

with the stuff all
the Hill at threepence

who saw me at the
a bit different from
as decently dressed,
very much alive. But
I slobber about his
d:

I can't expect to
use I've had no ex-
ing of. But I want
ive me ten shillings
the riff-raff, before
on to you for in-

way he spoke, and
sonable enough, for
were up to their
was gettin' sick of

id, after thinkin' it
you must first un-
it is expected of the

aid the young man,
way, was Halesham.
e's everything that
stipulates, he will
spend a month in
as an employee at a
the ropes a little.
at time we're both
ve to go abroad—

s Halesham, prick-

the whereabouts of
Mamie Wilton, who
lin' there. Havin'
interview her. He
writin' her opinion

young man, lookin'
ady to start on his
ly.

favorable—and by
deal—she will share
f the whole of the
ess durin' my life—
inherit my share
Understand?"

r opinion is not
simply receive the
res I hold independ-
and when I'm gone,
es. The whole of
to the young man.
shares, if her reply

the man, in addition
the business...

And begins to deal
pickin' one man
housand that same

and I found that I
out three per cent.
e kept it up for a
e there was a book
of men from whom
be made. The one
upon was named

in' chap with curly
very question like
ld me a few facts
had escaped my

nd settle the mat-
at the end of the
t man had been
was more tired
my life.

His manner was
there was a kink
t satisfy me.

th him?" says Hales-
w of, says Hales-
of instinctive dis-
time to analyse.
oo dazzlin'.

ll, he's comin', I
somethin' else to
urself fairly use-
d that you're in-
adly. If you care
t of private secre-
continue the three

says. 'But what

m, I told him—
h I took no more
ter.

Williams, and Wil-
ne next train like
bone. He flung
at once and in

about a week had picked up most of
what the countin'-house could teach him.
At the end of a month I packed him
off to find Mamie. Of course, he knew
all the rules of the game, though we
hadn't signed any agreement.

"It must depend upon her answer,"
I told him, when he asked.

"He left by the night boat for Dieppe
on Thursday, with Mamie's last hotel
address in his pocket, though, as a mat-
ter of fact, I hadn't heard from her for
a fortnight. Four days later I had a
letter from him, sayin' that he'd had a
long interview with her, and inclosin'
her reply. It read:

"Dear Mr. Bosking,
"I have heard all that Mr. Williams
has had to say concerning Bongoline. I
can only tell you that the subject is
odious to me, that I decline to have
anything to do with it, and never wish
even to hear the word mentioned again.
Yours very sincerely,
Mamie Wilton.

"Well, you can guess that that letter
was a regular facer. 'Dear Mr. Bosking'
—'Yours very sincerely'! And I'd been
fancin' that when she found that I was
in earnest, she'd drop that can't-touch-
it-with-a-ten-foot-pole attitude towards
Bongoline, and be something like her
own self again. Well, I was wrong!

"I showed the letters to Halesham—
he was as keen as if the affair were his
own, and I'd got to trust him.

"Does Williams know the value of
the shares you hold?" he asked.

"No," I said. "But I fancy he's a pretty
general idea that they aren't worth
much."

"So that it would pay him a great
deal better to own Bongoline outright
than one-third of it plus the shares?"

"Looks like it."

"And when is your agreement with
him, one way or the other, to be signed?"

"Immediately on his return."

"Mr. Bosking," says Halesham, so-
lemnly, "I'm convinced that the letter's a
forgery. It doesn't strike me as bein'
the genuine thing!"

"The signature's Mamie's right
enough," I said, yet feelin' a twinge of
suspicion myself, "I'd recognise it at
the bottom of a coalmine."

"Very good, sir," he says, handin'
back the papers, and didn't allude to
them again that mornin'.

"But what he said buzzed in my head
all day. I looked at the letters a good
many times, and the next mornin' called
young 'Sharpshins' to my desk.

"Look here," I said. "You're mighty
suspicious about Williams. Suppose I
give you the chance of runnin' over,
and findin' Miss Wilton yourself? She's
stayin' at Brown's Hotel, Rouen. I'll
wire this afternoon for Williams to
come back, and if you start at once,
you'll be pretty nearly there before I
see him. Savvy?"

"Very good, sir," says Halesham.
"So he packed his grip, and caught
the mornin' service an hour later, and
I felt the better for knowin' it."

"At about noon on the day followin',
Williams, who had my wire the previous
evenin', turns up, spick and span and
smilin'.

"Good-mornin', Mr. Bosking," he says.
half holdin' out his hand.

"Good-mornin', Mr. Williams," says
I, without lookin' up from the cable
layin' on my desk. It had come an
hour before.

"He gazed around and seemed to find
the atmosphere of the office a bit chillier
than he expected.

"To tell the truth," I said, after a
pause, "I'm a bit worried. Someone's
been forgin' your name!"

"What!" said Williams.

"Two days ago I had a letter which
looked as if it came from you, sayin'
that you'd seen Mamie, and inclosin'
her reply. I've just heard that that re-
ply was never written by her, though
it's true enough that she met a man
named Williams at Brown's Hotel. It's
also true that he managed to get hold
of the visitors' book, make a copy of her
signature from it, and disappear. That's
all. But for barefaced attempts to ruin
a promisin' young man, those Continent-
al sharpers beat everything!"

"Well, he looked at me pretty hard
for a moment, and then he reached for
his hat, and began to make tracks for

the door. But I stopped him half way.

"One moment!" I says. "You'll per-
haps be interested to hear that the
shares I hold in the 'Lucky Juggins' cop-
per mine have jumped from seven shill-
ings to about as many pounds within
the last week, owin' to a fresh discovery
of ore. At the present moment they're
worth about fifty thousand pounds."

"He opened and shut his mouth like
a fish, and then went out and slammed
the door behind him. And never even
sent me a picture postcard to say he'd
got home safely!"

"By the evenin' mail comes a letter
from Halesham:

"Dear Sir,
"I beg to confirm my previous cable,
and to inform you that I have had a
further interview with Miss Wilton on
the subject of Bongoline.

"She requests me to state, however,
that—with every respect and affection
for yourself—she cannot consent to be-
come a partner in a business for which
she feels little or no inclination.

"Yours faithfully,
"Arthur Halesham.

"Well, that was facer Number 2. But
I guessed it wasn't his fault, and I wrote
back telling him to take a holiday till
the end of the week. I wanted to adjust
my bearings and put in a day or so's
close grind at the business—and it was
time! All the habitable globe seemed
to have spotted that blessed advertise-
ment, bought a bottle of Bongoline to
find out what it was for, and been
satisfied with the result. The sales
hadn't climbed up—they'd shot sky-
high! I had to double the staff, have
fifteen hundred letters printed apologis-
ing for delays in delivery, and hire two
disused mission-rooms and a town hall
to put the extra machinery in till I'd
time to run up fresh factories.

"But I found myself handicapped
without Halesham at my elbow, and at
last I decided on a plan that would have
saved me a heap of trouble from the
first.

"Cut holiday short and come back,"
I wired.

"By the very next boat he came,
rigged out in a new suit, and smilin' as
if he'd come in for a fortune—which
was a fact, though he didn't know it.

"Look here," I said. "About this
adoption business! I was an imbecile
to start the darned thing, but since I
did, and the post is still vacant, I'll
make you an offer of it!"

"Many thanks," he says, lookin'
mighty pleased. "But my business abili-
ties—"

"Hang your business abilities! I want
to punish that ungrateful minx who
doesn't know a good digestive tonic and
cold cure when she sees it!"

"H'm!" he says and then, casual-like,
"I rather think she's waiting outside at
the present moment."

"Well, sure enough she was, with the
Honorable Augusta Thingummy attend-
ing on behalf of Mrs. Grundy. I sent
one of the messengers down—he has
Bongoline in gold letters four inches
high across his chest—to ask her to come
up. She came.

"Well?" says I. She'd changed—had
got back that sort of warm sparkle that
I'd missed before, and looked prettier
than ever.

"Well, daddy!" said Mamie.

"Aren't you quit of this foolishness
yet?"

"You—you haven't kissed me!" she
says, evadin' the point, woman-like.

"I want to know first if you're still
keen on a mouldy castle and the chance
of a titled husband," I told her, tryin' to
warm up my temper.

"Ye-yes!" says Mamie, blushin' like
a poppy.

"I got my breath after a minute, and
then I said: 'I knew there was somethin'
at the back of all this. Who is he?'"

"Sir Arthur—Sir Arthur Halesham,"
says Mamie. "And I didn't really mean
what I told him to write. It was only
to punish you for being so—so unk-
kind. Boo-boo-hoo!"

"And there she was, sobbin' in my
arms, and there was Halesham, standin'
like a ninny and stammerin' out that
he'd met her before in Paris, and had
come over to ask my permission, when
he happened to see the ad. in the papers,
and thought it would be rather a novel

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