

nearest the mantelpiece, was taking down a sheet of foolscap from the wall, with the evident intention of hiding it.

"Give me that paper!" he said calmly.

And Scott gave it. The Doctor put up his glasses and began to read. No one dared to interrupt, not even Mr. Wickham. Perhaps the poor fellow had not yet found anything to say.

"Ha! H'm!" said the Doctor, in his very best manner, after he had examined the rules. "This is interesting! And may I ask who has won the cup?"

There was a brief and terrible silence. Then the hero Talbot answered, as innocently and as gravely as possible:

"Please, sir, Mr. Wickham!"

We were breathless after that stroke. The Doctor glanced at Wickham.

"Ha! H'm!" he said again.

"I can explain all this, Doctor Holmes," stammered Wickham, again trying to smile. "I can explain it all."

"Ha! H'm!" said the Doctor, for the third time. "I thank you." Then he folded up the rules and slipped them into a book which he was carrying. After that, without another word, he turned round and stalked off down the corridor.

A moment later, Mr. Wickham went off too. He was so much engaged with his own thoughts that he could not find a word to utter. And we all realized that he had quite enough to think of.

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Thus came to its end our Grand Final Cup Tournament. We agreed un-animously that Talbot deserved the Cup, and it was hung around his neck. Mr. Wickham had beaten all of us, but he had beaten Mr. Wickham in the last round, with the Doctor as referee!

As for Mr. Wickham, I have no doubt that he did explain the thing to the Head, and that they came to some patchwork sort of understanding about it. It couldn't well be anything more, because the ways of the two men were so utterly different. There was nothing mean or small about the Doctor, and he would find it very hard to understand his assistant's conduct. For our part, we are convinced that matters were considerably strained between them as a result, and that this was the real cause of Mr. Wickham's leaving us at the end of term. He went to another school a sadder, if not a wiser man; but perhaps it shows some good points in him that he never even mentioned the lines he had given us to write in such a clever and unfortunate way. Possibly, however, he felt that Fate had intervened on our behalf, and that we were best left alone.