

"Oh, I got him on a soft spot," said the General. "Talked about his classics and how he was letting them rust. Read up Keats on purpose to talk about poetry to him. Got a shilling Emerson in the town and read that, and worked him up into an argument about some of Schopenhauer's theories. Oh yes! after a time he left off looking as if he'd like to bolt out of the room as I came in, and one day, to my surprise, he laughed, and then I knew I had him. I have offered him a hundred a year with board, and lodging, and washing and all that sort of thing, if he'll come away and tutor Jack until the young cub goes to Oxford. He's accepted—at least, he says he'll come to me for a month on trial, and yesterday he and Jack went off to my place in Leicestershire. I expect it will be a bit of a job getting him started for Australia, but Parker will manage it. You don't know Parker, do you?"

"No," I said. "Is that yet another pleasure in store for me?"

"Distinctly," said the General. "Parker is about six men rolled into one—a sort of combination of soldier, sailor, bootblack, groom and professional cricketer. There's nothing that's ever been done on the cricket field that he doesn't know."

"Quite a disturbing assortment of characters," I said. "Well, as far as I can make out, Jack and Parker and yourself are eminently suited to undertake this vague expedition. Mr Maitland will probably die on the voyage, and I'm not coming."

The General rose from his chair. "We leave a week from to-day," he said, "and by that time you ought to have got your gout under. Anyhow, it's