

THE PLAYERS

are improving rapidly, but Rome was not built in a day, and you made one or two slips just now."

Mr. Pomfret threw out an impatient arm, bringing into desirable prominence his cat's-eye and diamond sleeve-links. "It's not so easy to look a—ah-head," he protested, with a lavish expenditure of breath upon the inimical consonant, "when one is in the swing of conversation and anxious to drive ah-home one's opinions."

"Quite so, Mr. Pomfret, but the habit, persevered in——"

The ex-draper was not too well-bred to interrupt another's speech when he had something himself to say.

"Curious 'ow—ah-how—some people experience more difficulty in this matter than others. Of course I don't pretend to 'ave—ah—had much education," Mr. Pomfret said boastfully, as though it were rather something to be proud of. "Went into business too early for that."

Mr. Mowbray Gore bowed acceptance of the statement with a nice suggestion of blindness to its obvious truth.

"Now, many, I may say most, of my young men, assistants, walkers, and so on, who can't 'ave ah—had much education either, for I made a rule in my ah-house of getting 'em young, they got their aitches all right, at any rate during business hours.