

15¢



THE BEST IN SPORTS FICTION

NEW SPORTS

APR.

MAGAZINE



**JOHN D.
MacDONALD'S**
NOVEL OF
HARDWOOD DESTINY

THE PLUNDER FIVE MURDER IN HIS DUKES

by **WILLIAM
HEUMAN**

**MANY
OTHERS!**

LAGE MAY

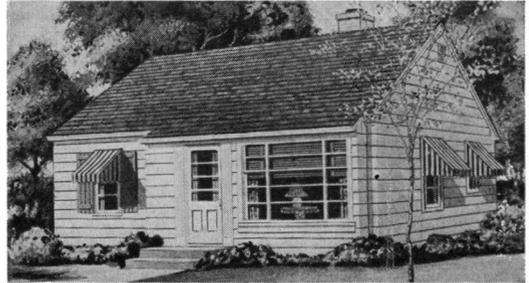
**THIS
5
ROOM**

ALADDIN

**READI- \$1492
CUT
HOUSE FREIGHT PAID**

**SAVE 4 PROFITS ON
LUMBER, MILLWORK
HARDWARE & LABOR**

The Aladdin Read-Cut System of Construction enables you to save 18% lumber waste and up to 30% labor costs, and guarantees you will receive the highest quality dry lumber and a COMPLETE house as specified. You can buy your COMPLETE house, ALL IN ONE SHIPMENT, direct from our mills and save the in-between profits.



HOW TO BEAT THE HIGH COST OF BUILDING

Every hour you can put in on the construction of your Aladdin home means a saving to you of from \$2.00 to \$3.00 per hour on its cost. That means a SAVING of from \$15.00 to \$18.00 for every day you work on it!**** Depending on the size of the house, the carpenter work sums up to from three hundred hours to twelve hundred hours.**** WITH MOST OF THE

SKILLED LABOR ALREADY PERFORMED when you receive your Aladdin Read-Cut, what an opportunity you have to bring down the cost of your new home to practically a pre-war level. Our drawings and instructions cover everything from the foundation up, so you can save any part, or even all labor costs.

**71
DESIGNS TO
CHOOSE
FROM**



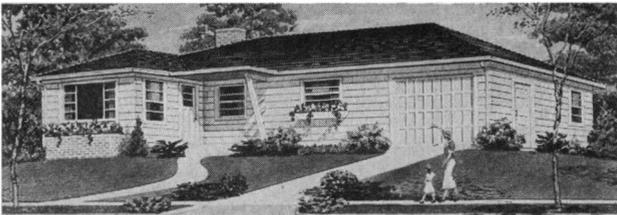
**PAY
YOURSELF
THOSE
HIGH
WAGES**

WHAT YOU GET WHEN YOU BUY AN ALADDIN

You get ALL THE LUMBER cut to fit by fast machinery-production line methods—marked and numbered, ready to erect practically without the use of a saw; also siding, flooring, interior

trim, all millwork, doors, windows, mouldings, glass, hardware, nails, roofing, paint and complete drawings with instructions. Many Aladdin home buyers erect their own houses.

ALADDIN GUARANTEE: SATISFACTION OR YOUR MONEY BACK



**OFFICES AND MILLS IN
MICHIGAN & NORTH CAROLINA**

Ranch Houses, Colonials, Cape Cods and Modern plans; also Storage Walls and Expansion Attics. ALADDIN HOUSES ARE NOT PREFABRICATED.

IMMEDIATE DELIVERY

Address Nearest Office

THE ALADDIN CO.

**BAY CITY, MICHIGAN or
WILMINGTON, N. C.**

NEW 1950 CATALOG IN FULL COLORS JUST OUT

**Send 25 cents today
for Catalog M-20**

**THE ALADDIN CO.
Bay City, Mich.
or Wilmington, N. C.**

Name _____

Street _____

Town _____

State _____



INSPECTOR MOON WON HIS BET AND THEN...



W-WHY IT'S AN ARROW!

KEEP BACK FROM THAT WINDOW!

IN A LOFTY NEW YORK APARTMENT, DETECTIVE INSPECTOR JIM MOON AND A MYSTERY WRITER, H.H. KYNE, ARGUE OVER THE PLAUSIBILITY OF THE LATTER'S NEWEST "WHO DONE IT" WHEN...



NOW HERE'S A MYSTERY JUST MADE FOR ROUTINE POLICE METHODS

BET YOU A DINNER I SOLVE IT FIRST

SHORT ARROW... SMALL PERSON



WRONG AGAIN! H-M-M-M

...AND SO, WHILE AUTHOR KYNE TRIES ARM-CHAIR DEDUCTION TO FIND THE MYSTERIOUS ARCHER, INSPECTOR MOON VISITS SPORTING GOODS STORES



A GIRL, EH? GOT HER NAME AND ADDRESS?



HERE'S OUR ARCHER AND, ODDLY ENOUGH, HER NAME'S DIANA

I WAS TARGET SHOOTING ON MY ROOF ACROSS THE AVENUE AND...

THAT EVENING



WASN'T OUR BET "DINNER FOR THREE," MR. KYNE?

WHY CERTAINLY! SUPPOSE WE PICK YOU UP IN AN HOUR, MISS BAILEY

SHE'S MARVELOUS



I DIDN'T SHAVE TODAY AND...

YOU'RE WELCOME TO MY RAZOR



SAY, THIS IS A SWELL BLADE! SKIMS OFF MY TOUGH STUBBLE LIKE MAGIC!

THIN GILLETTES ARE PLENTY KEEN AND EASY SHAVING



JUST IMAGINE! ME THE MAIN CHARACTER IN A REAL MYSTERY! HE'S WONDERFUL LOOKING

YES, AND WITH A DASH OF ROMANCE, IT'LL MAKE A GOOD YARN

THIN GILLETTES GIVE YOU SMOOTH, REFRESHING SHAVES THAT LOOK AS GOOD AS THEY FEEL. THAT'S BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE KEENEST, SMOOTHEST-FINISHED EDGES OF ANY LOW-PRICED BLADE ON THE MARKET. WHAT'S MORE THIN GILLETTES FIT YOUR GILLETTE RAZOR EXACTLY AND PROTECT YOU FROM DISCOMFORT. ASK FOR THIN GILLETTES IN THE HANDY 10-BLADE PACKAGE



10-25¢
4-10¢

NEW TEN-BLADE PACKAGE HAS COMPARTMENT FOR USED BLADES



15¢

THE BEST IN SPORTS FICTION

NEW SPORTS MAGAZINE



Vol. 7

CONTENTS FOR APRIL, 1950

No. 3

TWO SMASHING NOVELS

THE PLUNDER FIVE.....**John D. MacDonald** 10

The kid was no longer part of the desperately battling quintet he had once sparked to glory . . . but for a single hurricane half, he had one more thing to give them—a downcourt miracle that could turn a five-star false alarm into the plunder five!

SUICIDE SPIKES.....**Russell Gray** 52

He murdered eight guys' pennant dreams on the hot corner—he was suicide at the plate—the rookie who swore he'd be the best thing that ever happened to the once mighty Mammoths—or the last!

TOP-FLIGHT HEADLINE SPORTS FICTION

MURDER IN HIS DUKES.....**William Heuman** 30

Out of the toil and agony of a hundred fights big Sam had wrested all the things he wanted, except this final one—the right to face a better man's leather with a smile on his face, courage in his heart and murder in his dukes!

THE BIG SIX.....**Van MacNair, Jr.** 43

Grimly they lined up for that last-chance smash—eleven power guys fighting for a dream too battered to live—and six points that would never die!

HELL IN A BASKET.....**William R. Cox** 68

"Maybe you're too big to star for us," his four never-quit teammates told Jim Borden. "Maybe you're even too big to fight—" but they gave him all they had, and that was hell in a basket!

ROUGH GUY.....**W. H. Temple** 78

Fresh from golfdom's skidrow, he came back for one last sudden-death hole—for the one final putt for the long green—bigger than a champion's purse!

MATCH POINT POISON.....**Sam Merwin, Jr.** 86

Grimly they battled through one final blazing set—the champ who couldn't be beaten and the kid who couldn't win—until courage called up out of the past took the court to name the better man!

SPECIAL FEATURE

THE SCORE BOARD.....sports chatter,.....**A Department** 6

ALL STORIES NEW



NO REPRINTS

Any resemblance between any character appearing in fictional matter, and any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and unintentional.

Published bi-monthly by Popular Publications, Inc., at 1125 E. Valle Ave., Kokomo, Indiana. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President and Secretary, Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice-President and Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Kokomo, Indiana. Copyright, 1950, by Popular Publications, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under the International Copyright Convention and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Single copy, 15c. Annual subscription for U.S.A., its possessions and Canada, \$9c; other countries, 25c additional. All correspondence relating to this publication should be addressed to 1125 E. Valle Ave., Kokomo, Indiana, or to 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Printed in the U.S.A.

Is High School High enough?

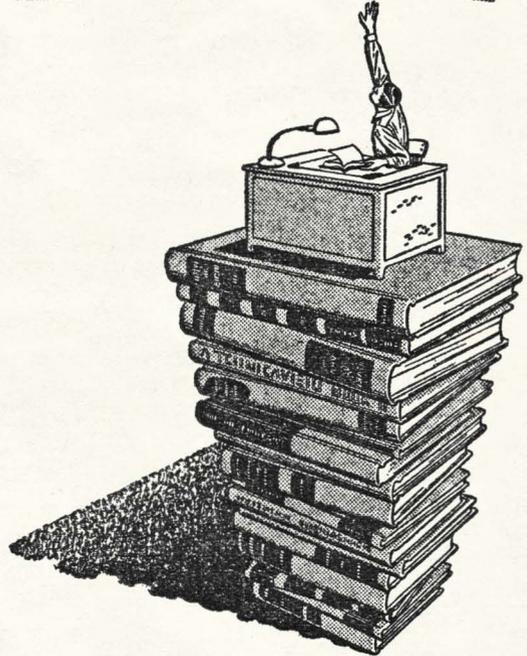
If YOU were smart enough to finish high school, you already know the answer. A high school diploma is a *must* if you want a decent job at a decent wage. But it's *not* enough if you want more: Real security. Responsible positions. Big rewards.

I. C. S. training is *specialized* training that helps you go farther, *faster*. It supplements your high school education with the practical, working knowledge you need for immediate as well as future advancement. Equally important, it gives you the confidence and self-assurance so characteristic of competent, well-trained, *successful* men.

The courses of these famous schools are designed so you can *learn* while you *earn*. You study in your spare time. At work you prove and apply what you learn.

This system of training is backed up by 58 years of I. C. S. experience. It is success-proved by thousands of students reporting promotions and pay increases. It can mean the difference between "halfway" and "headway" for you.

Job competition is getting stiffer every day for high school graduates. Mark and mail the coupon NOW!



INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

APPROVED
under the
G. I. BILL

BOX 3279-C, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full particulars about the course BEFORE which I have marked X:

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Business and Academic Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting <input type="checkbox"/> App. Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> Business Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Bus. Correspondence <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Public Accounting <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Art <input type="checkbox"/> Cost Accounting <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Tax <input type="checkbox"/> First Year College <input type="checkbox"/> Foreignship <input type="checkbox"/> Good English <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Supervision <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Traffic <input type="checkbox"/> Retailing <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship <input type="checkbox"/> Sign Lettering <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <p>Chemical Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry, Analytical <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry, Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry, Mig. Iron & Steel <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum Refining <input type="checkbox"/> Pulp and Paper Making <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering, Architectural and Mining Courses <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture <input type="checkbox"/> Building Estimating <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Contracting and Building <input type="checkbox"/> Highway Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Lumber Dealer <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Structural Blueprints <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping | <p>Electrical Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Light and Power <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting Technician <input type="checkbox"/> Practical Electrician <input type="checkbox"/> Power House Electric <input type="checkbox"/> Ship Electrician | <p>Internal Combustion Engines Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Technicians <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel-Electric <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Engines | <p>Mechanical Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Aeronautical Engineer's, Jr. <input type="checkbox"/> Aircraft Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Forging <input type="checkbox"/> Heat Treatment of Metals <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Instrumentation <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Metallurgy <input type="checkbox"/> Machine Shop <input type="checkbox"/> Machine Shop Inspection <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering | <p>Mold-Loft Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Patternmaking—Wood, Metal <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Shop Blueprints <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet-Metal Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet-Metal Worker <input type="checkbox"/> Ship Drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Ship Fitting <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Designing <input type="checkbox"/> Toolmaking <input type="checkbox"/> Welding Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Welding—Gas and Electric |
| <p>Bus. Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bus. Law | <p>Coal Mining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coal Mining | <p>Aviation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation | <p>Gas Engines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Gas Engines | <p>Car Inspector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Car Inspector | <p>Railroad Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Air Brake <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Locomotive <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Engineer <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Fireman <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Machinist <input type="checkbox"/> Railroad Section Foreman <input type="checkbox"/> Steam and Diesel Loco. Eng. |
| <p>Air Conditioning and Plumbing Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning <input type="checkbox"/> Heating <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration | <p>Communications Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Electronics <input type="checkbox"/> Prac. FM and Television <input type="checkbox"/> Prac. Telephony <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Operating <input type="checkbox"/> Radio, General <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Servicing <input type="checkbox"/> Telegraph Engineering | <p>Stationary Engineering Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Boilermaking <input type="checkbox"/> Combust. Engrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Engine Running <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Power Plant Engr. <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engineer | <p>Textile Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Loom Fixing <input type="checkbox"/> Rayon Weaving <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Designing <input type="checkbox"/> Woolen Manufacturing | <p>Textile Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Loom Fixing <input type="checkbox"/> Rayon Weaving <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Designing <input type="checkbox"/> Woolen Manufacturing | <p>Textile Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Loom Fixing <input type="checkbox"/> Rayon Weaving <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Designing <input type="checkbox"/> Woolen Manufacturing |

Name _____ Age _____ Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Working Hours _____ A.M. to _____ P.M.

Present Position _____ Employed by _____

Length of Service in World War II _____

Enrollment under G. I. Bill approved for World War II Veterans. Special tuition rates to members of the Armed Forces. Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada.

THE SCORE BOARD



HELLO again, friends. Glad to see you gathered around the score board, chalking up our hits and misses as usual. We can't publish as many of your letters as we'd like to—they'd crowd out a story if we did—but you can be sure that we read every one carefully, not just the ones we print here, chosen on a basis of general interest. Your comments are our only guide to the bull's-eye of your reading preferences. If we've hit the target dead-center in the past, we couldn't have done it without your help—and we can't get along without your help in the future. Keep those letters coming, won't you?

Dear Editor:

New Sports is tops for the money, as I've told you before. But I have one complaint—not enough variety. I like fight stories, golf stories, tennis stories, auto race stories, and of course the major sports in season and out. But how about off-the-trail items like water polo, fencing, collegiate wrestling? How about the roller derby, which is fast becoming one of the best-attended minor sports in America?

As far as I can recall, you've never run a story about the famous Boston Marathon. Seems to me that something like this true story would make a good fiction piece.

It was a chilly April day when the Boston Marathon began. A lean, leather-faced man went to the front of the pack early. As the miles flicked under his churning legs, he dropped farther and farther back.

Undiscouraged, he plodded on. The winner finished long before the leather-faced man crossed the finish line. There was a patter of applause from the spectators, who seemed to overlook the fact that they had witnessed one of the greatest athletic feats of history in this losing effort.

The leather-faced man was Clarence DeMar, who had completed the Boston marathon twenty-nine times, and won on more than half a dozen occasions. The fact that he had finished at all was amazing, for DeMar was sixty-one years old . . . and probably not another man of that age in the world could have completed the twenty-five mile grind!

Just forty-two years before this effort, a six-foot-one Canandaigua Indian, Tom Longboat, came out of Toronto to win the event, and set a world's record for the distance. His expenses had been paid by the boys of the Y. M. C. A., and they were the happiest kids in the world when Longboat made an auspicious start on one of the real-

ly great running careers in athletic history.

The boys even wrote a bit of verse, and sang it enthusiastically on the way back:

The hills look out on Boston town,
And Boston looks upon the sea,
Historic harbor of renown,
Gigantic teapot of the free.
The people of the dear old Hub
Will never Longboat's pace forget,
For he was dressed, and had his rub,
While half the Yanks were running yet!

Yours,
Tom Eldridge
Bend, Oregon

Dear Editor:

No-hit games in softball are not quite as much a rarity as in baseball, but when a girl comes up with them, then it is news. Last summer Joan Kemp, of Miami, pitched for a team in the Coral Gables Youth Center Softball League.

Joan did something that may have happened before, but if it has, the feat has been passed by in the public prints. She pitched two successive no-hit games. The only opponents who reached base were one in each contest, on bases on balls. That comes about as close to perfection as could be imagined.

Yours truly,
A. M. Oswald
Paradise, Pa.

And that's the size of it for this time, chums. We'll be back month after next with more of the same; here's hoping we'll see you then.

—THE EDITORS.



To the man who wants to enjoy
an ACCOUNTANT'S CAREER



IF you're that man, here's something that will interest you.

Not a magic formula—not a get-rich-quick scheme—but something more substantial, more practical.

Of course, you need something more than just the desire to be an accountant. You've got to pay the price—be willing to study earnestly, thoroughly.

Still, wouldn't it be worth your while to sacrifice some of your leisure in favor of interesting home study—over a comparatively brief period? Always provided that the rewards were good—a salary of \$4,000 to \$10,000?

An accountant's duties are interesting, varied and of real worth to his employers. He has *standing!*

Do you feel that such things aren't for you? Well, don't be too sure. Very possibly they *can* be!

Why not, like so many before you, investigate LaSalle's modern Problem Method of training for an accountancy position?

Just suppose you were permitted to work in a large accounting house under the personal supervision of an expert accountant. Suppose, with his aid, you studied accounting principles and solved problems day by day—easy ones at first—then more difficult ones. If you could do this—and could turn to him for advice as the problems became complex—soon you'd master them all.

That's the training you follow in principle under the LaSalle Problem Method.

You cover accountancy from the basic Principles right up through Accountancy Systems and Income Tax Procedure. Then you add C. P. A. Training and prepare for the C. P. A. examinations.

As you go along, you absorb the principles of Audit ing, Cost Accounting, Business Law, Statistical Control, Organization, Management and Finance.

Your progress is as speedy as you care to make it—depending on your own eagerness to learn and the time you spend in study.

Will recognition come? The only answer, as you know, is that success *does* come to the man who is really *trained*. It's possible your employers will notice your improvement in a very few weeks or months. Indeed many LaSalle graduates have paid for their training—with increased earnings—before they have completed it! For accountants, who are trained in organization and management, are the executives of the future.

Write For This Free Book

For your own good, don't put off investigation of *all* the facts. Write for our free 48-page book, "Accountancy, The Profession That Pays." It'll prove that accountancy offers brilliant futures to those who aren't afraid of serious home study. We'll also include "Ten Years' Promotion in One"—a book which has helped many men. Send us the coupon *now*.

**LASALLE EXTENSION
 CHICAGO 5, ILL.**

Over 3200 Certified
 Public Accountants among
 LaSalle alumni

**Other LaSalle
 Opportunities**

- Higher Accountancy
- C.P.A. Coaching
- Bookkeeping
- Law: LL.B. Degree
- Business Management
- Salesmanship
- Traffic Management
- Foremanship
- Industr'l Management
- Stenotypy
 (Machine Shorthand)

**LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY
 A CORRESPONDENCE INSTITUTION**

417 S. Dearborn St. Dept. 4334-HR Chicago 5, Ill.

I want to be an accountant. Send me without obligation, "Accountancy, The Profession That Pays"—also "Ten Years Promotion in One."

Name.....Age.....
 Address.....
 City, Zone & State.....



ONE MAN AGAINST THE



THIS IS JOHNNY...
handsome, hot-blooded
...vengeance in his heart!



THE VENDETTA BEGINS when Johnny's father is killed by the dreaded Black Hand! He sets out to destroy the gang!



THE TRAIL LEADS to Italy but the Black Hand brings death again... this time to the cop who is Johnny's best pal!



A LOVELY GIRL fears for Johnny's life but her pleas and kisses can't sway him from his purpose!



IN THE LAIR of the Black Hand Johnny is held captive and tortured because he knows too much!

Does Johnny escape from the clutches of the BLACK HAND? Can Johnny, alone, destroy the evil band of the BLACK HAND? See M-G-M's suspense-taut thriller...

Black Hand

starring

GENE KELLY

J. CARROLL NAISH · TERESA CELLI

Screen Play by Luther Davis

From a Story by Leo Townsend

Directed by RICHARD THORPE

Produced by WILLIAM H. WRIGHT

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Picture

THOUSANDS NOW PLAY who never thought they could!



Thrilled by Playing
I've had my lessons just a week. I think your course is super. I was more thrilled than words can express when I found I could actually play America, The Merry Widow Waltz and others.
*J. T., Marcelona, Mich.



Wouldn't Take \$1000 for Course
The lessons are so simple that anyone can understand them. I have learned to play by note in a little more than a month. I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for my course.
*S. E. A., Kansas City, Mo.



Shares Course With Sister
The teaching is so interesting and the pieces so beautiful I couldn't ask for anything better. I recommend your course highly. My sister shares it with me and feels the same way.
*D. E. G., Wausau, Wis.



Finding New Joy

I am finding a new joy that I never experienced before, for I have always wanted to play, but had given up hope until I heard of your course.
*C. S. Lucien, Okla.



Plays After 2 Months

I hesitated before sending for your course because of an earlier experience I had with a course by ear from another company. I am playing pieces now I never dreamed I would play after only two months.
*E. T. Prichard, Ala.

*Actual pupils' names on request. Pictures by professional models.

You, too, can play any instrument By this EASY A-B-C Method

YOU think it's difficult to learn music? That's what thousands of others have thought! Just like you, they long to play some instrument—the piano, violin, guitar, saxophone or other favorites. But they denied themselves the pleasure—because they thought it took months and years of tedious study to learn.

Learn in Spare Time at Home

And then they made an amazing discovery! They learned about a wonderful way to learn music at home—without a private teacher—without tedious study—and in a surprisingly short time. They wrote to the U. S. School of Music for the facts about this remarkable short-cut method. And the facts opened their eyes! They were amazed to find how easy it was to learn.

The result? Over 850,000 men and women have studied music at home this simple, A-B-C way. Now, all over the world, enthusiastic music-lovers are enjoying the thrilling satisfaction of creating their own music. They have found the key to good times, popularity and profit.

Costs only few cents a Day

And that's what you can do, right now. Get the proof that you, too, can learn to play your favorite instrument—quickly, easily, in

spare time at home for only a few cents a day. Never mind if you have no musical knowledge or talent. Just read the fascinating booklet and Print and Picture sample that explain all about the U. S. School method. (Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit.) Tear out the coupon now, before you turn the page. U. S. School of Music, 3674 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y. (52nd year)

NOTICE

Please don't confuse our method with any systems claiming to teach "without music" or "by ear". We teach you easily and quickly to play real music, any music by standard notes—done by any trick or number system.

FREE!

Print and Picture
Sample



U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC,
3674 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y.

I am interested in music study, particularly in the instrument checked below. Please send me your free illustrated booklet "How to Learn Music at Home", and your free Print and Picture Sample.

<input type="checkbox"/> Piano	<input type="checkbox"/> Saxophone	<input type="checkbox"/> Clarinet	<input type="checkbox"/> Practical
<input type="checkbox"/> Guitar	<input type="checkbox"/> Trumpet, Cornet	<input type="checkbox"/> Trombone	<input type="checkbox"/> Finger
<input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian	<input type="checkbox"/> Pipe, Reed Organ	<input type="checkbox"/> Flute	<input type="checkbox"/> Control
<input type="checkbox"/> Guitar	<input type="checkbox"/> Tenor Banjo	<input type="checkbox"/> Modern	<input type="checkbox"/> Piccolo
<input type="checkbox"/> Violin	<input type="checkbox"/> Ukulele	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> Mandolin
<input type="checkbox"/> Piano Accordion		<input type="checkbox"/> Harmony	

Mr. _____ Have you
Mrs. _____ Instrument?.....
(Please print)

Address.....

City..... State.....

NOTE: If you are under 18 years of age, parent must sign coupon.

SAVE 2c — STICK COUPON ON PENNY POSTCARD

A Basketball Novel

By

JOHN D.

MacDONALD

The hook-shot kid was no longer part of the desperately battling quintet he had once sparked to glory . . . but for one hurricane half, he had one more thing to give them—a downcourt miracle that could turn a five-star false alarm into—



THE
PLUNDER
FIVE



Zimmerman took the flip over his shoulder, relayed it to Ricard and then, taking the handoff in mid-air, went on up for the basket. . . .

CHAPTER ONE

Scrap-Iron Team

JAD HARRIK stood in center court of the old gym, his scowl black, his hands shoved deep into his pockets. The place was silent except for the slap and squeak of rubber soles on the hard-

wood, the bounce of the ball, the sighing of winter wind around the eaves.

He blew hard on his whistle and the ten men panted to a stop, breathing hard. Jad found it hard to believe that this was

almost the same squad with which he had taken the conference crown the previous year and played the invitation game at the Garden.

Almost the same squad. Only Henry Martinik was gone—Henry of the fabulous one-hand jump shot, the lightning pivot. Gone also was his twenty points per game, his dogged competitive sense.

"You went downcourt that time like a lot of firehouse clowns," Jad said in a bitterly quiet tone.

He glared at his center, Stalk Coogan, product of the Iowa high-school basketball mill. A yellow-thatched six foot seven. Originally the nickname had been Cornstalk.

"Coogan, on that formation you're the floating decoy, and I don't want you to work yourself loose. I want you to keep the defensive guard occupied."

Coogan shuffled his feet and said, in a low tone, "Okay, coach."

Jad switched his glare to Ryan Zimmerman. Zimmerman was an even six feet, a hard-muscled boy with endless bounce. Jad made his tone wheedling. "Please, Mister Zimmerman, in that formation your job is to head in toward the basket, cut two steps back out again and screen the defensive guard. The purpose of the move is to create a pocket behind you so that Ricard can sift in, half pivot and take the pass from Bobby Lamb. Is that too much to ask?"

"No, coach," Zimmerman said.

Jad wheeled on Frenchy Ricard and roared, "And where were you, if I may ask? You weren't three feet out of position, or even six. You were twenty feet away! You want them to stand there and wait for you?"

"I guess not," Frenchy said uneasily. He was a lean, dark, nervous boy, with quick sure hands.

"Well, it's up to you, all of you. We can keep running that sequence from now until the cows come home. When you're

doing it right, we'll try something else."

Jad took the ball, called the two centers over and threw it up for the tap. King Miller, the second-string center, got the tap and fed it over to scrappy little Harlan McGuire, the second-string forward. Jad Harrik moved over to the sideline and watched moodily. The play roared up the floor with Ryan Zimmerman diving onto a bounce pass, stealing it, forking it over to Frenchy who dribbled down, pivoted, passed it out to Lamb who got it away fast to Stalk Coogan floating outside. Stalk took a set shot and the ball whispered down through the strings.

Taken one by one, or collectively, it was a good squad. Chunky Ben Cohen and the phlegmatic, unemotional Bobby Lamb were the guards, fast with the ball, canny on defence. Bouncy Ryan Zimmerman and dark Frenchy Ricard were forwards who could think on their feet, on the way down the floor. Stalk Coogan, at twenty-two, had eleven years of competitive play behind him, and could shoot with effortless ease from any contorted, off-balance position. All of them were seniors except Cohen, a junior, and the proof of the merit of Stalk, Lamb, Ricard and Zimmerman was the way the pro scouts were nosing around, hoping to get another Henry Martinik out of tiny Nyeland College.

Jad Harrik groaned inwardly as he realized, anew, how much he missed Henry.

But a man had to make do with what was available. He watched them, weaving the endless patterns of offense on the floor. They called Jad Harrik the Giant Killer. Little Nyeland had killed the chances of many giants of the court circuit. Harrik's constant goal was fluidity—flexible offense plus a combination zone and man-for-man defense—plus that 'cuteness' that could only be reached by tireless practice.

He frowned again. What was the an-

swer? When he had known that this season would be played without Henry, he hadn't felt too badly about it. It hadn't been one of those squads built around a stellar performer, greased and oiled to make one man shine. With Henry it had been a compact and joyous unit, doing battle with gusto. Jad hadn't felt that it would be too hard to work Coogan into Henry's position. Stalk was as natural a player as Henry, equally fast, lacking only Henry's almost frightening will to win.

But here, at mid-season, with the schedule so stiff that it would have been wiser to schedule the lightest of workouts, he was having to pace them as though the season had not yet started.

The conference title was not yet lost, but it was fading. The quintet had played raggedly. He knew they were trying hard—possibly too hard. Eleven of the wins had been by a one- or two-point margin. And one of the losses had been by twenty-one points, the worst beating any Jad Harrik team had taken in the past three years.

There was no consistency about them. For four minutes they would rack up the points, stealing the ball beautifully, hooking the backboard bounces, attacking with blinding and bewildering speed, bringing heavy-throated roars from the crowd, and then, as soon as it had come, it would fade away and they would turn sucker for the clumsiest feints, make awkward fouls, permit themselves to be sucked out of position.

He watched them work themselves into the pattern, coming down the floor, for the screen play again. This time Frenchy slid into the vacuum, took the pass from Bobby Lamb and went high with a beautiful one-handed hook shot that dropped clean.

He blew the whistle. "Coogan, Cohen, Lamb, Zimmerman and Ricard, call it a day." They walked tiredly off the floor. He heard Lamb and Cohen laughing as

they went down the corridor to the shower room and pool.

He bounced two more balls out. "Miller and McGuire, go down to the other end and work on set shots." King Miller, the second-string center, was the weakest of the lot. Scrappy little Harlan McGuire, sophomore, would be first-string forward next season, and a good one. Jad was working him into the games whenever he could. The other second-string forward was Dandy Ames, a casual, lethargic, handsome boy who always seemed to float rather than run. The guards, Angus Petrie and Bill Jones, were competent workmen, without brilliance.

He stared at them for a moment. "You three practice your passing, two at a time with the third man guarding. Alternate every once in a while."

Jad walked over to the first row of benches where his assistant, Paul Frieden, sat. Paul was young, lean, serious. He worked hard, made few comments, but when he did speak, it was to the point. Jad sighed as he sat down.

"What do you think, Paul?"

"They'll have to do better tomorrow night against Western. That's for sure."

"What's wrong with 'em? Can you figure it?"

"No."

"They should be good. Tops."

Paul shrugged. "They aren't a team, that's all. But they want to work as a team. Nobody wants to shine or build up a national rating."

Jad stood up and glanced at his watch. "Keep 'em moving until quarter to six and then call it a day."

JAD HARRIK turned his overcoat collar high against the bitter wind and trudged across the campus, his head bowed, his gray eyes bleak. The street lights came on as he crossed the icy ruts of the Faculty Lane and turned in at his front walk.

Martha heard him come in and came from the kitchen into the front hallway. The look of her always lifted some of the burden. He kissed her. "Hello, girl."

She cocked her head on one side and studied him. He had to grin. "Still no answer?" she asked.

"I wish my legs hadn't quit on me. I wish I was back running myself to death with the pros, honey."

Harrik was a tall man, wide and heavy in the shoulders. His face was square and emotionless. Eyes and jaw were hard.

He took the evening paper in and sat by the radio, opened the paper to the sports page. The basketball column was written up by George Lion, and it was titled Lion's Cage.

The big question will be answered tomorrow night. Can Jad Harrik's Nyeland Deuces get by Western in the most important mid-season game of the schedule? At risk of not being able to go out during the daylight hours, your columnist hazards a loud NO. Forgive him if he remarks that this year the Deuces are wild. When Henry Martinik left, the ace in the pack, so did Jad Harrik's chance of his second conference victory in a row.

Western is rough. We'll see topside basketball tomorrow night. Their center, Big Chris Link is one of the top scoring men in the business. Barry Towner and Huck Finnegan, the men out front, have dazzling speed and well-coached deception. Farley Howell and Steps Jerome, the guards, seem to have more arms and hands than that Indian goddess, Siva. They've been running wild the last two weeks after a slow start.

However, just for the records, we have been looking over the past performances of the Deuces. Man for man, their records are as good as the Westerners. There seems to be no reason for the ragged play and poor timing we've seen thus far from last year's conference champs. Poor team morale? Poor training? Coaching? Tell us what happen, Jad. We'd like to know.

Jad flung the paper aside. Things were not panning out the way he had intended. It had all been so clear, his planning. When leaden legs had forced him out of active play, he had looked around with great care. The quickest way to the top of the coaching business, he decided, was

to achieve a spectacular improvement in one school. Nyeland College, with its worse than mediocre record, and with big schools on the schedule, looked like the place. Also, Nyeland was willing to set up five athletic scholarships a year for the basketball squad.

Jad had saved his pro money, as much of it as he could. He and Martha had talked it all over. Nyeland couldn't pay him very much. During the first season he had made Nyeland a little more impressive. The second season the results began to show more clearly, and Nyeland was a rude shock to the larger schools, ending well up in the conference ratings. And the third year, with Henry Martinik fully developed, they had been the conference champions.

There had been offers. One very good one from a university on the west coast.

Jad had said to Martha, "I've still got good boys. I can swing the second championship in a row with them. Then watch the offers roll in."

She had kissed him. "I'm glad, Jad. I wanted another year here."

"Why? Honey, you need new clothes and we need a new car. This place is costing us money."

"No, it isn't. We're even saving a little."

She was tiny. He had picked her up then and swung her in a big circle. "One more year in this dump and then we'll really roll, baby. Right to the top!"

He picked the paper off the floor, smoothed it out, and read Lion's column again. Damn the man! And damn the mysterious something about the squad that was keeping it from functioning at peak efficiency. He had a trapped feeling. If this year was mediocre, no big school would give him a second thought. They would say, "Harrik? Oh, he had one good season when he had Martinik. More luck than coaching."

Basketball was Jad's meat and drink,

his dreams, his work, his preoccupation. He realized ruefully that it was all he knew. Or wanted to know. And that one little thing about it that he couldn't fathom was going to keep him trapped in this . . . this third-rate little jerkwater college. Jad Harrik, the Giant Killer. Lion had called him that and it had caught on. Now Lion would have to think up a new name. . . .

"Soup's on!" Martha called. He went into the booth, diagramming, in his mind, a pivot and feedout that might shake Coogan loose. Coogan would have to break toward the basket, coming in from the left of the free-throw circle. The zone man would pick him up there. Then Coogan could jam on the brakes and cut *behind* the defensive man. Then Frenchy, taking the pass from Ben Cohen, could feed it out to Coogan. If the defensive man on Frenchy had smelled the feedout, Frenchy could feint and make the try himself. Then Coogan, coming in again, would be spotted to tip it in if it looked bad. . . .

"It's getting cold, darling," Martha said.

"Huh? Oh, sure. Sorry, baby."

THEY were packed from the sideline benches back up to the high windows, and on the mezzanine balconies every seat was taken. Jad Harrik, with Paul Frieden beside him, sat grimly on the squad bench on the Nyeland side. The plump little red-headed coed with the pixie glasses was leading a Nyeland cheer, punctuated by the boom of the bass drum of the five-piece Nyeland swing band.

Western was on the court, casual and competent, dribbling, passing, dropping dead set shots through the net. When they wavered, Big Chris Link came up with effortless powerful rebounds.

A roar greeted the Deuces as they came trotting out across the floor, under the lights. They warmed up and Jad could

PAL HOLLOW GROUND

Your Best Blade Buy!

Shaves you better • Costs you less
PROVE IT YOURSELF AT OUR EXPENSE

Buy a package of PALS. Use as many as you wish. If you don't agree they're your best blade buy... more shaves, better shaves, at lowest cost... return the dispenser to us for full refund. (If your dealer can't supply you, send us his name and address. Order type blades wanted and enclose payment. We'll reimburse dealer.)

© Pal Blade Co., Inc., Dept. P-4, 43 W. 57 St., N. Y. 19



PAL - Hollow Ground like a barber's razor



Usual Blade - ground like a jackknife

Fit your injector razor perfectly



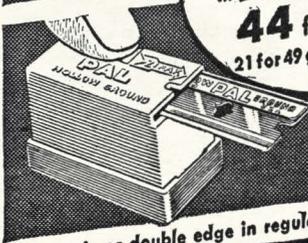
PAL INJECTOR BLADES
20 for 59¢
10 for 39¢ • 6 for 25¢
(Trial Size)

Double Edge



PAL DOUBLE & SINGLE EDGE
in ZIPAK® dispenser
44 for 98¢
21 for 49¢ • 10 for 25¢

Single Edge



PAL single or double edge in regular packing, 4 for 10¢

feel the gut-straining tension in them. "Tight," Paul said, beside him.

The extra men were called off the floor, there was that few seconds of breathless hush as the official tossed up the ball, and then a long scream as Link tapped it off to Finnegan, the Western forward. The Deuces raced downcourt with Ryan Zimmerman picking up Finnegan. Finnegan looked, feinted, fed a backward bounce pass to tall Barry Towner, then, with a flash of speed, got around Ryan Zimmerman, pivoted in the slot just in time to take Towner's perfectly rifled pass. Stalk Coogan was there to try to slap it down. Finnegan feinted, forcing Stalk to jump, and then he went up as Stalk was coming down. All very pretty, very competent and very disheartening.

Bobby Lamb dribbled it back upcourt, but he was cornered against the sideline and had to freeze the ball into a tap. Stalk got the tap over to Ben Cohen, but Ben's pass to Frenchy was too hurried. Howell, the Westerner guard, rammed himself into the line of fire, gathered it in and with the same motion gave it a side-arm sling across court to Link. Link took it beautifully all the way, feinting a feedout, then turning and going high, rolling the ball off his fingertips into the hoop.

Frenchy sank a set shot he should never have tried, and then Stalk was given two free throws on a personal foul by Link, tying it up. But the Western offense, rapier-swift, probing, retreating, striking from the unexpected angle, ran it up to 12-4. Nyeland called a time out.

AS SOON as play was started, Link was called again for a personal foul. Coogan sank the free throw. Finnegan made a beautiful steal of the ball from Ricard, slapping it down, diving on it and scooping it over to Link as he fell. But Stalk, with a sudden flash of brilliance, went high on defense under the basket and whipped it, one-handed, out to

Ricard who had already started up the floor. Ricard took it over his shoulder, dribbled it fast, foot-feinting the defensive man, going in on a sole hook shot. The score was 12-7. In rapid succession they built it to 11 and then to 13. In the last seconds of the half Chris Link picked up yet another foul, and Nyeland took a two point lead, 14-12.

"If they can keep on—" Paul muttered.

But they didn't. Western came back with four beautifully-executed counters in a row, only one of them wavering on the rim for a moment before Link floated up and gave it the necessary nudge as Stalk tried vainly to hook it away. Farley Howell got a free throw, and then Stalk got another, missing the chance.

Western cut in fast and Stalk snatched the rebound, pegging it out to Ben Cohen going up the sideline. As Jerome cut in toward Cohen, Ben reversed, slung it on a low pass across-court to Ricard. Ricard took it in, pivoted, fed it out to Cohen who had cut across. Cohen came back and dropped it effortlessly.

Then there was deadlock. Three times the ball was frozen behind the ten-second line, and each time Nyeland won the tap. The tension grew and grew and the Nyeland rooters mourned aloud as Western scored on a wild one-hander from the corner. The tally seemed to take the starch out of the Nyeland defense. Towner, Link and Jerome took the scoring burden, roaring, wide-open, into king-sized gaps in the backcourt, taking unchallenged flings at the hoop.

There was a bad pile-up near the Western bench and Chris Link pulled himself to his feet, took a step and nearly went down. Western took a time out. Link tested the ankle, wincing. A boy named Howard Stacks replaced him. Jad watched Stacks with narrowed eyes. The keen edge of tempo was suddenly gone from the Western offensive. Stacks was tall, but without bounce. On static de-

fense his long arms and big hands were busy, but his feet were nailed.

On his first opportunity, Jad replaced Zimmerman with Harlan McGuire, with orders to spread the defense and try to run around Stacks.

Then he sat back with an anxious eye on the clock. Across the way he saw Jordenson, the Western coach, frowning and shifting restlessly as the strategy took effect.

Stacks was a big man, but not a good big man. Time after time McGuire, Coogan and Ricard tied the big center's ankles into knots as they cut around him for an open shot.

Encouraged by the slow change in the score, the Nyeland defense tightened up, though Western was dangerous every time they got their hands on the ball. They were fighting desperately to preserve some fractional part of their lead.

Slowly the score changed . . . 30-18 . . . 36-30 . . . 39-37 . . . 41-40.

Now the crowd-scream was one continuous sound, lost in the back of Jad's mind. He was as unaware of it as the guests at a party are unaware of the ticking of a clock. He was watching the master-pattern of the game.

Western, slashing hard in desperation, got two in a row to bring it up to 45-40, but then, spearheaded by a fighting, wild-eyed Harlan McGuire, the Deuces got their two and then, after a zig-zag pattern of passes, two tries and two wild rebounds, they got the third to go out ahead 46-45. Both Jordenson and Jad Harrik replaced dangerously weary men. Stalk Coogan, his mouth drawn with strain, was playing his usual forty-minute game.

Nyeland rooters groaned as the lead was lost and it went 47-46. Jad's thick fingernails bit hard into his palms. The seconds ticked away. Stalk dribbled off into the corner and passed out to Petrie. But Petrie, unaccountably, had turned away. The ball bounced high off his shoul-

der. Three players spilled in a pile-up and Stalk recovered his own pass, stumbling, turning even as he was falling to arc the ball up. It kissed the backboard and dropped clean as the signal sounded for the end of the game. The coed cheerleader fainted and the Nyeland rooters went mad.

"Now you're a hero," Paul Frieden said, grinning.

"By one point," Jad said drily. "One big point. I liked the way it was made. That was cute. Bounce your pass off your own man, fall down while you're catching it and shoot before you hit the floor. Great!"

He went into the locker room. The joking and laughing stilled as he came in.

"A great squad," he said bitterly. "Wonderful basketball! What do you think would have happened if Link had stayed in there? Henry Martinik is the only man I ever saw who could put a lid on that Link and keep it there. Your timing stunk out loud. I thought I could depend on you, Lamb. Your passing was inferior. Zimmerman, when they tried to steal it, you handed it to them. Ricard, half the time you were running one sequence while the rest of the team was running another. Why don't you take a stick and a knife out there and get in some whittling? Coogan, you tried seven scores, by actual count, where you missed because you were trying to make them the fancy way. Got a girl in the audience? Then you'd let them gobble it off the rim and take it away from you. Ever hear of the rebound? A simple and effective maneuver. And remember, all of you, when the pattern says that two men go in, I'd like to see two go in. Tonight I got sick of seeing three or one. We aren't playing this game off the cuff, you know. Not one man tonight played any better than what is called outstanding high-school ball. Next week on our little trip we take in Freemont, Holdenburg

and Central. Last year it was a breather trip. This year it could turn into a funeral."

He turned on his heel and left.

But in each game something was learned, some improvisation noted, marked down for future use. Out of the Western game had come three offensive thrust formations. Jad stayed up until two-thirty in the morning, and at last he was satisfied with his neat drawings. Running the squad through them would give him the timing, and the count. The drawings could then be put on a master stencil and sheets run off for the squad notebooks, with each man marking in red his own responsibility in the sequence.

CHAPTER TWO

Hell on the Hoops

THE BIG chartered bus unloaded by the dormitories. Jad Harrik said good night to Paul and the squad and walked alone in the snow back to his house. The snow squeaked under his steps and the stars were high and far away.

As he came up onto his porch he could see, through the front windows, the fire crackling in the living-room fireplace. Some of the tension went out of him. He set his bag down in the hallway. "Anybody home?"

Martha met him in the middle of the living room. "How did it go, darling?"

Jad sat down without removing his coat. The tiredness was deep in him. "We looked terrible. In every game. Terrible!"

"The papers said you won," she said, smiling.

There was a thin note of anger in his voice that took away her smile. "We won, all right. But I don't know how. Those are the three weakest teams in the conference. The biggest margin we had was five points over Holdenberg. And next Friday we get a visit from Western

Ohio U. Know what the Ohios did to Holdenberg? They won by twenty-three points. Sixty-five to forty-two. Next Friday is going to be dandy! They've got a guard and a center nominated on the pre-season All American squads. Fran Stillwater and Si Veeley. Oh, we're in great shape for that one."

"I've laid out clean clothes for you, Jad. You've got time for a hot shower."

He stared through her. "If I had a clown on the squad, I could throw him off. If I had wise guys, I could give them the bounce. Every kid tries his heart out. Every kid has ability. I've trained them until I'm blue in the face."

He got up and walked woodenly into the hall and up the stairs.

Dinner was by candlelight. The steaks were good, the burgundy was exceptional. Jad ate mechanically.

Martha had her soft hair piled high. Midway through the meal she said softly, "Jad, do you know what day this is?"

He gave her a startled look. "Day?" Then he slowly realized that the meal was served in a special manner, that Martha had a special look. And he was ashamed.

He said, "I seem to remember that five years ago today a very special gal had the misfortune to get hooked up with a dull-witted schnook that isn't smart enough to appreciate her." He stood up, went around the table and kissed her lightly on the lips. "Honey, I'm sorry I bring the job home. It's just that it means so much to our future."

She smiled. "Darling, is the present so horrible?"

"Huh?" He looked over at the small cheerful fire. He grinned. "It isn't too bad now, is it? All I need is . . . never mind."

"What, darling?"

"I shouldn't say it. A little confidence that we can lick the Ohios."

JAD took advantage of the schedule

break to work the squad intensely. He put on the uniform and went through the formations with them, keeping up a steady stream of instructions as he worked up a sweat. "Coogan, you're off balance on the full pivot. Get down off your toes for it and plant the right foot. Keep your elbows out and the ball low or they'll take it away from you. Look! Like this. See? Now I'm in position to pass it without signaling the direction."

"Ricard, you're looping those passes too high and too slow. You give the defense too much time. I want to see that ball move like a bullet, but don't sling it with your arm. All fingers and wrists."

"Lamb, on your hook shot you're pushing the ball off the heel of your hand. Roll it up off your fingertips like this."

"Okay, gang. Now run the series where Coogan is the decoy, and we make the break from the bounce pass from Zimmerman to Ricard."

He stood with stony face and watched them go through the sequences. Last year's team had been a shining rapier, flexible, fast as light. This squad was fast, all right. But it was a tin sword, bending as it thrust.

The trouble was that they were all so eager to do it right. He would catch them looking at him, hopefully.

"No!" he roared. "Coogan, when you take that step, slow down. Then the pass will hit you so that you can go right on up with it on a forward push. You take the step too fast and you're beyond the basket and you've got to hook it up backward. That cuts your chances. Always play the percentage. Now run it again."

ON THE Thursday before the game, George Lion wrote a scalding column.

We've had hopes that, after a slow start, Harrik would bring the Deuces up to peak. We've had hopes that he was aiming at the Ohios, who are beginning to look like the conference champs. But hopes are often vain.

Last week's three games is a case in point. If Holdenberg hadn't run out of steam during the final half, that could have been an upset. As it was, it was an upset. The Deuces should have been twenty points better.

Let's face it. Nyeland just hasn't got a team this year. Harrik is placing five individuals on the court. Each individual has flashes of brilliance. Each individual has desolate tangle-footed moments. When the periods of brilliance happen to coincide, the Deuces score almost effortlessly. When the tangle-foot germ hits them, even the weakest opponents score at will. We saw the same group last year. To see them this year is a sad and unfortunate commentary on the inability of what we thought was a fine coach to bring out the possibilities of his team.

Last year we were saying that Harrik developed Hank Martinik. This year we're saying that Hank carried the team—and the coach.

After he read the column, he stood by the fire, his hands clenched. Martha came and touched him on the arm. "Jad, it's only—"

"Don't talk about it!" he snapped.

She stepped back as though he had struck her, her face pale. Without a word she turned and left the room. Jad balled the newspaper and threw it on the bed of coals. It smoked and then the yellow bright flames licked at it, devoured it. It turned shiny black and fragments floated up in the heat.

THEY were as tight as a bowstring when he talked to them before the game.

"All right," he said quietly. "We're underdogs tonight. Ohio is fat and happy. There's no point in telling you I want a win. There is some point in telling you that I want you to look like a squad that's worked together before."

He watched them go out onto the court. He groaned inwardly. They were making too many aimless motions, wasting too much energy bouncing around. They were like a hopped-up high-school quintet, amateurish beside the controlled ease of the Ohioans.

He looked at the Ohio squad. Fran Stillwater, the six-foot-six center, was a big steel spring. Si Veeley was known for his blazing speed. Ed Chizwiak, the set-shot expert. Moe Antone, canny and deceptive. Lefty Dwyer, who could get the ball away before you knew he had touched it. They moved with that controlled insolence, that fat-cat competence that all winning combos in every sport seem to acquire.

Stalk took himself out of the first tap by going up too soon, a mistake that he hadn't made all season. Stillwater slapped it over to Veeley. Veeley dribbled down directly at Bobby Lamb, pivoted and passed it over to Antone coming down the sideline. Antone got rid of it in a greased-lightning bounce pass behind Bobby Lamb while Bobby tried vainly to reach it. Stillwater, coming in, took the pass at his thighs as he went up into his leap, holding the ball in one hand, thrusting it gently upward and forward at the apex of his leap. It didn't touch the rim as it whicked down through the strings.

Ben Cohen took it and passed it out to Stalk, already moving. Stalk dribbled twice and Lefty Dwyer reached out, almost delicately, and hooked the ball away. It skittered over to Chizwiak who whirled, fainted Ricard out of position, turned back and sank his set shot from forty feet.

Nyeland took it downcourt and cross-passed it, looking for the break to go in. Zimmerman whirled free and drifted over into the corner. Jad caught his breath as Ben Cohen made the pass. But somehow Chizwiak twisted and got his hand in front of the ball. Stillwater had sensed the break and he was at top speed, going down the court. Chizwiak flung the ball half the length of the court, hanging it on a hook in front of Stillwater. Stillwater dribbled, cut left and went up, dropping his shot beautifully.

Again Cohen took it and again they went down, passing hard and fast, probing

for a hole in the Ohio defense. This time Zimmerman got through and missed. Stalk went up and missed the rebound, stumbling as he came down. By then Stillwater had come up and he slapped it out to Antone who flung a looping pass diagonally across-court to Chizwiak. Chizwiak took it down, making a full pivot away from Frenchy Ricard, taking it in as though to go up with it, then braking and feeding out to the side to Stillwater. Stillwater **dropped** it without effort.

The score stood at 8-0, with the Ohios looking good enough to make it 80-0. Nyeland rooters sat in blank, numb apathy.

At the end of ten minutes it was 15-4, and nervous Frenchy Ricard was playing with fury, tears on his cheeks. Ohio took advantage of his anger to lure him out of position and go into the slot he left open.

Jad heard the comments from the packed bleachers behind him. The game was being played in a silence so intense that you could hear the slap of rubber on the floor.

"Outclassed," a man said, with anger in his voice. ". . . different when Henry was in there," a woman said. "Come on, you tanglefoot wonders!" a drunk roared.

And, at the end of the half, it stood 33-13. The very size of the deficit seemed to render the Deuces more helpless. Jad had to sit and watch the sorry spectacle of Coogan passing to a man who wasn't there, of Zimmerman over-running the basket when he did work his way loose, of Ricard, trying for an intercept, tapping the ball directly into the basket for an Ohio score.

He sat huddled on the bench with Paul Frieden pale and silent beside him.

The game ended, 61-30.

Jad said, "Paul, take care of things. I'm going home."

Martha met him in the hallway. She said firmly, "Let's not talk about it."

"You heard it over the radio?"

"Yes."

He gave her a tired smile. "I wish there was some way I could stop thinking about it."

"It isn't the end of the world, Jad."

"The end of my world."

She frowned at him. "You never have been really disappointed in anything before, have you? You've had such a plan for everything. Nothing has ever defeated you."

"This has."

She nodded. "I know. And maybe it's a good thing."

"Oh, don't give me any pollyanna philosophy! Please!"

Her eyes flashed. "And don't take your disappointments out on me!"

"I'm sorry, baby. I really am."

"Forgiven, darling."

He sighed. "Well, now it's over. We're out of the running. Maybe I can relax."

"I hope you can."

AT PRACTICE he was bleak and silent. The squad worked out hard, but without spirit. He was standing on the sideline when he saw Ryan Zimmerman look beyond him and smile broadly, then yell, "Look who's here!"

Jad turned quickly and saw Henry Martinik walk toward him. He saw at once that the left sleeve of Henry's overcoat swung empty.

Jad shook his hand. "Henry! What are you doing here? What happened to you?"

Henry was tall, with a lean brown face, a certain shyness about him. George Lion had consistently called him Hank in the column, but among people who knew Henry, it had never caught on. The nickname did not fit him. He had a certain shy rustic honesty about him that made him one of the Henrys of this world.

"Coach, I fell right under the basket



oh-oh, Dry Scalp!

"... IMAGINE ME dancing with a scarecrow! How can he be so careless about his hair? It's straggly; unkempt, and ; ; Oh-oh—loose dandruff! He's got Dry Scalp, all right. He needs 'Vaseline' Hair Tonic."



*Hair looks better...
scalp feels better...
when you check Dry Scalp*

HE TOOK HER TIP, and look at his hair now! 'Vaseline' Hair Tonic can do as much for you. Just a few drops a day check loose dandruff... keep hair naturally good-looking. It contains no alcohol or other drying ingredients. Gives double care to both scalp and hair... and it's economical, too!

Vaseline HAIR TONIC
TRADE MARK ®

Listen to DR. CHRISTIAN, starring JEAN HERSHOLT, on CBS Wednesday nights.

and two hundred pounds of meat came down on my fingers and busted the middle one. I've got it fastened to this here board for a while."

"Will you get back in this season?"

"They think so. With the money they're paying me, they're right anxious to see that I do. How's Mrs. Harrik?"

"She's fine, Henry. Where are you staying?"

"I dropped my bag off at the Inn."

The squad had grouped around them. Henry, grinning from ear to ear, shook hands with his friends and took the joking about how often he had his name in the papers.

When Jad had a chance, he said, "Henry, you're staying with us. Martha wouldn't forgive me if I let you stay down at the Inn. No arguments."

Henry grinned. "You're the boss, coach."

Coogan said, "We got some new stuff, Henry." He spoke eagerly, and then he glanced uncertainly at Jad. "It hasn't been working so good."

"Let's see some of it," Henry said, "if it won't upset anything, coach."

They split into two teams and Paul tossed up the ball. Jad watched in amazement. They slid through the sequences like butter sliding down a hot stove, making the slots, taking advantage of them, holing out. They were five agile hands of one body—a team, anticipating each other's thoughts, faking, pivoting, passing.

"I'll be damned," Jad said softly.

They broke it off. Henry said, "Say, now! You got some sharp stuff there!"

"How about some coffee?" Jad asked.

They went and sat in a booth in the coffee shop in the basement of the Fine Arts building.

Henry said, "It isn't going so good, is it?"

"It isn't going good at all. Something's missing. You, maybe."

"Hell, coach. I wasn't the team. You

know that. There's five guys on an outfit, and you still got four of 'em."

"I don't know what it is."

"They looked right to me out there."

"And for those three or four minutes, Henry, they looked the best they've looked all season. Well, the season is shot now. I had to play it smart and try for two conference championships in a row so that I could get a better bid to go someplace else. I outsmarted myself. There won't be any bids after this season."

Henry frowned. "You giving up? Ohio will have some bad nights. They'll drop a few. I've been checking the records. I don't see why you couldn't work it up to a playoff."

"I could, if I had a squad, Henry. You ought to see them in a game. They try, but it just isn't there. We'll drop a lot more games than Ohio will. The season record might even be fair, but Nye-land won't be in any playoffs."

Henry grinned. "It could be professional pessimism, huh?"

Jad sadly shook his head. "Not this time. You'll get a chance to see what I mean Monday night. We're host to Winebeck Teachers. I'd like to have you on the bench with me. But we'll skip my problems. How do you like the pro game?"

Henry whistled softly. "I guess I was getting pretty cocky. Those boys can cut you down to size fast. Makes you think, when you try all night to pass around a little fat old guy and he knocks it down every time."

"Joe Risold?"

"That's the one."

"He gave me some bad nights too. I wish I was back playing."

Henry grinned. "And I wish I was coaching."

"Maybe you can tell me what's wrong with the squad, Henry."

"I can try, coach, but—"

"The name is Jad, Henry."

"Okay, Jad. Sounds funny to call you that."

"Sit tight. I'll phone Martha and tell her you're coming."

THE WINEBECKS were fast and strong and hard, but they lacked sharpshooters. Too many of their set shots were wild. They pranced and worked with an endless and tireless energy, and if they had had one man consistent from twenty feet, the game might have ended differently. As it was, it was a close thing.

Jad glanced from time to time at Henry's frowning face. The Deuces pulled all the old errors from their bag of tricks, and added some new ones. At one point Ryan Zimmerman threw an inadvertent but beautiful body block on Frenchy Ricard and knocked him flat. Later, Coogan and Cohen, cutting in from opposite corners, collided under the basket with force that knocked them both sprawling. The passing was ragged, inaccurate.

But Bobby Lamb and Frenchy Ricard, oddly enough, were having one of those nights when the hoop looks as big around as a bushel basket.

It was 48-42, with a minute and a half left, when Ryan Zimmerman was taken out on personal fouls. The remaining four drew into the tight zone defence established for that contingency, but Winebeck brought it up to 48-45 by game's end.

Henry was in the squad room listening while Jad gave them a run-through of the game, carefully listing the errors and the reasons, pointing out the defects in count and timing.

Martha sat with her sewing after they got back to the house, while Henry sprawled on the deep couch, and Jad paced back and forth, gesturing, explaining.

"You saw them tonight," Jad said.

"They're good boys. They've got an instinct for the game. They're not over-trained or undertrained. I've given them a bag of tricks that ought to be enough to smother any opponent in the conference. They all want to do well. This is their sport. Ben Cohen is the only one who plays football too. They just don't click, and it isn't my fault."

"Isn't it?" Henry asked mildly.

CHAPTER THREE

Two-Point Poison

THERE was silence in the room. "Just what do you mean by that, Martinik?"

"Don't get sore, coach."

Martha gave a forced laugh. "He's pretty sensitive these days, Henry."

"Henry," Jad said, "for a minute there you sounded like George Lion."

"Jad, you want to learn what the trouble is, don't you?" Henry asked.

"I certainly do."

"And you're willing to listen to anybody who might have a reason?"

"Of course, Henry."

"Then don't get sore at me, coach. Because if you get sore at me you won't listen to me, and if you don't listen, you might never find out why you've got wonderful material and no team."

Jad sat down across the room. "I'm listening."

"When I first came here to Nyeland, coach, you scared me. Honest, you really gave me the shakes."

Jad frowned, puzzled. "I don't get it."

"Now I got to get personal. You've got a tough look, coach. You don't smile. You've got a hard eye on you. To top it off, you've got a complete knowledge of the game and you can do anything you tell the kids to do, plus a national reputation. Right?"

"I don't see what that's got to do—"

"Let me tell you in my own way, please, Jad."

"Go ahead."

"Do you remember my sophomore season?"

"Of course. That was the first year I was here. I thought you'd *never* live up to what I'd hoped. You played erratic ball, all right."

"Do you know why? I'll tell you. Because you scared me and at the same time I had a heck of a lot of respect for you. I wanted so bad to do what you told me to do. I'd pull off something that looked all right, and then I'd look at you. I'd get the old stony eye. So I'd figure it wasn't good enough for you. So I'd try harder. Next thing I'd know, I'd be falling over my own feet trying to be superman. It got the other guys the same way. We started that year in a pretty sad fashion, and we didn't end up so well, either."

"Nobody has any reason to be afraid of me, Henry."

"Do they know that? In the junior year I got to know you. And it was just by accident, too. That was when my father was here. After he saw you he came all smiles over to my room and told me that you'd told him that I could maybe be the best in the country that season. Then I knew what you were thinking. You still gave me the stony eye all the time, but I knew that underneath you liked the way I was working. It made a difference."

"When they do a good job, I tell them."

"Sure you do, coach. You tell them all together and you say it like your mouth hurt. You see, I understand you now. I've talked to the pros you played with. You're a perfectionist. Everything has to be just so. And even if the squad turned in a hundred to nothing game, you'd worry about how Jimmy was slow on a pivot in the second half. You know basketball as well as any guy in the coun-

try, but you don't know how to handle the team."

Jad jumped up. "Don't know how to handle the team! How do you account for last year?"

Henry gave him a mild, shy smile. "Well, it was like this. When what dad told me made me feel good, I figured it would work with the other guys. I hung around you enough to make it look good, and then I would go to the other guys one at a time and tell them things you said. Some of them you did say. The rest I had to make up. Why, I'd tell Ben Cohen that you said he was one of the toughest defensive men in the conference. Then I'd get Jimmy aside and tell him that you said he was the finest rebound artist you'd ever seen. The same with all the other guys. I made a joke out of it, sort of. You'd peel the squad after every game and then later I'd fix it up by quoting you on the good plays they made, whether you'd said it or not."

Jad shoved his hands into his pockets and kicked at a log on the fire. "But I don't . . . I mean, I recognize the good plays when I see them and—"

"And that's all you do. The guys are all right. They're just trying too hard and they don't hear any compliments any more. The harder they try, the worse they get. It isn't hard to figure out, once you know what I was doing the past two years. It's like a good racehorse. The owner can feed it perfectly, give it the right exercise, bring it up to a peak—but unless there's somebody to talk to it and show some affection, that horse is never going to put out the best it has."

Martha said, "I should have known."

Jad spun on her. "How would you have known?"

Her smile was wry. "Darling, you are not what I would call affectionate. I have to imagine, most of the time, that you're still in love with me. I'm not complaining. It's just the way you are."

"What are you going to do about it, coach?" Henry asked.

"But—I—I can't go to them and spread a lot of butter around. I can't hear myself doing anything like that."

"Why not?"

"Well—I—"

"You've got Penn College coming up Wednesday. Ohio nosed them out by a point. Look what Ohio did to you. Penn will do it too unless those guys hear what they've been wanting to hear."

"A player should have confidence in his own ability," Jad said. "Nothing I do or say should be able to destroy that confidence."

"One out of a hundred is good, knows it, and doesn't give a damn how the coach acts. The rest of us have to have a little confidence fed to us with a spoon once in a while. If you hadn't broken down and told my father what you actually thought of me, Jad, I'd never be playing pro ball right now, and you would never have racked up that conference championship, believe me."

HE WROTE it out, corrected it, and then memorized it so well that he could say it as though it were a casual speech. He flushed as he said it to his mirror. He had never had any stomach for flattery, given or received.

The squad room had about it a pre-

game flavor of defeat. Coogan was listlessly tightening his shoelaces. Crowd noises filtered into the room, muffled and distant.

Jad Harrik took a deep breath. "Uh—fellows," he said. They all stared at him in surprise at the forced joviality. Jad flushed. "I—ah—I've decided that there's no point in the usual briefing. This is as good a time as any to tell you how much I've enjoyed working with you so far this season. Penn has some able boys. They haven't any top performers to match you, man for man. Coogan, you're one of the best. Ben, I know you'll do your usual outstanding defensive job. And Frenchy, it's a pleasure to watch you work out there. I don't know whether I get more kick out of watching you or Zimmerman. Bobby, you've got a wonderful knack for smelling out the offensive thrust and getting to the right place at the right time. And the rest of you, Miller, Petrie, Jones, McGuire, Ames—I just want to say that there's darn little to choose between you and the starting lineup. A lot of you will be my starting lineup next season, and I'll be proud to put you on the floor. Now let's make a game of it tonight."

He turned in the heavy silence and walked out. At the end of the corridor he met Henry. Henry said, "How did it go over?"

"Like a concrete balloon. They just



"Elementary!" says Watson

CAIRO, ILL.—Cal in Watson, Cairo businessman, says it's easy to pick today's best whiskey buy. "Judge taste, lightness, mildness, flavor—and you'll switch to Calvert. I did. Elementary!"

sat there, all of them, with their mouths open. They looked at me as if I were carrying my head under my arm. No, Henry, you guessed wrong. I could tell by the surprise that it wasn't something they'd been expecting, or needing. Even Paul gaped at me as if I'd gone crazy. This is another slaughter."

THE LITTLE red-headed cheer leader went through her gyrations mechanically, without interest. George Lion had predicted a Penn win by eighteen points. Penn's conference rating was just below Ohio's. With slippery, agile, six-foot-ten Hoagy Parr at center, with an average so far of 20.6 points per game, and with four fast converted centers from high-school star teams at the other four positions, Penn had hopes of upsetting Ohio in the playoffs. Sam Denver and Cleet Mannis were the forwards with Louis Antonelli and Jack Angelus at guard.

Henry sat beside Jad and said, "They look looser out there tonight."

"Glad you think so," Jad said quietly. "Okay, here we go."

Stalk Coogan and Hoagy Parr went high after the tap, neither getting it away cleanly. Ricard and Jack Angelus jumped for it and Frenchy snatched it away, pivoting and slamming it across to Ryan Zimmerman. Ryan dribbled it down the sideline, weaved his body toward the inside, and as the man on him took a wrong step, Ryan scooted down the sideline on the outside. He crouched, within paydirt distance, faked the set shot and passed it to mid-court to Coogan coming down the middle. Coogan, feeling himself smothered, made a half pivot and hung the ball for Bobby Lamb's easy push-up.

The ball circled the rim. Louis Antonelli, with a sizzling skyscraper leap, brushed it away with his fingertips. Coogan was close enough for the rebound, but off balance. Hoagy Parr swiped it

and slung it downcourt to Sam Denver. Cohen had dropped back. With a burst of speed he passed Denver and turned, arms outspread. Denver, barreling along, had to stop so abruptly to keep from crashing Cohen that the ball slithered out of his hands.

Ben Cohen batted it over to Ryan Zimmerman who was floating up the sideline. Ryan faked a cross-court pass to Coogan and then flipped it ahead to Frenchy. Frenchy went in fast, pivoted and fed it out to Cohen. As Cohen went up with it, Cleet Mannis batted it away, right into Bobby Lamb's hands. Bobby missed his shot and Hoagy Parr pounded down the floor with the ball. Two hook shots were batted away and then Jack Angelus sank a set shot from five feet outside the foul line.

Jad slowly grew conscious of the crescendo of noise behind him. Nyeland was seeing a rejuvenated team, a hard fighting team, reckless of energy, expending it in bursts of dazzling speed, flipping the ball around.

"See what I mean?" Henry yelled.

Ben Cohen rifled it out to Frenchy on the sideline. Cleet Mannis was all over Frenchy, nailing him there. Frenchy faked a high overhand toss, then scooted the ball low under Mannis' left arm as he lifted it instinctively. Coogan took it at a full hard run, dribbling down to the foul circle, making a full spin there, faking twice during the spin, then slanting it over to Bobby Lamb who was coming in fast from the corner. Bobby dropped it neatly for the 2-2 count.

Penn College came back with endless bounce, weaving a pattern of bewilderment inside the edge of the scoring zone, then knifing in for the deuce. Frenchy fouled Cleet Mannis to make it 5-2. Then, on a dive at a bounce pass, Jack Angelus stole the ball, flipped it deep, took the feedout and sank it. It was 7-2.

"It was good while it lasted," Jad said.

The Nyeland rooters had sunk into apathetic silence, but they came awake again with a great roar as Coogan stole the ball from Hoagy Parr, and Ricard and Zimmerman went deep criss-crossing halfway in from the foul circle to tie up the defense enough to shake Ricard free. Hoagy slammed the ball at Frenchy's head and Frenchy put it on a high hook for Ben Cohen coming out of the far corner.

Back under the Nyeland basket, Stalk smothered a rebound, flipped it ahead to Zimmerman who, forced into a corner, whirled free and sank it from there.

Then big Sam Denver delayed too long and was smothered at the center-court sideline and Coogan won the tap, feeding it into Ryan Zimmerman's hands. Zimmerman, free for the moment, dribbled a slow diagonal while Cohen and Ricard raced down. But Frenchy misjudged his distance and Antonelli sunk the foul shot. It was 8-6.

Moments later Cohen slung a high wild one from midcourt. Three men went high at the basket, but it was Stalk who put the necessary correction on the ball to lift it in.

Penn raced back down the court with it, compressing the defense, flipping it back and forth, seeking an opening. Sam Denver found a vacuum to the left of the hoop, but Bobby Lamb, on a frantic dive, got his hand on the ball. It rolled clear and Ryan Zimmerman scooped it up, underhanded it to Coogan, raced ahead, took the flip over his shoulder, relayed it on to Ricard and then, taking the handoff in midair, continued on up, rolling it off his fingertips to build the tally to 10-8. Penn called time.

Jad realized he was half-standing. He sank slowly back onto the bench. Henry was pounding his shoulder, yelling, "Like that? You like that?"

The Deuces caught fire. They played all-out ball, yet not forgetting the intri-

cate patterns of deception, not forgetting to think on the run, not forgetting how to take advantage of a Penn step in the wrong direction, a moment of hesitation.

"They can't last," Jad muttered. "They can't last at this rate."

On and on the score climbed. The Deuces played with flushed abandon; the Penns worked grimly, switching defensive styles, changing assignments. Ben Cohen got hot and they began to smother him. So Ben made a series of beautiful feed shots, just where and when they weren't expected. After a time the Penns began to keep a tight rein on the potential receivers, and so Ben opened up again with deadly eye.

Nyeland kept tipping them off balance. In the last half, with four minutes to go, it was 58-46, and every Deuce had played a thirty-six-minute game. But Jad could see the legs slowly turning to putty, and he knew well the great hard pain from waist to heart, the cotton in the mouth, the anguished sucking of wind that was never quite enough.

IT WOULDN'T have happened if tall, yellow-topped Coogan's reflexes hadn't been impaired by weariness. He was cutting fast down the middle when Sam Denver tripped and dived at him. Coogan tried to writhe his body out of the way, but Denver hit him solidly in the groin with his shoulder. Coogan hit hard and lay still. Time was called and the trainer went out. They got Coogan on his feet and he came slowly off the floor, leaning heavily on the trainer.

"Better take him on back," Jad said.

"Not a chance, coach," Stalk said through pain-whitened lips. "I gotta see the rest of this."

Three minutes and forty seconds remaining. Jad filled the slot with King Miller, then turned to Henry and said, "The foul shot makes it fifty-nine to forty-six. Now we see if they can make

thirteen points in the time that's left."

King Miller started out with a lot of bounce. He always reminded Jad of an airdale puppy, full of life but always confused.

Stalk's loss ripped the heart out of both the offense and defense. Nyeland screamed as they saw their team's lead being whittled down. Twice Miller was faked out of position and the lead dropped.

Then Ryan Zimmerman, on a brilliant fake, took it all the way. But with two minutes remaining, the Penns made three goals in a minute and a half. They whirled out again, stole the ball, carried it down and Jack Angelus hooked it in. Fifteen seconds to go, and the score 61-58. The Deuces were leg-weary. Mannis, on a foul by Cohen, was awarded two shots and made them both perfect. Five seconds. Hoagy Parr tapped it over to Sam Denver, and Denver was going down with it. Every man was in motion toward the Nyeland basket. Three seconds—two seconds—Denver stopped, planted himself, shot. The ball arced up, floating endlessly in the glare of the lights, reaching the highest point of the curve. Jad's eye automatically extended the line of flight and knew that it was in. But up, up, up—a leap to an incredible height, and a leap that was timed to perfect and uncanny accuracy—up went gaunt lean King Miller and the reaching fingers brushed the ball. It hit the rim, deflected by the touch, bounced, came straight down and hit the rim again, and fell outside the strings. The game ended, 61-60, as King Miller whipped the ball upcourt at nobody in particular, his grin so wide that it looked as though he could tie it at the back of his neck.

"I'm old before my time!" Jad yelled into Henry's ear—and then the frenzied fans had hoisted him roughly onto their shoulders and were marching him around the court.

BY THE time he could fight his way into the dressing room, some of the squad were already dressed.

He stared at them for a moment, at tired and contented faces. There were a lot of things they had to be told. Ricard's ragged pivoting. Ryan Zimmerman's bad underhand flips.

"This game," he said, "showed up a few things that need correction." His voice was hard and grating. He looked around again. For a moment he thought he heard Henry's voice, even though Henry had already gone back to the house. He cleared his throat.

"What I mean to say is, we can fix up any little things we did wrong at some other time. It was the sort of contest I knew you could make. I'm proud of you. Take care of things, Paul."

They were laughing and the room was a babble of talk before he got the door shut behind him. He frowned. It did seem better than walking out in the usual deathly hush that followed his after-game comments.

AT THE breakfast booth, Jad and Henry played the game over, time and time again. Together they marveled at King Miller's frantic, perfect save in the last second of the game. Martha listened to them, smiling to herself.

"I don't know how to thank you, Henry," Jad said, his voice humble. "Maybe now I can go ahead and be a coach. I can even learn how to sound sincere when I tell them they're good." His voice strengthened, "But I'm going to stamp down hard when I see sloppy play."

Henry grinned. "Sure you are, and it will do them good. But they've got to see both sides of the coin. Speaking of coins, I'll bet you that with the outfit you've got right now, you can make up lost ground and squeak into the playoffs. If you do, those kids will be at a pitch

that'll get you the conference championship again."

Jad leaned back in the booth. He said softly, "Yeah! You know it might work out that way. It just might."

He glanced at Martha. She was taking a sip of coffee.

"You've got the right angle," Henry said. "I'm going to hack at the pro game for a few years, as long as I can stay on top, and then I want to get into coaching too."

In an even voice Martha said, "This is a nice life, though next year I imagine, if the team is now all you say it is, we'll be at a much larger school."

"That's right," Jad said jovially. "Big-time. A real organization. A lot of talent to draw on."

Henry raised his eyebrows. He stirred his coffee. "I don't know, Jad. I think you get the best deal in the small places. You don't make so much, but it doesn't cost you as much."

"Jad wants a big school," Martha said.

There was something odd about her tone. Jad looked at her curiously. She didn't meet his glance. He shrugged.

"Oh, those kids had it tonight. Just like old times, Henry. Wasn't it? They pulled stuff I never knew I'd taught 'em. And that Miller!" He frowned. "You know, next year I might be able to work some judgment into that boy. My first string will have to be Miller, Petrie,

Cohen, McGuire and Ames. I think I can wake Ames up. We might—"

"Won't that be someone else's problem, dear?" Martha asked sweetly.

Jad started with surprise and then laughed. "I almost forgot I wasn't going to be stuck here forever." His laughter died on a sour note. "That's funny. Yesterday I was dying to get out of this place. Now, when it looks like I'll be able to make it, I feel—a little upset."

Martha's fingers bit into his wrist. "Look around, Jad darling," she said, her voice low and tense. "Look at what we have here! Where else in the world could the two of us be as happy?"

There was confusion in his tone. "But it's a—*little* place."

"If bigness means the same as goodness, Jad," Henry said, grinning, "then your pint-sized wife is a pretty miserable sort of woman."

Jad frowned. "You know . . . maybe I might stay right here."

He looked at Martha. Her eyes were swimming with unshed tears.

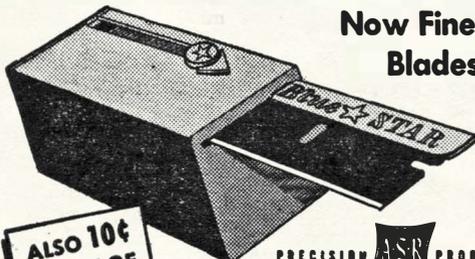
Henry said hurriedly, pushing his way out of the booth, "Well, I guess I'll turn in, folks."

As Henry went into the guest room he sighed heavily. There had been hopes of one day holding down the coaching slot at Nyeland.

It looked as though the job was filled. For keeps.

MONEY-SAVING SHAVES For Men with Tough Whiskers

Now Finest Single or Double Edge BLUE STEEL Blades in handy DISPENSER 10 for 25¢



ALSO 10¢
PACKAGE

PRECISION  PRODUCTS

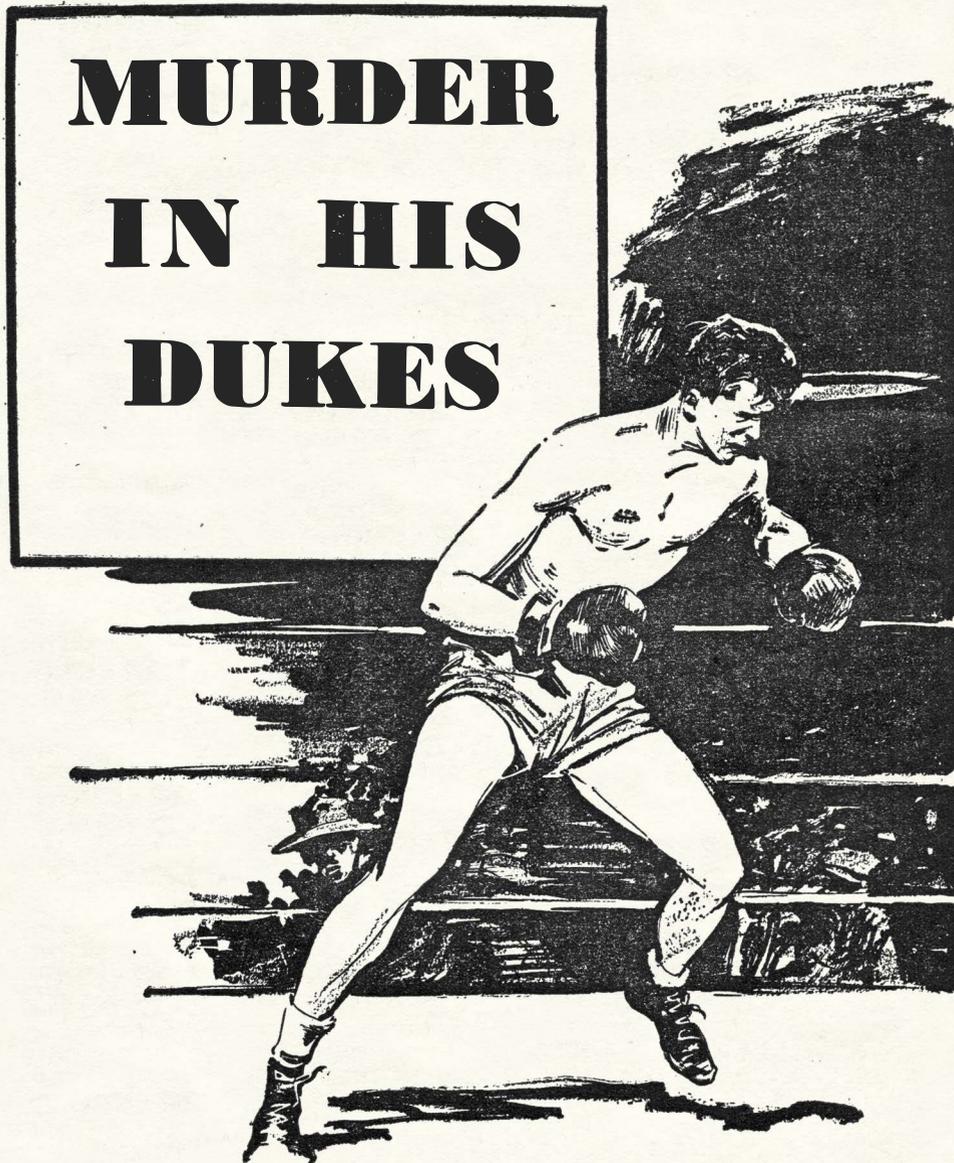
AMERICAN SAFETY RAZOR CORP., BKLYN 1, N.Y.

Blue STAR

SINGLE
EDGE

DOUBLE
EDGE

Out of the toil and agony of a hundred fights big Sam
had wrested all the things he wanted, except this final
one—the right to face a better man's leather with a
smile on his face, courage in his heart and—



● ● ● By WILLIAM HEUMAN

THE NIGHT of the fight big Sam O'Keefe played catch with his eleven-year-old son in the alley of the apartment house. It was the coolest place they could find in the sweltering August heat. A breeze blew through the alley, and they threw the ball back and forth lazily.

"Why didn't you become a big-leaguer, Pop?" Young Sammy said.

"Takes brains," big Sam grinned. "It's easier to get in there an' slug it out with another guy. Only two men in the ring; eighteen on a ball field. I'd get mixed up, kid."

"Nuts," young Sam told him.

On a canvas chair along the brick wall sat old John Ford, the Negro trainer, humming softly, shuffling his feet occasionally in time with his song.

Young Sam said, "You ever get scared in there, Pop?"

He rolled with the punch as always, but this time he fell. . . .



"Every time," big Sam nodded. "Scared as hell tonight. This DuBois is a hitter."

"All hitters," old John murmured. "Not so cute, though, like they was in my time, boy. They don't kill a man any more. Oh no."

Big Sam took a windup and threw. He felt good tonight—very good for a man of thirty-four, who was supposed to be at the end of the line. He was big, solid in the shoulders, thick in the waist, but not fat. He could take a punch down there and not crumple the way the wasp-waisted boxers did. He weighed a hundred and ninety-eight, and very little of it was fat.

The kid would have liked him to be a big-league ball player. The kid was nuts about baseball. Sam O'Keefe grinned as the thought struck him that he would work tonight in the pitcher's box in the big Stadium. They set the ring up there, and he could do his pitching against the iron jaw of Eddie DuBois, up-and-coming Canadian heavyweight.

The odds were about five to three that he would outsmart young Eddie. He'd been around too long, and he'd become very cute with his hands. Besides, this was for only ten rounds, and he could go ten rounds without much trouble.

At a quarter of seven old John stood up and folded his canvas chair. He was still humming as he tucked the chair under his arm and looked at Sam.

"Time to go," Sam O'Keefe said. He tossed the ball up into the air, caught it.

The boy said, "I'd like to see this one, Pop."

"That's out," Big Sam said. "No place for kids."

"This kid," young Sam growled, "is the son of one of the guys who's fighting."

"We'll take in a ball game tomorrow afternoon," Sam O'Keefe said, "if I'm still alive."

"What have we got a television set for?" the boy said grimly. "Can't even use it."

"Not tonight," Sam told him, "and not the radio, neither. You can read about it in the papers tomorrow."

They walked out to the head of the alley, facing on the street, and he stood there, tossing the ball up and down in his hands. He hadn't done too badly, he told himself. This apartment house was twelve stories high, comparatively new, in very good shape, and a gold mine. He owned it. He also owned the one next to it, which was fourteen stories high.

He wasn't so sure, though, about this DuBois affair. He'd retired almost a year ago, having made his pile, and then they'd hung a barrel of money in front of him and stuck a pen in his hand. He hadn't been able to resist. He was in shape, but DuBois was ten years younger, ten years faster. It would be a big feather in DuBois' cap to put him away. They were building the Canuck for the heavyweight championship, and they were having a hard time finding suitable opponents.

Leo Searle, DuBois' manager, had suggested Sam O'Keefe, the guy who had nearly become champ, but who'd started too late in life. He'd beaten nearly everybody in sight, and two years ago he'd been in line for the shot at the title, but the champ didn't want him and the promoters didn't want him. He was likely to beat the champ, but he was no drawing card. He was a spoiler. His fights were uninteresting, even though he won them pretty regularly.

They had plenty of time to get to the park. It was a ten-minute taxi ride to the dressing-room door. He never liked to rush on fight nights. Many such hot July or August nights he'd stalled around, driving his manager, Ben Combs, crazy. Ben was gone now, and Sam arranged his own fights.

He'd been a little surprised when Searle asked for this fight, because Leo knew better. Leo knew there was a good chance his Canadian slugger would be derailed

by the veteran O'Keefe, who'd beaten everybody but the champ.

Leo's phone call that morning had clarified the situation to some extent. It had proven to Sam that Leo was not slipping.

Sam said, "I'll step upstairs and say good-by to Mama." He looked at the boy, who was still scowling. He said, "You play stick ball with the kids or something. Forget about this fight."

"Okay," young Sam muttered, and he walked off.

Sam O'Keefe said to the trainer, "You grab a cab down tonight, John. I'll see you at the ball park."

John's brown eyes flickered, and that was all. He said, "You're the boss, Mr. O'Keefe." It was always Mr. O'Keefe when he had something in his craw.

Sam went into the apartment and took the elevator up to the top floor. The apartment was nicely furnished, very comfortable, a penthouse. His wife said, "Your bag's ready, Sam."

He saw it by the door, a small leather bag containing his shoes, clean socks, supporter, a towel. He looked at it and grinned. This was the way a workman left his house in the morning. He had his tool kit waiting for him, and he kissed his wife and went to work.

"Okay, Mama," Sam said. He kissed her, and she said, "I'll have iced tea waiting when you get home."

He liked iced tea in this hot weather.

He could drink it by the gallon. His wife looked at him quizzically, and she said, "Is it going to be all right tonight?"

"He's only a kid," Sam grinned.

"Don't you wish you were one," Mrs. O'Keefe murmured. "Go along now, you big Irishman."

HE WALKED up the street to the row of garages and got out his car. There were about two dozen garages in the line. He owned them, and they brought in a nice little return at the end of each month.

He drove the car three blocks south, made a right turn, and came in sight of a playground. There were two ball fields with games going on and small crowds watching. Another section of the playground was fenced off for the little kids. There were swings here and slides and see-saws. A car was parked along the fence—a black car with New Jersey plates.

As Sam O'Keefe rolled his own car past this one, he glanced over at a sharp-faced man who sat behind the wheel, a cigar in his mouth.

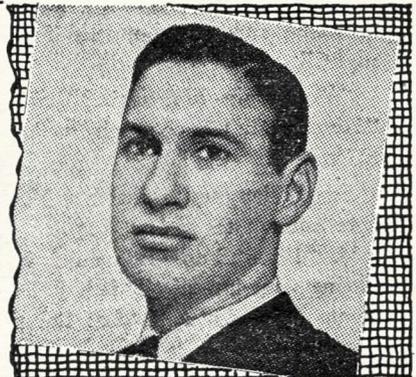
Very gently, Sam edged his car into the curb just ahead of the New Jersey car. He turned off the motor and looked into the rear mirror. He made no move to get out of the car.

A small grin slid across his face as the man in the other car remained where he was, too. Reaching forward, Sam flipped

REPORTER REPORTS ON SWITCH TO CALVERT

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Arnold Fine, Washington reporter and night club editor, flashes this news about today's whiskies. "Switch to Calvert," he says. "I have. Calvert honestly is lighter, smoother, milder."

CALVERT RESERVE BLENDED WHISKEY—86.8 PROOF—65% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. CALVERT DISTILLERS CORP., N.Y.C.



on the car radio. A jazz band came over, the music wild and hot. He turned it down low and leaned back against the seat, waiting.

He'd learned that much in this business: *Never go to them. Make them come to you.* It had paid off. Besides, tonight he held all the good cards, and he could afford to wait.

About a minute passed, and then someone opened his car door and slid into the seat next to him. It was the blond sharp-featured man who'd been behind the wheel of the New Jersey car. He said sourly, "It's just as far from my car to yours as it is from yours to mine."

"I have to fight tonight, Leo," Sam O'Keefe grinned. "You forget? I got to save my energy."

The radio was still going, the music getting hotter all the time. Leo Searle said tersely, "Turn that damn thing off, Sam."

Sam O'Keefe reached forward and snapped the radio off. He started to hum softly to himself, and then he said, "I'm due at the park in fifteen minutes, Leo."

Searle's eyes were blue, intense. He had a thin slit of a mouth, and his teeth were crooked, with spaces between them. His hands were long, slim-fingered, very nervous hands, constantly moving. The nails were manicured. He said grimly, "You know what I'm here for, Sam."

"No," Sam said innocently, "I don't, Leo. You asked me to meet you. That's all I know about it."

"All right," Searle scowled. "I want to make sure my boy, Eddie, wins tonight."

"You train him right?" Sam asked. "He shouldn't have much trouble with an old man."

Searle laughed tightly. "You're just cute enough to spoil it for our boy," he said. "I don't know how much you've lost during your lay-off. This kid of mine will be up there for a shot at the title next year."

"If he wins tonight," Sam nodded. "That's what everybody figures, Leo."

"I want to make sure," Leo Searle said, "that he doesn't miss that shot."

Sam O'Keefe looked out the window of the car and he hummed. Searle snapped at him, "How much do you want, Sam?"

"What for?" Sam O'Keefe asked innocently.

"You know damned well what for," Searle told him, "or you wouldn't be out here. How much will you take to let the boy stop you?"

Big Sam looked at his hands. This was a business proposition. He'd never gone into the tank before, but then he'd always had the thought deep back in his head that he might some day get a shot at the title. Now that was over, and it didn't matter any more. He had a chance to make a double killing tonight. He was getting thirty-three per cent of a big gate, and now Searle had a proposition. A man going up the ladder was a fool to listen to such a proposition, but for a man who was on the way out it was different. Especially for a man whom the fight crowd never had liked, who'd been denied his rightful shot at the title.

Sam O'Keefe said softly, "Name a figure, Leo."

Leo Searle took a deep breath. "Ten grand," he said.

Sam grinned. "You'll make five times that much," he murmured, "just backing your boy tonight when you know it's in the bag. Talk louder, Leo, and not so funny."

Searle glared at him. "I should let the kid knock your head off on the level," he glowered.

"Okay," Sam nodded. He reached forward and turned on the ignition key. "We'll let him try it."

"Twenty grand," Searle said. "You can put up another row of garages."

"This is a heavyweight fight," Sam O'Keefe said. "Remember? Your boy

wants a shot at the title, Leo, the big title. Million-dollar gates. Why are we talking about pin money?"

Searle was breathing more heavily now. His lips were drawn across his teeth, and he was perspiring. He said, "Thirty-five, you crook."

"Easy with the language," Sam warned him. "I'll take fifty. Twenty-five now, and twenty-five after the fight."

Leo Searle looked at him, his nostrils quivering. Then he took an envelope from his pocket, thumbed through the contents, and handed it over.

Sam said, "Put it in the glove compartment, Leo."

Searle slipped the envelope into the glove compartment, and then opened the car door and stepped out. He said tersely, "Don't pull any fast stuff, Sam."

Sam smiled at him. "You still have twenty-five grand of my dough," he stated. "I'll meet you here tomorrow night at the same time."

"I'll be here," Searle snapped. He walked back to his car.

Sam pushed the starter button. He drove around the corner, and then down a hill to the parking lot opposite the ball field. The attendant who took his car said, "Can I risk five bucks on you tonight, Sam?"

"Never bet on fights," Sam told him. He made his way to the dressing room door, nodded to the cop on duty, and went

inside. He could hear the noise overhead, the crowd coming in.

IT WAS cool below the big grandstand. He went into the ball players' dressing room, and then entered a little door which led to the trainers' quarters.

Old John Ford was there, and Mike Reagan, who usually worked in his corner. Reagan wasn't as old as the Negro trainer. He'd been a fighter back in the twenties, a middleweight. Most of his hair was gone now, and the scar tissue was thick over his eyes. He said, "Ready to go, Sam?"

"I'll murder the guy," Sam told him.

Mike Reagan nodded soberly. "I think you still got it," he said. "Most o' the wise guys don't see it that way. This lay-off an' your age are supposed to be workin' against you. I don't believe it."

Old John didn't say anything. He had his bag opened and he was laying his paraphernalia out on the table—the tape, scissors, gauze, adrenalin, monsel powder for the cuts, Sam's red rubber mouthpiece in a jar of water.

Sam noticed that the trainer wasn't humming. His face was shiny with perspiration because it was close in here. His hands were big, square, not the hands of an old man, but John Ford was nearly seventy.

Sam said softly, "What's wrong, John?"

"Ain't nothin' wrong," the old man

fast HELP for **HEADACHE** UPSET STOMACH - JUMPY NERVES

Today more people than ever before use Bromo-Seltzer. Because this time-proved product gives fast help. Not only for headache pain, but also for the upset stomach and jumpy nerves that often go with it.

Quick! Pleasant! Bromo-Seltzer effervesces with split-second ac-

tion, ready to go to work at once. And it is so refreshing! You must be satisfied or your money back! Caution: Use only as directed.

Get Bromo-Seltzer at your drug store fountain or counter today. It's a product of the Emerson Drug Co. since 1887.

WHERE
OTHERS
FAIL
BROMO-
SELTZER
WORKS



murmured. "Last one. Allus the sad one."

"How do you know this is the last one?" Sam asked him. "If I knock this kid out I might get my shot at the title yet."

John looked at him, and then back at the stuff on the table in front of him. Sam frowned.

Slowly, Sam stripped and got into his trunks. Old John went to work on his legs when he lay down on the rubbing table. The Negro's thick fingers dug into the muscles, kneading them, loosening them.

Up above, the first prelim had gotten under way, and Sam could hear the noise. He lay on the table, looking up at the ceiling, and he missed John Ford's humming.

After a while Mike Reagan left to go over to Eddie DuBois' dressing room to watch the fighter's hands being taped. Leo Searle came in, smoking a cigarette.

Sam said, "No smoking allowed in here, Leo. Put it out."

Searle stared at him, but he snubbed out the cigarette. Sam was sitting up on the table now, and old John was cutting his strips of tape, laying them out in orderly array on the table.

Searle said, "Don't put any rocks in there, John."

The old man didn't look at him, nor reply. Sam said, "John's in a bad mood. Let him alone."

The trainer started to lay on the strips of adhesive, and then he worked in the gauze, winding it around and around skillfully, Searle watching him, making no more comments.

Sam said when he had finished, "Everybody happy?"

"Why not?" Searle countered, and went out.

Sam lay back on the rubbing table again, and John covered him with a light sheet. He lay there completely relaxed, listening to the noise overhead. He was supposed

to sleep now if he could, and usually he did, but tonight he couldn't.

Mike Reagan came in and said, "Third six-rounder. We go on in about forty-five minutes."

"How's DuBois look?" Sam asked.

Reagan rubbed his jaw. "Fit," he said.

After a while Sam got up and started to move around a little, punching at the air, working up a small sweat. He slid around the room, surprisingly fast for a big man, light on his feet. His hands were fast, too, and that was what made him exceedingly hard to hit. He could pick off punches in the air; he could duck and slide away; he could go in and outside.

Reagan said, "This kid will come out hookin'. That's the only thing he knows. Always hooks. When he can't land 'em he gets disgusted."

"How's the new baby, Mike?" Sam asked.

"Okay," Reagan said, a grin breaking out across his homely face. "Okay."

Jeff Oldham, a member of the boxing commission, came through the door without knocking. He was a tall, thin man with graying hair. He said, "Everything okay, Sam?"

"All right," Sam nodded. "I'm ready."

"We want a nice fight," Oldham told him. "Don't make it too much of a waltz, Sam, if you don't want your purse held up."

"A man's style is his style," Sam said. "You can't change that, Jeff."

"Just remember what I said," Oldham warned him. "It has to be a fight."

When he went out Sam sighed. He said thoughtfully, "They should be in there tonight with that kid. They'd know whether it was a fight or not."

He sat down again, the gray bathrobe hanging loosely on his shoulders. He watched old John move around the room, setting things in order like a housewife, getting his bag ready to go out.

Mike Reagan went outside for a mo-

ment, closing the door behind him. Sam said to the trainer, "What's on your mind, John?"

"Nothin'."

"You'd like to win this last one, that it?" Sam asked softly.

"Like to win 'em all," John said gruffly.

"We're not that good," Sam told him.

"You ain't done too bad in this ring," the trainer reminded him.

"Always wanted to be champ," Sam scowled. "I could of licked the champ two years ago. You know that, John."

John nodded. "Reckon you could," he said, "but that ain't it. I'm talkin' about tonight. You'll remember this one, Sam. It's the last one. You never forget the last one."

Sam stared at him. "I'll remember them all," he said. "I got plenty to show for them all."

John shook his head. "That ain't it either, Sam," he said. "You got it all wrong."

"This crowd," Sam growled, jerking his chin toward the ceiling, "don't like me, and they never did. They come out every time to see me get it. They hate my guts. I've leveled for them on every one, John. Maybe the last one I'm entitled to take a little flyer."

"You never forget the last one," John Ford repeated. "You'll see what I mean, Sam."

The call boy knocked on the door and said, "Main event. All right, Mr. O'Keefe."

Sam slipped off the table. He said, "Don't let it get you, John. Who in hell will worry about this twenty years from now?"

HE WENT out, the towel around his head, and the trainer followed with the bucket and his bag. Mike Reagan went along with them, a few towels over his arm. For ten years they had been going out like this, together,

and this was the last time. Sam knew that very definitely. When young Eddie DuBois finished him he was through.

The crowd spotted them when they came out into the open down between the rows of seats on the infield. There were boos and a little hand-clapping, not much. They saved the applause for the Canadian when he came in a few moments later, wearing a green-and-white robe with a maple leaf on the back of it.

Eddie DuBois was a good-looking kid, dark-haired, with a white, serious face, nice features. His eyes were dark, too. He was the idol of the women fight fans, and there were a lot of them now with television.

He'd come in at one hundred and ninety-one, ideal weight for a heavy-weight, and he looked fast. In the slope of his shoulders you could see the hitting power.

Leo Searle was with him, and a score of handlers, all hovering around him, making themselves seem important. DuBois wouldn't know that this wasn't on the level. The kid would come out very serious, which was the way Searle wanted it.

DuBois came over to Sam's corner and said, "*Comment allez-vous?*"

"I'll have the same," Sam grinned. "Good luck, Frenchy."

DuBois grinned at him, and Sam felt sorry that the kid had gotten in with a crook like Searle.

There were a lot of introductions, a lot of bowing, hopping around, people in the ring, and then it cleared. The announcer said, "From the Bronx, weighing one hundred and ninety-eight pounds—Sam O'Keefe."

They booted. Sam grinned, a cold grin. He looked at John Ford and murmured, "I'm a popular guy. I got to come in here with the American flag wrapped around me to get a cheer."

He looked out over the ropes at this

vast crowd, drawn by the punching power of Eddie DuBois, drawn by the hope that they would see Sam O'Keefe, the spoiler, rolled in the dirt.

A fan yelled, "Build any more apartment houses, O'Keefe?"

Sam shuffled his feet in the rosin box. They had the gloves laced on his hands now, and he pounded one against the other. He was ready to go.

They went out to the center of the ring, and referee George Kramer gave them the instructions. DuBois was slightly the taller man.

Sam went back to his corner and handed the robe to Reagan. The Irishman said, "Watch his right, Sam, an' watch his left."

The bell rang and he had his first good look at Eddie DuBois. The French-Canadian was well set up, with good legs, a lot of speed in his body. He was short with a left, and then he came in and shot the right, wasting no time.

Sam O'Keefe rolled away from the right, and he knew then that he could win this fight if he wanted to. DuBois hit very hard and very fast, but he was young, and he still gave away his punches. Later on he would learn not to telegraph, and then he would really be good, but that took time.

That was the thing Leo Searle knew, too. He knew that a fighter who telegraphed his punches couldn't touch Sam O'Keefe with a ten-foot pole. Searle had had to make sure of this one.

Sam slid around the ring, moving his body more than his feet, swaying easily, those incredibly fast gloves flicking out, picking off DuBois' punches, jabbing with a left.

He went under a left hook; he rolled away from a swinging right, making DuBois miss by the tiniest of margins. He had it tonight—all of it, and he could go ten rounds without a bit of trouble. He could make DuBois miss till the cows

came home, and he could counter with short lefts and rights, spoiling young Eddie's fight, taking the play away from him.

DuBois threw a vicious right after a left jab. The jab missed, and the right coiled around Sam's head as he stepped inside it, digging his left into Eddie's ribs. He bulled his way forward, backing DuBois into the ropes just above where Leo Searle sat, and he smiled down at Searle.

"Break it up," George Kramer told them.

Sam stepped back. He fainted with his left, fainted with the right shoulder, with his eyes, and Eddie DuBois did a funny little dance to get away from nothing.

Sam straightened up, grinning, and Eddie DuBois smiled back, admiration in his dark eyes. He didn't stop trying. He threw another left for Sam's chin, nearly connecting this time, and then he got in a right to the body, a fairly hard right.

Sam winced a little, and the crowd howled. DuBois tried to follow up the punch, but Sam tied him into knots when he lunged in. The bell rang.

Mike said exuberantly, "What has he got? Nothin'."

"He's a pretty good boy," Sam said.

"I ain't talkin' about his character," Reagan observed. "You're gonna take him apart in there, Sam."

John handed Sam the water bottle. He wiped his face with a towel. He didn't say anything.

"Along about the seventh or eight," Mike said, "this kid's gonna start gettin' tired throwin' all them punches an' missin'. You hit him a couple-three good ones, Sam. You'll see him dance."

The warning horn and then the bell. Sam went out again, and he saw Searle watching him, the cigar clenched in his teeth. They hadn't named any particular round. He was to pick his own time to

do his flop, and that would not be very hard. Any one of DuBois' blows was considered hard enough to stop a fight. All he had to do was let the kid tag him once, or take one as he rolled, and go down.

DuBois missed a hard right, Sam sliding away from the punch instinctively. He jabbed with his left, took one of DuBois' left hooks on the elbow, and drifted away.

The crowd bood. They'd seen all this before, the pattern of it, and they were disappointed.

Sam shifted around the ring, riding the punches, jabbing, hooking on his own account, leaving no openings. He seldom threw a punch hard enough to stop another man, but after eight or ten rounds the other man usually became wearied of the whole business. Lunging in recklessly, he sometimes added power to one of Sam's short rights, and there was a knockout, not a spectacular one, but a KO in the books.

He won the second round by a wide margin, with Eddie DuBois trying very hard, but unable to land cleanly. Mike Reagan said, "This is all gravy, kid."

Sam didn't say anything. He couldn't keep this up because when he let DuBois drop him it would look phony. He had to keep his part of the bargain very shortly.

He went out for round three, and he decided that he was going to work it very

smooth—no one-punch job. If they wanted theatrics in the ring they could have them, too.

Halfway through the third round he took one of DuBois' long rights on the side of the jaw, rolling with the punch the way he always did, but this time he tumbled to the canvas instead of stepping back.

THE ROAR from the crowd was deafening. As he rolled over on his side he could see their faces, sweaty, distorted, their mouths open. Women were screaming deliriously.

Sam sat up, shaking his head. He watched DuBois hurry to the farthest corner and stand there, tremendously pleased with himself, anxious to get out again and finish it.

George Kramer had started to count, picking up the beat from the knock-down timekeeper. Sam looked up at him. His nose itched, and he scratched it with his glove. Then he got up on one knee and waited. He saw Mike staring at him from his corner, incredulity in his eyes. John Ford sat next to Reagan, no expression on his face.

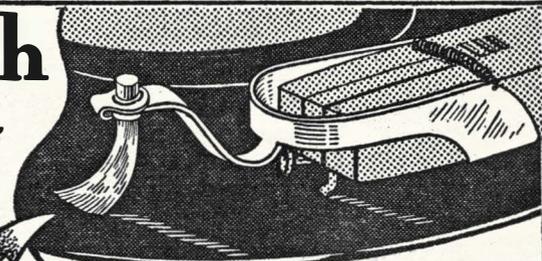
Sam got up at eight. He let Kramer wipe his gloves off, and then Kramer slid away and DuBois tore in at him, fists flying. Sam slid two punches and went in close. He held on, and Kramer broke them.

RECORD-Brush

*it
cleans
as it
plays!*

- PROLONGS RECORD LIFE
- IMPROVES TONE QUALITY
- REDUCES NEEDLE SHOCK
- INCREASES NEEDLE LIFE

Zim
PRODUCTS



If Not Available At Your Dealer
Send \$1.00-Regular . . . \$2.50-Deluxe Model.

ZIM PRODUCTS
6722 DEVONSHIRE AVE. ST. LOUIS 9, MO.

SAVE YOUR RECORDS!

DuBois let go with a long right, missed, and then came in with a short left for the head. It landed high, but Sam went down again, falling into the ropes. He did a good job of falling, making it look very spectacular, and the crowd howled again. It was the blood cry now, and he'd heard it many times, but never when he was the victim. It sounded strange.

He sat against the ropes, holding the lower strand with his left glove as if to steady himself. He let his face go slack. The rubber mouth-piece tumbled out of his mouth, bouncing on the canvas. It rolled over toward his own corner, and Mike reached forward to pick it up.

Kramer reached nine before Sam got up this time. He came off the canvas slowly as if it were a great effort. Kramer looked into his face, and Sam had to suppress a great inclination to wink at him.

Eddie DuBois' wild right coiled around Sam's neck. The kid swarmed all over him, backing him into the ropes, landing punches, but none of them clean. Sam was still rolling, sliding a little, taking the steam out of each punch, blocking some with his gloves. He retreated along the ropes, staggering for the benefit of the crowd, and just before the bell rang he went down again. He had eight seconds to go. He'd seen that on the clock before he let a left come through to roll off his cheek.

He fell backward this time and he lay there as if he would never move again. His eyes were partly closed, and he looked up into the bright lights.

Kramer reached six when the bell rang. Mike tumbled through the ropes, John coming after him more slowly. They got Sam to his feet, dragging him to the corner. Reagan was mumbling incoherently, "I don't believe it. I don't believe it."

Sam sat on his stool, body slack, head lolling to one side. They applied crushed ice to the base of his skull. Reagan squeezed a sponge full of water down his

neck, the cold water running down his spine into his trunks.

He sat up a little, pulling his face away from the smelling salts. Reagan kept saying, "What happened? What happened, kid?"

He'd even fooled Reagan, and he hadn't been so sure that he could do that. He thought about the guys sitting in the twenty seats, far back in the outfield. Those punches were the real McCoy to them.

"You all right, kid?" Reagan asked anxiously.

"Okay," Sam told him. "Get that damned bottle away from my nose."

He listened to the noise, and he looked across the ring at the confident DuBois. The kid was sitting on the edge of the stool, waiting for the bell, ready to go.

George Kramer came over to the corner to look at Sam. He said to Reagan, "How is he?"

"I can talk," Sam told him.

"Not for long," Kramer murmured, "from the looks of things."

The bell rang and Sam got up. He heard the blood cry again, rising to a wild scream. DuBois charged him, shooting rights and lefts for the head. He took the first one and went down. This punch was a little harder than the others, and he didn't roll with it. Still his head was clear when he went down, and he put on a good act.

He crawled to the ropes, reached for the lower strand, and pulled himself up. He hung there on one knee, waiting for the count, staring down at the floor. He noticed that some of the noise had stopped, and he was thinking bitterly, *Now they sit back and enjoy the show!*

He got up at nine again, and he threw a right for DuBois' chin. It was one of those wild swings a guy would throw when his senses were addled and he was desperate.

DuBois was coming in, and the glove

hit him on the side of the face. He went down. Sam O'Keefe lunged forward, off balance, himself. He nearly fell over DuBois.

There was another roar from the crowd. DuBois was a little stunned, but not badly hurt. He got up before Kramer could reach three, and his face was white, tense. He threw a half dozen punches at Sam, missing all of them. Sam shot another long right, missing deliberately. They went into a clinch.

The noise was deafening. DuBois fought furiously to break away, and Sam, for the pure hell of it, opened up himself. He didn't try to box. He threw punches at this tough kid in front of him, and he landed some of them. He took a few, too, and a short left to the jaw hurt him a little.

He could hear Mike Reagan howling, screaming for him to cover up, but he didn't. He was thinking that if it was going to end, let it end now. They'd had a good show for their money. They'd go away satisfied.

This was something he'd never done in his life, and it felt pretty good. Only a sucker slugged with another guy, but tonight he was a sucker—for fifty grand!

George Kramer made no attempt to break them. They were out in the center of the ring, throwing leather. The kid could hit, too, much harder than Sam. Hitting was his specialty.

Sam went down on his haunches from a short right to the jaw. It was legitimate, too, and because it was legitimate he got right up again before DuBois could go to the corner.

He went after the French-Canadian, pinning him in the far corner, and he saw the surprise in the kid's dark eyes. He started to heave in the punches, throwing his weight behind them. He forgot for the moment that he was supposed to lose this one. There was sheer joy in this—

something he'd never experienced in the ring before.

When the bell rang he was reluctant to stop. He stood there, grinning at Eddie DuBois, his right eye beginning to swell a little. His mouth was cut, too, and he tasted the blood. It was salty and clean.

Mike was raving in the corner. "What the hell goes?" he exploded. "We're sluggin' with a slugger! You crazy, Sam?"

"It's fun," Sam told him. He looked at John and grinned. The trainer grinned back.

They were going mad outside the ring. Sam could hear them howling. He looked down into the faces at ringside, and said aloud, "To hell with you. You're not going to see me roll." He knew now that Searle's fifty grand was only a lot of money, and while money could build apartment houses and blocks of garages, it could not buy something else. It could not buy what a fighter took with him when he left the ring the last time to the post.

Mike Reagan said slowly, "You're punch-crazy, Sam. That yellin' out there—that's for you!"

Sam stared at him. "For me?" he muttered. He listened more closely and he could hear his name. They were cheering for *him*, for the tremendous comeback he'd supposedly made after being on the verge of a knockout!

"You're their boy now," Reagan said. "They want you to win."

John said softly, "This boy gonna knock you out, Sam, you fight like that. That ain't your style. You don't hit hard like he does."

Sam said, "What do you know." He said it softly, meditatively. "We'll see what he does, kid."

THE WARNING horn buzzed and they had to get out of the ring. Mike Reagan was saying tersely, "Box him—box him, Sam."

John grinned at him and didn't say anything. Sam walked out, his fists tight, the grin still on his face. They gave him a tremendous hand. He walked into Eddie DuBois' hard fists and he started to slug it out. He kept walking in, actually forcing the younger man back.

He didn't hit hard enough for this fighter in front of him. Reagan knew it; he knew it himself. The fight crowd knew it, but he kept moving in, hooking.

He hit DuBois on the chin, and the kid staggered a little. He started another left for the face, and then something hit him on the side of the head. He felt himself going down sideways, and before he could fall he was hit again and again. He didn't see the two punches.

He was groping, reaching for something when he fell forward. He could feel the sharp bite of the rosin dust on his stomach and face.

Everything was hazy as if he were in a dream, trying to fight his way out of it, but lacking the strength. He started to crawl, knowing that sooner or later he would reach the ropes if he kept a straight course. He kept crawling, crawling, and in the distance he could hear Kramer's voice. He couldn't make out the numbers.

Something scraped against his face, the lower strand. He reached up with his right hand, grabbing it, and then he got the other glove on it. He waited there for a few moments, and his head cleared gradually. He could see faces on the other side of the ropes where before it had been a blur. They were staring at him incredulously as he came up off the floor.

He swung around, his back to the ropes, and Kramer slid in front of him, wiping off his gloves. DuBois tore out of the far corner, eager, the stars in his eyes.

The kid let go with a left hook, and Sam O'Keefe rolled his head gently, the glove sliding by. As DuBois tumbled in, a little off balance, Sam hit him in the

stomach with his left. He heard DuBois grunt.

The kid threw a right, very wild, and Sam ducked his head, a slight nod, just sufficient to let the punch go by. He was standing flat-footed now, and he let go with a right and then a left. The right hit DuBois in the stomach again, and the left collided with his jaw.

The Canadian staggered back, the red rubber mouthpiece popping from his mouth, bouncing crazily on the canvas. Sam moved after him, his own legs still wobbly. He was thinking, *Here goes fifty grand down the drain.* He didn't care.

He walked in, hooking, hitting high now because DuBois' guard was down, protecting his hurt stomach. He hit the Canadian three times, knocking him into the ropes on the other side of the ring, and then as DuBois slid to the floor, he turned and plodded slowly to the far corner. He glanced over and he saw John Ford and Mike Reagan watching him. Ford's teeth gleamed in a big grin.

They counted DuBois out as the kid lay on his face, one arm outstretched.

Sam O'Keefe had to fight his way through the mob in the aisle as he went back to the dressing room. It was a new sensation. It was something he'd missed all these years, and it was very nice.

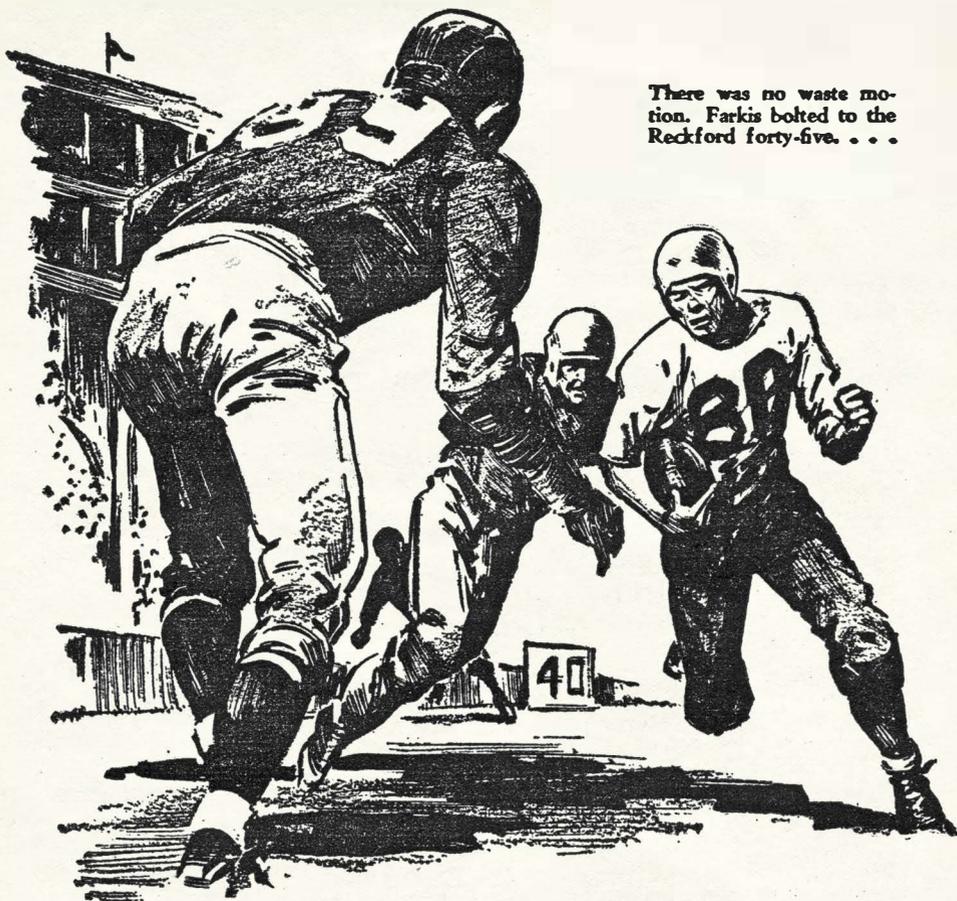
In the dressing room, when they finally got the door closed, and they had a few minutes' respite before the photographers and the reporters swarmed in again, Sam said to Mike Reagan, "What's fifty grand, Mike?"

The older man looked at him. "Lot of money, Sam," he grinned.

Sam looked at John. The old trainer was watching his face as he sat on the rubbing table. Sam said, "What do you think, John?"

"Ain't nothin'," Ford murmured, "only money."

Sam grinned crookedly. "Only money," he repeated. "It don't mean a damn."



There was no waste motion. Farkis bolted to the Reckford forty-five. . . .

THE BIG SIX

By VAN MacNAIR, Jr.

IT WAS the third quarter and the sun was down below the rim of Madison University stadium where a small, noisy gang of football addicts sat in the shadows ignoring the November afternoon chill. The Madisons were eating prosperity pie after many years of famine,

and they were making the most of it.

Down on the field a large young man named Larry Dabney pried himself loose from the pileup over the Reckford goal. He was lean from the waist up to a hard spread of shoulders, and he moved easily as a good quarterback should.

Grimly they lined up for that last-chance smash—eleven power guys fighting for a dream too battered to live—and six points that would never die!

He bounced a hand off the shoulder pads of Foots Magill, a young giant who had just crossed the Reckford goal line for the third time that day.

Larry said, "Great going, Footsie. You can be mayor after today."

On the bench Coach Chuck Totter surveyed the scene. To Barney Keller, first assistant in the new Madison coaching hierarchy, he said, "Lucky. The back-field was off count. Right tackle too wide. A good club would have smeared the play." His voice had all the emotion of an auctioneer's, and he did not look at Barney when he spoke.

Barney said, "Unh," and made notes on one of a sheaf of cards he held in his hand. His cigar marched from one side of his face to the other, goose-step fashion. Coach Totter's mouth once again became a pencil line across his concrete face.

Reckford received, tried three futile line plunges, and punted. Larry took it on his own thirty and started up the middle through tired opposition. He went past the forty, the forty-five, crossed mid-field. Magill shot in front of him, blocking, and Larry was clear.

A stunning truth became apparent. Larry Dabney was not trying very hard. A Reckford end, angling desperately, dropped him on the thirty-five. Larry helped pull the boy to his feet.

Chuck Totter snorted. "That Dabney! He'll never learn to play it hard. He should have scored." Abruptly, he turned and said, "Stressa for Dabney."

Tony Stressa stopped fidgeting, stood up and slipped a helmet over his wiry black hair, over the small ears that lay flat against a rock-like head. Totter walked up to him. "Pour it on."

"Okay, coach," Tony Stressa said. He spat out his chewing gum and trotted onto the field. He ran with his legs wide apart, stiff, big-muscled and business-like.

"Here comes the cash and carry boy," Footsie Magill said to Larry. "Totter

must want to run up the score real bad."

"Stressa's the boy who can do it," Larry said.

"He ought to go back to the coal mines," Magill grumbled. "And take Totter with him. Him and his assembly-line football."

"Forget it, Footsie," Larry said. "It's the new day we always used to yelp about. We win now, don't we?"

"Yeah. But it ain't any fun any more. What's the use of running up a big score? We're leading by twenty-one points already."

Larry shrugged. "Take it easy," he said, and loped off toward the sidelines. He nodded as he passed Stressa coming in. The bench was crowded and he dropped on the grass. *Imagine a Madison bench crowded with players*, he thought. And next year there would be a longer bench, more players, more victories, more pressure from big-time football played in big-time stadiums. He knew how the new system worked. Platoons of guys practicing on different fields. Offense and defense teams learning different sets of signals. Everybody a specialist. Hell, it was possible for a guy to play four years and never make a tackle, or recover a fumble; never punt or intercept a pass. Swarms of experts on the coaching staff spotted around the field, in the end zones, on the press-box roof, watching for weaknesses in the opposition, sending down signals by telephone to Chuck Totter, the master mind who manipulated the whole vast show. It was like a chess game now, not football.

Undeniably, the new regime won games, and that was what the long-suffering alumni had had in mind when they hired Totter from a big Eastern campus this year.

But games were supposed to be fun, weren't they? And this certainly wasn't any fun. Especially when you spent most of your last season riding the bench. *You*

got to play for blood now, Larry thought. *It's no laughing matter.*

He watched Tony Stressa running the team. As usual, he was fidgety, tense, barking out commands and signals. He was the first of an unexpected river of ringers to be brought in by Totter. The difference between him and Larry was glaring from the start. Tony Stressa came from a world where the penalty for losing was severe. You fought your way against a life stacked against you, and if you lost, you slugged out the rest of your days on a slag heap. It wasn't any game. At the end of the third game of the season, Totter had given him the first-string berth over Larry. Larry had gone up to give Tony congratulations.

"Tough for you, huh?" Tony had grunted at him.

"A little."

"It's the new deal, pal," Tony had said, deadpan. "You've got to change if you wanna play ball in the fast leagues."

LARRY was almost glad he would be gone next year. He knew he couldn't change, any more than the campus elms or the green grass of the football field where a long line of Dabneys had played the game since the flying wedge was new.

Out on the field the Madison team went into T formation. Stressa was up under center, his head thrown back, biting off the count. Magill was in motion, running precisely, the way Totter had drilled him. Stressa took the ball. Magill went into the line. Farkis hit the same hole. Then Sikes galloped around end. Stressa, who had held the ball, doubled over, slammed it into Sikes' stomach, and the end flashed into the secondary. Downfield blockers, following the calculated regimentation of Totter's plan, labored swiftly and well. Sikes went all the way to the five.

Stressa whipped them into the lineup quickly. The play started the same way.

Three men into the line—bing, bing, bing. But this time, Tony jumped and fed a short pass to Tuck, the left end, standing in the clear over the goal line. Precision ball. Everything clicking mechanically. Hot stuff.

Larry smiled ruefully. Stressa was a relentless driver. *But*, he thought, *that team out there is mine*. He had handled them for three years and although they had lost more games than they had won, it had been a good time. They were a good bunch with a good spirit. He knew them intimately, and he remembered now a little sadly that in his last year with them he was back with the scrubs. He was dated like an Army chow-line egg.

They lined up for the extra point. There was no backslapping, no joking, but the kick was true. They led, 28-0, and you couldn't laugh that off.

MADISON had the ball again. There was no waste motion. Farkis bolted to the Reckford forty-five on a quick opening play. Magill plunged for three, Farkis for three more. Third and four. Larry knew what he would have called for. Leading by twenty-eight points, he would have kicked. Let Reckford play a little.

A boy ran up to Totter with a note from the third assistant coach, atop the press box with a movie camera. The note read, "Right tackle still slashing."

Stressa got the signal from Totter. The ball was snapped. Farkis delayed for a count of two while Marconi, the guard, and Rusty Sikes nearly snapped the slashing tackle in pieces between them with a high-and-low mousetrap. Farkis bulled past, took the handoff from Stressa and went thirty-nine yards for the big six.

Magill, breathing hard, came out in the fourth quarter and sat down beside Larry. "We're cranking them out today," he said. They were. When the gun went off Madison had fifty-two points. Reckford was burdened with none. It was an astonish-

ing score, and the crowd made noise accordingly, but in the dressing room Larry couldn't get anything going. It was flat. He tried to wrestle Magill under a cold shower. Footsie scowled and muttered, "Cut it out."

What was wrong with everybody?

Totter walked in and said, "We'll go over the mistakes Monday. Three sharp. I don't need to tell you we've got Belton Tech next week. The last game of the year, and it's the tough caliber of team you're going to start meeting under the new plan."

The Belton Tech crowd was out of Madison's class, but the game would be played in a huge stadium. It would fatten the athletic fund which in turn would fatten the roster of players next year when there would be more gold-plated aggregations on the schedule, which would in turn lead to more. . . .

"I expect to win," Totter went on coolly. "That means intensive drills next week. Under lights if necessary. And I want every man in shape." He left.

"Lawdy, lawdy, ain't we sumpin'?" Larry said. He didn't get an answer. The team dressed in silence. At first Larry didn't get it. Then he saw. It was in their strained, tight faces. They were already keyed up for the Belton Tech game. So much so that they were going to blow sky-high. Stressa was snapping his fingers, tension already in his face. Larry wanted to go over to him and say, "Have a laugh, boy. They don't kill you if you lose." Larry remembered his father saying that to him. But it was old-fashioned advice now. Silly to feel old-fashioned at twenty-two.

THE NEXT week was a nightmare of drilling. Twice Totter kept them after dark working under lights. They spent tedious hours going over split-second timing which they never seemed to get quite right. They watched movies of

the Tech horde. Five full teams, substitutes by the legion, speedy backs in droves. Flamish, Jordan, Hodiak. Awesome headline names.

Larry ran with the second string, watching the tension rise. It became a fever.

"It's driving me dippy," Magill told him when they met briefly at the water cart one day. "I'm jumping in my sleep."

Totter roamed the field—a stiff-backed general, with Keller as his adjutant. Their ceaseless exhortations did nothing to soothe short tempers. "Drive, *drive!*"

There was no tapering off. Totter angrily ordered contact work for Friday.

Roaming behind the scrub line, Larry watched the varsity line up. He shook his head dismally. This team, of whom he had been so much a part, were strangers to him. They hardly spoke to one another. Stressa shot out starting numbers. The snap came to Farkis, the fullback, who wheeled, palmed the ball, faked with his elbows. Stressa and Magill raced wide on counterfeit missions to the short side. Crowell, the tailback, delayed for the fakes, then took the handoff from Farkis and swung in behind the tackle who had pulled out to run interference. It was a sweet play, perfectly designed. But the hairline of perfection was missing. The second string dumped the runner at the line.

Stressa raged. "You run it like a bunch of old women. Get into it. Damn it, we play Tech tomorrow, not next year!"

Farkis threw his helmet down. "We're so tight now we'll bust any minute," he shouted. "That's what's wrong with us."

"You don't care if you lose. That's what's wrong," Stressa shot back. The two were yapping at each other, their faces inches apart. Farkis swayed back slightly, fists balled up. Larry inserted his body. He said casually, "Keep it up, you guys, and we won't have to outscore 'em. We'll just worry them to death." A couple

of second stringers laughed hesitantly.

Stressa wheeled and jammed his helmet on his head.

"Let's get going," he said. They went back to work grimly.

SATURDAY was cold, but not cold enough to make the turf bone-breaking. The big Tech stadium was jammed with enough customers to gladden the athletic treasurer's heart. Flags snapped in the sun and there was excitement in the air. Word had leaked out that little Madison was aiming to belt the Tech giants to death. The last notes of the Tech anthem died and the band broke ranks, running for their positions in the stands. The Tech squad spilled out of the runway, an interminable red-jerseyed stream. A gutty roar burst on the air. The band crashed into a fighting song.

Totter held his club in the dressing room until the Techs stopped milling around and settled down on the benches. It would be bad psychology to let his men see the impressive entrance. He stood on a bench and read some last-minute instructions. When he had finished nobody moved. Larry heard himself breathing. Then Totter said, "I intend for this team to win. Now—"

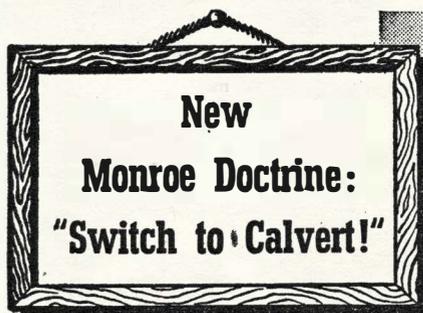
He let the word hang ominously, and waved his hand in dismissal.

"Just like going to the guillotine," Larry whispered to Magill as they trotted

out. Magill just turned his stiff face toward Larry and nodded. Then they were on the field in the clean clear air, running easily, knees just high enough to take out the kinks, faces impassive, the way Chuck Totter had taught them.

The Madison crowd whooped it up, and the band banged away on the proud old song, and Larry felt hollow with remembered excitement of other fall afternoons, other and better times, of an old devotion to the game he loved. His last game would be spent on the bench! He watched the starters kneeling and squatting in a circle around Stressa. Tech had won the toss and was going out to receive. Crowell booted. Flamish, the Tech left half, waited, took the ball on his own ten, feinted, cut back between the over-anxious Madison ends, and started up the slot between tumbling bodies. He was hit on the thirty by Marconi, went down twisting, and flipped the ball to Jordan.

Larry came to his feet with the rest of the bench squad. Jordan was a blur of speed crossing the fifty with every man on the field except Tony Stressa strung out behind him like streamers in the wind. Stressa, at safety, angled for him, trying to force him in toward the sideline. Jordan made his feint, slowed, shot ahead, and Tony, his face twisted, paused—and dove. They went down together, Tony hanging to Jordan's knees, on the twenty-five.



NEW YORK, N. Y.—George H. Monroe, New York singer and entertainer, advises men of moderation: "Switch to Calvert Reserve—as I have. Calvert really is lighter, milder, finer. It always makes your occasional highball taste better."

TOTTER yanked the two ends. Stressa raged at the team. Tech lined up, shifted once, shifted twice, caught the whole Madison front wall off balance, and blasted down to the fifteen. They didn't give you time to breathe. A power sweep off right end took them to the Madison five. Four downs to make five. But it was tougher now. Red jerseys bulled at the line. Larsen and Weiss boomed underneath the interference, splitting it. Farkis bear-hugged the ball carrier. No gain. The double shift again.

But this time Madison smelled it. The whole right side of the line crashed over the runner.

Tech ran in a new backfield. Galloping behind his own goal line, Stressa screamed, "Pass, pass." Magill heard and cut back with a rangy Tech end. They were involved briefly and earnestly in midair. Magill's big hands hit the ball first. Fourth and five.

The next play started the same way. Pass! Madison paused, scattered. But the wingback kept the ball, fell in behind a wall of red jerseys for an end sweep. Rusty Sikes, following around from his own end, somehow climbed up the guy's back and Madison took over on the three. They tried to power their way out of the box, failed, and Magill went back to kick on the third down. The Tech ends were in fast. Magill, rushed, barely got off the kick. Larry, watching carefully from the bench, rubbed his hands together nervously. *Too keyed up, too keyed up*, he said to himself.

It was Tech's ball on Madison's thirty-five. Tech shifted into single wing, unbalanced line to the left, and shot Jordan around right end on a naked reverse. Sikes, straining, missed him. Stressa ran him out of bounds on the twenty. Larry groaned. How long, he asked himself, could this last?

Jordan, Flamish and Hodiak romped back in for Tech. The ball snapped. Jor-

dan spun, faked a handoff, faded. Flamish cut sharply to the left on the ten, gathered in the pass just as Stressa, running desperately, spilled him. First and goal to go.

A quick-breaking sneak went to the five. Then Hodiak started wide, sucking Madison defenders with him, sliced back, spun, and went over standing up. Tech kicked the point and rushed in a whole new team.

Madison spent the first half on the ragged side of disaster. Tech threatened continually, and although they added only a field goal to their seven points, the sense of an impending Madison rout in the second half was strong.

In the dressing room Larry sat bleakly and watched Totter pace the floor. He read out the spotter's reports in a cold fury.

The whole place is going to blow up, Larry thought. *Any minute*. He looked at Tony Stressa. The kid looked ten years older. *No game is worth that price*, Larry told himself. As they filed out for the second half he tried to do what he could. He fell in beside Stressa. "It's only a game," he said. "Just play it the best you can, and quit eating yourself up." For an instant the tightness went out of Stressa's face. He looked curiously at Larry, opened his mouth, then shut it, and hurried on.

It became, after a while, the fourth quarter, and Larry still sat on the bench, unused, and with a taste of ashes in his mouth from watching old friends battling grimly. The score was still 10-0, but surely they couldn't stave off the rout much longer.

Then, suddenly, the break came. Magill, in the hole as usual, kicked from his twenty. The ball twisted high. Sikes and Tuck, the ends, were down fast, and Jordan made the error of trying to take the kick on the dead run. Sikes and Tuck slammed into him. The ball squirted, bounced toward the Tech goal, and Farkis

covered it with his hundred and eighty-five earnest pounds. First and ten on Tech's twenty-five. The Madison stands came to life, violently.

Larry felt a little sick as he watched the line dig in.

Stressa, leading Farkis through left tackle, missed his block, and Farkis went down for a slim yard gain. He got up and railed at the quarterback. Magill lost two on an end sweep. The linemen were off, changing raggedly. Stressa was a needling devil on everybody's shoulders as they lined up for third down. Tech linemen bolted through and piled up a double reverse before it could get started.

Larry shook his head. Fourth and eleven. A great chance blown. Out on the field the team seemed stunned. Then Larry started. Tony Stressa was not getting up. The doc went out with the water cart, took a look at Stressa's eyes, and shook his head. Chuck Totter, hands jammed into the pockets of his yellow polo coat, turned from the edge of the field.

"Dabney for Stressa," he said. His lips barely moved.

THE TEAM greeted him with silence. Yet it all felt wonderful, and like a lot of times not quite forgotten. In the huddle, Larry said, "How's about number sixty. We need the distance."

It was a pass play with Magill back, but the pass from center was bad. Magill had to scoop for it and then he was trapped behind the line. That did it. The ball went over to Tech.

Kahn, the center, bristled when Larry walked up to him. Larry said, "I still love you, baby." Kahn's eyes widened. He stared, "Thanks, sweetheart," he said at last. Larry turned to the rest of the team. "All right," he said. "Quit crying and let's show these heroes some football."

The Tech heroes came off tackle. en

masse. Larsen and Kahn rose up and slew them. They swept the end, and Larry, submarining the interference, bellowed, "Bag him, Footsie!" Footsie did.

"My, my, look at us," Farkis said dazedly.

Tech kicked, and Larry took it on his twenty-five. He ran wide to his right, bent over, knees churning. Magill crossed in back of him, and Larry made motions with his arms. The roof fell in on him then, but there was a great noise, loud and gay, and he knew guile was triumphant. Magill was running with the ball, easily, head up, picking out his interference. At midfield, he slowed, reversed, fell in behind a wall of Madisons. He was forced out of bounds at last on the twenty.

"Was that you, Footsie?" Larry asked in the huddle.

"The galloping ghost," Footsie grinned.

He slammed the line for three yards, crawled two more before Tech squashed him.

"Farkis on fifty-eight," Larry called. "Have some fun, Andy." Farkis romped to a first down on the eight.

Crowell dented his head against the line. Two yards. They were close to the right sideline. Larry chanted. Single wing to the left. The ball snapped, and under cover of much leftward deployment, Larry, holding the leather in one hand, tight-roped down the right sideline for the score.

He touched the ball down behind the goal with an exaggerated motion, and heaved a huge burlesque sigh. Crowell and Sikes grabbed each other around the waist and danced.

"How would you like a date with Lana Turner?" Larry asked.

"Me?" Farkis said.

"None other. Just kick that extra point and I'll fix it up."

The ball came back. Farkis toed it.

"It's a date," Larry yelled above the noise. Ten to seven, and the joint was jumping with Madison jive.

But life suddenly became less pleasant. Tech was moving. Straight power stuff through a weary Madison line. Fresh red jerseys kept pouring in from the horde on the Tech bench.

Standing on his own twenty, waiting for the Tech snapback, Larry suddenly straightened up and drawled at the Tech team, "By the way, would any of you guys like to meet each other?"

There was a second of hesitation in the Tech ranks, a split second in which there was dead silence. Then somebody laughed on the Tech side of the line. The end looked up and guffawed. The tackle beside him turned his head and snickered. The quarter snapped, "Hike," irritably, and the ball shot back, but the play lacked the power of its predecessors. It went for no gain. There was a sudden sense of disunity among the Techs. The ball went over to Madison on the eleven-yard line, after three plunges.

Larry looked at the clock. *Well, it's the last mile*, he thought. Tech went into a seven-man line with the backs hunched up close to block the kick. Farkis stood deep behind his own goal line in punt formation. But the ball went to Crowell, who dropped back slowly, his arm cocked. Magill waited calmly, and then cut down the right tackle who had broken through. Farkis whooped loudly, and sailed across in front of Crowell to smack over the left end. Crowell threw from ear level. The ball soared, sailed, and started to drop. Far down the field Larry was running faster than he ever thought he could. At midfield he turned and looked. The ball was coming down. He hooked sharply toward it, and leaned. It smacked hard against his chest and he came down running.

But the fresh Tech muscle told. A flying figure nailed him on the twelve. Madison lined up hurriedly, winded and panting, but somehow happy. They were eleven men playing a good game again,

and there was ancient contentment in the feeling. They shifted to the T. Larry's voice was hoarse, squawking signals over the pandemonium of the crowd. He took the ball, spun, faked to Magill going left, to Farkis going right, then shoveled it to Crowell, turned and led him into the quickly opening hole. The hole filled up rapidly, and he bounced off hard padded muscles. Crowell managed to fall forward for a yard. Farkis tried the line again. It was murder. Third and nine. A pass went over Sikes' yearning fingers.

So you come down to the last gasp, Larry thought. *Fourth down. Last game. The one you'd really like to win. A little something to remember. . . .*

THE BALL was dead center in front of the goal posts. Larry called time. A field goal and a tie with Tech would be, after all, a moral victory—prestige for recruiting next year's crop of players. Larry was aware of activity on the Madison bench. Tony Stressa was putting on his helmet. Chuck Totter was talking to him, and his jaw was moving rapidly.

All right, let it end like that, Larry said to himself. Next year, he'd be sitting in the stands with the rest of the crowd and down here on the field it would be somebody else's game. Some cold-blooded kid who would do the right thing, no doubt. . . somebody like Tony Stressa who was trotting up to the referee now.

Larry picked up his helmet and took a last look at the cleat-marked turf. He looked at the bruised faces around him. Then he looked at Tony Stressa who had moved away from the ref, away from the team, and stood motionless now, a lone figure with dark burning eyes. As Larry started past him he reached out and hooked his hand in the crook of Larry's elbow.

"Listen," he said, "I've been watching you. You do something with this bunch.

You fit right. I don't know—you belong. Listen, I'm sorry . . ."

There was no tension in Stressa's face now. But there was something worse—fear. Fear of defeat, a terrible fear of failure. Larry stared in shocked realization. So that was it. God, what every game must cost the poor guy. Larry moved close to him. He spoke rapidly.

"Tony," he said, "I don't know what they're paying you to play ball here, but whatever it is, it's not enough. Listen—they don't own you. They've got you scared to death, all the Saturday afternoon glory hogs who kick in to buy themselves a hero. Forget 'em. You give 'em what they paid for. Fair enough. But don't think they've got a right to all of you. Down here on the grass it's your world, and all you do is the best you can."

Then there wasn't any more time, and Larry was running off the field, watching Chuck Totter signaling for Stressa to try a field goal—the business play.

Madison came out of the huddle and lined up. It was very still in the stadium. Farkis went back in kicking position. Stressa knelt to hold the ball. He plucked a few blades of grass. Rusty Sikes toed in at end, and looked up slightly at the goal posts. The linemen dropped their padded rumps, settling into position. Stressa began to chant the starting numbers, and Larry's eyes widened in amazement. The kid was actually smiling. His voice was easy. Sixteen-twenty-two-eighty-four—he lifted his finger to his helmet. It was a quick gesture that could have passed for a sort of salute. He was looking in Larry's direction.

The ball shot back from center, and the crowd came up, roaring. Stressa had the ball—and he was passing. He cocked his arm. The Tech backs were whirling, converging, covering. Sikes sprinted for the corner. He turned, and leaped. The ball was there, big and beautiful. But a smart, fast boy with a muddy face, a red Tech

jersey, and very long arms came out of nowhere, jumped with a scissors kick.

Larry stood up with the rest of the bench riders. "Luck," he whispered, and he meant it for Tony Stressa, who had done all he could, and was now watching the payoff—watching the midair collision over the last stripe—seeing the thrashing bodies—the clawing fingers of Sikes reaching the ball first, seeing his hands stick. . . .

And so it ended, a play or so later—Madison 14, Tech 10.

Totter did not share the delirium.

"What the hell happened out there?" the coach bawled at Stressa as the team came off the field. "You were lucky. You might have blown the game. I ordered—"

"Leave him alone." It was Rusty Sikes. His face was shoved close to Totter's. "I'm going to tell you something. You know what he did?" Sikes jerked his thumb in Stressa's direction. "He apologized to us. Never mind all of it. But he ate crow, and that doesn't come easy. He says he's had us all nervous because he's been afraid—of us, of you, of losing his job, of everything. Then, he laughs, and says, 'Who wants to try for the big six with me?'" Sikes stopped. Then he went on, "We'll play ball for a guy like that."

Chuck Totter looked at the faces around him. He was thinking that Sikes had really made the greatest catch of his life on that touchdown. Then, as astonishingly as if it had been the Sphinx, Chuck Totter laughed. "All right, you guys," he said, and his eyes were on Larry Dabney, "all right, maybe I can eat a little crow, too."

"Wait till next year." Tony Stressa had to shout to be heard. Larry ducked a sponge, and cuffed somebody in the chest.

"Wait till next year," Stressa yelled again. "You'll see something."

And Larry knew he would. He would be in the stands, but he would be seeing something down there on the field. Something of himself.

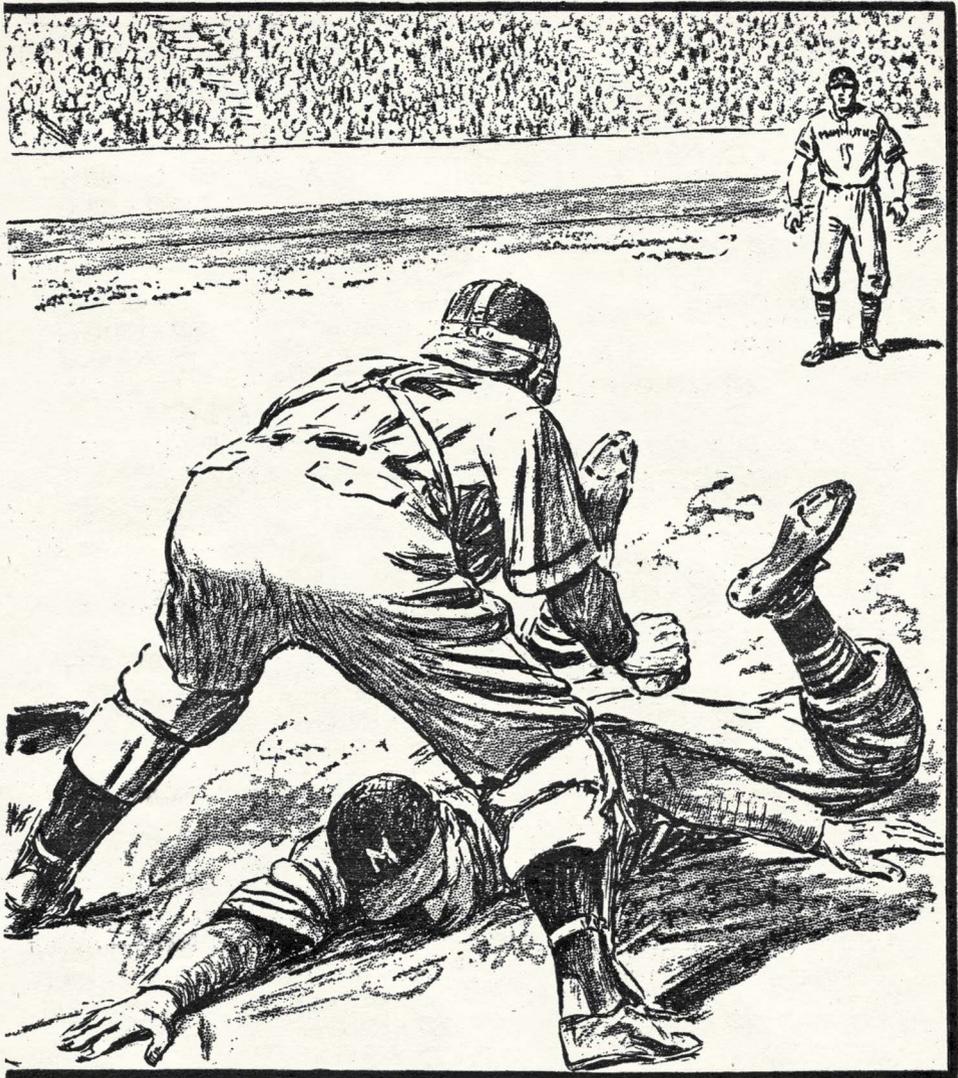


SUICIDE SPIKES

A Baseball Novel

By

RUSSELL GRAY



Oliver didn't raise his head or pause. He headed for home and dived. . . .

He murdered eight guys' pennant dreams on the hot corner—he was suicide at the plate—the kid who swore he'd be the best thing that ever happened to the once mighty Mammoths—or the last!

CHAPTER ONE

Soft-Boiled Busher

THE MAMMOTHS started the season with the strongest left side in the league—the great Whitey Green at third, Manager George Moodie at second, the veteran Earl Donovan in left field. But by the end of July there was a hole in the hot corner through which the ball poured with depressing

regularity. And it got worse, not better.

The trouble started when Whitey Green slid into second and broke his leg. A couple of weeks later Bert Warrender, the utility infielder, was rushed off to the hospital to have his appendix carved out. What with other injuries, that practically cleared the bench.

George Moodie, the playing manager, dragged Gabby Kent in from the right pasture to play third. Gabby was a better than fair outfielder; as an infielder he was merely pathetic.

In ten days we slipped from first place to third, behind the Atlantics and the Wildcats.

"Frankie," George Moodie said to me, "I can't see anything left for me to do but put you back on the active list."

He was kidding, of course. It was a good ten years since I'd hung up my glove to become coach for the Mammoths, and I'd been thirty-eight then. It shows how desperate George was, to even kid about me playing again.

"What about bringing up Kessler from our Center City farm?" I suggested.

"Would he be an improvement over what we've got?"

I had to admit that Kessler wouldn't. Big-league third basemen weren't picked off trees, and if you didn't have one who could stay out of the way of his own legs, the opposition could murder you with dragging bunts and grass cutters. Which was the way we were currently being murdered.

And what was even worse than the runs we were giving away, was the effect on the team: The Mammoths had been a smooth, snappy outfit. Now they were ragged, and ragged clubs don't win pennants, or even finish in the first division.

That talk with George Moodie was just before a game, and a couple of hours later we'd dropped another to the Atlantics when Gabby Kent got too anxious on a double-play ball and threw it into right

field, letting the tying and winning runs trickle through. Despondently George and I made for the clubhouse, and there was that wire from Joe Gladd.

Joe was our scout and about the best in the business. According to his wire, he'd just come out of a B-league ball park, where he'd seen a third baseman that had made his eyes pop. "Grab him," he wired. "He's got the makings of another Pie Traynor."

Personally I think there won't be another Pie Traynor soon, but Joe Gladd wasn't given to superlatives. Not much, anyway.

George looked at the telegram a full minute and then said, "If Joe's so high on him, he's got something. Maybe enough to plug up the hole in third."

"Wait a minute," I protested. "You can't take a kid out of the bushes and make a big-leaguer out of him in a day."

"I can try," George said. "If he's half the player Joe says, I've got nothing to lose. I'll wire Joe to have this Oliver Hall here by tomorrow."

The train pulled in at twelve ten. I was at the station with George to meet him, and Adele Taylor was with us.

Adele Taylor was hardly ever beyond reach of George, even at the ball park, where she had a box behind our dugout. She was one of those tall, sleek blondes who look as if they'd been poured out of a bottle of lacquer. On top of that, she had money, leaving her free to indulge her two hobbies—rooting for the Mammoths and being the Mammoth's manager's girl friend. She struck me as being too flashy for a big, humorless hunk of man like George, but that was strictly none of my business.

NOBODY who looked like a ball player got off that train. When the passengers stopped coming off the ramp, I glanced around and spotted a slim kid standing beside a big leather bag.

"Maybe that's him," I said.

"That infant?" George said.

"He's cute," Adele Taylor said.

He was cute, all right, with rosy cheeks and wavy brown hair. You wanted to pat his head and feed him lollypops. But as there was nobody else waiting, I went over to him and asked him if he was Oliver Hall.

"Why, yes," he said in a gentle tone. "Are you from the Mammoths, mister?"

I told him I was and shook his hand and led him over to the others. It was plain that George wasn't impressed, but Adele gave him a smoldering smile that made him gawk. Likely he was a small-town lad who'd never seen anybody like her except on a magazine cover.

The four of us had lunch together. Oliver told us that he was twenty-one years old. He could easily have passed for seventeen. He was shy and so polite that it hurt, and he blushed every time he met Adele's blandly interested gaze. And he was scared. Well, so had I been the first time I'd come up to play in the majors.

"I'm afraid I'm not a very good hitter," he confessed to George. "I batted only two eighteen, and that's against minor league pitching."

"We've got hitters," George said. "What we need is somebody at third who can find the handle on a ball."

"I'll do my best, Mr. Moodie."

We went directly from the restaurant to the clubhouse. I introduced him around, and he gazed in awe at each player in turn. These were the big names of the sports pages and the record books, the national heroes like Earl Donovan and Del Lightfoot. "I'm very glad to meet you," he said every time he shook a hand.

I got him a uniform, and while he was dressing I joined a group of players at the other end of the room. They were a mighty puzzled bunch.

"What is he?" Del Lightfoot, the pitch-

er, asked in a puzzled tone. "A mascot?"

"A third baseman," I said.

They considered that worth a laugh, but they stopped laughing when I told them how high Joe Gladd was on him. Hippy Strouss, the chunky catcher, said that the Mammoths were in a bad way if they had to rob a kindergarten for players. Gabby Kent, who'd been sweating blood at third, said he didn't care if an old woman in a wheelchair took over, as long as he could get back to right field where he belonged.

"Look at his hands," Earl Donovan, who's built like the side of a truck, said to me. "They're too small for an infielder."

"They're the biggest part of him," I said. "And don't ride him, you guys. He's high-strung. Give him a chance."

They nodded, not taking their eyes off him. The kid could be mighty important to them, but they had to be shown. So did I.

I went over to Oliver. "Ready, kid?"

He ran his tongue over his lips and nodded. I could see that he was as taut as a violin string.

George sent him to third for the warm-up. I stood near him at the foul line. His eyes roamed the stadium that was beginning to fill up.

He took a deep breath and said, "Big park."

"Second biggest in the league," I told him proudly. "Watch it!"

Hippy Strouss had thrown the ball at his head. Oliver spun, caught it cleanly, and snapped it across the diamond to Al Rubin on first. The infield peppered the ball around, testing the kid's arm. There was nothing wrong with it. He got plenty of whip into his throws and had a sweet underhand toss to second.

After a while I picked up a bat and fed him hot grounders. He scooped the first one up on a short hop. He went to his left for the second ball and sent it to first

without waste motion. At short George Moodie started to grin. Every player on the team was watching the kid.

"Try him on slow rollers," Hippy Strouss urged.

That's the supreme test for an infielder. I trickled one along the foul line. Oliver came in like a streak, gobbled the ball up, and in the same fluid motion shot it to George who was perched on second. George's grin broadened.

"Can it be we have a third baseman?" Strouss said hopefully.

Warm-ups didn't mean much. I'd seen high-school players look good when it didn't count. I kept my fingers crossed.

Later, at batting practice, the best Oliver did was a loud foul and an infield fly. But George Moodie was happy.

We were standing outside the dugout, watching Oliver at the plate. George shifted his wad of gum from one side of his mouth to the other. "Frankie, I'm going to play him today."

"You're crazy," I said. "It's bad enough you're bringing him up so quick. He hasn't had even a morning workout with the team. Give him at least a week."

"I like what I've seen of him," George said placidly, "and I'll be at short to steady him. Besides, what've we got to lose? He can't be much worse than Gabby."

GEORGE waited until a couple of minutes before game time to tell Oliver. The kid just nodded, as if he'd expected that, and kept wetting his lips and looking around the stadium. It was the middle of the week and there was a fair crowd of eighteen thousand, but that must have looked like close to all the people in the world to him.

"Just take it easy, kid," I said, patting his shoulder. "Forget about the crowd."

"I'll try to, Mr. Jenkins," he said, and walked out to his position.

Lou Wilcox, a pull right-hander, was

lead-off man for the Atlantics. George waved Oliver closer to the bag. The kid obeyed and wiped his ungloved hands on his pants.

"Show 'em, Oliver!" a voice came clear and loud from behind me.

That was Adele Taylor in her usual box behind the dugout. Oliver turned his head. She waved to him. He waved back. His hand was still in the air when Wilcox smacked the first ball pitched.

I yelled. Oliver glanced about, startled, and never saw the line drive whistle a foot past his ear. A look of utter disgust was on Earl Donovan's face as he picked up the ball on one hop in short left.

George Moodie threw down his glove. Hands on hips, he strode over to Oliver.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Moodie," I heard Oliver say.

George was too good a manager not to know how to handle rookies who made mistakes. With this sensitive, scared kid in particular, words of encouragement were in order. Instead, George poured acid over him.

The kid stood listening, the red getting deeper and deeper on his smooth cheeks. Once or twice as he spoke George glanced in the direction of Adele Taylor.

On the next batter Del Lightfoot lost the plate and pitched four wide balls. The third man up for the Atlantics hit a fly to deep right field. Gabby Kent, now back in his familiar position, backtracked and snared the ball. Immediately after the catch, Lou Wilcox tore for third, and Gabby threw to head him off.

The ball reached third on one hop, with Wilcox still three strides away. Oliver was there, waiting for it, but his gloved hand wasn't. The ball skimmed between his elbow and his hip and rolled to the bench. Oliver raced for it and slammed into Hippy Strouss who had come up from home plate. Eventually Hippy retrieved the ball, but by that time all possible damage had been done.

Both base runners had scored.

There was a vast silence as Oliver moved back to third where George was standing on the bag.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Moodie. I don't know how it happened."

George looked at him, shifted his gum, and walked away.

Lightfoot fanned the clean-up man, and the side was retired on a line drive to short. In our half of the first we got the two runs back when Donovan parked one in the stands and George Moodie and Al Rubin put a single and a double together.

But it didn't last. The first man up for the Atlantics in the second dumped a bunt along the third-base line. Oliver charged down on it and past it. Toward the end of the inning a grass cutter went through Oliver's legs, bringing in a couple of runs.

The Atlantics were merciless. The right-handed hitters pulled everything to the left; the left-handed hitters pushed to the left. At the end of the game four errors were marked up against Oliver, but those didn't include officially scored hits which should have been outs or double plays. We lost, 7-4, and five of the Atlantic runs had been handed to them by Oliver. At bat he'd looked at third strikes twice, fouled to the catcher once, popped to the pitcher once.

That was a pretty sad bunch of players that wandered off to the showers. The

Atlantics had swept the three-game series, putting them a full five games ahead of us.

I looked around for Oliver, but he had gone inside. George Moodie, disconsolately chewing his gum, came over to me.

"Live and learn," he said. "My hunch about the kid cost the game."

I snorted. "You were going to steady him, but all you did was give him a case of the jitters when he pulled that boner on Wilcox."

"Even a sandlot kid knows enough to pay attention to the game he's playing."

"You were sore because Adele Taylor waved to him," I said. "You took it out on the kid because you're jealous of every man she looks at."

George didn't meet my eyes. He said, "He didn't show anything that makes him a ball player."

"He showed plenty to Joe Gladd. And you liked him all right during warm-up."

George sighed. "Okay, Frankie, so I'll send him to Coast City. Maybe in a year or two he'll be ready."

"And what are you going to do about third?"

"You're the guy complained I was rushing him," he reminded me.

"That was before the game. He's sensitive, high-strung. An experience like today can ruin him as a ball player. Give him one more chance."

George chewed some more, then turned his head to the box where Adele Taylor

CUT-TO-FIT HOMES CUT BUILDING COSTS **ORDER NOW**

SAVE UP TO 1/3

Build your own home and save the builders' profit—plus savings in lumber and labor with Sterling Ready-Cut-Homes. Anyone can assemble with simple, easy to follow plans furnished. Every house complete with all lumber, roofing, nails, glass, hardware, paint, doors and windows marked ready to erect. Freight paid. Complete building plans ready for filing at low cost. Sold separately if desired. Write today!

CHOICE OF 57 DESIGNS



PRICED FROM \$1885 UP

Send 25c for NEW COLOR CATALOG

INTERNATIONAL MILL AND TIMBER CO.
DEPT. PF 450, BAY CITY, MICHIGAN.

was waiting for him. He was impatient to go over to her. "Okay, Frankie, we'll see how the kid does tomorrow," he tossed off, and hurried to Adele.

OLIVER HALL wasn't in the dressing room. He wasn't anywhere around. A couple of players said they'd seen him dress in a rush and leave with his bag.

I'd been in baseball too long not to know what that meant. I hopped a taxi to the railroad station, and there was the kid in the waiting room. When I sat down beside him, he glanced at me and then quickly down at his knees.

"Running out, Oliver?" I said.

"I lost the game," he said. "I'm ~~no~~ good."

I lit a cigarette and blew smoke through my nostrils. "What do you know about Frankie Jenkins?"

"Why, that's you—one of the real great second basemen. Last year you missed the Hall of Fame by only a few votes."

I said, "I was a couple of years older than you when I came up to the majors. I didn't have to make the jump overnight like you. A few years in the bushes, a year on a triple-A club, then spring training with the Mammoths, weeks of working out with the team—all that before I started in my first major-league game. But two days after the opening game I packed my bag and headed home to Iowa and swore I'd never again put on a glove. I was convinced I was a flop."

It was a good story, and almost true. At any rate, on that day almost thirty years ago, I had thought of giving up, even if I hadn't actually done so. And the story was having its effect. I saw Oliver's round jaw start to jut.

"But you think you're better than any major leaguer," I told him scornfully. "You think you can come up cold from the bushes and be a ball of fire the first day. A top man like Whitey Green has

plenty of bad days. Remember two years ago how he made four errors in the opening game of the series? You didn't find him running out on the club and on himself. But maybe you've got the right idea, Oliver. The game has no room for guys who can't take it."

Suddenly Oliver Hall stood up, and there were intense, angry fires in his big brown eyes. "Where am I supposed to stay, Mr. Jenkins?"

"You're going to room with me, and my roommates always call me Frankie."

"Let's go, Frankie," he said.

Next morning Oliver and I went out to the ball park early. I was feeding him bunts when the players trickled in for the workout. Oliver flushed, expecting the boys to be hostile because of the way he'd botched the game yesterday. You could see surprise spread over his face when one after another gave him a cheery, "Hi, kid."

Earl Donovan thumped his shoulder and asked how it was going. Al Rubin devoted ten minutes to giving him some pointers on throwing to first. George Moodie spoke to him like a father to his favorite son.

Baseball players are as decent people as you'll find in any group. It's an uncertain and heartbreaking profession; the best of them can't be sure where they'll be tomorrow. Except for the heels you'll find everywhere, they're anxious to give a teammate a break, especially a rookie.

The Wildcats were in for four games. Because they were in second place and the Mammoths a game and a half behind them, that was what the sportswriters call a crucial series.

Oliver Hall was no ball of fire and he let a hopper go through him for a single that Whitey Green could have trapped without trouble, but he handled every chance with innate skill. He even got himself a hit on a neatly placed bunt in front of the plate, and then from third

he scored on a right-field fly, hooking in cleanly under the catcher's legs.

As Oliver brushed dirt from his pants, George went over to shake his hand. In the dugout the players handed him the "Nice stuff, kid," and "Keep it up, kid," encouragement—and Oliver blushed.

The Mammoths put together nine runs to the Wildcats' six, thereby breaking a five-game losing streak.

"The kid wasn't bad," George admitted to me as he came off the field. "If he improves only a little bit, we'll get by."

"He's going to improve a lot," I said.

"Don't say it out loud, Frankie. I'm superstitious."

When Oliver and I came out of the clubhouse, Adele was standing there waiting for George. She handed the kid that dazzling smile of hers. "You were wonderful today, Oliver."

That was laying it on thick. He hadn't been anywhere near wonderful and she knew it.

The kid dropped his eyes. "Do you really think so, Miss Taylor?"

"I really do, Oliver. And please call me Adele."

The conversation bored me. I nudged him to come along.

"She's a beautiful woman," he said reflectively when we reached the street.

I grunted and flagged a cab.

CHAPTER TWO

Grandstand High Jinks

EARLY every morning, weather permitting, Oliver and I went out to the ball park before the other players got there. I smoothed off rough edges on his fielding, gave him pointers on base running, worked on his hitting. The other players went out of their way to help.

The Mammoths took three out of four from the Wildcats and found themselves in second place. By the time we ended

our home stay we were two games behind the Atlantics. On the road we took ten out of thirteen, and returned home only half a game out of first.

The sportswriters made a lot of fuss over the kid. That pretty face of his looked good among the mugs decorating the sports pages. He made fine copy. The Boy Wonder, the scribes called him—the sparkplug who had revived the Mammoths.

He was fast, all right. He was lightning on slow rollers and bunts and dazzled the eye on grass-cutters. When the occasion demanded, he could streak into short left field for a fly. On top of that he could outrun anybody on the club.

He turned out to be better with a stick than we'd dared hope. I doubted if he'd ever powder one out of the park, short of a miracle, but he had a knack of pushing the ball where the fielders weren't.

I remember that when we came home from the road trip there was a flock of reporters waiting for us at the station. Adele Taylor was there, too. After she kissed George Moodie, she kissed Oliver also, a smack on the cheek which brought red all the way down to his neck.

"For helping George win the pennant," she told him, though there was still a hard road to go for the pennant.

That was one time that George Moodie didn't show jealousy at her being within a couple of feet of another man. He grinned happily, talking to the newsmen about Oliver as if he'd invented him.

It was about a week later that I came into our hotel room and found Oliver pasting clippings into a scrapbook. He blushed a little when I stood watching him, but not much. I'd noticed that lately he wasn't nearly as shy as in those first days.

"I didn't know you collected clippings," I commented.

Oliver concentrated on smearing paste on the back of a sports column.

"I don't see any harm in it," he muttered.

"Sure not." I reached past him and flipped open the scrapbook. It was a thick book and more than half filled with stories about Oliver from newspapers all over the country. "How do you manage to collect them?"

"I subscribe to a clipping agency."

He was now pasting up a two-column photo of himself being kissed at the station by Adele Taylor.

"Don't get a swelled head, Oliver," I said, joking.

"You don't have to worry, Frankie," he replied gravely.

He sat down with the scrapbook and started to read it over from the first page. I had an idea that he knew everything in it by heart.

I guess I wasn't exactly surprised when I noticed a difference in his playing. It became really conspicuous in a game against the Bears under the arc lights, with forty thousand people in the stands.

The first Bear up worked Jack French, our pitcher, for a three and two count and then walked on an outside curve. The second Bear sent a sizzler between third and short—a sure single. Or it should have been. At the crack of the bat Oliver broke to his left on the grass and fell sideways. The ball struck his gloved fingers and dribbled a couple of feet away. Without rising, Oliver lunged for it with his bare hand. Still stretched on the grass, he flipped it to George on second to beat the runner from first by half a step. George whirled, whipped the ball to Al Rubin for a double play.

Forty thousand fans rose to give Oliver a tremendous hand. Modestly he touched his cap. Then he glanced at the box behind the dugout and out of all those people applauding picked out Adele Taylor waving to him. He touched his hat again, this time just for her.

A couple of innings later an easy

grounder was hit on a line to third. There was no Bear on base, and the Bear who had hit the ball had as much speed as a hay wagon. Oliver had all the time in the world to wait for the ball and leisurely throw him out, making it a sure play.

But Oliver charged in on the ball as if his life were at stake, plucked it out of the dirt with his bare hand, and without pivoting rifled a side-arm throw to first. The throw was a trifle wide; if Al Rubin had had an inch less reach he would have lost it, and a sure out would have been good for two bases.

Again the stands were in an uproar. To the fans it had looked like sensational stuff. Again Oliver modestly touched his cap.

From short George scowled at the kid, but didn't say anything.

G OING into the bottom half of the ninth, the Mammoths were behind, 3-2. Les Jones, our second-sacker, led off with a single. Oliver, batting in the eighth slot, got the sign to sacrifice him along. He dribbled a bunt across the third-base line and beat it out. Two men on and none out. The fans talked it up, begging for a brace of runs.

George yanked Jack French for a pinch hitter, who promptly fanned. With one out, Gabby Kent got the good wood on a sinker and drove it between right and center.

That day I was coaching at third. I waved Les Jones in and then took a quick look at both fielders still chasing the ball. "It's a cinch," I yelled to Oliver as he pounded toward third.

Halfway to the plate, Oliver glanced over his shoulder and saw that the center-fielder had just gotten his hand on the ball. The Bear second baseman was set for the relay. Oliver had enough time to score the winning run by getting down on his hands and knees and crawling to home plate, but from ten feet away he

went into a head-first dive and slid between the catcher's legs. In the excitement hardly anybody noticed that it was a couple of seconds later before the ball pounded into the catcher's mitt. Then out of the dust Oliver rose in glory.

The fans loved it. They poured out on the field; a couple of hundred tried to get at him.

The paper next morning had a three-column picture of Oliver's phony slide. It looked like the real thing, with Oliver on his belly reaching for the plate and the catcher crouching over him and the umpire's head bent to watch the play.

That photo promptly went into Oliver's scrapbook.

I suppose what was happening to him was inevitable. A kid from the sticks becomes a sensation in a few weeks. His teammates, the fans, the sportswriters make a fuss over him. Applause is music to his ears, and the way to get applause when there's no opportunity to earn it, is to make the opportunity.

A fly back of third that my grandmother could catch in her pocket, Oliver would take off his ear. He played easy grounders as if they'd been shot out of a gun. He never reached for a line drive; he leaped or dived for the ball when he could have made it simpler and surer by keeping his feet planted. When he had plenty of time to toss a runner out, he didn't straighten up for the peg; he

snapped it from a crouch or bent over or any other fancy position short of standing on his head.

George Moodie was the only one who had a gripe. "I'd like to break that kid's fool neck," he said to me, "if he doesn't do it himself with that stunting of his. I had a talk with him the other day. He put his calf eyes on me and said, 'But, Mr. Moodie, I'm naturally a fast man and can't help playing that way.' Hooey!"

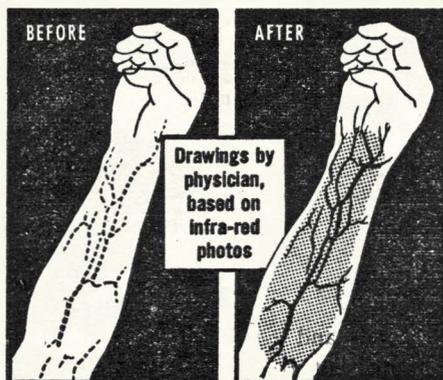
"I don't get you, George," I said. "Here he's solved our third-base problem. On top of that he's given the whole team a lift. We were five games out of first when he joined the club and now we've got a lead. What more do you want?"

"I don't care for stunting on the field. Baseball is a serious business."

"Sure it is," I said. "Oliver is playing a whale of a game. He's entitled to a little applause. We've both seen what happened to other kids when they became stars overnight. Think they're too big for their pants; start going out with fast crowds. Oliver has remained a nice, steady kid. No drinking, no women—nothing like that."

George looked at me with a queer, fixed stare. Then he grunted and walked off.

THAT night I woke up at twelve and found that Oliver hadn't come in yet. That was the first time I'd known him to break training. I sat up.



HOW SLOAN'S LINIMENT AIDS MUSCULAR PAINS

Here's vital news for sufferers from muscular aches and rheumatic pains. Using infra-red rays, scientists have now succeeded in photographing blood-vessels *below the skin-surface*. These photos (see pictures at left) prove that, after an application of Sloan's Liniment, the veins *expand* . . . evidence that the treated area gets *extra* supplies of blood, to revitalize tissues and wash away waste matter and poisons faster.

When you use Sloan's Liniment, you *know* that it is increasing the all-important flow of blood to the treated area, and that this effect *extends below the skin-surface*. No wonder Sloan's helps to bring blessed relief from rheumatic aches, arthritis pains, lumbago, sore muscles. Sloan's has been called "the greatest name in pain-relieving liniments." Get a bottle today.

He barged in at one-thirty, so drunk he was wobbling.

I stood up slowly, remembering what I'd said about him not having any bad habits.

"Where in the heck have you been?" I demanded.

He simpered. His facial muscles seemed to have lost control; his big brown eyes were bleary. "Party," he said thickly.

I felt my fists clench. I wanted to beat to a pulp whoever had done that to him. "Who'd you go with?"

"Adele."

I gawked at him. "Adele Taylor?"

"Sure. Only Adele I know. Lovely girl."

"Is that her lipstick all over your face?"

He giggled. "Guess I better wash it off."

I undressed him. I shoved him under a cold shower and then dumped him into bed. It was useless to try to talk to him when he was in that condition.

But next morning I told him plenty. I blistered the skin off him. He listened meekly as he dressed. He was pale and tired-looking, suffering from a hangover.

When I paused for breath, he said contritely, "I'm sorry, Frankie. Last night was the first time I ever got drunk. It won't happen again."

"And stay away from Adele," I said. "She's George's girl."

At that his round jaw jutted. "I love her, Frankie."

"You what?"

"I love her. Last night she told me she doesn't care for George any more."

I talked to Oliver some more. I told him that Adele was too old for him, that it was a pretty mean thing to take her away from George, that she wasn't the right woman for him. It didn't do any good; it never does. In the end Oliver told me to mind my own business. He said it pleasantly, the way he said and did everything.

"You're a damn-fool kid," I said weakly. "Maybe you'll get some sense into your head after we've had some breakfast."

George was in the hotel dining room. We didn't sit at his table, but he came over. He stood with his hands gripping the back of a chair and looked down at Oliver with expressionless eyes.

"It'll cost you one hundred bucks for coming in drunk last night," he said.

I don't know how George knew. But a good manager knows everything about his ball players.

The kid handed George a level stare. "I think that you're giving me that fine chiefly because I was out with Adele."

Five of George's fingers lifted from the chair and tightened. "If I didn't need you at third," he said tightly, "I'd smash in that pretty face." Then he returned to his table.

We ate our breakfast in silence.

In spite of his hangover, Oliver played a steady enough game that day. Next day he was back to his flashy self.

George and Oliver didn't say more to each other than was absolutely necessary, and then they spoke briefly and stiffly, as if they hadn't been introduced to each other.

August ran into September and the pressure increased. We went on the road and played at a better than seven hundred percent clip, but so did the Atlantics. We couldn't shake loose from them. We returned for a brief home stay with only a cat's whisker between the two clubs.

Adele was at the station when we got in. Tucking a hand through Oliver's arm, she went off with him. I saw George looking after them, and his heavy face was stiff; his eyes were tired.

Next day we had a double-header with the Wildcats. They'd faded fast in recent weeks, but to us every game meant top money. We watched the Atlantics' score on the board as intently as our own.

The Mammoths dropped the first game in a 1-0 heartbreaker. Del Lightfoot, our ace, pitched a masterful three-hitter, allowing one run on a walk and a double. The Mammoths collected seven hits, but couldn't bunch enough in one inning.

When that game ended, the score board showed that the Atlantics had an 8-2 lead going into the seventh. There was little chance that they wouldn't take their single game, which meant that we had to win the second half of our double-header to stay in first place.

THINGS went bad right in the top half of the second. The Wildcats started with a homer. A walk, a pop fly, and an infield single put men on first and second with only one away. The next Wildcat batter bounced to Oliver.

In the dugout I heaved a sigh of relief. That ball was hit hard enough to mean a certain double play. All Oliver had to do was take a step to his left and flip the ball to second.

But that wasn't Oliver's style. He ran in on the ball. Maybe it struck a pebble, as he said later. To me it looked as if he ran in too far, misjudging the hop, and the ball struck his chest and rolled.

He pounced on the ball. It was too late to make a play at second or third, but there was still plenty of time to get the batter racing to first. Oliver could afford to straighten up for the throw. He didn't because that wasn't his style either. Still stooping in the pick-up position, he zipped the ball under his arm. The ball hit the first-base bag and bounded past Al Rubin.

Two runs poured across the plate on what should have been the second and third outs.

George started toward Oliver, then changed his mind and returned to his position. It was so quiet in the park that the dozen or so people who booed sounded like a multitude. Oliver's rosy face twitched.

The Wildcats scored three more times in that inning.

Oliver said nothing when he came to the bench. Neither did George. Neither did the players. The fans considered that just a hard-luck error, the kind any player is entitled to now and then. Every man on the Mammoths knew that by his stunning Oliver had handed the Wildcats those five big runs on a platter.

To add to our grief, the score board showed that the Atlantics had won their game.

The Mammoths whittled away at that five-run lead. By the seventh the score was tied at five-five. Oliver hadn't contributed any part of those runs. Each time at bat he'd swung with everything he'd had; twice he'd fanned air and once he'd popped out.

Oliver was the first man up. I was coaching at first. I relayed George's signal from the bench to bunt. That was Oliver's best chance to get on base. He looked at a couple of balls and a strike and then swung from his heels at a high outside-pitch.

The ball made a beeline for the pitcher's box. Mountain Silik was in there for the Wildcats, a speed artist but with all his speed in his left arm. As a fielder, he was a study in slow motion. His gloved hand came up a split second too late. The ball was stopped by the webbing and fell to the mound. By the time Silik got his ponderous bulk around to picking up the ball and heaving it to first, Oliver was past the bag.

"What's the idea ignoring the sign?" I raged.

"Well, I'm on base," he told me affably.

"You got horseshoes in your pocket," the Wildcat first baseman growled. "Anybody but Silik, you would've been dead."

Which was true. I had a pretty good idea why he'd disobeyed orders and tried to tear the cover off the ball. It went back to those boos in the second inning.

He was used to applause, and he'd figured that a good way to get it was to give the ball a ride for extra bases. Somewhere, in his thinking, he'd lost the team.

But the fact remained that he was on base with none out. The fans started to talk it up hopefully.

George put in Abe Minnow to bat for the pitcher. Abe could powder that ball; he was also good at wheedling walks. With three runs needed, the important thing was for him to get on by hook or crook.

Silik went into his wind-up and glanced over his left shoulder. Oliver was a good ten feet off the bag. I gave him the sign to hug the bag, but he ignored it. Silik pitched to the batter, outside and high. The instant the Wildcat catcher got his hand on the ball, he zipped it to first. Oliver slid back headfirst and just about made it.

That was sheer foolishness. One run or two wouldn't do us any good. The least we needed was for two runners to score behind Oliver. I signed to him to cut his lead down.

Oliver nodded, adjusted his cap, and looked across the diamond. I knew that he was looking toward Adele Taylor's box. When Silik went into his wind-up, Oliver took an even bigger lead than before. At the pitch he was off for second.

Oliver had a good jump on the ball, but the Wildcat catcher's peg was perfect. The umpire's thumb jerked over his shoulder. A groan swept the stands.

CHAPTER THREE

Mr. Big Head

ANGRILY Oliver leaped up and started jawing the umpire. The result was as always—the umpire turned his back. Oliver took a step after him and stopped, looking around. None of his teammates was coming out on the field to back him up.

George didn't even look at him when he reached the bench.

Abe Minnow got himself a Texas League single. The next Mammoth batter fanned for two out. George Moodie punched a single through the box. Al Rubin swept both home with a triple. Earl Donovan caught hold of a low pitch and for a couple of breathless seconds it looked as if the ball would never stop going. But the Wildcat centerfielder, playing Donovan deep, backed up to the wall and pulled the ball down.

Two runs were one too few. We'd dropped both ends of the double-header, and dropped into second place.

I shuffled across the diamond through jubilant Wildcat players dashing for their dressing room. George was coming toward me. We met at the pitcher's mound.

The storm I expected to find in his florid face wasn't there. His voice was fairly calm. Those were bad signs.

"Frankie," he said, "did you send the kid to second?"

I hesitated for a moment, but there was no point in covering up for Oliver. George knew; he was asking only for the record.

"No," I said.

George nodded. "That crazy kid handed them five runs in the second and then broke the back of our rally. If he'd obeyed signs and played it safe, Al's triple would've tied the score with only one out. Then Earl's deep fly would've scored Al from third with the winning run."

There was no arguing against that. Together we walked to the clubhouse.

The boys were undressing in an atmosphere of gloom. Oliver was off by himself, getting out of his shirt.

George strode over to him. "That will cost you five hundred dollars," he said.

You could have heard a heartbeat in the dressing room then. Color flowed from Oliver's cheeks.

"For what?" he asked.

"For handing the Wildcats the game

twice over. For ignoring two signs from Frankie."

Oliver stood up with his shirt still caught in one arm. He looked straight at George. He said evenly, "There's only one reason why you'd fine me that much. You're taking it out on me this way because of Adele."

George raised a fist. I leaped at him, grabbed his arm. He looked at me, then at Oliver, then strode out of the dressing room.

AT THE start of the game next afternoon it seemed that Oliver had learned his lesson. He laid off playing for applause. After three or four innings, I began to wish that he would go back to his grandstand playing.

He played listlessly, as if he'd lost interest in baseball. He let a couple of balls go past him that weren't marked as errors only because he didn't get close enough to them. At bat he looked at third strikes on three different occasions.

The Wildcats took the third straight game by one run.

The Mammoths continued the slump that started the day we dropped the double-header to the Wildcats.

We went on our final road trip of the season. Oliver's play didn't improve and George benched him for several days. Gabby Kent came back from right field to third base, but all that proved once again was that Gabby, on his best day, wasn't an infielder.

I knew that if the team could have gotten along without Oliver, George would have traded him or sent him back to the bushes the day he slapped the five hundred buck fine on him. As it was, George had no choice. So after a few days of Gabby Kent on third, Oliver went back into the game.

We had one lucky break, and that was that the Atlantics went into a slump at about the same time. In fact, the Mam-

moths revived sufficiently in the four-game series with the Atlantics to take three of those games. That helped to keep within hailing distance of the lead.

But we all knew that the Atlantics would soon snap back. We weren't at all sure that the Mammoths would.

A couple of days before the road trip ended I received a telegram. After reading it, I went to George and said that my married sister was very sick and could I have a few days off. George said okay.

The evening the team returned home I was at the station.

I said hello to George and then suggested that he go out with me for a beer. When he agreed, I said, "I'd like to take Oliver along."

George scowled. "I don't sit at the same table with that heel."

"Are you manager of the Mammoths or aren't you?" I said. "Do you want to win the pennant or don't you?"

FIRST AID for
ACID INDIGESTION

When Acid Indigestion Follows a heavy meal
Try Alka-Seltzer for "First Aid"
And see how good you feel.

Alka-Seltzer

All drugstores
U. S. and Canada

He scratched his chin. "Trying to patch it up between me and the kid, eh?" He shrugged. "Have it your way, but you're wasting your time."

I went over to Oliver.

"Frankie," he asked me, "have you seen Adele?"

"She phoned me this morning that she's going to be out of town till tomorrow. Her mother is sick."

His face fell with disappointment.

"How about coming for a beer with George and me?" I said. "George wants to. I've got something I want to talk over with both of you."

Like George, he gave in. He didn't seem to care one way or the other.

I TOOK them to Lou's. It's what's called an intimate night spot. Intimate meant that the lights were kept low and the music didn't tear at your nerves and two walls were lined with cozy little booths in which you could have a certain amount of privacy.

The three of us ordered beers and hamburgers. I had to do all the talking because if I hadn't there would have been a vast and depressing silence in our booth.

George kept rolling the beer glass between his palms. Oliver munched his hamburger as if it were straw and watched Hector Luther's band.

The band finished its number. The dancers trickled off the floor. Luther left the platform and strode toward our booth, and past it to the next booth.

"Hi, sweetheart," I heard him say.

"Darling, I'm sorry I'm late," a woman said.

At the sound of her voice, Oliver stiffened. George stiffened. I picked up my second beer and drank half of it.

"I see by the papers that the Mammoth team is coming home today."

"So what?" the woman said.

"That brings your boy friend back to town, baby."

"You know very well you're the one I'm crazy about. So stop being foolish."

"But Oliver Hall is a good-looking kid," he went on. "A brilliant player."

"But now he's a bust. I can't stand second-raters. Besides, he started to bore me. He's hardly more than a child. Darling, I'm fed up with ball players."

Suddenly Oliver stood up. "Let's get out of here."

"Yeah," George said.

When we reached the street, George muttered good-night and wandered off. Oliver and I took a cab to our hotel.

George didn't show up at next morning's practice. He didn't appear on the field till a quarter to two.

As soon as he appeared, Oliver left the cage, where he was waiting for his turn at bat, and walked over to George. "I owe you an apology, Mr. Moodie."

"Because of Adele?" George scowled darkly. "After last night I know you did me a favor."

"I don't mean Adele. We're both well rid of her. I mean—" Oliver faltered and blushed. "I mean, I deserved that five hundred dollar fine."

A grin like a rising sun grew on George's face. "Forget about the fine. I'm rescinding it." He stuck out his hand.

Every Mammoth player on the field had stopped whatever he was doing to watch the manager and the third baseman shake hands. Smiles were passed around.

THE BEARS were in for three games, and almost as soon as the first one got under way all my beautiful hopes were dashed. The Bear lead-off man shoved a roller toward third. The ball skimmed through Oliver's legs for a one-base error.

Oliver hadn't tried anything fancy. He'd played that ball exactly right, except that maybe he'd been too eager.

The Bear on first was pushed home by a walk and a single. The Mammoths went out in quick order.

The way the second inning started, it looked as if the Mammoths had been lucky to give away only one run in the first. With one out, the Bears jammed the bases. George signaled the infield in, hoping to cut off a run at the plate.

The sound of the bat against the ball was like the crack of doom. The ball headed on a line a foot to the left of third base. If Oliver had been playing deeper, he might have had a chance for it. Just possibly. But I saw he was too far in.

Oliver went about a mile into the air, straight up as if yanked by a rope. When he came down, the ball was in the glove.

He lobbed it to second for the final out.

The crowd roared. Mechanically Oliver touched his cap, not smiling, not blushing, and strode to the bench.

The Mammoths started their half of the second with a couple of singles as if suddenly inspired, but there was a letdown when the next two batters couldn't do a thing except push the base runners forward. Oliver came to bat with men on second and third and two out.

He seemed in a hurry. He caught the first ball pitched and rode it over second, scoring both runners with a deep single.

With two down and Del Lightfoot, a weak hitter, at bat, I sent Oliver down for the steal. He reached second with time to spare. Lightfoot surprised everybody, particularly himself, by dumping the ball into short right field.

Oliver was off like a streak. That hit hadn't enough depth for a runner on second to go all the way around, but George came out from the bench and yelled to Oliver to keep going. Oliver didn't raise his head or pause. Spikes flashing, he headed for home and then dived. The ball reached the plate a second before he did, but he slid safely under the catcher.

That was all the scoring we did in that inning, but it set the team up.

In the fourth inning we got another run. In the fifth Oliver led off with a walk and scored, and then came up for a second time to drive in two runs with his first triple of the season. By the time the side was retired, the Mammoths had racked up eight runs.

It went on like that. The final score stood, Bears, 1; Mammoths, 16.

In sheer ecstasy, the Mammoth players almost beat Oliver to a pulp with their caps and their hands.

"From now on in the Atlantics haven't a chance," I said to George.

George put a level eye on me.

"I don't believe in coincidences, Frankie," he said abruptly. "I don't believe that Adele just happened to be in that booth."

I studied a spot on the floor. "Remember that telegram I got just before the end of the road trip?"

"Sure. Your sister was sick."

"She never felt better in her life," I said. "That wire was from a private detective agency. It didn't appear to me that Adele Taylor was the type who would sit home and read a book while her boy friend was on the road. The wire from the detective agency told me that every night she was going to see a band leader named Hector Luther."

"How'd you manage to have Adele in the booth next to ours?"

"Easy," I said. "A fat bribe to the headwaiter reserved one booth for us and persuaded him to lead Adele Taylor to the next one when she came in. The detective told me she arrived at about nine-thirty every night and that Luther always joined her."

George squeezed my arm. "For that, Frankie, you deserve a bonus if we win the pennant."

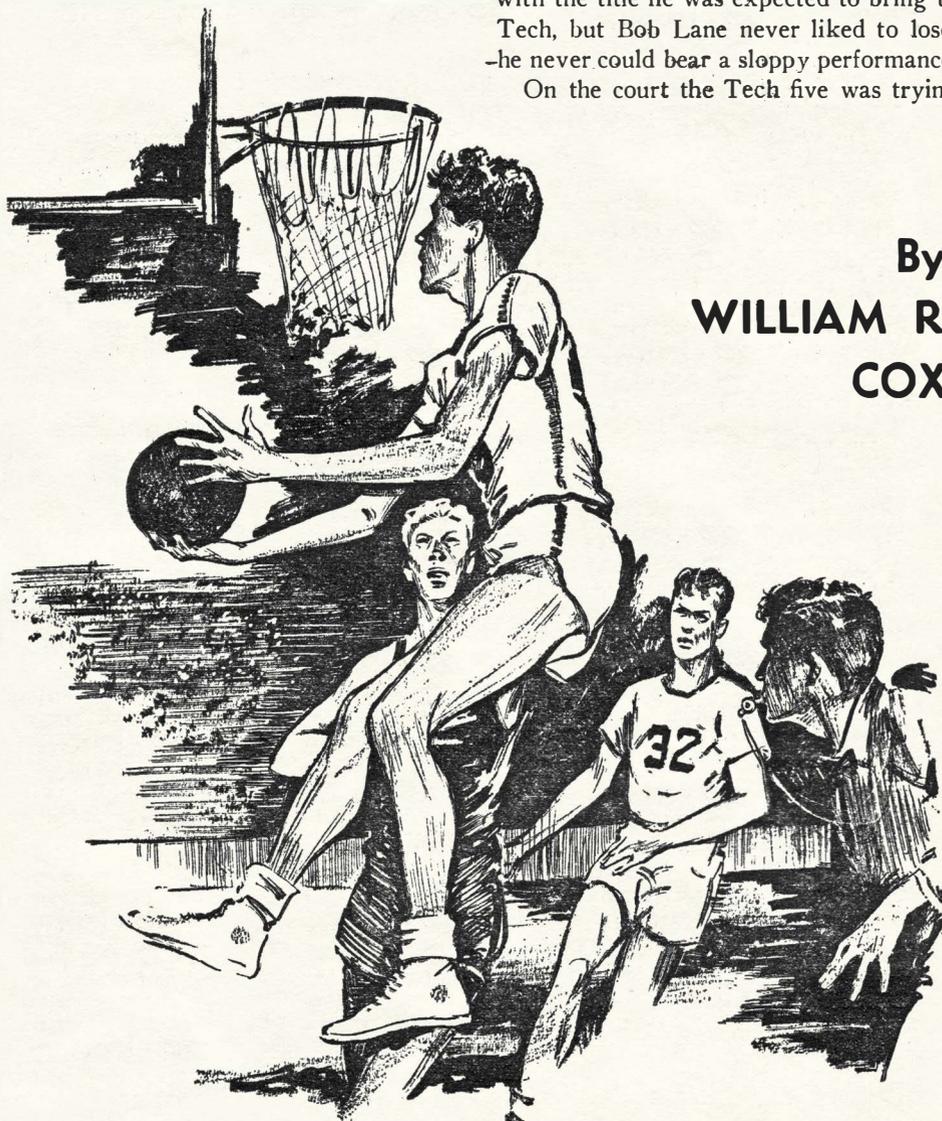
"If?" I said. "You mean *when* we win the pennant!"

We shook hands on that.

"Maybe you're too big to star for us," his four never-quit teammates told Jim Borden. "Maybe you're even too big to fight—" but they gave him all they had, and that was—

HELL IN A BASKET

His sure hands snatched leather from the hands of the startled Yale player



COACH Bob Lane jammed his left fist into his right palm. His Tech team was playing Yale. It was not a conference game, it had nothing to do with the title he was expected to bring to Tech, but Bob Lane never liked to lose, —he never could bear a sloppy performance. On the court the Tech five was trying

By
**WILLIAM R.
COX**

to set up a play. The idea was to give lanky Ray Shrader a lay-up under the Yale basket. The ball shuttled from Wally Fort to Dutch Otto, to Matt Levin as the Yales fought for possession.

Bob Lane glanced at the scoreboard again. It was Yale 42, Tech 38. His team needed four points to tie and the time was running out. He snapped, "Kelley!"

Slide Kelley came off the bench. He jittered a bit, standing beside the coach, watching. This was the spot where the speed and muscles of Jim Borden were supposed to pay off. The play had been rehearsed often enough. Borden, handsome, brawny, was supposed to decoy Ray Shrader's man, make a break, let the center go under the hoop.

Lane said tightly, "Watch Borden!"

"Yes, sir," said Kelley. He was a slim lad with red hair and freckles.

Borden made his break, finally. He moved effortlessly, with every earmark of the natural athlete. He slid into position, feinted. The Yale man hesitated. Borden ran.

Shrader broke for the basket. Levin had the ball and pivoted, faking a shot. Shrader was in the spot. Borden circled.

Shrader got the pass and started to shoot. A Yale man jumped, tipping the ball.

"You see?" demanded Bob Lane. "Too slow! Borden started too late—"

Kelley yelled, "Wowie! Looka that!"

Borden had put on the brakes instead of completing his circle. He reached out his long arms. His sure hands snatched leather from the hands of the startled Yale player. In one smooth motion he had thrown the ball, without a look, toward the bucket.

The two-pointer dropped through. Borden lazily ran downcourt to cover the surging Yale offense, knowing they did not dare try to freeze against the embattled Techs, knowing as well as the coach or anyone else that this was a fight-

ing, sterling Blue five, Ivy League champs, fit to compete in any league.

Lane muttered, "That's not basketball. He makes it just playground, pickup stuff. Dammit, he's *bored*, out there."

Kelley, a sophomore, said respectfully, "Yeah, coach. But he's the best we got!"

"No! He's not. And I'll prove it," said Lane abruptly. "Go in there. Send him out. Get that ball, Kelley!"

For a moment the boy looked frightened. Then, setting his jaw, he streaked onto the court.

Jim Borden grinned, slapped the kid on the shoulder and trotted off the boards. The Tech cheering section gave him a big, loud yell. He came straight to the bench and put on his silk jacket and sat down. He was a dark-haired young man, very tanned of skin, with deep blue eyes. His grin lingered, faint and indifferent. He did not speak to Bob Lane.

Kelley went in among the Blues. He could move like a streak and his sliding stop-and-pivot had given him his nickname. He hacked at the ball as a Yale started to pass. It slithered away and Levin, always a ball hawk, was on it.

Kelley lit out for the basket. Shrader motioned for the fast break with rotating motion downcourt. The Techs raced into their positions as the Yale team defended staunchly. Dutch Otto blocked a man to turn Slide loose and Kelley went under the hoop on a dead run. Shrader rammed the ball a step ahead of the youngster.

Kelley reached to take the ball. Saul, the Yale captain, came from nowhere. He stole the leather in mid-air. He hauled back and drove it far down the court.

"Too slow!" groaned Lane. "Too damned slow!" But in his heart he knew better. In his heart he knew Jim Borden would have pulled that play out of the fire . . . if Borden had bothered.

Yale took a shot and missed. The gun went off. The game was over. Yale had won by a field goal.

LANE walked to the dressing room without a word. It would be a long, unhappy bus ride back to Tech. He braced himself for what he knew he would be forced to do. He was a very young coach in a very important spot. He was a bit too young to be sure of his biggest decisions. He knew this, in all humility, knew he had much to learn about the psychology of handling men not too many years his junior.

He looked around at the men of the squad as they started undressing for the showers. They were downhearted, all right. It was only the second game they had lost—both outside the conference. But they had to meet Northern for the title in another week. They only got one shot at Northern this season, due to difficulties in the schedule-making. It was all or nothing against that crowd of court wizards and they were all thinking of it now.

All but Jim Borden, Lane amended angrily. That worthy was removing his socks, whistling "Some Enchanted Evening" and looking very satisfied with himself.

Lane paused beside his star forward. In low, savage accents he said, "Happy about something?"

Borden surveyed the coach coolly. "Bob, you take things too hard. Kelley did all he could in there. He's a fine boy, a great basketballer. You expect too much. Yale's got a great club. We did all right against them."

Lane said, "All right? We lose—that's all right?"

Borden sat looking at his bare feet. "You expect me to break down about losing a game?"

Lane took a deep breath. "You're on the team. You're a senior. You're the big star. And you don't give a damn!"

Borden looked around to see if any of the others were listening. Then he broke out his grin, staring straight at the coach.

"Frankly, I don't give a hoot about basketball. Never did."

"You what?" Lane's eyebrows threatened his scalp.

"Never did like the game," said Borden blithely. "Run, run, run. Pound on those boards. Throw a ball through a silly fish net. Stupid procedure, Bob. Not like football. Nothing to get your teeth into."

"You—don't—like—basketball?" The coach's jaw was rigid. It was hard for him to get the words out.

"Well, it's better than indoor track," said Borden judiciously. "I'm a scholarship kid, you know. Got to do three sports. Baseball, football, okay. So I do basketball."

Lane restrained himself with a heroic effort. He grated, "If I could do without you—if I could fire you off the squad—"

"Now don't get in an uproar, Bob," said Borden gently. "I do what I can out there. You're a very nice guy and you work hard. I'm on your side. Tell you what, Bob, I got a cute date tonight. Maybe she's got a sister—I'll blow you to a party at the Taft."

Lane's mind reeled. He said, "You—you—I wouldn't be seen with you! You—tramp athlete!" He managed to get away, off by himself.

He tried to stop his heart from pounding, to dismiss the urge to punch the handsome, grinning Borden in the nose. He began jabbering wildly to the squad, going from one man to the other, scarcely knowing what he said. They looked at him strangely, but it was not until they were in the bus and he settled into his seat, pretending to be asleep, that he gained full control of himself.

It was midnight then. Borden had cheerfully made the bus just as it pulled out, waving to a raucous group which had deposited him at the meeting place. Lane grunted at the driver to proceed and tilted his hat over his eyes.

Borden didn't like basketball! The star forward, the key man on a dozen tricky formations, the man around whom Lane had confidently built what he hoped was a championship team, disliked the game! It was almost more than he could bear.

He tried hard to rationalize it. He remembered his inexperience and honestly attempted to understand Borden.

The man was a war veteran. He was a star end at football, first baseman on a fine baseball team at Tech. Everything Borden tried in athletics came easy to him. He had never been All American, but he had been plenty good—and without much effort.

After all, Bob Lane tried to tell himself, it was not necessary that basketball be the religion of the players just because it was the coach's chosen line of endeavor.

Still—he moved restlessly—a player who didn't even *like* the game! He would have to do something about it. He thought of Kelley. The red-head was too young and inexperienced, he knew. Some day Kelley would be greater than Borden—greater than Saul of Yale or Ken Orban of Northern. They would say, "That's Coach Lane's boy—Lane made him—and he's real All America."

That would be in two years, when Kelley was a senior. But now—there was the Northern game, the Conference Championship. If he blew that—after such a good start—because Borden didn't care and wouldn't give out enough—he might not be around Tech when Kelley was a senior!

It was a long, weary ride back to Tech, all right—for Bob Lane.

SLIDE KELLEY came cautiously to the dorm, eased along the hall and ducked into the large room at the end. He closed the door and waved a handful of diagrammed sheets at the man who lay stretched on a window seat which overlooked the campus. "New plays!

Lane's gone nuts! We can't shift the whole system in two weeks, can we, Jim?"

Borden's blue eyes ran over the coach's handiwork. He said regretfully, "Made a mistake, kid. He was moanin' so low up at New Haven that I tried to cheer him a bit. Didn't work."

Kelley said in some awe, "Gee, you've been swell to me, Jim. Lane must be screwy. Why, I was scared stiff till you taught me to relax and not think about being on the varsity."

"Forget that," said Borden.

"Now he's trying to set the plays around Shrader. You know Ray can't pivot or move good enough. . . ."

There was a rap on the door, then Shrader, Leyin, big Dutch Otto and Wally Fort came in. Each bore a mittful of the new diagrams. They saluted Borden, arranged themselves about the room and glared indignantly at the reclining big man.

Shrader was the spokesman. "This is awful. Two weeks—and I'm the goat. What in Sam Hill did you do to Lane?"

Kelley blurted, "He didn't do anything!"

"Okay, hero-worshipper," Shrader said, his face cracking into mirthful lines. He gestured toward the blushing Kelley. "You see, Jim? You got responsibilities. What's the idea of ducking them?"

Borden said, "Made a mistake. I'm sorry, guys."

"Northern'll beat us to death," said Shrader. "I'm no pivot man."

The others waited, staring at Borden. Kelley was interlacing his fingers, head down, his jaw set. Jim got up off the window seat. He walked across the room and faced a picture on the wall. It was last year's team, with Race Kendall and Jojo Whales and the same crowd now in his rooms except young Kelley. They had almost beat Northern for the title last season.

He said, "What can I do? Lane's got

religion about basketball. He called me a tramp athlete. He thinks I'm dogging it. He's got principles—and he won't use me much, only in relief. Can't blame the guy—considering how he is."

Shrader said, "Couldn't you apologize?"

Borden swung around, facing them. "I told him I didn't like basketball."

Shrader's jaw fell, almost hitting him on the collarbone. Levin started to speak, checked himself. Dutch Otto jumped up. Wally Fort—another footballer—whistled through his teeth and muttered, "Golly gum-drop! I'd never of told him!"

But Shrader said in shocked accents, "You don't like the game? You told the coach?"

"A fellow gets tired," said Borden. "Real tired. Baseball runs into football. Football runs into basketball."

Shrader said slowly, "Well, if that's the way you feel, Jim. What can we say?"

They sat around awhile, but the conversation was pretty lame. Finally they shuffled out—all but Kelley.

The kid sat a moment, looking at the pictures on the wall, all the teams on which Jim had played. Then he blurted, "You don't act as though you hated basketball."

"Let it go, kid, let it go," said Borden wearily. "Learn the plays the man gave you."

Kelley started for the door. He looked, Jim Borden thought, like a kid bereft of his candy.

With a hand on the knob, Kelley said, "It ain't goin' to be fun any more."

He was gone. Jim Borden went back to the photographs which adorned his walls. How many years had it been? Four in high school. One in the prep school where they had learned "the Tech system." Three in the Army—that was eight. Then four years at Tech. This was his twelfth year of athletic competition.

He shook his head. He was sorry now that he had spoken as he had to Bob

Lane. He should have known the man would take it to heart, then act. Lane was an idealist, a rare thing amongst modern coaches in big schools with palatial athletic plants.

Borden liked Bob Lane, respected him. He went to his textbooks now—at Tech they also insisted on good grades—but the print kept fading before his eyes. He could not take his mind from the basketball team, from the coach, from woeful young Slide Kelley.

IN THE dressing room of the home gymnasium Bob Lane faced the squad. "I've tried to give you a pattern with which to beat Northern. I've done everything within my power, everything I thought was right."

Jim Borden met the challenging gaze of the coach. He sat alone, nursing his knee, the one which had been injured in football. He was careful not to show any feeling, to keep his eyes blank.

"This is the game we want," Lane went on. He was choosing his words with care, trying not to sound too sentimental, too corny. "Every Tech man wants this championship. If it was worth while to come out for the team, to play basketball for Tech—this game is worth fighting for. I'll give you the starting lineup." He drew a deep breath.

Jim Borden listened, holding his head high, maintaining his withdrawn, serious expression. "Fort — Otto — Shrader — Levin." Lane could not refrain from a dramatic pause. "Kelley!"

The silence was absolute. Then Lane said crisply, "All right. Go out there!"

Two weeks was all they had had, thought Jim Borden a bit numbly. It wasn't fair to Kelley. It wasn't fair to Shrader. He trotted out into the wild yelling of the home-team crowd and sat on the bench. He looked over at the remembered stalwarts of Northern. He recognized them all.

Ken Orban, six feet five, center and All American, led them. The other stars were Peek and Feaster at forward, Silica and Cohen at the guards. Behind them were Madison and Granger and Cantor and Levowitz—Jim Borden knew them of old. They had beaten Tech two years in a row. They were the gang at whom Lane had aimed the entire season.

And now Tech was taking the court with new plays, a green kid at forward and without something every championship team must have. Borden sat on the hard bench and gritted his teeth. It was his twelfth year and the things he had learned rode him like the Old Man of the Sea.

He almost spoke to Lane. It wouldn't do any good, he knew, but he almost tried it. Then he relaxed, watching. He kept his eyes on Kelley.

He had been attracted to the youngster because basketball did not come easily to Kelley. It was something he had acquired by dint of hours and hours of faithful practice. His sliding stops were hard on his slender legs. Only a flaming desire to shine at a sport within his physical capabilities had kept the kid going. Jim Borden knew these things without being told.

So he had worked with Kelley, teaching him short-cuts born of Borden's own years of competition. He had groomed the boy for stardom as a junior—and then Bob Lane had discovered Kelley's talents and recruited him from the scrubs to the varsity squad. Both Kelley and Borden had been elated at the success of their labors.

In games when Tech had got off to a big lead, Jim Borden often had pretended that his knee was far worse than it was so that Kelley could get into the fray. It had been fun to watch, and it had been good to rest on the bench. Truthfully, he didn't get much bang out of basketball.

Yet now he sat and within him some-

thing ground like two millstones, something deep, something he had not realized was left to him. He did not try, at that time, to explain it. He did not know how to tell it to Lane. He was afraid of being misunderstood, which could make matters worse for the team. He sat and suffered, watching Ken Orban lead his sharp-shooting horde to a superbly fast start.

Orban was a genius at sparking a team. The Northerns rallied around his giant frame. He gave them plays, moved in, blocked and feinted, side-stepped like a lightweight, one-handed the ball with his great palms, set up shot after shot for his men. Northern scored once, then again. Orban converted a foul, they bounced in a long one.

Tech's defense was good, but not perfect. No team ever had a defense against perfect long shots and Orban was collecting these, too, almost disdainfully, whenever the Techs got tough. The score mounted to sixteen for Northern—while Tech was lucky to get four.

Kelley was playing his heart out on defense. The kid slid in and out, spoiling passes, spoiling shots. But on offense he was supposed to complement Shrader on the new plays.

It did not work.

At first Tech was knocked on its heels by speed. Then Orban settled himself and began examining the unscouted system Lane had given them in the past two weeks. In a few moments Orban had it figured out. He left the game and talked earnestly with Jackson, the aged, canny Northern coach.

Jim Borden got up off the bench and started toward Lane. He caught sight of the resolute set of the coach's jaw and paused. He looked helplessly at the court, where Kelley was being given a ride by two men alternating until one of them ran him down under the basket. He resumed his seat.

THERE was a hushed buzz going around the Tech stands. The students were staring at Jim, at the coach. It was the first time since he had entered school, Jim realized suddenly, that he had not started the game in whatever sport he happened to be playing. He had not thought of that before, because—well, because he was Jim Borden. He was so good he could afford not to have any egotism.

He examined himself now, wondering if he was angry, or jealous, or injured because at last he had been relegated to second string. He could not find any of these things in himself. Worryment, yes, and a feeling of helplessness. Maybe irritation at Lane.

He wasn't angry because Lane had rearranged the set plays to revolve about Shrader. He understood that. Lane felt that lack of spirit on his part threatened the morale of the team. More, Lane was an idealist. He could not bear to hinge a basketball championship on the performance of a man who openly stated he did not enjoy the game.

So Jim Borden sat on the bench and watched Slide Kelley.

The kid was giving it everything he had. Silica, a brawny gent not addicted to gentle play, was riding the slim sophomore. Jim saw a couple of things the officials missed and again he started off the bench.

But Northern rambled on. Shrader hit the bucket for a couple of field goals and then Northern took over. The score ran to Northern 20, Tech 8 as the period slipped away.

Kelley began breathing too hard. Lane, without turning his head, snapped, "Borden."

He got up and removed his jacket. There was a blast of cheering from the Tech side of the gym. He did a knee bend, waited for the moment, then ran onto the court. Kelley looked at him with a

strange expression as he wobbled off.

Shrader muttered, "Number four play." There was a throw-in and Shrader got the ball, pivoted a bit awkwardly, bounced to Fort. Dutch Otto cut the circle. Levin moved smoothly, faking. They went in under the basket and Jim made his break. He took Levin's pass at top speed, back-handed to Shrader. The big center evaded Orban and took his shot. It went through clean as a whistle.

The Northerns came out, Orban moving them like pawns. Silica fastened himself to Borden, trying to block while the others went downcourt. He laid a hand on Jim's belt, forgetting perhaps that this was not Kelley.

Jim did a spin and threw a hip where it was most needed. Silica went flying across the floor. Orban had to rearrange the play and Borden went in like a flash, passing Shrader, bulldogging the ball.

Orban scowled, facing Jim for the jump. The ball went up. Jim seemed to climb a ladder. He could not get a tip from Orban, but he hurried the Northern giant. The ball fell loose.

Levin, true to form, was on it. Jim took a pass and dribbled downcourt. He heard Shrader's shout, walked through and tossed to the big center. Shrader tried to stall on the pivot and set up the new Bob Lane play to get in for a shot.

Levin was there, but Dutch missed his cue. A Northern man—sub for Cohen—stole the ball.

Jim went in pursuit. His knee hurt a little as he hit top speed, but he got down there ahead of everyone. He reached into the Northern shuttle-pass with one long arm and the Northerns seemed to scatter. He laid rough hands on the ball and Orban tried to wrestle, but he gave Orban a shoulder, slid away without the foul being called, laced the ball to Shrader.

Everything happened pretty fast, then. Levin was in position. Dutch Otto took his man with a legal screen. Fort changed

places with Jim. Shrader was loose and feinting a shot for the basket. Jim came like a race horse. Shrader gave him the ball and as he went under the hoop, Jim reached up and gently gave the ball a small ride. It went over the iron rim and into the net for two points.

The half ended. It was Northern 20, Tech 12.

There was only one thing wrong with that last basket, Jim Borden thought, going off the court. It had resulted from an old play they had used for two years. It was not in Bob Lane's new pattern of things. The boys had instinctively gone into it, and it had worked smooth as silk.

Kelley was bringing him his jacket. The kid's face was shining. "You were great in there, Jim." Kelley's voice lowered to a whisper. "Lane is nuts. I'm tellin' you, Jim, the guy's sufferin' torture on the bench."

"He's got principles," said Jim wearily. "He's a decent, honest guy."

"He's Joe Jerk," Kelley whispered fiercely. "You oughta be in there full time tonight. Those Northerns are good!"

Jim looked at the bruise on Kelley's cheek. Silica's elbow had done that. That was another little thing he must take care of, lest Silica get some wrong ideas. . . . Then he remembered he might not get a chance to. He went into the dressing room.

Lane was giving them a fit. He was walking up and down, telling them what they'd done wrong. Suddenly he stopped. He did not look at them. He said, simply, "It's partly my fault, too. Just do what you can, fellows. I know you'll fight all the way." He walked out of the room, closing the door softly behind him.

Shrader took a full breath. "I reckon he's leaving it up to us." He stared at Jim Borden.

No one spoke. Kelley shifted uneasily. There was nothing Jim could say, he knew.

After a moment they went back to the game.

Kelley was back in at forward. Silica immediately went to work on him. Bob Lane sat stiffly, frowning, watching. Jim Borden clenched his hands.

Silica pulled the stop-and-go. He dragged a foot. The inexperienced Kelley tried to slide to a stop. He tripped.

When he went down he rolled over twice. A whistle blew time out. There was no foul on the play—it was Kelley's own fault for falling for the old trick.

"My ankle," Kelley said. "It's busted or somethin'."

Bob Lane looked at Borden with a set expression. Jim shucked his jacket. It was still 20-12 for the visitors. Borden went onto the court as the trainer helped Kelley to hop off.

Silica rolled his eyes a bit. Play resumed. Northern was toying with the ball behind their eight-point lead. Jim Borden moved into the play.

First he made sure Shrader got the ball. Then he paid attention to Silica, who was guarding him. He made a feint, got Silica in close. He stumbled, let Silica come against him. They crashed to the floor. He put an elbow into Silica's face, a knee into his ribs and a hard hand over his nose as they scrambled to get to their feet—all in such a manner as to make it seem accidental. He even extended a hand to pull Silica upright—and jerked his arm almost out of joint in so doing.

Then he went into the play as Shrader scored to lessen Northern's advantage to six points. Orban began stretching for scores again, now, and Orban was terrific.

JIM BORDEN moved. His old, lackadaisical style had not altered. To the casual observer he was indolent in his movement, careless in his maneuvers. Yet when Orban was ready to set up his scoring shot, a tanned, lithe

figure was somewhere about, spoiling the play.

Then the ball was going the other way. Orban and his bunch were in there fighting, but the offensive was slowly being taken from them. Levin scored.

It was only four points now, but Orban scored and Borden had to get it back with a chancey looper. It went to 28 for Northern, 24 for Tech. There was a thrilling period when neither team scored, the ball changing hands every moment or so, the running players reversing back and forth as fortune swung with equal smile upon each.

Then Jim Borden went up for a rebound, came down with the leather and shot it to Shrader. Immediately he sprinted for midcourt. Shrader mechanically fed the ball back to him. Spinning, faking, Jim gave it to Levin. Fort came in and crisscrossed and took Levin's bounce and slid it to Jim. Shrader, abandoning any attempt to follow the new plays, took his old short run under the basket, Jim faked to him, fed to Dutch Otto, who slid down, masked by the Shrader move. Otto, discovered, was attacked hard by Orban.

Dutch leaned, rolled the ball tantalizingly along the boards. Jim gave Silica the slip, picked it up and fired it at the basket in his old, nonchalant manner. It went through.

Each team scored on fouls as the tempo mounted to frenzy. Twenty-nine to twenty-seven, thought Jim Borden, twenty-nine to twenty-seven, and Northern playing like a ten-legged All America. He raised the timing, made a sortie into a tight figure-eight which Orban had going. He spun the ball from Silica. That gentleman forgot himself and took a dive for him.

The whistle shrilled and Jim took the ball to the foul-line. Time was running very short. He set himself, nodded at Shrader. He tossed the ball gently at the rim. Without hitting the backboard,

the leather slipped cleanly into the net.

The race was on. One little point, now, Jim kept thinking. Just a shot from the field, that was all. One solid basket, the kind he had laid in a thousand times, and the boys could hold on for the final gun.

He sensed Orban's strategy. He knew the All-American center would not try to freeze. He feinted going into the tight, close pass-strategem which Northern was setting up and saw Silica promptly race away from the pack.

He began to run, then. His knee hurt and he knew he might not make it. But he ran like the wind, pounding on the boards. Orban's pass was high and hard. Silica was all set, alone and free to make the shot. He reached for the ball.

Borden left his feet. He was away up there with the lamps when he felt the leather hit his palms. When he came down he seemed to be already dribbling, as though he had started in midair.

The Northerns came at him but he swerved and bounced among them. He yelled, "Five!" and went in.

Shrader, startled, flung out an arm. Jim gave him the ball. The Techs deserted the style they had been using, formed a semicircle. The ball went from one to the other almost like magic, disappearing from view so that even Orban was lost, trying to anticipate the play.

In and out of the melee went Jim. He managed to get one eye on the clock. He yelled, "Five!" He danced away, took a pass and for an instant was free and could have tried one from the sideline.

But his experienced glance at the clock had given him the knowledge he needed. He feinted and Silica came plunging. He offered the ball to the guard, sidestepped when Silica fell for that one, wheeled and handed-off to Fort, who was coming in in the practiced pattern of this play.

Then Shrader had the ball and was pivoting while his men got set. Borden

screen-blocked Orban off the Tech center. Levin, the ball-hawk, was in for his piece of the play. Shrader gave it to Levin, who made a full spin and bounced to Dutch Otto.

Borden was making the arc, very fast. He drew Silica with a shout. He left Silica standing still and ran across in front of Orban, shouting for the ball. Dutch seemed to give it to him and turned as though to make a back-hand, overhead attempt at the basket. Orban and Silica covered.

Standing free, Shrader towered, his face shiny with sweat. Dutch let go with the ball as hard as he could slam it. Shrader took it far above his head.

Orban and Silica had followed Jim Borden out of the play. Jim yelled, "I've got them, Ray!"

Shrader moved into the open spot. He dribbled gently, carefully. Jim Borden reversed, breaking for the foul circle. Silica had to follow him. Orban tore in to guard Shrader.

Levin came from nowhere. Shrader softly put the ball into his hands. Levin jumped up and flipped the apple in a loving, short toss. It pattered against the backboard. It hovered delicately, then popped into the fishnet and struggled through.

Orban had it and was yelling fiercely and the Northerns were going down the court like madmen. Jim was among them, fighting the good fight, but his eye was still for the timepiece on the wall. He hand-cut a pass of Silica's and Levin was there, like always.

Jim said calmly, "Just hold it, kid. Just ten seconds."

The gun went off. Jim Borden went on, "Old clock's a little slow, huh?"

The scoreboard read Tech 30, Northern 29. . . .

IN THE dressing room Bob Lane faced them again, face flushed. He said,

"That last scoring play—Borden called that one."

Shrader explained, "Well, coach, it wasn't goin' good. Those new plays—we didn't have 'em long enough. So we just forgot 'em after Jim came in and began sloughing the Northerns. . . ."

Lane said flatly, "Borden, I owe you an apology. I should have known you wouldn't let me down, or let the school down."

"And he called your own play to win the game," shrieked the recalcitrant Kelley. He was almost jumping up and down with glee.

Lane surveyed the sophomore coldly. "It would look a lot better if you did not jump so much on your allegedly broken ankle!"

Kelley said stoutly, "I don't care if I never play for you again. I did it to get Jim in there. I knew he could do it!"

Borden stood up. He said slowly, "Coach, the kid means well. He shouldn't have said that, but he means the best. I shouldn't have said what I did up at New Haven. I found out I didn't really mean it."

Lane said, "I can skip that. You proved—"

Jim Borden said, "I didn't prove anything—except a guy has to be in there, all the time, trying to win. You proved you had integrity and the guts to stick by your ideals. You're a great coach and we all know it—and Kelley, you shut up!"

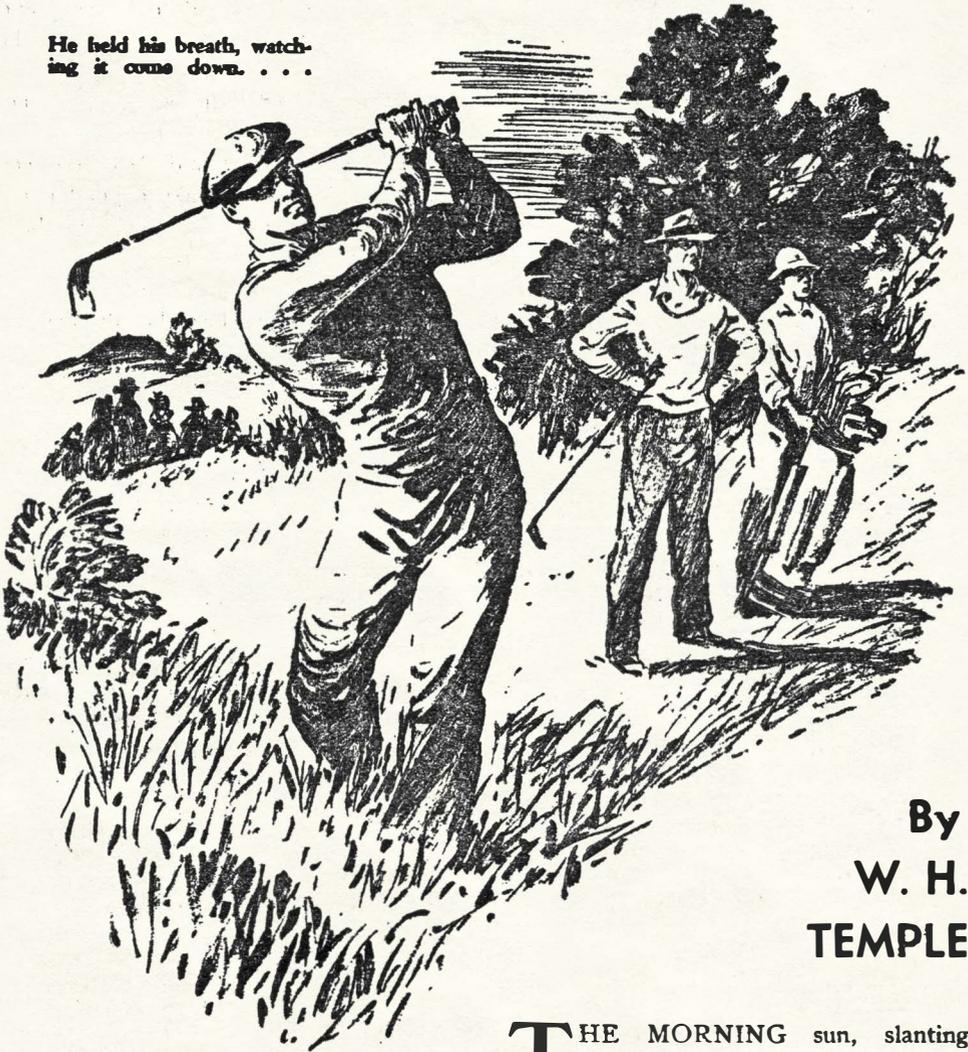
The team yelled then, loud and long, each man trying to get at young Bob Lane and pat him or shake his hand. Finally Kelley came forward, head low, and joined them.

Jim Borden went to the showers. Yes, he had learned something too, he realized. He began to whistle. He was pretty happy to wind up on a championship team.

And of course he had a date with a cutie for a late snack. He wondered if Bob Lane would like to go along now?

ROUGH GUY

He held his breath, watching it come down. . . .



By
W. H.
TEMPLE

Fresh from golfdom's skidrow, he came back for one last sudden-death hole—for one final putt for the long green—bigger than a champion's purse!

THE MORNING sun, slanting through the windshield, awakened Scott, and he sat up and rubbed the sleep out of his eyes. He was stiff and cramped from the cold. He got out of the car and danced a jig to start the circulation again. He got back in the car finally and looked at his reflection in the rear-view mirror. He saw the sunken eyes and the two-day growth of beard, and he nodded sagely at himself.

"You make a fine-looking bum," he said. "Maybe that's what you were supposed to be all along, a bum. That was your destiny. I wonder if they have a Skid Row in this town."

He turned the ignition key. The indicator showed a quarter of a tank left. Enough to get him into town; and he could sell the car then, except that today was Sunday. He checked his wallet and found he had thirty-six dollars left. Scott grinned ruefully to himself. Eight years out of college and he had a car and thirty-six dollars and some clothes that were not bad, because he had bought them in days gone by when he had been the half-owner of a business instead of a deadbeat.

Scott shrugged his shoulders, started the car and had just pulled out onto the highway when he heard a shout and saw a kid climbing the fence at the side of the road.

"You going toward the country club, mister?" the kid yelled. Scott stopped and waited for him.

"If it's straight ahead, I'm going past it," Scott said, and studied the kid. "A caddie, are you? How's business?"

"It's good," the kid said, climbing into the front seat and slamming the door. "Two and a half a round and you carry double. Five bucks a round. If I go twice today I'll pick up ten bucks."

Scott thought how times had changed. He had caddied as a kid for a buck and been glad to get it. He drove on and the sun was warming him now, taking the chill out of his bones. A mile and a half further on he saw the sign and the private road leading up to the country club. He turned into the road and drove up past the imposing clubhouse to park down near the pro shop.

"Thanks a lot, mister," the kid said, and scrambled out. Scott watched him run over and join the group of caddies waiting for the morning's play to start. He sat there a moment looking over the

well-manicured course with the red flags waving in the breeze over the emerald greens.

"Ten bucks," he said to himself, and got out of the car and went over to the pro shop.

A sandy-haired man with a pipe between his teeth came out from back of the counter and Scott said, "Do you need another caddie? I'd make a good one."

The pro stared at his unshaven face. "You don't know the course."

"I know the game," Scott said, and perhaps it was his voice that decided the pro.

"Join the gang outside," the pro said. "We'll call you."

Scott nodded. He went around the corner to the back door of the kitchen and paid the chef for rolls and coffee. He felt better then. He went back and joined the caddies, and an hour later he was called to the pro shop.

The pro pointed to two bags and he shouldered them—good leather bags with matched clubs inside. He trudged down to the first tee and was standing there when the two golfers he was carrying for came up to him.

He looked up and a shock went through him, but his face didn't change. The man coming toward him was prosperous-looking in well-creased slacks and a cashmere sweater, a fellow his own age, short and twenty pounds heavier than when Scott had seen him last. Scott remembered his name—Freddy Julian—but he had never known Julian well because after all he had been a punk kid then.

"Your driver, sir," Scott said, and handed him the club.

Julian looked at him, glanced away, then swung around. "What's your name?" he said.

Scott hesitated just a second. "Skinner," he said. "Ted Skinner."

Julian looked at him a moment, then nodded. "You reminded me of a guy I

used to know in college. A whale of a golfer."

He said no more but stepped to the tee. Little Freddy Julian, Scott thought, belonging to a high-class country club. The four men made their bets. They were playing for sizable stakes.

THEY started out. Julian might be a successful businessman but he was no golfer, Scott saw. It was a beautiful course but what Julian did to it shouldn't have happened to a cow pasture. And he was losing money on each hole.

On the fifth hole he blew up. He sliced his drive into the rough, then chopped back to the fairway.

"Brassie," he said angrily. "I don't know why I keep at this game—"

"Try your spoon," Scott said. "You ought to drive with a brassie and use a spoon on the fairway. Forget your driver."

"You think so?" Julian accepted the spoon, then took his stance.

"Relax," Scott said. "Let those knees give a little. You're too stiff. Now just meet the ball."

The clubhead went back, came through the ball and it soared into the air, came down on the fairway and rolled to a stop twenty yards short of the green.

"That's the stuff," Scott said. "You been running up your approaches. Try pitching them with an eight or a nine."

Julian did better after that. He won four holes in a row and picked up the money he had lost. They got around to the eighteenth tee and Julian's side had won the match.

One of his opponents said, "You ought to pay your caddie, Julian. He won this for you. It's easy to give advice to other people."

"I got a notion this caddie can do more than give advice," Julian said. "Here, caddie, what did you say your name was? Skinner? Let me see you hit one."

Scott put down the bags and took the driver from Julian's hands. He swung it once or twice, then stepped up to the ball and looked out over the eighteenth fairway. It was a four hundred yard hole and heavily trapped. A brook wandered across the fairway at the hundred thirty yard mark and beyond it were traps on both sides.

He swung the club through the ball, turning with it, the club coming up and pulling his arms and shoulders around. His head lifted and he watched the ball go out like a bullet, skim up over the brook, come down between the traps and bound forward. But he got no enjoyment out of the shot. It brought back the past and he did not want to be reminded of that.

"You think he was lucky?" Julian said. "Hit another, Skinner."

"I'm the caddie," Scott said shortly. "That's all."

He went in with them and Julian paid him off. "You're a good caddie," Julian said. "I'd like to reserve you for next week-end."

"I guess I won't be around," Scott said, shortly. "I'll take the bags in."

He carried them inside the pro shop and dumped them in one corner. As he turned to leave, the pro blocked his way.

"You want to stick around?" the pro said. "We're short of help. These kids are in school all week. We could use a guy to caddie and work in the shop part-time. Cleaning clubs, that sort of thing. Couldn't pay much but you'd get a few bucks in addition to caddie fees." He jerked his head toward an old house in the distance. "Greens-keeper lives there and rents out rooms to some of the help. You could sleep there. Wouldn't cost you much."

Scott hesitated, then said, "No, I guess not—"

"You could play some golf during the week when things get slow," the pro said.

"Get your meals free in the kitchen."
Well, why not? Scott thought to himself.

"Okay, I'll stay," he said, and picking up the bags he carried them into the locker room and began storing them away. He didn't go out the rest of the day; he stayed in the pro shop, cleaning clubs, enjoying the smell of glue and leather, perching there on the workbench. And that night he moved in with the chef in the greens-keeper's house.

The next day was Monday, and Monday was a slow day. In the afternoon Scott borrowed a set of clubs and went out to the first tee. Three hours later he came in. His face was set and drawn. He tossed the clubs aside, then strode out into the darkness of early evening, heading toward the house. A figure loomed up near him.

"Hello there, Skinner," Freddy Julian said. "Been playing a round? How'd you go?"

"No good," Scott said. "An eighty."

"I'd settle for an eighty any time," Julian said.

"I didn't like it," Scott said shortly. "I'm pulling out."

"Can't beat the course?" Julian said and laughed. "Walking out because it licked you?"

Julian turned and walked toward the clubhouse, and Scott went over to the house and changed his mind about leaving. After dinner he went up to his room and began putting a ball across the worn carpet. It reminded him of something a long time ago. A living room, a very attractive living room, and himself standing there with a putter in his hand, rolling a ball across the carpet. He remembered something else, a blonde and lovely girl sitting on the davenport. He remembered her screaming, "For God's sakes, will you stop that before you drive me out of my mind!"

The memory became too sharp and he

hurled the putter into the closet. But the next morning before he had to report for work in the pro shop, he was out on the putting green stroking ball after ball, hunting for a touch that had disappeared years ago.

And late that afternoon he was out again, not playing this time, hitting ball after ball with a five iron, dropping them out there on the fairway until it was too dark to see.

IT WAS the next day that he heard about the tournament. The tournament was two weeks off, a three-day affair, fifty-four holes, and he saw the list of entrants and then the name of Ted Skinner leaped out at him. He turned angrily and saw Freddy Julian standing there.

"I did that," Julian said. "This tournament is small potatoes but we've held it here for years. It's a tradition now. An open tourney. Our club champ goes in, and the other amateurs around, and all the pros in this vicinity. There's only one big-name golfer, Kip Venable. He's the state champ and he got his start years ago in this tournament. He takes it every year almost, and he's always the favorite."

"What did you put me in for?" Scott said.

Julian grinned at him. "I like a little bet now and again," he said. "A lot of us bet on this, we get up quite a pool. You're a sleeper. I saw you swing the other day and I've got a wad on you. I think you have an outside chance."

"You'd better pull out of that bet," Scott said. "I'm not entering."

Julian looked at him. "You scared of something?" he asked quietly. "You going to hit the road again? What are you running from—and can you really run away from it?"

He had put his finger on it then, Scott thought. He knew he would stay on, at least for the tournament. And then he

would blow. But maybe he could hold up his head once before he took to the road again toward oblivion.

He worked on his game. He knew the course like the back of his hand two weeks later, and a lot depended on his putting. If he had the touch back he might play tournament golf. But he hadn't played competitively; he didn't know what would happen to him when the chips were down.

They went out in threesomes on the Friday that the tourney started. Scott had drawn big Kip Venable and Hal Fletcher, a pro from a nearby town.

The first hole was a tough five hundred fifty yard par straightaway. The fairway was broad and level at the tee, then narrowed like the neck of a bottle out at the two hundred yard mark, and went on to an elevated tee surrounded by traps.

The three of them were down the middle with their tee shots. They poured second shots through that bottleneck and were short of the green.

Scott was away. He took an eight iron from his bag, hit down on the ball and pitched it high into the air, over the traps, and it came down on the green, rolled three feet and stopped, four yards from the cup. The others were on but farther away. They putted up close and Scott bent over his ball, feeling the tension go through his legs and arms. He stepped back a minute to try to relax, then bent over the ball and stroked it forward. It rattled into the cup and he had a birdie to start with.

"Ted Skinner," Venable said, looking at him. "Never heard the name. You handle those clubs like I should know about you. You been in this business?"

Scott shook his head. "I was in the paint business," he said.

He picked up his ball and they went on to the next tee, to the dogleg second, three hundred and sixty yards around a wide curve to a green surrounded at the back by thick woods.

He got a par, as did the others. He slipped on the third with a bogey and on the ninth he missed an easy putt. He missed two others on the second nine and came in with a seventy-three, one over par. Kip Venable had a seventy and an amateur had the leading round, a sixty-nine.

Scott came into the clubhouse and saw Julian. "Better cover your bets," Scott said. "I'm blowing out there."

"Four strokes away," Julian said. "It's not too far. I got confidence in you. Tomorrow is another day. And remember Venable is the guy to beat. He's consistent. You're only three stokes away from him."

They went out again the next day and for a while it was good. Scott enjoyed it. Venable was a great guy, a master golfer who played the world over. He only played this tourney out of sentiment now, but he was in there to win it, although the first money, five hundred dollars, was peanuts to him. He was steady as a rock, he had another seventy, and this time Scott stayed with him. When they came in and checked the scores, Venable had moved into second place. Scott was hanging in fourth place, still three strokes behind Venable.

He knew he couldn't give three strokes away to Kip Venable. The guy was just too good. What this was going to add up to, Scott thought, sitting in his room that night, was another failure. Another to add to a long list of them. He was just that kind of a guy.

SCOTT sat there and he knew he couldn't go through it again. He'd leave now, in the dark. He was packing up his clothes when there was a knock at the door and Freddy Julian came in with a couple of beers in his hand.

He ignored the suitcase on the bed. He sat down and handed Scott a beer.

"You sure do remind me of this guy I knew in college," Julian said. "Fellow named Tom Scott. I'm curious about him, one reason is I'm secretary of my class, I've done a lot of work checking up on the boys I went to college with. It's kind of an interesting story about Scott."

Julian took a long pull at his beer bottle. "I was just a freshman. This guy Scott was a senior. A swell guy, everybody loved him. A big man on campus and a golf star. He lived for golf, that guy. Went out there before and after classes, and he was a whiz. Won the intercollegiate title twice running. But he never graduated from college. Busted two final exams. It wasn't just the golf, there was a dame involved. The best-looking girl on the campus, and naturally she was Scott's girl. Who else had a chance?"

Scott sat rigid in the chair. He said nothing.

"Anyway," Julian went on, "he married the girl. That was the last anyone heard of him. He dropped out of sight. I was trying to check on him recently, and naturally I figured a guy like Scott would be playing golf. But I couldn't contact him through golf clubs anywhere. I often wondered what happened to him. I couldn't picture that guy in business."

Scott shrugged his shoulders. "He dropped out of sight," he said. "That's not so unusual, it happens to a lot of guys."

"It shouldn't have happened to this guy," Julian said. "And I'll tell you why. I don't know what happened to him but golf should have been his business. It was all he cared about, it was his life. He busted out of college because of it. It shouldn't have worried him because he was never born to be a student, a high mark boy. And that dame. Well, she was good-looking. She was also a tramp, which everyone knew except Scott himself, and Scott was a guy who had thought so much about golf and so little

about anything else, he didn't know a tramp when he saw one. He just fell like a ton of brick. You know what my hunch is? My hunch is that the girl got him to quit the game. I hope I'm wrong. What I hope is that he ditched the girl or she ditched him and somewhere he's swinging a golf club. Because that's all he needs to get along."

Julian finished his beer. "Well, I'll be following you around tomorrow, but I guess you were right. Giving three strokes to Venable is too much."

He didn't mention the suitcase on the bed. He left the room and Scott stared after him and suddenly he grinned, the first time in a long while.

"Kip Venable," he said, "who the blue blazes is Kip Venable? I played that guy eight years ago and took him apart. Kip Venable!"

He got up and left the room and went over to the brightly-lighted clubhouse. He went inside. There was a Saturday night dance going on. The place was crowded, and when Scott came in, he was surrounded by members talking about the game the next day.

It was the way he had done in college, Scott thought. You play and practice, but the night before a big match you go out and have yourself a time. You forget what's coming, you talk to people, you hang around the bright lights. It is better than sitting in a room and swinging a club and building up the tension.

He danced with some of the girls, he talked shop with Kip Venable and some of the other golfers, and at midnight he'd had enough. He was still a bum, he thought, as he walked through the dark back to the greens-keeper's house, but for a little while maybe he could forget it.

And at ten o'clock the next morning when he stepped out on the tee he saw that the gallery was large. They all figured Venable and they were following him. Three strokes, Scott thought, was a tough

handicap against the big fellow. He couldn't waste time. And there was more involved for him than for Venable. Five hundred dollars first money would be a stake to him. A chance to buy some new clothes, to look like a man again although he didn't know what the future could hold. He was, Scott thought, a really hungry guy that morning.

He lit into his tee shot, slamming at it, and clubbing the ball. The power hooked it to the right. He got two hundred and seventy yards but he was off the fairway down there at the bottleneck.

The others played their second shots. They were short. Venable was playing safe, not gambling when he figured another seventy would pick up the marbles.

Scott went on to his ball. He was in the rough but with a good lie, and he reached for an iron that would give him distance. He looked across the fairway, past the deep trap, and hit the ball straight for the pin. It went up and out over the fairway and finally began dropping. He held his breath watching it come down, heading directly, so he thought, for that yawning trap. But it was a foot past it and on the apron. It bounced and rolled forward past the pin. He was on in two.

VENABLE and the local pro chipped on. Venable putted close to make sure of his par five. Scott dried his hands on his trousers. This was the hole, this was the chance. He had to do it early or never, and he stretched out on the turf and studied the angle. He straightened up and tapped the ball and kept his eyes on the ground, watching the

blade of the putter follow through. Then he heard the rattle of the ball in the cup and knew he had done it, an eagle three. On the first hole he had chopped two strokes off Venable's lead.

The big pro was staring at him. "You ain't foolin'," he said. He shook his head. "I should have heard of you before."

"You did," Scott said. "I played you once. A long time ago. You weren't so good then, you had a hook that gave you trouble."

He walked over to the second tee and hammered a ball out that hooked around the dogleg curve. It was a beautiful shot and the crowd applauded. But Kip Venable's ball was in the same place.

The match went on and they were both playing sound, tight golf. More and more Scott began thinking of the seventeenth, the one really long hole left. Kip Venable would have to make a mistake for him to catch him before then, and he had a hunch Kip's iron nerves would not let him down.

He was right about that. He was still a stroke away from him when they reached the seventeenth, and by then it was down to the two of them. It was Venable or himself now for first money.

The seventeenth was Deadman's Gulch, so nicknamed because of the golfing hopes that had died there. The fairway was ridged and uneven, broken by two gullies that meandered across it. The golfers played to the right where a safe patch of fairway protected them. They went the long way round the dogleg, adding a hundred yards to the hole.

Scott stood there and made his decision. Straight ahead of him were the gullies.

Statement of the ownership, management and circulation required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, as amended by the acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 353) of New Sports Magazine, published bi-monthly at Kokomo, Indiana, October 1, 1949. 1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are: Publisher, Harold S. Goldsmith, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N.Y.; Editor, Henry Steeger, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N.Y.; Managing Editor, none; Business Manager, none. 2. The owner is Popular Publications, Inc., 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N.Y.; Henry Steeger, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N.Y.; Harold S. Goldsmith, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N.Y.; Shirley M. Steeger, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N.Y. 3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: none. 4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner. Harold S. Goldsmith, Publisher. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 22nd day of November, 1949. Eva M. Walker, Notary Public, New York County Clerk's No. 116, Registrar's No. 363-W-O. (My commission expires March 30, 1950.) [Seal]—Form 3626—Rev. 2-49.

If he drove straight down the left side of the fairway, if he cleared the gullies and didn't bound down the bank to the left, he would have a clear second shot to the green. If he missed, the match was lost.

He teed up his ball and took a double waggle so as not to press. His club came through the ball and the crowd was silent, watching the low-rising ball, seeing it soar over the first gully, start to drop, come down yards beyond the second and roll straight forward.

Kip Venable let out a breath.

"I did that once myself," he said. "The first time I won this tournament. I was a hungry guy myself then."

He played it safe to the right, a good drive that left him two hundred yards from the tightly trapped green. And the pressure was on him now. He tried for the alley that went up between two traps and he missed it by three feet. He caught the white sand of the trap just to the right.

Scott used a five iron, and he was on the green but a long way off. He had a thirty-foot putt. He walked up slowly and Venable waded down into the trap with his wedge. A shower of sand came up and the ball was on the edge of the carpet.

Scott was away. He stepped up to putt. He thought he had it; the ball went straight as a die to the cup—and then it bounced on the rim and lay a half-inch beyond for a birdie four.

Venable studied his ball. He rolled it up and he was four feet away. Kip took a long time, stroked the ball, and it walked up and sat down on the rim. He had bogied it for a six.

They went on to the eighteenth. He and Venable were on the carpet in two and when Venable missed his desperate try for a birdie and they both got fours, that was it, a one-stroke victory.

They had a presentation on the eighteenth green, and then they went into

the clubhouse and Scott saw Julian there. Scott sank into a chair beside him.

He said, "When did you know I was Tom Scott?"

Julian grinned at him. "I thought so when I first saw you. Then I was sure when I saw you swing. That picture-book swing. I used to follow you around the course in college. That's why I asked you to hit a ball that day, to make sure."

Scott said, "I could fill you in on the details if you like. That girl I married didn't care for golf. She liked living well and she didn't think golf would help. She got me to put my savings into a business. There's no point in elaborating. I was no businessman. I got a partner who knew all the legal angles and in a couple of years I discovered I didn't have a business any longer. I didn't have a wife either. When the roof fell in she found someone else. That was when I hit bottom."

Julian looked at him. "Well," he said, "this club has grown. It's becoming big-time and there's too much for our pro to handle. We need an assistant pro. I'm a lousy golfer," Julian said, "but I'm a good businessman. I'm one of the directors of this club. You know anyone who might like to become an assistant pro here?"

Scott's lips were dry. He was afraid to hope. "I know one guy," he said. "But he hasn't done too well in the past. Made a lot of mistakes."

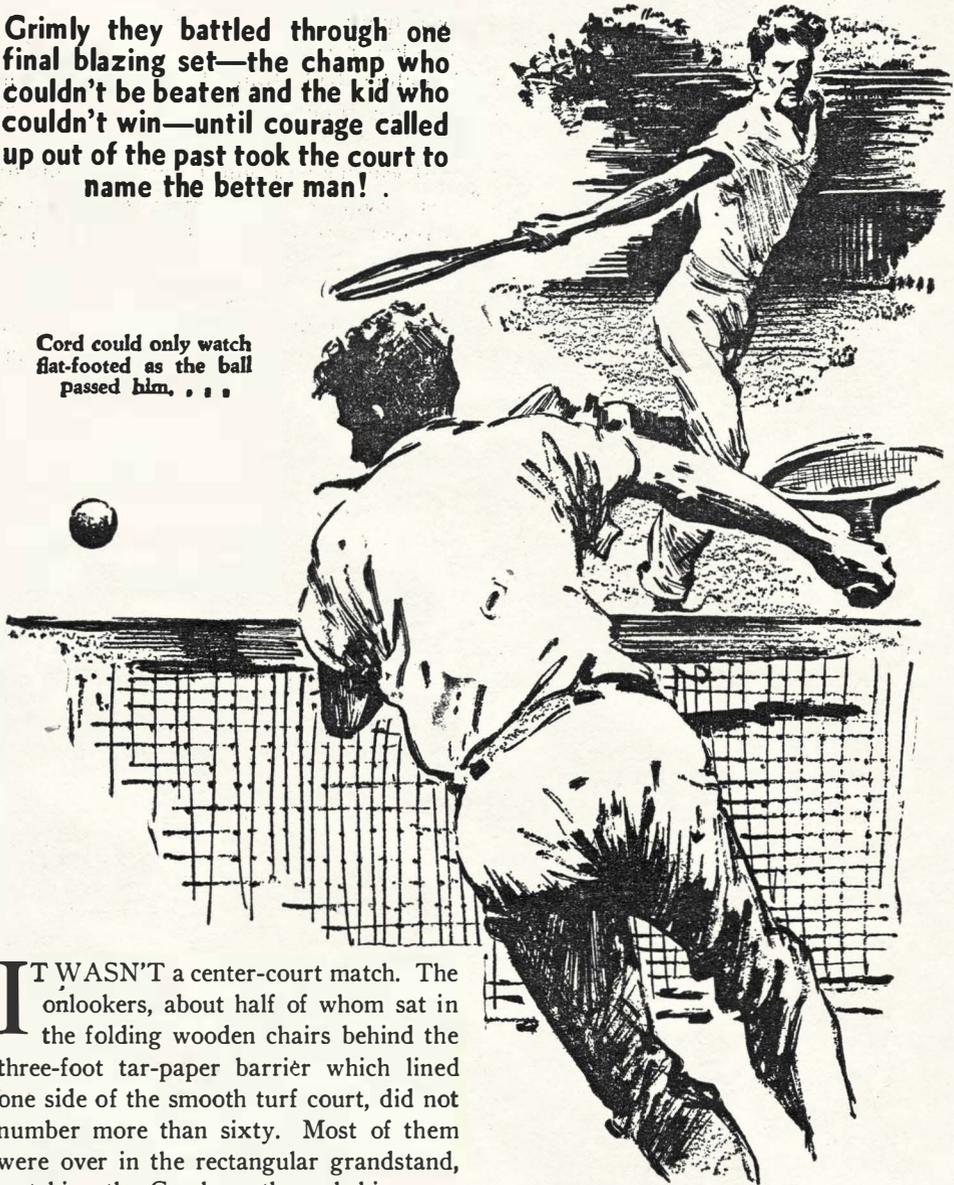
"We want a guy who's mainly interested in golf," Julian said. "An assistant pro who will teach the game and work on his own game and maybe eventually play in the big tourneys and give the club a little publicity. A guy who doesn't care for business, a guy who doesn't chase every good-looking girl around the place—a character who's married to golf."

Tom Scott settled back in his chair. "Freddy," he said, "I know just the man for you."

Match Point Poison

Grimly they battled through one final blazing set—the champ who couldn't be beaten and the kid who couldn't win—until courage called up out of the past took the court to name the better man!

Cord could only watch flat-footed as the ball passed him. . . .



IT WASN'T a center-court match. The onlookers, about half of whom sat in the folding wooden chairs behind the three-foot tar-paper barrier which lined one side of the smooth turf court, did not number more than sixty. Most of them were over in the rectangular grandstand, watching the Czech go through his paces with a former singles champion, who was to test the foreign threat.

But despite the lack of interest, young Don Avery was getting a belt out of playing in the Wessex quarter-finals. It was

By

SAM MERWIN, Jr.

not his first appearance in the round of eight in a major grass-court tournament. Thrice before he had got as far in his year and a half on the big-time circuit.

As he set himself to receive lanky Rog Talcott's cannon-ball service, he felt a surge of excitement he had not known since graduating from the ranks of the juniors a couple of seasons earlier. He was tired—sure. The backs of his knees ached, and the calves of his legs felt like slugs of lead.

But across the net his opponent was even more tired. The gaunt Californian sagged like a wilting reed before taking stance to serve. His eyes had sunk in his head, and he looked far older than his nineteen years. The score was four games to five in the fifth set and Talcott was on the ropes.

The first ball hit the net with a rifle-like crack and fell back into the server's court. The referee droned his call of fault and, seconds later, the West Coast lad's second serve came spinning safely in court. It was a twister that kicked high to Don's left, but not with the devastating speed and pace of the earlier portions of the match. Out of the corner of his eye Don saw that Talcott was following it in to the net and, for the hundredth or so time in the long-drawn match, lifted a carefully masked lob off his backhand.

Talcott made a despairing leap for the shot but, for all his great height, his racket missed it by half a foot. It fell just inside the baseline for a clean placement. Don trotted up to the net to receive the Californian's handshake amid a spattering of half-hearted applause from the thin gallery.

"You wore me down to a nub," said Talcott, gasping for breath. Don said something equally polite about its being a matter of luck but he hardly knew what he was saying. His win over the West Coast youth was a milestone in his career.

Not only had he finally reached the semi-

finals of a major tournament—he had for the first time taken the measure of one of the sock and volley Californians whose ever-aggressive style of play, directly descended from the tactics of Maurice McLaughlin, had always been too much for his own more subtle and conservative Eastern style of backcourt play.

It was his best win to date. The previous season he had won twenty-fourth as a national rating. Talcott had been rated ninth and was due to climb even higher this season. He had hit a hot streak at Wimbledon and had gone all the way to the finals in the world tennis capital. Taking his measure meant a big jump upward for Don.

Furthermore, Mary Barton had been watching during the last two sets, in which Don, by his lob and chop tactics, had finally taken the heart out of the tall Californian and reduced his attack to comparative impotence. He hastily pulled on his blazer, picked up his rackets and walked over to where she was waiting by the gate in the tar-paper barrier.

"Nice going, Don," she said more or less coolly. He looked at her in surprise, for he had been expecting warmer congratulations. As usual he liked what he saw even though her nearness disturbed him. But he was getting used to that. In one way or another she had been disturbing him since his grammar school days.

Her father had sensed her talent and launched her on a court career under expert instruction. She had humiliated him during school vacations by outplaying him whenever she could lure him onto a court with her.

It was largely as a result of these beatings by a girl he could pick up with one hand that he himself had taken up the game seriously. But by the time he had become captain of his school team, Mary had already won her spurs in the tennis world as another Sarah Palfrey. In short, she was out of his reach.

She had also acquired a smooth brown complexion and a lithe curvaceous figure that, coupled with the early sophistication of the tennis circuit, had caused the Avery-Barton admiration trend to go into reverse. Instead of evading her attentions he began to look for them, thinking he had, in his infancy, passed up something good.

CATCHING up with Mary Barton, currently on the eve of winning her first National Singles title, wasn't easy. She was friendly—yes. But she was also damnably in demand. He looked at her now, as they walked between the outlying courts toward the clubhouse, wondering how to break the ice.

"Well," he said, "at any rate I'm not just a quarter-finalist this time. Maybe if I can put this tournament away I'll be able to team up with you."

"You know the committee picks my partners in the mixed," she said quietly. She gave Don a speculative sidelong glance, as if she were weighing him and finding him wanting. He caught it and blushed.

"Something wrong?" he asked and felt like a boor for being so challenging.

"Of course not, Don," she said thoughtfully. She smiled a little and added, "I'm sorry, Don. It was really a fine win. I'm glad for you."

He caught the reservation in her tone and asked, "What's wrong with it?"

She made a gesture as she sought words. "Nothing, of course. But, Don, you'll never really get anywhere being a spoiler. If Rog hadn't been away off in his game you'd never have beaten him today. You had no attack."

"I couldn't match Rog on attack and you know it," he told her. "I had to use what I had. I know it wasn't flashy tennis but it was good enough to win."

"Today it was," Mary told him. "But tomorrow you go up against Red Cord. And if you try the same tactics on him,

he'll blast you right off the court." She paused and added, "You've never played Red, have you, Don?"

"Not so far," Don replied. "How do you think I should play him?" He had not yet reached sufficient eminence to have hordes of committeemen and other tennis notables hovering around him to discuss his tactics for every match. So far, his career had drawn remarkably little interest. He was glad to have Mary's.

"You've got to show more speed," she told him. "You can hit the ball hard off either hand. You keep lobbing and he'll put them away. You've got to pass him when he comes in to the net or take the net away from him yourself."

"Thanks, Mary," he said. "I'll do what I can. Say, do you suppose we could—" His suggestion for a date fell on empty ears. Waving him a cheery good-by, Mary moved off to a group of tennis elite gathered near the clubhouse court.

The next afternoon, shortly after two o'clock, Don found himself walking onto the grandstand court as a contestant for the first time in his career. The stands were more than half-filled and the setting caused an unaccustomed excitement to stir beneath his short ribs. But it only added to his sense of anticipation.

Red Cord, beneath the coppery top that had won him his nickname, was a grave, lightly freckled, half-handsome young man of a chunkiness that belied the speed of his reflexes. He and Don had met each other casually from time to time around the circuit and the potential champion was always friendly.

A Davis Cup veteran and once a National Singles finalist, Red was rated just about the top among American amateurs since the champ had turned pro.

He had almost as much speed of service, smash and volley as Rog Talcott, and he could back it up with a fine and well-tested assortment of ground strokes. Furthermore, his years at or close to the

top of the heap, and his experience as an internationalist, had given him the seasoning, the coolness under fire that so often spells the difference between champion and contender on the courts.

"Going to make me sweat for it?" he asked Don before the racket toss.

"I'm going to do my damndest," said Don. He called for "smooth" as the redhead sent a racket spinning in the sunlight. It came down rough side up and Red chose service. They warmed up briefly.

The redhead's opening serve was swift—no cannon-ball but a viciously sliced delivery, cunningly placed to break out and away from Don's forehand corner. Don, keyed to electric pitch, was on it like a panther, returning a low, short, heavily topped drive at a sharp cross-court angle. Cord, who had followed in along the line of his serve, could only watch flat-footed as it passed him.

It was the key point of the first set. Don, determined to show Mary Barton that he was more than a pat-ball spoiler, hit every shot with every bit of power he could muster. He met Red's speed with more speed and kept on lifting the pace until one of them made a placement or was forced into error.

It was a ding-dong battle and the gallery was applauding frequently as the bristling exchanges followed one another. But Don, who had attacked from the opening bell, was winning a majority of the points. He broke Red's service in the first game and managed to hold his own from then on, thus walking away with the set at six games to four.

The battle continued through the second set with both contestants holding their deliveries. Three-all, four-all, five-all, six-all, and the crowd, looking for an upset, grew increasingly excited. Don felt a glow of achievement sustaining him as he kept on blasting and running, sending shot after shot past Red as he came charging in to the net.

And then, all at once, he was through. Behind six-seven in games, he double-faulted once, his first such error in the match, and then did it again. He was suddenly trembling with fatigue, and before he could regain any sort of control he had blown the set at eight-six.

He managed to get one game in the third set and, partially refreshed after the intermission, three in the fourth. But once the break came he was out of the match and he knew it. It wasn't lack of fighting spirit, or the will to win. He was simply and utterly exhausted.

"Well," said a panting Red during the handshake, "you made me do it."

"Do what?" said Don, only half-curious in his complete fatigue.

"Sweat for it. Man, I thought you were never going to crack," the near-champion went on as they walked to the table under the umpire's high chair. "Where have you been keeping those drives? Rog Talcott told me your game was strictly soft stuff. I haven't run into so much speed since Jack Kramer went pro."

"Them's kind words," said Don. He was still dispirited about his failure to carry an upset through, but had no wish to show it. The redhead said something about seeing him in the clubhouse after his doubles match and trotted off with a friendly wave of his arm. Don, who wanted only to lie down somewhere and die for a while, wondered how on earth the man could do it.

He looked half-heartedly around for Mary, but she was not in sight and he supposed she was playing a match on one of the outer courts. Feeling lonesome and let down after his failure, he gathered up his rackets and trudged wearily from the court, passing the Czech and his semi-final opponent on their way in. The Czech, Rodrik Mozelle, was a tall, handsome man who walked with the lithe grace of a ballet dancer.

T IRED as he was, Don leaned against a stanchion and watched for a while. Mozelle's shots flowed with the effortless ease of mercury. Even in the warm-up it was evident that he had perfect control of the ball, and the ability to utilize the effort of his opponent—in this case an old war horse of the tennis circuit—to put speed on his shots with a minimum of effort for himself.

"See how he masks his shots," said a voice almost in Don's ear. He turned to look into a weathered countenance with bright blue eyes, a face tanned the color of old meerschaum beneath sparse bleached hair. It was Bill Farmer, the best known American teaching pro since George Agutter hung up his racket.

"He's slick," said Don simply. So surprised was he at having Bill Farmer address him that he could think of nothing further to say for a while. They remained side by side in silence, watching the Czech launch his match with a dazzlingly fast, subtle and varied attack that had his opponent befuddled from the first. Mozelle had control of length, angle and speed from any point on the court. He toyed with his veteran foeman, making him look like a novice.

"Glory!" breathed Don, who was watching the stylish Czech for the first time. "If he's that good, who have we got to beat him? He's got everything."

"Just about," said the pro with a slight degree of reservation in his tone. Then he turned and his light blue eyes were directly on Don's. "I think you and I have things to talk about, Avery. Shall we take a little walk?"

This, thought Don, didn't make sense. But he was not going to argue with fate. Bill Farmer was the professional assigned to the Davis Cup squad by the committee.

"You should be playing in that final against Mozelle tomorrow, Avery," Farmer said laconically. "You played Red like a four-year-old."

"I gave everything I had," said Don, feeling a surge of resentment. "Could he never do anything right? Yesterday he had played tactically sound tennis to trim Rog Ralcott and Mary had blasted him for not showing more attack. Now he had gone all out against Red Cord and Bill Farmer was raking him over the coals.

"You gave everything you had—except with what's up here," said the veteran pro, tapping his temple. "I saw some of your match against young Talcott yesterday. You used your head then. What happened to you out there today? You showed enough speed to win if you'd played it as smartly as you did against Talcott."

Don wondered if this were happening to him.

To date he had made about as much impression upon the tennis world as a golf player. Ditto with Mary. He didn't get it. So he leveled off with Bill Farmer, even telling him about Betty and why he had lashed out so blindly against Red Cord. The pro nodded.

"Perhaps it's a good thing," he said. "I'd not have known you had the power if you hadn't been driven to it by a young lady. Incidentally, she had better improve her own high backhand before she gets so free with advice."

"I'd like to ask one question, Mr. Farmer," said Don. "What's this all about, anyway? I mean, why the sudden interest in me. I'm grateful, sure, but puzzled."

"Once in a while," said the pro, "things don't work out as they're supposed to. Our boys don't develop according to plan, or some foreigner comes over here and flashes a game we can't meet. It happened when Tilden and Johnston began to fade and Richards turned pro and the Frenchman turned up. Then it happened with Perry and Austin, later still with Bromwich and McGrath."

"Mozelle, eh?" said Don. "But I still don't see why me. I don't even rate the first twenty."

"No one's been helping you," said the pro. "But you've picked up more experience than you realize. I've been looking up your record. With a bit of intensive coaching—if you can take it, mind you—you may do for us."

"I can take it and love it," said Don with a smile. "But why me?"

"When the French sent LaCoste over here he was built to beat Tilden," the pro told him. "Cochet was probably a greater player, but Big Bill usually could take him in the tough ones. He could almost never take LaCoste. And now we have a whole stable full of crashing young Californians—they're great boys, mind you—and we've got a foreigner who has all the answers to their game.

"All right, let's go over to one of the west courts and see if we can't get things started," Farmer said mildly.

"Now?" said Don, astonished. And then he realized the fatigue which had so recently been permeating his whole body had receded. Under the spur of this new and unexpected opportunity, he felt new power flood through him. He grinned, more to himself than to the older man, and said, "Sure. Why not?"

Even in that first hour of practice on a secluded turf rectangle far from the courts upon which the important tournament matches were being played, Don began to fear that he might have bitten off more than he could chew. As he and the endlessly steady Farmer exchanged shots across the net, with the pro demonstrating his mastery of court tactics by voice and action, he began to wonder if the game he had been playing so long was tennis at all.

"No, no, no," Bill Farmer would say as Don returned a drive of middle length. "You're just hitting it back. If I had wanted to follow my shot in I could have put it away or taken command at the net. Tennis is like chess. You have to plan every shot three shots ahead. You've got

to make me do what *you* want me to—not just try to keep hitting them back."

"But you've got command once you're at the net," Don protested.

"Not if you've forced me to come in at your will. That's what the drop shot is for. You can make me come in, then pass me or lob over me, either win your point outright, or me run my legs off."

A GAIN, when Don found himself forced to race all over the court in a long exchange, Farmer said, "That's why you collapsed against Cord, Don. You let him stand still and you wore yourself out. You didn't think your shots."

That afternoon, and in the days that followed, Don began to understand how tennis should be played. He only hoped he would be able to play it once he had absorbed all that Farmer was teaching him. They spent five hours in practice on Saturday, and the entire morning of the Sunday that followed. Don was so busy trying to remember and practice all that he was learning that he almost ceased to worry about his shots.

That afternoon they took time off to see Red Cord and the Czech meet in the finals of the Wessex tournament. And both of them winced and marveled as Mozelle, complete master of the court, proceeded to beat the Californian easily in four sets. For a while it looked like a straight set win for the foreigner but, when Red rallied desperately and piled up a lead in the third, Mozelle relaxed and contented himself with making Red work for every point. After the intermission, it was the Czech in six straight games, with the American utterly helpless.

The gang moved on to the Meadow Club at Southampton but Farmer had Don withdraw his entry and they stayed on at Wessex to practice. At times in the eight days that followed, the younger man felt as if he were going backward instead of progressing. There was so

**14K GOLD PLATED
CHRONOGRAPH WRIST WATCH**



LOWEST MARKET PRICE \$7.25

Sweep Second Hand; Precision Workmanship; Rugged Shock-resistant case; Radium hands and numerals; Leather strap. It measures distance, speed of cars, planes, horses and other moving objects. It's a time keeper, stop watch, telemeter, tachometer. **ONE YEAR WRITTEN GUARANTEE** and full operating instructions enclosed with each watch. **SEND NO MONEY.** Mail your order today. Pay postman \$7.25 plus 10% Federal tax. Total \$8.00 plus postage. Or send cash (money order or check) with your order and save postage charge. **CHROME CASE \$6.75 plus tax (\$7.43).**

**MARDO SALES CO., Dept. 3611
480 Lexington Ave. New York 17, N. Y.**



SEND FOR THIS FREE!

Make money. Know how to break and train horses. Write today for this book **FREE**, together with special offer of a course in Animal Breeding. If you are interested in Gaiting and Riding the saddle horse, check here () *Do it today—now.*

**BEERY SCHOOL OF HORSEMANSHIP
Dept. 844, Pleasant Hill, Ohio**

INVENTORS

If you believe that you have an invention, you should find out how to protect it. We are registered Patent Attorneys. Send for copy of our Patent Booklet "How to Protect Your Invention," and an "Invention Record" form. No obligation. They are yours for the asking.

McMORROW, BERMAN & DAVIDSON

Registered Patent Attorneys
150-E Victor Building Washington I, D. C.



OWN a Business

Clean and Mothproof rugs and upholstery "in the home or office building". Patented equipment. No shop needed. Duraclean Dealer's gross profits up to \$15 and \$20 a day on EACH service man. These Nationally Advertised services create repeat customers the year 'round. Easy to learn. Quickly established. Easy terms. Send today for FREE Booklet—explaining full details. No obligation. Duraclean Co., 0-674 Duraclean Bldg., Deerfield, Ill.

**POPULAR DEMAND—
DEMANDS POPULAR**

Whatever you demand of your reading, there's an answer to it in the more than 20,000,000 words published annually under this seal—

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| SPORTS | DETECTIVE |
| LOVE | FANTASY |
| SCIENCE | WEST |
| ADVENTURE | MYSTERY |
| RAILROADING | |

Watch for this Popular Fiction Group seal on every magazine you buy. It is your one sure guide to good reading always!



much to learn, as well as to unlearn, and so little time to do it.

But he stuck with it, day after discouraging day. Concentrating on one point and another—from hitting his backhands farther away from him and farther behind him for more speed and concealment, to making his crosscourt drives flatter and sharper of angle and developing a stop volley that would drop dead.

Above all, he had to learn the trick of thinking not one shot ahead, but two or three or even four. He had to learn to use more varied spin to cause ultimate disruption in his opponent's game, and he had to learn how to control the speed of the exchanges from his side of the net.

Finally, on Saturday, Don played a practice game with Bill Farmer and discovered he wasn't having to think of all the details of shot and tactic that had been crowding his brain all week. He concentrated on strategy only as shot after shot rolled crisply off his racket and took the pro into camp in straight sets, none of which went to deuce. When it was over Bill Farmer nodded.

"Tomorrow," he said, "you and I are going to the beach."

They spent a day loafing, discussing the strength and weaknesses of his game, and those of his opponents.

Oddly enough, when they arrived at the Norfolk Cricket Club, a gorgeous expanse of emerald turf and profuse shrubbery, with a huge white clubhouse overlooking a yacht-studded bay, Mary Barton was one of the first persons Don saw.

"What happened to you?" she inquired almost belligerently. "I thought you would be at Southampton. You'll never get anywhere if you don't stick to it."

"I was," he told her quietly, "otherwise occupied. But I'm here now—and just a trifle surprised to discover that you do care after all."

MATCH POINT POISON

"Don't be idiotic!" Her pert and slightly sun-blistered nose rose a couple of notches. She turned away and nearly stumbled over a threshold. Don smothered an impulse to laugh and joined Bill, who had come in after parking the car.

He played under wraps on the pro's instructions during the early rounds. Against one opponent he practiced hitting undercut drives to force low returns into the net. Against a second he worked chiefly on angles, making them sharp and short in length.

And then, once again he found himself facing Rog Talcott, who had gone to the semi-finals at Southampton in the round of eight. If he won it would be his lot to go up against the Czech, who was still sweeping all before him, and if he managed to upset him, he'd probably face Red Cord in the finals.

"Don't worry about either of them till you have to, Don," Bill Farmer told him. "You still have Talcott to take. And that's not going to be easy."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Don. "I took him two weeks back at Wessex."

"You won't be playing him the same way," the pro said quietly. "You're going to keep the ball low this time—low and not too fast. I want you to spoil him, drop-shot him, break up his speed from the backcourt. Keep passing him until he tries the stay-back, then pull him in with drop shots."

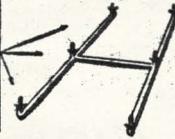
Don dropped the first two sets as a fresh and determined Rog Talcott, out for revenge, got his racket on too many shots. Time after time he sent appealing looks at Farmer, who sat unobtrusively on the sidelines, smoking his pipe, and time after time the veteran pro contented himself by merely shaking his head slowly.

So Don had to sweat it out. He got behind in the third set with his half-speed shots and, though he was making Talcott do most of the running, he began to be

SALESMEN! Cash in With . . .

Everspray

AMAZING UNDERGROUND SPRINKLER SYSTEM



**ONLY
\$4950
COMPLETE
Waters up to
1000 sq. ft.
with 6
"POP-UP"
HEADS**

**Owner Installs It in One Evening,
No Damage to Lawn or Garden!
Salesmen . . . Distributors Wanted at Once**

Dramatic demonstration on prospect's own lawn makes him say "Yes." Thousands sold last year. Demand bigger than ever. Provides Underground Sprinkler System at a price even the smallest home owner can afford. Installed quickly and easily without special tools. No pipe-cutting or threading. Can't freeze as automatic valve drains entire system after every use. Made of solid brass and copper—can't rust or rot! Easy to move if owner changes residence.

"JACK-POT" PLAN PAYS SALESMEN 10 for 1!

Amazing Sales Plan turns one order into 10 or more. Land first order quick and easy. Then EXTRA orders start pouring in without effort on your part. Exclusive Territories for Distributors and Salesmen. SEND NAME on postcard for Illustrated Folder, offer of FREE! pocket size Demonstrator and details of sensational "Jack-Pot" Pyramid Sales Plan. All information is FREE. Rush name today to

**EVERHOT PRODUCTS CO., (Everspray Division)
2001 CARROLL AVE. Dept. 244 CHICAGO 12, ILL.**

PRACTICAL AUTO INFORMATION

**Keeps Cars Rolling by Making Repairs
and Adjustments Easy!**



AUDELS AUTO GUIDE
For Every Mechanic, Driver,
Owner and Repair Shop.

Sent on 7 Days Approval
Shows How to Tune Up—Keep
Brakes Safe—Batteries Power-
ful—Tire Mileage Up—Save
Gas—Lubricate Correctly.

ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

Contains all you need to know
about 1—Construction,
2—Operation, 3—Service,
4—Repair of Modern Motor
Cars, Trucks, Buses & Diesel
Engines in every detail.

NEW FLUID DRIVE TREATED

Easy to understand—
1540 Pages, 1540 Illustrations.
Gives definite directions on
How to handle service jobs.

**ASK TO SEE IT—Get this information for yourself
—simply fill in and mail coupon today.**

• \$4 COMPLETE • PAY ONLY \$1 A MO.

AUDEL, Publishers, 49 West 23rd St., New York
Mail AUDELS AUTOMOBILE GUIDE (\$4) for free examination, if O. K., I
will send you \$1 in 7 days; then remit \$1 monthly until \$4 is paid.
Otherwise, I will return book promptly.

Name _____
Address _____
Occupation _____
Reference _____ PER

due to travel motion,
NAUSEA RELIEVED
 with the aid of
MOTHERSILL'S
SEASICK
REMEDY
 aids in quieting
 the nervous system
 THE WORLD OVER

INVENTORS

Learn how to protect your invention. Specially prepared "Patent Guide" containing detailed information concerning patent protection and procedure with "Record of Invention" form will be forwarded to you upon request—without obligation.
CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN & HARVEY JACOBSON

Registered Patent Attorneys

026-D District National Bldg. Washington 5, D. C.

NERVOUS STOMACH

ALLIMIN relieves distressing symptoms of "nervous stomach"—heaviness after meals, belching, bloating and colic due to gas. ALLIMIN has been scientifically tested by doctors and found highly effective. World famous—more than a ¼ billion sold to date.

ALLIMIN Garlic Tablets

"How to Make Money with Simple Cartoons"

A book everyone who likes to draw should have. It is free; no obligation. Simply address

FREE BOOK

CARTOONISTS' EXCHANGE
 Dept. 484 Pleasant Hill, Ohio



Annual Speed Survey

—is just one of dozens of exciting and informative features in the big April issue of **RAILROAD**. Rail hobbyists will find model locomotive plans, rail-photo club listings, old-time and modern interurban and streetcar news. Get your copy today. 35c at your favorite newsstand, or address—

RAILROAD

205 E. 42nd St., New York City 17

NEW SPORTS MAGAZINE

afraid the Californian never would slow up. It was unpleasant, playing under wraps against an opponent of Talcott's caliber, unpleasant and hard work.

And then, suddenly, Talcott slowed down just a trifle. He began to be a step slower coming in and Don found his own touch improving. It was something like his showing against Red Cord two weeks before. Don reeled off placement after placement with soft, apparently easy drives, forced errors with undercut shots that caught Talcott at shoe-top level.

The Californian tried to lay back in the fourth set, and Don kept pulling him in, feeling a sense of power, of control of the match, that was entirely new to him. In the fifth set, Talcott's game simply fell apart and Don romped home without having a single game go to deuce. They shook hands and Don noted that Talcott was a limp and wilted rag, while he himself felt fairly fresh.

IN THE clubhouse that evening they did a lot of talking. For the first time Don found himself an object of official interest. The big moguls kept stopping by the corner of the lounge in which he and the veteran pro were discussing the Czech's game. His showing against Red Cord and his two wins over Rog Talcott had aroused interest.

Farmer kept Don up until well after midnight.

"Never go to bed too early before an important match," he said. "Get good and sleepy before you turn in. You'll play better on six hours of solid sleep than on twelve of tossing and turning and wearing yourself out worrying."

"I'm not worried," said Don. Bill Farmer smiled and shook his head.

"You're not sleepy, either," he told Don. So they sat and chatted further. By the time he went up to his room, Don was dead tired.

MATCH POINT POISON

The next morning, he felt the tension and the restlessness that precede every big match. Mary was playing a doubles match and he spent an hour or so watching her scamper about the court. Her shots no longer looked so marvelous to him, though he realized she was head and shoulders above the other three girls in ability. But for all that, she looked slow and a bit clumsy in stroke production. He knew that she would never take a game from him unless he let her.

Rodrik Mozelle kept Don waiting nearly ten minutes before he swept out onto the court in a magnificent peacock-blue blazer.

Bill Farmer beckoned Don over to the court-side box in which he was sitting. "Remember," said the pro, "you don't have to beat him. Just scare hell out of him this time."

"I don't think," said the usually good-humored Don, "that I care particularly for the cut of his stripes."

"I'd like to see how he acts when he isn't ahead," said Bill Farmer, cryptically, his eyes straight ahead. Don nodded, more to himself than to the old pro, and then returned to the court and prepared to serve.

He lost the opening game in four straight points. No matter how much he put on his serve—and he was serving beautifully—the Czech returned flat, sharply angled drives that looked to be hit with almost insolent laziness, but which came whistling in with a speed which put them far out of reach.

When Mozelle took his service at love for eight straight points, Don began to feel a sense of panic. How could you play tactics against a man so good he put virtually every shot away as a placement?

The answer, of course, was that no man was that good. Sooner or later the Czech would have to let up on his pace.

He lost his second service but not until

SLEEP LIKE A TOP WITH ASTHMADOR

The soothing medicated fumes of Dr. R. Schiffmann's ASTHMADOR relieve the choking agony of bronchial asthma. You breathe more easily—sleep better. Use ASTHMADOR anytime—powder, cigarette or pipe mixture—whichever is most convenient. At all drug stores in U.S. & Canada.

DR. R. SCHIFFMANN'S
ASTHMADOR

SALESMANSHIP IS THE ANSWER

WE GUARANTEE that The Dyco Action Course in Effective Salesmanship will make you financially and professionally successful through salesmanship. Based on tested principles and proved methods. Easily learned. Done entirely in four colors. Requires 15 minutes a day for twelve weeks. IMMEDIATE RESULTS. Costs only \$3 per month for six months. Write for free details to

DYCO PUBLISHING COMPANY

Selling Aids Division

Dept. SA 4,

1321 Arch St.,

Philadelphia 7, Pa.



TOOTHACHE?

Quick relief with Dent's Gum or Dent's Tooth Drops for cavity toothaches. Use Dent's Dental Poultice for pain or soreness in gums or teeth. At all drug stores.

"Since 1888"

DENT'S

TOOTH GUM
TOOTH DROPS
DENTAL POULTICE



Get Well QUICKER

From Your Cough Due to a Cold

FOLEY'S Honey & Tar Cough Compound

CONFIDENTIAL LOAN SERVICE

Borrow \$50 to \$300⁰⁰

Need money? No matter where you live... you can borrow **BY MAIL**, \$50.00 to \$300.00 this easy, quick, confidential way. No endorsers needed. Employed men & women of good character eligible. Solve your money problems quickly and in complete privacy with a loan made by mail. Employer, relatives and friends will not know you are applying for a loan. Convenient monthly payments. Rush coupon—giving occupation—for Application Blank sent FREE in plain envelope. No obligation. **State Finance Co., 210 State Finance Bldg., Dept. E-71, Des Moines 3, Iowa**

BY MAIL

**STATE FINANCE CO., Dept. E-71,
210 State Finance Bldg., Des Moines 3, Iowa**
Please rush FREE Application Blank.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____
Occupation _____ Age _____

"Saved my Life

A God-send for GAS-HEARTBURN"

When excess stomach acid causes painful, suffocating gas, sour stomach and heartburn, doctors usually prescribe the fastest-acting medicines known for symptomatic relief—medicines like those in Bell-ans Tablets. No laxative. Bell-ans bring comfort in a jiffy or return bottle to us for double money back. 25¢ everywhere. Send post-card to Bell & Co., Orangeburg, N. Y. for free lucky rabbit's foot and sample of Bell-ans. Do it now.

EXTRA MONEY
IN MY SPARE TIME!
NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED! THIS EASY, PLEASANT WAY *\$50 IS YOURS
for selling 100 boxes greeting cards at \$1. Stationery or napkins with name on. Send for selling plan & samples on approval. Costs nothing to try
MERIT, 370 PLANE ST., DEPT. 21, NEWARK 2, N. J.

LAW

STUDY AT HOME for Business Success and LARGER PERSONAL EARNINGS. 40 years expert instruction—over 114,000 students enrolled. LL.B. Degree awarded. All text material furnished. Easy payment plan. Send for FREE BOOK—"Law and Executive Guidance"—NOW!

AMERICAN EXTENSION SCHOOL OF LAW
Dept. 25-B, 646 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Illinois

AGENTS WANTED

GET INTO ADVERTISING

MAKE A QUICK KILLING!

Everything you need to CLEAN up this year! Amazing new catalog and Free sales kit brings you THOUSANDS of Advertising specialties, pricing tickets, electric signs, display devices. Send postcard for it today. Remember it's FREE! Write:
PRICING PRESS, Dept. PF
103 Lafayette St. N. Y. 13, N. Y.

MAKE MONEY ADDRESSING ENVELOPES

Do this profitable easy work in the privacy of your home in spare time, experience unnecessary. Our complete instructions show you how, and also reveal names and addresses of many firms who constantly address thousands of envelopes. Send only \$1—with your name and address and we will send you everything to get started immediately.

The Congress Co., Dept. 469 1019 Congress Bldg. MIAMI, FLORIDA

High School Course at Home

Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H. S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. H-449 Drexel at 56th, Chicago 37

PERSONAL STAMP
SMITH'S ONE LINE RING POCKET STAMP 95¢
Neat chromium plated case with self contained ink pad. Fits Pocket or Purse. No. 1A one line name only 95c. No. 2A two line name and town \$1.29. No. 3A three line name, street and city \$1.39. Send M.O. or check, no C.O.D.'s. Order Today.
MAURICE C. SMITH CO., INC.
Dept. R-6 861 Broad Street, Providence 7, R. I.

NEW SPORTS MAGAZINE

the game had been deuced three times. One of the exchanges was a long affair and, after half a dozen shots had crossed the net in a baseline exchange, Don pulled Mozelle in with a drop shot and then passed him easily for his first earned point of the match.

The crowd applauded this show of life by the American, and the Czech sent a warning look at Don which suggested that he would not get away with *that* again. And to prove it, Mozelle lashed out furiously to take the next two points and put the game on ice. But, Don noted, he also did most of the running.

In the following game, Don stroked a low backhand straight down the line and came in behind it to the net. He volleyed the Czech's return crisply to the other side of the court, forcing him to run for it, but keeping it within reach. He repeated this four times from side to side, never putting the ball away, until even the crowd got hep to it and began to titter. This woke up the European, who lashed the next shot furiously—twenty feet out of court!

He broke Mozelle's service with that one, then held his own, bringing the game score up to two-three. The Czech put on another burst and corraled the next three games and the set, but not without paying for them. There was anger in his eyes as he and Don exchanged courts after the first game of the second set, which Don won with a clean cannon-ball ace down the center line.

Don went to receive.

His opponent came charging in and Don hit a lob so high that again the crowd laughed. This irritated Mozelle, who blasted it with a smash that bounded over the stands.

On the next serve Don did it again—and the Czech put it away! A third time Don did it and this time his enemy missed with a smash that sailed well beyond the

MATCH POINT POISON

baseline. Then, behind at fifteen-thirty, Don sent a low, undercut crosscourt return that Mozelle volleyed into the net.

Don lobbed again as the Czech continued to attack behind his heavy service—but this was no comedy lob. It barely cleared Mozelle's racket tip, fell just inside the baseline for an ungettable placement. The game was evened up and now Don took the attack, lashing out with savage drives off either wing, finally moving into the forecourt to put both points away with crashing volleys.

The Czech stayed in there, fighting grimly, but that was the match. Don took the second set at six games to three. The third went to deuce but Don pulled it out, nine-seven, and the fourth was a six-two runaway.

"Did I give him enough of a scare?" he asked Bill Farmer when he had a chance to talk to his mentor. The old pro just grinned and patted him on the back and wrung his hand. Red Cord came on then for his semi-final.

"Tomorrow," he said to Don, "is going to be rough—mighty rough."

"A pleasure," said Don with a fair imitation of the Czech's curt bow. Red laughed and started to say something else, but Don had spotted Mary under the grandstand gate and was already on his way. He wasn't worried about Red. He had an idea that the two of them might be playing side by side in the coming Davis Cup matches, come what might on the morrow.

Mary started to walk away as he approached her but he caught up with her outside the stands and put a restraining hand on her forearm. "Hold everything," he said. "Don't you be a spoiler now."

"Don," she said, turning slowly to face him, a glow of happiness flooding her pretty face, "I'm not going to spoil anything for you—ever."

It was all he wanted to know.



NEED MORE? MONEY?

Thousands already earn big, steady profits selling famous Bostonian shirts, rainwear, hosiery, underwear and other everyday needs for men, women and children. Also new line of Hamilton shoes. No selling experience needed — if you're keen and really want to assure yourself of a steady income. Bostonian will back you and set you up in business. You get big profits, immediate cash and big selling kit. Our Company has tripled its business in the last year. Write now — big Spring season ahead. Bostonian Mfg. Co., Dept. 401, 89 Bickford Street, Boston 30, Mass.

Write for
FREE
Selling
Kit



SAHARA SUE SAYS

Stop using Harsh Abrasive Soaps, Sahara will Remove Without Water — Paint, Tar, Grease, Grime, Printers' Ink, etc. QUICKLY — EASILY — SAFELY. Contains Lanalin.

Prevents Chapping and Rough Red Hands.

At Your Dealer or Send \$1.00 for two 60c Tubes — Postpaid — Money-Back Guarantee — Agents Wanted SAHARA WATERLESS SOAP CO., Grand Rapids 2, Michigan

FREE MONEY-MAKING OUTFITS WITH ACTUAL SAMPLES

Man or woman—young or old, YOU can earn steady income in full or spare time. Everything you need is furnished FREE and prepaid. Simply write orders for nationally advertised Kendex nylon hosiery sold with amazing guarantee that gives free replacement if hose runs or snags (regardless of cause) within period up to 3 months. Complete line including sheerest 60 gauge. Carries Good Housekeeping Guarantee Seal, which provides replacement or refund of money if not as advertised therein. Also 3 additional lines (1) beautiful lingerie (2) wonderful robes at amazing direct to wearer prices (3) complete line men's hose guaranteed one full year or replaced free. No money or experience needed to build your own business. We deliver and collect. Advance cash plus huge bonus. Postcard will bring you sample nylon stockings, samples of lingerie-robe fabrics and complete money-making outfits. Nothing to pay now or later. No obligation. Write:

KENDEX COMPANY • BABYLON 99, N. Y.



Build Your Library this new, money-saving way!

Order any book right from your own home. You'll get it promptly, direct from New York (book center of the world), and at not one penny additional charge to you. Postage and insurance are free. Here's the smart way, the money-saving way to build a library your friends will marvel at. And it's just as perfect for selecting gift books, too. Here are just a few of the latest selections worth owning. Use the convenient coupon below . . .



SPECIAL—WHILE THEY LAST!

Reader's Treasury—Heritage Press Edition

750 pages of unforgettable stories, novels, essays, poems by Somerset Maugham . . . Ring Lardner . . . Alexander Woolcott . . . A. E. Housman . . . James Thurber . . . Jack London . . . Damon Runyon . . . Carl Sandburg . . . many others.

Published at \$2.95

Special Price \$1.49

CHILDBIRTH: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

by Carl Henry Davis, M.D. and Donita Ferguson

\$2.50

What is the truth about the new method of having a baby painlessly? Are premature babies invariably handicapped? These and so many other vital questions are answered in this remarkable book. Every expectant mother should have a copy.

THE FORSYTE SAGA

by John Galsworthy

\$2.98

This is the motion picture edition of one of the most interesting novels of all time. Yes, the picture that stars Errol Flynn, Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon, in book form—a big book, 921 pages complete, uncut. A rare opportunity while the limited supply lasts!

WHILE THEY LAST—THREE GREAT NOVELS!

VERMILION by Idwol Jones

"A vintage novel . . . full-bodied and to the connoisseur's taste."—Prentice-Hall, Inc.

I WILL BE GOOD by Hester Chapman

"An original and deeply impressive book."—Houghton Mifflin

BARABBAS by Emery Bekessy

Second large printing. Recommended by the Religious Book Club.

Pub. at \$8.25 . . . 1296 pages . . . The three volumes, \$2.98

MAIL THIS COUPON WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!

Popular Publications, Dept. D,
205 E. 42nd St., N. Y. 17, N. Y.

Send me the books checked below. I enclose remittance of \$.....

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reader's Treasury, \$1.49 | <input type="checkbox"/> (Vermilion) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childbirth, \$2.50 | <input type="checkbox"/> (I Will Be Good) \$2.98 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Forsyte Saga, \$2.98 | <input type="checkbox"/> (Barabbas) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (Tales for Males), \$1.98 | <input type="checkbox"/> How to Build Your |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (Beside Bonanza) | <input type="checkbox"/> Own House, \$5.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Bright Coin, \$3.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Below Suspicion, \$2.50 |

Name

Address.....

City..... Zone..... State.....

WHILE THEY LAST!

Special Gift Package—Original Editions

TALES FOR MALES Selected by Ed Fitzgerald

" . . . It is rowdy . . . cynical Notable stories by clever writers"—The Salt Lake Tribune.

THE BEDSIDE BONANZA . . . Edited by Frank Owen

"A lodestone of love and laughter . . ."—Frederick Fell

Two volumes, 870 pages

Published at \$4.99

2 volumes complete \$1.98

THE BRIGHT COIN

By Elizabeth Seifert

\$3.00

A throbbing love story with a daring insight into the lives and problems of doctors. Should there be a single or double standard of morality for the medical profession? What do you think? Read "The Bright Coin" and see if you agree.

HOW TO BUILD YOUR OWN HOUSE

by Hugh Ladiman

\$5.00

You can build yourself a beautiful home in 20 weekends plus your 2-weeks vacation—and save \$75 a day while you do it. If you can saw a board or hammer a nail—and your missus will help—the rest is easy. What do you want—a ranch house, a town house, a modern house? They're all here.

BELOW SUSPICION

by John Dickson Carr

\$2.50

If the fabulous Dr. Gideon Fell is a favorite of yours, here he is snarled up in his newest, greatest mystery. And you're right with him. What is the significance of the silver candelabrum and the red garter? Every clue is given and you are challenged to find the murderer.

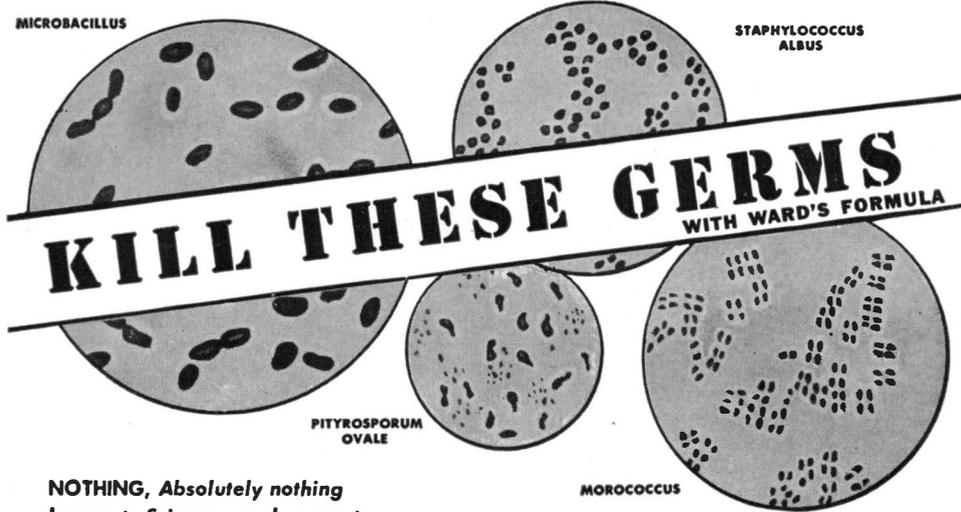


Buy your books this new,
easy by-mail way!

Yes, order any book you want right from your own home. You'll get it promptly direct from New York (book center of the world) at no extra cost—free insurance and postage. Build your library this fast, easy, money-saving way. USE THIS COUPON . . .

MICROBACILLUS

STAPHYLOCOCCUS
ALBUS



**NOTHING, Absolutely nothing
known to Science can do more to**

MOROCOCCUS

SAVE YOUR HAIR

Beware of your itchy scalp, hair loss, dandruff, head scales, unpleasant head odors! Nature may be warning you of approaching baldness. Heed Nature's warning! Treat your scalp to scientifically prepared Ward's Formula.

Millions of trouble-breeding bacteria, living on your sick scalp (see above) are killed on contact. Ward's Formula kills not one, but *all four* types of these destructive scalp germs now recognized by many medical authorities as a significant cause of baldness. Kill these germs—don't risk letting them kill your hair growth.

Once you're bald, that's *it*, friends! There's nothing you can do. Your hair is gone forever. So are your chances of getting it back. But Ward's Formula, used as directed, keeps your sick scalp free of itchy dandruff, seborrhea, and stops the hair loss they cause. Almost at once your hair looks thicker, more attractive and alive.

We don't ask you to believe *us*. Thousands of men and women—first skeptical just as you are—have *proved* what we say. Read *their* grateful letters. Study the guarantee—it's *better* than a free trial! Then try Ward's Formula at our risk. Use it for only 10 short days. You must enjoy *all* the benefits we claim—or we return not only the price you pay—but **DOUBLE YOUR MONEY BACK**. You be the judge! © Ward Laboratories, Inc., 1430 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y.

ENJOY THESE 5 BENEFITS IMMEDIATELY

1. Kills these 4 types of germs that retard normal hair growth—on contact
2. Removes ugly infectious dandruff—*fast*
3. Brings hair-nourishing blood to scalp—*quickly*
4. Stops annoying scalp itch and burn—*instantly*
5. Starts wonderful self-massaging action—*within 3 seconds*

Here's the Proof!

We get letters like these every day from grateful men and women all over the world.

I must admit I didn't have much faith in it, but I hadn't been using Ward's one week before I could see it was helping me. I could feel my hair getting thicker.

E. K., Cleveland, Ohio
Out of all the Hair Experts I went to, I've gotten the *most* help from one bottle of Ward's Formula.
C. Le M., Philadelphia, Pa.

After using Ward's for only 12 days, my hair has stopped falling out.

R. W. C., Cicero, Ill.
I am tickled to death with the results. In just two weeks' time—no dandruff! *W. T. W., Fortola, Cal.*
I feel encouraged to say that the infuriating scalp itch which has bothered me for 5 years is now gone.
J. M. K., Columbus, Ohio

We gladly cooperate with Physicians and Hospitals desiring to make clinical tests of Ward's Formula. Please write.

TO SAVE YOUR HAIR ACT NOW. Send coupon today for 10-day offer. Send No Money

Guarantee

This written guarantee entitles you not only to return of price paid for Ward's Formula, but **Double Your Money Back** unless you actually **SEE, FEEL and ENJOY** all benefits herein claimed in only ten days. The test is at our risk. All you do is return unused portion or the empty bottle unless completely satisfied.

Ward Laboratories, Inc.

Ward Laboratories, Inc.,
1430 Broadway, Dept. 52W, New York 18, N. Y.

Rush Ward's Formula to me at once. I will pay postman two dollars plus postage. I must be completely satisfied within 10 days, or you GUARANTEE refund of **DOUBLE MY MONEY BACK** upon return of bottle and unused portion.

Name.....
Address.....
City..... Zone..... State.....

Check here if you enclose \$2.00 with order, and we will pay postage. Some refund after holds, of course.
APO, FPO, Canada and Foreign, add 50c—No C.O.D.'s.

DOUBLE YOUR MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

THIS OFFER TO NEW DOLLAR BOOK CLUB MEMBERS IS SO UNUSUAL IT MAY NEVER BE REPEATED! JOIN NOW AND GET

ALL 3 FOR \$1

TOTAL VALUE IN PUBLISHERS EDITIONS \$8.00

3 TOP FICTION HITS—FULL SIZE, HANDSOMELY BOUND BOOKS!



Send No Money Now... Nothing to Postman... Pay Later!

WHAT A BARGAIN! This big TRIPLE package of book entertainment—for only \$1.00! Combined value in publishers' original editions is \$8.00—yet we'll send you all three for only \$1.00 if you join the Dollar Book Club now. Get this big generous sample of the fascinating reading and huge savings that members enjoy! Just mail coupon below.

What Was the Terrifying Discovery That Could Stop an Atomic War?

THE BIG EYE
by Maz Ehrlich

IN the deserted, ghost-like New York of 1960, David Hughes, young astronomer, is suddenly called away from a top-secret military conference. For the 200 inch telescope at Palomar Observatory has seen something that was to rock the entire world! Edge-of-the-chair excitement!



Beware This Blonde—Her Caress Is A Booby-Trap!

CASE OF THE CAUTIOUS COQUETTE
by Erle Stanley Gardner

THE inimitable Perry Mason is faced with a beautiful but dangerous woman, a dead husband, and a man with "a million dollar" alibi which almost sends the wrong party to the deathhouse. Erle Stanley Gardner's newest and most sizzling mystery!



Meet the Most Surprised Bride in All England—and

LORD JOHNNIE
by Leslie T. White

THE ravishing Lady Leanna wed Lord Johnnie the Rogue on his way to the gal-lows, and planned to forget him; but slippery Johnnie came back... to claim his wedding night! A tale of strange love and swashbuckling adventure on land and sea!



The Only Club That Brings You Best-Sellers for Just \$1

YES, the very same titles sold in the publishers' retail editions for \$2.75 to \$3.00 come to Dollar Book Club members for only \$1 each—an incredibly big saving of almost two-thirds! Such values are possible because of the great economies effected in printing huge editions for a large membership.

Take as Few as Six Books a Year!

Membership in the Dollar Book Club requires no dues of any kind. You do not even have to take a book every month; the purchase of as few as six books a year fulfills your membership requirement.

Upon receipt of the attached coupon you will be sent your introductory TRIPLE package of books: *The Big Eye*, *The Case of the Cautious Coquette* and *Lord Johnnie*, and you will be billed a total of only \$1.00, plus a few cents shipping cost, for ALL THREE. Thereafter you will receive regularly the Club's Bulletin which describes the forthcoming Club selections, also other popular books offered to members for only \$1.00.

Send No Money—Just the Coupon

When you see your TRIPLE book package—and realize these three books are typical of the values offered by the Club for only \$1.00 each, you will be delighted to have become a member! Mail the coupon now.

Doubleday One Dollar Book Club, Garden City, New York.

MAIL THIS COUPON
DOUBLEDAY ONE DOLLAR BOOK CLUB
Dept. 4PP, Garden City, New York

Please enroll me as a Dollar Book Club member and send me at once my triple package of books, *The Big Eye*, *Case of the Cautious Coquette*, and *Lord Johnnie*. Bill me only \$1.00 for all 3, plus a few cents shipping cost.

With these books will come my first issue of the free descriptive folder called "The Bulletin" telling about the two new forthcoming one-dollar bargain book selections and additional bargains offered at \$1.00* each to members only.

I have the privilege of notifying you in advance if I do not wish either of the following months' selections and whether or not I wish to purchase any of the other bargains at the Special Club price of \$1.00 each. I do not have to accept a book every month—only six during such year that I remain a member. I pay nothing except \$1 for each selection received plus a few cents shipping cost.

Mr. _____
Mrs. _____
Miss _____ Please Print
Address _____
City, Zone _____
& State _____

Occupation _____ If under 21, age, please...
*Same Price in Canada: 105 Bond St., Toronto 2