brougham as they were listening to-night. In the boy's mind the sound was associated with guilty apprehensions and a cessation of all festivities. But to-night Mr. Harwood was to bring back with him one of Kenyon's own heroes, one of the heroes of his favourite book, which was not a story-book. It has been said that Kenyon's literary taste was peculiar; his favourite book was *Lillywhite's Cricketers' Guide;* the name of the great young man who was coming this evening had figured prominently in recent volumes of *Lillywhite*, and Kenyon knew every score he had ever made.

"Do you think he'll talk to us?" was one of the thousand questions which Ethel had to answer. "I'd give my nut to talk to him! Fancy having C. J.

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Forrester to stay here! I've a sort of idea the governor asked him partly to please me, though he says he's a sort of relation. I only wish we'd known it before. Anyhow, it's the jolliest thing the governor ever did in his life, and a wonder he did it, seeing he only laughs at cricket. I wish he'd been a cricketer himself, then he'd kick up less row about the glass; thank goodness I haven't broken any to-day! I say, I wish C. J. Forrester 'd made more runs yesterday; he's certain to have the hump."

Kenyon had not picked up all his pretty expressions in the potting-shed; he was intimate with a boy who went to a public school.

"How many did he make?" Ethel asked.

"Duck and seven. He must be sick!"

"I shouldn't be surprised if he thinks far less about it than you do, Ken. It's only a game; I don't suppose he'll mind so very much."

"Oh, no, not at all; it's only about the swaggerest county match of the season," scathed Kenyon, "and they only went and let Notts lick! Besides, the *Sportsman* says he was out to a miserable stroke second innings. Where did I see the *Sportsman?* Oh, John and I are getting it from the town every day; we're going halves; it comes to John, though, so you needn't say anything. What *are* you grinning at, Ethel? Ah, you're not up in real cricket. You only understand snob."

Kenyon was more experienced. The public school

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boy hard by had given him an innings or two at his net, where Kenyon had picked up more than the rudiments of the game and a passion for *Lillywhite*. He had learnt there his pretty expressions, which were anything but popular at home. Mr. Harwood was a man of limited patience, with a still more limited knowledge of boys. He frightened Kenyon, and the boy was at his worst with him. A very sensitive man, of uncertain temper, he could not get on with his children, though Ethel was his right hand already. It was a secret trouble, an unacknowledged grief, to hard lonely Mr. Harwood. But it was his own fault; he knew that; he knew all about it. He knew too much of himself, and not enough of his children.

You could not blame Kenyon—Mr. Harwood would have been the last to do so—yet it was dreadful to see him so impatient for his father's return, for perhaps the first time in his life, and now only for the sake of the stranger he was bringing with him; to see him peering through the blind at this stranger, without so much as glancing at his father or realising that he was there; to hear him talking volubly in the drawing-room after dinner (when the children came down) to a very young man whom he had never seen before; and to remember how little he ever had to say to his own father. Ethel felt it—all—and was particularly attentive to her father this evening. That peculiar man may also

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have felt it, and the root of Ethel's attentions into the bargain; for he was very snubbing to her. He never showed much feeling. Yet it *was* to please Kenyon that Mr. Harwood had pressed Forrester to look him up, and not by any means (though this had been his way of putting it to his young kinsman, whom he scarcely knew) to cheer his own loneliness.

The cricketer was a sunburnt giant, disappointingly free from personal lustre, and chiefly remarkable for his hands. He had an enormous hand, and when it closed like jaws over Kenyon's little one, this suffering student could well understand his *Lillywhite* characterising C. J. Forrester as "a grand field, especially in the country." They talked cricket together from the first moment, and until Kenyon said good-night. Upstairs he told Ethel that so far they had got no further than the late match against Notts; that Forrester had described it "as if he'd only *seen* the thing;" and that she was quite right, and C. J. was far less cut up at the result than he was. It was Kenyon's county which had been trounced by Nottinghamshire, and he went so far as to affirm that C. J. Forrester's disappointing form had directly contributed to the disaster, and that he deserved to lose his place in the team. This, however, was but a drop of bravado in the first flood of enthusiasm for C. J.

Mr. Harwood watched and heard the frank, free, immediate intercourse between Kenyon and the

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visitor. He had never known Kenyon so bright and animated—so nearly handsome. The boy was at his best, and his best was a revelation to Mr. Harwood, who had never in his life had a real conversation with Kenyon such as Forrester was having now. He had talked *to* Kenyon, that was all. As he sat grimly listening, with Ethel snubbed to silence, he may have felt a jealous longing to be his small son's friend, not merely his father; to interest him, as this complete stranger was doing, and he himself honestly interested; to love openly, and be openly loved. The man was self-conscious enough to feel all this, and to smile as he rose to look at the clock, and saw in the mirror behind it no trace of such feeling in his own thin-lipped, whiskered face. At nine the children said good-night, of their own accord, knowing better than to stay a minute over their time. Mr. Harwood kissed them as coldly and lightly as usual; but surprised them with a pleasantry before they reached the door.

"Wait, Kenyon. Forrester, ask him your average. He'll tell you to a decimal. He knows what he calls his *Lillywhite* by heart."

Kenyon looked extremely eager, though Mr. Harwood's tone struck Forrester as a little sarcastic.

"You've been getting it up!" the cricketer said knowingly to Kenyon.

"I haven't," declared Kenyon, bubbling over with excitement.

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"You needn't ask him your own," Ethel added, quite entering into it. "He knows them all."

"Oh, we'll have mine," said Forrester, who felt slightly ridiculous but much amused. "What was it for the 'Varsity—my first year?"

Kenyon had to think. That was three years ago, before he had known much about cricket; but he had read up that year's *Lillywhite*—he read as many old *Lillywhites* as he could borrow—and he answered in a few moments:

"Nineteen point seven."

"You *have* been getting it up!" cried Forrester.

Kenyon was beaming. "No, I haven't—honestly I haven't! Ask Ethel!"

"Oh, it's genuine enough," said Mr. Harwood; "it's his accomplishment—one to be proud of, isn't it? That'll do, Kenyon; good-night, both of you."

The door closed.

"*He's* one to be proud of," said Forrester pointedly, a vague indignation rising within him. "A delightful little chap, I call him! And he *was* right to a decimal. I never heard of such a fellow!"

"He's cricket mad," said Mr. Harwood. "I'm glad you like him."

"I like him immensely. I like his enthusiasm. I never saw so small a boy so keen. Does he play?"

"Not properly; he's not fit to; he's rather delicate. No, it's mostly theory with Kenyon; and I'm very much afraid he'll bore you. You mustn't let him.

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Indeed I fear you'll have a slow time all round; but, as I told you, there's a horse to ride whenever you want him."

"Does the boy ride?"

"He's not allowed to. Then we have a very respectable club in the town, where I can tuck you up and make you comfortable any time you like to come down. Only don't, for your own sake, encourage Kenyon to be a nuisance; he doesn't require very much encouragement."

"My dear sir, we're too keen cricketers to bore each other; we're going to be tremendous friends. You don't mean to say he bores *you*? Ah, with the scores, perhaps; but you must be awfully proud of having such a jolly little beggar; I know *I* should be! I'd make a cricketer of him. If he's as keen as this now, in a few years' time——"

"You smoke, Forrester? We'll go into the other room."

Mr. Harwood had turned away and was putting out the lights.

II

Long before breakfast next morning—while the lawns were yet frosted with dew and lustrous in the level sunlight—Kenyon Harwood and C. J. Forrester, the well-known cricketer, met and fraternised. Kenyon and John had always spoken of Forrester as "C. J."; and when Kenyon let this out, it

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was arranged, chiefly by C. J. himself, who was amused and pleased, that Kenyon should never call him anything else. Mr. Harwood, at breakfast, rather disapproved of the arrangement, but it was hardly a matter for the paternal ukase. Meanwhile Kenyon had personally conducted C. J. round the place, and had most impressively introduced him (in the potting-shed) to John, who looked so proud and so delighted as to put a head even on Kenyon's delight and pride. C. J. was charmed with John; but he was less enthusiastic about a bricked quadrangle, in front of the gardener's and coachman's cottages, with wickets painted on a buttress, where Kenyon was constantly indulging in small cricket—notably in the dinner-hour of John, who bolted his food to come out and bowl to him. The skilled opinion of C. J. was not in favour of "snob," as played by Kenyon with a racket and a soft ball.

"He says a racket is bad for you," Ethel understood from Kenyon (to whom it was a very serious matter); "makes you play with a crooked bat, and teaches you to spoon. So there's an end to snob! But what do you think? He's going to take me into the town to choose a decent bat; and we're going in for regular practice on the far lawn—John and all —if the governor lets us. C. J.'s going to coach me. Think of being coached by C. J. Forrester!"

"Father is sure to let you," said Ethel; and certainly Mr. Harwood did not say no; but his consent

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was coldly given, and one thing he stipulated almost sternly.

"I won't have Kenyon run. I shall put a stop to it if he does. It might kill him."

"Ah, he has told me about that." Forrester added, simply, "I am so sorry!"

Kenyon, in fact, in explaining the system of scoring at snob—a most ingenious system—had said:

"You see, I mayn't run my runs. I know the boundaries don't make half such a good game, but I can't help it. What's wrong? I'm sure *I* can't tell you. I've been to heaps of doctors, but they never say much to me; they just mess about and then send you back to the room where you look at the papers. Mother used to take me to London on purpose, and the governor's done so twice. It's my hip, or some rot. It's a jolly bore, for it feels all right, and I'm positive I *could* run, and ride, and go to school. Blow the doctors!"

"But obey them," C. J. had said, seriously; "you should go in for obeying orders, Kenyon."

They got the bat. It was used a great deal during those few days, the too few days of C. J.'s visit; and was permitted to repose in C. J.'s cricket-bag, cheek by jowl with bruised veterans that had served with honour at Lord's and at the Oval. Kenyon was very mindful of those services, and handled the big bats even more reverently than he shook his hero's hand. They lent themselves to this sort of thing more read-

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ily than C. J. did. Small doubt that Kenyon—at all events at first—would have had his hero a trifle more heroic than the Almighty had made him. There was nothing intrinsically venerable in his personality, as there might have been. He was infinitely more friendly than Kenyon had dreamt of finding him; he was altogether nicer; but he did lack the vague inexpressible distinction with which the boy's imagination invested the heroes of *Lillywhite's Guide*.

That summer was the loveliest of its decade, and Kenyon made the most of it. He had never before seemed so strong, and well, and promising. For the first time in his life his really miserable little body seemed equal—at moments—to his mighty spirit; and the days of C. J. were the brightest and happiest he had ever known. In that jolly, manly companionship the unrealised want of an intensely masculine young soul was insensibly filled. Hard, perhaps, to fill it so completely for so short a time: the cricketer's departure was so soon at hand! As it was he had put it off some days, because he liked Kenyon with an extraordinary liking. But he was wanted at the Oval on the last Thursday in July; his play with Kenyon and John (though John was a rough natural bowler) could by no stretch of imagination be regarded as practice for an important county match; he decided to tear himself away on the Tuesday morning.

He had been with them only a week, but the Harwoods had bitten deep into his life, a life not wholly

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consecrated to cricket. Forrester had definite aspirations, and some very noble intentions; and he happened to possess the character to give this spiritual baggage some value, in his case. Also he had a kind heart, which Kenyon had completely won. He liked Ethel; but one could not merely like Kenyon, with his frail little frame and his splendid spirit. Ethel, however, was very sweet; her eyes were like Kenyon's in everything but their sadness, as deep and lustrous, but so often sad. Her love for Kenyon was the most pathetic thing but one that Forrester had ever seen. The more touching spectacle was that of the father of Ethel and Kenyon, who seemed to have very little love for his children, and to conceal what he had. He was nice enough to Forrester, who found him a different being at the club, affable, good-natured, amusing in his sardonic way. He talked a little to Forrester about the children, a very little, but enough to make Forrester sincerely sorry for him. He was sorrier for Mr. Harwood than for Ethel or for Kenyon himself. He pitied him profoundly on Kenyon's account, but less because the boy might never live to grow up, than because, as Forrester read father and son, there would never be much love to lose between them. As for Kenyon, there was a chance for him yet: even the family doctor declared that he had never been so well as he was now. His vitality—his amazing vitality—seemed finally to upset a certain pessimistic calculation. His trouble might never be-

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come a greater trouble than it had been already; and this summer it had been no trouble at all, his very limp was no longer noticeable. He might yet go to school; and Forrester himself was going to start a small boys' school the following summer, in partnership with an older man, in one of the healthiest spots in the island. St. Crispin's had been spoken of for Kenyon. Kenyon himself spoke of little else during Forrester's last day or two. To go to school at St. Crispin's was now the dream of his life.

"I am sorry we told him about it," Mr. Harwood said, gloomily. "He may never be able to go there; he may never again be so well as he is now; all the summer it has seemed too good to last!"

Forrester, for his part, thought it good for the boy to have things to look forward to, thought that, if he could go, the change of life and climate might prove the saving and making of him. Beyond this, he honestly hoped for the best (whereas Mr. Harwood seemed to look for the worst), and expressed his hope —often a really strong one—with all possible emphasis.

He carries with him still some intensely vivid impressions of this visit, but especially of the last day or two, when the weather was hotter than ever—despite one splendid shower—and Kenyon if anything more alert, active and keen. He remembers, for example, how Ethel and Kenyon and he tore to an outlying greenhouse for shelter from that shower, or

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rather how he carried Kenyon. In the greenhouse, accompanied by a tremendous rattle of rain on the sloping glass, Kenyon sang them "Willow the King," the Harrow cricket song, which Tommy Barnard, the boy with the cricket-net, had taught Kenyon among less pretty things. Clear through the years Forrester can hear Kenyon's jolly treble, and Ethel's shy notes, and his own most brazen bass in the chorus; he even recollects the verse in which the singer broke down through too strong a sense of its humour:—

"Who is this?" King Willow he swore,
"Hops like that to a gentleman's door?
Who's afraid of a Duke like him?
Fiddlededee!" says the monarch slim.
"What do you say, my courtiers three?"
And the courtiers all said "Fiddlededee!"

But his last evening, the Monday evening, C. J. Forrester remembers best. They had an immense match—double-wicket. The head gardener, the coachman, John (captain) and the butler made one side; Forrester, Kenyon, Ethel (Kenyon insisted) and T. Barnard (home early, *æger*) were the other. "It's Gentlemen and Players," John said with a gaping grin; and the Players won, in spite of C. J., who, at the last, did all he knew, for Kenyon's sake.

It was a gorgeous evening. The sun set slowly on a gaudy scene; the wealth of colour was almost tropical. The red light glared between the trees, their

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crests swayed gently against the palest, purest amber. Mr. Harwood looked on rather kindly with his cigar; and the shadow of his son, in for the second time, lay along the pitch like a single plank. Ethel was running for him, and it was really exciting, for there were runs to get; it was the last wicket; and Kenyon, to C. J.'s secret sorrow, and in spite of C. J.'s distinguished coaching, was not a practical cricketer. Yet he was doing really very well this evening. They did not bowl too easily to him, he would not have stood that; they bowled very nearly their best; but Kenyon's bat managed somehow to get in the way, and once he got hold of one wide of his legs, and sent it an astonishing distance, in fact over the wall. Even Mr. Harwood clapped his hands, and Forrester muttered, "That's the happiest moment of his life!" Certainly Kenyon knew more about that leg-hit ever afterwards than he did at the moment, for, it must be owned, it was a fluke; but the very next ball Kenyon was out—run out through Ethel's petticoats—and the game was lost.

"Oh, Ethel!" he cried, his flush of ecstasy wiped out in an instant. "I could have run the thing myself!"

Ethel was dreadfully grieved, and showed it so unmistakably that Kenyon, shifting his ground, turned hotly to an unlucky groom who had been standing umpire.

"I don't believe she *was* out, Fisher!" he ex-

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claimed more angrily than ever. Mr. Harwood snatched his cigar from his mouth; but C. J. forestalled his interference by running up and taking Kenyon by the arm.

"My dear fellow, I'm surprised at you! To dispute the umpire! I thought you were such a sportsman? You must learn to take a licking, and go out grinning, like a man."

Kenyon was crushed—by his hero. He stammered an apology, with a crimson face, and left the lawn with the sweetness of that leg-hit already turned in an instant to gall. And there was a knock at Forrester's door while he was dressing for dinner, and in crept Kenyon, hanging his head, and shut the door and burst into tears.

"Oh, you'll never think the same of me again, C. J.! A nice fellow you'll think me, who can't stand getting out—a nice fellow for your school!"

C. J., in his shirt and trousers, looked down very tenderly on the little quivering figure in flannels. Kenyon was standing awkwardly, as he sometimes would when tired.

"My dear old fellow, it was only a game—yet it was life! We live our lives as we play our games; and we *must* be sportsmen, and bide by the umpire's decision, and go out grinning when it's against us. Do you see, Ken?"

"I see," said Kenyon, with sudden firmness. "I have learnt a lesson. I'll never forget it."

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"Ah, you may learn many a lesson from cricket, Kenyon," said C. J. "And when you have learnt to play the game—pluckily—unselfishly—as well as you can—then you've learnt how to live too!" He was only saying what he has been preaching to his school ever since; but now he says that no one has ever attended to him as Kenyon did.

Kenyon looked up with wet, pleading eyes. "Then —you will have me at St. Crispin's?"

But C. J. only ruffled the boy's brown hair.

III

A variety of hindrances prevented Forrester from revisiting Kenyon's father until August in the following year, when he arrived in the grey evening of a repulsive day. As before, he came straight from the Nottingham match; he had started his school, but was getting as much cricket as he could in the holidays. It was raining heavily when he jumped out of the carriage which had been sent to meet him. Mr. Harwood shook his hand in the cold twilight of the hall. House and host seemed silent and depressed. Forrester looked for Kenyon—for his hat, for some sign of him—as one searches for a break in the clouds.

"Where's the boy?" was his first question.

"Where's Kenyon?"

"Kenyon? In bed."

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"Since when?"

"The beginning of last month."

Forrester looked horrified; his manner seemed to irritate Mr. Harwood.

"Surely I wrote and told you; have you forgotten? I wrote to say he couldn't come last term, that he had fallen off during the winter, and was limping badly. Didn't you get the letter? But you did; you answered it."

"Yes, yes. I know all that," said Forrester, still bewildered. "I answered, and you never answered me. Then the term came on, and you don't know what it was. I had all my time taken up, every moment. And I have been playing cricket ever since we broke up. But—the truth is, I've been having the most cheerful letters from Kenyon all the time!"

"That's it; he *is* cheerful."

"He never said he was in bed."

"You weren't to know of it on any account. But I thought you would be prepared for it."

"Not with those letters. I can hardly believe it. Will he—won't he be able——"

"No, never; but you will find him as keen about it as ever, and as mad on cricket. He tells me, by the way, you've been doing great things yesterday—in fact I read him the report—and he's wild with delight about it. Come up and see him. You'll get another ovation."

Forrester nodded, setting his teeth. While they

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were conversing Ethel had entered the hall, shaken hands with him, and vanished up the shallow stairs, leaving the hall more gloomy than before. He remembered this presently; also that Ethel, in a single year, seemed changed from a child to a woman. But at the time he could see one thing only, a vision, a memory. The peculiar sadness in Mr. Harwood's tones, the tenderness which was still untender, though very different from last year's note, was yet to strike him. He could think only of Kenyon as he best remembered him, playing cricket with a sunburnt face, ardent, triumphant, angry, penitent, ashamed—and of Kenyon as he dreaded to look upon him now.

Mr. Harwood stopped on the stairs.

"I wish you could help me in one thing, Charlie. He is still counting on your school, and now he can never go. He needn't know this; but could you—I do so wish you could make him think less about it!"

Forrester coloured a little. "I wish I could," he said, thoughtfully; "and perhaps I can, for somehow I myself am less anxious to have him than I was last year. I have often been thankful he wasn't one of the boys this last term. I couldn't have borne to pitch into him as I have had to pitch into most of them. When I was here before I only looked on the pleasant side of it all. . . . Yes, I can tell him there's another side."

Kenyon looked a great length as he lay stretched out in bed; he seemed to have grown a good deal.

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His thin face was flushed with anticipation; his fine eyes burnt eagerly; he had heard the wheels in the wet gravel under his window, and C. J.'s voice in the hall and on the stairs. A thin white arm lay over the counterpane, the fingers clasping a newspaper. As Forrester entered, with a trepidation of which he was ashamed, the thin arm flourished the newspaper wildly.

"Well played, sir!" thundered Kenyon from his pillow. "Your score won the match; come and shake hands on it!"

Forrester, who had certainly troubled the Nottingham bowlers this time, was more taken aback than he had ever been on the cricket-field, where astonishing things do happen. He went to the bedside, and sat down there, and pressed the small boy's slender hands; but he had not a thing to say.

"The *Sportsman*," continued Kenyon, beating the bed with that paper, "says it was a fine display of cricket, and that you're in splendid form just now. So you are. Look what you did against Surrey! Do you remember how that match came *after* Notts last year, and you left here to play in it? I'm glad it was the other way round this season; and oh, I say, how glad I am you've come!"

"Dear old boy! But—look here—don't you think you might have told me you were like this, old fellow?"

Kenyon tossed his head on the pillow.

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"I couldn't. It was too sickening. Besides, I thought——"

"Well?"

"You mightn't be awfully keen to come, you know."

"You needn't have thought that, Kenyon. I can't believe you did think it."

"Well, I won't swear that I did. Anyhow I didn't want you to know before you must—for lots of reasons."

Forrester let the reasons alone: he could divine one of them: the boy had hoped to be up and well before he came. Forrester wondered whether that hope held yet, and if it did, whether he honestly could share it any longer. He looked at Kenyon as he confronted this question: the flush of pleasure and excitement had subsided from the young wan face, which had now an unhealthy pallor. His face had been the best thing about Kenyon last year, the thing that inspired confidence and faith. Forrester strove to talk more cricket. Kenyon had a hundred pet cricketers, his favourites and friends on paper, whom he spoke of by their initials and knew intimately on the cricket-fields of his fancy, as formerly he had known and spoken of C. J. himself. C. J. tried to tell him of those he had met lately; but the young fellow was all distraught, he could not think of the right men, and took the newspaper to his assistance.

"So John still gets you the *Sportsman!*"

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"No, John doesn't."

"You don't mean that he's left?"

"Rather not! He comes up to see me every day; the governor fetches him; and it's the governor who brings me the *Sportsman*."

"Really?"

"Yes, and *Cricket* and the *Field*, and all the other papers that you see all over the shop."

"It's too dark to see all over the shop," said Forrester, throwing the *Sportsman* aside. "I call it very good of your father, though."

"He *is* good. He's awfully good to me since I've been lying-up, the governor. He sits with me a lot, and reads and talks to me; he reads awfully well. But he doesn't understand much about cricket, doesn't care for it. He reads me the full account of the play when I've looked at the score; but I'd as soon read them to myself if it wasn't for offending him. You see, he can't be interested, though he says he is. I should think he'd be very glad if you did it for him—if you would."

Forrester was thinking. Mr. Harwood had left him alone with Kenyon, hardly entering the room himself; he had turned away with a look which Forrester happened to see, but failed to understand. Now he had a clue: perhaps Kenyon had greeted him as he never greeted his father, that father who by the boy's own showing was trying at the last to be his friend. The thought troubled Forrester. He had

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been touched by a something in Mr. Harwood's manner, in the hall, on the stairs, and still more by what Kenyon had just told him; he was pleased with Kenyon's evident appreciation of his father's kindness; but—there were more buts than he could sort or separate now and here. What he did feel instantly, and acutely, was a premonition of involuntary intervention, on his own part, between father and child. In his difficulty he pushed the long brown hair from Kenyon's forehead, and looked gently into the eager eyes.

"We'll see, old fellow," he said at last; "your father mightn't quite like it, I think; and of course, as you say, you must take care not to offend him. Stick to that, Kenyon; always be good to your father and Ethel."

"They're awfully good to me, certainly," said Kenyon, with a sigh. "Dear old Ethel! Have you seen her with her hair up, C. J.?"

"I just saw her in the hall; she is quite grown up."

"She's a brick. . . . Do you really think the governor would mind—you reading the cricket, I mean? It *must* bore him, no matter what he says; how can it help doing?"

"It might bore him to read it to himself; it may delight him to read it to you."

Kenyon turned his cheek to the pillow, and stared at the dismal evening sky. No doubt he was wondering, in his small way, if he was a very ungrateful, un-

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natural son; and trying to account for it, if it was so; and wishing he were comfortably certain it was not so.

"Besides," added Forrester, "I shall not be able to stay many days, you know." Indeed it seemed to him that he had better not stay; but Kenyon's eyes were on him in a twinkling.

"How many?" he asked, almost with a gasp.

"A week at the outside; it's the Lancashire match the week after next."

Again Kenyon turned, and his sharp profile looked sharper than before against the pillow. "Of course you must play against Lancashire—and make your century," he said, with such a hollow heartiness that, first-class cricketer as he was, and few as were his present opportunities for first-class cricket, C. J. instantly resolved to cancel all remaining engagements.

Kenyon went on:

"I'm hoping to get up, you know, before long. Surely I've been here long enough? It's all rot, *I* say, keeping you in bed like this; you get as weak as a cat. I believe the governor thinks so too. I know they're going to have a doctor down from London to see me. If he lets me get up, and you come back after you've made that century, we might have some more cricket, mightn't we? I'd give anything to have some before the term begins. I want another of those leg-hits! I say, they think I might be able to go to St. Crispin's next term, don't they?"

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