



THE NOBLE JEANNOTTE DEFENDING THE BRIBE-TAKER.



OR, THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN MATHEMATICS.  
(Continued.)

NOW it chanced one day that I stumbled upon old D, in the little garden in front of his cottage, hoeing in the sun. D is an aged labouring man who used occasionally to be called in to help A, B and C in a job needing four, such as tennis matches and guessing at beans in a bag. I greeted the old man and asked him of A, B and C. "Did I know 'em, sir?" he answered, "why, I knowed 'em ever since they was little fellows in brackets. Master A, he were a fine lad, sir, though I always said give me master B for kind-heartedness like. Many's the job as we've been on together, sir, though I never did no racing nor ought of that, but just the plain labour, as you might say. I'm getting a bit too old and stiff for it now-a-days, sir. I'm thinking master A, if he was here, could do more work in one hour nor I could in four. I don't do no regular work now, sir, just scratch about in the garden here and grow a bit of a logarithm, or raise a common dominator or two.

But Mr. Euclid he use me still for they propositions, he do."

From the garrulous old man I learned the melancholy end of my former acquaintances. Some time after I left town, he told me, C had been taken ill. It seems that A and B had been rowing on the river for a wager and C had been running on the bank and then sat in a draft. Of course the bank had refused the draft and C was taken ill.

A and B came home and found C lying helpless in bed. A shook him roughly and said, "Get up, C, we're going to pile wood." C looked so worn and pitiful that B said, "Look here, A, I won't stand this; he isn't fit to pile wood to-night." C smiled feebly and said, "Perhaps I might pile a little if I sat up in bed; I'm sure if I could pile I wood pile." Then B thoroughly alarmed, said, "See here, A, I'm going to fetch a doctor; he's dying." A flared up and answered, "You've no money to fetch a doctor." "I'll reduce him to his lowest terms," B said firmly, "that'll fetch him."

C's life might even then have been saved but they made a mistake about the medicine. It stood at the head of the bed on a bracket, and the nurse accidentally removed it from the bracket without changing the sign.

After the fatal blunder, C seems to have sunk rapidly. On the evening of the next day as the shadows deepened in the little room, it was clear to all that the end was near. I think that even A was affected at the last, as he stood with bowed head, aimlessly offering to bet with the doctor on C's laboured breathing. "A," whispered C, "I think I'm going fast." "How fast do you think you'll go, old man?"