

# BY ADVICE OF COUNSEL.

By P. G. WODEHOUSE.

Illustrated by Chas. Crombie.



HE traveller champed meditatively at his steak. He paid no attention to the altercation which was in progress between the waiter and the man at the other end of the dingy room.

The sounds of strife ceased.

The waiter came over to the traveller's table and stood behind his chair. Hé was ruffled.

"If he meant lamb," he said, querulously, "why didn't he say 'lamb' so's a feller could hear him? I thought he said 'ham,' so I brought ham. Now Lord Percy gets all peevish."

He laughed bitterly. The traveller made no reply.

"If people spoke distinct," said the waiter, "there wouldn't be half the trouble there is in the world. Not half the trouble there wouldn't be. I shouldn't be here, for one thing. In this restawrong, I mean." A sigh escaped him.

"I shouldn't," he said, "and that's the truth. I should be getting up when I pleased, eating and drinking all I wanted, and carrying on same as in the good old days. You wouldn't think, to look at me, would you now, that I was once like the lily of the field?"

The waiter was a tall, stringy man, who gave the impression of having no spine. In that he drooped, he might have been said to resemble a flower, but in no other respect. He had sandy hair, weak eyes, set close together, and a day's growth of red stubble on his chin. One could not see him in the lily class.

"What I mean to say is, I didn't toil, neither did I spin. Ah, them was happy days! Lying on me back, plenty of tobacco, something cool in a jug——"

He sighed once more.

"Did you ever know a man of the name of Moore? Jerry Moore?"

The traveller applied himself to his steak in silence.

"Nice feller. Simple sort of feller. Big. Quiet. Bit deaf in one ear. Straw-coloured hair. Blue eyes. 'Andsome, rather. Had a 'ouse just outside of Reigate. Has it still. Money of his own. Left him by his pa.

Simple sort of feller. Not much to say for himself. I used to know him well in them days. Used to live with him. Nice feller he was. Big. Bit hard of hearing. Got a sleepy kind of grin, like this—something."

The traveller sipped his beer in thoughtful silence.

"I reckon you never met him," said the waiter. "Maybe you never knew Gentleman Bailey, either? We always called him that. He was one of these broken-down Eton or 'Arrer fellers, folks said. We struck up a partnership kind of casual, both being on the tramp together, and after a while we 'appened to be round about Reigate. And the first house we come to was this Jerry Moore's. He come up just as we was sliding to the back door, and grins that sleepy grin. Like this—something. 'Ullo!' he says. Gentleman kind of gives a whoop, and hollers, 'If it ain't my old pal, Jerry Moore! Jack,' he says to me, 'this is my old pal, Mr. Jerry Moore, wot I met in 'appier days down at Ramsgate one summer.'

"They shakes hands, and Jerry Moore says, 'Is this a friend of yours, Bailey?' looking at me. Gentleman introduces me. 'We are partners,' he says, 'partners in misfortune. This is my friend, Mr. Roach.'

"'Come along in,' says Jerry.

"So we went in, and he makes us at home. He's a bachelor, and lives all by himself in this desirable 'ouse.

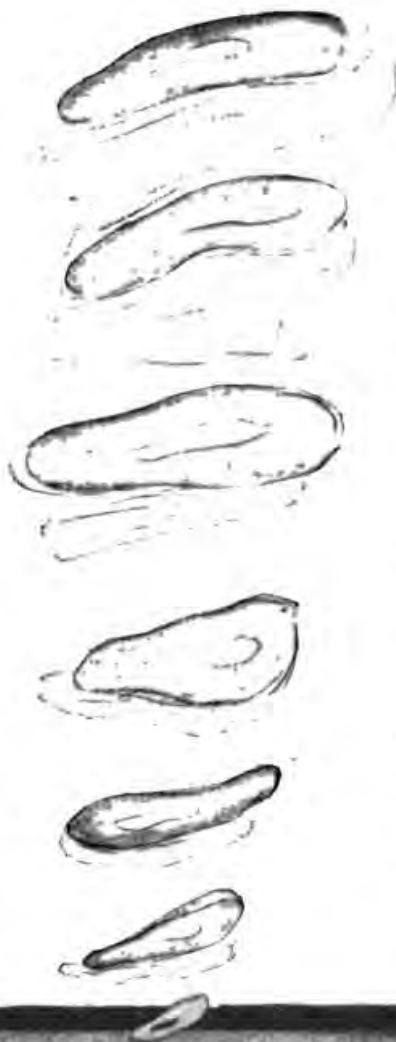
"Well, I seen pretty quick that Jerry thinks the world of Gentleman. All that evening he's acting as if he's as pleased as Punch to have him there. Couldn't do enough for him. It was a bit of *alright*, I said to meself. It was, too.

"Next day we gets up late and has a good breakfast, and sits on the lawn and smokes. The sun was shining, the little birds was singing, and there wasn't a thing, east, west, north, or south, that looked like work. If I had been asked my address at that moment, on oath, I wouldn't have hesitated a second. I should have answered, 'No. 1, Easy Street.' You see, Jerry Moore was one of these slow, simple fellers, and you could tell in a moment what a lot he thought of Gentleman. Gentleman, you see, had a way with him.

Not haughty, he wasn't. More affable, I should call it. He sort of made you feel that all men was born equal, but that it was awful good of him to be talking to you, and that he wouldn't do it for everybody. It went down proper with Jerry Moore. Jerry would sit and listen to him giving his views on things by the hour. By the end of the first day I was having visions of sitting in that garden a white-haired old man and being laid out when my time should come, in Jerry's front room."

He paused, his mind evidently in the past, among the cigars and big breakfasts. Presently he took up his tale.

"This here Jerry Moore was a simple sort of feller. Deafies are like that. Ever noticed? Not that Jerry was a real deafy. His hearing was a bit off, but he could foller you if you spoke to him nice and clear. Well, I was saying, he was kind of simple. Liked to put in his days pottering about the little



LYING ON ME BACK, PLENTY OF TOBACCO, SOMETHING COOL IN A JUG."

garden he'd made for himself, looking after his flowers and his fowls, and sit of an evening listening to Gentleman 'olding forth on Life. He was a philosopher, Gentleman was. And Jerry took everything he said as gospel. He didn't want no proofs. 'E and the King of Denmark would have been great pals. He just sat by with his big blue eyes getting rounder every minute and lapped it up.

"Now you'd think a man like that could be counted on, wouldn't you? Would he want anything more? Not he, you'd say. You'd be wrong. Believe me, there isn't a man on earth that fixed and contented but what a woman can't knock his old Paradise into 'ash with one punch.

"It wasn't long before I begin to notice a change in Jerry. He never had been what you'd call a champion catch-as-catch-can talker, but now he was silenter than ever. And he got a habit of switching Gentleman off from his theories on Life in general to Woman in particular. This suited Gentleman just right. What he didn't know about Woman wasn't knowledge.

"Gentleman was too busy talking to have time to get suspicious, but I wasn't; and one day I draws Gentleman aside and puts it to him straight. 'Gentleman,' I says, 'Jerry Moore is in love!'

"Well, this was



a nasty knock, of course, for Gentleman. He knew as well as I did what it would mean if Jerry was to lead home a blushing bride through that front door. It would be outside into the cold, hard world for the bachelor friends. Gentleman sees that quick, and his jaw drops. I goes on. 'All the time,' I says, 'that you're talking away of an evening Jerry's seeing visions of a little woman sitting in your chair. And you can bet we don't enter into them visions. He may dream of little feet pattering about the house,' I says, 'but they aren't ours; and you can 'ave something on that both ways. Look alive, Gentleman,' I says, 'and think out some plan, or we might as well be padding the hoof now.'

"Well, Gentleman did what he could. In his evening discourses he started to give it to Woman all he knew. Began to talk about Delilahs and Jezebels and Fools-there-was and the rest of it, and what a mug a feller was to let a female into 'is cosy home, who'd only make him spend his days hooking her up, and his nights wondering how to get back the blankets without waking her. My, he was crisp! Enough to have given Romeo the jumps, you'd have thought. But, lor! It's no good talking to them when they've got it bad.

"A few days later we caught him with the goods, talking in the road to a girl in a pink dress.

"I couldn't but admit that Jerry had picked one right from the top of the basket. This wasn't one of them languishing sort wot sits about in cosy corners and reads story-books, and don't care what's 'appening in the home so long as they find out what became of the hero in his duel with the Grand Duke. She was a brown, slim, wiry-looking little thing. You know. Held her chin up and looked you up and down with eyes the colour of Scotch

whisky, as much as to say, 'Well, what *about* it?' You could tell without looking at her, just by the feel of the atmosphere when she was near, that she had as much snap and go in her as Jerry Moore hadn't, which was a good bit. I knew, just as sure as I was standing there on one leg, that this was the sort of girl who would have me and Gentleman out of that house about three seconds after the clergyman had tied the knot.

"Jerry says, 'These are my friends, Miss Tuxton—Mr. Bailey and Mr. Roach. They are staying with me for a visit. This is Miss Jane Tuxton,' he says to us. 'I was just going to see Miss Tuxton home,' he says, sort of wistful. 'Excellent,' says Gentleman. 'We'll come too.' And we all goes along. There wasn't much done in the way of conversation. Jerry never was one for pushing



"GENTLEMAN,' I SAYS, 'WHAT'S GOING TO BE DONE ABOUT THIS?'"



out the words; nor was I, when in the presence of the sect; and Miss Jane had her chin in the air, as if she thought me and Gentleman was not needed in any way whatsoever. The only talk before we turned her in at the garden gate was done by Gentleman, who told a pretty long story about a friend of his in Upper Sydenham who had been silly enough to marry, and had had trouble ever since.

"That night, after we had went to bed, I said to Gentleman, 'Gentleman,' I says, 'what's going to be done about this?



"WHENEVER HE GOES TRICKLING ROUND AFTER THE GIRL, WE GOES TRICKLING ROUND AFTER HIM."

We've got about as much chance, if Jerry marries that girl,' I says, 'as a couple of helpless pink chocolate creams at a schoolgirls' picnic.' 'If,' says Gentleman. 'He ain't married her yet. That is a girl of character, Jack. Trust me. Didn't she strike you as a girl who would like a man with a bit of devil in him, a man with some go in him, a you-be-

darned kind of man? Does Jerry fill the bill? He's more like a doormat with "Welcome" written on it, than anything else.'

"Well, we seen a good deal of Miss Jane in the next week or so. We keeps Jerry under—what's it the heroine says in the melodrama? 'Oh, cruel, cruel, S.P. something.' Espionage, that's it. We keeps Jerry under espionage, and whenever he goes trickling round after the girl, we goes trickling round after him.

"'Things is running our way,' says Gentleman to me, after one of these meetings. 'That girl is getting cross with Jerry. She wants Reckless Rudolf, not a man who stands and grins when other men butt in on him and his girl. Mark my words, Jack. She'll get tired of Jerry, and go off and marry a soldier, and we'll live happy ever after.' 'Think so?' I says. 'Sure of it,' says Gentleman.

"It was the Sunday after this that Jerry Moore announces to us, wriggling, that he has an engagement to take supper with Jane and her folks. He'd have liked to have slipped away secret, but we was keeping him under espionage too crisp for that, so he has to tell us. 'Excellent,' says Gentleman. 'It will be a great treat to Jack and myself to meet the family. We will go along with you.' So off we all goes, and pushes our boots in sociable fashion under the Tuxton table. I looked at Miss Jane out of the corner of my eye; and, honest, that chin of hers was sticking out a foot, and Jerry didn't dare look

at her. Love's young dream, I muses to myself, how swift it fades when a man has the nature and disposition of a lop-eared rabbit!

"The Tuxtons was four in number, not counting the parrot, and all male. There was Pa Tuxton, an old feller with a beard and glasses; a fat uncle; a big brother, who worked in a bank and was dressed like Moses in all his glory; and a little brother with a snub nose, that cheeky you'd have been surprised. And the parrot in its cage and a fat yellow dog. And they're all making themselves pleasant to Jerry, the wealthy future son-in-law, something awful. It's 'How are the fowls, Mr. Moore?' and 'A little bit of this pie, Mr. Moore; Jane made it,' and Jerry sitting there with a feeble grin, saying 'Yes' and 'No' and nothing much more, while Miss Jane's eyes are snapping like Fifth of November fireworks. I could feel Jerry's chances going back a mile a minute. I felt as happy as a little child that evening. I sang going back home.

"Gentleman's pleased, too. 'Jack,' he says to me when we're in bed, 'this is too easy. In my most sanguinary dreams I hardly hoped for this. No girl of spirit's going to love a man who behaves that way to her parents. The way to win the heart of a certain type of girl,' he says, beginning on his theories, 'the type to which Jane Tuxton belongs, is to be rude to her family. I've got Jane Tuxton sized up and labelled. Her kind wants her folks to dislike her young man. She wants to feel that she's the only one in the family that's got the sense to see the hidden good in Willie. She doesn't want to be one of a crowd hollering out what a nice young man he is. It takes some pluck in a man to stand up to a girl's family, and that's what Jane Tuxton is looking for in Jerry. Take it from one who has studied the sect,' says Gentleman, 'from John o' Groat's to Land's End, and back again.'

"Next day Jerry Moore's looking as if he'd only sixpence in the world and had swallowed it. 'What's the matter, Jerry?' says Gentleman. Jerry heaves a sigh. 'Bailey,' he says, 'and you, Mr. Roach, I expect you both seen how it is with me. I love Miss Jane Tuxton, and you seen for yourselves what transpires. She don't value me, not tuppence.' 'Say not so,' says Gentleman, sympathetic. 'You're doing fine. If you knew the sect as I do you wouldn't go by mere superficial silences and chin-tiltings. I can read a girl's heart, Jerry,' he says, patting him on the shoulder, 'and I tell you you're doing fine. All you want now is a little rapid

work, and you win easy. To make the thing a cert.,' he says, getting up, 'all you have to do is to make a dead set at her folks.' He winks at me. 'Don't just sit there like you did last night. Show 'em you've got something in you. You know what folks are: they think themselves the most important things on the map. Well, go to work. Consult them all you know. Every opportunity you get. There's nothing like consulting a girl's folks to put you in good with her.' And he pats Jerry on the shoulder again and goes indoors to find his pipe.

"Jerry turns to me. 'Do you think that's really so?' he says. I says, 'I do.' 'He knows all about girls, I reckon,' says Jerry. 'You can go by him every time,' I says. 'Well, well,' says Jerry, sort of thoughtful."

The waiter paused. His eye was sad and dreamy. Then he took up the burden of his tale.

"First thing that happens is that Gentleman has a sore tooth on the next Sunday, so don't feel like coming along with us. He sits at home, dosing it with whisky, and Jerry and me goes off alone.

"So Jerry and me pikes off, and once more we prepares to settle down around the board. I hadn't noticed Jerry particular, but just now I catches sight of his face in the light of the lamp. Ever see one of these fighters when he's sitting in his corner before a fight, waiting for the gong to go? Well, Jerry looks like that; and it surprises me.

"I told you about the fat yellow dog that permeated the Tuxtons' house, didn't I? The family thought a lot of that dog, though of all the ugly brutes I ever met he was the worst. Sniffing round and growling all the time. Well, this evening he comes up to Jerry just as he's going to sit down and starts to growl. Old Pa Tuxton looks over his glasses and clicks his tongue. 'Rover! Rover!' he says, kind of mild. 'Naughty Rover; he don't like strangers, I'm afraid.' Jerry looks at Pa Tuxton, and he looks at the dog, and I'm just expecting him to say 'No,' or 'Yes,' same as the other night, when he lets out a nasty laugh—one of them bitter laughs. 'Ho!' he says. 'Ho! don't he? Then perhaps he'd better get further away from them.' And he ups with his boot and—well, that dog hit the far wall.

"Jerry sits down and pulls up his chair. 'I don't approve,' he says, fierce, 'of folks keeping great, fat, ugly, bad-tempered yellow dogs that are a nuisance to all. I don't like it.'

"There was a silence you could have



scooped out with a spoon. Have you ever had a rabbit turn round on you and growl? That's how we all felt when Jerry outs with them crisp words. They took our breath away.

"While we was getting it back again the parrot, which was in its cage, lets out a squawk. Honest, I jumped a foot in my chair.

"Jerry gets up very deliberate, and walks over to the parrot.

"'Is this a menagerie?' he says. 'Can't a man have supper in peace without an image like you starting to holler? Go to sleep.'

"We was all staring at him surprised, especially Uncle Dick Tuxton, whose particular pet the parrot was. He'd brought him home all the way from some foreign parts.

"'Hello, Billy!' says the bird, shrugging his shoulders and puffing himself up. 'R-r-r! R-r-r! 'lo, Billy! 'lo, 'lo, 'lo! R-r WAH!'

"Jerry gives its cage a bang.

"'Don't you talk back at me,' he says, 'or I'll knock your head off. You think because you've got a green tail you're someone.' And he stalks back to his chair and sits glaring at Uncle Dick.

"Well, all this wasn't what you might call promoting an easy flow of conversation. Everyone's looking at Jerry, specially me, wondering what next and trying to get their breath, and Jerry's frowning at the cold beef, and there's a sort of awkward pause. Miss Jane is the first to get busy. She bustles about and gets the food served out, and we begins to eat. But still there's not so much conversation that you'd notice it. This goes on till we reaches the concluding stages, and then Uncle Dick comes up to the scratch.

"'How is the fowls, Mr. Moore?' he says.

"'Gimme some more pie,' says Jerry. 'What?'

"Uncle Dick repeats his remark.

"'Fowls?' says Jerry. 'What do you know about fowls? Your notion of a fowl is an ugly bird with a green tail, a Wellington nose, and—gimme a bit of cheese.'

"Uncle Dick's fond of the parrot, so he speaks up for him. 'Polly's always been reckoned a handsome bird,' he says.

"'He wants stuffing,' says Jerry.

"And Uncle Dick drops out of the talk.

"Up comes big brother, Ralph his name was. He's the bank-clerk and a dude. He gives his cuffs a flick, and starts in to make things jolly all round by telling a story about a man he knows named Wotherspoon. Jerry fixes him with his eye, and, half-way through, interrupts.

"'That waistcoat of yours is fierce,' he says.

"'Pardon?' says Ralph.

"'That waistcoat of yours,' says Jerry. 'It hurts me eyes. It's like an electric sign.'

"'Why, Jerry,' I says, but he just scowls at me and I stops.

"Ralph is proud of his clothes, and he isn't going to stand this. He glares at Jerry and Jerry glares at him.

"'Who do you think you are?' says Ralph, breathing hard.

"'Button up your coat,' says Jerry.

"'Look 'ere!' says Ralph.

"'Cover it up, I tell you,' says Jerry. 'Do you want to blind me?' Pa Tuxton interrupts.

"'Why, Mr. Moore,' he begins, sort of soothing; when the small brother, who's been staring at Jerry, chips in. I told you he was cheeky.

"He says, 'Pa, what a funny nose Mr. Moore's got!'

"And that did it. Jerry rises, very slow, and leans across the table and clips the kid brother one side of the ear-ole. And then there's a general imbroglio, everyone standing up and the kid hollering and the dog barking.

"'If you'd brought him up better,' says Jerry, severe, to Pa Tuxton, 'this wouldn't ever have happened.'

"Pa Tuxton gives a sort of howl.

"'Mr. Moore,' he yells, 'what is the meaning of this extraordinary behaviour? You come here and strike me child—'

"Jerry bangs on the table.

"'Yes,' he says, 'and I'd strike him again. Listen to me,' he says. 'You think just because I'm quiet I ain't got no spirit. You think all I can do is to sit and smile. You think—Bah! You aren't on to the hidden depths in me character. I'm one of them still waters that runs deep. I'm— Here, you get out of it! Yes, all of you. Except Jane. Jane and me wants this room to have a private talk in. I've got a lot of things to say to Jane. Are you going?'

"I turns to the crowd. I was awful disturbed. 'You mustn't take any notice,' I says. 'He ain't well. He ain't himself.' When just then the parrot outs with another of them squawks. Jerry jumps at it.

"'You first,' he says, and flings the cage out of the window. 'Now you,' he says to the yellow dog, putting him out through the door. And then he folds his arms and scowls at us, and we all notice suddenly that he's very big. We looks at one another, and we begins to edge towards the door. All

except Jane, who's staring at Jerry as if he's a ghost.

"'Mr. Moore,' says Pa Tuxton, dignified, 'we'll leave you. You're drunk.'

"'I'm not drunk,' says Jerry. 'I'm in love.'

it ain't in the man. Specially after what I said to him about the way he ought to behave. How could he have done so?' Just then in comes Jerry, beaming all over. 'Boys,' he shouts, 'congratulate me. It's all right. We've fixed it up. She says she hadn't known me properly before. She says she'd always reckoned me a sheep, while all the time I was one of them strong, silent men.' He turns to Gentleman——"

The man at the other end of the room was calling for his bill.

"All right, all right," said the waiter. "Coming! He turns to Gentleman," he



"'Jane,' says Pa Tuxton, 'come with me, and leave this ruffian to himself.'

"'Jane,' says Jerry, 'stop here, and come and lay your head on my shoulder.'

"'Jane,' says Pa Tuxton, 'do you hear me?'

"'Jane,' says Jerry, 'I'm waiting.'

"She looks from one to the other for a spell, and then she moves to where Jerry's standing.

"'I'll stop,' she says, sort of quiet.

"And we drifts out."

The waiter snorted.

"I got back home, quick as I could," he said, "and relates the proceedings to Gentleman. Gentleman's rattled. 'I don't believe it,' he says. 'Don't stand there and tell me Jerry Moore did them things. Why,

"YOUR NOTION OF A FOWL IS AN UGLY BIRD WITH A GREEN TAIL AND A WELLINGTON NOSE."

went on rapidly, "and he says, 'Bailey, I owe it all to you, because if you hadn't told me to insult her folks——'"

He leaned on the traveller's table and fixed him with an eye that pleaded for sympathy.

"'Ow about that?" he said. "Isn't that crisp? 'Insult her folks!' Them was his very words. 'Insult her folks!'"

The traveller looked at him inquiringly.

"Can you bear it?" said the waiter.

"I don't know what you are saying," said the traveller. "If it is important, write it on a slip of paper. I am stone-deaf."