

WYNDHAM'S PAL

CHAPTER I

THE COMMODORE'S CUP

THE breeze had dropped as the tide ebbed, and *Red Rose* plunged languidly across the shining swell. Faint mist obscured the horizon and the yachts engaged in the fifty-mile race had vanished, although Wyndham thought he had not long since distinguished a sail in the distance. He was curious about this because if he had seen canvas it was *Deva's*, and her skipper had probably seen *Red Rose*. The rest of the fleet was scattered about to the north. Wyndham had noted their positions carefully before the haze rolled up. He wanted to win and meant to leave nothing to chance.

In the meantime, the yacht crept slowly through the sparkling water, close-hauled to a light wind that Wyndham knew would not last. Her canvas, tapering in a tall white pyramid, swayed with a regular heave against the sky. In her shadow, the sea was a cool, luminous green, but the sun was hot and Wyndham had taken off his coat. He wore a white jersey, blue trousers, and very neat white shoes. His age was twenty-six, his figure was thin but athletic, and the molding of his face was good. On the whole, he was a handsome man and was generally marked by