

when the Chief left at four o'clock they knew the worst. He paused at Saxelby's door and said, "Well, my boy, I suppose we shall be seeing you at dinner this evening?"

That was enough for them. Their colleague to make sure of the post was to marry the Chief's daughter. The first division clerk who was making a book promptly closed it. Everybody wanted to back Saxelby as a dead cert., and the bookmaker declared that he would do nothing more unless the other two principal clerks also proposed to the other Champion girls. Even old Champion could not be expected to forget his future son-in-law's name.

Morris and Bates congratulated Saxelby in sarcastic fashion. However, though the two were depressed they had not given up hope. Then one afternoon Morris played his trump card. He had a second cousin who held high office in the Ministry. To the amazement of all, this Cabinet Minister dropped in to see Mr. Champion. They were closeted together for such a long time that the first division clerk offered to reopen his book, and promised to lay evens against Morris and Saxelby, and six to one against Bates. Mr. Champion escorted the Cabinet Minister to the entrance of the department when he left, and the chief messenger reported that their last words were:

"So you will bear him in mind, Mr. Champion?"

"Certainly, sir, any recommendation of yours will of course, carry the greatest weight with me."

Saxelby sought out Bates and agreed with him that the English civil service was becoming even more corrupt than the American.

However, Bates, too, had a card up his sleeve. In the intervals of his official work Bates was an admirable golfer—or if you choose to put it another way, in the intervals of his golf Bates was an admirable civil servant. He had even been in the semi-final of the Amateur Champion-

ship. He had taken great care to belong to the same club as Mr. Champion. One Monday morning there was a tremendous sensation at the office. In their studious perusal of the daily papers, essential to their efficiency as public servants, the first division clerks read the account of the Rotham Club Championship. To their amazement they found that in the play-off Bates, who was a plus four man, had been defeated by Mr. Champion, whose handicap was somewhere about minus sixteen. One paper even recorded that in the speech-making following the presentation of the cup, Bates had frankly admitted that he had been thoroughly beaten by a better man.

"Sickening!" exclaimed Saxelby. "He could have beaten Champion easily if he'd used his umbrella instead of his clubs."

Morris groaned. "To think that a man should prostitute a noble game like that to get a miserable bit of promotion. It makes one sick of the service."

There was a rush to back Bates for the post. The bookmaker confessed himself dubious about the prospects. He said it was an open question whether Champion would be more frightened of the Cabinet Minister or of Mrs. Champion, and whether he loved golf or his daughters best. So he offered two to one against any of the candidates. He also said that if it wasn't settled soon he would make a personal appeal to old Champion to end the matter. He was tired of holding up all the ready money in the office.

A week later the head messenger once again bore a message to each of the principal clerks. "Mr. Champion would be obliged," he told each of them, "if you would kindly step into his room at once."

As they met in the corridor Saxelby was flushed, Morris had turned pale, and Bates's fingers trembled as he opened the great man's door.