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MOUNTAINS — MOLEHILLS

By GILBERT FRANKAU

Illustrated by WILTON WILLIAMS

"BUT you can't mean that, Jennifer. You're not serious."

"I do mean it. And I've never been more serious in my life, Nigel."

"After being engaged to me for three years. After promising, only last night——"

"Never mind last night." Jennifer Trent did not blush. Meadingbury girls rarely do. "That's got nothing to do with it. You can't have your own way about everything, Nigel."

"Neither can you, if it comes to that."

"I only want my way about one thing."

"And supposing I won't give it you?"

"Why, then, you must take the consequences, my dear." And Jennifer Trent's eyes, dark under their dark brows, began to smoulder; while her full lips drew to their stubbornest line; and the thumb and forefinger of her right hand fidgeted, suddenly, towards the third finger of her left.

"I've never been more serious in my life," she repeated. "At your age, a man ought to have more sense than to risk breaking his neck just for the sake of getting a thrill."

"That isn't why I do it. And besides, there isn't any risk."

"Oh, no." The voice was sarcastic.

"Not if one knows the game."

"Game, you call it."

And at that Nigel Westmacott's blue eyes also began to smoulder, and the pale lashes over them to twitch.

It had often amused Jennifer to see him in this mood, angry with a queer tigerish anger which seemed to make even the little blond moustache bristle. But this afternoon his temper only added to his offence.

"Aren't you being rather unreasonable?" he went on. "You've never taken up this attitude before. And I've been racing cars ever since we first knew each other."

"All the more reason," countered Jennifer, "for you to oblige me by giving it up now."

"But, damn it, darling——"

"You needn't swear at a girl——"

"You'd make any man swear. Do you think I'm going to scratch now, ten days before the Easter Meeting? Do you imagine I'm going to give up the whole season, the Double Twelve, the T.T., Le Mans, Montlhéry——"

"Meaning that you'd rather give me up, Nigel?"

" I didn't say so."

" You implied it, though." And Jennifer Trent, the thumb and forefinger of her right hand already twisting at her engagement ring, rose from the sofa on which——

But she wasn't going to remember how many times Nigel had kissed her on that particular sofa. Marriage wasn't just kissing, anyway. A wife ought to have certain rights. And one of those rights was peace of mind.

" A fat lot of peace of mind I'd have," she thought, " married to a speed-maniac. Unreasonable, indeed. When I've put up with it for three years. Scared all the time. And never letting on that I was scared."

Aloud, for she was that kind of young woman, she said, " And you needn't think I'm frightened of your temper, because I'm not."

As she spoke he, too, rose ; and a ray of cold sunshine, slanting in on them through the big French windows of the Meadingbury drawing-room, showed him her full attractions—the tall slender shape of her, the broad white forehead, the soft and darkly curling mass of her hair.

Lovely hair, she had. And a lovely mouth. And the loveliest, softest hands. But he, Nigel Westmacott, wasn't going to put the wheel of his whole life into any girl's hands. If she wanted to boss him like this—if this was all that a three-year engagement, and last night's definite promise, meant to her—if she really intended to give him back that diamond . . .

" I'm not in the least frightened," she repeated ; and, twisting the single square-cut stone from her engagement finger, held it out to him, saying, " You have your choice, Nigel. Either no Brooklands, or no me."

He had made his choice ; and she, Jennifer Trent, wasn't sorry about it. She didn't really love Nigel Westmacott. No girl in her senses could really love anyone so utterly selfish, so completely pig-headed as Nigel Westmacott. And to think that she'd wasted three of the best years of her life over the man, to think of all the fun she'd missed, to think how sloppy she'd let herself be !

" But I'm not going to be slŏppy any more," decided Jennifer—and went upstairs to bathe her eyes.

Her eyes, examined in the bath-room mirror, looked absurdly moist. She attended to them, attended to the rest of her complexion, put on a hat, took a stick, and joined her mother in the garden.

" Isn't Nigel staying for dinner ? " asked her mother, busy among the rose-bushes. " I thought I heard his car go off just now."

" So you did," answered Jennifer—and held out her left hand.

" Well, you know your own mind best, I expect," said Mrs. Trent a little later.

" I should hope so," retorted Mrs. Trent's only daughter ; and set out for a walk.

By then, the cold sun was already setting over Meadingbury ; and as she turned out of the Avenue towards Tom Rodney's big house and the common beyond it, rain threatened from the April sky.

" Beastly winter we've had," she thought. " Beastly spring, too. Everything's rather beastly in Meadingbury." And so thinking, heard herself accosted ; looked round to recognize Basil Toogood, also on foot and alone.

At twenty-one—he was commonly known as " the public danger " in Meadingbury—Jennifer had very nearly succumbed to the attractions of Basil Toogood, who still flirted with her (he played golf, also, but only in his spare time, so to speak), whenever the opportunity arose.

He began flirtatiously now ; and although she snubbed him as of old, Jennifer could not help admiring his technique, a nicely balanced blend of eagerness and insolence. He was handsome, too—much better-looking, really, than Nigel. Taller. Slimmer. And with ever so much nicer hands.

" And how is the dashing *fiancé* ? " he asked, after a while. " Satisfactory ? One can only presume so—from the duration of your engagement to him. Let's see, how long is it since you and I used to go out dancing together ? "

" But did we ever do that ? " retorted an artless Jennifer. " If so, I've forgotten it."

" Then, of course, we didn't," he countered. " And it must have been some other girl I used to drive home."

Which was fun ; and still more fun when he asked her, semi-sententiously, " What about coming along to the Club for a cocktail ; or don't you think an engaged girl ought to be seen alone with me ? "

Especially fun—thought Jennifer—if Nigel, who was also a member, though not a Meadingburyite, should happen to be at the Club, too.

MEANWHILE, Nigel Westmacott, sizzling back to London at a fat seventy in his low, red Marotti, was not finding life any fun at all.

Jennifer—he decided, as he cut round a slow flivver, a pantechnicon, and a Green Line char-à-bancs—was a self-willed little pig. Be damned, therefore, if he wanted to marry her.

" Gobble me up," continued his decision. " That's what she'd do. Shouldn't be able to call my soul my own."

Back at his flat, however, with the car garaged, and his servant out, and nothing arranged for the evening, he fell to thinking about "the old sofa in Meadingbury" as they had been wont, jestingly, to call it, and Jennifer's good-night kisses, and the plans they had made—only yesterday—for a home of their own.

Item: fumbling in his pocket for his tobacco-pouch, his fingers encountered some hard, foreign substance, which he recognized with a shock for the returned engagement-ring.

At which, he swore roundly, locked "the blinking stone" away in the drawer of his desk, and went out to dine at his club—where the average man of forty, faced with a similar situation, might have been excused for indulging in "two over the odds," but where Nigel Westmacott, his new Clemonda already handicapped down to fifty seconds in the Easter Mountain Speed Handicap, only drank one cocktail, subsequently drowned in a fluid highly satisfactory for the filling of radiators, but somewhat inadequate for the solace of men in love.

So lowering, indeed, was the effect of this radiator-filling fluid that Nigel Westmacott hardly slept a wink on it; and, waking at the unearthly hour of six-thirty, he smoked furiously till breakfast, thinking, "There may be a letter from her. It may be all right."

The postman, however, brought only bills; for all of which—no man in love being quite responsible for his actions—Westmacott wrote out immediate cheques, and so departed to the City, where he snapped at his tea-broking partner, "Sorry I can't give you a lift back from Meadingbury on Sunday night. I'm spending this week-end in Town."

The which he did, in some loneliness—alternately wondering how long it would take Jennifer to "come to heel," and what sort of a coward he would feel if he gave up motor-racing.

For Nigel Westmacott, though you would never have guessed it from his words or his appearance, was the kind of man—either very brave or very foolish, according to the way you look at it—who wins the Victoria Cross through being more afraid for his vanity than for his skin.

But this is a trait in the masculine character which only the rarest of maidens should be expected to understand.

THERE was nothing rare, of course—except in Nigel Westmacott's imagination—about Jennifer Trent. She was just a Meadingbury girl; anxious, though in no particular hurry, for the fate of all good Meadingbury girls, marriage. After which, she would "settle down."

Settling down, however, having been momentarily postponed, both instinct and vanity urged her to find an alternative. And since the alternative, properly flaunted, might eventually "teach Nigel that he wasn't the only pebble on the beach," she did not disdain the first one to hand—in the person of Basil Toogood, to whom she confided, after waiting two days for a letter or at least a telephone-call from Nigel, that her engagement had been broken off "for keeps."

And whether or no Basil Toogood believed this is immaterial, since he—as he confided in return and instanter—was not a marrying man.

"Can't afford it, for one thing," confided Basil. "Don't believe in it, for another. Though I must say I like a spot of petting occasionally."

"Is that so?" asked Jennifer, and on Tuesday night went dancing with him, not at the Club, but in Town.

She stayed the night in Town, too, with her Aunt Louisa, who said, "That was a very presentable young man, my dear. But, on the whole, I think I prefer Captain Westmacott. Are you sure you've done the wise thing in breaking off your engagement?"

"Of course I'm sure," retorted Jennifer—wondering, nevertheless, why, despite three glasses of champagne, and the fact that the sofa in Aunt's drawing-room was more than big enough for two, she should have insisted on Basil's taking one of the armchairs when he came in for that last whisky-and-soda; and why she should not have got even the faintest pre-engagement kick out of his "Hang it all, you might at least let a man kiss you good night."

She wondered, too, packing her suit-case for the return to Meadingbury, what on earth could have induced her to bring Nigel's photograph, deciding, as they passed the Ace of Spades in Basil's woolly little two-seater, "Habit, I expect. After all, three years is a long time. And I'm nearly twenty-five. And at twenty-five one can't expect to get quite the same kick out of men wanting to kiss one after dances."

And how rottenly Basil Toogood drove!

He drove her back to the house; and she felt bound to invite him in for a glass of sherry. The parlourmaid, asked if there were any letters for her, said: "Nothing at all, Miss." Basil, drinking his sherry, asked her when they were going to meet again:—

"What about to-morrow?"

"No. I'm playing tennis to-morrow."

"Friday, then?"

"Hullo," said Jennifer, offering her hand.

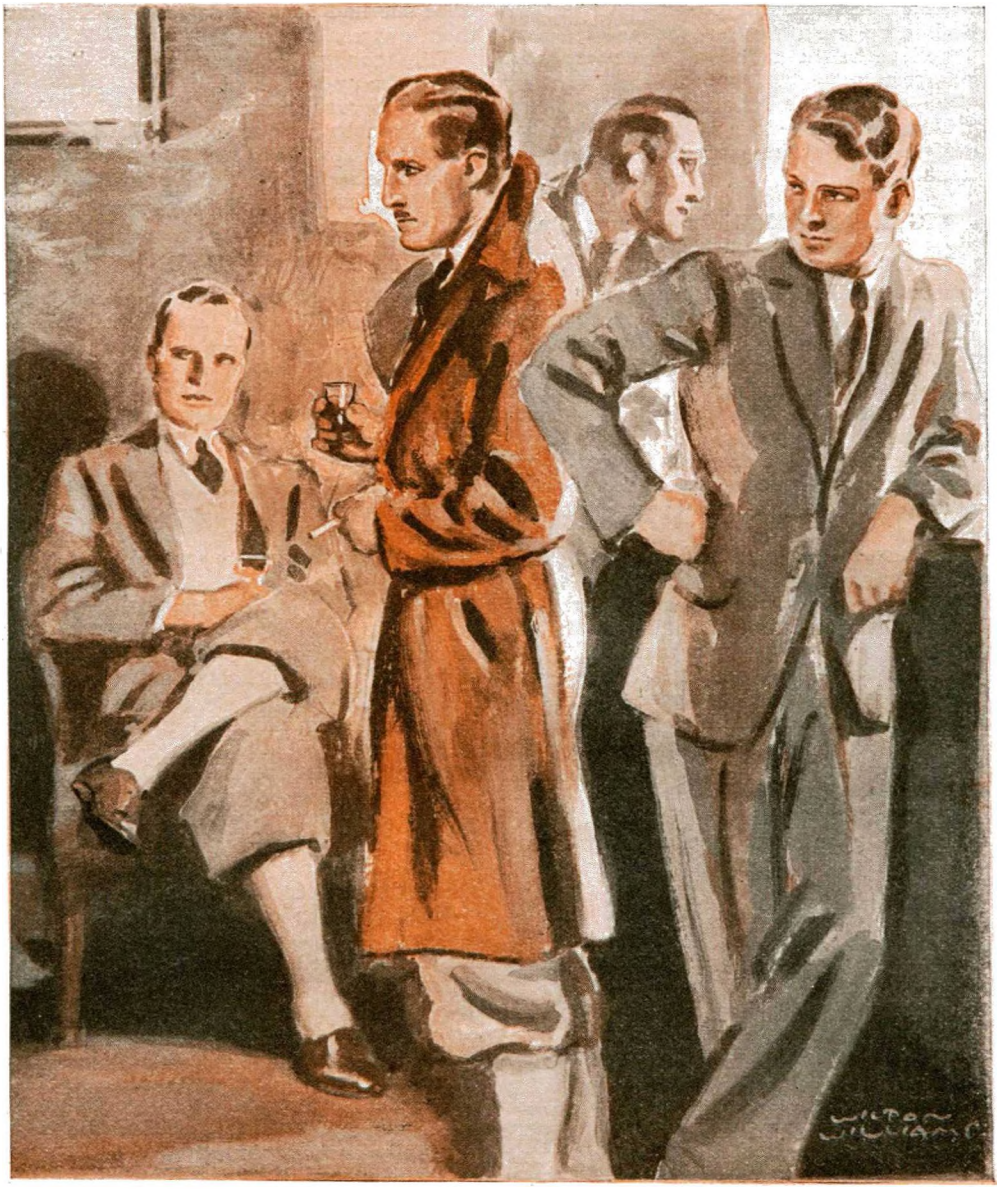
"But it's Good Friday."

"So it is. Easter and all that. I'd clean forgotten. Saturday'll be all right, though. How about running down to Brighton?"

"I'll let you know," promised Jennifer; but Thursday night found her still undecided—and closer than ever to tears.

It was such a heavenly night—she thought, as she went up to her bedroom. Spring seemed really to have arrived. Parting the curtains, looking down into the garden, she could just see the first daffodils, glimmering like tiny yellow stars in the radiance from her mother's window. And the Martindale's, next door, still had their wireless on. "Go home and tell your

come and see



smiling at him, but not "We thought we'd you race."

mother," the wireless began to play, "that you're going to belong to me."

Whereupon Jennifer Trent felt the tears so close behind her dark eyes that she had to repeat the word "Sloppy" with appropriate self-recriminations three times before getting into bed, and again when she woke, reminding herself that she really must let Basil Toogood know something about Saturday.

But the more Jennifer Trent thought about running down to Brighton with Basil Toogood on Easter Saturday, the less it appealed to her. And if only she'd had a car of her own, she'd never even have bothered to ring him up.

In fact, she'd as good as decided not to ring him up when the thought came to her, "I believe he's a member. I may as well make certain."

And, certain, she did a very strange thing for Meadingbury, which is more faithful in its attendance at its picture-house than at church.

NIGEL WESTMACOTT did not attend divine service on Good Friday. He spent most of that day with his partner's family, who did not find him much of a guest; and, woken early next morning to the news, "It looks a bit like rain, sir," re-experienced certain sensations with which he had been all too familiar between the ages of twenty-three and twenty-six.

Track-racing on a dry day was a good enough test for any fellow's post-war nerves. But on a wet one, it was "just a bit too steep."

Breakfasting, in plus fours, his imagination pictured the two turns on "The Mountain"—the banked one under the Members' Bridge, the flat hair-pin at the Fork; and, picturing them both deluged, he had the impulse to scratch.

At which moment, however, his eyes happened to light on Jennifer's photograph, still queening it beside the case which held his war-medals—and the impulse passed suddenly as it had come.

Let it pelt. He'd race just the same. One wasn't going to be bossed by Jennifer. No, by Jove. Any more than one was going to admit, even to one's own most private soul, that one had "wind up."

"Haven't got wind up," decided Nigel Westmacott. "Don't give a damn for anybody. Mean to win."

In that mood, and the red Marotti, no longer raceable, he set out for Brooklands. The rain appeared to be holding off. Mounting Putney Hill, it seemed almost as though the sun were going to shine before afternoon.

It was early yet, his road fairly clear. But once on the by-pass, obstacles hindered him, and he began to chafe.

Why the blazes were they always doing something or other to this by-pass? Why hadn't they laid it decently, made it a decent size, to start with? Halted by a hulking youth with a red stop-sign, he fumbled in the pocket of his leather coat for his pipe.

The pipe, lit before he drove on, soothed him. He started to calculate his chances of winning with the Clemonda; decided them pretty good. But from that, his thoughts switched to Jennifer, and he began to wonder what she had been doing with herself since their quarrel.

Till, wondering, jealousy took him between the eyes.

At this very moment, Jennifer might be with somebody else. And, dash it, he wouldn't stand for her going about with anybody else. If he met her with anybody else, he'd have something to say about it. No right? Possibly not. Right or no right, though, he'd have something to say about it.

Presently, however, that mood also passed. Jennifer could do what she liked. Unless—faint hope!—she came to heel of her own accord, he'd done with her.

So deciding, he approached the course.

The sky, though completely grey, still held a vague promise of sunshine. Quite possibly, it would be clear by lunch-time. Steering in at the Members' entrance, Nigel Westmacott gave the gate-man his cheeriest good day.

He drove on, through the tunnel under the great track, to the concrete paddock; stabled the Marotti; found the factory mechanic smoking by his green Clemonda under the card which bore his name.

Right and left of him nearly all the compartments in the long, open shed were still empty. He asked a question or two of the mechanic; assured himself that the Clemonda's pump-gland, which had given a bit of trouble at practice, was now O.K. Also—being pernickety about them—he insisted on testing his tyre-pressures; and gave orders to change his plugs.

By then, other cars were arriving; and the shed, the whole paddock, began to echo the noise of their exhausts.

One or two of his pals lounged over; gave him "Cheerio." As usual, he found himself responding to the atmosphere of this place, which recalled, faintly, the atmosphere of his War-time mess.

Everybody, however, decided that rain was certain; and this annoyed him. Because personally he held the opposite view. He even had a bet about the rain, with "old Fisscock," whose new Panther was rumoured to have lapped the Mountain in fifty-six seconds—obviously a lie, since that worked out at something like seventy-five miles an hour, and all Panthers were rotten cornerers.

This bet made, he and "old Fisscock," also known as "Champagne Charlie," sauntered the few yards to the club-house, and upstairs to the bar; where Nigel Westmacott, over just one glass of sherry, offered to lay any odds that Champagne Charlie's Panther couldn't lap the Mountain in one minute one, let alone fifty-six seconds.

At which exact moment he heard a voice to which he took an instant dislike, say, "This is the private speakeasy, girl-friends also admitted," and turning found himself face to face with Basil Toogood, whom he knew only by sight (though also by reputation), and Jennifer, who smiled at him but did not offer her hand.

"Hullo," said Jennifer. "We thought we'd come and see you race. Basil Toogood —Nigel Westmacott."

"Nasty-looking piece of work," Westmacott said to himself, barely acknowledging the introduction; and the other, "Suppose this is what she made me bring her here for. Looks like being a jolly afternoon, *je ne pense pas*."

Aloud he said, "Now we'll have a look at the Control Tower, Jenny."

And, "Jenny, indeed," thought Westmacott. "That shows what a bounder the fellow is."

But aloud he said nothing. Though even through the sudden gust of his jealous temper it struck him as slightly queer that Jennifer, who had always made some excuse or other not to see him race, should have chosen this particular juncture to change her mind.

JENNIFER TRENT and Basil Toogood took a cocktail apiece before the fire in the members' room, and lunched early—neither of them, it must be admitted, spending a pleasant hour.

The public danger of Meadingbury did his best to be flirtatiously entertaining; and occasionally his companion responded. But the responses lacked even the sincerity of artifice; and every now and again Jennifer relapsed into complete silence, thinking, as a less reputable character is reported to have thought, "If it comes to wishing, I wish I were dead."

Needless to say, Jennifer Trent didn't really wish that. She only wished she were lunching with Nigel. Also, with every passing minute, she felt herself growing more scared for Nigel; and when Basil, who may or may not be a bounder but is certainly a good mixer, fell into conversation with a tall stranger at their table, who appeared to possess a supreme knowledge of racing-hazards, she listened with her heart in her mouth, till the stranger, in reply to a direct question, explained that he was a medical officer of the course.

Then, making the most of her attractive smile, she chipped in to the talk.

"Accidents?" the doctor told her. "Well, of course, one's bound to have a few. There was a nasty one in the Double Twelve last year. But on the whole it's pretty safe now that they finish in the Railway Straight. Except, of course, when we have a really wet track."

"And it's not going to be really wet this afternoon, is it?" asked Jennifer.

"Hm," answered the doctor, looking out of the restaurant windows, "I'm not so sure of that."

At which Jennifer's heart sank into her shoes.

They were, by the way, her most attractive pair of shoes; and the coat she had chosen for the day, her new leather one, pale brown with a black fur collar. Her hat, too, was her latest purchase. But the face under that hat—decided the expert Basil—needed a spot more colour to look its best.

He had half a mind, when the doctor left them, to tell her so. But decided not to—calling her attention, instead, to the costume of a man who was just paying for his luncheon ticket.

"Those tartan socks," remarked Basil, *sotto voce*, "worn with a green check suit, an orange waistcoat, a purple tie, and a rhubarb-coloured overcoat, make a most chaste finale to the *tout ensemble*."

By then, however, Jennifer Trent was beyond laughter—even at such a sight.

She was still in love—no use blinking the fact—with Nigel. And Nigel might be killed that very afternoon. Then, she would have no chance of making it up with him. And she must make it up with him. She simply must.

She looked round the crowded restaurant. Why hadn't Nigel come in? Where was Nigel? What time would he be racing?

Basil had already bought her a race-card. Fidgeting, she turned the pages till she found Nigel's name. "No. 7. Entrant, Captain N. Westmacott, Vehicle, Clemonda, Driver, Entrant." But that race wouldn't be run till five o'clock.

"Time we were toddling up the hill. You ought to see the first one from there," remarked Basil.

"All right," said Jennifer, almost in the voice of the domestic young person (one bates respectful breath when discussing that enthralling topic, "the maids," in Meadingbury) who is "willing to oblige."

She caught a glimpse of Nigel, prematurely in his crash-hat and overalls, as they came down the steps to the red totalisator omnibus, through whose open windows a youth was already handing out tickets. But Nigel deliberately looked the other way; and still obliging her escort, she followed him past the cars in the paddock, through the gates and across the course.

At the far gate, the doctor was just getting into his big green ambulance. He took off his bowler. Jennifer smiled at him.

But the mere sight of the ambulance made her feel a little sick.

Basil led on, by the bookies and the test hill. As she followed him, the first rain-drop spotted her hat.

Usually, she was careful about her clothes. But to-day she wouldn't have cared if the hat had cost five guineas in Knightsbridge instead of thirty-five shillings at the Misses Moffatts in Meadingbury High Street, both of whom, one is credibly informed, look the other way when "trying you on."

"This is about the best place," said Basil, when they had finished their climb; and, looking down at the banked turn under Members' Bridge, it seemed to Jennifer that she had never known fear before.

The fear was in her very bones. She could hardly stand upright; felt almost glad—though she also hated being touched by him—when Basil took possession of her arm.

Jennifer caught a glimpse of a man's shape lying near the overturned car.

Then, almost before she realized it, the first Mountan race was off—and for ten minutes, which seemed like ten centuries, she heard the engines yowling, watched car after car come at the sand-bank, change down and cut over, swirl upwards out of sight.

"Rather fun, isn't it?" remarked Basil, when the yellow flag waved from the finishing straight and the cars returned to the paddock.

But Jennifer, though she did her best to go on obliging, could scarcely answer; and, as he released her arm, and they made their way slowly back through the increasing drizzle to the enclosure, Basil Toogood diagnosed the exact situation.

Which was no great shock to his intelligence, though somewhat of a jar to his pride.

"This day's work'll cost me another wedding-present before it's out," decided Basil Toogood. "Ought to have known what I was in for the moment she suggested Brooklands. Suppose she'll ask me to be godfather, too, as per usual. O Lord, why can't I stick to golf?"

Meanwhile, however, he'd have to stick to squiring Jennifer: and doing so during

the next race, a three-lap handicap round the full course, Pond Start to Railway Straight, which they watched from under cover, his sense of humour, and a certain softness of heart (which had, on occasions, made him all the more dangerous to the susceptibles of Meadingbury) came to the solace of his pride.

"It's a pity about you, isn't it?" he said, staring through the rain-blurred glass at the distant racers. "You've got it badly."

"Got what?"

"*Sloppyitis amorosa matrimonii*. But don't mind little boy Basil. He's used to it. They all go the same way in Meadingbury. Home, don't you know. Let's hope it'll run to a couple of maids, though of course, they are such a nuisance nowadays. And if you really insist on my being godfather to the first man-child——"

"Basil," interrupted Jennifer, "will you shut up."

He looked away from the racing, then; and observing, not that a Meadingbury girl had actually blushed, rather less necessity for that "spot more colour" in Jennifer's cheeks, continued: "Since you admit I'm right, we'll say no more about it. The question now is, what are we going to *do* about it? Fling ourselves on our knees to him in the paddock, implore him to forgive us and take us back? Not a bad scheme—though the concrete is rather hard and a bit greasy. You could do it either before the race, or afterwards. Afterwards, I feel, would be more artistic."

But all Jennifer could answer, and she spoke through set teeth, was, "Don't rag me, Basil. Please don't—even though I deserve it."

And shortly after that, they again encountered the doctor, who said, "There may be a spot of work for me if it keeps on coming down like this."

WHAT followed, is open to various explanations.

Basil Toogood, in his subsequent report of the affair to another Meadingburyite, made the definite statement, "Take it from me, old son, she just vamped her way into that jolly old ambulance." And the doctor's view is much the same as Basil's.

But since Jennifer always maintains that the thing "just happened," let us leave it at that—chronicling only that when, at five o'clock, with the rain now pelting cats and dogs, the doctor's ambulance took up its station at the Fork for the Easter Mountain Speed Handicap, she was sitting in the front seat of it, and talking her hardest to hide her fear.

She was all fear again—yet all admiration for Nigel. After the race, she would go to Nigel. But until then she would stick—as she had been sticking ever since she had met him again—to the only man who could be of any use to Nigel if——

"But it isn't going to happen," she started telling herself. "It can't happen, because I love him too much."

At which precise moment Basil, who had also managed to squeeze himself into the ambulance, announced, "There they go."

She was ice-cold by then, only just conscious that someone had tried to hand her a pair of field-glasses, that she had waved them away.

She didn't need field-glasses. Everything was clear—only too clear—without them. There, away from her through the rain up the Finishing Straight to the hill from which she had watched the first race, went the first little car, the second little car, the third.

And now those three little cars had disappeared, reappeared; now they were coming at one, coming down the banking to the Fork. But she mustn't look at the Fork. Not yet. Because Nigel hadn't started yet. That was Nigel's car, the second of the two green ones. And it wouldn't start for two and a-half minutes. How brave Nigel was. Fancy having to wait like that, for two and a-half minutes. Oh, God, how was she going to bear them, these two and a-half dreadful minutes? Why couldn't she be brave, like Nigel——

And all this while Nigel Westmacott, watching, through a visor that seemed like a gas-mask, the far sandbank, and car after car cutting over from the sandbank, felt the heart drop clean out of him.

Since why—why the hell should a man risk his life on that blasted banking just because he was afraid?

"Only do it because I'm afraid," Nigel Westmacott knew in that last second before his foot went down. And, in that second also he remembered, very definitely, those words Jennifer had said to him, "At your age, a man ought to have more sense than to risk breaking his neck."

But after that, he remembered nothing except that there were eighteen cars ahead of him, and only two behind.

For already he was away. Already, the sandbank was rushing at him. Already he had braked, changed down, swung the wheel over. And here, as the banking streamed at the Clemonda's bonnet and the tyres screamed under, was the black line.

And down from that black line, front wheels barely biting while they checked the tail-skid, the Clemonda came at eighty,

came at ninety as Westmacott changed to top.

Jennifer Trent saw it come, yowling, for the yellow mark ; saw it slow as Westmacott braked, changed down again ; saw it cut over across the Fork ; saw the back wheels slither, straighten as it got away ; saw the water spurting man-high over Westmacott's disappearing visor from its naked tyres.

And after that, for a lap, and a lap, and yet another lap, panic had her in its grip.

IN her panic she was aware, dimly, of Basil's voice ; of an over-braked car spinning like a teetotum on the wet concrete ; of the crowd just opposite ; and of the barricades. Every moment, it seemed to her as though one car or another must skid broadside on to the barricades ; as though one car or another must crash into its skidding leader.

And every time she saw the Clemonda's tail slither as Nigel revved away from the Fork, it seemed to her as though the green car were turning over.

Till suddenly—so suddenly that it seemed to tear the very inside out of her—she heard a voice, not Basil's, saying, " Hallo. That looks like a spill."

And after that she waited—just waited—endlessly — while car after car swirled slithering round the Fork—for Nigel.

But there was no Nigel ; and after a million years, never knowing she had asked a question of it, she heard the voice again, saying, " I don't know what happened any more than you do. All I saw was the car stop and a man running back."

And when she asked, her voice very high in her throat, " But why don't you go to him ? What are you waiting here for ? " the doctor's voice answered, curtly, " How can I—till the end of the race ? " And after that the waiting again—the endless awful waiting . . .

Till the flag waved and the ambulance began to move.

The doctor tried, before the ambulance began to move, to persuade her out of it. But at him she swore, using an oath that ill became even the most advanced of Meadingbury girls—and some of them are very advanced. And at Basil, too.

" Blast you both," she had sworn, a little mindful, perhaps, of the talkies. " He's my man—and I'm going to him."

But now, as she peered forward through the windscreen over the rushing concrete, there were no more words, not even swear-words, in Jennifer Trent.

Already, they were almost at the scene of the accident. Already, at the bottom of the banking, she could see the little knot of people round the overturned car. And as they drew abreast of the crowd, as the doctor jammed on his brakes, as he jumped down and the people made way for him, she caught a glimpse of a man's shape lying near the overturned car.

And after that the world went black as night, with rain lashing through the blackness of it—till she looked up and saw Nigel's ghost . . .

. . . But because Meadingbury, except in the most supreme crises, remains Meadingbury, all Jennifer Trent said to that ghost was, " A nice fright you gave me. I thought it was your car that crashed."

To which the ghost of Nigel Westmacott answered, very casually, " Crashed ? Me ? What on earth made you think that ? I only pulled up and ran back to see if I could do anything for poor old Fisscock."

Whereafter the tale peters out into mere *sloppyitis amorosa matrimonii*, for which reason, and which reason only, Jennifer Westmacott's husband—as our Club hears him explain so often—has given up motor-racing.

" The wife didn't like it, you know," says Nigel Westmacott ; and since, if a man lie long enough to his private soul he will end by believing himself, he is one of the happiest husbands in all Meadingbury.

While as for Jennifer, her life in the little house they have bought on the Avenue is just " too marvellous "—except for Nigel's temper, the housekeeping bills, the whooping cough developed last week by Basil Toogood's seventeenth god-child, and, needless to add, " the maids."

SOME ELECTION

By

Mr. Winston Churchill addressing an open-air meeting during the strenuous 1924 election in the Abbey Division of Westminster, where he was opposed by candidates put up by all three big political parties.

IF you wish to know about elections, I am the person to tell you. I have actually fought more parliamentary elections than any living member of the House of Commons. I have fought fourteen. Think of that! Fourteen elections, each taking at least three weeks, with a week beforehand when you are sickening for it, and at least a week afterwards when you are convalescing and paying the bills. Since I came of age I have lived thirty-five years, and taking an election as dominating one month of your life, I have spent considerably more than a whole year of this short span under these arduous and worrying conditions. In fact, I have devoted one day in thirty of my whole adult life to these strange experiences.

One has got by now pretty well to know the routine. First, the negotiations and pourparlering with

MEMORIES

The Right Hon. WINSTON CHURCHILL P.C.

the local fathers and magnates, then the interviews with the Committee and the Council and the executives, and finally with the full Association for the adoption meeting. Next the visits to the prominent people and the tour of the constituency : study of its industries, interests, character, and its particular idiosyncrasies.

Then decision as to the main line of the campaign ! Writing the election address : alarums and excursions in the local press ! Opening of the contest ! Nomination day !

You walk with your principal friends to the Town Hall or other appointed place. Here you meet your opponent or opponents for the first time. Smiles of forced geniality are interchanged. "Good morning, I am delighted to meet you. I hope we shall have a very pleasant contest," "The weather is rather cold (or hot) for this time of year, isn't it ?" "Mind you let me know if there is anything I can do for your convenience," and so on.

Then the fight in earnest. Every morning between nine and ten the Committee, *i.e.*, the General Staff Meeting, all the heads of departments represented—posters, canvassers, the reports from the different committee rooms, progress of the canvass, press notices, advertisements, motor-cars, meetings, prevention of disorder (at your own meetings), cautioning everyone about the election laws : prominent persons who require to be attended to, and so on.

Then out and about around the constituency. When I first began this had to be done in a two-horse landau, at about seven miles an hour. Nowadays in a whirling motor-car one sometimes goes a great deal faster, does more, and works harder. Meetings early in the mornings when the workmen have their lunch, meetings in their dinner hour, meetings in the afternoon. Nowadays three meetings every evening, rushing from one to the other. You arrive on the platform, the other speakers sit down when the candidate is seen. Loud cheers or Boos ! Sometimes when there are only twenty or thirty extremely stolid-looking persons in a hall which will hold six or seven hundred, this is a

trial to the speaker. But think of his poor friends, of his wife and daughter who follow him round from place to place and hear the same speech let off with variations to suit the local circumstances again and again. Well do I know the loyal laughter of the faithful chairman or vice-chairman of the Association as he hears the same old joke poured out for the thirty-third time. My dear friend, I sympathize with you, my heart bleeds for you. Think of all the other meetings where I shall have to make this joke, and you will have to give your enthusiastic Ha! ha! ha!—Hear, hear—Bravo! Never mind. It cannot be helped. It is the way the Constitution works. We are all galley-slaves chained to our toil. We swing forward and heave back, and swing forward again. The overseer cracks his whip and the galley goes forward through waters increasingly sullen.

Then there are the rowdy meetings. These are a great help. You have not got to make the same old speech. Here you have excited crowds. Green-eyed opponents, their jaws twitching with fury shouting interruptions, hollowing, bellowing insults of every kind; anything they can think of that will hurt your feelings, any charge that they can make against your consistency or public record, or sometimes, I am sorry to say, against your personal character; and loud jeers and scoffs arising now on all sides and every kind of nasty question carefully thought out and sent up to the Chair by vehement looking youths or short-haired young women of bull-dog appearance.

An ordeal? Certainly; but still these sorts of meetings make themselves. You have not got to worry beforehand to prepare a speech. A few of the main slogans are quite enough to start with. The rest is—not silence. But how your supporters enjoy it! How much more easily are they converted by the interruptions of their opponents, than convinced by the arguments of their candidate.

Mrs. Pankhurst, the Suffragette leader, being forcibly removed after a demonstration outside Buckingham Palace. The Suffragettes began their campaign of violence during the bye-election Mr. Churchill fought in 1908 in Manchester, Mrs. Pankhurst's home.

From the "Manchester Dispatch."

Winston: "I want a first-class 'return,' please."
Redmond: "You do, do you? Well, you've come to the wrong window."

A cartoon published during Mr. Churchill's bye-election in Manchester in 1908, *and referring to a speech by Mr. John Redmond, the Irish leader, in which he recommended the large number of Irish voters in Manchester not to support Mr. Churchill.*

A long sagacious argument makes the audience yawn, a good retort at a turbulent meeting makes friends by the dozen, even sometimes of the enemy. My advice to candidates in rowdy meetings is this. First of all grin, or as they say, "smile." There is nothing like it. Next be natural, and quite easy, as if you were talking to a single friend in some quiet place about something in which you were both much interested. Thirdly, cultivate a strange sense of detachment from the clatter and clamour proceeding around you.

After all, nothing is so ludicrous as seeing a large number of people in a frantic state, so long as you are sure they are not going to hurt you. In Great Britain they very rarely try to hurt you. If they do, well then, it becomes a simple proposition of self-defence.

Above all, never lose your temper. The worse it goes, the more you must treat it as a puppet show. Cultivate the feeling of Mr. Punch's pheasant who, when he sailed on expanded wings from cover to cover, remarked to his friend, "I wonder why that funny little man down there makes that sharp noise every time I fly over him."

The late Duke of Devonshire, the famous Lord Hartington, talked to me about public meetings on several

occasions. He was once accused of yawning in the middle of an important speech in the House of Commons. When asked if this was true he replied, "Did you hear the speech?" In the great Free Trade split I had once to go into action with him at a very big meeting in Liverpool; he was to deliver the principal speech, and I was to move a vote of thanks in twelve minutes. We spent the previous night in Lord Derby's comfortable abode at Knowsley. We drove into the meeting together. It was in 1904, and I think it must have been in a carriage and pair. "Are you nervous?" he said. I admitted I was a bit worried. "Well," he said, "I have always found it a very good rule when you come before a very large audience to take a good look at them and say to yourself with conviction, 'I have never seen such a lot of d—— fools in all my life.'" However, he made a very good speech to a magnificent audience, and whether he used this recipe or not I cannot tell. But I am digressing.

AFTER ten days, or it may be a fortnight, of meetings of every kind, including sometimes even tramway men at 1 a.m., we reach Polling Day. This is always passed entirely in a vehicle. From early morning till night we circulate and peregrinate among polling booths and committee rooms. A candidate is allowed to enter any polling station, and this is the usual practice, though what good he can do, I cannot tell. You watch the electors coming up, getting their ballot papers and going off into their little pen or to put their fateful cross in the right (or wrong) place. You do not need to be a reader of thought or character to make a shrewd guess at how the bulk of them have voted. An averted look or a friendly wink will usually tell you all you need to know. As the day wears on, the voters become more numerous and the excitement rises. Large crowds of yelling children waving party colours salute or assail the candidates. By nine o'clock at latest all is over. In the old days the count was nearly always taken in boroughs the same night. Now in many boroughs and counties the constituencies have become so vast and unmanageable that you have a night of exhaustion and suspense before the result. Once you have entered the counting room, you must not leave again till all is over. It is therefore wise not to go too early and be well provided with refreshments when you do. Usually after two hours of counting a pretty good estimate can be formed. You see the votes neatly stacked in thousands on the returning officer's table, and looks corresponding to those piles may be read in the eyes of your friends or opponents. But sometimes when the result is very close the last few scraps of paper hold their secret till the end. What is it—victory or defeat? And a short speech for either event!

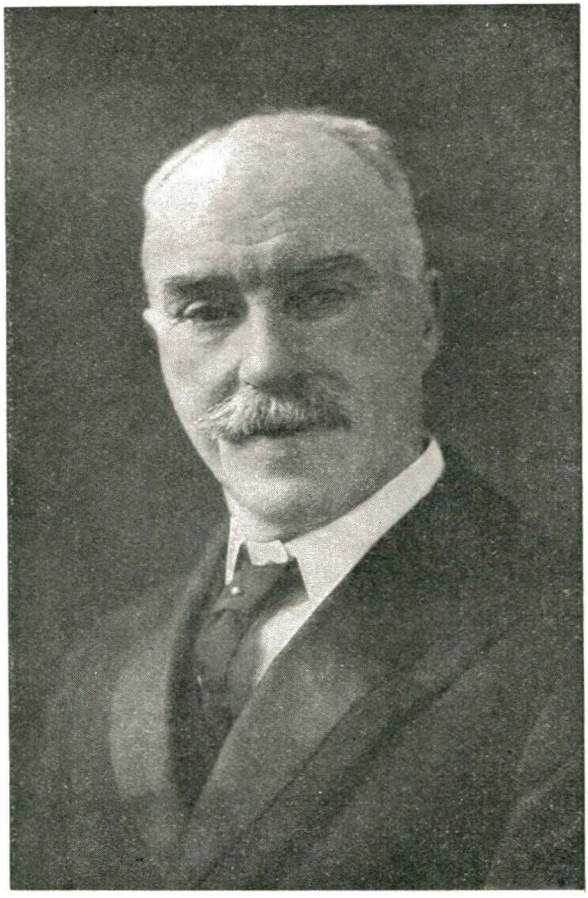
I have nearly always had agreeable relations with my opponents. I have always tried to avoid mentioning their names or indeed noticing their existence during the contest. But after it is over, whatever has happened, one can afford to be good-tempered. If you have lost, you congratulate the victor and say what an ornament he will be to Parliament. If you win, you dwell upon the fair manner in which the contest has been conducted (never mind what you feel), and express your determination to be a father to the whole constituency, without respect to party. I have seen men very broken and bitter in these circumstances and some of the great men of the past—John Morley and Sir William Harcourt in particular—showed keen emotion in defeat. But it does no good; it only pleases the other side. It is far better to pretend that the matter is of trifling consequence.

More painful is the grief of your supporters. This is sometimes poignant. Men and women who have given weeks of utterly disinterested, devoted labour, with tears streaming down their cheeks and looking as if the world had come to an end! This is the worst part of all. Still, sometimes—more often indeed—one wins. Out of my fourteen elections I have lost five and won nine; and then what jubilation! What rousing cheers, pattings on the back and shaking of hands and throwing of caps into the air!

As the reader may have gathered, I do not like elections, but it is in my many elections that I have learned to know and honour the people of this old island. They are good all through. Liberals, Tories, Radicals, Socialists—how much kindliness and good sportsmanship there is in all!

I have already described in my autobiography my two elections at Oldham. The first was a sharp rebuff, the second after the South African campaign and the glamour then attached towards those who had served in such easy wars—a decisive recovery. But by the time the Parliament was ended a convulsion had occurred in British politics the consequences of which are with us to-day. Mr. Chamberlain's attack upon the Free Trade system had become not only the dominant feature in politics, but the supreme test and focus by which everything else was judged. I was chosen candidate for the Liberal party in the central division of Manchester, the Exchange division, considered the Blue Ribbon of the city. My individual fight was a part of a vehement national revolt against the Conservative Government.

Nothing like it had been seen before in the memory of mortal man, and nothing like it has been seen since. Mr. Balfour had succeeded Lord Salisbury as Prime Minister at a time when the twenty years' reign of Conservatism was drawing to its inevitable close. The death of Lord Salisbury ended a definite and recognizable period in English history. Many mistakes were made by the Conservatives, and many violences done. But nothing done or



Mr. Edwin Scrymgeour, the Prohibitionist, who fought Mr. Churchill in every election in Dundee from 1908 *until he defeated him in* 1922.

undone could have saved them from grave defeat. Folly and pride converted this defeat into ruin.

In those days elections took five or six weeks between the result of the earliest boroughs and of the later counties. I had a fight in Manchester. Manchester polled on the first or second day. There were nine seats in the city and in the neighbouring borough of Salford. Mr. Balfour, the Prime Minister of a few weeks before, led the Conservatives in the battle. I was certainly the most prominent figure on the Liberal side. The contest was strenuous, but from the outset it was clear that the popular favour lay with us. No one, however, could possibly foresee that the final result would be so sweeping. Even the most ardent Liberal would never have believed it. When we rose up in the morning, all the nine seats were held by Conservatives. When we went to bed that night, all had passed into the control of Liberals.

I went back to my hotel through streets which were one solid mass of humanity. Arthur Balfour was down and out, and with him all his friends. His sister, Miss Alice, was deeply distressed. We had only communicated by none too cordial salutations.

Some of us, belonging to the victorious party, had a supper at the Midland Hotel, then a brand-new mammoth up-to-date production, vaunting the wealth and power of Lancashire. There was a little man, on the staff of the *Daily Mail*, who had been their correspondent in the South

From an old print supplied by Gooch.

"CHAIRING THE MEMBERS."

An exciting scene at an old-time Election—from a drawing by Hogarth.

From an old print supplied by Gooch.

"POLLING AT THE HUSTINGS."

Another election scene by Hogarth.

African War, and whom I had known there. He had been shot through the breast in the Relief of Mafeking. I refer to the famous Charlie Hands; he wrote extremely well, but of course on the Conservative side. I invited him to supper. "What do you think of that?" "It is," he said, "a grand slam in doubled 'No Trumps.'" It certainly seemed very like it. And the next day a whole tribe of lackey papers, fawning on success, declared that my victory had been a triumph of moral standards over the vacillations and cynicism of Mr. Balfour. He had been very wrong and had made great mistakes; but I was wise enough even then not to be taken in by such talk. Lord James of Hereford has described in his recent memoirs the scene at Sandringham, where he was a guest, when these surprising results flowed in to King Edward. To me he wrote, "You must have thought '*I walked on clouds, I stood on thrones.*'" The results at Manchester were endorsed throughout the island. The Conservative party which had ruled the nation for so many years was shattered to pieces; barely a hundred representatives came back to the chamber which they had left nearly four hundred strong.

Seats wrested from the side to whom they normally belong because of a great wave of public opinion, usually return to their old allegiance at the first opportunity. In the spring of 1908 I entered the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade. In those days this entailed a bye-election. The Liberal Government had been for two years in office and as is usual with

Governments had disappointed its friends and aroused its enemies.

The contest was most difficult and all the forces hostile to the Government concentrated upon one of its most aggressive representatives. It was memorable, however, as marking the beginning of the Votes for Women campaign in its violent form.

Manchester was the home of the Pankhursts. The redoubtable Mrs. Pankhurst, aided by her daughters Christabel and Sylvia, determined upon violent courses. In those days it was a novelty for women to take a vigorous part in politics. The idea of throwing a woman out of a public meeting or laying rough hands upon her was rightly repulsive to all. Painful scenes were witnessed in the Free Trade Hall when Miss Christabel Pankhurst, screaming and dishevelled, was finally ejected after having thrown the meeting into pandemonium. This was the beginning of a systematic interruption of public speeches and the breaking-up and throwing into confusion of all Liberal meetings. Indeed, it was most provoking to anyone who cares about the style and form of his speech to be assailed by continued, calculated, shrill interruptions. Just as you were reaching the most moving part of your peroration or the most intricate point in your argument, when things were going well and the audience were gripped, a high-pitched voice would ring out : " What about the women ? " " When are you going to give the women the vote ? " or " Votes for women," and so on. No sooner was one interrupter removed, than another in a different part of the hall took up the task. It became extremely difficult to pursue connected arguments. All this developed during my second fight in North-west Manchester, in which I was eventually defeated by a few hundred votes by the same opponent, Mr. Joynson-Hicks, now Lord Brentford, whom I had defeated two years before.

It took only five or six minutes to walk from the City Hall, where the poll was declared, to the Manchester Reform Club. I was accompanied there by tumultuous crowds. As I entered the Club a telegram was handed to me. It was from Dundee and conveyed the unanimous invitation of the Liberals of that city that I should become their candidate in succession to the sitting member, a Mr. Edmund Robertson, who held a minor position in the Government, and was about to be promoted to the House of Lords. It is no exaggeration that only seven minutes at the outside passed between my defeat at Manchester and my invitation to Dundee.

This was, of course, one of the strongest Liberal seats in the island. The Conservatives had never yet succeeded since the Reform Bill of 1832 in returning a member. The Labour movement was still in its adolescence. Here I found a resting-place for fifteen years, being five times returned by large majorities during all the convulsions of peace and war which marked that terrible period.

NEVERTHELESS, my first contest there was by no means easy. The Conservative party in the city was full of combative spirit. At the other extreme of politics appeared a Labour candidate, an able representative of the Post Office Trade Union, and finally a dim, quaint figure in the shape of Mr. Scrymgeour, the Prohibitionist, who pleaded for the Kingdom of God upon earth with special reference to the evils of alcohol.

For the first week I fought the Conservatives and completely ignored the Labour attack. At the end of the first week when the Liberals had been marshalled effectively against the Conservatives, it was time to turn upon the Socialists. Accordingly, on the Monday preceding the poll I attacked Socialism in all its aspects. I think this was upon the whole the most successful election speech I have ever made. The entire

audience of over two thousand persons escorted me, cheering and singing, through the streets of Dundee to my hotel. Thereafter we never looked back, but strode on straight to victory. There was indeed on polling day a wave of panic among friends and helpers from London, and the large staff of press correspondents, who had followed the contest. It was said I was "out again," and that this would be final. But the old Scotch chairman of the Liberal Association, Sir George Ritchie, only smiled a wintry smile and observed: "The majority will be about three thousand"; and so it was.

I HAD now been for nearly two months electioneering. Both contests had been most strenuous. The Suffragettes, as they were beginning to be called, had followed me from Manchester to Dundee, and a peculiarly virulent Scottish virago, armed with a large dinner bell, interrupted every meeting to which she could obtain access. The strain and anxiety, so continued and so prolonged, had exhausted me. Bye-elections are always much harder than fights in a General Election. Both these bye-elections, following one another without an interval, had riveted the attention of the country. I had had to speak many times each day, and columns had appeared in all the newspapers. To produce a stream of new material and to keep up electioneering enthusiasm, while at the same time being a member of the Cabinet, and head of an important department, had taxed me to the full. It was with the greatest relief that I returned to London, was introduced into the House of Commons by the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, took my seat, and settled down to enjoy the Board of Trade.

I should not forget to add that Mr. Scrymgeour, the Prohibitionist, scored three or four hundred votes only out of the thirty thousand that were cast. However, he persevered. He entered the lists in the two General Elections of 1910. He opposed me in the bye-election of 1917, when I re-entered the Government as Minister of Munitions. He fought again in 1918, in the "Victory" election. On every occasion he increased his poll, and, at the fifth attempt, his original three hundred had grown to four or five thousand. The great extensions of the franchise which were made during the War fundamentally altered the political character of Dundee. These effects were veiled for the moment in 1918 by the joy of victory and peace, and by the hatred for the Germans. But, in 1922, when Mr. Lloyd George's Coalition Government was broken up, the whole strength of the new electorate became manifest. Three days before the contest opened I was struck down by appendicitis. I had a very serious operation, performed only just in time, and an abdominal wound seven inches long. My wife and a few friends had to keep the battle going as well as they could.

The tide flowed fierce and strong against us. Meetings were everywhere interrupted and disorderly, not through the efforts of individuals, but from general discontent and ill-will.

It was not till two days before the poll that I was allowed to travel from London to the scene. On the twenty-first day after my operation I addressed two great meetings. The first, a ticket meeting, was orderly, and I was able to deliver my whole argument. The evening meeting in the Drill Hall was a seething mass of eight or nine thousand people, in whom opponents greatly predominated.

I was unable to stand, and my wound was still open. I had to be carried on to the platform in an invalid chair, and from place to place. There is no doubt a major operation is a shock to the system. I felt desperately weak and ill. As I was carried through the yelling crowd of

Socialists at the Drill Hall to the platform, I was struck by looks of passionate hatred on the faces of some of the younger men and women. Indeed, but for my helpless condition, I am sure I should have been attacked by them. Although I had enjoyed for the previous eight years the whole-hearted support of the Dundee Conservatives, both Conservatives and Liberals together were swept away before the onslaught of the new electorate. Enormous masses of people hitherto disfranchised through not paying their rates, and great numbers of very poor women, streamed to the poll during the last two hours of the voting, besieging the polling station in solid queues. My majority of fifteen thousand at the Victory election was washed out, and I was beaten by over ten thousand votes.

And who was the victor? It was the same Mr. Scrymgeour, who, at the sixth time, had increased his original poll of three hundred to a total of thirty-five thousand. I felt no bitterness towards him. I knew that his movement represented in many ways a strong current of moral and social revival.

During the fifteen years of his efforts to gain the seat, he had visited several times almost every household in the city. He was surrounded and supported by a devoted band of followers of the Christian-Socialist type.

He lived a life of extreme self-denial; he represented the poverty and misery of the city and its revolt against the bestial drunkenness for which it bore an evil reputation, and which I must admit I have never seen paralleled in any part of the United Kingdom. When it came to his duty to move the customary vote of thanks to the returning officer, Mr. Scrymgeour moved it instead to Almighty God. I was too ill to be present, and quitting Dundee for ever as its representative, I was carried back to a long convalescence in London and the South of France.

Here is a good instance of the ups and downs of politics. I had been a prominent member of the Coalition Government, to which both Liberals and Conservatives were giving allegiance. I had in two years successfully conducted the settlement of our affairs in Palestine and Irak, and had carried through the extremely delicate and hazardous arrangements necessitated by the Irish Treaty. I think I may say that the session of 1922 was the most successful I have ever had as a Minister in the House of Commons.

Suddenly everything broke in pieces. I was hurried off in an ambulance to the hospital, and I had hardly regained consciousness before I learnt that the Government was destroyed and that our Conservative friends and colleagues, with whom we had been working so loyally, had, in a night, turned from friends to foes; and that I was no longer a Minister. And then, a few weeks later, the constituency which had sustained me so long repudiated and cast me out in the most decisive manner. And all this, mind you, at the close of a year when I had been, by general consent, more successful in Parliament and in administration than at any other time in my life. In the twinkling of an eye I found myself without an office, without a seat, without a party, and without an appendix.

BUT incomparably the most exciting, stirring, sensational election I have ever fought was the Westminster election of 1924. The eighteen months that had passed since the breaking up of the Coalition had produced great and lamentable changes in the political situation. Mr. Bonar Law had died, his successor, Mr. Baldwin, had suddenly appealed to the country upon the Protectionist issue. He had been decisively defeated, and to the deep alarm of the general public the Liberal party decided to put the Socialists in power for the first time

in our history. On a vacancy occurring in the Abbey Division of Westminster I decided to stand as a Liberal who wished to join with the Conservatives in arresting the march of Socialism. This seemed at first a very forlorn hope. I had no organization and no idea how to form one. All the three great parties, Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour, brought forward their official candidates, and backed them with their whole resources.

The polling day was fixed for the earliest possible date, and less than a fortnight was available for the fight. However, one immediately felt the exhilarating sensation of being supported by a real and spontaneous movement of public opinion. From all sides men of standing and importance came to join me. With scarcely a single exception the whole London Press gave its support. The Conservative Association, torn between conflicting views, split in twain. This fissure rapidly extended through the whole Conservative party. Everyone took sides, families were divided; nearly thirty Conservative members of Parliament appeared upon my platform and worked on the committees.

Energetic friends laid hold of the organization. By the end of the first week, Captain Guest, my chief lieutenant, a most experienced electioneerer, was able to report to me that my candidature was seriously supported.

The constituency—which includes the Houses of Parliament, the seat of government, Buckingham Palace, the principal clubs and theatres, St. James's Street, the Strand, Soho, Pimlico, and Covent Garden—is one of the strangest and most remarkable in the world. The poorest and the richest are gathered there, and every trade, profession, and interest finds its representative and often its headquarters in this marvellous square mile. To and fro throughout its streets flow the tides of mighty London. As the campaign progressed I began to receive all kinds of support. Dukes, jockeys, prizefighters, courtiers, actors, and business men, all developed a keen partisanship. The chorus girls of Daly's Theatre sat up all night addressing the envelopes and dispatching the election address. It was most cheering and refreshing to see so many young and beautiful women of every rank in life ardently working in a purely disinterested cause not unconnected with myself.

The leaders of the Conservative party were themselves divided. Lord Balfour wrote a letter in my support. The count at the finish was the most exciting I have ever seen. Up to the very end I was assured I had won. Someone said as the last packet was being carried up to the table, "You're in by a hundred." A loud cheer went up. The sound was caught by the crowds waiting outside, and the news was telegraphed all over the world. A minute later the actual figures showed that I was beaten by forty votes out of nearly forty thousand polled. I must confess I thoroughly enjoyed the fight from start to finish.

I had now been defeated three times in succession—Dundee, West Leicester, and Westminster—and it was a relief to be returned by a majority of ten thousand for West Essex at the end of the General Election of 1924. Four elections in under two years! This is certainly as much as should satisfy anyone, and makes me earnestly hope that I have now found a resting-place amid the glades of Epping which will last me as long as I am concerned with mundane affairs.

A CHANGE OF FIGURE

By LYNN DOYLE

Illustrated by STEVEN SPURRIER

MR. BLACKMAN, the manager of the Union Bank in Ballygullion, said Mr. Patrick Murphy, was a real ould martinet, as hard as nails, an' always on the make. Half his time was spent huntin' legacies an' settin' traps for presents, or snookin' round the country houses in the hope of pickin' up a bargain in furniture. But outside his own advantage or the Bank's, he was as dry as sawdust, an' would have prosecuted an orphan child for stealin' the paper cover off a caramel.

Now one day, Henry Lofty, a customer in the Union Bank, gave a cheque for four pounds in payment for a calf to Simmy Scott, the greatest wee rascal of a small farmer in the countryside ; an' it happened that Simmy was by-ordinary hard-up at the minit, an' four pounds as good as no use to him. So what does my bold Simmy do but put a one before the figure four on the cheque an' write " teen " after the "four " in the writin' part, an' cash the cheque for fourteen pounds at the Union Bank. From what I have told you of Mr. Blackman you can understand that this wasn't an action he would very much approve of ; but he approved of it still less because neither his cashier nor himself noticed the alterations till the following day, when it was too late.

Now you'll say that apart from the dishonesty of the transaction, Simmy had done a foolish thing, because sooner or later he was bound to be found out. An' Simmy *was* a fool, in ways ; but he had cunnin' notions. First of all, as he gave in to me later, he had an idea that he mightn't be found out till a certain horse he had a pound on would romp home at twenty to one, an' he could then go an' confess to Henry Lofty an' pay up. But what you might call the second line of defence was stronger than that. He was a next-door neigbour of Henry's, an' knew the soft drop in him, an' calculated that even if he was found out, an' went an' made a poor mouth to Henry, an' told him all the difficulties he was in—an' he didn't need to lie about *them*—an' promised restitution, Henry wouldn't prosecute, an' would make good the money in the Bank meantime.

Things turned out as Simmy had calculated. Henry Lofty was as soft as he expected him to be, an' as good as promised

Poor Henry stood up in court with tears fallin' down his cheeks, an' completely flummoxed everybody by offerin' to go bail for Simmy up to fifty pounds.

he would see Mr. Blackman about havin the cheque paid as fourteen pounds ; an' all would have been well if a couple of days afterwards Simmy hadn't spent enough of his plunder on whisky to send him into the Union Bank, boastin' about how clever he'd been, an' jeerin' at the manager for the blunder he'd made in passin' the alteration.

But Mr. Blackman was an ill man to vex. He had been very far from pleased at the notion of Simmy's gettin' away with his piece of rascality, but hadn't up till then been able to persuade Henry to prosecute ; an' now his chance came. It was myself, worse luck, brought it to his notice.

I happened to be in the Bank when Simmy was layin' off about how smart he'd been, an' wasn't a bit sorry to be there either. It wasn't two months since Mr. Blackman had been what I thought very tart about makin' me pay up on a bill I'd been foolish enough to back; an' I was well pleased to see him taken down a peg, especially as I knew he'd be mad that I was listenin'. An' when Simmy left the office I threw in, God forgive me, an extra wee stab of my own, an' did a deal more harm than I knowed at the time, or ever intended.

"He's away down to Cassidy's pub now, I bet you," sez I, "to boast among his cronies there."

"Would he do that, do you think?" sez Mr. Blackman, strokin' his beard very thoughtful. "Thompson," sez he, beckonin' over his ledger clerk. He whispered somethin'; an' the young fellow put on his hat an' went out.

"You didn't happen to see Henry Lofty as you came up the street?" sez Mr. Blackman to me.

"Ay, did I," sez I. "He's in Dickson's the draper's, this very minit, an' told me he was on his way up to see you."

"I want him now," sez Mr. Blackman. "Would you mind sendin' him up as you pass Dickson's?"

An' when I went down the street sure enough Henry was still in Dickson's, lookin' very small and insignificant as usual with his wee grizzled side-whiskers an' his coat far too big for him. Of course, old Dickson was selling him a whole lot of stuff that he didn't want, an' Henry lookin' from side to side like a cornered bullock, dyin' to get away but without the pluck to go. My message gave him his chance, an' he tore himself out of Dickson's clutches, an' away up the street to the Union Bank.

An' what do you think Mr. Blackman did with him when he got him there but march him down to Michael Cassidy's pub to have a quiet talk with him about the case of Simmy Scott an' the cheque, well knowin' all the time, by the report brought back by his ledger clerk, that Simmy himself was sittin' in the next-door "snug," half-full, an' boastin' to his cronies at the top of his lungs about the way he'd got the better of the Bank-man, an' the fool he'd made of that ould soft gawm, Henry Lofty. The yarn about the cheque went well, with laughin' an' clappin' on the back, an' great popularity for Simmy, who was meltin' what was left of the fourteen pounds like snow in April. So presently he went on to tell all the other bits of rascality he had perpetrated on Henry, of buyin' too cheap from him, an' sellin' to him too dear, an' stealin' his fences, an' robbin' his hen-roost, an' borrowin' his money; till in about half an hour's time Mr. Blackman could hardly keep up with Henry on their way up to Mr. Stokes's, the Resident Magistrate, to swear an information again Simmy about the altered cheque.

Mr. Stokes was out, an' when he did come in, the legal proceedin's occupied some time. Meantime Simmy was still in his glory, surrounded with friends, an' gettin' more popular with every half-crown he spent. When the Serjeant came round to the pub with the warrant, Michael Cassidy, bein' an old friend from the same part of the country, tipped him the wink that there was money bein' spent, an' that it would be a pity to disgrace a respectable man like Simmy by bringin' him through the streets before dusk; an' the result was that Simmy woke up in the cells next mornin' before he or anybody else knew he had left Michael's.

WHEN he did wake up to realities in the early hours of the mornin' they say the gowls of him silenced two drunk-an'-disorderlies, an' a tinker's wife. With all his rascality, he had never got into the hands of the law before, an' the stuffin' went clean out of him. All he could do was to cry an' lament an' call out for the son Rab an' the daughter Louisa—Loo, as they called her—to come an' help him; an' with that Simmy an' Henry an' the four-pound cheque set out to make history in Ballygullion.

Rab Scott, Simmy's only son, was a clever fellow, but as lazy as a sow on a summer day, an' fond of a sup of drink. He had just been reinstated in his job in the County Council for about the fourth time, an' he got the message from Simmy the minit he hung his hat up in the office that mornin'. He didn't even remember to take it down again, he was in that great a pucker, but set off bare-headed to intercede with Henry, an', on his way, to give the alarm to his sister Loo. Their mother was dead, an' neither Rab nor Loo had bothered about Simmy not turnin' up at bed-time, barrin' to throw a couple of planks across the well in case he came home later. Loo, an affectionate throughother little trollop, galloped off into Ballygullion in the donkey-an'-cart before Rab had right finished his story, an' made such a hullabaloo at the polis-barracks that between the row she kicked up an' the good looks of her, they say the Serjeant was near lettin' Simmy out on his own bat, without bail or authority; an' Rab made his way on to Henry Lofty's.

But poor Henry Lofty, the only injured one in the whole jing-bang, was in a worse state than any of them. From the minit

he'd left Mr. Stokes the magistrate's house, the evenin' before, he'd begun to repent of informin' on Simmy. All Simmy had said about him in Michael Cassidy's pub left his mind, an' instead there came back to him all the wee neighbourly acts Simmy had done him from time to time.

To make matters worse, as he'd passed Simmy's cottage, on his way home, Loo had come to the garden gate, an' asked him if he'd seen her father anywhere in the town; an' that must have struck him to the heart. For though Henry was well past fifty, he was an ould bachelor, an' a simple romantic ould bachelor at that, an' people said he used to cast sheep's eyes at Louisa now an' then as he went by.

That may be as it likes, but anyway, before Loo Scott had done askin' about her father, Henry whipped up his horse an' drove off at a hand-gallop, an' took no tea when he got home, an' hardly laid his side in bed the whole night, but walked up and down his room. An' that's true enough, for I had it from his housekeeper's own lips.

So Rab needn't have bothered goin' to Henry at all. Badly an' all as Henry had regretted the evenin' before what he'd done on Simmy, he regretted it twice as much after the want of his night's rest; an' when Rab Scott let out that his sister was comin' back from Ballygullion presently to join in the chorus, Henry just took to his heels out of the house, yoked the pony, an' drove off post haste to get hold of Mr. Blackman an' undo all the harm that had been done.

Now, surprisin' enough, when the news had gone round Ballygullion about Simmy there was a certain amount of sympathy with him in some quarters. For one thing, his trickery had never made him any money before; an' then he was a takin' creature on the surface, an' sang a good song at a fireside or a wee party, an' could make a fiddle fairly speak to you. So, although everyone agreed that Henry Lofty had been ill-treated, an' was quite right to prosecute, there was a general feelin' that Mr. Blackman had very little to do when he egged him on; and one or two had told him that already. This bein' so, contrary to Henry's expectation, he found Mr. Blackman not unwillin' to help him. Like every other Bank man, he was anxious to set his course the way public opinion was blowin', an' he seen that easy-goin' good nature would maybe be the best line to take.

But when they approached the Resident Magistrate, they found they were too late. Simmy's case was entered. He was bound to face the Petty Sessions the followin' day, an', if he was committed for trial, the Assizes a fortnight after.

Of course, there was great excitement at the Petty Sessions when Simmy's case was called; but it was nothin' to the sensation there was later on. Mr. Blackman had spoke up for Simmy in a way that did Mr. Blackman a certain amount of good, but did very little to help Simmy Scott; an' then, hearin' Simmy safely returned for trial, slackened the watch he had been keepin' on Henry Lofty all day; an' poor Henry stood up in court with the tears fallin' down his cheeks an' completely flummoxed everybody, includin' the Resident Magistrate, by offerin' to go bail for Simmy up to fifty pounds.

I need hardly tell you that this finished any chance Simmy had of gettin' out on bail; for the Resident Magistrate, after hearin' the way Henry had given his evidence, naturally made up his mind that he meant to forfeit the fifty pounds and get Simmy out of the way.

However, Henry did what he could. As soon as the Petty Sessions was over, he marched across to Fitzsimons, the lawyer's, office, an' instructed him to defend Simmy at the Assizes, an' if necessary, to engage a barrister. I need hardly tell you that Fitzsimons did think it necessary; and at the Assizes a very able young fellow in a wig and gown, well paid out of Henry Lofty's own pocket, cross-harrowed the same Henry in the witness-box till the judge nearly committed him for perjury.

All was no use. Henry's foolish goings on only turned the jury against Simmy. The bigger fool Henry showed himself, the bigger rascal he made Simmy look. Mr. Blackman saw the way the wind was blowin' now, an' let the facts speak for themselves. They said nothin' for Simmy; an' Simmy got three months' hard.

This was just about long enough for Simmy's creditors. No sooner was Simmy locked away than a scramble began, the opposition Bank to Mr. Blackman—*he* wasn't a creditor, or Simmy might never have been in jail—half-a-dozen shopkeepers in Ballygullion an' two or three in Belfast, an' a wheen of moneylenders, most of them from Jerusalem. Processes, writs, an' foreclosin's rained on Simmy, an' he was just out of jail in time to attend the auction of his farm. The only satisfaction he had was that the whole proceedin's ended in eighteenpence in the pound.

During the time Simmy was in jail there had been trouble at home in other directions. The farmer that had been courtin' Loo in a scared kind of a way for some time—an' might have married her in the end if his love had outlasted Simmy—threw her over the day after the Assizes. With Simmy bein' out of the way, there was no one to

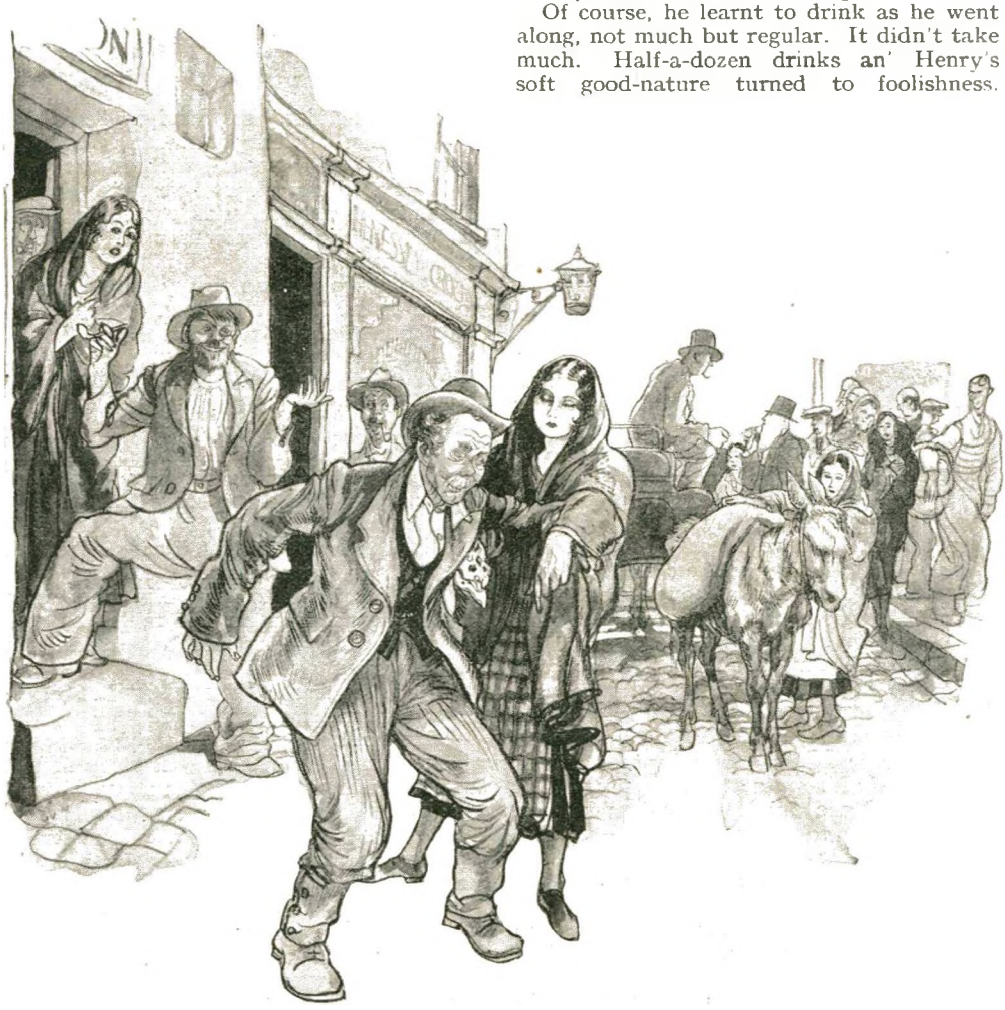
follow the farmer up for breach, an' Loo's two or three years' courtin' was, as you might say, clean thrown away. Then Rab began to take a sup again, to forget the disgrace; not enough to do an ordinary man any great harm, but enough to destroy a man whose father was in jail—an' he got the sack for the fifth an' last time.

A far stonier conscience than Henry's would have felt a bit tender over the brother and sister. He kept them goin' with stuff from his farm, an' wee loans now an' then; an' when the father an' them was thrown out on the roadside nobody was surprised that the next move they made was to Henry's, not even Henry's housekeeper. They were to be with Henry for only a few weeks till Simmy had time to look round him; but the housekeeper was no fool. She demanded what money was comin' to her, an' went out at the back door—not altogether in silence—as Simmy an' the son an' daughter came up the front path, Henry all the time skippin' from the front door to the back one like a pendulum, between makin' ready to say a few welcomin'

words to Simmy an' beseechin' the housekeeper not to go.

So there Simmy an' the son an' daughter were, an' there they stayed. Henry had no chance by himself from the first minit they sat down in the house, an' he had no near relations to give him a helpin' hand, either for greed or kindness' sake. The Scotts just settled down on him like a disease. First of all, he learned laziness, lyin' late in the mornin', neglectin' tillage, neglectin' cattle. Then he took to cards, an' from that to bettin'; an' after that he went down the old hill the old way, runnin' up accounts, borrowin' on bills, borrowin' on mortgage; an' then, just like his instructor Simmy, moneylenders for the last lap.

Of course, he learnt to drink as he went along, not much but regular. It didn't take much. Half-a-dozen drinks an' Henry's soft good-nature turned to foolishness.



Loo used to come sometimes, an' pull him out of a pub, but people said it was only because she wanted nobody to rob him but her own family.

He was every sponger's refuge, an stood drinks to Tom, Dick, an' Harry that would be watchin' all day at the street corners for him comin' into the town.

In a queer kind of a way Loo used to stand his friend, an' come into Ballygullion after him, an' pull him out of some pub an' bring him home; but people said it was only because she wanted nobody to rob him but her own family. Maybe they were right,

though in the end I came to disbelieve it. For I had the curiosity after the thing had become a public scandal to go up to Henry's an' see for myself the pack of rogues an' spongers that congregated there nightly. But all the time I could see that while Loo never bothered her head about what happened to her father, she was determined that Rab an' Henry shouldn't get more drink than was good for them; an' I thought the better of her for it.

It was just shortly afterwards that the end began to come. A rumour got about that Henry was goin' to assign the farm to Simmy to escape his debts. This scared his creditors effectually, an' every one of them descended on Henry at the same time, in the good old-fashioned way. He was still solvent as it turned out; but the Scotts took fright an' fetched him in to Fitzsimons, the solicitor; an' Fitzsimons, hoping to get him out of Simmy's clutches, I suppose, advised him to sell the farm, put any surplus in his pocket, an' leave the country.

Comin' down the road one day I met Loo Scott, an' asked her if things were as bad as I'd heard. She laughed an' said they were.

"I suppose you've heard we're for America," sez she. "There's a brother of my father's there. He did well; an' years ago he sent for us, but my mother wouldn't face the sea. But we'll land in on him now without givin' notice, an' he can't very well throw us out. If there's enough money left after the auction, off we go, straight."

"Henry an' all?" sez I.

"Henry an' all," says Loo. "Who would be bothered with the poor old boy now but somebody like ourselves that has no more sense than he has? We'll have to keep him among us. He's kept us a long while. But I suppose he'll be my job at the heels of the hunt. It's only fair," sez she. "I never told anybody before; but it was me put it in my father's head to alter the cheque that started the whole fun."

She gave a big, jolly laugh, an' away up the road as cheery as if she'd been left a million.

The auction came on an' Henry was sold out, lock, stock, an' barrel. He didn't seem to care. He had loaded himself up with drink, an' just wandered about on the edge of the crowd, gigglin' an' laughin', as bit by bit all he had passed away from him.

I saw Mr. Blackman colloguin' with Sandy Morrison early in the day; but he didn't wait for the sale. When it was finished Sandy beckoned me over.

"Here's the key of that little loft," sez he. "There's a piece of furniture there, wrapped in tarpaulin. Within the next week or two, as your work suits, fetch it into my yard an' ask for me."

I SENT the package in the next day, but it was ten days before I could find time to go into Ballygullion myself, an' you can guess my feelin's when the first thing I heard when I entered the town was that the three Scotts, Simmy, an' Rab an' Loo herself, had got hold of all that was likely to come to Henry out of the wreck, an' skipped for America the previous day, an' that unfortunate Henry was in the workhouse.

"It's true, Pat," sez Sandy, when I got hold of him. "They're away as clean as a whistle, money an' all, without one word to Henry. When Henry heard the news he got insensible drunk with the few shillin's he had on him; an' now he's in the Workhouse Infirmary."

"An' do you mean to say nothin's goin' to be done?" sez I, leppin' up. "Why isn't it in the hands of the police?"

"No use," sez Sandy. "Henry won't prosecute. He says he done an unChristian act on Simmy once before, about the cheque, an' it didn't turn out lucky. But he's terribly cut about Loo. 'Loo has forgot me, after all,' he keeps on rhyming, 'Loo has forgot me.' You'd be sorry for the poor ould fellow."

"So that's the end of Henry?" sez I.

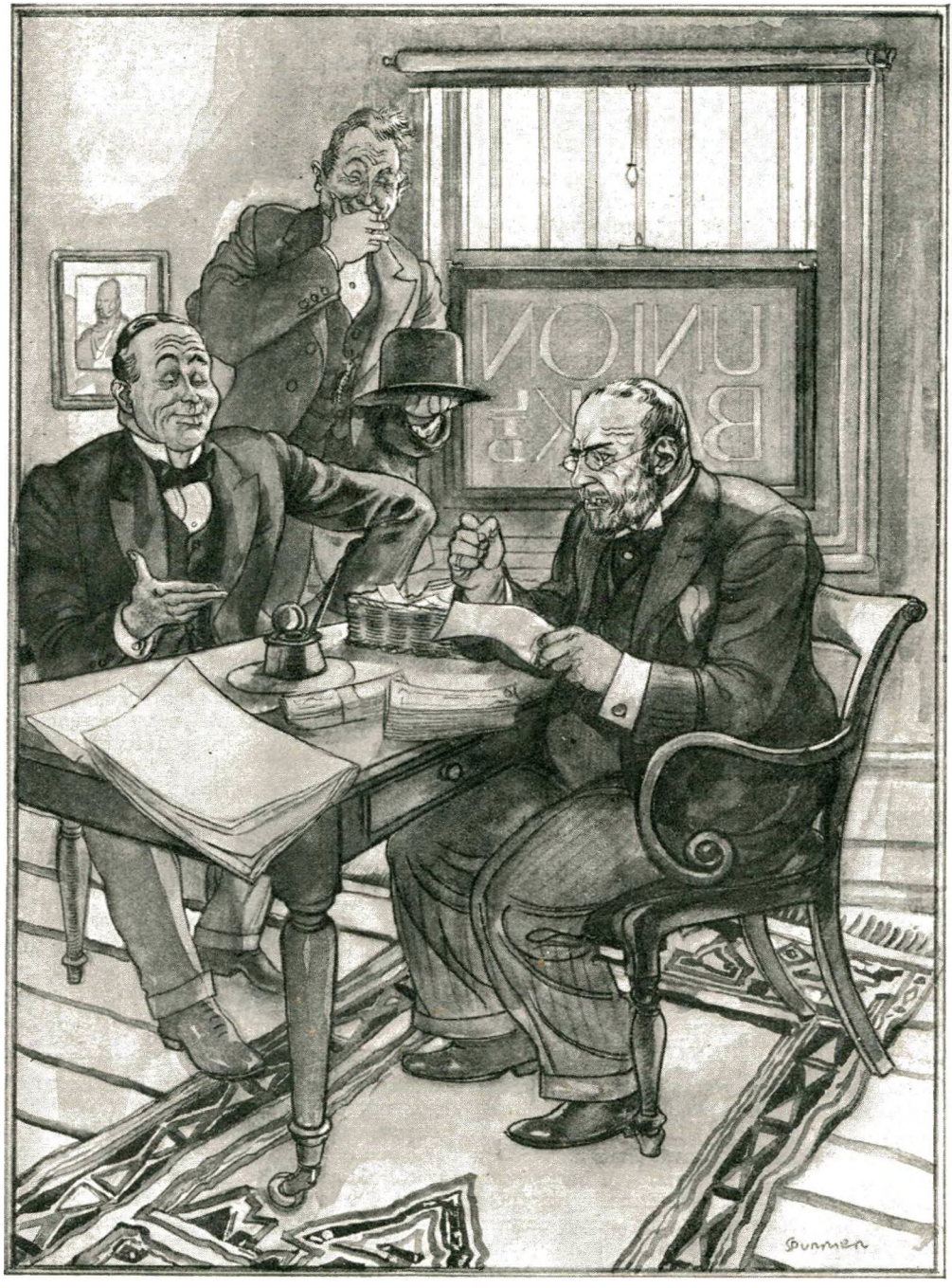
"Not yet," sez Sandy. "I'm dependin' on Mr. Blackman to keep him goin' for a while longer. Him an' the table you sent me in the tarpaulin," sez he, catchin' the surprise in my face.

"A table, was it?" sez I; "but where does Mr. Blackman come in?"

"That table was part of the furniture of the Hastings dower-house, that my fool of a predecessor sold thirty years ago without advertisin' in the newspapers," sez Sandy. "The whole countryside got plunder in expensive furniture without knowin' it, an' Mr. Blackman has been picking it up pretty reasonable ever since. He's had his eye for long time on this buhl table. Mr. Blackman asked me to keep it out of the sale; an' he would give a better price for it than it would fetch there."

"Mr. Morrison," sez I, "don't depend on him! He's an ould tyrant and ruffian, an' now that he knows Henry is left behind an' in the Workhouse, he'll take advantage of it to rob him, wait till you see. It was his stony heart put Henry where he is."

"Tut, tut, Pat," sez Sandy. "You're too severe on a hard, honest man with his duty to do. Anyway, he'll not get the chance. I'm sendin' off for a rough valuation to a firm of dealers I know in Liverpool, an' I'll not sell the table till I get it. Come back



"*The rogue—the scoundrel!*" *he cried out, looking at the cheque,* "*he's altered it from seven to seventy!*"

the day after to-morrow, if you're curious. I'll have an answer by then."

When I went into Sandy's office in two days' time, he looked up from his desk with a wry kind of smile.

"You were right about Blackman," sez he. "He's an earlier bird than I knew about. As I went up the street yesterday mornin' who comes clatterin' down it on a jauntin' car, with all his luggage about him, but himself, goin' on his holidays a week early to get a cheap ticket. He called me over, lookin' at his watch as he did.

"'I haven't a minit for the train,' sez he. 'You heard about Lofty? Well, I'm just after runnin' round by the Workhouse an' buyin' that table from him. Not that I wanted it; but I felt a pity for the creature.'

"'How much?' sez I.

"'Oh, too much,' sez he. 'But I couldn't see him left where he was. Good-bye,' sez he. 'There is a written order from Lofty. The Bank porter'll call for the table about eleven.' An' at eleven to the minit the table left this."

"What did he pay for it, Sandy?" sez I, all agog.

"Wait a minit, now," sez Sandy. "I have other news for you, too. Loo has been here," sez he.

"*Loo!*" sez I, the eyes stickin' out of my head.

"Loo," sez he; "yesterday, two hours after the table left. The stuff is in her, after all! Her heart failed her; she rounded on Simmy, an' back she came. An' how she has managed it, I don't know, but two hours later she went off with Henry."

"But why not, Sandy?" sez I.

"She had no money," sez he. "Simmy would give her none, she said, he was so wild at her. She might have a shillin' or two, but that's all."

"Haven't they the price of the table?"

"Do you know what Blackman gave for it," sez Sandy. "Seven pounds; an' that's beyond yea or nay, for Henry showed me the cheque. Sev-en pounds," sez he, hittin' the table at every syllable. "The dirty old dog."

"But was it worth more?" sez I.

"More!" sez Sandy, pullin' a letter out of his pocket. "The valuation I got this morning from Liverpool was sixty pounds at least, an' trade price at that. Oh, heavens," sez he, "if I'd only known in time, Loo an' Henry would have the table with them to Liverpool yesterday, let Blackman say what he liked. But now they're gone, an' the table's gone, an' all's past prayin' for. I had to go out to Ringdove to make a valuation for probate. Loo and Henry were to go to the Union Bank an' get the money for the table an' then come down here again an' wait till I came back. An' when I did come back, lo and behold, they were away by the afternoon train."

"Loo must have had money after all."

"She must," sez Sandy. "She's a bit of a liar, I know. But if she had money, it's no thanks to Blackman; an' I'll do somethin' this day'll take the pleasure out of his bargain when he comes back from his holidays. I'm goin' to the Bank to get my passbook made up, an' close my account. An' more than that, I'll show him what it is to offend an auctioneer with the country business for ten miles round in the hollow of his hand. I've no compunction about it," sez he, hittin' the desk a slap that done him more harm than it did Mr. Blackman.

But very soon Sandy came back, just like him, with all his rage clean gone.

"I think, after all, I won't do it till Blackman comes back," sez he. "I got chattin' with the cashier before I showed my hand; an' he's a decent fellow, an' a deal freer with his information than old Blackman would have been. If I closed while he's in charge, he might get the blame. But, Pat," sez he, "when Blackman comes home I'll send you word; an' do you come in, no matter you should lose your potato-crop. For there'll be fun," sez Sandy, rubbin' his hands. "There'll be skin an' hair flyin'," sez he; "an' I want you to be there to see it."

"An' if Loo an' Henry turn up between now an' then, Sandy," sez I, "an' I fully expect they will, what about them?"

"If Loo an' Henry turn up again, Pat," sez Sandy, "they'll be there, too. You can take my word for that."

A MINIT or two after ten on the big mornin', Sandy an' I walked up together towards the Union Bank.

"No word at all of Loo and Henry?" sez I to Sandy.

"Not yet," sez Sandy. "Ask no questions meantime," sez he. "There'll be word of them before we've done."

As we walked into the Bank Mr. Blackman came round the counter an' shook us both by the hand, with a special squeeze for Sandy.

"You're the first man in to welcome me, Mr. Morrison," sez he. "Always the same staunch friend of the Union Bank."

Sandy showed no sign at all, but shook hands quite friendly.

"Could we speak to you in the private room?" sez he, at the same time tippin' me a wink.

"Now for a scene!" sez I to myself as I took my seat.

But Sandy meant to work things up gradual, as he told me afterwards.

" Pat Murphy an' I just came in to say how pleased we were at the way you treated Henry Lofty," sez he.

Mr. Blackman smiled in an uncertain kind of a way, but said nothin'.

" About the table, I mean," sez Sandy.

" Ah, the table," sez Mr. Blackman.

" There's more than one about this town that has taken part in the plunderin' of that poor witless creature," goes on Sandy. " As far as it was in my power, I've made them suffer, if they were business men, that is. I'm in a position to influence a good deal of business in this town an' district, as you know, Mr. Blackman."

By this time there was a very blue look comin' on Mr. Blackman's face, an' I could hardly keep my own face straight.

" But you're not a man of that sort, sir," sez Sandy. " An' I never thought so much of you as when I found out from Loo Scott that you'd paid Henry the full value of the table."

" Loo Scott ? " sez Mr. Blackman, all puzzled.

" Yes," sez Sandy. " She came back to fetch Henry off to America the day after you left ; an' it was she told me about your kindness. It was decent of you, Mr. Blackman," sez Sandy, reachin' forward an' shaking him by the hand again ; " decent, that's what it was."

" H'm, h'm," sez Mr. Blackman, clearing his throat, an' lookin' four ways at once. " Of course, I like to be fair."

" You were that," sez Sandy, " an' more. But what I came here to warn you about was —did Henry get that money or did Loo ? For she came up to the Bank with Henry."

" Ha ! " sez Mr. Blackman. " I'll soon find that out," sez he, goin' to the door into the office. " Send me in my paid cheques, Thompson," sez he.

HE thumbed the wee bundle over when the boy had gone out, takin' good care that we didn't get a look at the faces of the cheques.

" Here is the cheque endorsed quite properly by Henry Lofty—Damnation ! " he cries out, lookin' at the front of the cheque, " he's altered it from seven to seventy ! The rogue—the scoundrel——" he stutters, dancin' round an' wavin' the cheque in the air. " I'll hang him ! I'll transport him ! Thompson ; send Thompson here," sez he, openin' the door.

But Sandy pulled him back.

" A minit, Mr. Thompson," sez he, puttin' out his head, an' then closin' the door again. " Wait," sez he to Mr. Blackman. " There's plenty of time, too. Henry's in America by now. The amount couldn't have been seven. . . . Wait, now ! It *couldn't* have been seven. I got a valuation from a firm I'm agent for, an' they estimated the table to be worthy sixty pounds, trade price——"

" I don't care," bursts in Mr. Blackman. " I'm not an expert. I took a risk."

" Wait—ah, *do* wait," sez Sandy, puttin' up a hand. " They warned me in the same letter, in case I was handlin' the sale of the table myself, that they had valued it for a private individual in this town at eighty pounds. He was a Mr. Blackman, a manager of a bank, they said. They'd had dealings with him before, an' found him very cute. Knowin' that valuation, you couldn't have offered Henry seven pounds for the table, a man in your position. It wouldn't do, sir, you know, it wouldn't do—— Going at seventy pounds," sez Sandy, as if he was auctionin', " going at seventy——" he raised his hand above the table and looked the manager in the eye.

Mr. Blackman glared at him ; an' if looks could have electrocuted Sandy his account at the Union Bank was closed that day, sure enough. But Sandy could read thoughts.

" *Gone !* " sez he, hittin' the table a slap that shook it on its legs. " Come in now, Mr. Thompson," sez he, openin' the door. " I've been beggin' you off a row. Mr. Blackman issued this cheque for seven pounds——" I half riz from my chair to stop him, an' I could see Mr. Blackman stiffen up—" by mistake," sez Sandy, beamin' at the pair of us. " He altered it to seventy without initialling it. You should have returned it ' amount altered,' shouldn't you, Mr. Thompson ? "

" By heavens, of course I should," sez Thompson, turnin' white. " It *is* seventy all right, sir ? " sez he to the manager.

Mr. Blackman sat without answerin' till I'd held as much breath as should have kept me goin' for a week.

" Yes," sez he, at last ; " it's seventy."

" Do you mind Henry Lofty puttin' Simmy Scott in jail for alterin' a cheque of his two or three years ago ? " sez Sandy. " Wouldn't it have been a funny thing if Henry had taken a leaf out of Simmy's book, Mr. Blackman, an' altered one of yours ? "

Sandy burst into a roar of a laugh at the notion ; Thompson followed suit, even heartier ; an' then me. The three of us hung on to chairs an' rocked back an' forward, an' laughed an' laughed.

But judgin' by the look on Mr. Blackman's face as Sandy an' I went out, I would say there wasn't much laughin' in the Union Bank for a considerable time afterwards.

BULLDOG DRUMMOND AND THE MYSTERY OF THE STUDIO

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Bulldog Drummond's afternoon nap at Ted Jerningham's Devonshire home, Merridale Hall, is disturbed by the arrival of an agitated young man closely pursued by two prison warders through the fog which is hanging over the moor. The warders find that the fugitive is not the escaped murderer Morris for whom they are seeking, and depart. The young man, whose name is Marton, is in the middle of explaining his abject terror, which involves in some way a Comtessa Bartelozzi, when he is interrupted by the return of Jerningham and Peter Darrell, who have been to Plymouth. Drummond goes to meet them, and on his return finds that Marton has been kidnapped. Drummond finds a piece of notepaper with the address of Marton, Peters and Newall, a firm of solicitors, with a pencilled note: "Glensham House"—a place half a mile away. And the morning paper has reported the apparently accidental death, while cleaning a gun, of an Edward Marton, senior partner in the firm. Drummond and his friends decide to visit Glensham House. Morris, the escaped convict, stumbles on Glensham House in the fog, and believing it deserted, breaks in for shelter, and finds a meal laid out in a downstairs room. He devours the food, and is startled to hear the door of the room open. A ghost-like grey-haired woman comes in.

LUMME, mum, you didn't 'alf give me a start, opening that there door like that," said the convict. "The fust time was bad enough, but this time I thought as 'ow I was going to go barmy."

"The first time?" she said, still in the same deep voice. "This is the first time that I have been here to-night."

"Then 'oo was monkeying with that blinking door quarter of an hour ago?"

She came slowly into the room, and the convict backed away. There was something almost as terrifying about this woman as if she had actually been a ghost.

"Strange things happen in this house," she said. "It is not wise to ask too many questions."

"There was a norful row going on above 'ere a few minutes ago," he said, nervously.

"So you heard them too, did you?" she answered, gravely. "Every foggy night the curse must be fulfilled. Such is the penalty that even in death they must carry out."

"Spooks!" he muttered. "Is that wot you mean?"

"Thirty years ago my son killed a man in the room above. He deserved to die if ever a man did, but they took my son, and they hanged him. Even, Morris, as they might have hanged you."

He took a step forward, snarling, only to stand abashed before those glowing eyes.

"'Ow do you know my name is Morris?" he muttered, sullenly.

"There are many things that I know,"

she said ; " things that are whispered to me in the night by those who live around my bedside—those whom you could never see."

He shivered uncomfortably.

" But it was not they who told me about you," she went on. " This afternoon a warder came and wanted me to be on my guard against you. I listened to what he had to say, and when he had gone I laughed. For I knew you would come, Morris. I willed you to come to me through the fog. It was for you I prepared the meal."

" Very nice of you, I'm sure, mum," he said, scratching his head in a bewildered way. " But I don't quite——"

" Listen," she interrupted, imperiously. " I have told you that they hanged my son, and I have sworn to be revenged on them. Then perhaps the curse may be lifted."

He stared at her, and for the first time noticed that she was carrying a suit of clothes over her arm.

" And for that reason, Morris, I have brought you these."

She laid the clothes on a chair.

" I am going to help you to escape so that I can revenge myself on those who hanged my son. They are my son's clothes which I have kept against such a day as this. When I leave you, you will put them on. In the pockets you will find money, and cigarettes. Leave your own clothes on the floor here. I will dispose of them to-morrow. Do not thank me." She held up her hand to stop him. " I do this not for you, but for my son. So that the curse may be lifted. One thing and one thing only do I say to you : As you value your life, and more than your life, do not go upstairs. For when the fog is on Dartmoor, there is death in this house."

The convict stared at her fearfully and the hair on the back of his scalp began to tingle and prick. Her eyes seemed to be glowing more than ever. Her right arm was outstretched with finger pointing directly at him. And even as he watched her she appeared to recede through the doorway. A moment later he was alone.

" Barmy," he muttered to himself. " Clean barmy. But, strewth, the old gal guessed right."

His nerves were still on edge, and the sound of his own voice comforted him.

" Suppose them blinkin' clothes are real," he went on. " Not ghost clothes, are they, like everything else in this spookery ? "

He crossed to the chair and picked them up. No ghost about them. He ran his fingers eagerly through the pockets: notes, silver, cigarettes were all there.

" Lumme ! " he chuckled, " 'ere's luck to the old geyser. May 'er curse be lifted. But if ever I sees 'er again, I'll ask 'er to wear glasses. Luv-a-duck, them eyes of 'ers were 'orrid."

He lit a cigarette, and blew out a cloud of smoke luxuriously. Then he poured out the beer, and bringing the other four bottles he ranged them on the table.

" If the meal was for me," he announced, " I'll show the old gal that I appreciates it."

He finished his cigarette, and then began to change his clothes. His convict rig he threw into the cupboard, and to his joyful amazement he found that the other clothes fitted passably well. A little tight round the shoulders, and a little long in the legs, but not too bad, he considered, as he toasted his reflection in the mirror. The hat was a bit small, which was a pity, but by ripping out the lining he could just get it on.

Anyway, what was a hat ? He had already counted the money—fifteen pounds odd. He would buy another at the first opportunity. And, having, by that time, lowered the third bottle of beer, he decided that it was time he made some plans. Here he was with clothes and money, full of good food and good drink—in fact, in a position that would have seemed impossible half an hour ago—but he was not out of the wood by any manner of means yet. He poured out the fourth bottle, and began to think.

Presumably he could wait there till the morning if he wished to—the beer had produced a certain contempt for such trifles as spooks. And if he went now he would

By

'SAPPER'

Illustrated by A. R. THOMSON

again undoubtedly lose his way in the fog. Of course daylight was dangerous. He knew that his description would have been circulated everywhere. But even if he went now daylight would still come, and he would have the intense discomfort of wandering about in the fog all the night.

And then another idea struck him which was so wonderful that he promptly broached the fifth bottle. Why should he go at all—at any rate for days? If the old trout really wanted to lift the curse from her son, the best thing she could do would be to hide him until the hue-and-cry had blown over. Give him his half dozen, or dozen bottles of beer a day, and three or four good square meals, and he'd be perfectly happy. In fact, he'd do all he could to help the poor old thing with regard to her son.

A righteous glow was spreading over him. Of course he'd help her. A shame, he reflected, that the old girl should be haunted like that every foggy night. Lucky thing he'd come here, instead of wandering about on the moor where he might have fallen into a bog. Which brought a sudden idea to him of such stupendous magnificence that he bolted the last half of the fifth bottle, and seized the sixth.

The bogs! Why in Heaven's name hadn't he thought of them before? The next morning he would give her his convict's cap, and tell her to take it to the nearest one. She could there place it on a tuft of grass at the edge where it was bound in time to be discovered. Everyone would immediately think that he had fallen in, and the search would be given up. Then in due course he would leave comfortably and go over-seas. The old lady was sure to have a bit of savings put by. The least she could do if he was going to help her over this curse business was to pass them across. If she wouldn't—well, there were ways of making her.

He finished his glass, and lit a final cigarette. Having decided on his plans for the future, he now felt a desire for sleep. And after a while his head began to nod, and he was on the verge of falling right off, when a bell began to ring in the passage outside. The sound brought him scrambling to his feet. His head was feeling fuddled and muzzy, and for a while he stood staring stupidly in front of him. Who on earth could be ringing that infernal bell? Was it someone in the house, or was it someone outside at the front door? Again it pealed, and he began to curse foully under his breath. Could it be that the warders had got on to him?

In a panic of fear he blew out the candle, and stood listening intently. Would the old woman answer the door? If she did the warders might insist on searching the house, and they would be bound to find him. And then as the seconds went by and the ring was not repeated, he began to breathe freely again. There was no sound in the hall, and he knew that if the warders had come in they would not trouble to walk quietly. So she hadn't answered the bell, and with luck they would go away, believing the house to be empty.

But what if they broke in—the same as he had done? The thought set him trembling again. Surely luck couldn't be so cruel just after he'd thought out this wonderful scheme. Warders wouldn't dare to break into a house. It was against the law. A minute passed, two—still no sound. And he was on the point of sitting down again when he saw a thing that turned him cold with fright. A light had shone for a moment under the door.

He strained his ears, though all he could hear was the heavy thumping of his own heart. And then above it came the sound of muffled voices just outside the room. He backed away into the corner farthest from the door, and crouched there. There were men outside in the passage. Who were they, and how many?

SUDDENLY the door opened, and a voice came out of the darkness.

"Look out, chaps. The place reeks of cigarette smoke, and a candle has just been blown out. Stand away from me. I'll switch on the torch."

Came a little click, and the beam travelled round the room till it picked up the snarling figure in the corner. Then it checked.

"Hullo! Hullo!" came a quiet voice. "What have we here?"

Slowly Morris straightened up, his great fists clenched by his sides. He could see nothing behind the torch, but he could hear. And by the voice he knew that this was no warder but a blasted toff. Trouble was there was more than one, but—Gawd! he'd learn 'em.

"Light that candle, will you, Peter," went on the voice, and someone stepped into the circle of light. He was a youngish man, and he didn't look too big. And as he took a box of matches out of his pocket, the convict sprang at him with a grunt of rage.

What happened then was not quite clear to Morris. It seemed that the torch wavered for a moment, and then a thing like a battering ram hit him on the point of the jaw. He had a fleeting recollection of being hurled backwards; he felt his head strike the wall. And then for a space he slumbered.

The beam travelled round the room till it picked up the snarling figure in the corner.

When he came to himself again, he lay still for a moment or two trying to collect his thoughts. The candle had been relit, and he saw that there were three men in the room. They were standing by the table regarding him dispassionately, and he particularly noticed that one of them was quite the largest individual he had ever seen. And it was this one who spoke.

"Don't do that again, Morris. Next time I shall really hit you."

The convict scrambled sullenly to his feet.

"'Oo the 'ell are you calling Morris?"

He knew he was caught, but there was no harm in trying the bluff.

"You," said the large man, quietly. "I had an accurate description of your face given me by one of your kind warders this afternoon. And I must admit I had not quite anticipated finding you here. But if you will smoke cigarettes in an empty house, you must expect to be discovered. However, the point that now arises is what the devil to do with you. You seem to have done yourself pretty well, judging by the table. And not to mince words you're an infernal nuisance. What do you say, Ted?"

"Well, old boy," said the third individual, "I don't know. If there's a 'phone here we ought to ring up the prison, I suppose."

"But that means sitting and mounting guard on the damn' fellow," remarked the big man, peevishly.

A ray of hope dawned in the convict's mind.

"Give us a chance, guv'nor," he cried, coming into the centre of the room. "Give us a chance. If they cops me, I won't never give yer away. I swears it. But yer don't know wot it's like up in that blarsted place. Give us—Gaw lumme, guv'nor, wot are yer looking at me like that for?"

He cowered back, staring at the big man, whose face had suddenly changed from being almost good-natured, to an expression that the convict couldn't understand.

"Where did you get those clothes from, Morris?" he said in a terrible voice.

"Strewth, guv'nor," he stammered. "I—I——"

"Where did you get them from, damn you? Answer me."

"The old woman—she give 'em to me, sir. Belonged to 'er son, wot was 'anged."

"You're lying, you scum. If you don't tell me the truth, I'll smash your face in."

"I swear to Gawd, guv'nor, I'm telling yer the truth," he said, earnestly.

"What's the great idea, Hugh?" said the man called Peter.

"That suit is the one young Marton was wearing this afternoon. As soon as Morris came nearer the light I recognized it at once. Now listen to me." He took a step forward, and stood towering over the convict. "Those clothes belong to a young man whom I was talking to this afternoon. Where is he, and what have you done to him?"

"I ain't seen no young man, sir," answered the convict, quietly. "They was given to me by the old woman in the 'ouse 'ere, and she told me they belonged to 'er son 'oo murdered a man in the room above thirty years ago."

He looked upwards and pointed, and the next instant every drop of colour had left his face.

"'Oly 'Eaven, look at that," he screamed. "It's the mark of wot 'e did, and I ain't noticed it before."

A CIRCULAR crimson patch stained the white ceiling, and for a space they all stared at it—stared at it until, with a yell of terror, the convict made a dart for the door. For the patch was growing bigger.

The three men hurled themselves on him, and he struggled like a maniac till another blow from Drummond's fists knocked him half silly.

"Lemme go," he whimpered. "I can't abear it. I'd sooner be copped, strite I would. It weren't there when I came, I swear it weren't. And I 'eard 'em, guv'nor. I 'eard the ghosts a-murdering one another. And now there's ghost blood too. It ain't real. Gawd! It cawn't be real. It just comes every foggy night like wot the old woman said, and then goes away again. Let's get out of the 'ouse, guv'nor. It's 'orrible."

The man was almost mad with fear, and Drummond watched him curiously. Then once again he looked at the ceiling. The patch had grown enormously, and now a dark central nucleus was visible, in which great drops formed sluggishly and fell to the floor.

"Come here, Morris," he said, quietly. "Put out your hand; hold it there."

He seized the convict's arm and forced it into the line of falling drops.

"Is that ghost blood?" he demanded.

Like a crazy thing Morris stared at the palm of his hand, then at the three men.

"I don't understand," he muttered, helplessly. "This 'ere is real blood."

"It is," said Drummond, even more quietly. "Real blood. And now we're all going upstairs, Morris, to see where that real blood is coming from."

But that was too much for the convict. He flung himself on his knees, and literally jibbered in his terror.

"Not me, guv'nor; for pity's sake, not me. I dursn't do it—not if you was to

let me off the rest of me sentence. There's death in the 'ouse on foggy nights. The old woman said so. As you values yer life, she says to me, don't go up them stairs. I cawn't understand about this 'ere blood, but it's ghosts, don't yer see?—ghosts wot are upstairs. I 'eard 'em."

"And now you're going to see them, Morris," answered Drummond. "There's no good protesting, my man. You're coming upstairs with us. Get his arms, you two fellows, and bring him along."

HE led the way to the stairs, while Darrell and Jerningham forced the struggling convict to follow. Once or twice he almost threw them off in his frenzied endeavours to escape, but between them they half pushed, half carried him up the stairs.

"Stop that damned noise," snapped Drummond, when they reached the top, "or I'll lay you out. I want to listen."

But no sound broke the silence, and save for his torch there was not a glimmer of light anywhere. And after a while he led the way along a passage, the end of which was barred by a green baize door.

"Through here," he said, "and it should be the first room on the left, if my bearings are correct. Ah!" He drew in his breath sharply. "It's what I expected. Bring that man in here."

He had flung open the door of the room, and the others followed with the convict between them.

"Stay there, Peter, till I see if this gas will light. And mind where you put your feet."

He had turned his torch on the gas bracket, so that the floor was in darkness. But a moment later the light flared up, and Darrell and Jerningham gave a simultaneous gasp. Sprawling on the boards was the body of a man, clad only in a shirt and under-clothes. It was obvious at a glance that he was dead. His head had been battered in with inconceivable ferocity. But his face was just recognizable; the dead man was young Marton.

"Now, Morris," said Drummond, quietly, "is that a ghost?"

The convict was staring foolishly at the body. His mouth kept opening and shutting though no sound came from it.

"I don't understand, guv'nor," he said, hoarsely, after a while. "The old woman said as 'ow it was a ghost."

"Where is the old woman?" demanded Drummond.

"I dunno, guv'nor. I ain't see'd 'er since she give me these clothes."

"You realize, don't you, Morris, that those clothes you are wearing belong to that man who has been murdered?"

"Well, I didn't know it, guv'nor. 'Ow could I? She said as 'ow they were 'er son's."

"Was there ever any old woman, Morris?" cried Drummond, sternly.

"In course there were, guv'nor. Ain't I been telling yer? It was she wot told me abaht the ghost."

And then suddenly the real significance of his position penetrated his slow brain.

"Gawd! guv'nor," he screamed, "yer don't think I did it, do yer? Yer don't think I croaked the young gent? I ain't never seen 'im in my life: I swears it on me mother's grave."

"How long have you been in this house?" demanded Drummond.

"It struck eight, guv'nor, as I was standing in the 'all."

Drummond looked at his watch.

"So you've been here two hours," he remarked. "Did anyone see or hear you come in?"

"I suppose the old woman must 'ave, sir. And then the door opened once in the room dahn below, opened and shut it did. She said as 'ow queer things took place in this 'ere 'ouse."

"Was that before she gave you those clothes?"

"Yus, guv'nor—afore that."

"And before you heard the ghosts fighting up here?"

"That's right, sir," said the convict, eagerly. "Yer do believe me, sir. Yer don't think as 'ow I done that bloke in?"

"It doesn't much matter what I think, Morris," said Drummond, gravely, "but you're in a devilish serious position; and there's no good pretending you're not. We find you in this house alone with a murdered man, and wearing his clothes. And all you can say about it is that some old woman who can't be found spun you a yarn about ghosts. It's pretty thin, my lad, and you may find the police a little difficult to convince."

The convict was looking round him like a trapped animal. Why this thing had been done to him he didn't know, but all too clearly did he realize the truth of this big man's words. The whole affair had been a frame-up from beginning to end. What he had thought were ghosts had been nothing of the sort. The noise he had heard had been the actual murder of the man who lay on the floor with his head battered in.

And suddenly his nerve broke completely. For a moment his three captors were not looking at him and, with a cry of terror, he sprang through the door and banged it behind him. Then he rushed

blindly along the passage to the top of the stairs. To get away from that dead man whose clothes he wore was the only thought in his brain as he blundered through the hall. And a moment later he had flung open a window and the fog had swallowed him up.

"Excellent," said Drummond, thoughtfully. "Thank Heavens he decided to make a bolt for it. I was wondering what we were going to do with him. Hullo!" He paused, listening intently. "Some more people playing. This house is getting quite popular."

He opened the door, and the sound of angry voices came up from below. And then, followed by the other two, he strolled to the top of the stairs. A light had been lit in the hall, and two men were standing there who fell silent as soon as they saw Drummond and his companions.

"Say," shouted one of them after a while, "are you the damned ginks who have eaten our supper?"

"Perish the thought, laddies," remarked Drummond, affably. "We dined on caviare and white wine before coming to call."

"Well, who is the guy who rushed through the hall and jumped out of a window a few moments ago just as we were coming in?"

"He also came to call, but he didn't seem to like the house. He got the willies about it and decided to leave."

"Look here," said the other, savagely, beginning to mount the stairs: "Is this whole outfit mad? What under the sun are you doing up there, anyway?"

He paused in front of Drummond, a great powerful raking man with a nasty look in his eyes.

"We've been ghost-hunting, Percy," said Drummond, genially. "Very naughty of us, but we thought the house was empty. And instead of that we find a delightful escaped convict replete with your supper, and other things too numerous to mention."

"If you call me Percy again," snarled the other, "you won't speak for a few days."

"Is that so, Percy darling," said Drummond, lazily. "I always thought it was such a nice name."

The veins stood out on the other's forehead and he took a step forward with his fists clenched. And then the look in Drummond's eyes made him pause, while his companion whispered something in his ear.

"Well, the house isn't empty," he remarked, sullenly. "So you can clear out before I send for the police."

"But how inhospitable of you," said Drummond, mildly. "However, I fear that anyway you will have to communicate with that excellent body of men. You must do something about the dead man, mustn't you?"

The other stared at him.

"The dead man," he said at length. "What in fortune are you talking about?"

"I told you we'd found a lot of other things," remarked Drummond. "Come along and you shall see for yourself."

THEY walked along the passage to the room where the body lay.

"Holy smoke!" cried the big man, pausing by the door. "Who's done that?"

"Who, indeed!" murmured Drummond, thoughtfully.

"Where are his clothes?" asked the other.

"Adorning Mr. Morris, the escaped convict," said Drummond. "The gentleman who left the house so rapidly."

For a while the other looked at him in a puzzled way.

"This seems to me to be a mighty rum affair," he remarked at length.

"Mighty rum," agreed Drummond.

"Since you say the convict was wearing his clothes, it looks as if he had done it."

"It certainly does," Drummond again agreed.

"What a damnable crime! Jake! If we hadn't gone out for a breather this would never have happened. I guess I'll never forgive myself."

"It sure is tough on the poor young chap," said his companion.

"A young friend of ours, Mr—Mr.——?"

"Drummond is my name. Captain Drummond."

"Hardcastle is mine. And my pal is Jake Slingsby. To think that this poor young fellow should be murdered like that. I guess I can't get over it."

"The strange thing is that he should have had a premonition of danger," remarked Drummond. "I saw him this afternoon when he lost his way in the fog."

"He told us he had called in at the wrong house," said Hardcastle.

"A call is one way of describing his visit," murmured Drummond. "I gathered his name was Marton."

"That's so. Down on business about the house. Well, well! This is terrible. I don't know how I shall break the news to his father."

"Nor do I," said Drummond. "For unless I am greatly mistaken his father was killed last night through a gun accident."

"What's that you say?" shouted Hardcastle, and his companion seemed equally perturbed. "Old Marton dead?"

"According to the papers he is," answered Drummond. "It must be a great shock to you, Mr. Hardcastle, to have a firm with

After what seemed an eternity Bulldog Drummond began to smile as slowly and inexorably he forced the other back.

whom you are doing business dying off so rapidly."

The other looked at him suspiciously, but Drummond's face was expressionless.

"Well, I suppose we ought to ring up the police," he went on after a pause.

"That would seem to be the thing to do," remarked Drummond. "And since they will probably take some time coming on a night like this, I think we might wait for them elsewhere, don't you? You must be very fond of fresh air, Mr. Hardcastle," he continued, as they left the room.

"How do you make that out?" demanded the other.

"To go for a stroll on a night like this,"

said Drummond. "I should have thought that a book and a whisky and soda would have been preferable."

"Then why don't you follow your own advice?"

"Ah! It was different in our case. You see, it is only on foggy nights that the ghost is supposed to walk."

"What is all this rot about a ghost?" said Hardcastle, contemptuously. "I reckon the ghost isn't made yet that I shall ever see."

"Do not scoff, Mr. Hardcastle, at things beyond your ken," said Drummond, reprovingly. "What would your housekeeper say if she heard you?"

The other paused and stared at him.

"Housekeeper!" he cried. "What fly has stung you this time? If there's a housekeeper here it's the first I've heard of it."

"Really? You surprise me."

Drummond stopped suddenly and began to sniff the air.

"By the way, Ted," he remarked, "which was the room you told me was haunted? The second from the top of the stairs, wasn't it?"

And before anyone realized what he was going to do he flung the door open.

"Most extraordinary," he said, blandly. "Do you use scent, Mr. Hardcastle? Or is it Mr. Slingsby? But I don't see any ghost, Ted."

He let the light of his torch travel round the room, until it finally rested on the bed.

"Oh!" he cried, covering his eyes with his hand. "Is that your nightie, Mr. Hardcastle? Or yours, Mr. Slingsby?"

But by this time Hardcastle had recovered from his surprise, and there was murder in his eyes.

"How dare you go butting into a lady's bedroom?" he shouted, furiously. "Get out of it, you meddling young beast."

He seized Drummond by the arms, and then for half a minute there ensued a struggle the more intense because neither man moved.

It was just a trial of strength, and the others watched it breathlessly. For to all of them it seemed that far more depended on the result than what happened at the moment. It was the first clash between the two men. The outcome would be an omen for the future.

Their breathing came faster; the sweat stood out on both their foreheads. And then, after what seemed an eternity, Drummond began to smile, and the other to curse. Slowly and inexorably Hardcastle was forced back, and then Drummond relaxed his hold.

"Not this time, Percy," he remarked, quietly. "And I must really apologize for entering the lady's bedroom. It's this confounded ghost business that is responsible for it. By the way, where is she? Did you carelessly lose her in the fog?"

"What the hell is that to do with you?" snarled Hardcastle.

"My dear fellow!" Drummond lifted his hands in horror. "I find that the thought of the owner of that garment wandering forlornly over Dartmoor distresses me beyond words!"

HARDCASTLE looked at him sullenly. The type was a new one to him. Accustomed all his life to being top dog, either by physical strength or through sheer force of will, he found himself confronted with a man who was his match in both.

"You needn't worry yourself," he muttered. "My daughter is in Plymouth."

"And a charming spot it is, too," boomed Drummond, genially. "The jolly old daughter in Plymouth of all places! Happy days we used to have there, didn't we, Peter, prancing along the Hoe?"

His torch, in apparently a haphazard way, was flashing about the room as he rambled on, and suddenly it picked up a box of cigarettes lying open on the dressing-table.

"But how careless of her, Mr. Hardcastle," he cried. "They will all get stale. I must really close it up."

He crossed the room and shut the box. Then he calmly returned and strolled towards the top of the stairs.

"Daughter or no daughter, duty calls us, Mr. Hardcastle. We must ring up that fine body of men, the Devon Constabulary."

"A thing that ought to have been done ten minutes ago, but for your infernal impertinence," said the other, furiously.

He crossed the hall to the telephone, and rang up the exchange. He did it again. Then a third time, and gradually a smile spread over Drummond's face.

"Most extraordinary," he murmured. "I expect the telephone girl is in Plymouth, too. Or can it be that you aren't connected up, Mr. Hardcastle?"

"The damned line must be out of order," grunted the other.

And Drummond began to shake with laughter.

"You sure are out of luck to-night, aren't you?" he remarked. "A dead man in the house; a daughter painting Plymouth red; a telephone that doesn't function; and last, but not least, three interfering ghost hunters. However, don't be despondent! The darkest hour is always just before the dawn."

He paused for the fraction of a second, and only Darrell saw the look that flashed

momentarily into his eyes. He had noticed something, but his voice as he went on was unchanged.

"We'll do the ringing up for you, Mr. Hardcastle, from Merridale Hall, and tell the police all your maidenly secrets. And as your next-door neighbours, let us say welcome to our smiling countryside. Which concludes the national programme for this evening. Good-night. *Good*-night."

CHAPTER III.

THE fog had lifted a little as they left the house, though it was still sufficiently thick to make progress slow. And they had only gone some thirty or forty yards down the drive when a cry came echoing faintly over the moor. They stopped abruptly. It was repeated again and again. It sounded as if someone was calling for help, and then as suddenly as the shouts had started, they ceased.

"That's the direction of Grimstone Mire," said Jerningham, gravely. "Surely no one could be such a damned fool as to go near it on a night like this?"

"Dangerous, is it?" said Drummond.

"Dangerous, old boy! Why, it's a death trap even by day. And in the dark, and foggy at that, it would be simply suicide. No one who lives round here would go within half a mile of the place."

"No good going to have a look, I suppose?"

"Not the slightest, Hugh. Whoever it is has either scrambled out by now, or it's all over, with the odds on the latter."

"Then let's get back," said Drummond. "We've got to put on our considering caps, you fellows, but it darned well can't be done till I've lowered some ale. For unless I'm much mistaken we've stepped right into one of the biggest things we've ever handled. And the first thing to be considered is what we're going to do about Mr. Morris!"

'You think he did in Marton?" said Darrell.

"I'm damned certain he didn't," answered Drummond, shortly. "But they'll hang him all the same. It's one of the most diabolically clever bits of work we've ever butted into, comparing quite creditably with the deeds of our late lamented Carl. Thank the Lord—here's the house. Ale, Ted, in buckets. Then you, as the resident, get on to the police. Tell 'em a man has been murdered at Glensham House, and say that we shall be here to give 'em all the information we can. And one other thing, old lad. Ask the exchange if Glensham House is disconnected or not."

"What was the sudden brain storm in the hall, Hugh, just before we left?" said Darrell, curiously.

Jerningham was telephoning, and Drummond's face was buried in a tankard, which he drained before answering.

"A little matter of dust," he remarked. "But all in good time, Peter. We've got to get down to this pretty carefully."

"The house hasn't been connected up for two years," said Jerningham, coming back into the room, and Drummond nodded thoughtfully. "I've told the police, who darned near fused the wire in their excitement. They'll be round as soon as they can."

"And before they come we've got to decide exactly what we are going to say," remarked Drummond, lighting a cigarette. "I'll take the chair for the moment. You stop me the instant you disagree with anything. Point one: Was the story told us by Morris true? I unhesitatingly maintain that it was, for one very good reason. That man at the best of times hasn't got the brains to *invent* such a wildly fantastic yarn and stick to it. And half-screwed as he was when we found him, the thing is an utter impossibility. No—he was speaking the truth the whole way through; I watched him closely."

"I agree," said Jerningham. "Or else he is the most consummate actor."

Drummond shook his head.

"He wasn't acting, Ted. What do you say, Peter?"

"I agree with you, old boy. Which brings us to point two: If Morris didn't murder Marton—who did?"

"Exactly," said Drummond. "But let's go back a bit farther, and see what we can build up on the assumption that Morris's story is true. Clearly there were people in the house when Morris broke in. There was a woman, young Marton, and another man or men. Right. They hear him come in, or someone—they don't know who. The woman comes down; sees the glint of the candle, and opens the door just enough to see who the visitor is. A convict—must be Morris. And it's at this point, you fellows, that I maintain we get a line on to what we are up against, which gives one to think pretty furiously. Because without the smallest hesitation they seized on a thing that had happened by the merest fluke, and turned it to advantage with a brutality that is damned near unprecedented. Common or garden murder we know, but they don't stick at butchery. I'm not often serious, as you know, but 'pon my soul this show is a bit over the odds. For some reason we haven't got, they wanted young Marton out of the way. Behold the unsuspecting scapegoat all ready to hand. Morris can be hanged for what they've done. But in order to make it doubly sure they asked themselves the

safest way of killing Marton. A revolver—out of the question; Morris wouldn't have one. A knife means fingerprints on the shaft, which Morris could prove were not his. And so these beauties, remembering that in the Sydenham case he was reputed to have bashed his victim's head about, and acting on the well-known truth that a murderer rarely changes his methods, went and did likewise. They deliberately killed young Marton by battering his head in."

"Sounds right, so far, Hugh," said Jerningham.

"Hold hard, old boy, for a minute. We've got to go a bit farther. Down comes this woman with Marton's clothes and pitches Morris a yarn which was exactly the kind to impress and frighten an ignorant man. Ghost and foggy night—just the stuff to scare the fellow stiff. And then she disappears, intending, in all probability, to come back later and get his convict's uniform, so that there shall be no chance of his not putting on Marton's clothes. And from that moment Morris would have been a doomed man. Supposing we hadn't heard his yarn in the circumstances we did, should we have believed it? No; and that is the only point where their plan miscarried. No one was ever intended to hear it in such circumstances. It rang true to-night. It wouldn't have rung true two or three days from now, when Morris was found wandering about. He would not have had a dog's chance. The woman would either have disappeared, or she would have denied his story *in toto*. And then, unfortunately for them, we came barging in, which necessitated a considerable change in their plans. For my own belief is that, if we had not arrived, they would merely have left with the absolute

"I really am quite exhausted," said the woman. "If I could rest here a little before going on it would make all the difference."

certainty that it was only a question of time before Morris was caught. Our arrival altered matters, and completely forced their hands, so that we were treated to the theatrical performance we've just had from Hardcastle and the others. They knew we should have to ring up the police, and the instant the police arrived they were in the soup. What were they doing while this wretched boy's head was being bashed in by Morris? It can't have been a silent proceeding. Why didn't they hear it? They could only pretend they were out of the house, and if they were going to do that, the sooner they took the bull by the horns the better."

"You think they were in the house the whole time?" said Darrell.

"My dear old Peter, who goes for a walk on a night like this for fun? Of course they were. Though there is no denying that that swine Hardcastle's acting was damned good. Probably to the police they will say they were walking back from Yelverton, which sounds feasible, because the police won't be able to get beyond the point that Morris is the murderer."

"You think those two did it?" said Jerningham.

Drummond shrugged his shoulders.

"There, old boy, we're getting into the region of guesswork. From what I saw of Hardcastle, I should think he's quite capable of anything. But it was either them or pals of theirs."

"And what about the housekeeper?" said Darrell.

"Housekeeper, my aunt, Peter! Who ever heard of a housekeeper with a nightdress like that? Who ever heard of a housekeeper who smoked expensive cigarettes with purple-tipped mouthpieces? It's just possible that the woman who fooled Morris was really Hardcastle's daughter made up for the part, but there was never any housekeeper."

"And where was she all the time?"

"In the hall. Just as we were going, I happened to look at the floor close by the wall. It was very dusty, and I saw the marks of a woman's footsteps going up to a big piece of panelling. There were none coming away from it."

"There undoubtedly are secret passages in the house," said Jerningham, thoughtfully. "So you think the fairy was there, and not in Plymouth?"

"Do we or do we not accept Morris's story? That's the answer, Ted. If we do—she was there."

"In which case she is there now. Are we to tell the police?"

Drummond refilled his tankard thoughtfully.

"I think we must tell the police the entire story that Morris told us. I don't think any good will be done by putting in any comment on it. We must leave them to form their own conclusions. You see, a mere statement on our part that we believe the yarn cuts no ice, anyway. At the same time, I think it's going to be a little awkward for those men. There are a whole lot of points they will have to explain away which would never have cropped up but for our arrival on the scene. Jove! they must have been as wild as civet cats when we appeared.

He rubbed his hands together and began to grin.

"Boys, we're going to have some fun. What is that galaxy doing there at all? Why do they know so little about it that they don't even realize the telephone is not connected up? Why do they want to murder young Marton? Why does the old man have a gun accident? And I'm just wondering how much will come out when Morris is caught. Nothing—if we hadn't come into it. But we have, and we're damned well not going out."

He paused as a ring came at the front door bell.

"Is that the police already? They've been pretty quick. Now, don't forget, you fellows, we were ghost-hunting, believing the house to be empty. And, for the rest, we give Morris's story without expressing any opinion."

"It's not the police," said Jerningham, who had gone to the door. "It's a woman's voice."

A MOMENT or two later Jennings entered the room.

"A lady, sir, has lost her way. She is looking for Glensham House."

"Have you directed her?" asked his master, glancing at Drummond.

The butler hesitated.

"She seems very tired, sir. I was wondering if I should offer her a glass of wine. She is, if I may say so," he continued, confidentially, "distinctly—er—worth while."

"Bring her in, Ted," said Drummond. "Tell Jennings to bring some champagne and sandwiches. Peter," he went on, as they left the room, "the rush on Glensham House is making me giddy."

"But it is too kind of you," came a woman's voice from the hall. "I really am quite exhausted. If I could rest a little before going on it would make all the difference."

She entered the room, and paused in momentary embarrassment on seeing the other two.

"Of course," cried Jerningham. "I have ordered some sandwiches for you. May I introduce Captain Drummond and Mr. Darrell? My own name is Jerningham."

He pulled up a chair, and she sat down with a charming smile that embraced all three. And, as Jennings had remarked, she was distinctly worth while. Dark and of medium height, she had a complexion that was simply flawless. Her eyes, of which she knew how to make full use, were a deep blue. In fact, the only thing that struck an incongruous note was her frock, which was more suitable for Ascot than Dartmoor.

"I have been over in Plymouth," she explained, "and had intended to spend the night there. And then I suddenly decided to return. If only I had realized what a fog on Dartmoor was like nothing would have induced me to. No taxi at the station. Not even a cab. So I started to walk, and when I got to your gates I thought it was Glensham House. Luckily my father thinks I'm still in Plymouth, so he won't be worried."

"Have we the pleasure of meeting Miss Hardcastle?" asked Drummond.

She laughed merrily.

"It is some time since I was called that," she said. "I am Comtessa Bartelozzi." And then she gave a puzzled little frown. "But how did you know my father's name?"

"Your father and ourselves have been having a lot of fun and excitement this evening," explained Drummond, genially. "I feel we're quite old friends."

"But I didn't know that he had met anyone round here," she said. "You see, we're only newcomers. My father has rented

Glensham House, and we just came down for a night or two to see what furniture was wanted."

"Well, I'm afraid your preliminary reconnaissance has not been devoid of incident, Comtessa," he remarked. "It's a merciful thing for you that you were in Plymouth; otherwise I fear the shock would have been considerable. A young man has had his head battered in at Glensham House."

She stared at him in speechless amazement.

"Head battered in! A young man! But who?"

"I gathered his name was Marton," answered Drummond. "Ah! Here is the champagne."

"Marton! But he's our solicitor. Captain Drummond—please explain."

WITH a completely expressionless face he told her the story, to which she listened with ever-increasing horror.

"But how dreadful!" she cried, as he finished. "Poor, poor boy. What a brute that convict must be."

"It certainly is one of the most brutal murders I have ever come across," Drummond agreed. "And we are expecting the police at any moment to hear what we have to tell them about it."

"Oh! I hope they catch the brute!" she cried, passionately. "What a pity you ever let him escape. I can't understand how you could have been taken in for a moment by such a story."

"You mean with regard to the housekeeper, the old woman who gave him the clothes?"

"Of course. There's no such person in the house. Why, if there had been you would have seen her."

"That is true, Comtessa. Perhaps we were credulous. Anyway, since Morris is bound to be caught very shortly, the whole thing will have to be thrashed out in court. Are you proposing to stay long at Glensham House?"

He poured her out another glass of champagne.

"It all depends on my father," she answered. "Mr. Hardcastle is very interested in cinema work, and he wants a place where he can work undisturbed at a new invention of his which he thinks is going to revolutionize the whole business."

"Indeed," murmured Drummond. "Then we can only hope there are no more diversions of the sort that occurred to-night. It will have a most upsetting effect on his studies. By the way, you know it is your room, don't you, that is reputed to be haunted?"

"What! My bedroom!" she cried. "Is that really so?"

"My host, Mr. Jerningham, is quite positive about it," he answered. "We didn't see anything, I must admit, but perhaps your father and Mr. Slingsby have an antagonistic aura for ghosts. Fortunately, we did one good deed in shutting up a box of your cigarettes which would otherwise have got dreadfully stale."

She stared at him thoughtfully.

"Do you think it's possible," she remarked at length, "that the woman this man Morris said he saw was a spirit?"

"My dear Comtessa," said Drummond, gravely, "I have reached the age when I never think anything is impossible. And there is no doubt that the amount of beer he had consumed might have rendered him prone to see things. However, those surely are the footsteps of the police I hear on the drive. After we have talked to them, you must allow us to see you home."

It turned out to be a sergeant, who stood in the door with his helmet under his arm.

"Mr. Jerningham?" He looked round the group, and Jerningham nodded.

"That's me," he said.

"It was you that telephoned, sir, wasn't it, about this murder at Glensham House? Well, sir, the Inspector has gone straight there, and he gave me orders to ask you to go round there at once and the other gentlemen that were with you."

"Of course," cried Drummond. "We'll all go. And you, too, Comtessa."

"He didn't say nothing about any lady, sir," said the sergeant, dubiously.

"The Comtessa is living at Glensham House," said Drummond. "Fortunately for her she has been in Plymouth to-day, and lost her way in the fog coming back."

"Then that's a different matter, sir," answered the sergeant. "It's much clearer now. We shan't have any difficulty in getting there."

"Good," said Drummond. "Let's start."

The sergeant proved right. A few isolated stars were showing as they left the house. Pockets of mist still hung about the road, but they grew thinner and thinner each moment. And in a few minutes the party could see the outline of Glensham House in front of them. There were lights showing in several of the downstair rooms, and finding the front door open they walked straight in.

An inspector with a constable beside him was seated at the table. Opposite him were Hardcastle and Slingsby, and a third man who was smoking a cigar.

"Gee, honey," cried Hardcastle, springing to his feet, "what under the sun are you doing here? I thought you were in Plymouth."

" I suddenly decided to come back, dad," she said, " and in the fog I went to this gentleman's house by mistake. What is this awful thing I hear ? "

He patted her on the arm.

" There, there," he cried, soothingly. " It's just one of the most terrible things that's ever happened. An escaped convict has murdered poor young Bob Marton."

" Are you the gentleman who telephoned ? " asked the Inspector, rapping on the table for silence.

" I telephoned from Merridale Hall," said Jerningham.

" I've explained that our instrument was disconnected," said Hardcastle.

" Please allow me, sir, to do the talking," said the Inspector, firmly. " Now, sir, would you be good enough to tell me exactly what happened. But before you begin, would you, sir," he swung round in his chair and addressed Drummond, " be good enough to stop walking about."

" Sorry, old lad," boomed Drummond, coming back into the centre of the room. " Carry on, Ted."

" One moment," interrupted Hardcastle. " I'm sure you don't want to ask my daughter anything, Inspector, and she must be tired. Go to bed, honey ; go to bed."

" Well, if the Inspector will allow me, I think I will," she said.

" Certainly, miss," he said. " If I do want to ask you anything I will do so to-morrow. Now, sir," he turned to Jerningham as Hardcastle led the Comtessa upstairs, " will you go ahead."

He listened to the story, taking copious notes, while Drummond studied the third man covertly.

" By Gad ! Peter," he whispered after a while. " Number Three looks if possible a bigger tough than the other two. What's that you say, Inspector ? "

" This gentleman says that it was you who identified the man as Morris. How did you know him ? "

" By the red scar on his face," said Drummond. " Two warders this afternoon described him to me. And afterwards he admitted it."

" And you knew the clothes were the clothes of the murdered man. How ? "

" Because I saw them on Marton this afternoon, when he lost his way in the fog and came to Merridale Hall instead of here," answered Drummond. " They were so obviously London clothes that I noticed them particularly. When you catch Morris you'll see what I mean."

" I guess the Inspector will have to take it on trust," said the newcomer, shortly. " That was the guy right enough : the scar proves it. Say, mister "—he turned to Drummond—" when he bolted, was he wearing a hat ? "

" He was not," remarked Drummond.

" Then that settles it. He's cheated the hangman all right. He went bathing in Grimstone Mire."

" What's that ? " said Drummond, slowly. " You say he fell into Grimstone Mire ? "

" Yep," answered the other. " There can't be two birds like him loose. I was in the garage tinkering with the car when I heard someone crashing about in the bushes near by. So I went out and flashed a torch around. Suddenly I saw him. A wild looking fellow without a hat and a great red scar on his face. He bolted like a hare towards the Mire and I went after him to try to stop him, but I couldn't do anything in the fog. And in he went—splosh. Let out one yell and then it was all over."

" An amazing development, isn't it, Captain Drummond ? " said Hardcastle, who had rejoined them.

" Most amazing," agreed Drummond. " However, as you say, it saves the hangman a job."

And at that moment the constable let out a yell.

" Look at the top of the stairs, sir."

THEY all swung round and stared upwards. Standing motionless in the dim light was a woman dressed in black. Her hair was grey. One arm was outstretched, pointing towards them. And the only thing that seemed alive in her were two eyes that gleamed from her dead-white face.

For a few seconds they all stood rooted to the ground. Then very slowly, almost as if she was floating on air, the woman receded, and disappeared from sight.

" What the devil ! " cried Hardcastle, and the next instant he dashed up the stairs, followed by the others. For a scream of terror had come from the Comtessa's room.

It was Hardcastle who reached it first, to find that the door was locked.

" Honey," he shouted. " Honey ! Open the door. Are you all right ? "

There was no reply, and in a frenzy he beat on the door with his fists. But the wood was stout, and it was not until they had all charged it several times with their shoulders that it began to show signs of giving. At last the bolt tore away from it's fastening, and in a body they surged into the room.

(To be continued.)

THE INTELLIGENCE OF BIRDS

By PROFESSOR JULIAN HUXLEY

A CENTURY and a half ago it was generally accepted, even by professional naturalists, that nature represented a single scale, culminating in man. There existed, in fact, a ladder of life, each rung of which was represented by a different type of animal, with humanity as the highest type of all. And from this point of view each kind of living creature represented merely a step on the way to man, its nature an incomplete realization of human nature.

But with further study, especially after it was illuminated by the theory of evolution, a wholly different and more interesting picture emerged. The various types of animals—insects, fish, crustaceans, birds, and the rest—could not be thought of as the rungs of one ladder, the steps of a single staircase; they now appeared as the branches of a tree, the ever-growing tree of evolving life. And with this they took on a new interest. It might still be that man was at the summit of the whole; but he was at the top of the tree only by being at the top of one particular branch. There existed many other branches, quite different in their nature, in which life was working out its ends in a different way from that she had adopted in the human branch.

By looking at these branches we are able to see, not merely our own natures in an incomplete state, but quite other expressions of life, quite other kinds of nature from our own. Life appears not as a single finished article, but as a whole series of diverse and fascinating experiments to deal with the problems of the world. We happen to be the most successful experiment; but we are not therefore the most beautiful or the most ingenious.

Of the non-human experiments, the two which are the most interesting are, on the one hand, the insects with their bodies confined within the armour of their skeletons, their minds cramped within the strange rigidity of instinct, and, on the other hand, the birds.

It is with these latter that I am concerned here; and I shall try to picture some of the differences between their minds and our own. But first we need a little evolutionary background so as to grasp some of the main characters of this particular branch of life. Birds, then, branched off from reptiles somewhere about a hundred million years ago, a good long time after our own mammalian ancestry had taken its origin from another branch of the great reptilian stock. The birds' whole nature was, of course, remodelled in connexion with flight, so that their fore-limb was irrevocably converted into a wing, and no

Photo: F. B. Kirkman.

A perversion of instinct. A black-headed gull contentedly brooding a tin which has been substituted for its eggs.

chance was left of re-moulding it into a hand. They clung obstinately to one important character of their reptilian ancestry—the shelled egg, whereas their mammalian rivals came to specialize in the internal nourishment of the young inside the mother's body. And by this the birds debarred themselves from ever being born into the world at such an advanced state of development as is possible to man and other higher mammals.

But in one thing at least birds went farther than any mammal: they not only developed a constant temperature, but kept it constant at a greater height. Birds and mammals are unique among living things in having evolved the self-regulating central heating system that we call "warm blood," a system which is of the utmost importance, since it enables their activities of body and mind to continue on a more or less constant level instead of being slowed down by cold, speeded up by heat, as is the case with all other kinds of animals, and makes it possible for birds and mammals to laugh at extremes of temperature which send insects or reptiles into the sleep of hibernation or æstivation. But birds have pushed the invention to its limits: they live at temperatures which would be the extremes of fever for us, one hundred and five degrees and even over.

It is this extremely high temperature, combined with the agility that comes of flight, which gives birds their fascinating quality of seeming always so intensely alive. But being intensely alive does not necessarily, as we know from human examples, mean being intensely intelligent. And, in fact, in respect of their minds just as much as their bodies, birds have developed along other lines than mammals. Mammals have gradually perfected intelligence and the capacity for learning by experience, until this line has culminated in that conscious reason and in that deliberate reliance upon the accumulated experience of previous generations which are unique properties of the human species. And with the gradual rise of intelligence, the power and fixity of the instincts have diminished.

Birds, on the other hand, have kept instinct as the mainstay of their behaviour; they possess, like all other backboned animals, some intelligence and some power of profiting by experience, but these are subordinate, used merely to polish up the outfit of instincts which is provided by heredity without having to be paid for in terms of experience. Indeed, the anatomist

could tell you as much by looking at the brains of bird and mammal, even if he had never studied the way the creatures behave. For whereas in mammals we can trace a steady increase in the size and elaboration of the cerebral hemispheres, the front part of the brain which we know to be the seat of intelligence and learning, this region is never highly developed in any bird, but remains relatively small, without convolutions on its surface; while other parts, which are known to be the regulating machinery for complicated but more automatic and more emotional actions, are in birds relatively larger than in four-footed creatures.

But enough of this generalizing. What I wanted to show at the outset was the fact that in the lives of birds we are not merely studying the actions of creatures which, though small and feathered, had minds of the same type as ourselves, albeit on a lower level, but rather a branch of the tree of life which, in mind as in body, has specialized along a line of its own, showing us mind of a different quality from ours. Birds have raised emotion to the highest pitch found in animals; the line of mammals has done the same thing for intelligence.

Perhaps the most obvious way in which birds differ from men in their behaviour is that they can do all that they have to do, including some quite complicated things, without ever being taught. Flying, to start with, is an activity which, for all its astonishing complexity of balance and aeronautical adjustment, comes untaught to birds. Young birds very frequently make their first flight when their parents are out of sight. Practice, of course, makes perfect, and puts a polish on the somewhat awkward first performance; but there is no elaborate learning needed, as with our learning of golf or tennis or figure-skating. Furthermore, the stories of old birds "teaching" their young to fly seem all to be erroneous. Some kinds of birds, once their young are full-fledged, do try to lure them away from the nest. But this merely encourages them to take the plunge; there is no instruction by the old bird in the movements of flight, no conscious imitation by the young.

But flight, after all, is something very organic. What is much more extraordinary than that a bird should be able to fly un-

Photo: D. Seth-Smith.

A brush-turkey on the automatic incubator it builds for its eggs, which are laid at the end of a tunnel in the mound and are hatched by the heat generated by the fermentation of the decaying vegetation of which the nest is made.

taught (though this demands a formidable complexity of self-regulating machinery provided ready-made by nature in the form of muscles and skeleton, nerves and nerve-centres, eyes and balance-organs) is that it should be able to build its nest untaught. And of this there can be no manner of doubt. Young birds, mating for the first time, can make perfectly good nests, and nests of the usual type found among their particular species. Some people have suggested that this may be due to their having absorbed the necessary knowledge from contemplating the structure of the nest in which they were brought up. But even if we were to admit that this was possible—which is very unlikely, considering that the young of small birds are very stupid, only live a few days in the nest after their eyes are open, and are never given any lessons in nest-building by their parents—it is negatived by the facts. For instance, the celebrated mound-builders or brush-turkeys of the Australian region build large mounds of rubbish and decaying leaves and deposit their eggs at the ends of tunnels in the mounds, leaving them to be hatched out by the heat of the fermenting vegetation. The young brush-turkey on hatching scrambles out of the tunnel; it can get no instruction from its parents, since they have long since gone about their own business; and not only does it not stay near the mound long enough to observe how it is constructed, but does not bestow on it so much as a look. None the less, when the time comes for it to mate, it will build a mound just as its ancestors have done.

Secondly, even young birds which have been brought up by hand in artificial nests—boxes lined with cotton-wool or what not—will build the proper kind of nest for their species when the time comes for mating, and will not attempt to reproduce their own early homes. A finch, for instance, has the impulse, when its mating urge is upon it, to weave coarse material into a rough cup, and then to line this with some finer material; the tailor-bird has the impulse to take leaves and sew them together; the house-martin to collect mud or clay and construct a cup against the side of a cliff or a house.

In a not dissimilar way, the bird which is in the physiological state of broodiness will have the violent urge to sit on eggs, or, if no eggs are available, it will often take something else. Crows have been known to brood golf-balls, gulls to sit on brilliantine tins substituted for their eggs; and the majestic Emperor penguin, if it loses its egg or chick, will even brood lumps of ice in its inhospitable Antarctic home.

How unhumanly a bird regards the central facts of its life is seen in many of its relations to its offspring. Birds undoubtedly have a strong emotional concern over their eggs and young, but it is an instinctive, irrational concern, not an instinct entwined, as is the human parents' concern, with reason, memory, personal affection, and foresight. A pair of birds are robbed of their whole brood; the parental instinct finds itself frustrated, and they will show great agitation. But if one or more of the nestlings die before they are fledged—a frequent and in some species a normal occurrence—the old birds show no signs of sorrow or even agitation, but merely throw the corpse out of the nest as if it were a stick or a piece of dirt. And while a chick is, to our eyes, obviously failing, the old birds, far from

Photo: John Kearton.

A hedge-sparrow (left) about to feed a young cuckoo which has displaced the legitimate offspring and is already much bigger than its foster-parent.

making special efforts to restore it, as would human parents, definitely neglect it. The fact seems to be that the bird parent feels parental only when stimulated by some activity on the part of its children. When they gape and squawk, this is a stimulus to the parent to feed and tend them assiduously. When the stimulus fails, the parental feeling is no longer aroused, the bird is no longer impelled to parental actions.

This same incapacity to experience things as men and women would experience them is shown by the fact that if you remove young birds from a nest, as Mr. Kearton did with some starlings, and substitute some eggs, the mother, after a moment's apparent surprise, may accept the situation with equanimity and respond to the new stimulus in the proper way, by sitting on the eggs. There was no trace of the distraction and grief which a human mother would have felt.

But perhaps the familiar cuckoo provides us with the completest proof, over the widest field, of the dissimilarity of birds' minds with our own. The young cuckoo, having been deposited as an egg in the nest of some quite other species of bird—a meadow pipit, say, or a hedge-sparrow—and having hatched out in double-quick time, the rate of its embryonic development being adjusted to its parasitic habits, so that it shall not lag behind its foster-brothers, next proceeds to evict all the rest of the contents of the nest, be these eggs or young birds. It is provided with a flat, and indeed slightly hollow, back; and, hoisting its victim on to this, it crawls backwards up the side of the nest, to pitch the object outside. This it continues to do until the nest is empty.

Photo: John Kearton.

The young cuckoo has now grown so bulky that its foster-parent, a tree-pipit, is obliged to perch on its shoulders to feed it.

What cruelty, you will say, and what unpleasant ingenuity! But you will be wrong. The nestling cuckoo is not cruel, nor does he know why he is murdering his fellow-nestmates. He acts blindly, because he is a machine constructed to act thus and not otherwise. Not only is his back slightly concave, but this concavity is highly irritable and over-sensitive; the touch of any object there drives him frantic, and if it is continued, it releases in him the impulse to walk upwards and backwards until he has reached the edge of whatever he is walking on, and then to tilt the object overboard. He will behave in just the same way to marbles or hazel-nuts or any other small object. Indeed, if you think of it, he *cannot* know what he is doing. For he will act thus immediately he is hatched, before his eyes are open. Even if he could be taught, his parents have never been near him, and his foster-parents are hardly likely to instruct him in this particular! No, the whole train of actions is the outcome of a marvellous piece of machinery with which he is endowed by heredity, just as he is endowed with the equally marvellous adaptive mechanism of his feathers. The machinery consists in the shape of the back, its hyper-sensitiveness, and the intricate pattern of nervous connexions in the brain

and spinal cord which set the particular muscles into action. The act, in fact, is purely instinctive, just as instinctive and automatic as sneezing or coughing in ourselves. And, like coughing, it has been brought into being by the long, unconscious processes of natural selection, not by any foresight or conscious will.

Once the foster-brothers are outside, we shall get another surprising peep into bird-mind. When the foster-mother comes home, she does not seem in the least distressed by the absence of all but one of her brood, but at once sets about feeding the changeling. What is more, she pays no attention to her own offspring, even should some of these be dangling just outside the nest. As long as there is something in the nest which appeals to her parental instincts, it seems that young birds outside the nest, even if they be her own, are treated as so many foreign objects.

Then the young cuckoo begins to grow. It grows into a creature entirely different from its foster-parents, and eventually becomes several times bulkier than they, so that they have to perch on its head to drop food into its mouth! But they are not in the least disconcerted, as would be human parents if their children began growing into giants, and giants of quite a different appearance from themselves. They are built to respond to the stimulus of appeals for food from any nestling in their nest, and they continue their response, whether the nestling is their own or a cuckoo.

At last the young cuckoo is ready to fly, leaves his foster-parents, and very soon must leave the country on migration. So far as we know, all the old cuckoos have before this time left the country for the South, so that it is again without any teaching or any knowledge that the young ones must obey the migration urge.

Most people know about the well-known "broken-wing trick" practised by so many birds when their young are threatened. Most writers of natural history books set this down as a remarkable example of intelligence: the bird, seeing its offspring in danger, deliberately invents a ruse, and acts its part with consummate skill to draw the intruder away. All the evidence, however, points to this too being merely instinctive, a trick not invented by the individual bird, but patented by the species. If it were the fruit of intelligent reflection, we should expect to find some individuals of a species practising it, others not, and great variations in the efficacy of the performance. But in species like the purple sandpiper or the Arctic skua, every individual seems to be a good performer, and this without any previous training. The trick, in fact, is on a par with the purely automatic "shamming dead" which many insects practise: it is the inevitable outcome of the animal's nervous machinery when this machinery is stimulated in a particular way.

A black-headed gull alighting on its nest.

Besides instinctive actions, we could multiply instances of unintelligent behaviour among birds. If a strange egg is put among a bird's own eggs, the mother may accept it through uncritical instinct, or may intelligently turn it out of the nest and continue to sit. But a quite common reaction is for it to turn the strange egg out, and *then* to desert its nest—a most decidedly illogical procedure! Again, Mr. St. Quentin

Photo: Capt. C. W. R. Knight.

Young herons almost ready to fly waiting in their untidy tree-top nest for the fish their parents are catching for them. A remarkable photograph that took many hours of patient silent observation from a nearby tree-top to obtain.

had two hens and one cock of a kind of sand-grouse in his aviary. These are birds of which the hens normally sit by day, the cock by night. One year both the hens laid at the same time. The cock tried his best, sitting part of the night on one clutch, part on another, but, of course, the eggs came to nothing. If the birds had had any intelligence, they would have divided up the twenty-four hours so that the eggs were always brooded; but the day-brooding of the hens and the night-brooding of the cock

Photo: Oliver G. Pike.

Reed-warblers perched above their ingeniously constructed nest, which is fastened to the stems of three or four reeds and built deep so that the young cannot be shaken out by the wind.

are mechanical instincts, and intelligence neither enters into them in normal nor modifies them in abnormal circumstances.

But because birds are mainly instinctive and not intelligent in their actions, it does not follow that their minds are lacking in intensity or variety: so far as we can judge, they must be experiencing a wide range of powerful emotions.

A bird clearly finds an intense satisfaction in fulfilling its brooding impulse or the impulse to feed its young, even though the impulse may be, for want of intelligence, what we should call a strangely blind one. And when the young birds are threatened with danger, the parents clearly are suffering very real distress, just as birds suffer very real fear when cornered by an enemy. In song, too, the bird, besides expressing a certain general well-being, is giving vent to a deep current of feeling, even if it does not understand the feeling or reflect upon it, as would a human poet or musician. For the moment, they *are* that feeling. Some birds are so obsessed by their emotions during their courtship display that they become oblivious of danger. The males of that huge bird of the grouse tribe, the capercaille, have an extraordinary courtship ceremony which they carry out at daybreak in the branches of a favourite tree. While they are in the ecstasy of this passionate performance a man can easily creep up within range; and it is by this method that in certain countries many are shot.

Again, birds seem as subject as men to the emotion of jealousy. Rival cocks may fight to the death. One remarkable case with captive parakeets is quite human in its incidents. Two cocks and a hen were in one cage. After much squabbling, one night one of the cocks killed the other; upon which the hen, who had hitherto rather favoured this bird, turned upon him and might have killed him too if they had not been separated.

I have described elsewhere other examples of the emotion of jealousy amongst birds. As I have said in an essay on bird-mind,* several times I have seen little scenes like the following enacted. A pair of grebes are floating idly side by side, necks drawn right down so that the head rests on the centre of the back. One—generally, I must admit, it has been the cock, but I think the hen may do so too on occasion—rouses himself from the pleasant lethargy, swims up to his mate, places himself in front of her, and gives a definite, if repressed, shake of the head. It is an obvious sign of his desire to "have a bit of fun"—to

* "Essays of a Biologist" (Chatto and Windus).

go through with one of those bouts of head-shaking which constitute the grebe's courtship. During these, pleasurable emotion clearly reaches its highest level in the birds' lives, as anyone who has watched their habits with any thoroughness would agree. It also acts, by a simple extension of function, as an informative symbol. The other bird knows what is meant; it raises its head from beneath its wing, gives a sleepy, barely discernible shake—and replaces the head. In so doing it puts back the possibility of the ceremony and the thrill into its slumbers; for it takes two to make love, for grebe as for human. The cock swims off; but he has a restless air, and in a minute or so is back again, and the same series of events is run through. This may be repeated three or four times.

If now another hen bird, unaccompanied by a mate, reveals herself to the eye of the restless and disappointed cock, he will make for her and try the same insinuating informative head-shake on her; and, in the cases that I have seen, she has responded, and a bout of shaking has begun. Flirtation—illicit love, if you will; for the grebe, during each breeding season at least, is strictly monogamous, and the whole economics of its family life, if I may use the expression, are based on the co-operation of male and female in incubation and the feeding and care of the young. On the other hand, how natural and how human; and how harmless—for there is no evidence that the pretty thrills of the head-shaking display ever lead on to anything more serious.

BUT now observe. Every time that I have seen such a flirtation start, it has always been interrupted. The mate, so sleepy before, yet must have had one eye open all the time. She is at once aroused to action; she dives, and attacks the strange hen after the fashion of grebes, from below, with an under-water thrust of the sharp beak in the belly. Whether the thrust ever goes home I do not know. Generally, I think, the offending bird becomes aware of the danger just in time, and, squawking, hastily flaps off. The rightful mate emerges. What does she do now? Peck the erring husband? Leave him in chilly disgrace? Not a bit of it! She approaches with an eager note, and in a moment the two are hard at it shaking their heads; and, indeed, on such occasions you may see more vigour and excitement thrown into the ceremony than at any other time.

Again we exclaim, how human! And again we see to what a pitch of complexity the bird's emotional life is tuned.

Then bird-mind has sufficient subtlety to indulge in play. Dr. Gill, of Cape Town, records seeing a hooded crow fly up into the air, drop a small object it was carrying, swoop after it, croaking loudly, catch it in mid-air, and repeat the performance over and over again with the greatest evidence of enjoyment. And ravens often display what seems a real sense of humour, though it must be admitted humour of rather a low order. A pair of them will combine to tease a cat or dog, one occupying its attention from the front, while the other steals round behind to tweak its tail and hop off with loud and delighted squawkings. They will play tricks on each other; in an aviary, one raven of a pair has been seen to slink up from behind when its mate was sitting on a low perch, and then reach up to knock the perching bird's foot from under it, with evident malicious enjoyment.

But in all these varied manifestations of emotion, birds still differ in a fundamental way from ourselves. Being without the power of conceptual thought, their emotion, while occupying their life with a completeness which is perhaps rarer with us, is not linked up with the future or the past as in a human mind. Their fear is just fear: it is not the fear of death, nor can it anticipate pain, nor become an ingredient of a lasting "complex." They cannot worry or torment themselves. When the fear-situation is past, the fear just disappears. So, as we have seen, with their maternal instincts. The bird mother is not concerned with the fate of an individual offspring, as a human mother would be concerned about Johnny's career or Tommy's poor health. The bird mother is concerned just to give vent to her instincts impersonally, as it were; and when the young grow up and her inner physiology changes, there is no intellectual framework making a continuing personal or individual interest possible.

That indeed is the greatest difference between the bird and ourselves. We, whether we want to or not, cannot help living within the framework of a continuing life. Our powers of thought and imagination bind up the present with the future and the past: the bird's life must be almost wholly a patchwork, a series of self-sufficing moments.

PYJAMAS

I HAVE a prejudice against being taken for a ride, with the muzzle of an automatic jabbed into my ribs, so I shall not reveal the name of the city where all this happened. But as I was saying: I was going out to California, last winter, to recover from my operation.

The first two nights out from New York, I slept fairly well; but on the third night, when the train was barging into the farther reaches of the Middle West, I could not drop off for more than an hour at a time.

You know how it is.

Here you have been asleep and happy, dreaming that your Almanacs Inc. stock has again risen to twenty and that the flexible flapper with whom you danced at the Wishepamoggin Country Club, last

By SINCLAIR LEWIS

The large policeman glanced at Miss X; then he glowered at me, and unwound his truncheon.

Tuesday, really liked to dance with you, and did not regard you as the father of a large family.

Just then, the driver decides to have some fun with the passengers.

"Aw, what the deuce!" he thinks. "Here's all these millionaires, bankers and magazine editors and advertising men and college presidents, all of 'em sleeping in their nice warm beds, while I'm here alone at the wheel of the doggone train, having to change from third to low and jam on the brakes every time a farmer tries to beat the game at the crossing. What an idea! Perfectly ridiculous! *Formez ies bataillons!* While they're sunken in their gilded and decadent slumbers, they'll find there's one guy awake on this train!"

So, as the train quivers into the next station, the driver slams on the brakes, the train comes up all standing, and the passengers awake with a low moan.

Anyway, I did, that night, and with frequency.

Oh, for the wings of a dove, that I might describe how a Pullman lower berth feels and looks and smells, especially smells, when you can't sleep and you turn on the light! In the polished wooden bottom of the berth above you, you are reflected as a cotton doll. Your face looks long and melancholy, and your pyjamas look—well, they look like wrinkled pyjamas. As the train starts again, sometimes mooing and sometimes yowling and all the time clanking sardonically, "Awful luck, awful luck, awful luck, awful luck," it begins to sway, and the coat and vest and trousers which

ILLUSTRATED BY GILBERT WILKINSON

you have carefully draped on the hanger against the green curtain sway with it.

"Oh, ho!" my coat seemed to sneer, as it flipped a horribly empty sleeve at me. "All these years since you bought me at Moe's Piccadilly Suiterie, Climb One Flight and Save $16.75, I've wiggled and bent at the elbow when *you* wanted me to. Not no more! No sir!" And it frivolously waved its sleeves at me, while the trousers trembled with derision.

I ignored them. Nor was I shaken by realizing from time to time that the train had run off the track, caught fire, hit a motor-car, and just generally taken to playing leapfrog. No! In fact, the only thing that disturbed me was the steady, methodical, earnest snoring of the man across the way. The train clanked and belched and fell upon points with a furious desire to destroy them, but all through this clamour, the subdued and inescapable snoring went on: "Garrhh—*woof*; garrhh—woof!"

But I got so lonely in my cell that I welcomed even this proof that there was still one soul, besides myself, living in the world of roar and chaos.

European observers of America have asserted that the trouble with our sleeping-cars is that the curtains which divide you from the person opposite—who may be a safe-blower, a suicide, a member of the W.C.T.U., or any equally dangerous stranger—do not give you sufficient privacy. The fact is (for, if you take European or British views of America exactly by opposites, you will be reasonably accurate) that the trouble with our sleeping-cars is that they are too confoundedly private.

TO lie awake in a Pullman berth is to be stranded on a desert isle without the coconuts. If you are travelling by steamer, you can always go up and be thrown off the bridge by the first officer. In New York there are, day and night, coffee-stall waiters, policemen, evangelists, authors, and bartenders with whom you can talk. In Sauk Center, you can all night long find the bus-driver awake at the Palmer House. But on an all-Pullman train, there is apparently no one awake besides the porters, and the driver, who would almost certainly not welcome you if you climbed over the coal into his cab and demanded: "Do you think that Humanism will give a more austere purpose to American letters?"

So I reconciled myself to reading a detective story.

It was a nice story.

I reached the page which ran:—

"A shot rang out on the mysterious nocturnal stillness of Limehouse, and smote Detective-Inspector Simms full on the forehead. 'Oh, I say,' grumbled the Inspector, quietly brushing the bullet away, 'that isn't quite the thing, now, is it?' Then he started. He looked keenly at the Chinaman who had shot him. He said, gently: 'Now, Wung Chung Lug, we mustn't have any more of this. Not at all sir. Because I perceive that you are not Wung Chung Lug, nor even Wung Chung Low, but none other (although, sir, in disguise) than Brig.-Gen. Sir Arthur Plupe, D.S.O., K.C.M.G., R.A.C.'"

Oh, hang it. I'd read this story before!

Of course! I remembered Sir Arthur Plupe, who from time to time appears in the tale disguised as Wung Chung Lug, as Lady Bonaventure, as Michael Arlen, as Hiram P. Scroug of Indianola, Indiana, and even, though less convincingly, as Brig.-Gen. Sir Arthur Plupe. He hasn't done the dirty deed, though good old Inspector Simms (C.I.D.), who happens to be on the spot, has seen him rising with a bloody Malayan dagger from beside the corpse of his uncle, Lord Neversly.

And I had nothing else to read. The man across the way was now snoring, "Urf—*keek!*" and the car-wheel beneath me was not only obviously flat, but likely to fly to pieces, wrecking the train. I tucked on my slippers, pulled my dressing-gown over my pyjamas. And they were lovely pyjamas, given to me by my wife at Christmas, checkered green and yellow, while the dressing-gown, fortunately warm, as it was now February, was a nice domestic thing of pink wool edged with mauve cord.

I swayed, occasionally catching at the curtains for support but not awakening more than two or three apprehensive old maids, along the dim tunnel to the smoking-room. It was occupied by the porter, and a row of shoes, which looked curiously collapsed and dead. I lighted a cigarette and glanced doubtfully at the porter. He had taken one look at me, and his expression suggested that the one look would last him the rest of his life.

"Cold evening," I said, politely.

"Yes, it's pretty cold if you have to get out at every station and help off passengers!"

The way in which he said "passengers" made them sound in a class with blow-outs, rent-bills, sticking typewriter keys, and the Xenopsylla cheopis Rothsc., or Indian Rat Flea.

I tried again; "Interesting work you have, isn't it!"

"It isn't."

"I mean, meeting such types, varieties, and assortments of people."

"I don't."

"But going to so many places."

"Why?"

"Madam," I said, "I may as well confess all."

"Oh, yes—well, I see."

"And furthermore——" He raised his eyes from a light natty gent's Oxford, looking at me for the last time, and observed: "And furthermore, my name is not George, the train is not on time, I do not know how late we shall be when we reach Denver, the train for Colorado Springs goes out of the same station, I am not a graduate of Hampton, and the city through whose miserable suburbs we are now staggering is——"

And having named the scene of the strange and romantic adventures that I am going to chronicle, he threw down the natty tan shoe as though he did not care for it, changed into a blue jacket, and left me as one without sorrow.

"I see," I said.

The train stood in the huge city station. The blinds of the smoking-compartment were up, and uncouth workmen stared in at me, at my dressing-gown and pyjamas, with crude unworthy derision. The little room was filled with the smell of dead cigar-smoke, perished soap, and that curious mouldy smell of sleep. Cold though it was, I ventured out into the vestibule for a slice of fresh air. The snow had sifted under the bellows between vestibules and lay in a pointed streak across the iron-bordered linoleum. I shivered, and was going in, when I saw a restaurant just across the platform.

There was no one in it save one male waiter, who would presumably not be demoralized by my pyjamas, and a cup of coffee would be good. I knew that in the city of Blank the train must stop for at least ten minutes. I might have asked the porter standing down beside the train, but I felt that he and I weren't pals any more.

I flashed across the platform, the wind very playful with my ankles. As I guzzled the coffee I was horrified to see my train pulling out.

"Don't worry. Just shunting. They're taking on the coach from Kansas City," the waiter comforted me.

"Does it come back on the same platform?"

"Usually. Plenty of time, anyway, brother."

I almost burst into tears at again being recognized as a human being, and ordered three doughnuts. I even ate part of one of them, and then, feeling like a man of the world, I stepped briskly out on the platform.

And I had forgotten the name and number of my Pullman!

The Pullman now drawn up in front of the restaurant was christened "Phagocytosis." I had a notion that my car had been named "Werewolf," or "D'Annunzio," or "Hoboken," or something like that, but this certainly looked like mine, and the porter looked like mine, at least, he was coloured and had a blue coat with silver buttons. He was yelling: "All aboard!"

I leaped up—I don't know what the thing is that they use for circus bears to sit on and for Pullman passengers to climb on, but that was what I leaped up on to, and

"You sit there all night, drinking and smoking and gambling, while I wait up for you and get visited by a lunatic."

shivering, I pranced into the grateful warmth of the train.

Just inside I met the conductor, growling, "Tickets!"

"My tickets are in my berth—Lower 4."

"Say, what's the big idea? There's no one in Lower 4. Hasn't even been made up."

"I'm probably on the wrong car. Anyway, my berth is Lower——"

The conductor looked at the chart which the Pullman conductor held out to him. "Then if you're in the only other Lower 4 on this train, your name is 'Mrs. S. Bezelius and daughter.' Maybe you're them. You look like it! Say, what train do you think you're on?"

"The Platinum Plate Limited to 'Frisco, of course."

"It isn't called 'Frisco of course.' It's called San Francisco. And this is the train for Jefferson City. You'll find your train back on platform seven. Except that it'll be gone when you get back there!"

He pulled the communication cord like an executioner.

"Hey, you can't put me off this train—not out into the night!" I tried to make my voice warm and menacing, but it skidded, just as the train seemed to rear up its whole length from the track and come down with a bang.

The conductor said nothing. The Pullman conductor said nothing The porter said nothing. The three of them merely propelled me toward the vestibule, in the tomby stillness that had settled down on the train.

But plenty was said by the passengers. Heads popped from between berth curtains, and a bald man informed a lady who had done up her hair in a small fishing net: "He's a pickpocket; they caught him stealing watches." With a cold swiftness, like going down a shoot-the-chutes in November, I was galloped through the vestibule, down the steps, into the city of outdoors—and already the train was heaving ahead.

Busy though I was at shivering, I appreciated what a lot of loneliness and cold there was everywhere, and what a distinct lack of warm berths. I was at the end of what seemed to be a million miles of railway yards, all in a modernistic picture—rails that swooped on me like rays of light, red lanterns and green arc-lamps overhead, and the headlights of locomotives that grew in size as though they were exploding, and pointed

me out as though they were hunting me down. And all this illumination made the spaces between signal boxes and tool-shacks only the darker and more forlorn.

Impossible to find my train there, even if it had not gone. I must get help somewhere in the city. And I knew no one in the city!

STUMBLING across lines, just leaping aside as a vast train burst by me, viciously cold at ankle and wrist and throat, I found a watchman's fire with no one near it just at the moment, and stopped a second to explore my pockets. I possessed, besides the dressing-gown and pyjamas and slippers, a now deflated cigarette package with three wrinkled cigarettes, a quarter-box of matches, three doubtful handkerchiefs, ever so many cigarette-crumbs in one pocket, and a piece of paper which, anxiously examined over the fire, was discovered to be a note from our maid: "Cabbages will be delivered to-morrow."

It was my sole identification.

And I found five cents—my change after coffee and doughnuts at the restaurant. I looked at it with proud wrath, and hurled it on the ground. Instantly I realized what a huge sum five cents could be. With it I could get a telephone call, a newspaper, or in many Five and Ten Stores, a beautiful tin fire-engine with three red firemen. I scrabbled in the dust and cinders, savagely, ready to kill any interloper; I found the five cents and slipped it into my pocket. And thus I came on something even more important: a particular filthy strip of old Brussels carpet. I shamelessly stole it, wrapped it about my bare head and neck, and started for the wilderness beyond the railway yards.

I fell into a few ditches, crawled through a fence, came to a street given over to malt-and-hops emporia, poolrooms, and lunch-rooms, whose refined neon signs of "*Eats*" mocked my misery. I flickered along it. I had never moved quite so fast. At home, in Pelham, that highly select and indeed I may even call it exclusive suburb of New York, I have been rebuked by my wife, and by Edgar, my eldest son, for my sloth in playing tennis. Sometimes when a ball is returned to me, I miss it entirely, because I am thinking of the relationship of Walter Lippmann to St. Polycarp, or the curious use of the squint in the tower of the Cistercian Abbey at Monmonkshire. But this night I could have received and returned a ball six times before my opponent even knew it had been served, so rapid was I.

After perhaps two miles of greyhound coursing, without having time to ask myself just where I was going, I emerged into a district of respectable houses which, because they had two-car garages with cement drives and "we've subscribed to the Red Cross" placards in the windows, showed that they belonged to the kind of people I knew. I felt safe! Here I would surely find people who would appreciate the fact that I had been graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University, that I had an automatic oil furnace in Pelham, that I had lost money in the panic, like the most aristocratic people, and that my Uncle Herbert was one of the best eye, ear, nose, throat, heart and skin specialists in Trenton, N.J. They would recognize me as one of their own class, and rescue me.

My connexion with the medical profession through Uncle Herbert made me stop hopefully in front of a delightful residence of brown-stained shingles, with a carved greystone porch, on which was a tasteful illuminated glass sign, lettered: "F. Smilie Lockland, M.D., Phys. & Surg." Though it was now (I guessed) five in the morning, there were lights in the lower storey, indicating that someone was about.

"Good old F. Smilie!" I muttered. "There he is, succouring the unfortunate! What sort, type, or category of public-spirited citizen soars superior to a phys. and surg.? Perhaps even now he is operating on some poor sufferer, saving his life, being meantime utterly regardless of his own comfort, slumber, and rest. I'll go right in!

"Smilie will know the name of Dr. Herbert Smouse. Perhaps he will have read Uncle Herbert's paper on 'Comparative Fees in 567 Cases of Tonsillectomy,' in the *New Jersey Medical Ægis*. Anyway, his house will be warm. O God, I hope it'll be warm! I must ask him how many square inches of radiation he allows to the cubic foot of room contents. Ought to be more."

But putting these carping criticisms aside—who was I to criticize a man like Smilie Lockland?—I strode up the sandstone steps, and rang the bell. I threw my vulgar scarf of Brussels carpet into the areaway as the door opened—just three inches.

Of the lady who was peering out at my dressing-gown, I inquired pleasantly: "Is the doctor at home?"

"He is not!"

"Then I'll just come in——"

"You will not!"

Oh, Smilie, Smilie! F. Smilie Lockland, Phys. and Surg.! Where was your oath of Hippocrates then? What of your little woman who shut out from the temple of healing a man who had lost even his Brussels carpet? For she slammed the door, and I stood alone and frigid; and when I looked I couldn't even find the carpet.

I wavered down the street that a moment ago seemed so friendly and secure. Bah! I knew now what it was that made Bolsheviks! These cursed bourgeois, snug and warm in their beds, with every luxury at hand—sweaters, overcoats, radiators, cans of soup, hot-water bottles, aviators' helmets, wristlets, volumes of Eddie Guest, kerosene stoves, blankets, comforters, gin, woollen socks and fire insurance—while I staggered amid them, cold.... Cold!

Not till now had I seemed criminal, but as dawn crept grey over the tin roof of the Pentecostal Tabernacle, I was forced into disorderly conduct. I had turned from Maplegrove Street, in which lived that treacherous and abominable F. Smilie Lockland, into the great thoroughfare of Lindbergh Avenue. A young lady alighted from a tramcar. She had a grey suit and amiable ankles. Later reports indicate that she was a telephone supervisor, coming home from a late trick. She said "Good night" in ever so jolly a voice to the tram conductor, and frisked up Lindbergh Avenue, till she looked back at me. She gave a slight squeal, and started to run.

I was nettled. Look at it this way! Ask any man in the Men's Club of the Fourth Baptist Church, Pelham, N.Y. Ask any pastor, grocer or bootlegger who has ever dealt with me. Am I a man to go out deliberately and get into pyjamas and dressing-gown and ruffled hair at five-thirty a.m. and chase down Lindbergh Avenue in the city of Blank, or in any other city, merely to frighten a respectable female telephone supervisor?

I was annoyed. I hastened after her.

Or ask——

I have concealed this from you till now, because I do not like to boast, but the fact is, I am no *Babbitt*. I am a literary man. I do the financial, religious, and baseball notes for the *Employing Steamfitters' Chronicle*. And you may freely ask any man on the staff of the *Chronicle* if I am likely to pursue phone girls down Lindbergh Avenue, or even Maplegrove Street!

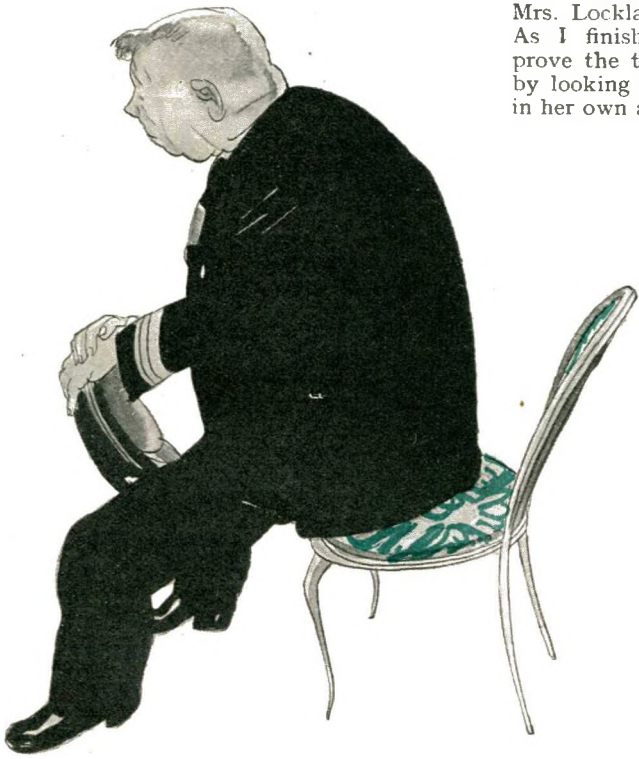
The doctor sprang at me, and with those offensively soothing tones we use to children, breathed: "Just a moment, my dear fellow, just a lit-tle mo-ment."

Speeding after her merely to explain this I saw a large policeman emerging from a hallway. He glanced at Miss X (as by now I was romantically calling her); he glowered at me, and unwound his truncheon. I slipped into an alley, into a cross-alley, out into a street, and found myself again in front of the house of Dr. F. Smilie Lockland.

The glass sign and the lights on the ground floor still beamed their treacherous greeting. They *had* to save me! Again I burred at the bell; again I faced the small and resolute lady who had previously thrown me out.

"I must see the doctor! I want to pay my bill before I leave town!"

She threw wide the door. "Oh, do come in!" she crooned, and as I hurled myself into that deliciously warm hall, as I sat shivering on an oak bench, which, though unpadded, was wonderfully free of conductors, policemen, and telephone girls, she



remarked: "You may pay me, if you wish. The doctor is out. It won't be necessary for you to wait for him."

"I see. Rather! I take it, as you are waiting up for him so late—and what would we do without our devoted little women?—that he is out on a case of incomparable importance. And when he comes home, you will soothe his jangled nerves, you will heat up a tasty cup of soup with your own fair hands——"

"I will not! I'll tell him what I think of him! With my own fair tongue! The old hellion is out playing poker! And now, about that little bill of yours——"

"Madam, I may as well confess all."

I did, starting with my boyhood in Oklahoma, briefly describing my bonny little Swiss châlet in Pelham and the better trains to take into New York, making harsh but justified remarks about conductors from Jefferson City, and emphasizing the importance of my Uncle Herbert.

She was a crisp, brainy little woman, Mrs. Lockland, though too hard on poker. As I finished, indicating that she could prove the truth of my extraordinary story by looking for the strip of Brussels carpet in her own areaway, she snapped:—

"Who—or whom—do you know in this city?"

"No one."

"Whom could you phone in New York?"

"None of them awake yet."

"Couldn't you rouse this wife of yours that you talk about, and the three children in Pelham, wherever that is?"

"Alas, they have gone off to my Aunt Ethelberta's, in Maine, and you know how it is with Aunt Ethelberta—she never would have a phone."

"What if I wired the conductor of your train? He would have your name on his chart."

"I'm afraid not. I got my ticket at the last moment. I don't think he has my name."

"I see. Well, I'll think of something. But I mustn't keep you here. You'll be more comfortable in the sitting-room."

She led me into the cheerful, warm little room at the end of the hall. "Just sit here while I get you something hot to drink," she murmured. I sat down gratefully, she rippled out—and I heard her lock the door!

She hadn't trusted me! Still, it was warm there, and I dozed until I heard violent voices in the hallway. It was the doctor's lady, greeting her returning husband.

"So, this is the time of morning you choose for getting home! Of course, it doesn't matter what happens to me! You sit there all night, drinking and smoking and gambling, while I wait up for you and get visited by a lunatic!"

"Well, thass all right with me! Whiss lunatic was it—your father, or your brother Joe?"

"Will you listen to me? Will you kindly try—just *try*; that's all I ask—will you

kindly just try to clear your brain from the horrible fumes of smoke and liquor and try, at least *try*, to understand that while you were away, playing your games of chance—and I hope that, for once, you didn't lose, although you will never learn not to try to fill an inside straight, and your weakness for a four-card draw amounts to antinomianism—and me, I wait up for you, and a lunatic breaks in here and I have him locked up in the sitting-room right this minute!"

The doctor's voice sounded as though he were shocked into sobriety.

"I'll go in and treat him right away. Do you know anything about his credit?"

"I do not. First he says he comes from Pelham, Massachusetts, then that he's from New York. He says he's a steam-fitter. He says a conductor bounced him off a train for eating doughnuts. He's wearing frightful pyjamas and bathrobe now, but he says that ordinarily he wears a Brussels carpet suit."

"Clear case to me—*dementia præcox*, with an Œdipus complex. Before I see him I'd better get the cop on the beat, in case he turns violent."

I heard nothing more for ten minutes. In my anguish, I had smoked my last three cigarettes; and in my rage I had torn up and flung upon the floor the note which I had found in my pocket, asserting that the cabbages would be delivered to-morrow. I went berserk. I burst the tame bonds of civilization. I had always been known for politeness and my love of dumb animals, but suddenly I was a ferocious demon. I wanted a smoke, and I was going to get it. All the urbanity of Pelham dropped from me, and I surged through the sitting-room, looking for cigarettes. Ruthlessly I opened the drawer of the centre table, rummaged behind books, and even fearlessly searched the pockets of a medical-looking alpaca jacket hanging on a peg.

And there I found two more cigarettes.

I was sitting with a proud, cold expression on my face, puffing a cigarette and trying to remember that, after all, I came from Pelham and that I needn't stand any rudeness from these hicks in the city of Blank, when the door was unlocked and the doctor edged in, followed by a particularly loutish policeman.

"Good morning, my boy!" the doctor said airily. He was a small man, with a shredded moustache, and his voice sounded as his moustache looked. "I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. I've been out on a serious case."

"Lost much?"

"I don't know what you're talking about!" He turned and winked at the

"Hold him tight!" ordered the lieutenant. "He's one of the most dangerous homicidal maniacs who ever landed in this town."

policeman with a wink that said: "You see? Absolutely batty!"

"Listen!" I raged. "My uncle is Doctor——"

Oh, I don't know why I got so mixed up. But my night of wretchedness, and the codfish eye of the policeman, confused me, and in horror I heard myself saying: "My uncle is Doctor Sherbert House—I mean, Doctor Shoubert Hearse—I mean, Doctor Werbert Wows, of Jersey, New Trenton——"

The policeman sat on a small gilt chair, like a bullfrog perched on a goldenrod, and looked as though he was wondering whether to start beating me up now. He stared, and panted fatly. Yet he annoyed me less than the sprightly doctor, who sprang at me and, with those offensively soothing tones we use to children, breathed: "Just a moment, my dear fellow, just a lit-tle mo-ment!"

Before I could resist, he had got a thermometer into my mouth, had seized my wrist, and was counting my pulse. But I saw that there was something wrong with this picture; and in that muffled voice which comes from talking with a clinical thermometer in your mouth, I gurgled:—

"Look here, Doc! You think you're timing my pulse by your wrist-watch. You aren't! You haven't got a wrist-watch on! You lost it playing poker to-night—last night—well, anyway, whatever the darn' night is—and you're still too lit to notice it! And unless you help me out I'll tell your jolly little wren of a wife about the watch!"

He yanked the thermometer from my mouth, looked slyly at the policeman, saw that by now he had gone gently to sleep and whispered: "I think you're already recovering from your attack. Your case is not *dementia præcox*. You're just a nice old maniac depressive. That will be ten dollars, please."

"It will not be ten dollars, please! His name is Doctor Herbert Smouse—my uncle, I mean—the well-known stomach, cardiac, boil and diet specialist; and I would have told you before if you hadn't come in scaring me with a cop who would have been in the butcher business if he'd been a little brighter! But I mean: I want you to listen to my story."

"That's so. I did sell that watch to Ramon Cowley, for nineteen bucks, and bought another stack, and then Doc. Murphy had four aces. Go on!"

I told all.

The doctor said pleadingly, "Don't you think it might be amnesia?"

"Certainly not!"

"Just a little amnesia? Listen, brother, I'd love to have a case of amnesia. *You* know. For the County Medical Society!"

"No. No amnesia."

"Not the least little bit? But when you pinched the Brussels carpet—there must have neen some amnesia then!"

"Not the slightest. The Smouses have been in every war for the Republic, but they have never had amnesia."

"Oh, all right! You needn't shout at me! After all, this is my house. (It is, isn't it? Of course it is! There's my copy of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover.' I *told* Doc. Murphy I'd get home safely!) But I mean: Do you often see spots, flecks or dazzling particles before the eyes?"

"Well, flecks, yes. But no spots or particles."

"I see. Do you hear strange noises? Do you have a feeling that you are being persecuted? Do you feel that a person, or persons, unknown are plotting against you? Do you sometimes fancy yourself as a person of vast power, as Mussolini, Will Hays, or a golf pro?"

"Why——"

"Exactly! Do you fear high places,

enclosed places, rapid transit, or eating oysters ? "

" Why, sometimes——"

" It's a perfect case !—Officer ! " He woke the resentful policeman. " Just keep watch a moment, will you, while I find a time-table."

The doctor returned, sprightlier and more detestable then ever.

" I find," he said, " that your train will reach Omaha in twenty minutes. I always like a sporting chance . . . ! And then you to rebuke me about the wrist-watch ! Just to show you, I'll phone to Omaha and get the conductor of your train, and see if your pocket-book, tickets, pants, copy of detective story, *et cetera*, are actually in Lower 4 on the car called—what did you say its name was ? "

" Oh, heavens, how can I remember——"

" Loss of memory ! Do you often find yourself leaving umbrella, packages, wife, *et cetera*, in strange places ? "

" I do not ! I was saying : That Pullman. Its name was either ' Pickerel ' or ' Marcel Proust,' or ' Piquenaba ' or — *you* know ! Have the conductor look in all Lower 4's."

" Right, my dear fellow ! If you'll just wait ! "

The policeman spoke the first words of which he had been capable :—

" Say, Doc, I gotta ring in at the station."

" Splendid, Officer, splendid ! Come with me ! "

The two of them vanished—that is, the lively little physician vanished, though the policeman trundled out more like an ice-wagon. I heard the door locked. I paid no attention. By this time I was hardened to crimes, and sneering quietly I got busy rifling the room.

I FOUND one more cigarette, perhaps a trifle flattened, which had been used as a book-mark in " Minor Diseases of the Duodenum," and behind Cruden's Concordance I found a flask with three hundred c.c. of gin, which helped greatly. When the door was opened again, I was gravely reading an article on " Opisthorchis Felineus and Its Relationship to Hepatic Distomiasis," in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Perhaps I flatter myself, but it seemed to me that I looked as a man with a Swiss châlet in Pelham should look.

Yet I was disturbed.

For Dr. Lockland returned, not with the elephantine cop, but with three other officers, headed by a police lieutenant.

" Ah, there you are my lad ! Always reading, ain't you ? " said the lieutenant.

I tried to ignore him. I looked at the doctor.

" Did you get the conductor ? "

" I did."

" Did he have my ticket, money, identification papers, *et cetera*, to say nothing of my trousers ? God, how I want my trousers."

" He did not. He looked at all the Lower 4's on the train, and they were either empty or filled with people who were not you."

" None of them were not me ? Not one ? I mean——"

The lieutenant and his three hirelings exchanged dirty glances with the doctor, and moved nearer to me, fingering their revolvers in a suggestive way.

Later, checking up, I found that the doctor and the conductor were right. Someone had stolen everything from my berth, though whether it was a passenger or a station loafer is one of the mysteries that will go down unsolved in history, along with the Man in the Iron Mask, the Dauphin, and the reason why many quite respectable persons regard O. Henry as a better writer than P. G. Wodehouse.

"Well, it doesn't matter," I purred, trying to calm their savage breasts. " It's about the right hour now, with the difference in time, for someone to be at my office in New York who'll recognize me."

" Huh ? In those pyjamas ? " crowed the lieutenant.

" By my voice, idiot ! "

" Did you say I was an idiot ? "

" I did not ! "

" Didn't he say I was an idiot ? " the lieutenant demanded of his gallant squad.

" Sure he did, Lieut ! Shall we soak him ? "

" Let's get him to the police-station first."

" Besides," groaned the doctor, " who would pay for a long-distance call to New York ? Speaking of that, brother—I didn't quite catch the name—my call to Omaha will cost you just one dollar and thirty-eight cents. If it wouldn't inconvenience you, my dear fellow ? "

From my pockets I brought out the dirty handkerchiefs, a match-box with seven matches still left in it, and my nickel. " That's all I've got, though I think the strip of Brussels carpet is still in your areaway."

The doctor was a good sport. He didn't take the nickel.

The lieutenant did, on the way out.

" Well, we'll just shoot him along to the police-station," said the lieutenant, " and we'll have him up before the insanity commission to-day, and to-morrow he'll be in the pecan pen playing mumble-de-peg with Julius Cæsar. Come along, laddie, but say, Doc, shall I put the wristlets on him ? Is he likely to get dangerous ? "

"No," said the doctor, and it seemed to me that his voice was a little weary, a little sad. "No, not dangerous. But—my wrist-watch, and now one dollar and thirty-eight cents! Take him along!"

At the telephone in the shiny oak hallway, the lieutenant rang up the station for the police car, and from the station he apparently received exciting information.

He leaped up from the telephone, ordering his battalion: "Hold him tight!" He bellowed at the doctor: "You got the wrong idea about this baby! Say, he's one of the most dangerous homicidal maniacs who ever landed in this town! The station has a report about him—yuh, same guy, all right—tall, skinny fellow, washed-out brown hair, dressed in foolish-looking pyjamas and bathrobe, chased Mrs. Clairmonteneaux O'Kelly, night telephone supervisor, age thirty-seven, address corner Lovers' Lane and Kloefkorn Street, down Lindbergh Avenue, early this morning, utterin' horrible shrieks, also profanity and blasphemy. Same fellow! Hold him, boys!"

Till then, the officers of the law had regarded me, and my costume, with what might almost be called contempt. Now, as they gripped my arms, as one of them handcuffed me, I felt that they viewed me with the respect of terror.

I saw it all. I had been too meek!

I kicked wildly. I shouted: "Woe betide begone whurrip!"

And the lieutenant, whose tones had been so cold, said almost caressingly: "Yes, yes, ole fellow, it's all right. Come ridey-ridey and see nice movies?"

They dragged me out, fondly promising to take me to the zoo, to a speakeasy, to the Museum of Assyriological Antiquities, to the county waterworks, and every other

From his pillow one of the most extraordinary men imaginable raised himself, and glared at me.

historical sight in Blank, while I kept on kicking as much as an enfeebled constitution and a worn pair of slippers permitted, and shrieking in what I flatter myself must have been an admirable imitation of a maniac: "Yale beat Harvard! Two-and-six down on the income tax! Let's keep the red flag flying! It's minion, I tell you, minion, not nonpareil! Reach for a sweet! Yes, lettum look for the body under my garage!"

It was curious with what a sweet, quaint, idyllic respect they treated me as they sat about me in the patrol wagon.

"Cigarettes!" I shouted.

"I think he wants a smoke!" sighed one policeman.

"By thunder, Montmorency, I believe you are right! I'll see you get your sergeant's stripes for this!" said the lieutenant nervously. He hastily lighted a cigarette and handed it to me.

Did you ever try smoking a cigarette, at seven of a cold winter morning, in a police car, clad—I mean I was clad, not the car—in dressing-gown and pyjamas, with handcuffs on your wrists? You haven't missed much.

And in the meantime to have to keep up the maniac talk, muttering: "Twelve cents per kilowatt hour! Snoutrage! And yet—Hey, you demons, listen or I'll treat you the same way! Yurrup! Gloo! Steel handcuffs—non-rustable handcuffs—down on heads of cops and killum. And yet I'm sorry I killed that reater—meter—that teeter-fleeter—I mean that meter reader. Killedum! With can-opener! Blap! Under garage floor! Cement, see?"

AT the police-station I was escorted in as delicately as if I were Aimee McPherson or King Carol.

"Morning, Lieut.," murmured the desk sergeant.

The lieutenant panted: "I've got the Lindbergh Avenue murderer! And I've found that he's committed two as yet, or so, from my knowledge of criminal annals, I should imagine, undiscovered murders. The corpses will be discovered buried in cement under his garage, in Pelham, New Jersey!"

"Is that a fact?"

"Surest thing you know!"

"This means promotion for you, Lieut.!"

"It oughta! I took him single-handed. Where are the reporters? Well, call 'em up, and when they come, tell 'em I have nothing to say, and then see I see 'em. Now where shall we put this poor guy? Nice fellow, but a chronic murderer."

"Well, we ought to put him in a superior cell, then, don't you think?" said the sergeant. "You know we've had to haul in Zoppo Innocente, and he's in Cell de Luxe A."

"You mean—" I have never seen a man more angrily shocked then the lieutenant. "You mean you've pinched Zoppo? What a swell-elegant bunch you've turned out to be! I suppose you know that Zoppo is merely the most disingenuous gunman west of Chicago? I suppose you know that this will mean the deduction, or shall I say subtraction, from the forces of civic righteousness of you and me, and a lotta guys I won't mention, but God help the mayor and the chief!"

"Sure, Lieut., I know! I know! By the way, if I may be permitted an apparently tangential remark, I should highly appreciate it if you would pay me the twenty-five hundred bucks you owe me. I would like a nice funeral. But here's what happened. The flying squadron caught Zoppo just as he was bumping off Maggiociondolo Grattaculo, though old Zop was as careful as ever. He'd took Maggi for a ride out to Sycamore Plaza. But just as he was shooting, along comes an inspection party of the Anti-Saloon League, with Bishop Skaggs and Ermen Plush in it."

"Not Plush?"

"The same.'

"Not the guy that devotes all he makes from the sale of cocktail-glasses, shakers, and juniper flavour to the Prohibition cause?"

"Yes. Him. They'd been out on a big crusade. They'd found a coloured gal that was selling beer. She'll get six years. They'd found a G.A.R. veteran with a half pint of gin. He'll get life! So they was going along, all cosy about five this morning, when they see Zoppo bumping off Maggi. And just then the flying squadron comes along, and the Bish and Plush complains and so Inspector Pjysky had to pinch Zop and bring him in. And believe me, Lieut., Zop is plenty sore. Of course he'll get off in the magistrate's court, this morning, but he says he's lost ten cargoes of beer, and he'll have all our badges. Now listen, Lieut. You say this poor mutt you just brought in is a regular killer?"

"Worst I ever saw! Murdered a train-conductor, a reater-meader—I mean a meter deeder—and six cops and a Pullman porter—oh, yes, and a dealer in Brussels carpets, and has 'em all buried under his garage."

"Neat place for it, too! Now listen, Lieut.! What about putting him in the same cell with good old Zoppo? Maybe he'll bump him off for us."

"Serg., you said it!" the lieutenant chanted; and to me: "Lookit, baby! We're going to put you in with a bad guy. Get me? Baddy, baddy mans! Here's my pocket-knife. If that guy insults you, just 'tend to him, like a good fellow. He

"I'm bumping off Batata alone," I snarled, and Pasquale quailed before me.

hates Brussels carpet. that fellow — get me ? "

The handcuffs were snapped off my wrists. I was thrust into a large cell, simply furnished with two beds, a portrait of Hoover, and an expanding bookcase. From his pillow, one of the most extraordinary men imaginable raised his head—a small, square man, very swarthy. Black curly hair almost met his eyebrows, and those eyebrows were a straight menacing line. He glared at me, and slapped his hand against his trousers pocket, muttering something like: "Well, baby, Maggi ? "

"Certainly not ! I am no Maggi ! " I sat down aloofly on the other bed.

"Well, hootahell are you ? "

"My name is Harry S. Smouse, I am a literary gentleman."

"Oh ! Drunk ? "

"Certainly not."

"Bootlegging ? "

"Certainly not. Have you a cigarette ? "

"No, dear heart ! What do you think of bootleggers ? "

"They are, I suppose, a low and perhaps even dastardly race."

"Did you say dastardly ? "

"I did."

"Oh. My mistake."

And the extraordinary man flopped over and went to sleep.

I tried to, but so distraught was I that I was still wide awake when a deputation of three gentlemen peered into our cell.

"Good morning. I am the mayor of the city. Is Mr. Zoppo Innocente awake ? No, he seems asleep," said the roundest of the three.

"Are you a friend of his ? May I venture to introduce myself ? The sheriff," the second observed to me.

"And I," said the third with a friendly smile, "am secretary to the Fly-screen Adjusters and Porch-painters International Brotherhood, Local seventeen, and I wish to be the first to say the Zoppo has been very much misunderstood indeed. I have ventured to bring him—you both, rather—some cigars, some scarcely worn copies of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and some nice oranges."

Mr. Innocente snorted awake, looked at them sharply, groaned disgustedly, and slammed his pillow over his head.

"Good morning, Mr. Innocente ! " they chorused.

"Won't you have an orange ? " begged the labour organizer.

Mr. Innocente sat up and threw his legs over the side of his bed in one quick, alarming motion. "Get out of here ! "

"A nice orange. Fresh ! "

"Beat it ! "

"Look here, Zoppo," begged the mayor. "You know it was all a mistake. You'll be let out this morning. Honest, old

fellow, we had to do something to pacify Ermen Plush."

"Did you have run me in like I was some vagrant? Get out!"

Mr. Innocente sank his face sobbingly in his pillow. The stately delegation departed, and three young men in sweaters and plus-fours appeared before our bars.

"Zoppo! Hey, kid! Zop!" crooned one of them, in a tender voice.

Mr. Innocente looked up. He seemed displeased. "How you bozos get here?" he sighed.

"Just sweetened the serg., baby," murmured the centre one. "Give our regards to Maggiociondolo, will you?" And drawing an automatic revolver from a pocket most ingeniously concealed in the slack of his plus-fours, he shot Mr. Innocente three times, and they all went away.

Mr. Innocente fell over on the bed. There was a lot of scurrying about of doctors and police officers and reporters for a while.

The doctors said that it would not be safe to move Mr. Innocente. And a lieutenant thanked me—I never did quite know why—and gave me a whole new packet of cigarettes.

Mr. Innocente and I were alone in the cell, with the door open, when two unpleasant new visitants walked in, also young and sleek and swarthy. Zoppo grinned at them.

"Who done it, boss?" said one of them. "This guy here?"

I really did feel uncomfortable as the man jerked his thumb in my direction, but grinned again. He spoke, with difficulty: "No. He's me new bodyguard. New leader of the gang—get me? Stick right to him!" A sinister mirth seemed to mingle with his agonized expression.

"Hardest-boiled egg in New York," he wheezed. "Talks like a gent, but he's all right. He'll get the Maggi gang. Name Heinie Hipple. Get him out of here, and do what he tells you to."

And I swear Mr. Innocente winked at me.

The other gangster said: "Look, Heinie, my name is Pete Costola. I'll fix it up to get you out right away. What's the charge?"

"Involuntary *dementia præcox*."

"Gee, that sounds serious. I'd better see the mouthpiece."

They went. I slept. I was awakened by Pete Costola, Dr. F. Smilie Lockland, the lieutenant of police, the sergeant who had booked me, and a new man—a lawyer, it appeared—entering our cell.

The lawyer demanded of Dr. Lockland: "You say this gentleman acted in a mad, irrational, maniacal manner to you? Do you want to go into the witness-box and make a positive statement to this effect?"

"Well, no," fretted Dr. Lockland.

"Do you wish to change the charge, then?"

"Well, I guess I better. I guess I was tired, just a wee bit tired, and misunderstood our friend here. My fault! Glad to withdraw the charge!"

STILL in dressing-gown and pyjamas, I was released from the police cell, and at nine in the morning was riding in a taxicab with Pete Costola. Pete, who wore an automatic in his coat-sleeve, a pineapple bomb attached to his watch-chain, and carried a sawed-off shotgun in his polished-seal brief-case, looked at me admiringly. Why shouldn't he, I decided—I had been a homicidal maniac. I had worn the Brussels carpet. I was Zop's successor!

"Look, chief," asked Pete. "Where did you lose the clothes?"

I put my arms akimbo. I honestly did! I glared at him like Richard Cœur de Lion. "Any of your business, Pete? Are you *asking* me anything?"

"No! Gee! Excuse me, chief!"

"Then listen! I got me reasons, see?"

"Sure!" he breathed.

"Then listen! Whatsa programme to-day?"

"Well, I guess first bump off Maggi's successor, Batata Muffioni. We meet the council of the gang at the Hotel Magnifico."

"Fine, Pete. But first you get me some things to make up for what I lost in the killing last night."

"Killing? Oh, excuse me, chief!"

"Well, as I was saying, get me a private suite, and bring me some clothes, two hundred and fifty bucks, a toothbrush, and a detective story—a new one, mind you—and don't go bringing me the latest S. S. Van Loon, because I've read it, see!"

For a second I fancied he doubted me as a chief of gangsters. So I rose, dangerously—as much as you can rise in a taxicab. The look of doubt vanished.

"Yuh, sure, how about one by Edgar Wallace? Or do you think there is more imagination in the tales of Agatha Christie?" said Pete, hastily and meekly.

"Fine. Now gimme a gun!"

He handed over a large dangerous looking object. "Say, chief," he begged, "you ain't going to bump off nobody till we meet the council?"

"You keep your mouth shut!"

"Sure, boss! Please to excuse it!"

We rode in silence to the Hotel Magnifico.

Pete got me up tactfully in the freight elevator. We got out on the thirty-seventh floor, and Pete telephoned for the assistant

manager—an elegant person in morning clothes, who purred at me : " Good-morning, Mr. Hipple, so sorry to hear of the loss of Mr. Innocente. Would you care to try Suite B 7 in which to change your clothes, sir ? "

I twisted my jaw round to the right, and hoped I made my " Awright, shoot ! " adequately tough.

IT was a nice suite with a serving-hatch, a radio, an electric refrigerator, a bath-room in purple and lemon tiles, an electrical cocktail-shaker, and an electrical orange-squeezer, a hydraulic corkscrew, an original Matisse, a map of Scythia in A.D. 1267, a quite small and awfully nice private vacuum cleaner for coat-collars, a Gideon Bible bound in crushed morocco, and some beds.

Not more than half an hour later Pete Costola dashed into my suite with the money, a suit that fitted me reasonably well, haberdashery, shoes, a cup of coffee, and a copy of Mrs. Belloc Lowndes' " The Lodger."

" Fine, Pete," I said, as I hastily drew on the new garments. " You're a good kid, and I hope to be able to give you a little surprise."

" Well, say, that's fine of you, boss. Now come meet Pasquale, your new lieutenant."

Slipping Pete's automatic into my side pocket, I followed him one flight upstairs. With some notion of escaping down the stairs I stopped at a window and murmured : " How lovely is the prospect of insurance buildings, chain groceries, and Y.M.C.A.'s, Pete ! "

I had thought he would be bored. But in Pete Costola there was something of the poetic soul of his countrymen, Dante and Goethe and Virgil.

" Yeah," he breathed, " 's a fact. To say nothing of the beautiful marble morgue where Batata will lie in about one hour and a half from now, if to our salt and steel we shall be true ! Let's go ! "

We entered the suite in which sat the Executive Council of the Zoppo Innocente Literary and Distributing Association, Inc.

Around a large mahogany table sat six young gentlemen with sixty-candle-power eyes. One who looked like Pete Costola, but much more so, arose. " Hey, whatsa game ? " he said to Pete. " Wherjuh getta idea this guy is Zop's successor ? Whoozee? "

I really felt uncomfortable.

Pete faltered : " He's Heinie Hipple. He's a homicidal maniac—s'what Lieutenant O'Killalay at Station Three said."

" Hm ! We'll see about that ! " murmured the unpleasant young man. He telephoned, he got my lieutenant friend and he spake :—

" H'lo. Lieut. ! Pasquale Ringabbiare. How's a boy ? I hear your eldest son Claude is doing fine on the radio, broadcasting the beef arrivals at the stock yards. I bet he wins the Academy of Arts and Letters medal . . . Huh ? No, no, nothing much ; they just knocked off two truckloads of beer . . . No, the wife and I have taken up backgammon. Drop around some evening . . . No, the bullet just nipped my ear. Nothing much . . . No, I haven't read much of his stuff. We like Thornton Wilder better . . . Say, listen, Lieut., what dope you got on a guy called Heinie Hipple ? . . . He did ? Killed a conductor and a doctor's wife and the president of the telephone company ? And a man named Russell Scarpet ? Thanks, Lieut. ! "

Pasquale beamed at me. " Honestly, I apologize, old fellow ! Your demeanour was so gentle that I got you wrong ! *Morituri*, in all probability, *te salutamus !* Now what are your orders about bumping off Batata ? "

" I'm doing this job alone," I said,

" But my dear commander, Batata will be surrounded by redoubtable bodyguards ! "

" Hear what I said ? " I snarled. Pasquale quailed before me. After I enjoyed his quailing, I said, forgivingly : " It's all right, Pasq, my boy. Now you laddies all wait for me here, understand ? Don't stir till I phone."

" Good luck to you, *mon colonel !* " they chorused, and all shook hands with me as if they didn't expect to see me again.

They didn't.

At eleven that morning I was on the Del Monte Special, bound for San Francisco, sitting in the saloon car chatting to a very pleasant stranger—superintendent of schools in Altheimer, Arkansas, he told me.

" Fine town," he said. " Fine educational opportunities."

" Yes, you certainly get a lot of education in that town," I said.

" Slendid water-supply system."

" Is that a fact ? " I said, happy having returned to an intellectual milieu.

I gave a glance at the copy of the *Morning Sun* on my lap, noted various headlines, " Telephone Girl Chased by Maniac," " Zoppo Innocente Dies of Heart Failure," and went back to watching the peaceful landscape slide by.

I wondered if Pasquale and the boys were still waiting for me.

MY LIFE

Lillah McCarthy as "Judith" in Arnold Bennett's play based on the story of Judith and Holofernes, in the Apocrypha.

ON THE STAGE

By LILLAH McCARTHY

Edited by Lady Vaughan

III.—Millionaire Title-Hunters—The Theatre and the War—G.B.S. goes Russian—Air-Raid Terrors—Arnold Bennett and "Judith"

THE years from 1911 to August, 1914, when the War broke out, were years of great prosperity in the theatre. Still, in spite of this, it was impossible to get any substantial support to run repertory in London. I had to be content with long runs like "Fanny's First Play" and "The Great Adventure." However, Repertory Theatres were in the air. Barry Jackson had begun his repertory theatre in Birmingham, and Miss Horniman had made a great success with her Manchester theatre. The Abbey Theatre in Dublin had shown what the Irish players could do. Repertory theatres had also been started at Liverpool, Leeds, Plymouth, and various other centres throughout England.

The season ended at the St. James's on Saturday, the 27th December, and the next day, Sunday, Lady —— and a friend arrived without any warning at my country house in Kent. Lady —— asked me to go with her to a house at the other end of the county, where the Prime Minister was staying. She believed that I might be able to persuade the Prime Minister to grant a baronetcy to her friend, who had rendered notable public services. If I could do this she promised that her friend would endow a repertory theatre in London. I did not want to go. I had been let down before on this "honours list" business, and I felt it would come to nothing. I hated the idea of going, particularly as there was no time to let the Prime Minister know of our intended visit. However, I was persuaded, much against my inclination, to venture the journey. It was a cold, dark night, and a long way to drive.

Lady —— and I arrived at 7.30 to find the Prime Minister in his room resting, the other members of the house party dressing for dinner. Lady —— would not send her name up to the Prime Minister, so my name went up alone. With his usual courtesy, he saw me at once; I told him exactly why I was there and who had brought me. He was not discouraging—in fact, he said he would talk to my fellow-visitor about the matter. There was a large family party in the house for Christmas and the New Year. The dinner gong sounded; the Prime Minister sent a message to his hostess, and we were invited to stay and dine with the family. The Prime Minister promised to recommend the baronetcy for Lady ——'s deserving friend, recognizing the public-spiritedness of the offer which I described to him. So having gained our point, we started back to my cottage in Kent, arriving some time after midnight. I may say here that Lady ——'s friend received his baronetcy, but there must

surely have been a misunderstanding, for not a penny did we get of the promised money for a repertory theatre.

It was about this time that another millionaire came into my life. He professed great interest in the idea of a repertory theatre in London, and was quite willing to subscribe the necessary endowment.

Margot most kindly invited me to The Wharf for the week-end of the 1st March to get some definite ideas on the matter and talk it over with the Prime Minister. There was a large party, including Lady Sybil Grant, Lady Venetia Stanley, and Arthur Asquith, but I managed to get ten minutes' talk with the Prime Minister alone about my millionaire, and I gave full details of his life and work. On the 3rd March, 1914, arrangements were definitely made that he was to endow a permanent repertory theatre in London with £50,000.

So at last it looked as though an endowment was assured, and that a permanent repertory theatre would be established in London.

On the 28th June, 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated at Sarajevo. To us in England this did not seem to have any special significance. We were not accustomed to concern ourselves in the affairs of other nations. Everything went on as gaily as ever. Of course, those in the know, soldiers and sailors, and other far-seeing people, watched the storm clouds gathering over Europe, but ordinary folk went on with their daily round, their common task. It was not until towards the end of July that fear and apprehension began to take possession of everyone. War was in the air, yet still we did not think England would be dragged in; we hoped against hope that a miracle might happen.

I spent much of that July in the country. Professor Gilbert Murray was spending the last week of July with us at Stanstead when the news came that France and Germany were at war. He said: "It is impossible for us to remain unconditionally neutral." Then came Sir Edward Grey's statement: "We must be, and are, prepared for the consequences of having to use all the strength we have at any moment, we know not how soon, to defend ourselves and take our part. We have reached the parting of the ways."

Lillah McCarthy (left) with her husband, Sir Frederick W. Keeble, and Arnold Bennett — a photograph taken on board Arnold Bennett's yacht, the "Marie-Marguerite," at Cowes in 1924.

Gilbert Murray hurried back to London, and I went to spend a few days with Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Wells at Dunmow, Essex. When I arrived I found H. G. in a terribly gloomy mood—quite out of keeping with his usual jolly and happy temperament. I tried to cheer him up and asked him to come and play at a sort of rackets he had invented in his barn, but he said, "I just can't play, Lillah. We are at war: don't you grasp that? I can't get away from it. The world's fallen asunder."

Slowly we all began to grasp that fact; that England was at war. Everything was changed. Though the slogan "business as usual" was heard on every side, how could business be as usual when our best friends were going out to France every day, and day after day we read the long casualty lists containing the names of many we had known well and loved? I know I have

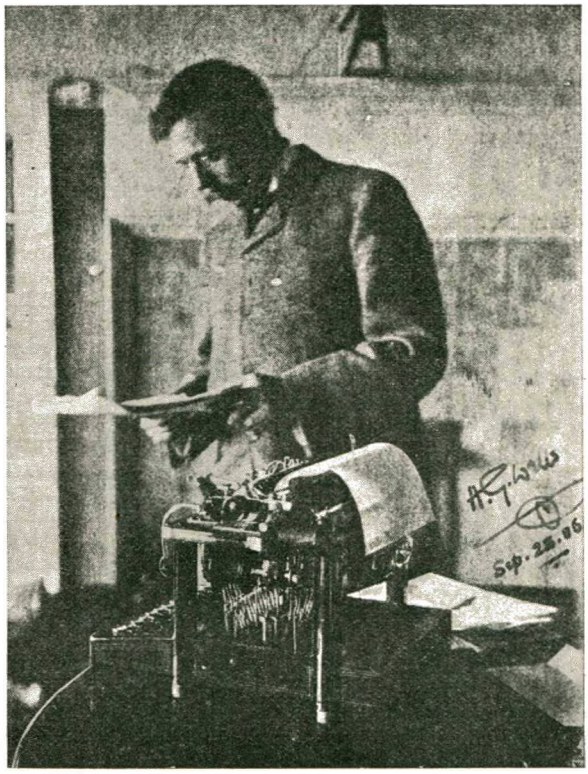
never been so grateful for my art as I was at that time. We members of the theatre were at all events able to raise funds which were much needed.

I began rehearsing for "The Impossible Woman." It was produced at the Haymarket Theatre on the 8th September. My part was that of a world-famous pianist, Madame Mercedes Okraska, a woman cursed with the typical artistic temperament, entirely cosmopolitan. She was a great genius in her way, did absolutely what she liked, never stopping to consider other people's wishes or feelings. Emotions and scenes, whether theatrical or domestic, were the breath of life to her. Added to this she was consumed by jealousy—jealous even of her own adopted daughter Karen. When Madame catches her poet friend kissing Karen there is the devil to pay—such torrents of vulgar abuse that poor little Karen flies, Madame is left alone, deserted by everyone, to find solace in her piano: after all, the only thing she cares for—the only thing she takes seriously is her art.

After the great scene in the last act when Tante is left deserted, I had to play the piano. Now, I am not a pianist, so I was given a dummy piano while a composition of Rachmaninoff's was played off-stage by a really fine artist. I practised for hours with the pianist on the dummy piano, and played the notes exactly as he did. I also played the piece over and over again on a pianola so that I knew every note and phrase of it by heart. The illusion was complete, and hence it was amusing to receive many letters from the audience congratulating me on being such a magnificent pianist.

Only a month ago I met a man at dinner who said to me, "I shall never forget your performance of Tante, and the exquisite way in which you played Rachmaninoff. My wife, who was with me at the time, said, 'Now we know how it is she is such a splendid artist, combining the art of music with all her other gifts!'" I felt greatly embarrassed, but had not the heart to tell him of my dummy piano. If he reads this confession I hope he will not be angry or think the less of me for not admitting the truth at the time.

I went to America in December, 1914,



An interesting photograph of H. G. Wells in 1906, taken from Lillah McCarthy's album.

and not knowing how long I should be away or how long the War would last, I let my flat to Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland.

However, in July, 1917, I was back at 5, Adelphi Terrace again. My tenants had left; it was nice to be amongst my own things. I had been offered the principal part in "One Hour of Life," by Desmond Coke, which was to be produced at the Kingsway Theatre in October. I was alone in my flat on the 4th September, after the first rehearsal, when I heard a curious noise outside. Looking out of the window over the river, I saw lights flash from aircraft in the sky, and the next minute came a terrific crash. I had rushed out of bed to look, not even waiting to put on a dressing-gown. Bombs had fallen on the Little Theatre and by Cleopatra's Needle simultaneously—Adelphi Terrace lies on the line between these two spots.

I felt the house rock, and I didn't know whether I would be flying into the Embankment Gardens the next second; then the house swayed back to its original position.

As Annajanska in Bernard Shaw's play—Lillah McCarthy wearing the "gorgeous white Russian costume" designed for her by Charles Ricketts.

All the windows in the terrace were smashed, and the whole pavement was covered with minute particles of glass. Horace Annesley Vachell told me that he was rehearsing a play at the Savoy the same evening. While bombs were falling and glass crashing, one of the dressers turned to him and said, "This war seems to be getting serious, sir. Don't you think we ought to do something to these here Germans?" This, when war had been going on for over three years!

In November, 1917, G. B. S. had written to me that he had finished a "Bolshevist" sketch, especially for me, and that he was sending me the script. He said: "Enclosed is the first rough draft of Annajanska. Show this copy to Butt or Moss, and ask them if it appeals to them. As the play is a topical one, it cannot be held up; it is now or never."

On the 1st January, 1918, I appeared in "Annajanska, the Wild Grand Duchess," at the Coliseum. It was announced as by Gregory Biessipoff, a translation from the Russian. The papers said it was by "Gbsopoff"—they detected the Shaw touch at once. The Coliseum audience is a wonderful one; with this little play of dramatic intensity we held them in absolute silence. At my first entrance I was led on guarded by soldiers. In order to free myself from their grasp I bit their wrists. I then demanded to see the General alone, and fired shot after shot—a regular fusillade—at the soldiers, until I got my own way.

I wore a gorgeous white Russian uniform, designed by Charles Ricketts and made by a real military tailor, with an enormous green overcoat trimmed with black fur.

The newspapers said I looked magnificent in my uniform, and added: "It made one wish we could have a dress controller who would insist on all women wearing a similar uniform during their working hours"; not a very practical idea, I may say, as I felt I would choke when I first put the uniform on, the collar was so stiff and high; I had been accustomed all my life to having my neck bare. It took me a long time to get accustomed to that awful collar—yet when I was on the great Coliseum stage I forgot all about the discomfort, in my joy at the amusement, delight, and enthusiasm of the great audience. After our first performance, Charles Ricketts sent me this letter:—

"January 21st, 1918.

"Just a word to say that you have never looked more beautiful or seemed so absurdly young, the wig suits you to perfection, and so does the white make-up. The latter has always brought you luck; it allows the shape of the face and features to tell, and these are your strong points; colour adds nothing—it can add just too much, as in the Revolution play. Some day I shall plaster down your hair like Maria Carmi. I know it will suit you. You look splendid in uniform. I heard one of the attendant girls say to another in the corridor: 'Don't she look lovely in them white things of hers?' You carry yourself splendidly.

"Shannon joins in congratulations and good wishes.

"Ever sincerely,

"C. R."

A few days afterwards I got this criticism from Shaw :—

"25th January, 1918.

"You have spoilt the end of 'Annajanska.' Why, after I took the trouble to get Strammfest out of your way by the window trick, leaving you the centre all to yourself, and prolonging the anticipation sufficiently to enable the audience to take it fully in, have you undone it all? At the first performance it was the only point that missed fire; and it took the end of the play from you and handed it to Ayrton.

"What is the matter with the band? Is Dove sulking about anything? They have very properly gone back to my original suggestion for the prelude, which they told me was too short, and which I *knew* was just right; but why on earth don't they give the last thirteen bars of the overture at the end full crash instead of piffling as they do?

"It went very well to-day until the end; but every time you dropped a bit of our arranged business you missed the effect it was meant to produce. Unless you say 'all the King's horses' in profile, upstanding, and with the playfulness over the sadness, you will not get the full effect to the contrast when you sink over him immediately after.

"Do kick the dynasty *out* with your left foot and not *in* with your right. It makes all the difference in the intelligibility of the gesture.

"I could not see the lighting from my stage-box; but it seemed to me that the dazzling whiteness of the uniform was gone. Has *that* been altered?

"In great haste,

"G. B. S."

However, the public liked me—and the play. I got numerous letters from soldiers home on leave, begging to make my acquaintance! I had proved very attractive as a blonde to the male sex, but when I appeared in uniform I seemed to bowl them over completely! I should have thought they would have been sick of the sight of uniform; perhaps they were of khaki, but not of the dazzling white uniform of Annajanska.

Anna and Ann seem to have been lucky names to me in my stage career—Ann Whitefield in "Man and Superman," Anne Pedersdotter in "The Witch," Nan in "The Tragedy of Nan," and now "Annajanska"!

One day, returning to my flat after a *matinée*, I found a group of soldiers having tea with my mother. I had no idea who they were, but my mother said calmly: "Lillah, these dear boys have come in for a talk with you." So down I sat. They told me their adventures; many of them were

Lillah McCarthy as Mercedes Okraska, the temperamental musician, in "The Impossible Woman," by C. Haddon Chambers.

from overseas, and we had a lovely time. I kept up a large correspondence with men at the Front I'd never seen, and they when home on leave often came to see me.

All this time I was rehearsing in Zangwill's play, "Too Much Money." I had appeared in 1911 in his play, "The War God," with Tree, and had got to know him and like him. He was a dear, simple creature. We had our final dress rehearsal in London, and were to produce the play at Glasgow the next evening. I had arranged to go by the midnight train from London that Sunday, the 17th February. My heavy luggage had gone on, and I had only a handbag and a dressmaker's cardboard box containing my beautiful dresses for the play. I sent for a taxi, but was told I couldn't have one as the "warning" was out. I had to get to Euston somehow, so started off carrying my luggage.

There was not a soul to be seen on Adelphi Terrace, except one solitary man, who came up to me and said, "You had better take shelter; there is a raid on." I told him it was impossible, and that I must catch my train. He very gallantly offered to go with me and carry my traps. As I hadn't the faintest idea who he was, I gave him my bag and carried my lovely dresses myself. We walked side by side without a word—crossed the Strand and Trafalgar Square, and never met a soul; we seemed to be the only people in the world, while bomb after bomb crashed down from the raiders with terrific noise. He advised me to keep close to the buildings as it was safer. As we went along he told me he was careless of his own life, that as soon as the warning had sounded he had come out, hoping he would be killed. He said he recognized me the moment he saw me. So we made our way through the silent city.

When we got to Euston we found crowds sheltering there, and the station and trains in darkness. I thanked my friend for guiding me. I should never have found my way alone, and there was no one I could have asked in the empty streets. We had not met a living being from the time we left Adelphi Terrace until we got to Euston Station. It was rather a nerve-racking experience, and I cannot say I enjoyed it.

We opened at the Ambassadors Theatre on the 9th April, 1918. I thoroughly enjoyed my part and liked the play. It was a mixture of comedy and tragedy, just like life. It gave me many opportunities for farce and comedy. John Galsworthy wrote and said he had no idea I could be so funny. Someone writing to one of the papers, in the course of his article said: "On the subject of kisses, surely the longest, in fact, quite the most ultra in London at this moment, must be Lillah McCarthy's and Marsh Allen's in 'Too Much Money'"!

That year I went down to Lulworth Cove for a long holiday—only coming up to London to play at various charity performances. I felt I wanted to be alone.

G. B. S. had finished a play, which he sent to me with this letter:—

"10, Adelphi Terrace.

"There is something about that play that makes me extraordinarily reluctant to let it out of my hands. I suppose I am not quite convinced that it is really finished. You are the first to extract it; and I can only let you have a peep at it, as I want it back, though there is no hurry. But don't show it to anyone who matters. . . . .

"Ever,

"G. B. S."

The play was "Heartbreak House." I wanted so much to act the part of Ellie in it, but my hopes were dashed by this letter from G. B. S.:—

"24th June, 1918.

"Yes, it's a glorious dream. But only a dream. Mrs. Campbell wants to play Ellie. Lena wants to play Ellie. You want to play Ellie. Why? Because Ellie plays herself. Ellen O'Mally is the only woman on the stage who could touch Ellie without coming into competition with the two gorgeous females who must play Hesione and Ariadne. Unless they are both irresistible, whilst Ellie is born to immaculate virginity, there is no play. Imagine Lillah McCarthy at the top of her superb prime left a spiritual bride in the arms of an ancient mariner of ninety-nine!

"But the play is no good, anyhow. Lights have to be out at ten-thirty. It would mean beginning at seven-fifteen to empty stalls. A fortnight's *matinées* would be its full measure; and who would master such parts for a fortnight's engagement?

"We must be content to dream about it. Let it lie there to show that the old dog can still bark a bit.

"Here the Spanish flu rages; so you had better fly back to Lulworth. Charlotte's temperature is 103°. Probably mine will be that when I catch it. If not, I shall be in town as usual on Thursday. I feel horrid.

"In haste—off to waylay the doctor.

"Ever,

"G. B. S."

I was miserable and unhappy; I ought to

have known it was useless to try to persuade G. B. S.; he is always so clear on how to cast his plays.

As he was so very definite that there was nothing for me in his play, I remained at Lulworth, thinking and planning my future. I visited Thomas Hardy often, and had much consolation from his companionship, although getting about was difficult in these days when no private cars were in use.

When I had ordered my mind and formed my plans, I returned to London again to take up management of a theatre.

I was able to secure the lease of the Kingsway on favourable terms, but to get plays was quite a different matter — hence my disappointment when G. B. S. would not let me do "Heartbreak House," though I tried my best to make him change his mind. No doubt he was quite right; it was not the time to produce the play, and I, perhaps, was not the person for the part.

Some weeks before, I had been staying at a country house where Arnold Bennett was one of the party. I talked of my difficulties, and turning to him, said he ought to write a play for me. He replied he was for the moment destitute of ideas. "Have you ever read the story of Judith and Holofernes in the Apocrypha?" I asked him. He confessed complete ignorance on the subject. I then told him that I had found much beauty in the character when I had played in Sturge Moore's one-act play "Judith."

Our host promised to read the story to us after dinner, but there was no copy of the Apocrypha in the house. He told one of the servants to go to the various houses in the neighbourhood and borrow a copy. After dinner the man came in triumphant; he had managed, with much difficulty, to secure the book, and our host read us the story. Arnold Bennett got most enthusiastic, took the Apocrypha away with him, and said he would have the play ready by the time I wanted to open my season at the Kingsway. He was as good as his word, but when I read his "Judith," I found he had not followed the stark magnificence of the Biblical story, though his play was very fine in parts. He also sent me a copy of his "Don Juan," but this had no part for me. While debating in my mind what I should say to him, he wrote me:—

Lillah McCarthy as Anne Pedersdotter in "The Witch," a play John Masefield adapted from the Norwegian of Wiers-Janssen.

"November 25th, 1918.

"I have heard nothing from you since Monday of last week. Nevertheless, you told me that you must decide at latest on the Tuesday, and that you would let me know at once. I am always being treated in this way by people connected with the theatre. I do not know why it is so, but it is so. I am only troubling you with this letter because I may have an opportunity of placing 'Don Juan' elsewhere, and I am keeping it open for you.

"Yours, A. B."

I wrote to him of my difficulties, and got this :—

" November 27th, 1918.

" Many thanks for your frank letter. I now understand the situation much better than I did before. It is by no means certain that I shall sell ' Don Juan.' Nothing is certain in the theatrical world.

" I gather that there is a chance of seeing you next week-end at Dr. Keeble's. Good.

" Yours,

" ARNOLD BENNETT."

We tried out " Judith " at Eastbourne on the 8th April. The costumes and scenery were designed by Charles Ricketts. Everyone knows the Apocryphal story. It is a simple one—a besieged city, a time-serving governor, a famine-pressed and wavering populace, a beautiful widow, Judith, who feels the call of the Divine to go forth and captivate and to slay Holofernes, the enemy General.

In the tent scene with Holofernes I wore a dress of very scanty proportions. A lady in the audience took great exception to this dress of mine, or rather lack of dress, and wrote saying she had asked the Lord Chamberlain to make a public objection. She then went to my manager and advised him to insist on my wearing a cloak. I was foolish enough to believe that this lady might be right, and I not only modified my dress, but also my acting in the seduction scene. I wished afterwards that I had published her letter and used it as an advertisement. The costumier told me he had been inundated with orders to copy that same dress by society ladies who wanted to wear it as a tea gown !

Arnold Bennett wrote after the first night :—

" 30-4-19.

" Your dressing-room was too much of a reception-room last night for me to get at you.

" Good luck be with you. You *immensely* deserve it.

" Please note :—

" 1. Move as little as possible during the speech after the murder. Speak the words *low* but very clear. If possible, do *not* move until the last sentence : ' The grave shall be thy home.' It has struck me several times that this speech is a bit long. I enclose a cut, which you will use or not as you like.

" 2. You used the knife all right last night. You kept the point downwards as you raised the knife. This is correct. Don't raise the point.

" 3. Let there be *no pause whatever* between the murder and the speech.

" 4. Tell Holofernes to keep still after the single convulsive movement. If he is not still, attention is distracted from the speech and you.

" 5. Make a pause between the two parts of your speech to Haggith. Say the second part, ' Take the head in a cloth and let us depart,' in a very firm, self-controlled dominating tone. Tell Haggith that when you have said ' The power of Assyria is fallen ' and pointed, she must look *at the blood* and *not* at you. She must start back, with the least possible cry, and certainly not a cry like a newborn lamb. Then the second part of the speech will pull her together again, and she must pull herself together.

" The curtain must be very quick.

" Peace be upon you.

" Yours,

" A. B.

" P.S.—You must keep yourself entirely covered in Act III. Last night we could see not merely the green tunic, but a great deal of your admirable body."

(Another instalment of Miss Lillah McCarthy's reminiscences will appear next month.)

THE LOVELY LADY

By

JOHN HASTINGS TURNER

Illustrated by STANLEY DAVIS

HENRY JONES was a dull man, with a dull job. He was the head clerk in a big warehousing firm. He knew, none better, how dull a job it was, and he knew too that he was a dull man. At the end of his day's work he was, of course, unutterably dull. But sometimes, on a keen winter morning, or at the very beginning of spring, he wondered vaguely whether he really was so impossibly dull as he seemed. In fact, he knew that he was not: he knew that he couldn't be.

If he was really the little man with the absurd name of Henry Jones, how could he be the husband of Pamela, who was tall and dark and very lovely? Obviously lovely. He knew, because he had heard people saying things when they didn't know that he was within earshot. And what they said was: "Well! A woman like that! What she could have seen in him . . ."

And when Henry had heard that much he drifted away, and wondered about it himself. So that the possession of Pamela became a torture to him. Not that he was jealous or tormented himself on the score of other men's admiration for Pamela. What worried him was the fact that they were so obviously a misfit. It was quite impossible that the radiant Pamela could have been designed to be a mate for himself.

Every evening he would get back from his office at the warehouse and this amazing creature would welcome him and kiss him and give him his supper and, apparently, remain content. But Henry knew that he must be living on the edge of a volcano. If he went on being as dull as he was at present, something was bound to happen.

The thing became an obsession with him. He found himself panicking suddenly about it as he bent over the sheets of figures on his office desk. He did not dare take Pamela to the pictures in case she should see some glimpse of Romance there which might force before her the contrast between what her own life was and what it should have been. In fact, Henry was in a thoroughly unhealthy state of mind about the whole thing. Meanwhile Pamela continued to kiss him and give him his supper and believe him when he said he was too tired to go to the pictures. And he became more and more uneasy. He began to talk rather wildly.

"You know, Pam," he would say, "I'm not a bit like what you think me." Or, more darkly: "There are hidden depths in men. They're harder to know than women."

To which she replied: "I daresay you're right, dear," and looked frighteningly lovely. And the more he talked in this strain, the less notice she seemed to take of it. So

that he began to think that she was already bored with him. This produced fresh panic in the heart of Henry Jones. He must *do* something. He must do something tremendously exciting and romantic. But what? And how? His salary was not such as to allow of any high-flying. How absurd, how wrong that romance should be dependent on so ordinary a thing as cash!

HE had a fortnight's holiday in June, and already Pamela had asked him whether she had better not write and book the rooms at Worthing. He had said "No," that he had other plans—that she should know all in good time. He had implied that he had some tremendous surprise up his sleeve, something dashing and exciting. But he had nothing up his sleeve at all. Only now, of course, he couldn't go to Worthing. He'd got to invent something. But Henry Jones didn't invent things easily. And there was this infernal question of cash.

It was at this point that his eye caught an advertisement in a daily paper. "Auxiliary ketch, 36 x 9ft., sleeping for three. Excellent condition. Immediate sale, £320."

Henry had always been vaguely fond of the sea, and he knew, at least, how to run a motor. He had saved over long years about five hundred pounds, but this money he had always regarded as untouchable. If only he had that ketch! There would be a dashing bit of Romance, if you like!

"Going to the country for your holidays, Jones?"

"No. Taking my little yacht out this summer. May go anywhere. France, perhaps!"

Wonderful! And Pamela, on the ketch, would be so dependent on him. He wouldn't do anything dangerous, of course. Just bowl along the coast and put in at little harbours. But Pamela would admire his control of the boat (simple things boats, really), and she would realize that he wasn't just a little man in a warehouse who went to Worthing. And, of course, he could sell the ketch again, if he had to. Though Henry, who already saw himself as her owner, frowned as he thought of this. He didn't want to sell his "yacht."

No harm in seeing her, anyway. He slipped down on the next Saturday afternoon to Southsea, where she lay, and a man in a grey sweater showed him over the ketch.

"Dash of paint and varnish," said the dirty man, "and she'll be like new. Engine in grand form. She'll do nearly eight knots."

Henry went quite mad.

"I'll buy her," he said. Later he put it in writing. What was that Grey Sweater was saying? Henry, under a kind of roseate anæsthetic, was hardly listening. When did he want her ready for sea? "Oh, June. June the seventh."

Grey Sweater nodded.

"I'll have her ready," he said. "It won't cost more than a hundred pounds to get her fine. You'll get your stores when you come for her, I take it?"

Henry nodded, a little dourly; the man had said a hundred pounds. That made it four hundred and twenty. He ought to say, of course, that he had not understood that there would be anything extra beyond the purchase price: that he couldn't afford it. But all he did was to nod again. He found it impossible to give up the ketch.

"Oh, and by the way," he added, airily. "I want to rechristen her. I want to call her 'Pamela.' Will you see to that?"

Grey Sweater said he would. There would be papers to sign and stamp fees. But he'd put it through. It occurred to Henry Jones that he had better stop talking and get back to London. Every time he opened his mouth there seemed to be more expense involved. In the train he alternated between cold shivering attacks and the glow of ownership. Again and again he re-pictured to himself the little engine-room—the cabins—the bunks. The little folding table and the stove in the galley, with its ingenious space-saving cupboards.

He paid for the boat, signed various papers, paid for stamps, received a letter saying that fitting out *Pamela* had cost rather more than the estimate—a hundred and twenty pounds, to be precise—paid this, sat back in his office chair and wondered what on earth he thought he was doing.

Then, with immense concentration, he went into ways and means. There were practically no means, and very few ways.

But the last thing which entered Henry's head was to get out while the going was good. Besides, he had told Pamela. That finished it. He couldn't go back on that. Pamela had looked at him quite differently. She had looked at him, he thought, with something almost like awe in her eyes. He had adopted a rather rolling swagger when he had told her, something mildly approaching what he imagined to be the manner of a buccaneer.

"You see, my dear," he had said, "I'm not the kind of man who can go to Worthing every year. In other circumstances—in another age—I should have been——" He waved a short arm and left it vague what he would have been. Vague, but undoubtedly in the class of Frobisher and Hawkins.

"But how——" began Pamela. He cut that short.

"Leave it to me," he said. "I'm not altogether the humdrum chap you think, Pamela!"

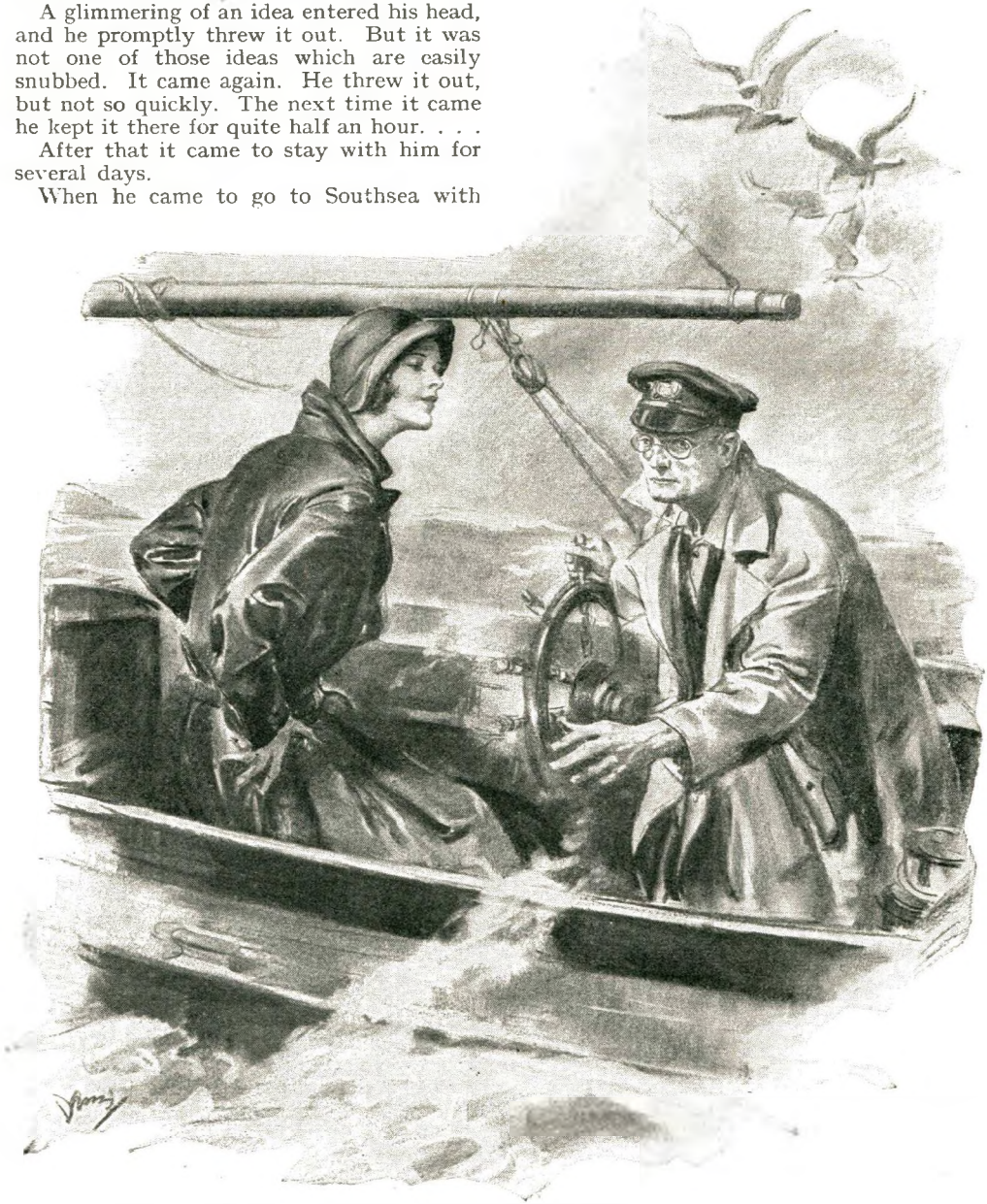
So she had left it to him. And there it was—left. But Pamela, he was certain, had looked at him with new eyes. He was more of a mate for her than before. Meanwhile, there was this problem of cash.

It would cost a bit—stores and all that: and then, he believed, there were such things as harbour dues, and various incidentals. He'd have to have some cash.

A glimmering of an idea entered his head, and he promptly threw it out. But it was not one of those ideas which are easily snubbed. It came again. He threw it out, but not so quickly. The next time it came he kept it there for quite half an hour. . . .

After that it came to stay with him for several days.

When he came to go to Southsea with Pamela he carried an extra hundred pounds in notes in his pocket. It had been quite easy. And really, as he put it to himself, almost justifiable. He had security, after all. The boat. He could slip it back where it came from without anyone being the wiser. Why, perhaps he wouldn't need the money at all! But the risk of this tremendous



"I never knew that you were an adventurous man like this," said Pamela.

romance breaking down for want of cash was too humiliating.

When he saw his ketch newly painted, with *Pamela* in gold letters on her bows, he forgot any mild uneasiness he had felt before. His nautical gait returned to him as he piloted his wife across the narrow gangway. He was not used to such things and very nearly fell off, but Pamela didn't notice—so that was all right.

He showed her over the little ship.

"What do you think of her, eh?" he asked. "Trim little craft, eh?"

Pamela knew nothing of boats, nor whether she was trim or not, but she was touched that Henry had called the ketch by her name and she was glad, too, that he had saved money and was able to afford what was evidently such a pleasure to him.

She said she thought it was "perfectly sweet." Henry laughed boisterously.

"Mustn't use words like that about a ship," he said.

Pamela liked buying the stores. Henry seemed to have plenty of money. The best of everything, he said he was going to have. He even insisted on half-a-dozen bottles of champagne, and would have broken one against the bows of his boat to christen her, only Pamela said firmly that it would be simply wicked. After some vexatious delays about papers and officialdom, they got away.

"Do you know all about boats, Henry?" asked Pamela. "I never knew you did."

"Enough," he answered, breezily. And he thought he did, too. He had spent a holiday on the Broads once, in a much smaller boat than this, and he'd picked up a thing or two with a man who owned a motor-boat, off Yarmouth. Certainly, everything was splendid at the moment. The sea was calm, and the sun not too hot. There was a moment of anxiety when the wash of a great liner making for Southampton caught them suddenly broadside on, and Henry had not the slightest idea what to do.

But the ketch was eminently seaworthy and she made nothing of it.

"We'll just potter round to Bognor," said Henry, "and lie there for the night."

THE sea was kind and Henry made Bognor just in time for dinner.

Never in his life had he been so exalted. Master of his own ship, he was a fit mate for Pamela. No longer was he a dull little man. Being tall, Pamela found the boat uncomfortable and the cooking of the dinner a martyrdom; but she didn't say so to Henry. His pleasure delighted her. He seemed to have grown. He dominated the little boat, as he had never dominated his home.

Her bunk was hard and there was a rather sickening smell of varnish. But Henry assured her that she was mistaken. He consulted a little book bound in red calico, and busied himself lighting lamps.

"To-morrow," he said, "we'll beat round to Worthing. Better than those beastly lodgings, eh, Pamela?" There was a note of triumph in his voice, as who should say, "I'll show Worthing!" Pamela felt sure that in some odd way Henry liked to come back to Worthing like this. Funny he had never shown anything of the kind before.

She went to sleep with difficulty.

The next morning the sky was grey, and there was a suspicion of chill in the wind. The sea was grey, too, with little white horses. Nothing much, but not the gentle swell they had experienced the day before.

"Shall you use the sails, Henry?" asked Pamela.

Henry said he thought not. He gave a good many reasons why he thought not. Actually he was not at all sure he could manage the sails.

They put out to sea and turned east towards Worthing. The ketch bucketed about considerably and Pamela saw Henry being surreptitiously unwell over the stern. She was a good sailor herself and she pretended to have noticed nothing. There was no doubt that the sea was getting up.

Said Henry:—

"Bit stormy. I'll take her in rather nearer the coast."

Pamela supposed that that was the right thing to do.

"I never knew," she said, "that you were an adventurous kind of man, like this."

He laughed.

"I warned you," he answered. "I told you we men aren't always what we seem."

Undoubtedly he had impressed her, at last. No longer was he a dull little man. After this she would not get tired of him. She would always be looking for new depths, new surprises. She was lovely—amazingly lovely, but he was worthy of her.

Little gusts of spray swept over the deck, and Henry found the steering of his ship a distinct strain on his arms. The spray in their faces was amusing and invigorating at first, but later it became a nuisance and they were both getting very wet.

Then, in the most sudden and unreasonable manner, the wind from being a steady, respectable blow, became puffy and violent. They made little headway against it. The ketch, safe as a house, yet groaned alarmingly. It almost sounded as if she knew she was in the wrong hands and resented it.

Henry put her further in towards the shore, muttering something about the lee of the cliffs. Every plank of the ketch protested against this.

"We'll have to swim for it," said Pamela. She slipped off her frock and stood up, tall, athletic, and very lovely.

Then, with a splutter and a few dull explosions, the engine gave out and the screw ceased to revolve. Henry messed about with it for some minutes. The boat, still groaning, was blown towards the cliffs.

SUDDENLY Pamela saw Henry go very white.

"What is it?" she asked quickly.

"The—the petrol. It's run out. I never knew she used so much."

He looked up and saw how much nearer in-shore they had drifted.

Pamela was perfectly calm. Henry did not know whether she realized the danger or not.

"We must get up a sail, then," she said.

"Yes," answered Henry. He knew enough to realize that they must get out to sea somehow or other. But the blood rushed to his cheeks as he told himself that he did not even know how.

"I—I——" he stammered. And then: "Oh, God, Pamela, I don't know how to do it!" The helplessness, the humiliation of it! He was still biting his lip and looking foolishly about him when the ketch struck a submerged rock and heeled right over. The sea poured in over her side before she righted herself, only to drive on again. Henry, wild-eyed, fought with the wheel, which was, of course, useless. Pamela was aware of a great pity for him, a tremendous feeling of love as well. He looked like a schoolboy who has been showing off and has been found out.

The boat slithered round the rock and floated free again. They were about thirty yards from the shore when she struck again. This time there was no doubt about it. A hideous rasping and tearing told them that the ketch, in her indignation, had committed *hara-kiri*. The water poured into the little cabin.

"We'll have to swim for it," said Pamela, and took off her mackintosh. She slipped off her frock, too, and stood up, tall, athletic, and very lovely.

"I can't swim," said Henry, and she saw the tears of utter humiliation in his eyes.

"Then do what I tell you, dear," said Pamela. Suddenly the boat's stern, weighted by the engine, disappeared under water.

"My pocket-book!" shouted Henry. "I must have my pocket-book!"

But Pamela had him firmly by the wrist.

"It's too late for that," she said, quickly. "The boat's going down. If we go down with it we sha'n't have a chance. Slip off your Burberry—and your shoes, if you can."

"My God!" he groaned. "My pocket-book!"

The ketch shuddered. The sea was practically awash of her. Pamela sat on the edge of the bulwarks and slid into the sea. She held on with one hand.

"Come to me, Henry," she said. "You'll be perfectly all right, dear, if you don't panic. It's not more than twenty-five yards to the beach."

He lowered himself over the side and hung there, clinging with both hands.

"You—you'd better go alone," he said. She actually laughed.

"Nonsense!" she said. "Just leave go of the boat, and don't struggle."

He let go of the boat and felt her hands beneath his arms. A grey wave swept over his face and he swallowed a great deal of water.

"Why don't you save yourself?" he gasped. Again he heard a little panting laugh.

"I am," she said. "You keep still!" She looked over her shoulder and swam strongly on her back. The wind helped her, but there was a nasty current trying to take her along the coast. If only Henry had done what she had told him and got rid of that wretched Burberry! She had been swimming for ten minutes before her feet touched the ground. But she was not exhausted and she walked up the beach with her hand in Henry's.

When they looked out to sea there was no sign of the ketch. The sun peeped out from behind a cloud and smiled at them.

"You must let me have your Burberry now, Henry, dear," said Pamela. "I'm not decent."

"You saved my life," he muttered.

"Don't be silly," she said.

They found a farmhouse where they told their story, and where Pamela was careful to leave out the fact that she had swum ashore with her husband in her arms.

It was after some dinner, when she lay drowsily in bed, watching Henry, in pyjamas many times too big for him, staring into the fire, that he began to talk.

And what were these amazing things he was saying?

"I've got to tell you," he muttered. "I've got to tell you. It was because you were so wonderful, so lovely. And I was dull. Just a dull, undersized little man, with a dull job. I thought you couldn't go on caring for me, unless—unless I did something to show I wasn't dull. I got afraid—in a panic. I was afraid one day I'd come back home and find you had gone. I didn't see how I could *expect* to keep you. God—what a fool I've been! And that pocket-book! The money! . . . I borrowed it from the firm. No. Stole it; I mean, nobody would know. I had the

boat, if I'd spent it, and I could have put it back easily enough. But now I haven't got the boat, or the money—and——" He broke off, with a little sighing sob, and added brokenly, "Well, I've told you."

Pamela's eyes were like a child's, round with astonishment.

"But, Henry," she said, "I don't understand. Why did you think that I would leave you?"

"Because you are so lovely and I am—so ordinary."

"But, darling, I never thought you dull or ordinary. I admired you tremendously. Working so hard at that horrid warehouse and keeping me and the home, and bringing me back chocolates and things. I couldn't bear to have left you, Henry, dear. I used to wonder sometimes how it was you never complained, never wanted to kick over the traces. I married you, darling, because I loved you, and after I was married I loved you more and more."

He stood up, a ridiculous figure in his flapping pyjamas.

"Oh, Pamela," he said, "what a fool I've been. And—and when it came to the point, I couldn't even swim."

"Darling," she answered, "you can be faithful and kind and toil your life away for me. And I love you. Isn't that enough?"

He came to her side, falling over his pyjamas on the way. But neither of them was in the mood to think it funny. She pulled his head down to hers and, as she kissed him, she saw the grey hairs underneath the tousled brown. They had forgotten, for the moment, the note-case and the stolen money.

But, at last, he looked up, his face drawn.

"The money!" he said. "I've done for myself."

"How much did you take?" she asked.

"A hundred pounds."

"I can let you have that," she answered. "You've always been generous, and I've saved out of the housekeeping."

"Then—then——" A great sense of relief flooded him. "Then you've saved my life again," he said.

"Surely, dear, you won't be angry with me for that?"

"Oh, my darling!" he cried. And then: "But don't you—aren't you disgusted with me for being so mad?"

Her eyes were half-closed and she was very sleepy.

"You were mad about me," she whispered. "You'll never find a woman to be very much disgusted about that!"

He slept peacefully and happily—more happily than he had slept for months. The sleep of the unjust who have got away with it.

ACROSTICS

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 218.

(*The Second of the Series.*)

THE ancient proverb thus
Resolves the matter:
One bird in former is
Worth two in latter.

1. Scornful reproach, which, lacking head,
Would be a relative instead.
2. Rabbits there often are inside,
A rhyming word will such provide.
3. Such is the horse; not so the sow,
The elephant, the sheep, the cow.
4. Riotous uproar, horrid noise,
A thing that nobody enjoys.
5. A month is of its end bereft,
Only four letters now are left.
6. Italian city: sleep or game,
And half a lesson make the name.
7. In Devonshire, beside the sea,
Tool in a vessel it may be.

REMUS.

Answers to Acrostic No. 218 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on September 10th.*

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 217.

1. N	igh	T
2. E	xete	R
3. P	acif	I
4. T	oa	D
5. U	mpir	E
6. N	ewto	N
7. E	lephan	T

NOTES.—Light 1. Knight errant. 3. Pacific. 4. Shakespeare, "As You Like It."

ACROSTIC No. 215 (Tortoise Porpoise).—The third and sixth lights lend themselves to other solutions, and "Reminder," "Biscuit," and "Biffin" have been accepted as correct.

THE LUCKIEST IN THE

By E. PHILLIPS

EVERYONE amongst his particular set, and at the haunts which he was accustomed to frequent, had been telling "Dagger" Rodwell for the last two years that, with his luck, he ought to visit foreign gambling places, where real money was to be touched. Rodwell, however, who had led a precarious existence until some time before, when he had developed an amazing habitude of winning at whatever game of chance he indulged in, was shy about the matter.

"You see, Jimmy," he explained to his own particular pal, Jimmy Dane. "I can't speak the lingo for one thing. Then, turning an honest penny at *chemie* as we play it in London, with always a mug or two at the table, is easy enough. One is up against a different class of play over there, and a mountain of money."

"Dagger, my lad," his friend persisted, "your luck would stand anything. The fact is that to-day you're in what they call the 'streak.' It doesn't matter whether it's horses, cars, or a billiard match. You're in luck, and if you take my advice you'll play it whilst it lasts. Don't hang around here to pick up perhaps a thousand or two. Go for the big things before it stops. Then buy a small hotel, or something solid, and take life easy."

"I'll think it over," the other temporized.

Nevertheless, when, ten days later, he touched a fantastic double at Newmarket, which very nearly sent his bookmaker into the bankruptcy court, and, within a few days, simply paralyzed the *chemie* at the two best-known haunts in London, Charles Rodwell changed his mind. With a new outfit, selected for him by a West-end tailor, and a letter of credit of quite respectable proportions, he packed his bags and departed, for the first time in his life, upon foreign travel. His destination had been subject to the spin of a coin. Rather to his joy, as the place had an alluring sound, fate consigned him to Monte Carlo. Accordingly, on the first day of March, Charles Rodwell, with a London-wide nickname of Dagger, twenty-eight years old, tall, lean, and blue-eyed, a touch of the colonial in his occasional awkwardness of speech and demeanour, descended upon the Hotel de Paris, and in these days of greater latitude found no difficulty in adding a card of admission to the Sporting Club to his *Salles Privées* ticket.

The night of his arrival, he devoted to watching the various games. On the following day he drew a thousand pounds from the bank, and started operations. In the afternoon he lost six hundred pounds at roulette, but won it back again at *chemin de fer* in the evening. His first reverse was his last. At the end of a week he was six thousand pounds to the good, and should have been more—a fact which perplexed him not a little. He had made friends, too—a Frenchman who spoke excellent English, and his lady companion, who also spoke a little English, and whose flirtations were apparently suffered gladly by her protector. There were frequent little supper parties after the gambling was over, and visits to the various bars. Dagger Rodwell wrote home to his friends that he found Monte Carlo a very amusing place.

Established at a *chemin-de-fer* table in the

BEWARE!—No. 6.

YOUNG MAN WORLD

OPPENHEIM

Illustrated by JACK M. FAULKS

Sporting Club one night, he was very much surprised when a very attractive young lady, seated on his left, followed his example of retaining her place during the making of the cards, and rather abruptly addressed him.

"You've been winning a great deal of money the last few days, haven't you?" she asked.

"I—yes, I suppose I have," he admitted.

"Do you come to Monte Carlo often?"

"I have never been in France before in my life," he told her.

"You play very well," she reflected. "You are also very lucky."

"There isn't much in the way you play," he said, modestly. "Unless, of course, you've got a lot of mugs at the table. I'm lucky. That's why I came out here"

"Alone?" she asked.

He nodded.

"My friends aren't used to travelling much," he confided. "I shouldn't have dared to take this on myself if they hadn't bothered me into it."

"Luck," she meditated. "Yes, one hears that word very often at Monte Carlo. Of course, no one really believes in it."

He looked at her in blank astonishment.

"You don't believe in luck?" he exclaimed.

She shook her head

"I'm afraid I don't," she confessed.

"What about that last hand?" he demanded, "when the gentleman took no cards against me? I drew to a five, and got a three—against his seven."

"Such things happen occasionally."

"You don't believe in luck!" he repeated. "Will you let me show you something? Will you give me a plaque, or as much as you care to risk, and walk with me to that roulette table?" he suggested. "We shall just have time."

"Of course I will," she assented, rising to her feet. "Here's five hundred francs. Now, what are you going to do with it?"

"I'll show you," he promised.

During their brief progress, his companion curtseyed to a minor royalty, and exchanged greetings with many of the people whom his French acquaintances had pointed out to him as being amongst the great ones of the earth, none of whom, however, they had seemed to know themselves. He set his teeth, and pushed his way a little ruthlessly to the table. He scarcely glanced at the numbers, and placed the five hundred francs which had been entrusted to him, and one of his own, upon the *cheval* of fourteen to seventeen. Seventeen turned up. He fought his way back to the outside circle where the young lady had loitered, his hands full of plaques.

"Eight thousand five hundred," he counted out, "and five hundred for your stake. Now do you believe in luck?"

He looked at her triumphantly. His blue eyes were sparkling with pleasure.

"Well, I must believe in yours, at any rate," she acknowledged, smiling.

They returned to their places. He was becoming more voluble.

"I just can't help it," he confided. "Perhaps it won't last. I don't know. If it doesn't, I shall leave off playing, but I haven't been a loser a single day since I've been here, or a single week in London during

the last two or three months. It isn't only cards. It's racing. I touched a bookie just before I left London for a double at two hundred and eighty to one."

The game claimed their attention for a few minutes. A short, dark man, and a very *chic* but somewhat obvious young woman sauntered up, and stood at the other side of the table. Dagger Rodwell exchanged greetings with them eagerly.

"Do you know that gentleman?" he asked his companion, complacently. "That's the Marquis de Verrais and his lady friend."

She looked across the table and studied the two with thoughtful eyes.

"The Marquis de Verrais," she repeated, softly. "Is he one of your friends here?"

"We have supper together most nights," Dagger Rodwell confided. "Lucky for me coming across him. I don't speak a word of French."

"Do you find that your supper excursions cost you a great deal of money?" she inquired.

He flashed a look of quick surprise at her.

"In a way," he admitted. "To tell you the truth, I'd begun to wonder whether there were many pickpockets about, or whether the waiters were quite honest at the hotel. I never count my money carefully, but I always seem to have a lot less than I expected in the morning."

"The Marquis and his companion might be expensive guests," she remarked.

"I generally pay the bills," he confessed, frankly, "but they don't come to much. The Marquis only gets his money four times a year, and he lost a hundred thousand francs gambling a week or two ago."

"Really," she murmured. "Now we must both pay more attention to the game."

He accepted the hint, and relapsed into silence. Presently his companion picked up her winnings, and, with a pleasant little nod of farewell to her neighbour, took her leave. Dagger Rodwell gazed after her wistfully.

"If only I had dared to ask her to have a drink!" he sighed.

The lady friend of the Marquis de Verrais watched the departure of Dagger Rodwell's new acquaintance with anxious eyes. She drew her companion into the background.

"François," she asked, "do you know who that woman was—that girl—there she is—talking to the Duke?"

"Never saw her before in my life," the Marquis replied.

"You have. You've seen her often," the girl went on. "That is the woman who comes sometimes to the Régal and calls herself Mademoiselle Anna. I've often sat on the next stool to her there."

"Idiot!" the Marquis declared, scornfully. "There is a slight likeness, but I tell you—I, who am a judge—that young woman is a person of consequence. Her jewels are real. Listen. We will prove this."

The Marquis de Verrais had a large acquaintance amongst the frequenters of the place. He stopped a well-known English bookmaker who was passing.

"Monsieur Jackson," he said, "you are acquainted with all the world. Please tell us the name of the lady in the pearl-coloured dress and rubies, talking to the Duke there."

Monsieur Jackson glanced down the room, and nodded.

"One of our English beauties," he replied. "The Honourable Sybil Christian her name is, the daughter of Lord Farrowdale."

"I am obliged to you," the Marquis acknowledged. "Well, Fifine?"

Fifine was looking a little dazed, but her eyes were fixed upon that departing figure.

"That was Mademoiselle Anna," she repeated. "She was talking with the boy who wins the money, whom you wish me to take out to supper to-night."

"Idiot!" the Marquis repeated, wearily.

PETER HAMES, the young American painter and seeker after adventure, in a lazy fit, had gone to bed at ten o'clock. At midnight he was awakened suddenly to find the telephone buzzing by his side.

"Is that Mr. Peter Hames?" a soft voice inquired.

"That's right," was the electrified reply. "What are you doing? Are you in bed yet?"

"Of course not," was the scornful but lying response. "Who thinks of going to bed at ten o'clock? I was just going to have a last whisky and soda, and finish a book I am reading."

"Never mind the whisky and soda. I want you to come down and have it with me at the Régal."

"I'll be there in a quarter of an hour," Peter promised, cheerfully.

"Say half an hour. It won't be necessary to-night, I'm sure, but just in case—you'd better bring your—flask."

"I understand."

In less than the appointed time, Peter Hames had dressed and made his way down the hill to Beausoleil. He found a retired spot for his car, and entered the Café Régal. The place as yet was almost empty, but Mademoiselle Anna was seated upon her accustomed stool, smoking a cigarette in a long holder, and talking confidentially to the barman. She beckoned Peter Hames to her side.

The lady friend of the Marquis de Verrais drew him into the background. "François," she asked, "do you know who that woman is?"

"Sit close to me, please," she invited, "and listen. I ought to have told you before. I owe you all the confidence in the world. However, I tell you now. Since the affair of Monsieur the chemist, this place has belonged to me. Madame Lapouge is my woman; John here does as I tell him. That is why now and then I have been able to pick up scraps of interesting information."

"You might have told me," Peter Hames said simply.

She recognized the hurt in his tone, laid her hand impulsively upon his, and pressed it.

"Forgive me," she begged. "Reticence has become almost a vice with me. This little world here is so small."

"Go on, please," he enjoined. "I am pacified. You have some work for me, I hope?"

"There may be," she admitted. "There is a young Englishman over here—a young man, very simple, who has been winning a great deal of money. Legrande has got hold of him—Legrande, if you please, posing

as the Marquis de Verrais—and Fifine, my little neighbour at the bar, posing as his mistress and an actress at the Opéra Comique. The little beast very nearly recognized me this evening. I never dreamed of her getting the entrée to the Sporting Club. Most nights, to wind up with, they come here. They make this young man pretty well drunk—you know how clever Legrande is at it—and they help themselves to his loose mille notes. I have sat here and seen Legrande take the notes from him whilst Fifine has been whispering in his ear. However, enough of that. They are planning a much bigger thing. What it is I don't know, but they have sent for the three men we know as the 'Three Musketeers,' who will rob or murder anybody for a mille, and the three are now upstairs in the *salon*."

"Looks like a dirty business," Peter Hames commented.

"I am afraid it is," she agreed. "Now presently the Marquis, as he calls himself, and the young man and Fifine will be here. I cannot be certain if Fifine recognized me to-night, but I am absolutely sure that she was suspicious. I meant to use the microphone from the small bedroom, but if they did recognize me, of course the whole thing is finished. Will you take that on?"

"Rather," he assented.

"I'm afraid I'm leaving you all the work," she sighed, "but I know that little cat will never let me out of her sight. If you wouldn't mind just having one more whisky, and getting up to the *salon*, I shall clear out quietly. Legrande will go upstairs to meet these three desperadoes, and you will listen to his orders. I'll tell you one thing. I'm sure it won't be for to-night. They'll want to have all the young man's money. Meet me to-morrow morning at the bar of the Hotel de Paris at eleven o'clock, and tell me what you have discovered."

PETER HAMES had discovered a great deal when he met Sybil Christian at eleven o'clock the next morning in the Hotel de Paris bar. Her face grew graver all the time as she listened.

"The one weak point about it that I can see," he remarked, as he drew to an end of his story, "is this: What would happen if, instead of winning to-morrow night at Nice, this young man, Dagger Rodwell, should lose his money. It seems to me they're risking the whole grab."

Sybil shook her head.

"Legrande is no fool," she declared. "If he sees that the luck has changed there, he will make Fifine stop the play and take Rodwell out to supper. Then they'll bring him back, and everything will proceed according to programme."

Peter Hames meditated for a few minutes.

"Are these three musketeers really clever fellows?" he asked.

"They're slippery, treacherous, and diabolically cunning," she assured him.

"Then I have an amendment to propose. Listen, please."

Sybil listened, and the amendment was carried.

AT about twenty past two in the morning, a large and comfortable limousine was driven out of Nice. Inside, Fifine was sitting with one arm around Dagger Rodwell's neck, and his arm, it must be confessed, was round her waist. She had thrown off her hat, and her head rested upon his shoulder. Outside, Monsieur le Marquis, by the side of the chauffeur, was apparently enjoying the view so much that, notwithstanding the jealousy insisted upon by Fifine, he never once looked round.

"I say," Dagger Rodwell asked once, as he ventured to snatch a willingly-returned kiss, "is this all right with the Marquis there?"

"Of course it is, you stupid," she answered. "He has to let me do what I like or I wouldn't stay with him. Aren't you glad? We didn't want him in here."

The young man demonstrated his satisfaction, and their heads remained only a few inches apart.

"Such luck as yours," she murmured, "I have never seen. What was it you took with you?"

"Five thousand pounds."

"And how much did you win?"

"Just about another five thousand," he confided, his eyes alight with the joy of his success.

They mounted high and higher. Now the bluff and lights of Cap Ferrat stretched out beneath them. The high lights of Eze, few but clear, confronted them on the right. Fifine was glancing from side to side with eager eyes.

"Why are you trembling?" he asked.

"I don't want to get back to Monte Carlo too quickly," she sighed.

"Hullo, what's this?" her companion remarked, looking out of the window. "A car broken down?"

The events of the next few seconds were amazing and speedy. A dark form, flashing an electric light, stepped out into the road, the brakes were put on their car, and it was brought to a standstill. Through the window they caught a momentary glimpse of a strange little panorama. They saw the chauffeur flung off the box, saw him rolling

Recognizing the hurt in his tone, she laid her hand impulsively upon his, and pressed it.

for a moment in the dusty road, spring up and run for the sheltering woods upon the left. Monsieur le Marquis, looking very dazed, made a brave show of tackling the aggressor, but received a blow which placed him almost immediately *hors de combat*. There was no time to watch more, for their own troubles had begun. The door had been thrown open, and the muzzle of a very ugly-looking gun was poked to within a couple of feet of Dagger Rodwell's forehead.

" Your pocket-book—quick as hell ! " a gruff voice demanded.

Dagger Rodwell crouched back, and clenched his fist. In another moment he would have been upon his assailant, gun or no gun, but Fifine's arms were around his neck.

" Don't hurt him ! " she shrieked. " He shall not be hurt. Here ! The pocket-book is nothing. Take it ! "

Before he could recover from his amazement, she had thrust her hand into his pocket, brought out the pocket-book, and

In another moment Dagger Rodwell would have been upon his assailant, gun or no gun, but Fifine flung her arms round his neck.

flung it through the open door to the man whom they could now see dimly. Without a word the door was slammed, the man joined his companion, and both disappeared. Dagger Rodwell shook himself free from the girl's arms.

"Here, I say!" he cried. "I'm not going to stand this. That's every penny I've got in the world, Fifine."

"He would have killed you," she sobbed. "There was a man murdered here last year. He would have killed you! We can do without money. The Marquis has plenty."

"I'm going after mine, anyway," Dagger Rodwell declared, pushing her away.

He sprang into the centre of the road. Almost immediately another car came rushing round the corner, and pulled up. Before he knew where he was, there were more automatics, and a chorus of cries and exclamations. M. le Marquis came staggering into the little circle of light thrown by the headlights of the newly-arrived automobile. He tackled one of the newcomers with much apparent courage. The other two were within a few feet of Dagger Rodwell, a villainous-looking pair, and obviously meaning business.

"Throw up your hands!" Fifine shrieked from the car. "What does it matter?"

Dagger Rodwell did as he was bidden. After all, what did it matter?

THE luckiest young man in the world received the shock of his life when, on arriving at the Hotel de Paris, at four o'clock in the morning, scratched, bruised, dishevelled, and practically penniless, he was taken charge of by the night *concierge*, to whom he had begun to tell his story, and ushered into a sitting-room on the second floor. There he saw the aristocratic young lady who had vouchsafed to talk to him at the gaming table, and two good-humoured-looking giants of men, both of whom were strangers to him.

"I say——" he began.

Peter Hames mixed a generous whisky and soda, and handed it to the dazed newcomer. The latter drained half its contents, and set it down. Once more he looked round the room, and this time he saw, also, upon the table, his bulging pocket-book. He gave a little gasp. Peter Hames nodded as he saw the direction in which his eyes had travelled.

"That's your pocket-book all right," he assured him. "Miss Christian, I think it would be almost best if you explained to our young friend."

Sybil smiled.

"You remember my speaking to you at the Sporting Club?" she asked him.

"Of course I do," he answered.

"Well, that man whom you told me was the Marquis de Verrais was, as I knew, a rogue and an adventurer. The woman with him was a little cocotte of the place—never been near the Opéra Comique in her life. What they were after was your money. It is rather a hobby of mine," she went on, "and of my two friends here, to interfere where it is possible in affairs like yours. I shall not tell you how, and you must never ask me, but Mr. Hames and I got to know that you were to be taken to Nice with all the money you possessed, and induced to gamble. If you showed signs of losing, they would bring you home; if you won, so much the better. Then they arranged a little hold-up, and robbery, on the Corniche Road."

"But there were two sets of robbers!" the young man pointed out, raising his glass once more to his lips, and draining its contents.

"Quite so," Sybil agreed. "Our first idea was to wait until the three men who work for your sham Marquis had robbed you of the pocket-book, and then interfere ourselves, and get it back for you. Mr. Hames, however, had a better idea. He pointed out that these three thieves were absolutely reckless, and would use knives as freely as an Englishman does his fist, and, however clever and quick my two friends here were, might very easily get away with the pocket-book. If we called in the police, who, by the, by, never pay much attention to these affairs unless they have direct information themselves, they were very unlikely to patrol the Corniche Road just on the strength of our word. Accordingly, we changed our idea. My two friends here held up your car, robbed you first, and the three men who had been hired to take the pocket-book away from you at any price, arrived a few minutes too late. There is your pocket-book, and all you have to do is to shake hands with Mr. Peter Hames and Mr. Paddy Collins here, and thank them very prettily for looking after you."

The young man stood up, and those blue eyes of his were very bright. He wrung the hands of the two men, and he held out his tumbler willingly at Paddy Collins's suggestion.

"You aren't going to tell me after this;" he remarked, looking across at Sybil, with a twinkle in his eyes, "that I'm not the luckiest young man in the world?"

THE LIFT

By Frederick Skerry

THE hall-porter of Stafford Hall lived with his wife in the front basement, the windows of which afforded a sort of worm's-eye view of the world without, a world made up, for the most part, of lower extremities and as much above as might be, according to pedestrians' distance from the building or the variable length of skirts.

Living at such a level, they may be permitted a lively interest in the affairs of those in the house above, whose nether members were so familiar. They were like stage hands in a theatre, seeing the actors and scenery coming and going, helping with minor props, but seldom understanding the comedies or tragedies that were enacted out of their hearing.

Of the thirty tenants in the building, Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes—number fifty-two, fifth floor—were regarded most favourably by the hall-porter and his wife. Though they agreed upon the general desirability of the Wilkeses, each had special and personal reason for liking either of the young couple. The hall-porter respected Mr. Wilkes for quite a number of things and appreciated the liberal tips which came regularly from him. His wife liked Mrs. Wilkes because she was a "genteel little body" and most generous about her discarded finery. Their idea of an acceptable heaven was a house full of couples like the Wilkeses, quiet, happy, giving no trouble.

Stafford Hall boasted an automatic lift, an early type and shaky, that slid up and down on greasy guides in the stair well and was screened round with gilded wire mesh, which—through no intent of its builder—entertained passengers with a leisurely scrutiny of each landing at the expense of seeming a moving menagerie themselves.

Once in a while, but not often enough to give tenants the impression that they were living in cheap flats without a lift, something would go wrong in the complicated mass of drums and cables and gears which filled a special space at the foot of the stairs in the basement, a ponderous machine which made more wonderful the slender power cable and switch that could set it in motion. When such an accident occurred the lift would stop wherever it happened to be, and most of the tenants, at some time or other, had learned how it feels to be a canary imprisoned, suspended, in a cage.

Because of the hall-porter's familiarity with the vagaries of the machinery, these infrequent lapses were rarely of long duration, though, while they caused no great inconvenience to those on the lower floors, they did force into the homecomings of dwellers on the fourth, fifth, and sixth a little extra and unwonted exercise. At any rate, walking up was preferable to being stuck between floors.

One day in August the hall-porter, carrying a couple of the morning papers that he had salvaged from dust-bins, came into his kitchen for dinner. "Pretty quiet now," he observed, soaping his hands at the sink. "So many gone away for the month." Then, through the muffling web of the roller towel, "The Wilkeses had the dickens of a row this morning."

"No! The *Wilkeses!*" His wife turned her hot face from the gas stove. "How d'you know?"

"How do I know? I heard them. I was in fifty-three, cleaning out that kitchen sink, and I couldn't help hearing them."

"Money, I suppose," she grunted, a watchful eye on the stew. "It generally is."

"No, it wasn't that. He's jealous—as much as told her she was deceiving him."

"Who? *Her?* He's crazy. Now if it was some women about here—— But her! He's crazy."

"Of course! He's wrong. I know all about it. You see, last night when I'm putting out the hall light she comes in, and just then out comes that chap—the fellow

with the cane—that's here every night to see that Miss De Courcy in twenty-four. Well, Wilkes happens to come home right on her heels, you might say, and meets the guy in front of the door. And he thinks they just separated in the hall. See?

"Well, they're at it hammer and tongs this morning—carrying-on from last night, I shouldn't be surprised. She says, 'You're insulting! I won't stand it! You'll have to apologize for this.' And he says, 'I wish to God I could, but it looks damn' suspicious to me. But I'll tell you what I *will* do: I'll give that waster a good bash on the nose if I see him about here again. I took a good look at him.'

"It was a wonderful broadcast, and me, with my head under the sink next door, taking it all in. If he didn't split that door, the way he slammed it——"

"You'd better tell him what really happened."

"Who? Me? Not likely! Mixing in other people's affairs is something I don't get paid for. Though if he asked me—he saw me there in the hall last night."

"He'd never ask you. So, if you won't tell him, I will."

"What! And let it out that I listened—make a spy out of me?"

"Well, all right, then. It's too bad, though. A nice person like her. I'd put him in his place if he was mine."

Her husband grinned. "I'll bet you would." But he was reflective as he began his meal.

THAT evening when he returned to his quarters his wife announced, with evident satisfaction, "I saw the Wilkeses go by. She had on those pretty alligator-skin shoes. You never see *her* stockings wrinkled or twisted. I reckon they've made it up between them—walking close together, they were."

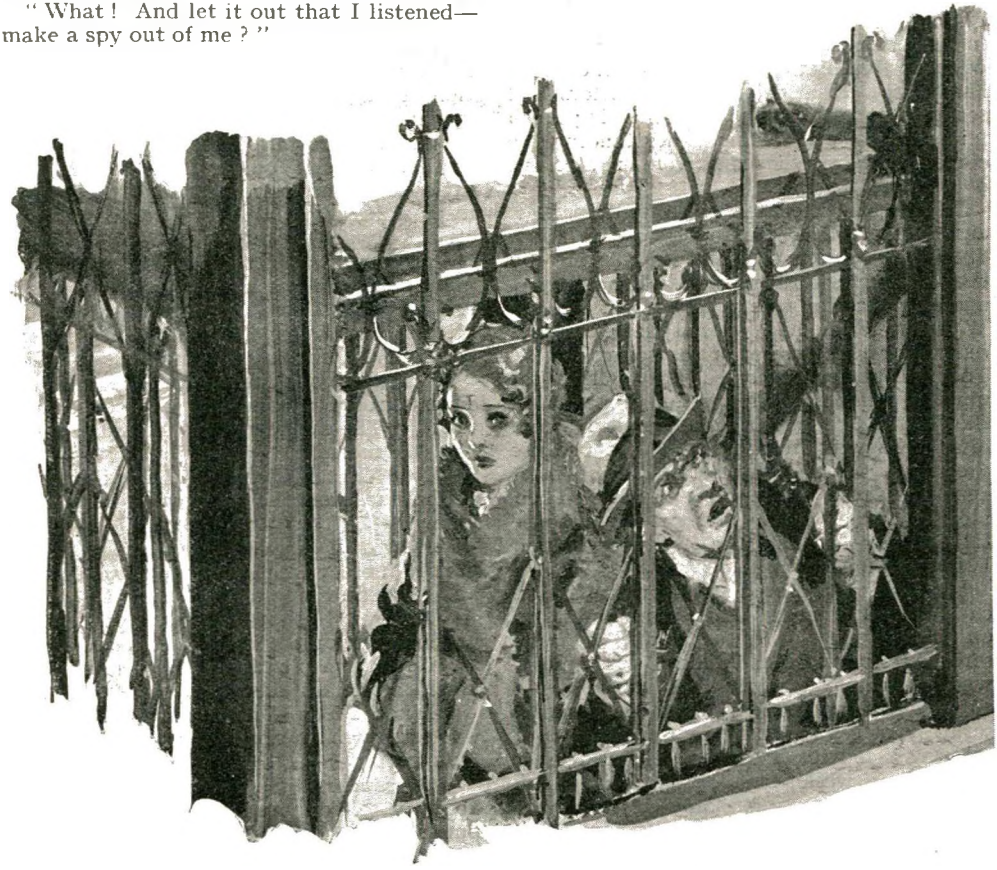
"Yes. Everything is rosy, I dare say."

She regarded him slyly. "Have you been at that sink again?"

"No. I finished that this morning. The fifth floor is quiet now, with everyone away but the Wilkeses."

"Then—— Here, you didn't tell him?"

"What do you take me for? I didn't have to."



"Of course"—with enticing sarcasm—"he came and told you the whole business himself."

"Well—no." The hall-porter was enjoying her impatience. "But I happened to be in the cellar when the lift starts and the indicator arrow goes to five—I thought it must be the Wilkeses because they're the only ones on the fifth. When I go upstairs a couple of minutes later the lift is stopped between the first and second, and, sure enough, the Wilkeses are in it.

"He's wild. Yells at me that they've got an engagement, and can't I put the thing right so that they can get out. She's quiet: not a word out of her. So I have to go downstairs. But I don't see anything wrong with the machinery. In about ten minutes I'm up again and tell Wilkes I'll have to try all the doors, in case a connexion got loose when the lift was coming down. You'd think he was in there for life, he's so wild.

"It's about a quarter to eight when I get down to the second, and while I'm tinkering with the door up comes that chap to see Miss De Courcy—he never bothers with the lift. I see the Wilkeses watching him while he's knocking at twenty-four. De Courcy opens it and says, 'Hello, darling!'—oh, very loving-like. Well, I go down to the cellar once more; and in a minute I get the lift moving. By the time I get back upstairs they're going out of the door, with Wilkes talking his head off."

"What a bit of luck for her! I'm glad."

"Yes. So'm I." The hall-porter grinned complacently as he filled his pipe.

"What was the matter with the lift this time?"

"Nothing. After Wilkes got a good look at that chap I only went down and—switched on the current again."

"He's wild. He yells at me that they've got an engagement, and can't I put the thing right so that they can get out."

PERPLEXITIES

1,068.—LEGAL TENDER.

WHEN the proprietor of a drapery store decided to change his line of business, he sent to the bank the very large number of farthings which had accumulated during some years of trading. Instead of stating their value in the ordinary way, he jocosely filled in the paying-in slip with the number of farthings in figures—five in all.

The cashier, who was a bit of a humorist also, returned the slip, by way of an informal receipt, without altering a figure, but introducing the symbols £—s—d in such a way as to give the value of the payment in a more conventional form.

What was this value?

1,069.—A TRANS-POSER.

THIS is not a severe poser. All that you have to do is to rearrange the letters in the square so that each of the horizontal lines spells a word. You are, however, so to arrange the letters that the word in the first horizontal line also appears in the first vertical line, while the diagonal from top right to bottom left merely repeats the same letter.

E	E	E	E
T	T	T	T
M	M	M	M
I	I	I	I

1,070.—ACROSTIC.

HERE are the clues of four words each of seven letters :—

(1) A reed pipe which, though not musical, "hath charms to soothe the savage breast."

(2) So was the fatted calf, keeping the pose to the end.

(3) A little man; you may get this bird in the tropics.

(4) The proper sphere in which men appear.

When the correct words are discovered, it will be seen that four words of four letters are formed when the first, third, fifth and seventh lines are read downwards. To assist you further, here is an anagram of these four words: LET MEN TAKE INCOME.

1,071.—A CATCHY TALE.

THREE sportsmen named George Washington Nunn, John Seddy, and Ananias Gort, were comparing notes in the inn parlour after a day's fishing. None had caught the same number of fish as either of the others. Nunn overstated his catch to the same extent as Gort, and John Seddy did so too.

Nunn said he caught twice as many as Gort caught and† Seddy said he caught; Seddy caught six less than half as many as Nunn and† Gort said they caught; and Gort said he caught twice as many as Nunn caught more than twice the number that Seddy said he caught.

The question is how many Gort caught and said he caught.

(† To avoid confusion, let it be stated that the word "and" is used here in its correct sense, signifying addition.)

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

1,063.—FIND THE BACHELORS.

As the number of bridegrooms must have equalled the number of brides, 4.2 per cent. of the male unmarried population on January 1st equals 2.8 per cent. of the female unmarried population. Therefore for every 28 males there were 42 females; *i.e.*, out of a total of 28+42=70 persons, the males constituted $\frac{28}{70}$, or 40 per cent. of the unmarried population of Bolonia on January 1st.

1,064.—ANAGRAM ACROSTIC.

1. A grand tie	T ragedian.
2. Beer in hat.	H ibernate.
3. Neat Prose.	E speranto
4. He rubs tan.	S unbather.
5. Tony items.	T estimony.
6. Hears Lear.	R ehearsal.
7. I hate Cork	A rtichoke.
8. City sense.	N ecessity.
9. A spy spied	D yspepsia.

1,065.—A LETTER SUM.

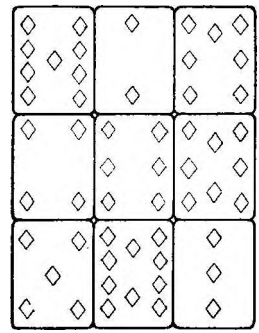
THE key word was :—I M P E R S O N A L

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

The subtraction and addition sums were therefore :—

822935	822935
9355	1643
813580	824578

1,066.—SQUARE DIAMONDS.



1,067.—SPECIAL CROSSWORD.

1 M	2 O	3 L	4 E	5 B	6 A	7 N	8 D
9 M	O	L	E	10 B	A	N	D
11 M	O	L	E	12 B	A	N	D
13 M	O	L	E	14 B	A	N	D
15 Q	16 U	17 I	18 D	19 D	20 U	21 T	22 Y
23 Q	U	I	D	24 D	U	T	Y
25 Q	U	I	D	26 D	U	T	Y
27 Q	U	I	D	28 D	U	T	Y