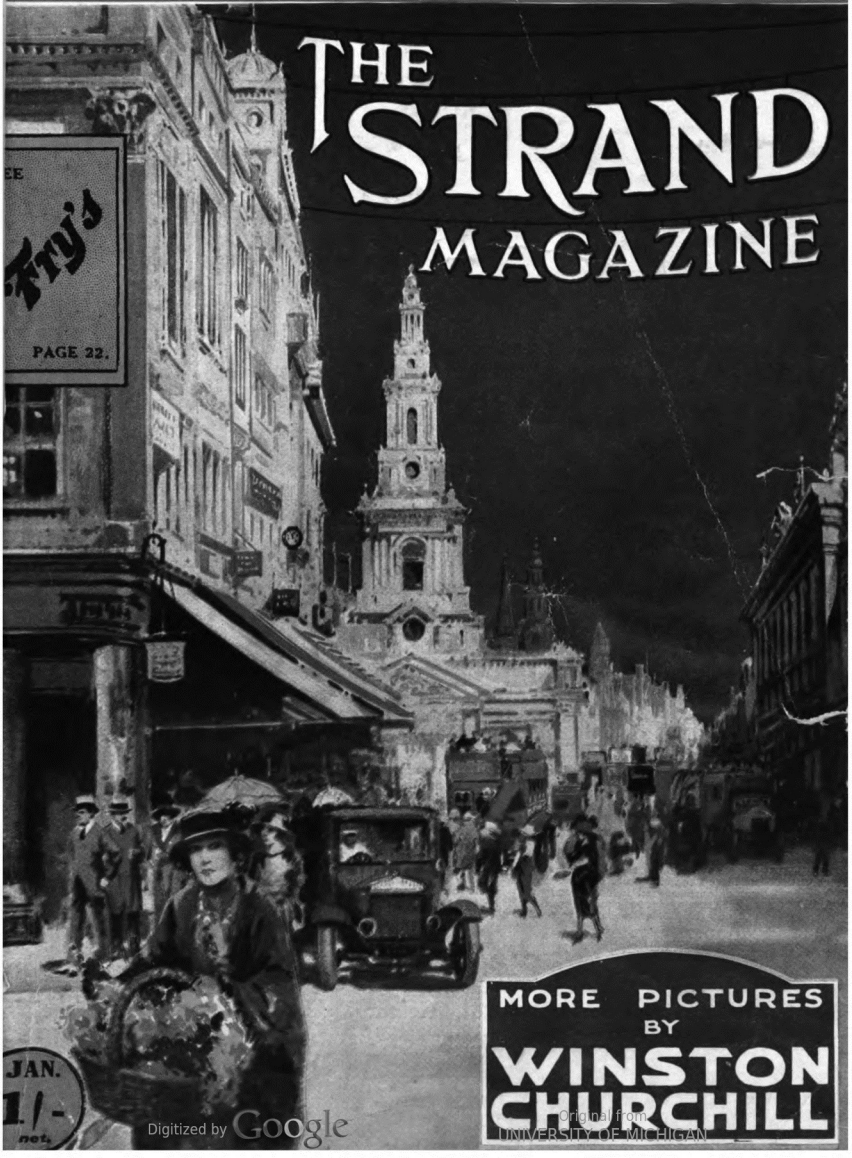
SPECIAL NEW YEAR NUMBER

THE STRAND MAGAZINE



MORE PICTURES BY WINSTON CHURCHILL

Illustration shows the 2 oz. Barney's Flat Tin: it fits conveniently into the jacket or hip pocket, making a pouch unnecessary.

Barney's is also sold in 1 oz. Lead packets and 4, 8, & 16 oz. Tins at 1/1 the oz. throughout.

The way to fill your Pipe:

Try filling this way. Don't use the forefinger—use the third or little finger of the right hand. Fill a little at a time. Take care. The difference between pipe-joy and pipe-disappointment is worth a trifling trouble.

To give a perfect smoke, the pipe-bowl needs to contain an *even* pressure of Tobacco *throughout* its depth. The tight-and-slack method, produced by careless "forefinger" filling, means many matches, much waste of good tobacco, and little smoking satisfaction.

Of equal importance with filling is the Pipe and the Tobacco. Get a good Pipe—an old Briar preferably. Fill it with Barney's in this Barney's way. Light thoroughly. Unless your case is *very* exceptional, you will *then* realise the deep joy of the Pipe—that continuous, recurring, *enduring* pleasure which smokers of cigarettes and cigars so rarely encounter.

Barney's
the Ideal Tobacco

is a subtle blend of cool-smoking, even-burning, rare-flavoured growths. It is coarsely cut, of medium strength and rich amber-and-black colour. Being moisture-free, it "bulks" well to the ounce. In the Tin, and in the Pipe, its aroma is inviting. Punch-bowle (full strength) and Parsons' Pleasure (mild) are the variations of Barney's.

Barney's is sold by the best shops in its three strengths under the Makers' guarantee (enclosed in each size) to replace free any out-of-condition package and refund the Sender's Postage.

If your regular Tobacconist does not already stock, he can obtain supplies in the strength you wish, *specially for you*, 1/1 the oz.; in 1 oz. lead packets and 2, 4, 8, and 16 oz. Tins.

TO THE TRADE.—Supplies of Barney's (medium), Punchbowle (full strength), Parsons' Pleasure (the mild Barney's), and of Barney's Cigarettes can be obtained through your usual Wholesaler, or direct from the Makers:

JOHN SINCLAIR, LTD.,
National Sales Bureau, 24, Holborn, E.C.1
(11) **Also at Edinburgh. Factory, Newcastle-on-Tyne.**

TO THE . . . SMOKER, AND TOBACCO DEALERS, OVERSEAS

Barney's—Britain's winning Pipe Tobacco—is making rapid headway Overseas. True it is that good stuff travels far.

Canada, U.S.A., India and China, Norway, Holland, Denmark, etc., are already receiving supplies. We invite inquiries from Tobacco Dealers in these Countries, and in all others where the need is felt for something *really good* in Pipe Tobaccos.

Smokers abroad who wish to try "*cheery, chummy Barney's from the North Country*," can have a 2-lb. Tin sent ex-bond at a cost of 20/- *plus* postage, either direct or through the V.P.P. or C.O.D. systems.

To order: send name and address clearly written with remittance for £1, and add the cost of postage to the Country of order (allow for 5lb. gross weight); or instruct similarly per V.P.P. or C.O.D.

Address: "Export Dept. S.M.6," John Sinclair, Ltd., International Sales Bureau, 24, Holborn, London, E.C.1, England.

Ex-bond prices for Punchbowle (full strength) and Parsons' Pleasure (the mild Barney's) are the same as for medium Barney's, and apply only to orders sent Abroad and of not less than 2-lb. The Home price of Barney's and its Kindred Tobaccos is 1/1 the ounce for each and every ounce.

ENCOURAGEMENT

In the long roll of successes achieved by School of Accountancy Students you will find your encouragement to train for the higher-paid posts.

SET before you on this page is definite, legally-certified evidence proving the enormous advantage and money value of School of Accountancy Training.

This evidence will convince you, by the extreme diversity of the examples reproduced, that no man of average intelligence who puts himself under the guidance of the School of Accountancy can possibly fail to benefit, provided only that he conscientiously applies himself to the training planned for him.

Up to 800% Increases in Salary achieved within Twelve months of enrolment

A *Questionnaire* which we send out to our students who have completed their training asks for answers to three questions :—

(a) What was your Business Position at date of enrolment as a Student?
(b) What is your Business Position to-day?
(c) To what extent annually has your salary or profits increased since the date you enrolled as a Student of the School?

The following are some of the replies received, all of which have been examined by David Paterson, Chartered Accountant, 135, Wellington Street, Glasgow, who certifies that they are genuine—

1 (*a*) Insurance Agent; (*b*) Accountant, A.L.L.A.; (*c*) 225% p.a. increase.

2 (*a*) Cashier and Audit Clerk; (*b*) Secretary and Accountant to Multiple Shop Company; (*c*) 600% p.a. increase with good prospects—age 25.

3 (*a*) Foreman; (*b*) Chief Book-keeper; (*c*) £104 p.a. increase.

4 (*a*) Clerk; (*b*) General Manager; (*c*) I have now more than ten times the salary I had when I first enrolled.

5 (*a*) Junior Clerk; (*b*) Chartered Accountant; (*c*) 800% p.a. increase.

6 (*a*) Clerk; (*b*) Accountant and Economist; (*c*) From £78 p.a. to £300 p.a.

7 (*a*) Clerk in a Law Office; (*b*) Accountant; (*c*) About 200% p.a. increase.

8 (*a*) A Clerk doing general office work; (*b*) Accountant employed in the Audit Department of a big industrial concern; (*c*) By £150 annually.

9 (*a*) Stores Ledger Clerk; (*b*) Acting Company Accountant; (*c*) 100 % p.a. increase.

10 (*a*) Shorthand Typist; (*b*) Business Accountant; (*c*) About 60% p.a. increase.

11 (*a*) Assistant Book-keeper at £150 p.a.; (*b*) Chief Accountant at £800 p.a.; (*c*) £650 p.a. increase.

12 (*a*) Employee at £150; (*b*) Accountant at £450; (*c*) £300 p.a. increase.

13 (*a*) Assistant to Land Agent, Auctioneer and Valuer; (*b*) Same, with prospect of participating in business; (*c*) £100 increase plus another £50 in a month.

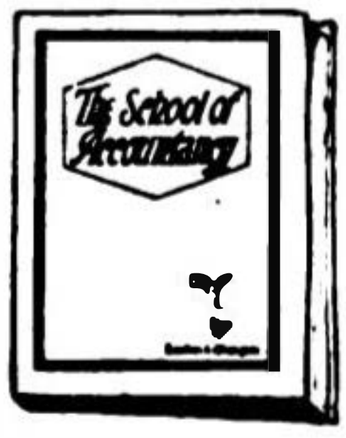
14 (*a*) Commercial Correspondent; (*b*) Secretary of Limited Company; (*c*) Considerably over 700% p.a. increase.

15 (*a*) Junior of Six Ledger Clerks; (*b*) Accountant; (*c*) 250% p.a. increase.

Why not raise yourself to a Professional status?

Out of a total of 15 Honours Certificates for the June, 1921, Examinations for the London Association of Accountants, 12 were won by the School of Accountancy students, who, during the past six years, have secured nearly all First Places and Prizes. At the Chartered Institute of Secretaries Examinations our showing is 90 per cent. passes in the Intermediate and 100 per cent. in the Final. Achievements at the Examinations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and Society of Incorporated Accountants are equally remarkable. In all commercial Examinations our record is one long string of First Places, Medals, Prizes and Distinctions.

Send for this FREE BOOK



It contains useful information about business and business training, gives particulars of all our Courses and Terms, and includes facts which will definitely convince you that our postal training will qualify you to fill a responsible executive position.

WRITE FOR A COPY TO-DAY.

THE SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTANCY

2, West Regent Street, Glasgow
10, Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C.2
Millgate Buildings, Long Millgate, MANCHESTER
62, Dale Street - - - LIVERPOOL
Post Office House, Infirmary St., LEEDS
8, Newhall Street - BIRMINGHAM

A METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

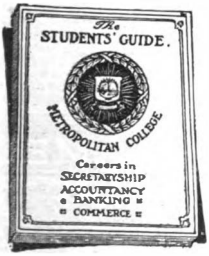
AMBITION SUCCESS

The climb to high position in business need no longer be a protracted and tedious process. With the advent of Specialised Postal Training in every department of present-day commerce *e.g., par excellence*, the spare-time study provided by the METROPOLITAN COLLEGE it can fairly be claimed that the attainment of SUCCESS has at last been reduced to the precise terms of a recognised science

Specialised Postal Training in

Accountancy, Commercial Correspondence, Bookkeeping, Auditing, Office Management, Costing and Factory Organisation, Mercantile Law, London B. Com. Degree, Secretarial Practice, Company Law, Business Organisation, Shorthand, Commercial Knowledge, Practical Advertising, Income Tax, Economics, Banking, etc.

Write To-day for this FREE BOOK



First comes AMBITION, the *desire* to succeed, with TRAINING as the next vital step; but it is well to tread warily here: be sure that YOU take the *Right Step*. Enrol with the METROPOLITAN COLLEGE for a course of Individual Postal Training under the personal direction of the most highly qualified Tutorial Staff in the United Kingdom.

This famous 'Varsity of Commerce—founded in 1910—can advance your prospects further in twelve months than mere plodding would achieve in as many years, and the privacy of the training (taken in leisure hours, in home surroundings) makes it as attractive to the busy man of 40 as to the youth of 16 or upwards.

Bear in mind that it is the "Ordinary Man" who, when TRAINED, becomes the "Big Man" in modern business, and write *to-day* for the

"STUDENTS' GUIDE," Free on Application.

The College has to its credit the longest and most impressive list of examination successes recorded by any commercial training institution in the United Kingdom, whether postal or oral.

METROPOLITAN COLLEGE,

Dept. S, St. Albans.

A.A.R. AIMS AT RETIRING WHEN 55 YEARS OF AGE.

This Plan will enable him to do so. Meanwhile it safeguards the financial comfort of his wife, should he not reach that age.

THIRTY-FIVE years of age and little headway made in the matter of saving! £200 or £300, that was all. Very little financial provision for his wife also—if anything happened to him. One or two small Insurance Policies, all helpful, but not sufficient to keep her in anything like the comfort he would desire her to enjoy. That was the situation last year.

This year, how different! A.A.R. has added no less a sum than £2,000 to his prospects for retirement at the age of fifty-five, and more than £2,000 has been added to the financial provision for his wife, should he be taken from her. This has been done without any undue sacrifice and, if all goes well, the Plan will be carried through just as easily as paying the rent.

A.A.R. deposits £110 per annum with the Sun Life of Canada for twenty years only. On his income tax he gets abatement of £16 10s. 0d. (a gift from the Government), which really reduces the deposit to £93 10s. 0d.

If A.A.R. dies any time before the Bond (for £2,000, with profits) matures, his wife will receive the full amount of £2,000 together with 50 per cent. of all the deposits that have been made up to that time. Thus, if death occurred after paying five deposits of £110, his wife would receive £2,275.

If he lives the full period, he himself will draw out £2,000 when he is fifty-five, together with profits, which are conservatively estimated at £740. Therefore his Capital will be increased by no less a sum than £2,740. As he has only deposited £1,870 net, he makes a profit of £870 on the transaction.

If he needs money at any time after making three deposits he can obtain an advance up to 95 per cent. of a guaranteed Surrender value. If he finds he cannot keep up the deposits he can exercise any one of several generous options.

Why not adopt this plan yourself? It is not only the best method of saving, but it enables you at the same time to safeguard the future of your Dependants. It can be adopted at any age and for any amount; your deposits may be about £10 if you cannot spare more, or £200 or £2,000 if your present income permits. The term may be for ten, twenty-five, or any number of years.

The plan is issued by the Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada, one of the most progressive Companies in the world.

The Assets of the Sun Life of Canada exceed £23,000,000 and the Company is under strict Government supervision. Anyone interested should write at once for full particulars, giving his or her age and the amount it is proposed to invest annually. All communications treated in confidence. Enquiries to J. F. Junkin (Manager), Sun Life of Canada, 6, Canada House, Norfolk Street, London, W.C.2.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Contents for January, 1922.

Frontispiece: "Arrived in her sitting-room, she closed the door. She had rather the look of a tigress as she turned and faced me."

		Page.
THE SINISTER QUEST OF NORMAN GREYES II.—The Kiss of Judas. Illustrations by Charles Crombie.	E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM..	3
PAINTING AS A PASTIME.—II. With Reproductions of his Paintings.	THE RIGHT HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL.	13
FIGHTING SNUB REILLY Illustrations by Steven Spurrier, R.O.I.	EDGAR WALLACE..	21
VARIATIONS ON A PERSONAL THEME.—I. Illustrations by Bert Thomas.	LANDON RONALD..	32
DINNER AT SEVEN-THIRTY Illustrations by Balliol Salmon.	H. W. LEGGETT	41
THE SENSE OF HUMOUR IN CHILDREN Illustrations by G. L. Stampa.	DR. C. W. KIMMINS	52
DID KRESSLER KILL HIS WIFE? Illustrations by S. Seymour Lucas.	H. DE VERE STACPOOLE	57
PERPLEXITIES Illustrations from Diagrams.	HENRY E. DUDENEY	65
THE PUZZLE CRANKS' SYMPOSIUM SOLUTIONS	HENRY E. DUDENEY	66
"RAFFLES" IN VIENNA Illustrations by E. Verpilleux.	JOSEPH GOLLOMB	67
THE VALIANT Illustrations by Ugo Matania.	HOLWORTHY HALL and ROBERT MIDDLEMASS	72
AN INDIVIDUALIST FROM BLUE WING Illustrations by Wilton Williams.	EDGAR MILNE	84
ACROSTICS		92

THE STRAND MAGAZINE is printed by The Cornwall Press, Ltd., and published monthly by the Proprietors, George Newnes, Limited, 8 to 11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, England. Subscription price to any part of the world, post free, for one year, 15s. (Canada, 14s.). Registered at the General Post Office for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York, N.Y., Post Office. Cases for binding volumes of THE STRAND MAGAZINE may be obtained to order from Booksellers for 3s., or post free for 3s. 4d. direct from the Office. Half-yearly Volumes, 7s. 6d. net.

Sole Agents for Australasia: Gordon & Gotch (A/asia), Ltd. Sole Agents for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd. American Agents: The International News Company, 83 and 85, Duane Street, New York.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.—MSS. and Drawings must be submitted at the owner's risk, and the Editor will not guarantee their safety, though when stamps are enclosed he will endeavour to return them. MSS. should be typewritten. All contributions paid for on acceptance.

The Index to Volume 62 can be obtained on application to the Publisher.

Most of the Original Drawings of the Illustrations in this Magazine are for sale. Terms may be had on application to the Cliché Department, George Newnes, Ltd., 8-11, Southampton Street, Strand, W.C.

To face back of Frontispiece.

"ARRIVED IN HER SITTING-ROOM, SHE CLOSED THE DOOR. SHE HAD RATHER THE LOOK OF A TIGRESS AS SHE TURNED AND FACED ME."

(*See page* 12.)

THE SINISTER QUEST OF NORMAN GREYES

by

E·PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

No. 2. "THE KISS OF JUDAS"

Sir Norman Greyes, the chief figure in this thrilling series of detective stories, having resigned his high position at Scotland Yard, makes a practice of studying the criminal world from the outsider's point of view.

ON the evening of my return from the Riviera after a three months' holiday, I was accosted in the lounge of Marridge's Hotel by a middle-aged man of inconspicuous appearance, who had been seated in a corner alone. It was some few seconds before I could recall him to my memory, but curiously enough a crowd of unpleasant associations gathered themselves together in my mind even before I recognized him.

"You haven't forgotten me and our golf down at Woking, Sir Norman?" he asked.

I knew all about him then.

"Mr. Stanfield, isn't it?" I said. "No, I haven't forgotten."

I was a few minutes early for my party, and I accepted the offer of a cocktail from my golfing acquaintance.

"That was an extraordinary interruption to our first game," he remarked. "I never fancied my little house much afterwards. I gave it up, in fact, within the year."

"I heard you had left," I told him. "Have you still your model domestic?"

"She left me soon afterwards," he replied, regretfully. "You had no luck in your investigations, Sir Norman?"

"I had no luck at all," I confessed. "Yet I don't despair. I always have the fancy that some day or other I shall solve that mystery."

The waiter brought the cocktails, and we raised our glasses.

"I drink, then, to that day, Sir Norman," my companion said.

"I am with you," I declared, heartily.

We talked idly of various matters for a few moments—principally of golf, which I had been playing regularly in the South of France. There were several dinner-parties being given in the restaurant that evening, and some very beautiful women were in evidence. One in particular attracted my attention. She was tall, and, though slim, beautifully made. Her complexion was perfect, although a little colourless. Her strange-coloured eyes had a nameless attraction. Her hair was just the shade of brown which appealed to me. She bowed to my companion as she passed, and joined a little group at the farther end of the hall. The last thing I noticed about her was her wonderful string of pearls.

"That is a very beautiful woman," I remarked. "Do you know who she is?"

"A South American widow—De Mendoza, her name is."

"You know her?"

"My humble apartment is on the same floor as her suite," my companion replied. "She is gracious enough sometimes to remember the fact that we meet occasionally in the lift."

My friends arrived, and I made my adieu to my erstwhile golfing acquaintance. Somehow or other, my meeting with him had left an unpleasant impression behind it. It had forced my thoughts back to the humiliating recollection of the fact that the murderer of Richard Ladbrooke still remained undiscovered, and that the man who had called himself Pugsley had walked away from detection under our very eyes and never

been heard of since. Amongst my fellow-guests was an official of the Home Office, and our conversation naturally drifted into the subject of social order.

"Your connection with Scotland Yard having long since ceased, Sir Norman," he remarked to me, "you will not be over-sensitive as to facts. The epidemic of crime which was raging about two years ago seems to have broken out again with exactly the same results. There are four undetected murders and five great robberies up to the debit of your late department. Your people believe that the same person is at the head of them who planned all those robberies eighteen months ago, and escaped arrest by shooting the inspector."

I affected to take only a casual interest in the information, but, as a matter of fact, I was considerably moved. If the man who had last concealed his identity under the name of Pugsley, but whom I strongly suspected to be the notorious Michael Sayers, had really come out into the open once more, life would possess a new interest for me during the next few months.

We were a party of six that evening—a celebrated criminal lawyer and his wife, my friend from the Home Office, with his wife and sister-in-law, and myself. The criminal lawyer, who was our host, heard scraps of our conversation, and leaned forward.

"You did well to leave Scotland Yard when your reputation stood high, Sir Norman," he said. "A new era of crime has dawned, and the struggle is no longer equal. It isn't the riff-raff of the world to-day who take to murder and burglary. The skilled and conscienceless scientist has taken their place. The criminal of to-day, in nine cases out of ten, is of higher mental calibre than the detective opposed to him."

"The struggle should be the more interesting," I remarked, vaguely.

It was a fancy of mine that my continued interest in my profession should remain as little known as possible, and I talked for some time on indifferent subjects to the lady who was seated by my side. We admired Mrs. De Mendoza and her gorgeous rope of pearls. My host intervened.

"It is women like that," he commented, "who choose to deck their bodies with jewels of fabulous value, who encourage crime. Roughly speaking, I dare say that necklace is worth eighty thousand pounds. For purposes of theft it could probably be disposed of for fifty thousand. What a haul for the scientific thief! If it is really true that Pugsley is once more at work, what an opportunity!"

"A woman must be very brave," my hostess declared, "to run such risks."

"The jewels are probably in the hotel safe most of the time," I suggested. "I don't suppose she goes out in them."

Our host smiled.

"I can imagine Pugsley finding a few minutes in the hotel quite sufficient," he observed. "He or his successors, whoever they may be, would think little enough of human life by the side of, say, fifty thousand pounds. The modern maxim of the thief seems to be all or nothing. By killing at sight they certainly increase their chances of escape."

THAT closed our conversation upon the subject. We sat about in the lounge and drank coffee and liqueurs, danced for a time, and smoked a few cigarettes. The party broke up as the lights in the lounge were being lowered. I was the only one of our little gathering remaining in the hotel, and I was talking for a few moments to the head-porter, who was an old acquaintance of mine, when a man made a somewhat hurried entrance through the swing-doors, and seemed on the point of proceeding to the office. As he saw me, however, he hesitated, and, turning aside, addressed me.

"Excuse me, but are you Sir Norman Greyes?" he asked.

I admitted the fact.

"Can I ask you to give me five minutes of your time on a matter of urgent business?"

He drew a card from his pocket and handed it to me.

I stepped underneath one of the electric standards and looked at the card:—

Mr. Stanley Delchester,

and underneath was the name of a famous insurance company. I motioned him to follow me into the deserted lounge.

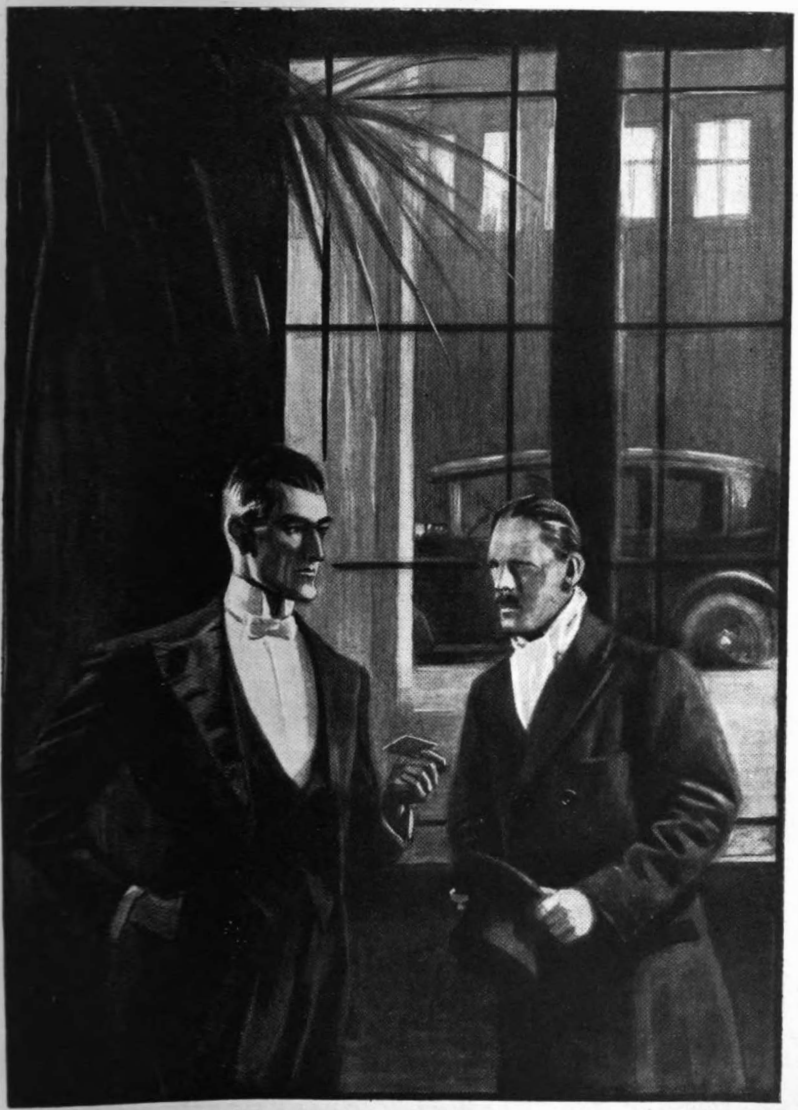
"Many years ago, Sir Norman," he reminded me, "when you were officially engaged at Scotland Yard, you saved our firm a great loss in the matter of the Hatton Garden emerald theft."

"I remember it quite well," I admitted.

"We understand," my visitor continued, "that you have now resigned from the Force, but we hoped that you might be inclined to undertake a small commission for us. It came to the ears of our chief quite unexpectedly that you were staying here, and he sent me after you at once."

"I can at least hear what the business is," I replied.

"There is staying in this hotel," the insurance-agent proceeded, "a Mrs. De Mendoza, the reputed widow of a fruit-merchant in Buenos Ayres. She is the fortunate possessor of a very wonderful pearl necklace, which she has insured with our firm for a hundred thousand pounds. Our acceptance



"Can I ask you to give me five minutes of your time on a matter of urgent business?"

of the policy was a grave error, which we recognized almost immediately afterwards. We know nothing of the lady, and in those circumstances it is against our business policy to accept the risk. We have done our best to protect ourselves, however. Since the policy was issued we have kept in constant touch with the lady, and in daily communication with the hotel detective. By to-night's post, however, we had a message from the latter to say that he was at home ill, and that during his absence his duties would be taken over by the night-watchman. The policy has only one more week to run, and will not, under any conditions, be renewed. We want to know if, for any fee which you care to name, you will do your best to guard the necklace for us during that week?"

"Have you had any intimation of thieves working in this neighbourhood?" I asked.

"None whatever," he replied. "I will be perfectly frank with you. It is not an ordinary robbery of which we are afraid. For some reason or other, our inquiry department has formed a dubious opinion of Mrs. De Mendoza herself."

"I see," I remarked. "You are afraid of a bogus theft?"

"Precisely! Directly we received the letter from the hotel detective we rang up the manager here. All that we could learn was that the illness was altogether unexpected, and that the man had been compelled to go home at a moment's notice. In reply to our request that a trained detective might take his place, the management assured us that they considered nothing of the sort necessary. No robbery of jewels had ever taken place from this hotel, and they considered their night-porter fully competent to watch over the interests of their guests."

I considered for a moment.

"Sir William Greaves, our manager, desired me to suggest a fee of two hundred guineas," my visitor concluded.

"I will accept the commission," I promised.

THE next morning I interviewed the manager of the hotel, to whom I was well known. He showed some irritation when I spoke of Mrs. De Mendoza's necklace and her nervousness concerning it.

"To be quite frank with you," he confessed, "although Mrs. De Mendoza is a good client, and pays her accounts regularly, I am inclined to be sorry that we ever let her the rooms."

"Why?" I asked.

"People with valuable jewellery should accept its possession with a certain resignation," he replied. "This is the last hotel in London where a jewel robbery would be likely. The lady herself, I understand, takes every possible care and caution. She wears her necklace nowhere except in the restaurant and lounge, and every night it is deposited in the hotel safe. I cannot see that she has the slightest cause for anxiety, nor do I understand the nervousness of the insurance company. However, you may rely upon it, Sir Norman, that every facility will be given to you in your task. I would suggest that you pay a visit to the lady herself."

The idea had already occurred to me, and later in the day I sent up my card to Mrs. De Mendoza, and was at once invited to enter her sitting-room. I found her writing letters, simply dressed in a black *négligée* and wearing the pearls. I was struck once more by the extreme elegance of her bearing and figure. As she turned and invited me to seat myself, she stirred in my memory a faint suggestion of reminiscence. I was not sure even then, however, whether it were a real person or a picture of which she reminded me. She listened to the few words with which I introduced myself, and smiled deprecatingly.

"It is true that I am very foolish," she admitted, "but then, I have always been a person of superstitions. I have owned my necklace for some years, and I have had it with me in quite lawless places. I have never, however, felt just the same amount of apprehension as I do at the present moment."

"That certainly seems strange," I replied. "The servants at this hotel are more carefully chosen than at any other hotel in London, and the guests are, in nearly every case, old clients."

"Apprehensions such as mine," she said, "are not based upon reason. However, I must confess that I feel more comfortable now that the insurance company has engaged your services. Would you not like to examine the pearls?"

She came over to my side and, without unclasping the necklace, let it rest in my hands. The pearls were all marvellously matched, all of considerable size, and with that milky softness which she pointed out to me as being a proof of their great perfection. As we stood there, necessarily close together, a wisp of her hair touched my forehead. Something in the timbre of her low laugh as she brushed it back induced me to look up. There were qualities about her smile, and the peculiar expression of her eyes, which gave me a momentary thrill. I understood at once why men turned their heads always to look at her.

"Do you admire my pearls?" she asked, softly.

I let them slip from my palm.

"They are very wonderful," I admitted.

She moved slowly away. I breathed more easily as the distance increased between us. She looked over her shoulder unexpectedly, and I believe that she realized my sensation. The slight frown passed from her forehead. She was obviously more content.

"Tell me how you propose to guard my treasures, Sir Norman," she inquired, as she sank into an easy-chair. "Shall you stand behind my chair at dinner, disguised as a waiter, and lie on my mat at night? It gives one quite a shivery sensation to think of such espionage!"

"Believe me," I assured her, "I shall not be in the least obtrusive. I understand that you send your pearls down every night to the hotel safe?"

"I have always done so," she answered. "Do you think it would be better to keep them up here? Will you promise to sit in this easy-chair, with a revolver on your knee, all night, if I do so?"

"Not for the world," I declared. "The hotel safe is much the better place."

"I am glad to hear your decision," she said, with a slight smile. "I should sleep very little if I thought that my pearls were near me—and that you were sitting here, on guard. The idea would be disturbing."

"One cannot guard against miracles," I observed, "but I think you can make your mind quite easy about the necklace. If you should need me at any time, the number of my room is four hundred and thirty-two."

"On this floor?"

"On this floor."

"Tell me," she asked, a little abruptly, as I rose to take my leave, "who was the man with whom you were talking last night in the lounge—a slim, middle-aged man with a very hard face? I am always seeing him in the lift."

"A man I know scarcely anything of," I replied. "His name, I believe, is Stanfield. I once played golf with him down at Woking."

"Stanfield?" she repeated. "Was it in his grounds near Woking that a murder was committed—a policeman was found shot there?"

I nodded.

"I was playing golf with Mr. Stanfield at the time," I told her.

"And the murderer was never discovered?"

"Never!"

"I wonder you didn't take an interest in the case yourself," she remarked.

"I did," I told her.

She made a little grimace.

"My fears for my necklace are reawakened," she declared. "Surely it ought to have been an easy task for a clever man like you, one who used to be called a really great detective, to discover the murderer?"

"It is beyond my powers to bring him to justice, at any rate," I replied. "There are many criminals walking about to-day of whose guilt the police are perfectly well aware. They cannot be arrested, however, for lack of evidence."

"How thrilling!" she murmured. "Will you ask me to dine with you one night and tell me some of your adventures?"

"I shall be charmed," I assented.

ABOUT seven o'clock a note was brought into my room:—

Dear Sir Norman,—

A lady and her husband who were dining have disappointed me. Can you, by any chance, be my guest? If so, let us meet at eight o'clock in the lounge.—Hopefully yours,

BLANCHE DE MENDOZA.

I scribbled a line of acceptance. I felt, as I descended into the lounge that evening, a premonition that life for the next few hours was going to be very interesting indeed.

At eight o'clock precisely Mrs. De Mendoza came into the lounge. Her entrance made a mild sensation. Mr. Stanfield, who was seated in his accustomed corner, drinking his cocktail, watched our meeting and departure into the restaurant with obvious surprise.

"The little man was there again, who stares at me so much—Mr. Stanfield, I think you called him?" she remarked, as we took our places.

I nodded.

"I dare say he was surprised to see us together," I said. "I asked him who you were, on the night of my arrival here."

"Why?"

"For the same reason that a great many other people ask the same question," I replied.

She made a little grimace.

"You are determined to pay me no compliments this evening, and I am wearing my favourite gown."

"I admire your taste," I assured her.

"Anything else?"

"You are the best-dressed and the best-looking woman in the room."

"Too impersonal," she complained.

I turned the conversation to the subject of the necklace. The pearls were collected for her, she told me, by her husband, some in India, some in the Malay States, some in Paris, some in Rio. She spoke of him quite frankly—a prosperous fruit-broker who had achieved sudden opulence.

"It was quite as much a change for me

as for him," she remarked. "I was a typist in Buenos Ayres before we were married. I have known what it is to be poor."

She answered all my questions without reserve, and I began to feel that I had been mistaken with regard to her, We took our coffee in the lounge afterwards. In the background, my golfing friend, Mr. Stanfield, was seated, smoking a cigar in a retired corner, and having the air of studymg everyone who passed.

"He is quaint, that little man," my companion remarked once, as he glanced over towards us. "He reminds me of those impossible characters one reads about in magazines, who detect crime for the pleasure of it, and discover hidden treasures in absurd places."

"He is, as a matter of fact," I told her, "a retired City merchant with a passion for golf—at least, that is what the golf secretary at Woking told me."

The music was seductive, and presently we danced once or twice. In the ballroom, however, my companion showed signs of renewed nervousness. The fingers of one hand were nearly all the time straying around her neck, as though to assure herself that the necklace was still there. Presently she drew me away with an apologetic little laugh.

"I am quite mad," she confessed, "but I have a fit of nerves to-night. I am going upstairs early. Do you mind?"

"Of course not," I told her. "Let me see you to the lift."

"I am going to ask you to do more than that," she said, as we crossed the hall. "I am going to ask you to come up to my sitting-room and escort my maid down to the office when she takes my necklace there. As a reward, you can come back afterwards, if you will, and have a whisky-and-soda with me."

"I shall be very pleased," I acquiesced.

I RANG for the lift, and we ascended together to the fourth floor. She handed me her key, and I unlocked the door of her charming little *salon*. She pointed to the evening paper and an easy-chair.

"Please make yourself comfortable for five minutes," she begged, looking back from the threshold of the inner room. "I shall just let Annette help me out of my gown. Then I will give her the jewel-case and she shall call for you."

She nodded and disappeared. I stood for a moment looking after her. The door was closed softly. I heard her call to her maid in the farther apartment.

These next few seconds seemed to beat themselves out in my brain, charged with a strange and almost amazing significance. I am convinced that I acted from impulse. There was nothing definite in my mind when from behind that closed door I conceived the sudden idea which prompted my action. I crossed the floor of the sitting-room and opened the door which led on to the corridor. There was no one in sight, and it seemed to me that fewer of the electric lights were lit than usual. I stood there, every nerve of my body riveted upon an attempt at dual listening. I listened for the return of Mrs. De Mendoza, and I listened for the opening of either of her doors. Presently, what I had divined might happen came to pass. The door of her bedroom, in a line with the one behind which I was lurking, opened. I peered through the crack. Annette, the maid, a trim, dark figure, had crossed the threshold. She stood for a moment, listening. Then, without even glancing towards the sitting-room, she walked swiftly along the corridor and turned to the left towards the lift and staircases. In a couple of stealthy strides I, too, had reached the corner, and, peering round, watched her movements. To my surprise, she passed the lift and turned the other corner of the corridor towards the staircase. As soon as she was out of sight I followed. As I reached the farther angle every light was suddenly extinguished. There was a little gurgling cry, the sound of a heavy fall upon the soft carpet. In a second or two I was on the spot. I could dimly see where Annette was lying, gasping for breath, apparently half unconscious. By her side lay the jewel-case, open and empty.

I did nothing for a moment towards raising any alarm. I bent over the girl and satisfied myself that she was not shamming—that she had, in effect, been subjected to a certain amount of violence. I glanced at the transoms over the doors of the bedrooms opposite. There were three of them between where I was and the turn to the lift. Suddenly the farthest door was opened, softly but not stealthily. A figure appeared and, leaning down, threw a pair of boots upon the mat. I suppose that I was dimly visible in the semi-gloom, for the man suddenly left off whistling and turned in my direction.

"Hallo, there!" he called out.

I drew from my pocket the little electric-torch which I had been keeping in readiness, and flashed it upon him. It was my friend Mr. Stanfield, in striped yellow-and-white pyjamas, a cigarette between his teeth, his feet encased in comfortable slippers.

"What the devil are you doing out there?" he demanded. "And who's turned the lights out?"

"Better turn them on, and you may see,"

I replied. "There's a switch close to your door."

He found it after a second or two's fumbling, and stared at us in amazement. The maid, with her fingers still to her throat, had recovered sufficiently to sit up, and was leaning with her back to the wall, ghastly white and moaning to herself. The empty jewel-case told its own story.

"Jerusalem!" Mr. Stanfield exclaimed, breathlessly. "A robbery!"

"Ring your bell," I directed.

He disappeared into his room for a moment, leaving the door open. Presently he reappeared.

"I've rung all three," he announced.

"Then the wires have been cut," I answered, pointing to the register lower down, which had not moved. "Go to the lift and see if you can get anyone."

He was gone for about half a minute. I leaned down towards the girl, who was beginning to cry.

"Did you see who attacked you?" I asked.

"No," she sobbed. "All the lights went out suddenly. Someone came up from behind. I did not hear a sound—just the clutch at my throat and the choking."

"Why did you not wait for me, or go down by the lift?" I demanded.

She looked a little puzzled.

"I never go by the lift," she replied.

"Why not?"

"Fred, the second-floor valet, generally meets me on the floor below," she explained, reluctantly, "and——"

"I see," I interrupted. "But didn't your mistress tell you to wait and go down with me?"

The girl seemed surprised.

"My head is queer," she admitted, "and I cannot remember much, but madam said nothing to me except to tell me to hurry down."

The silence of the corridor was suddenly broken. Mr. Stanfield reappeared, followed by a little army of servants and the manager.

"Send everyone away except two men whom you can trust," I begged the latter. "Mrs. De Mendoza's necklace has been stolen."

There was a murmur of consternation and excitement. The manager selected two of the servants and dismissed the rest. He posted one by the lift and one by the staircase. I explained in a few words what had happened.

"Do you think the thief has got away?" he asked.

"One cannot tell," I replied. "I want to know about these three rooms."

He glanced at the numbers.

"The farthest one is occupied by Mr. Stanfield," he announced. "The other two are empty."

"You are sure that this one," I asked, pointing to the door close to where we stood, "is unoccupied?"

"Certain," was the confident reply. "Take my keys and see for yourself."

I was on the point of doing so when Mrs. De Mendoza appeared. She was clad in a wonderful light-blue wrapper, and the touch of excitement seemed to add to her beauty.

"My necklace!" she gasped. "Don't tell me that it is gone!"

"Madam," the manager began, "I regret to say——"

"What were you doing, then?" she cried, turning to me. "Do you mean to say that it was stolen whilst Annette was with you?"

"Annette was never with me," I replied. "She left your bedroom with the jewel-case without coming near the sitting-room."

"Is this true, Annette?" her mistress demanded.

"But why not, madam?" Annette faltered. "You said nothing to me about going into the sitting-room. I did not know that monsieur was to accompany me."

"The girl is telling a falsehood," Mrs. De Mendoza declared, angrily.

"Could these matters wait for a moment?" I intervened. "Our immediate task is to try and recover the necklace. I wish everyone to leave this place—except you, sir," I added, addressing the manager, "and myself."

THE manager was a person of determination, and in a moment or two the corridor was empty. Mr. Stanfield lingered on the threshold of his room.

"Can I remain?" he inquired. "In a way I am interested, as my room is so near."

The manager waved him back.

"I desire to hear what Sir Norman has to say, alone," he insisted.

Mr. Stanfield reluctantly withdrew. We first of all entered the room opposite to us. It was empty, and apparently undisturbed. There was a connecting door on the left.

"Where does that lead to?" I asked.

The manager unlocked it. It led into a similar room, also empty. The room on the other side was Mr. Stanfield's, also connecting. The outlook of all three was on to some mews.

We withdrew into the first one we had entered.

"Will you lend me that master-key of yours?" I begged.

The manager detached it from his chain and handed it to me.

"If you should be instrumental in recovering the necklace, Sir Norman," he said,

"'My necklace!' she gasped. 'Don't tell me that it is

"the hotel authorities would appreciate all possible reticence in the matter."

I nodded.

"It is hard to keep anything out of the Press, nowadays," I reminded him, "but so far as I am concerned you may rely upon my discretion."

THE few days that followed were filled with hysterical and irritating appeals, complaints, and inquiries from Mrs. De Mendoza herself, the insurance company, and the management. No efforts on our part could keep the affair out of the newspapers, and the disappearance of the necklace became the universal subject of conversation. On the sixth day after the robbery, I felt that a brief escape was necessary. I proposed to Mr. Stanfield, whom I met in the hall of the hotel, that we went down to Woking and had a round of golf, an arrangement to which he agreed with avidity. We lunched at the club-house, and, as on the previous occasion, we played a careful and hard-fought game. It was on the eighteenth tee when one of those unexplained moments of inspiration came to me which serve as the landmarks of life. We had spoken of that grim tragedy which had interrupted our first game. I thought of poor Ladbrooke lying there with a bullet-hole in his forehead; Janet, the maid, serene and secretive, with the strange eyes and unruffled manner. The memory of these things came back to me as I stood there, with the wet wind fluttering in the leaves of the trees and Stanfield filling his pipe by my side, and it seemed as though my faculties were suddenly prompted by a new vigour and a new insight. Supposing it had been the maid who had killed the prying stranger! What was her motive? Whom was she trying to shield? Could it be her master? And if her master's name were not Stanfield, might it not be Pugsley? The two men were of the same height and build, and the one thing which Rimmington had always insisted upon was Pugsley's genius for disguise. The pieces of my puzzle fell together like magic, and with them the puzzle of the necklace. I turned back to the tee, and I was suddenly conscious of my companion's intense gaze. His eyes seemed to be boring their way into the back of my head. I knew that something in my face had given me away.

"Your honour," he said, tersely.

I topped my drive miserably. My companion's drive went sailing down the course, and he halved the match in a perfectly-played four. We walked together to the club-house.

gone!' 'Madam,' the manager began, 'I regret to say——'"

"A whisky-and-soda?" I suggested.

"I'll change my shoes first," he answered, turning towards the dressing-room.

I drank my whisky-and-soda, exchanged greetings with a few acquaintances, and paid my bill. Then I went to look for Stanfield. I might have spared myself the trouble. He and the taxi had alike disappeared. I had to wait whilst they telephoned for another, and I travelled up to London alone.

THE game was played out in quite the grand fashion. On my arrival at the hotel, I found the representative of the insurance company waiting to see me, and I was told that Mrs. De Mendoza was in her room. Accompanied by the manager, we made our way thither. I think that she was well prepared for what was coming, or rather one part of it. She received us a little impatiently.

"I have been waiting to hear from your firm all day," she said, addressing Delchester. "My jewellers who valued the pearls, and my legal adviser, have helped to make out my claim. I am anxious to know when I may expect your cheque."

"I am thankful to say, madam, that that will not be necessary," the manager announced, stepping forward. "Here is your necklace."

He handed it to her. She stared at it like a woman transfixed. There were no signs of joy in her face. She seemed, indeed, for the moment stricken with consternation.

"When was it found?" she demanded, breathlessly.

"About four o'clock on the morning after the theft," I told her.

"But where?"

"If you will come with me," I replied, "I will show you."

I led the way down the corridor to the exact spot where Annette had been attacked, and opened the door of the nearest room. I saw Mrs. De Mendoza start when she saw the heavy bolt which had been fitted to the communicating door.

"I came to the conclusion," I explained, "that the theft was committed by someone hiding in one of these three rooms, and to the further conclusion that the necklace had been hidden on the spot."

"How did you guess that?" she inquired.

"Because the thief made a slight blunder," I answered. "For a single moment, as I stood by Annette's side in the darkness outside, I saw a light flash out through the transom of this room. I must admit, however," I went on, "that it took me four hours to find the necklace."

"Where was it, then?" she asked, curiously.

I turned up the rug. In one of the planks of the wooden floor was a knot. I took a little corkscrew gimlet from my pocket, bored through it, and drew it out. Then I made Delchester push his finger through. There was a hook fastened in the underneath side of the floor.

"The necklace was hanging there," I told him. "I imagine it would have been found later on by someone making a point of occupying this room. As a matter of fact, I believe it was booked for the first week in June."

"By whom?" Mrs. De Mendoza demanded.

"By Mr. Stanfield," I replied. "He is paying a return visit in June, and he appears to prefer this room to the one he is occupying at present.

There was a brief silence. Delchester held out his hand.

"We are very much obliged to you, Sir Norman," he declared. "Our insurance, as you know, expired at midday to-day. I need not say that it will not be renewed. I wish you all good afternoon."

He took his leave. The manager appealed to me.

"Sir Norman," he said, "there is a great deal in this matter which it is hard to understand. I hope that you will not consider it a case for the police?"

I turned to Mrs. De Mendoza.

"Do you wish to prosecute?" I asked. "There is a certain amount of circumstantial evidence which might be collected."

"Against whom?"

"Against the gentleman whom we have known as Mr. Stanfield."

She laughed scornfully.

"That funny little man who sits about in the lounge? I would as soon believe that you yourself were the thief, Sir Norman! I have my necklace back, and that is all I care about," she concluded.

THE manager departed, very much relieved. Mrs. De Mendoza beckoned me to follow her to her suite. Arrived in her sitting-room, she closed the door. She had rather the look of a tigress as she turned and faced me. Never was a woman born of more splendid courage.

"And the epilogue?" she asked.

"I fear," I replied, "that the epilogue must be postponed. It was only to-day, on Woking golf links, that a certain little scene of eighteen months ago became reconstructed in my mind. I saw a motiveless crime explained. I realized by whose hand that bullet might have found its way into Ladbrooke's brain, and for whose sake."

"Yet you let him go!" she cried.

"If I had dreamed," I said, slowly, "that it was possible for him to escape, even for an hour, I would have wrung the breath from his body first. As it is, I must admit that he has scored a trick. But you must remember, or perhaps you have yet to find out," I went on, "that the world where such a man can live is a very small place."

"And what about me?" she asked. "From the moment when I heard that you had gone out with him alone, I could foresee what was coming. Yet I was not afraid. I waited for you."

I looked at the necklace and shrugged my shoulders.

"It is hard to leave a hundred thousand pounds," I pointed out, "and so far as you realized, the game was not up. Not a soul in this hotel knew that the necklace was in the manager's safe. Yet you had courage to remain and see the thing through. I admit that."

She came a little nearer to me. The green lights in her eyes were soft. I felt the attraction of her as she meant me to.

"Where I love," she said, "I have courage, and my love has every quality which the devil ever distilled, except constancy. Are you afraid of me, Sir Norman, because I killed a man who——"

"A confession," I muttered.

She laughed.

"No witnesses," she reminded me. "After all, it was you who once said that murder was the easiest of crimes. What you know and what I know will never take me to the dock. Would you put me there if you could, my enemy?"

I drew a little away. Her breath was almost upon my cheek, her lips had taken to themselves the curve of invitation.

"I would put you there without a moment's hesitation," I retorted. "You killed a man in cold blood to shield a murderer and a criminal. The hand of justice is slow, especially where evidence is scanty, but in the end it grips."

She laughed scornfully.

"You speak in ignorance," she declared. "At least be friends," she went on, "until you can drag me to the gallows. I shot him with my right hand."

She held out her left fingers. I raised them to my lips.

"The kiss of Judas," I warned her.

"You will need more than his cunning," she answered.

Next month: "The Menwood Road Bank Robbery."

PAINTING AS A PASTIME

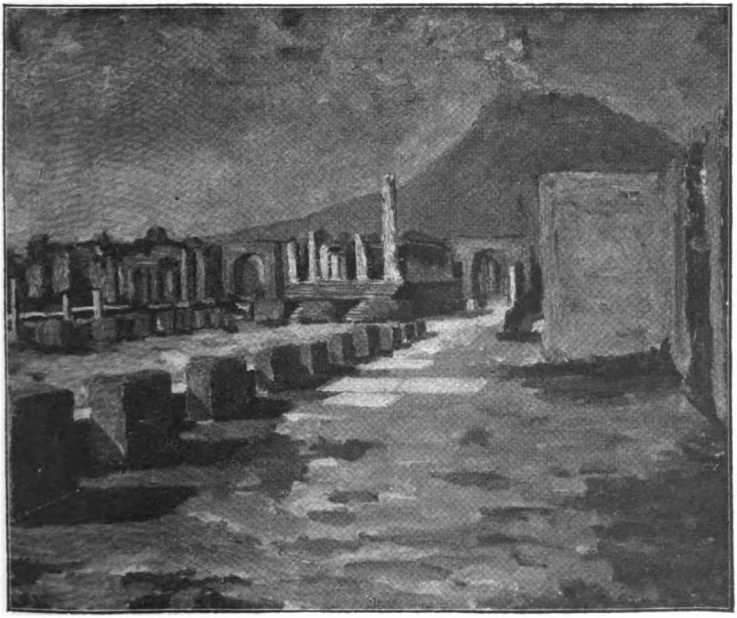
by

THE RT. HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL

WITH REPRODUCTIONS OF HIS PAINTINGS

Part II.

I MUST say I like bright colours. I agree with Ruskin in his denunciation of that school of painting who "eat slate-pencil and chalk, and assure everybody that they are nicer and purer than strawberries and plums." I cannot pretend to feel impartial about the colours. I rejoice with the brilliant ones, and am genuinely sorry for the poor browns. When I get to heaven I mean to spend a considerable portion of my first million years in painting, and so get to the bottom of the

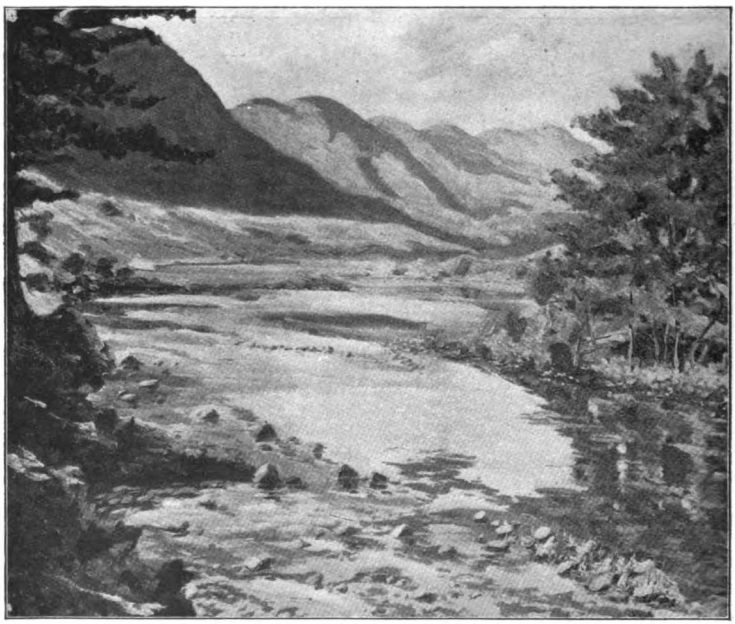


Vesuvius, from Pompeii.

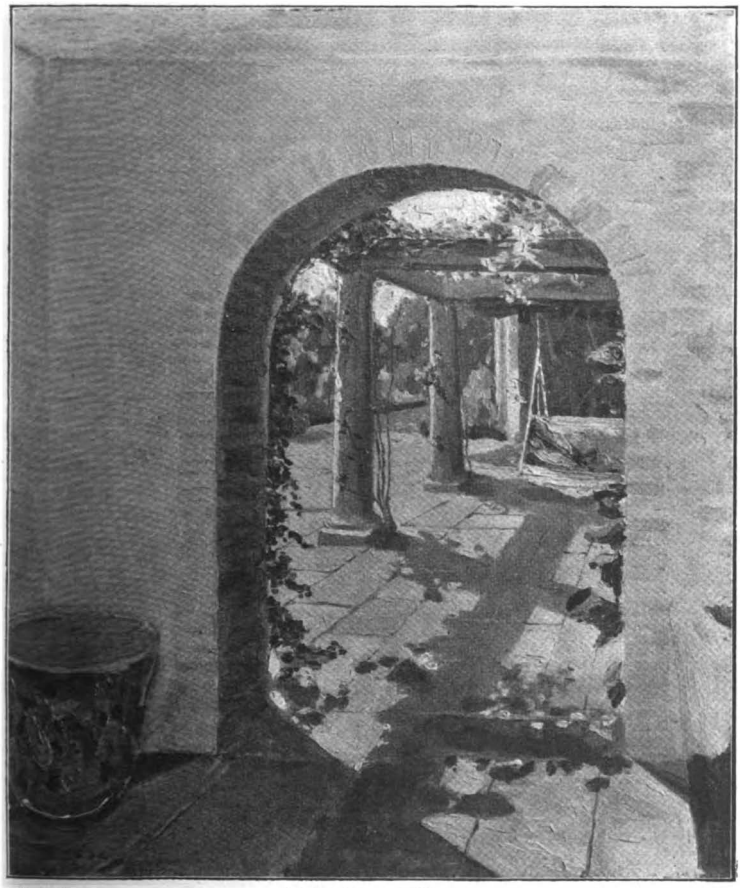
subject. But then I shall require a still gayer palette than I get here below. I expect orange and vermilion will be the darkest, dullest colours upon it, and beyond them there will be a whole range of wonderful new colours which will delight the celestial eye.

Chance led me one autumn to a secluded nook on the Côte d'Azur, between Marseilles and Toulon, and there I fell in with one or two painters who revelled in the methods of the modern French school. These were disciples of Cézanne. They view Nature as a mass of shimmering light in which forms and surfaces are comparatively unimportant, indeed hardly visible, but which gleams and glows with beautiful harmonies and contrasts of colour. Certainly it was of great interest to me to come suddenly in contact with this entirely different way of looking at things. I had hitherto painted the sea flat, with long, smooth strokes of mixed pigment in which the tints varied only by gradations. Now I must try to represent it by innumerable small separate lozenge-shaped points and patches of colour---often pure colour—so that it looked more like a tessellated pavement than a marine picture. It sounds curious. All the same, do not be in a hurry to reject the method. Go back a few yards and survey the result. Each of these little points of colour is now playing his part in the general effect. Individually invisible, he sets up a strong radiation, of which the eye is conscious without detecting the cause. Look also at the blue of the Mediterranean. How can you depict and record it? Certainly not by any single colour that was ever manufactured. The only way in which that luminous intensity of blue can be simulated is by this multitude of tiny points of varied colour all in true relation to the rest of the scheme. Difficult? Fascinating!

Nature presents itself to the eye through the agency of these individual points of light, each of which sets up the vibrations peculiar to its colour. The brilliancy of a picture must therefore depend partly upon the frequency with which these points are found on any given area of the canvas, and partly on their just relation to one another. Ruskin says in his "Elements of Drawing," from



The Valley of the Brora, Sutherlandshire.



Mells, Somersetshire.

which I have already quoted. "You will not, in Turner's largest oil pictures, perhaps six or seven feet long by four or five high, find one spot of colour as large as a grain of wheat ungradated." But the gradations of Turner differ from those of the modern French school by being gently and almost imperceptibly evolved one from another instead of being boldly and even roughly separated; and the brush of Turner followed the form of the objects he depicted, while our French friends often seem to take a pride in directly opposing it. For instance, they would prefer to paint a sea with up and down strokes rather than with horizontal; or a tree-trunk from right to left rather than up and down. This, I expect, is due to falling in love with one's theories, and making sacrifices of truth to them in order to demonstrate fidelity and admiration.

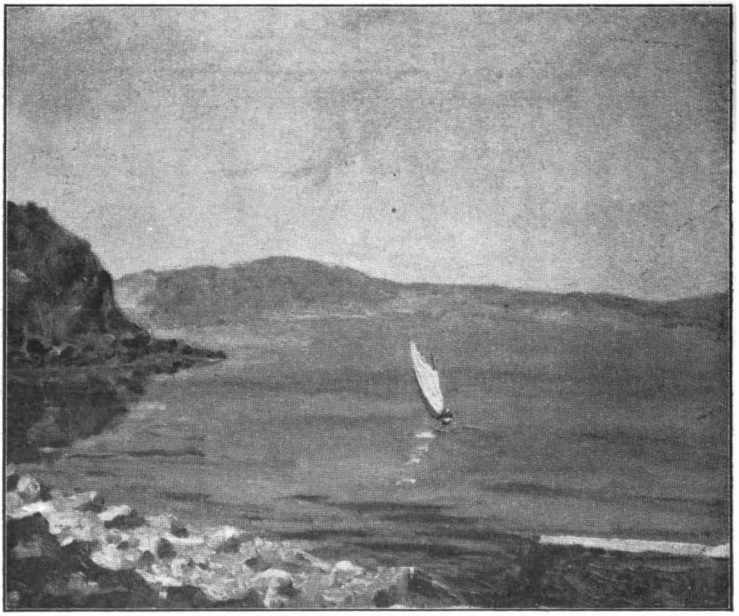
But surely we owe a debt to those who have so wonderfully vivified, brightened, and

illuminated modern landscape painting. Have not Manet and Monet, Cézanne and Matisse, rendered to painting something of the same service which Keats and Shelley gave to poetry after the solemn and ceremonious literary perfections of the eighteenth century? They have brought back to the pictorial art a new draught of *joie de vivre*; and the beauty of their work is instinct with gaiety, and floats in sparkling air.

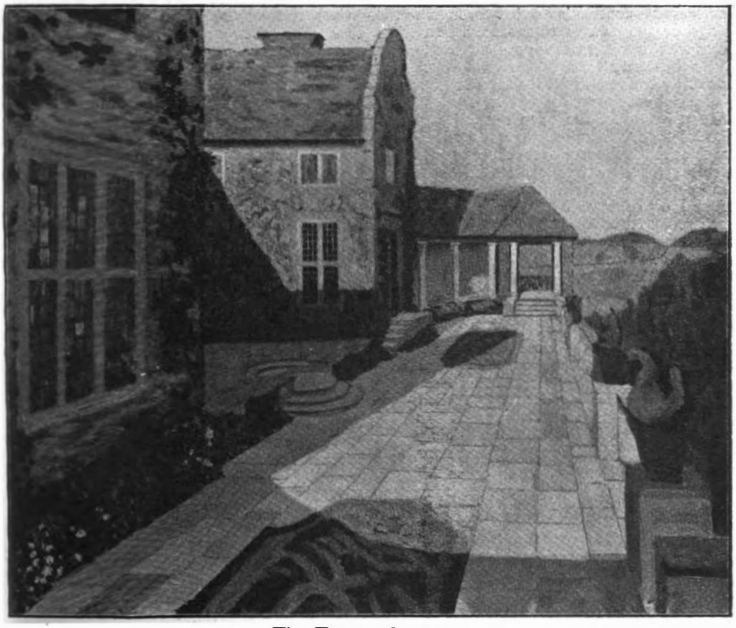
I do not expect these masters would particularly appreciate my defence, but I must avow an increasing attraction to their work. Lucid and exact expression is one of the first characteristics of the French mind. The French language has been made the instrument of that admirable gift. Frenchmen talk and write just as well about painting as they have done about love, about war, about diplomacy, or, we may add, cooking. Their terminology is precise and complete. They are therefore admirably equipped to be teachers in the theory of any of these arts. Their critical faculty is so powerfully developed that it is perhaps some restraint upon achievement. But it is a wonderful corrective to others as well as to themselves.

My French friend, for instance, after looking at some of my daubs, took me round the galleries of Paris, pausing here and there. Wherever he paused, I found myself before a picture which I particularly admired. He then explained that it was quite easy to tell, from the kind of things I had been trying to do, what were the things I liked. Never having taken any interest in pictures till I tried to paint, I had no preconceived opinions.

I just felt, for reasons I could not fathom, that I liked some much more than others. I was astonished that anyone else should, on the most cursory observation of my work, be able so surely to divine a taste which I had never consciously formed. My friend says that it is not a bad thing to know nothing at all about pictures, but to have a matured mind trained in other things and a new strong interest for painting. The elements are there from which a true taste in art can be formed with time and guidance, and there are no obstacles or imperfect conceptions in



On the Rance, near St. Malo.



The Terrace, Lympne.

the way. I hope this is true. Certainly the last part is true.

Once you begin to study it, all Nature is equally interesting and equally charged with beauty. I was shown a picture by Cézanne of a blank wall of a house, which he had made instinct with the most delicate lights and colours. Now I often amuse myself when I am looking at a wall or a flat surface of any kind by trying to distinguish all the different colours and tints which can be discerned upon it, and considering whether these arise from reflections or from natural hue. You would be astonished the first time you tried this to see how many and what beautiful colours there are even in the most commonplace objects, and the more carefully and frequently you look the more variations do you perceive.

But these are no reasons for limiting oneself to the plainest and most ordinary objects and scenes. Mere prettiness of scene, to be sure, is not needed for a beautiful picture. In fact, artificially made pretty places are very often a hindrance to a good picture. Nature will hardly stand a double process of beautification: one layer of idealism on top of another is too much of a good thing. But a vivid scene, a brilliant atmosphere, novel and charming lights, impressive contrasts, if they strike the eye all at once, arouse an interest and an ardour which will certainly be reflected in the work which you try to do, and will make it seem easier.

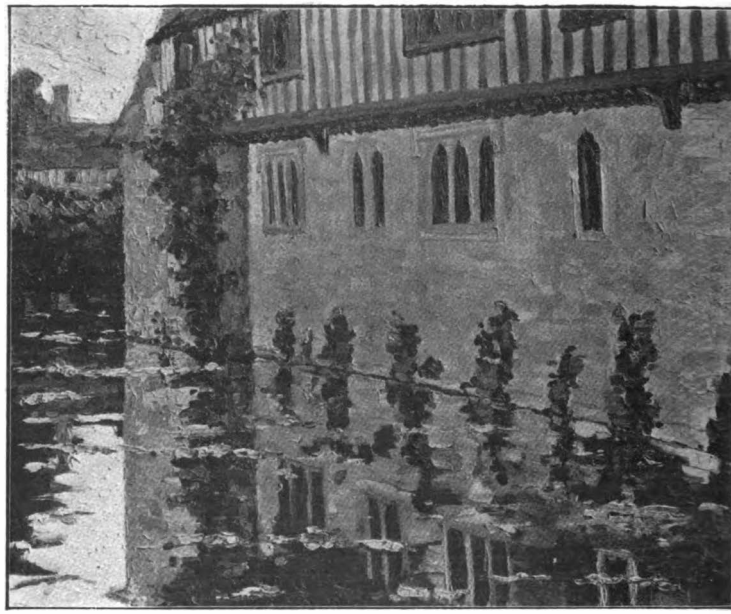
It would be interesting if some real authority investigated carefully the part which memory plays in painting. We look at the object with an intent regard, then at the palette, and thirdly at the canvas. The canvas receives a message dispatched usually a few seconds before from the natural object. But it has come through a post-office *en route*. It has been transmitted in code. It has been turned from light into paint. It reaches the canvas a cryptogram. Not until it has been placed in its correct relation to everything else that is on the canvas or that has yet to be put upon the canvas can it be deciphered, is its meaning apparent, is it translated once again from mere pigment into light. And the light this time is not of Nature but of Art. The whole of this

considerable process is carried through on the wings or the wheels of memory. In most cases we think it is the wings—airy and quick like a butterfly from flower to flower. But all heavy traffic and all that has to go a long journey must travel on wheels.

In painting in the open air the sequence of actions is so rapid that the process of translation into and out of pigment may seem to be unconscious. But all great landscapes have been painted indoors, and often long after the first impressions were gathered. In a dim cellar the Dutch or Italian master recreated the gleaming ice of a Netherlands carnival or the lustrous sunshine of Venice or the Campagna. Here, then, is required a truly formidable memory of the ocular kind. Not only do we develop our powers of observation, but also those of carrying the record—of carrying it through an extraneous medium and of reproducing it, hours, days, or even months after the scene has vanished or the sunlight died.

I was told by a friend that when Whistler guided a school in Paris he made his pupils observe their model on the ground floor, and then run upstairs and paint their picture piece by piece on the floor above. As they became more proficient he put their easels up a storey higher, till at last the *élite* were scampering with their decision up six flights into the attic—praying it would not evaporate on the way. This is, perhaps, only a tale. But it shows effectively of what enormous importance a trained, accurate, retentive memory must be to an artist; and conversely what a useful exercise painting may be for the development of an accurate and retentive memory.

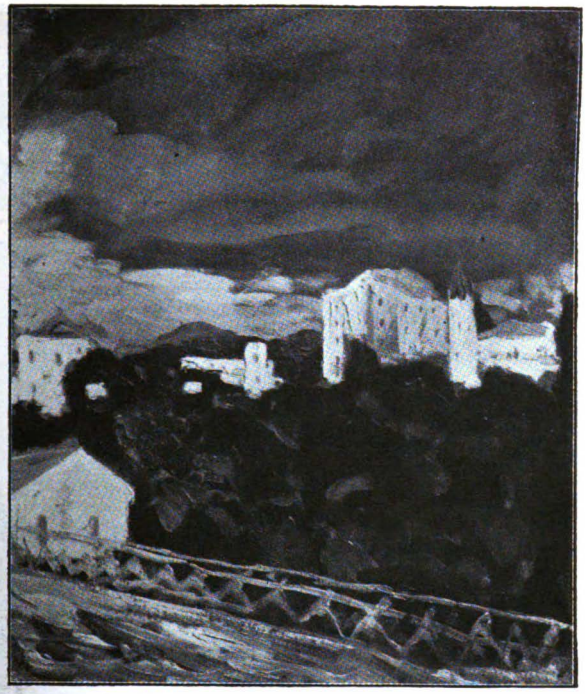
There is no better exercise for the would-be artist than to study and devour a picture, and then, without looking at it again, to attempt the next day to reproduce it. Nothing can more exactly measure the progress both of observation and memory. It is still harder to compose out of many separate, well-retained impressions, aided though they be by sketches and colour notes, a new complete conception. But this is the only way in which great landscapes have been painted—or can be painted. The size of the canvas alone precludes its being handled



Ightham Moat.

out of doors. The fleeting light imposes a rigid time-limit. One can not go back day after day without the picture getting stale. The painter must choose between a rapid impression, fresh and warm and living, but probably deserving only of a short life, and the cold, profound, intense effort of memory, knowledge, and will-power, prolonged perhaps for weeks, from which a masterpiece can alone result. It is much better not to fret too much about the latter. Leave to the masters of art trained by a lifetime of devotion the wonderful process of picture-building and picture-creation. Go out into the sunlight and be happy with what you see.

Painting is complete as a distraction. I know of nothing which, without exhausting the body, more entirely absorbs the mind. Whatever the worries of the hour or the threats of the future, once the picture has begun to flow along there is no room for them in the mental screen. They pass out into shadow and darkness. All one's mental light, such as it is, is concentrated on the task. Time stands respectfully aside, and it is only after many hesitations that luncheon knocks gruffly at the door. When I have had to stand up on parade, or even, I regret to say, in church, for half an hour at a time, I have always felt that the erect position is not natural to man, has only been painfully acquired, and is only with fatigue and difficulty maintained. But no one who is fond of painting finds the slightest inconvenience in standing to paint for three or four hours at a time or for seven or eight hours in a day. Not, at least, as long as the interest holds.



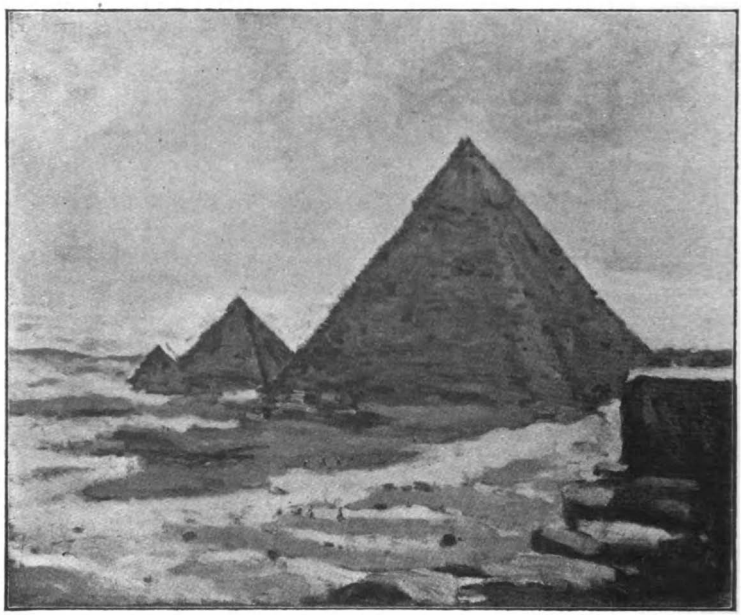
Thunderstorm: Nice.

Lastly, let me say a word on painting as a spur to travel. There is really nothing like it. Every country where the sun shines and every district in it has a theme of its own. The lights, the atmosphere, the aspect, the spirit, are all different; but each has its native charm. Even if you are only a poor painter you can feel the influence of the scene, guiding your brush, selecting the tubes you squeeze on to the palette. Even if you cannot portray it as you see it, you feel it, you know it, and you admire it for ever. When people rush about Europe in the train from one glittering centre of work or pleasure into another, passing—at enormous expense—through a series of mammoth hotels and blatant carnivals, they little know what they are missing, and how cheaply priceless things can be obtained. The painter wanders and loiters contentedly from place to place, always on the look-out for some brilliant butterfly of a picture which

can be caught and set up and carried safely home. All he asks for is sunshine, and if it be really true that we are to have thirty-five years of drought, there ought to be no difficulty about supplying that. Côte d'Azur, Côte d'Argent, Côte d'Emeraude all present to him their world-famed beauties, which neither crowds nor casinos are needed to enhance.

Sir William Orpen advised me to visit Avignon on account of its wonderful light, and certainly there is no more delightful centre for a would-be painter's activities: then Egypt, fierce and brilliant, presenting in infinite variety the single triplex theme of the Nile, the desert, and the sun; or Palestine, a land of rare beauty—the beauty of the turquoise and the opal—which well deserves the attention of some real artist, and has never been portrayed to the extent that is its due. And what of India? Who has ever interpreted its lurid splendours? But after all, if only the sun will shine, one does not need to go beyond one's own country. There is nothing more intense than the burnished steel and gold of a Highland stream; and at the beginning and close of almost every day the Thames displays to the citizens of London glories and delights which one must travel far to rival.

I end where I began; I hope sincerely that these notes and sketches may encourage others to find out whether they have not got within them that love of colour and faculty of observation which will enable them to enrich their leisure with the delightful amusement of painting. At any rate I shall dwell in the comfortable expectation of stirring some slumbering genius into action, or at least of investing a modest life with a new sense of fullness, security, and independence.



At the Pyramids.

FIGHTING SNUB REILLY

By EDGAR WALLACE

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER R.O.I.

TEN minutes before Snub Reilly left his dressing-room, a messenger delivered a letter. His seconds and his manager protested against his reading anything which might well be disturbing at such a critical moment, for the little man was fighting for his title, and Curly Boyd, the aspirant to championship honours, had knocked out four successive opponents before he claimed his right to a meeting with the world champion.

"Let me see it," said Snub, and he was something of an autocrat.

The letter was typewritten and was signed by two reputable men whose names were honoured in the sporting world.

Snub read the letter slowly.

"A challenge," he said, tersely, "for ten thousand pounds a side."

"Who is the feller?" asked the manager.

"They call him 'An Unknown'—he wants to meet the winner of to-night's fight. Send a wire and say I accept."

The manager grinned.

"Better wait till after the fight?" he suggested.

"Send it," said Snub, curtly, and put on his dressing-gown and that queer grimace of his at one and the same time.

Snub Reilly's "fighting face" was not pretty. It wrinkled up his nose and twisted his mouth to a sneer. Some say it was designed to scare the opposition; some explained it as "nerves." Snub was sensitive on the matter, for even fighters have their amiable weaknesses. He was never photographed except in the ring, so that the world knew Snub by such snaps and films as showed a puckered face, a mouth awry, and the dishevelment of hair which comes from the strenuous exchanges of the ring.

This night the public glimpse of him was brief, and Curly Boyd, his opponent, had himself to thank for such an early ending to his rosy dreams. He had detected, as he thought, a certain unsteadiness in Snub's leg movements and a hint of anxiety showing through his grimace. So Curly, relying upon his excellent fitness, had put everything into a projected left and right. Incidentally he was fighting the greatest ring strategist of his day, and when he uncovered his jaw for the fraction of a second——

"Eight—nine—ten---out!" said a far-away voice in Curly's ear. Somebody shook him by his gloved hand, and he heard above the roaring in his head a louder roar, and dropped his head wearily to catch a glimpse of a figure in a flowered dressing-gown, slipping through the gangway into the gloom behind the ring seats.

It was a fine thing for Snub, because the eyes of the world were on that fight---outside the building limousines were parked twenty deep—and before he reached his dressing-room the news of his victory was quivering in dots and dashes on every line and cable that ran from the city.

Ten minutes after the fight he left the building by a side door and mingled with the thousands who crowded about the entrances. Modesty was Snub Reilly's favourite vice.

The echoes of such a combat were not to die down in a day, for Snub was something of a national hero. This champion, who never gave interviews, who was so taciturn and secretive that his very seconds did not meet him until the day before his fights, appealed to the popular imagination as no other ring favourite had done. And when at the end of the Press description it was announced that "An Unknown" had challenged the winner for a purse of ten thousand pounds,

and the challenge had been accepted, there was an added value to the news.

Even staid and sleepy Rindle, dedicated to the education of youth, was excited, wildly excited for Rindle. The headmaster read the account of the fight at breakfast, and hummed and hawed his approval of the lightning stroke which laid the presumptuous Curly Boyd so low.

And on the opposite side of the breakfast table, Vera Shaw, nineteen and beautiful, hid a newspaper on her lap, read furtively, and was thrilled. A group of boys *en route* from their dormitories to prayers and morning school gathered about one daring soul who had broken all school regulations and purchased forbidden literature, and whooped joyously.

It was natural that Barry Tearle, the mathematical master, should stop in the midst of correcting exercises, hitch up his gown at the neck for comfort, and sit back to study the account. Natural, because he was also games master and instructor of the noble art to Rindle School.

He put down the paper with a thoughtful frown and went back to his exercises, lighting his pipe mechanically the while. Presently he gathered the papers together and rose. The bell was clanging the warning for prayers in Hall. He was hurrying across the quadrangle and under the archway, when he heard his name called.

He turned quickly, startled almost, and swept off his cap. It was Vera.

"I saw you come home this morning."

"Did—did you? My car had a breakdown near Northwood—I hope I didn't disturb you?"

No errant boy called to his study to explain a delinquency could have looked more patently guilty than he, and she laughed, and when Vera Shaw laughed it required all his self-possession to behave sanely.

"No, you didn't disturb me. I couldn't sleep and was sitting at the window approving the moon when you sneaked into the quad.—there is no other word for it. Did you see the fight?" she asked suddenly, and he gasped.

"No, I did *not* see the fight," he said, severely, "and I'm surprised——"

"Pooh!" She flicked her finger at him. "I've read every bit about it. Do tell me who is 'An Unknown' who is going to fight that darling Snub—run, you'll be late!"

He was the first to leave after the final "Amen." She was standing where he had left her, but Sellinger was with her, and, forgetful of the admirable charity toward all men which he had so recently intoned, Barry cursed Sellinger most heartily.

John Sellinger lived in Rindle; his ancestors had founded Rindle School, and he himself assumed the style and manner and mental attitude of hereditary patron saint to the school. He was tall, overtopping Barry by six inches, florid, well-fed, and prosperous. He was good-looking, too, in a heavy, aquiline way. And he made no secret that his patronage of Rindle might extend to acquiring relationship with its headmaster.

"Morning, Tearle. I suppose you didn't see the fight?"

"No, I *didn't* see the fight," said Barry, savagely. "Have I nothing better to do? Did you?" he asked suddenly.

"Yes, rather—I was just telling Vera all about it. Wonderful fellow, Reilly. Smaller even than you."

"Is it possible?" asked Barry, affecting an extravagant surprise. "Could you see him?"

"Don't be sarcastic," said Mr. Sellinger. "Of course you could see him. He isn't a beauty, I can tell you—lop-sided face—you've seen the picture in the papers?—but, boy, he's a fighter!"

"So I've heard," said Barry, wearily.

"As to the unknown idiot who wants to fight him——"

"Good morning," said Barry, shortly, and, with a lift of his hat, went on.

"CURIOUS fellow, that." Sellinger shook his head. "Can't quite make him out, Vera."

"Mr. Sellinger." Her tone was very quiet.

"Yes, Vera?"

"Will you please not call me by my Christian name?"

He was surprised and hurt.

"But, my dear child——"

"But I'm not your dear child," she said, in the same voice. "I'm not even a child."

"Of course, if you wish it, Ve—Miss—er—Shaw, by all means. I'm sorry if I've offended you."

He was not sorry, except for himself, of course; but it was the kind of reply that a representative of the oldest family in the county should make.

"You haven't offended me—only I don't like it. Why do you think that Mr. Tearle is curious?"

"Well," he hesitated, "a schoolmaster isn't the best paid professional in the world, and yet Tearle lives in style, has a car of his own, is always dressed well."

She looked at him in that weary, patient way which women can make so offensive.

"Other people have money—you have money—and yet it isn't curious," she said, coldly; "or do you think it is curious because you haven't got it all?"

He smiled indulgently.

"How like you to defend him!" he said, and before indignation could permit an appropriate reply he went on: "Did your father say whether the School Extension Committee was meeting at the usual hour?"

She shook her head and half turned to go.

"I wish——" he began, and stopped.

"You wish?"

"Well——" This time his halt of speech was less natural. "I wish that other arrangements would be made about——"

"About what?"

She was exasperated by his studied hesitations, but she was curious.

"About the money that has been raised for the School Extension. It is a tremendous sum for a—well, for an ill-paid master to handle."

He knew he had made a mistake before the words were out, for the girl's face had gone from crimson to white as the drift of his meaning appeared.

"Do you"—she was breathless, and her voice sounded strange even to herself; "do you—mean to suggest that Mr. Tearle—gets his money for motor-cars—oh, it's too absurd—too wicked! How dare you!"

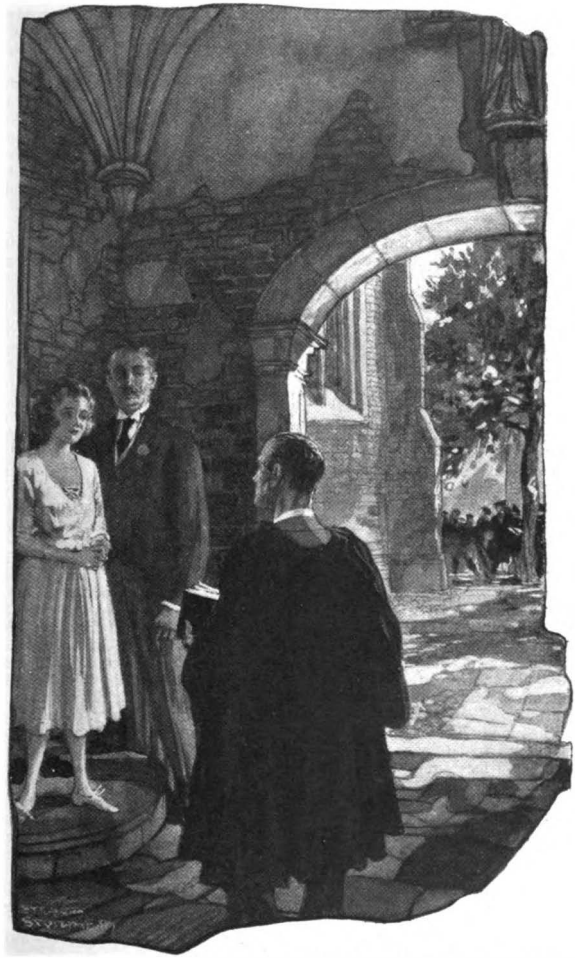
He blinked at her in amazement. He had never regarded her as anything but a soft, fluffy, kitteny thing and a possible ornament to his gloomy house. He looked aghast upon a fury; her grey eyes, dark with passion, her lips straight drawn and unbecoming.

"My dear——" he began.

"You must have an evil mind to think such things," she flamed. "I hate you!"

He stood as a man petrified until she had disappeared through the porch of Dr. Shaw's study.

"Very unbecoming," he spluttered to



"Vera was standing where he had left her, but Sellinger was with her."

himself, fuming; "very unladylike — very unnecessary——"

DR. SHAW came in to lunch ten minutes earlier than Vera had expected, and brought Sellinger with him, to the girl's intense annoyance.

"I've asked Sellinger to stay to lunch, Vera," he said. "Will you tell Mrs. Burdon to put another place at the table? We have a meeting of the Extension Committee this afternoon and I cannot send Mr. Sellinger all the way back."

A more sensitive man than Sellinger might have been hurt by the apology for his invitation; but Sellinger was not that kind of man. He smiled graciously upon the girl, and in that smile conveyed a tacit agreement that what had happened that morning should be overlooked and forgotten.

Fortunately for Vera, there was little need for her to speak, for the conversation centred about the afternoon committee meeting. When Tearle's name came into the conversation it was Dr. Shaw who was responsible.

"There was rather an unpleasant little incident this morning in town," he said—and when those of Rindle School referred to "town" they meant all that part of Rindle which was not school. "I don't know what started it, but I'm quite sure the boy was not in the wrong."

"Is one of the boys in trouble, father?" asked Vera, quickly.

"Well, not exactly in trouble. You remember—do you know the man Crickley—he has a tumbledown shanty on the Jamaica Road?"

She nodded.

"An awful ruffian," she said; "he was at court last year, and he drinks, doesn't he?"

"I should imagine he had been drinking this morning. He was going through the town with his unfortunate wife, and apparently something she said disagreed with him—at any rate, the brute hit her first with his stick, and although I don't suppose he hurt her very much, one of the boys of the fifth—young Tilling, to be exact—who happened to be passing, interfered——"

"Good for him!" said the girl, her eyes sparkling.

Dr. Shaw smiled.

"It looked like being bad for him," he said. "For the blackguard turned his attention to the boy, and had him by the scruff of the neck, according to accounts, when Tearle, who was going over to the higher mathematical set, came upon the scene. I understand he asked the man very civilly to release the boy; whereupon he certainly loosed his hold of the boy, but he struck at Tearle."

The girl opened her mouth in consternation.

"Was he—was he hurt?" she asked.

"No, I don't think he was," the doctor chuckled, quietly. "Tearle, you know——" he turned to Sellinger, "is our games master, and a rattling good instructor in boxing. I saw the captain of the school, who witnessed the encounter, and he is most enthusiastic about what followed."

"Did he strike the man? Was there a brawl?" asked Sellinger, ready to be shocked.

"I don't think there was much of a brawl, but he certainly struck the man," said the doctor, dryly. "Crickley had to be assisted away."

Sellinger shook his head heavily.

"I don't know whether that sort of thing is good for Rindle," he said, in his capacity of patron saint.

"Nonsense!" said the doctor, sharply, and the girl beamed upon her father. "A most excellent lesson and example to the boys. It means, of course, that the boys in Tearle's form will give themselves airs, but it is what I would term a most excellent thing to have happened."

Sellinger was discreetly silent on this conclusion.

"I TALKED to Tearle after school," Dr. Shaw went on. "Of course, Tearle was most apologetic." He paused and frowned. "Do you know, Vera," he said, "I had the most extraordinary impression when I was speaking to Tearle. In this morning's paper—which, of course, you haven't read, my dear, at least not the part that I am referring to—there was a reference to a challenge which had been issued by a certain Unknown to the boxer, Snub Reilly."

"You don't mean that——" she said, breathlessly.

"Yes, I had that impression—that Tearle was the Unknown. You see, I mentioned the fight of the previous evening, and I talked to him about the challenge, just as I might talk to Sellinger here in an ordinary, matter-of-fact way. And do you know that he went as red as a beetroot?"

Sellinger laughed loud and heartily.

"That would be too absurd," he said, contemptuously. "I grant that our friend Tearle may be an excellent boxer, but an excellent amateur has no earthly chance against even a third-class professional, and Snub Reilly is at the top of his class."

Dr. Shaw shrugged.

"I agree it is ridiculous," he said.

"Besides," Sellinger went on, enlarging his argument, "before that match can occur, somebody has got to find ten thousand pounds, and ten thousand pounds is a lot of money——"

Vera was looking at him, and their eyes

met. She saw in his the dawn of a great suspicion, and her hand gripped the handle of her bread knife murderously. It was Sellinger who changed the subject abruptly, but the girl knew that he was far from relinquishing his theory.

Sellinger went out to telephone to his house, and the girl was left alone with her father.

"Daddy," she said, "do you like Mr. Sellinger?"

He looked at her over his glasses.

"No, dear, to be candid," he said, slowly. "I think him a most unmitigated bore!"

She held out her hand solemnly and her father gripped it.

"I think you are the most wonderful father in the world," she said. "And all this time I was thinking that you loved him."

"I loathe him," said her father, frankly, "in so far as it is possible for a person of my profession to loathe anybody. But the Sellingers are a sort of tradition at Rindle, and one has to be civil to them."

"I'm going to tell you something."

She walked over and shut the door which Sellinger had left open.

"Do you know what he suggested to me this morning?"

"Who, Sellinger?"

She nodded.

"He suggested that the School Extension Funds are being stolen by Mr. Tearle."

Dr. Shaw jumped up, pink with anger.

"How dare he? It is a monstrous suggestion!" he said. "I shall tell him——"

"No, you'll tell him nothing," said Vera, hastily. "What is the use of my giving you my confidence? I am only telling you for your guidance."

Dr. Shaw sat down in his chair again.

"A disgraceful suggestion," he mumbled, "and palpably stupid. Certainly Tearle, as treasurer, has control of the money——"

"Is it cash? I mean, could you go into a room and take so many hundreds or thousands from a box?" asked the girl, and Dr. Shaw laughed.

"Of course not. The money is represented by certain securities—stocks in various industries and railways. Tearle has the handling and the care of these stocks—he is a capital man of business. But to suggest ——!" he fumed, and it needed all the girl's power of persuasion to bring him back to a condition of calm.

Mr. Sellinger went home that night deep in thought, and sat up until two o'clock in the morning writing letters to his friends. One of these friends was an editor of a newspaper closely identified with sport, and from him in a few days he learnt more particulars of the challenge which had been issued to the great Snub Reilly. The ten thousand pounds had to be deposited by the fifth of the following month, the sum being lodged in the bank in the name of three prominent sportsmen, one of whom was the writer.

Where would Tearle get his ten thousand? He was absolutely certain that Tearle was the challenger, and the news he had from the school confirmed him in his opinion. Further confirmation came one day at a committee meeting when Tearle had taken some papers from his pocket. Amongst them Sellinger saw a somewhat gaudy print. It was strangely familiar to him, but it was not until he got home that it flashed upon him that the print was a programme of the Reilly-Boyd fight! So Tearle had been a spectator after all! And he had sworn that he had not seen the fight!

The master, too, was in strict training, and once, looking from his bedroom in the dark hours of the morning—Sellinger was not a good sleeper—he saw a figure in white vest and shorts run past the lodge entrance, and recognized Barry Tearle as the runner.

The weeks that followed were for Mr. Sellinger weeks of interest and investigation. At a meeting of the Extension Committee, which gathered once a week to transact formal business, he asked for and secured a list of the securities held by the treasurer. And with this in his possession he bided his time.

THERE arrived at this period an unobtrusive individual who took lodgings in the village and appeared to have very little to do except to loaf about the school and watch the boys and the masters go in and out. He was a charming man, who made friends with the postmaster, and was on good terms with all the tradesmen before he had been in the village three days. One night Sellinger was finishing his dinner when a visitor was announced. It was the stranger who greeted his employer deferentially.

"Well, Mr. Sellinger," he said, with satisfaction, "I have a few items of information for you which will interest you."

"Have you got him?" asked Mr. Sellinger, eagerly.

"I wouldn't like to say that," said the detective, "but I rather fancy that if we haven't got him we've put him in a very tight corner."

He took a note-book from his pocket and turned the leaves.

"Yesterday afternoon Tearle sent a registered envelope to Taylor and Grime, the brokers. I got the address, because I'm a friend of the postmaster's—anyway, that was easy. I went straight up to the City by the night train and called on Taylor and Grime the next morning, and it couldn't have

happened better for me, because there's a clerk in the office whom I know very well. As a matter of fact, I saved him from a whole lot of trouble a couple of years ago."

"What was it that Tearle sent?" asked Sellinger, holding his breath.

"Five thousand shares in the Rochester and Holbeach Railroad. One thousand shares in the Land Development Syndicate, and a thousand shares in the Newport Dock Corporation."

"Wait a moment," said Sellinger, hastily, and went to his desk. He came back with a list. "Read the names of those stocks over again," he said, and the detective complied.

"That's it!" Sellinger nodded. "All these shares are held by Tearle on behalf of the School Extension Fund!"

The detective looked at him curiously.

"Well, what are you going to do—pinch him?" he asked, and Mr. Sellinger smiled.

"No," he said, softly; "I don't think we need arrest him yet awhile."

He paced up and down the room.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said. "I'm having the masters up to dinner to-morrow night. It is a practice that the Sellingers have always followed since the foundation of the school—I suppose you know that Rindle School was founded by one of my ancestors?"

The detective did not know, but bowed reverently.

"Tearle lives with old Mrs. Gold in the High Street," Sellinger went on. "She's as deaf as a brick and I believe goes to bed every night at nine o'clock. His rooms are a long way from where she and the servants sleep, and, anyway, she's so deaf that she wouldn't hear you."

"What's the idea?" asked the detective.

"Whilst I have Mr. Tearle here"—Sellinger emphasized his words with a regular thrust of his finger into his hireling's waistcoat—"you will make a very careful search through Tearle's papers."

The detective nodded.

"I get you," he said. "But how am I to find my way into the house?"

"The front door is always unfastened when Tearle is out at night," said Sellinger. "He was telling the Head last week that he never carried a key, and most of the houses leave their doors open—there is no crime in Rindle."

"Except what we commit," said the detective, humorously.

"That," said Mr. Sellinger, gravely, "is an impertinence. This is not a crime. I am acting in the best interests of justice."

The Sellinger dinner, which, as Mr. Sellinger said, was a feature of Rindle School life, was a deadly dull affair to two of the guests. For the host, with commendable foresight, had so arranged the seats that Vera Shaw sat at one end of the board on his right, and Barry Tearle at the other end of the long table, on Dr. Shaw's right. This arrangement suited Mr. Sellinger admirably, because he had a proposal to make to Vera, the terms of which had taken a good day's thought. The girl, who would never have attended but for the fact that the three mistresses which Rindle boasted were present, was openly bored—a fact which Mr. Sellinger did not observe.

THEY were half-way through dinner when Sellinger exposed his grand scheme.

"Miss Vera," he said (he had compromised to that extent), "I want to make a suggestion to you and I wonder how you'll take it?"

"That depends upon the suggestion," she said, coolly.

"It may shock you," he began, cautiously, lowering his voice. "But—how would you like to see the fight?"

"See the fight?" she repeated, startled. "Do you mean the fight between——"

"Between Snub Reilly and the Great Unknown," he said, jocularly.

She thought a moment.

"I hardly think I'd like to see it at all," she said. "I do not approve of women attending such exhibitions."

"Suppose the Great Unknown were a friend of yours?" he said deliberately, and her face went pink.

"How absurd! Do you suggest——?"

"I not only suggest, but I know," he said. "You must promise not to tell Tearle, because, if my surmise is correct, he would be upset by your knowing, and maybe the thing would peter out!"

"But it's nonsense," she said, contemptuously. "How could Mr. Tearle find ten thousand——" She bit her lip.

"He may have friends," said Sellinger, suavely.

There was a silence.

"Do you think he could win—supposing he were—the Unknown?"

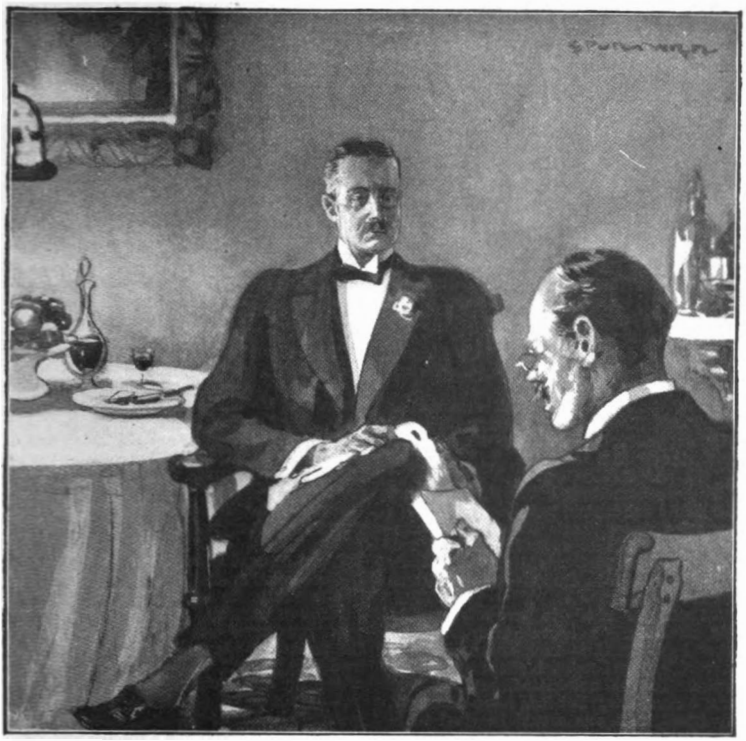
"Why not?" lied Sellinger. "I'm told he is a very brilliant boxer, and I'm not so sure that Snub Reilly couldn't be beaten."

He saw the girl's head turn slowly, and, as if obeying a common impulse, Barry Tearle raised his head at that moment.

"Why do you want me to go?" she asked suddenly.

But he was prepared for that; it was in framing the answer to such a question that he had spent the morning.

"Because," he said, stoutly, "I think he will win. And, what is more," it cost him a greater effort to deliver this sentiment than



"'I rather fancy,' said the detective, 'that if we haven't got him we've put him in a very tight corner.'"

to carry out the rest of the scheme—" because I've an idea that Tearle is fond of you."

She turned quickly away and did not reply for some minutes.

"I'll go on one condition," she said, " and I think that it can be managed. I have to go to town, and my aunt has asked me to stay the night—I can easily pretend that I am going to a theatre. Who will take me ? "

" I, of course," said Mr. Sellinger, gallantly, and she nodded.

" What is the condition ? " he asked.

" That if you find you are wrong, and the —the Unknown is not Mr.—Tearle—you will take me away."

" Of course," said Mr. Sellinger, heartily. " I wouldn't dream of allowing you to see the fight unless our friend was involved. Now remember, Miss Vera, it is absolutely necessary that you should not mention this matter to Mr. Tearle. Let it be a surprise to him. I can imagine," he went on, " how delighted he would be, how nerved for the —er—combat."

" Don't let us talk about it any more," she said.

To Barry Tearle's intense disappointment she left with her father, and scarcely spoke two words to him. He was puzzled. What had she and Sellinger been talking about so earnestly, he wondered. Did they know ?—he went pale at the thought.

He walked back to his lodgings, a greatly worried young man.

The last guest had hardly departed before the detective was ushered into Sellinger's

library, and one glance at his face revealed to that gentleman the measure of his success.

"We've got him, sir," he said, exultantly. "Here you are!" He laid a sheet of paper before the other.

"What is this?"

"I've copied it from a letter which I found on his table."

Mr. Sellinger picked up the paper and fixed his glasses. It was from a City bank, and acknowledged the receipt of ten thousand pounds which had been paid into Barry Tearle's account. But it was the second extract which filled Mr. Sellinger with joy. It was merely three lines copied from the counterfoil of Barry Tearle's cheque-book, which showed that the sum of ten thousand pounds had been made out in favour of the Fight Committee!

Mr. Sellinger rubbed his hands.

"You've done splendidly, my friend, splendidly!" he said. "Now, what shall we do?"

"You ought to have him arrested at once," said the detective, shaking his head. "Unless you take immediate steps, you'll never recover that money."

"No, no," said Sellinger.

He knew something better than that, but this he did not explain to the detective. He was going to see Tearle beaten—and somebody else was going to see him beaten, too. And when the fight was over, the comedy would develop into drama—and melodrama at that.

"I want Somebody to have a lesson," he said solemnly, "a lesson which they will never forget in their lives, and which may have a lasting beneficial effect upon their future. To the uninitiated, my act may seem a cruel one; but it is often necessary, my friend, that one should be cruel to be kind."

"But what about the money?" asked the puzzled but practical detective. "That is going to be lost."

"I don't think so," said Mr. Sellinger. "If it is, then I am happily in a position to make good to the school the amount that this man has stolen."

He might have kept his secret, he might have maintained his outward calm to the grand *dénouement*; but it was impossible that he could keep his knowledge pent up so long. The girl left for town early on the morning of the fight, and Barry, when he learnt she had gone, and had gone without seeing him, felt as though life held no further interest for him. He himself went up by the afternoon train, having secured permission from the Head. An hour before he left, Dr. Shaw sent for him, and the doctor was obviously ill at ease.

"You wanted me, sir?" said Barry, coming into the study, and the Head looked round with a start.

"Yes—er—yes, Tearle," said the doctor, uncomfortably. "Sit down, will you? I wanted to say to you—that I wish you luck."

He put out his hand.

"I'm a little worried, you know, Tearle, about it all, and it seems to me that you haven't a ghost of a chance."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean, I believe you are the Unknown who has challenged this boxer, and somehow I wish you hadn't. It is not that I disapprove of boxing, and although there is certain to be a little trouble if the truth comes out that you are the challenger, we can get over that. No, it's the fear that you have risked your own private fortune——" he hesitated, "unless, of course, you persuaded your friends to assist you?"

"No, sir, it is all my own money," said Barry Tearle, steadily.

"I hope you win." Dr. Shaw shook him cheerfully by the hand. "You're a good fellow, Tearle, and—and I hope you win, and I'm sure if my—if my girl knew, and of course she doesn't dream that you are taking part in this contest, that she would echo my wishes."

Barry wrung his hand in silence and left with a little lump in his throat.

IT was a grand adventure for the girl. All day she had thought about nothing else, and alternated between hope and dread. Sometimes it was dread of the spectacle she would see; sometimes—and more often—it was the picture of Barry Tearle's failure which made her shiver. The faithful Mr. Sellinger arrived at nine o'clock in the evening. He was in his most jovial mood, as he had reason to be, for he had just parted from two Central Office detectives after putting them in possession of the vital facts.

He had arranged that the girl should arrive at the theatre where the fight was taking place in time to miss some of the minor encounters which preceded it, and it was while they were waiting in the vestibule for one such contest to finish that he was hailed by a friend and left her for a moment.

Vera was feeling self-conscious and uncomfortable. It did not bring ease to her mind that there were other ladies present. She felt ashamed and furtive and mean, and for the first time she began to have serious doubts as to what effect her presence would have upon the man whose victory she desired.

She still told herself that Sellinger was mistaken, and that the challenger was some other person than Barry, but in her heart of hearts she knew that she would see the man she loved within that cruel ring, and the thought of it set her heart thumping wildly.

"Talk to me later, Johnson. I'm going to get my seat," she heard Sellinger say, and then he took her arm and led her down a long aisle.

The theatre was in darkness save for the brilliant lights which hung above a square, white platform.

So that was the ring! It was smaller than she had expected. She looked round at the spectators in the gloom, and thought she had never seen so many thousands of faces so close together. She was seized with a panic as to what all those thousands would say if Barry was defeated. Would they cheer? She stopped, gripping fast to Sellinger's arm. She couldn't bear that.

"I don't think I'll go in," she whispered, "I really don't think I can stand it."

"Come along," said Sellinger, soothingly, and led her down to a ring seat.

She was too near. She knew that she was too near. She would rather see this thing at such a distance as made it impossible to distinguish between one fighter and the other. But she was there now and she must stay. And then it was that Sellinger could keep his secret no longer.

There was some delay, they learned. Snub had not arrived, but had telephoned that he was on his way. But for the delay and the opportunity which it gave him, Sellinger might have maintained his silence to the end. But now he bent over the girl, and step by step traced the progress of his investigations, and she listened, chilled with horror. She could not even find the words to protest.

He might have noticed her distress and in pity have toned down his lurid recital, but he was hot with triumph, and found a joy in his brutality. And then the climax came, when the girl was clutching the arm of her chair, half fainting.

The man to whom Sellinger had spoken in the vestibule came up and said Snub had arrived. Mr. Johnson was stout, red-faced, and white-haired.

"Is the Unknown here?" demanded Sellinger with a grim smile.

"Oh, yes, he's here. I'm told he's going to——"

"He's going nowhere," almost shouted Sellinger. "I've got a couple of detectives waiting for him, my friend."

"Oh, don't, don't," said Vera, white to her lips.

"A couple of detectives?" The man looked from one to the other. "Well, I think that's rotten of you, Sellinger. The man has had his punishment. Why should he have more? You know him, then?"

"I know him very well indeed," said Sellinger. "I don't know about his punishment."

"He had two years' imprisonment for forgery in Australia. He was one of the best lightweights we've had in this country for years. I told them that they ought to have come out boldly and told the public that it is Kid Mackay who was challenging, but the men who are behind him insisted on introducing him as 'An Unknown'—an idiotic piece of tactics."

The colour was coming back to the girl's face as her eyes were fixed upon the other.

"Who is he?" she whispered.

"Kid Mackay, madam," said Sellinger's friend, and went on, "one of the best lads in the ring three years ago——"

"Then it is not Tearle?" wailed Sellinger.

Such a look of bewilderment was on his face that she could have laughed. Then with a start she remembered.

"You must take me away. You promised that if it was not——"

Her words were interrupted by a roar. A man was coming down one of the aisles in a purple dressing-gown. As he swung up between the ropes, his broad, good-humoured face all smiles, one half the audience recognized the Unknown as the erstwhile champion, and understood the reticence that his backers had shown.

But now a greater roar shook the building. Another figure moved amidst his seconds, and leaping lightly up to the ring, dodged through the ropes. From every part of the vast hall came a shout!

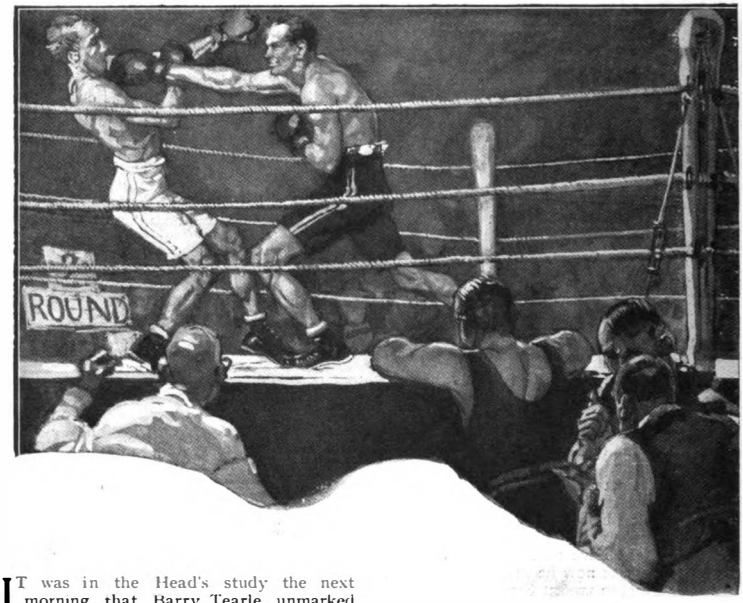
"Snub—Snub Reilly!"

"Snub Reilly!" Mr. Sellinger's voice was hollow, and then Snub Reilly turned, and the girl half rose from her seat.

The man whose face was distorted with his characteristic grimace was staring down at her, then slowly the wrinkles and puckerings smoothed out and the mouth went straight and she looked up into the startled eyes of Barry Tearle.

Mr. Sellinger sat, stricken dumb, his mouth agape. As for the girl, she looked on as if in a trance. She saw the preliminaries, watched the opening of the first round, her eyes never leaving the lithe figure that leaped and lunged. She could hear the thud of the gloves as they struck, but whose gloves they were and who was struck she could not tell. It was at the beginning of the second round that the "Unknown" forced the fighting, in spite of the injunctions and prayers of his seconds to remain strictly on the defensive for the first eight rounds. Right and left flashed Snub's terrible fists. The Unknown staggered. A second blow to the jaw landed, timed to the fraction of a second.

The fight was over. It was over, too, for Vera Shaw, and Barry Tearle leapt the ropes in time to catch her as she fainted.



"Right and left flashed Snub's terrible fists. The Unknown staggered. A second blow to the jaw landed. The fight was over."

IT was in the Head's study the next morning that Barry Tearle, unmarked by his exertions the night before, told his story.

"My father was a boxer," he said. "He used to travel the country fairs, and every penny he made he put into my education. He did something more—he taught me the game, as no man knew it better than he. He died whilst I was at the University, and it looked as though my education was going to stop short. I loved my studies and I loved the life I had planned for myself. But I wanted money. I had no friends or influence. One morning at breakfast I saw in the sporting press a challenge issued on behalf of a man whom I had seen fight and whom I thought I could beat. I pawned everything I had to cover his modest stake, and, adopting the name of Snub Reilly—Reilly is my second name—I fought him and won. As I became better known I was terrified lest I should be recognized. It was then that I adopted what the papers call my 'fighting face.' It was difficult to keep it up, but my fights have been so short——"

The doctor cleared his throat.

"Vera has told me something of Mr. Sellinger's accusation. You sold some bonds?"

Barry nodded.

"They were my own bonds," he said. "I had to raise ten thousand pounds to cover this challenge. They were bonds similar to those which we held for the Extension Fund."

"Naturally," Dr. Shaw nodded, "you would buy the best stock, both for the school and for yourself."

He was looking down at his blotting-pad thoughtfully.

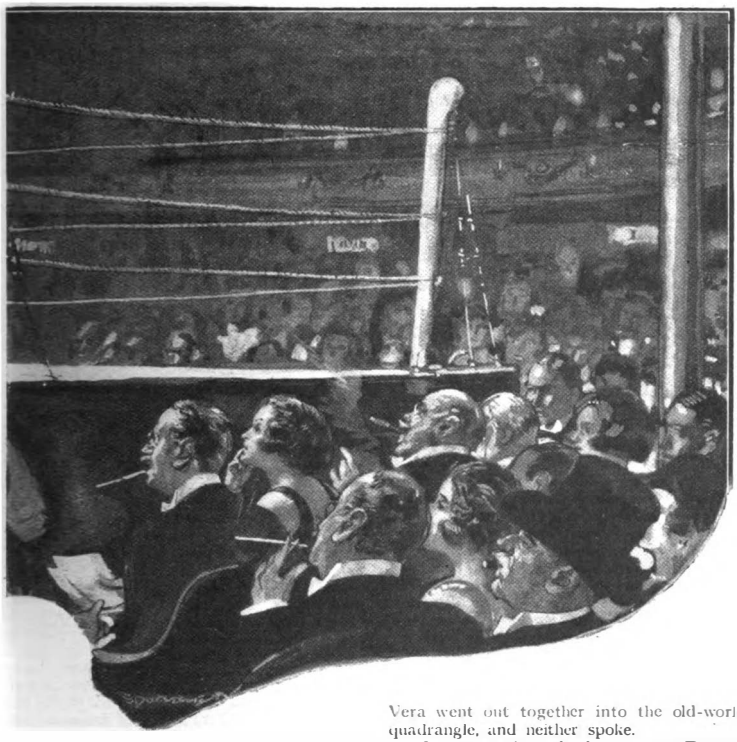
"You have fought your last fight?" he said.

Barry nodded.

"Yes, sir. From now on, Snub Reilly disappears. I have made a considerable sum, quite sufficient for my needs."

"Nobody at the school knows you are—Snub Reilly?"

"Except Mr. Sellinger," said Vera.



"I do not think Mr. Sellinger will be anxious to talk about the part he has played in a business which is only discreditable in so far as he has been concerned," said Dr. Shaw.

For the second time in twenty-four hours he put out his hand.

"I rather think," he said, "I should like to have seen that fight. Wouldn't you, Vera?"

The girl shuddered and shook her head.

"Of course not, of course not. How could I ask such a thing?" said the doctor, tenderly, and he dropped his hand on her shoulder. "You couldn't imagine my little girl in that sort of an atmosphere, could you, Tearle?"

Mr. Barry Tearle shook his head. He and Vera went out together into the old-world quadrangle, and neither spoke.

"I must go into the house now, Barry," she said. "You—you weren't very much hurt last night?" she added, anxiously. "Oh, my dear, I was so happy when you won." She laid her hands impulsively on his breast. "And I've quite forgiven your little lie!"

"My little lie?" He was astonished.

"You said you had not seen the fight that night."

He smiled.

"I didn't see it," he insisted. "I felt it—but I didn't see it."

Since the class-rooms overlook the quadrangle, what followed would have been witnessed by the whole of the Fifth Classical form but for the tact of the head prefect of School House, who happened to be standing by the window and closed it with a bang.

VARIATIONS

on a personal theme

by

LANDON RONALD

These selections from Mr. Landon Ronald's Reminiscences are published by arrangement with Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, who are shortly issuing "Variations on a Personal Theme" in volume form.

VARIATION I.

Mainly Autobiographical.

I HAVE constantly been asked to write my Reminiscences, but have always refused—chiefly because I keep no diary and I have a very bad memory for dates. No one, however, who has been before the public since he was sixteen and has met every kind of person, interesting or otherwise, can fail to have had some amusing experiences and a few anecdotes to tell.

I can at least lay claim to having had a sense of humour all my life. Again and again have I been saved from utter boredom at stodgy committee meetings, at dull entertainments, or on long railway journeys by seeing the funny side of things. I probably inherited this from my father, who was a great *raconteur*, loved a joke, and had a splendid sense of the ridiculous. As a boy at home I was considered the "funny man," and can boast at the age of ten of even amusing my family—and, as we all know, the family is *not* given to laughing at or encouraging home-grown products as a rule. Corney Grain and George Grossmith were my two idols, and I was filled with an ambition to give an entertainment at the pianoforte similar to theirs. This ambition has never been realized. From the age of four or five I gave such obvious signs of being exceptionally musical that never for one instant was the possibility entertained of my ever becoming anything but a musician. My dear mother not only gave me my first pianoforte lessons, but in every way guided and helped me in my studies, selecting my masters and even standing over me with infinite patience to see that I performed my allotted tasks at home. Oddly enough, I was a lazy boy, and would always shirk work if I could. This is all the more curious when it is remembered that from the age of seventeen I have been an indefatigable worker, and that to-day I never give up unless ill-health compels me to do so. Everything in music came remarkably easy to me, especially writing songs. I was trained, however, to become a pianist and violinist, but heartily disliked having to practise either instrument. At the age of fourteen I wanted to give up both in order to become a conductor, a composer, and a musical critic, and wrote this fact to my mother. It may seem odd to have written it instead of saying it to her, but Dr. Johnson never said a truer saying than "A letter cannot blush." This was just my case; I was too shy to tell her, so I wrote a note and crept upstairs and placed it carefully on her dressing-table. She met me with a very definite refusal, partly because she quite rightly deemed my desire as a mere excuse to escape the necessary work that all pianists and violinists have to do. To those two instruments I was therefore kept, and after some six months' private tuition under Lady Thompson for composition, Franklin Taylor for pianoforte, and Henry Holmes for violin, I was entered as a student at the Royal College of Music. I

Mr. Landon Ronald.

should like to add here in parentheses that Lady Thompson was the wife of the celebrated surgeon, Sir Henry Thompson, and was in her early days known as Miss Kate Loder, a brilliant pianist. In her old age she was paralyzed, and couldn't move hand or foot. She was a magnificent musician and the kindest of friends, and her influence on my early musical days was deeply marked.

On one of my journeys to the Royal College of Music on the Underground Railway an absurd incident occurred which I still remember with great clearness. I was standing on Praed Street Station platform, when I noticed an old man in a huge fur coat smoking a pipe. Some ashes of the pipe fell on his coat and it began to burn. I ran up to him and informed him of the circumstance. He seemed greatly perturbed, and thanked me in the most effusive terms, and said that he would never forget my action. He would not leave me, and would not stop thanking me, and travelled with me as far as South Kensington Station, asking me all about myself. He took my name and address and said that I should hear from him, as he wished me to have a little souvenir of an action he would never forget. I heard nothing for some days, though, with childlike curiosity, I anxiously awaited the knock of the postman! One day a huge parcel arrived addressed to me. In the greatest excitement I opened it, and it turned out to be at least a couple of hundred religious tracts of all kinds, with a very cheap edition of the Bible and some Ancient and Modern Hymns. This was the old man's way of showing his gratitude.

I LEFT the Royal College of Music at the age of sixteen and a half, being a very good pianist, a fair violinist, a composer of some pretty tunes, and equipped with a thorough knowledge of the orchestra and orchestral music through having played first violin in the college orchestra for a considerable period. Among those who were fellow-students of mine and who have since made names for themselves were Robert Hichens, Hamish MacCunn, Howard Talbot, W. H. Squire, and those excellent accompanists Messrs. F. A. Sewell and Liddle, besides many others who hold prominent positions on the concert platform and as well-known teachers.

"When Moul asked what my terms would be, with a beating heart but without a moment's hesitation I replied: 'Ten pounds!'"

My first engagement followed soon after I left the college and came about thus: I received a letter from a fellow-student saying that a pianist was wanted to play the difficult pianoforte part of "L'Enfant Prodigue," a musical play without words which had just been produced with enormous

success at the Prince of Wales Theatre. I was asked to go and see Mr. Alfred Moul, who was then a theatrical agent and later became chairman of the Alhambra Theatre. I did so, and my interview with him was decidedly amusing, and both he and I often laughed about it in after years. I was an independent, somewhat self-satisfied youth, and he was the practical, very busy man, with little time and few words to waste. He informed me very curtly that a trial of pianists was being held the next day at the theatre, and that if I cared to attend I could do so. I was living at home at this time and my father allowed me a few shillings a week pocket-money, and I didn't feel that there was any urgent necessity for me to earn anything. But I went to the theatre more out of a desire to prove to Mr. Moul that I was considerably better than he imagined than for any other reason. The composer, André Wormser, was there; Charles Lauri, who was running the piece, and Mr. Moul, and behind them there were about twenty pianists all waiting to be heard. My turn came, and I played a very showy rhapsody by Liszt. My success was very marked, and I was at once asked to play from sight some of "L'Enfant Prodigue," which I did with the greatest ease. Charles Lauri was so carried away with enthusiasm that in a loud whisper I heard him tell Alfred Moul not to let me go out of the theatre and to settle with me there and then. I had no idea of my value, and scarcely realized what a weekly salary meant. Whatever they offered to pay me I knew I should have for pocket-money, and before I overheard Lauri's remark I began to see visions of two golden sovereigns per week to spend as I liked. When Moul, therefore, took me aside and told me that he was instructed to offer me the job and asked me what my terms would be, with a beating heart but without a moment's hesitation I replied, "Ten pounds"! What possessed me to do so, or how I had the effrontery, still remains a mystery. But when my suggestion was immediately agreed to and I was not kicked out of the theatre, as I had feared I should be, I was scarcely able to find my voice to say "Thank you." I played "L'Enfant Prodigue" over three hundred times, and went on tour with it through England and Scotland.

Playing the piano in "L'Enfant Prodigue" proved to be my first and practically my last appearance as a pianist. It is true that I have played in public on a few rare occasions since, but my dropping the idea of ever making a career as a pianist dates from the last performance of "L'Enfant Prodigue" many, many years ago. I made up my mind to become a conductor, although my youthful appearance was a great drawback, as I found that managers were shy of trusting such a boyish-looking individual, and that orchestral men had little or no respect for me. I eventually succeeded, however, in obtaining an engagement to conduct comic opera on tour. This I did for a year or two, obtaining invaluable experience, though the remuneration was small and the life an unpleasant one. Naturally, I could not afford to live at hotels, and very often I would arrive on a Sunday fairly late in the evening, leaving my baggage at the station and having to hunt for rooms in a large town without knowing my way about. Having obtained them, I often experienced the most horrible cooking, and more often suffered from dirt. I remember passing a most terrible night in one of the big northern cities through finding the bed crowded with horrible insects. On upbraiding the landlady about it the next morning, it was explained to me that an actress had been sleeping in the bed the previous week, and had as her companions two pet dogs. Incidents such as these were innumerable, although I am led to understand that present-day conditions have vastly improved, and that the life of an actor or actress on tour can be made extremely comfortable without going to expensive hotels.

Signor Boito, the famous composer of "Mefistofele" and the man who arranged the libretti of "Otello" and "Falstaff" for Verdi, was over in this country, and I was invited to a party given by Mr. Albert Visetti to meet him. It was on this occasion that I met and made friends with the well-known conductor of Covent Garden Opera, Signor Luigi Mancinelli. Chiefly through the influence of Signor Mancinelli and my father, I was engaged by the famous impresario of that time, Sir Augustus Harris, who appointed me to take up the duties of coach and *répétiteur* at Covent Garden Theatre. Although for the next few years I was destined to have some of the most heart-breaking experiences, some of the most awful snubs, and some of the hardest work that has ever fallen to the lot of a young man of nineteen, I still look back on those days as being the most interesting, the most valuable, and the most influential of my life. I had to be at the theatre every morning at ten o'clock, and seldom got away before midnight, while regular meals were literally an unknown quantity. During the Opera season I believe I did everything except sweeping the floors and keeping the place clean. I was at everybody's call, and all the work that other coaches didn't want or care to do was put on my shoulders. By the time six months had passed I really felt that I had mastered my job. I was sent on a provincial operatic tour which Harris had

arranged, the company including the Sisters Ravogli (who had created such a *furore* in "Orfeo"), Lucile Hill, David Bispham, Joseph O'Mara, and about twenty other artistes of all nationalities, a large chorus, and orchestra. The tour was a financial failure, but it gave me fresh and valuable experience. It seems extraordinary, considering the enormous success that opera is to-day in the provinces, that this tour with such fine artistes and a really first-class chorus and orchestra should have been a failure. At so-called "musical Manchester," I can remember that the night we gave the first production of the "Meistersinger," that Albert Chevalier was giving one of his recitals next door at the Free Trade Hall. The "Meistersinger" scarcely drew five hundred people; Chevalier was absolutely packed out, and hundreds refused at the doors.

My second season at Covent Garden proved in every way eventful. I was then beginning to be recognized by certain of the great singers as a capable coach, and Mr. Arthur Collins (the present Managing Director of Drury Lane Theatre), Augustus Harris's stage manager, was extremely kind and took the warmest interest in me. He used to allow me privileges which he would grant to but few, one being that I was permitted to stand in the "prompt corner" to watch the performance when I had nothing else to do, so that I could note how all the great singers phrased and interpreted their different *rôles*. This was the period when the De Reszkes were at the height of their fame, and the list of artistes engaged included almost all the greatest singers of the world. I have a list before me now as I write, and find that amongst those who were announced to appear during this season were Mesdames Melba, Albani, Calvé, Nordica, Ternina, Emma Eames, Ella Russell, Marie Brema, and Schumann-Heink; and Messieurs Jean and Edouard de Reszke, Tamagno, Van Dyck, Alvarez, Maurel, Van Rooy, Plançon, Renaud, Ancona, and De Lucia. I remember that the cast that usually appeared in the production of "Romeo and Juliet" included Melba, Jean de Reszke, Edouard de Reszke, and Plançon, and I can recall a unique performance of "Carmen" with Jean de Reszke as Don José, Calvé as Carmen,

"The tenor repeated the mistake and nearly put out the entire orchestra. Mancinelli shouted to him in a raucous voice: 'You are very beast!'"

Nella as Micaela, and Ancona as Escamillo. Augustus Harris certainly did things in the grand manner. He gave the British public casts which undoubtedly have never been equalled since; casts which, alas! would be financially prohibitive nowadays, even supposing such supreme artistes were available. Singers are proverbially the most difficult people to deal with, but Augustus Harris had the special gift of getting them to do anything and everything he wanted. He commanded their affection as well as their respect. I worked under him for close on eight years, and still have in my possession my first three years' contract at a salary of four pounds, five pounds, and six pounds per week. His early and unexpected death was a great loss to the operatic world, and left a void I do not consider has ever been filled.

On one occasion at Drury Lane Harris had persuaded Mancinelli to direct a few operas during the English Opera season. He was rehearsing "Lohengrin" with a certain English tenor on the morning of the performance, and he could not be persuaded to sing one particular phrase in time. Mancinelli, after much swearing in Italian and French (he spoke no English), eventually got the unfortunate singer to do it correctly, and made him promise to practise it well before the night's performance. Sure enough, at the performance the tenor repeated the mistake he had made in the morning, and nearly put out the entire orchestra. Mancinelli, getting very red in the face, shouted to him in a raucous voice, "You are very beast!"—a literal translation of "Vous êtes très bête."

His anger was very violent and short-lived, and he had a curiously penetrating, good-natured laugh, amazingly like the bleat of a nanny-goat. I remember an incident that occurred when the Sisters Ravogli were cramming the house with their performance of Glück's "Orfeo." Harris had the notion that it would be very realistic to have some real nanny-goats on the stage in the scene depicting the Elysian Plains. I was sitting in the stalls with Harris, just behind Bevignani, who was conducting, and we were eagerly awaiting the effect the stage picture would create. Our expectations were surpassed! In the middle of Sofia Ravogli's solo the nanny-goats began to bleat all over the stage; the audience tittered and laughed, and the dramatic effect was ruined. Harris told me to rush round to Arthur Collins and get the nanny-goats off the stage as quickly as ever he could. After much signing and pantomime to the fat Italian choristers, these wretched animals were eventually pulled off amidst a roar of laughter from the audience. I went back to my seat to find Harris furious. However, things settled down again, but to our horror we heard the bleat in the distance about a quarter of an hour after we had believed the episode to be closed. Harris got up and went on the stage himself, using unparliamentary language to Arthur Collins and asking why the nanny-goats had not been taken entirely out of the building. Collins assured him that they were out of the building, when another bleat was heard. Harris shouted furiously, "Why, I can hear one of those wretched beasts now!" "Oh, no," said Arthur Collins; "that's Signor Mancinelli laughing at some story which Calvé has just told him." It was so.

Mancinelli could only speak a few sentences of broken English, but he was only one of many members of the company who made the most humorous mistakes. I was present when the immortal sentence of Arditi was shouted by him to a second violin who had been arguing with him: "Don't shpoke. If you no like, you went!"

TO digress from this period for a moment, one of the funniest experiences in connection with foreign pronunciation of the English language I had in comparatively recent years was when I was vainly endeavouring to teach Victor Maurel, the famous French baritone, a song of mine entitled "Away on the Hill there Runs a Stream." His great difficulty was to aspirate the h in "hill," and although I studied it with him for hours he *would* sing "ill" instead of "hill." Eventually, two days before the concert, we got it fairly right, although of course he took the usual exaggerated deep breath before the aspirate. The day of the concert arrived, and I was accompanying him. Imagine my agony of mind when, as I was playing the introduction of my song, I saw beads of perspiration on Maurel's forehead as he began to sing. I knew that something terrible was going to occur, and it did! He took a deep breath, looked round appealingly to me, and at the top of his voice shouted for all he was worth: "Haway hon the eel!"

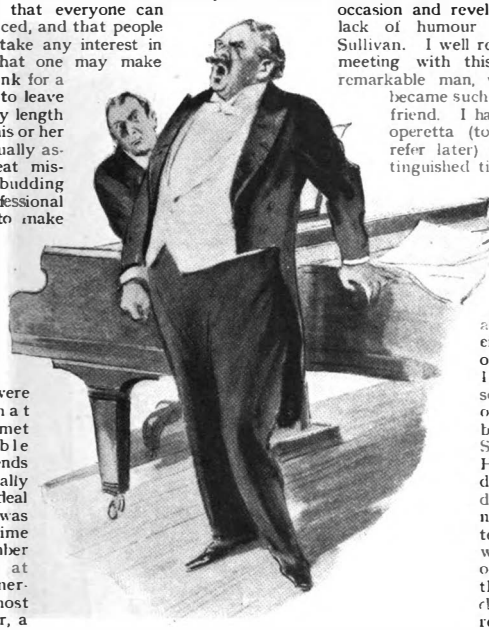
In 1895 Mme. Melba engaged me as conductor of her American tour, notwithstanding that up to that time I had chiefly acted for her as accompanist. We went right through the States and part of Canada carrying an excellent orchestra, and in addition to a concert programme performed scenes from operas in the second half. I was away about six months in all, and on my return to London received a lesson which I shall ever remember. I was then twenty-two, so I shall be forgiven if I say that perhaps I returned with what I may describe as a "swollen head." I had certainly hoped that the success I had achieved in America

with the world's greatest singer would be known over here. I was soon to be disillusioned. The first man who met me said, sympathetically, "My dear Ronald, how nice to see you again. Have you been ill? I haven't seen you for months!" Another acquaintance was curious to know "*what I had been doing in America*," and on my entering Drury Lane Theatre I found that another coach and conductor had been engaged for the English Opera season in my absence. All this helped to teach me that nobody is really missed, that everyone can easily be replaced, and that people really do not take any interest in any success that one may make abroad. I think for a young artiste to leave London for any length of time until his or her position is actually assured is a great mistake. The budding young professional may do well to make a note of this.

The following year my accompanying led me to undertake the preparation of most of the great musical parties that were given at that period, and I met many valuable and useful friends and incidentally earned a good deal of money. It was about this time that I remember being present at a large dinner-party; my host was a bachelor, a very famous man in society, who entirely lacked any sense of humour whatever. I always loved making people laugh—I do still to-day—and I told a little story on that occasion at my end of the table which is a "chestnut" to-day, but in those days and on this particular occasion caused much laughter. It was as follows:—

A man was brought up for stealing. The magistrate, addressing the prisoner, said, "What's your name?" The prisoner replied by making a noise somewhat resembling a sneeze, or the escape of gas. "*What's* your name?" repeated the magistrate in firmer tones. The answer was the same, only more so. "Constable," said the magistrate, very much perturbed, "what is this man *charged* with?" "I don't know, yer worship," was the reply, "but I should think soda-water!" My host, who had listened with great attention, never smiled and seemed amazed at his guests' laughter. After an awkward silence of about three minutes, he turned to me and said, "Now tell me, Ronald, what *was* that man's name, really?"

One of those who were present on the occasion and revelled in my host's lack of humour was Sir Arthur Sullivan. I well remember my first meeting with this charming and remarkable man, who later in life became such a kind and good friend. I had written a little operetta (to which I shall refer later) with the undistinguished title of "Did you Ring?" and it had been accepted for production at the Prince of Wales Theatre. I was to have about sixteen or eighteen in the orchestra. Now, I had learnt to score for a large orchestra from my beloved master, Sir (then Dr.) Hubert Parry, during my student days. But he had never thought of teaching me to write for a small orchestra — something much more difficult to do really well. So I got a letter of introduction to Sir Arthur Sullivan, who, I was told, would be willing to help me. I kept my appointment with the great little man in fear and trembling. He received me delightfully, placed me at my ease at once, and almost made me feel that I was a brother colleague of his! I explained my mission, but he told me in the kindest manner that he never taught, and advised me to go to a friend of his, an admirable musician named Ernest Ford, which eventually I did. As I was taking leave of Sullivan he asked me if I was going to the next Richter concert. I



"At the top of his voice he shouted for all he was worth: 'Haway hon the eel!'"

replied in the affirmative. "Well," he said, "the wonderful Mozart G minor Symphony is being performed. Go and buy a pianoforte copy of it: take it with you to the concert, listen well to the orchestration, and next morning score it yourself from the pianoforte copy. Then go and buy Mozart's full score, compare it with yours, and you'll learn much!" It was the most wonderful advice. By the time I had finished comparing Mozart's scoring with mine I felt I would never again attempt to write for orchestra, small or big! This advice stands as good for to-day as it did many years ago, and I hope if these lines meet the eyes of any music students that they may benefit as much from Sir Arthur's advice as I did.

The very last time I saw Sullivan was at a big private concert given by the late Lord Astor in Carlton House Terrace, when the great composer was nearing his end. He came to me and insisted, rather petulantly, that I should call myself Sir Arthur Sullivan and he was to call himself Landon Ronald for the rest of the evening. It was a joke that placed me in an awkward position, and which fell very flat. I pointed out the incongruity of it all to him, and he left me quite in a pet, affirming that I had no sense of humour and would never enter into a joke. Alas! I never saw him again.

VARIATION II.

Stories Against Myself.

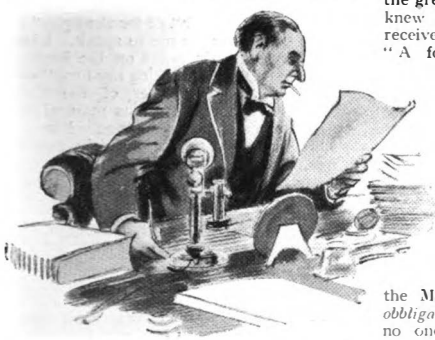
I LOVE telling stories against myself. Here are one or two for which I can vouch.

I sauntered into my club one hot afternoon and looked into the reading-room, which was empty save for two men—one a famous pianist, the other a stranger and one of the very ugliest men I have ever set eyes upon in my life. I scanned the columns of a few newspapers, and was about to leave the room, when my pianist friend called me, saying, "Let me introduce you to my friend, Mr. X——." We shook hands and I thought him uglier than ever. He immediately began talking about my work at the Albert Hall and the Guildhall School of Music in the kindest and most flattering terms, and indeed there seemed little of my professional life of which he was ignorant. After about ten minutes of this I got rather "fed up," and, pleading that I had to go and telephone, I asked him to excuse me. He at once burst forth, "I can't tell you how delighted I am, Mr. Landon Ronald, to have met you, as for years I have been a great admirer of yours. Quite apart from that, I must tell you that I was very anxious to know you, *as I am always being mistaken for you!*"

The ugliness of my physiognomy has more than once been brought home to me, but never more forcibly than by a certain photographer. And it happened thus: I had just been appointed Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, when one of the weekly illustrated papers (for the life of me I cannot remember which) wrote and asked me if they might include me in a series of "Celebrities at Home" interviews they were publishing, and that if I consented they would send one of their own photographers to take portraits of myself, my study, etc. I agreed to all this and the appointment was duly made. Punctual to the minute, a little red-nosed man arrived on a very hot June day, dressed in a long black coat, white waistcoat, green tie, brown boots, and a sailor's hat! He got to work quickly, taking portraits of various nooks and corners of my house, with obvious satisfaction to himself; fixed his camera in my study, and informed

"Back he went to his camera, placing a black cloth on his head, when I heard a plaintive little voice ejaculate: 'Oh, my Gawd, no! That's worse than ever!'"

me that now it was *my* turn to be taken. The poor little chap posed me in every imaginable position, made me sit down and stand up, placed me against the mantelpiece, asked me to smile, to fold my arms, to look serious, and after each attempt sighed and murmured, "Oh, dear; oh, dear." I began to feel quite unhappy and uncomfortable myself, when I saw a light come into his eyes and, with a triumphant smile and a Cockney accent, he said, "I've got it! Go to your desk, Mr. Ronald, sit down with some manuscript paper before you, and look as if you were a-trying to make up one of those pretty little songs of yours." I was out to get this trying interview over, so promptly did what he told me, with the



result that my profile was turned to him. Back he went to his camera, placing a black cloth on his head, when I heard a plaintive little voice ejaculate: "Oh, my Gawd, no! That's worse than ever!" The interview ended by my giving him a portrait I had by me and begging him not to trouble any more.

Many of the musical public of to-day, who only know me either as conductor or composer, or as being the head of a school of music, may be surprised to hear that twenty years ago I held a prominent place among the accompanists of that period. From 1904 to about 1910 I was the sole accompanist of Dame Nellie Melba, and I believe I am right in saying that she deeply regretted the fact that my other work made it impossible for me to continue playing for her. About two years had elapsed since I had accompanied her, when one day I had a telegram from her asking me to call. She informed me that she was going on a tour with her impresario (Mr. Percy Harrison) through the English provinces and that her accompanist from Paris was unable to come, and wanted to know if I could possibly go along with her, just to play her numbers and do nothing else. As a bait, she informed me she was singing a small group of my songs in the middle of the programme. She was far too dear and precious a friend for me to fail her when she really wanted me, so I agreed at once.

Scenes of triumph were repeated in every town we visited—with one notable exception. Wild horses would not extract the name from me, but I may just add that the town in question is better known as a great industrial centre than for its cultivation of music. Not that the people didn't crowd to hear Melba. They literally packed the hall, and extra seats had to be placed on the platform, right next to the grand piano; but the great enthusiasm was lacking, and Melba knew it. She bowed very coldly and was received very coldly. Her first item was "A fors è lui," from "Traviata." The applause was dignified and restrained; so was Melba's acknowledgment. After expressing her opinion of the audience to me in no uncertain terms, I thought I would comfort her by saying, "Wait until you sing *my* group of songs! You won't get a hand." My prophecy, alas! was fulfilled, and I left the platform feeling like the criminal does when he leaves the dock after the jury have found him "Guilty." Her last item was the Mad Scene from "Lucia" with flute *obbligato*, and I think I may safely say that no one ever sang this aria in any way approaching Dame Nellie Melba. The result was electrical, even on this stodgy audience. They shouted and stamped and roared and cheered, until, after bowing five or six times, she consented to sing Tosti's "Good-bye." Now, I must just explain here that I had played this song for years by memory for her, just as I played my own songs without music, so that I didn't dream of taking the music with me on this particular occasion. I sat down at the pianoforte and was just about to begin, when a woman sitting very near me on my left said, in a very raucous voice, "Eh, lad, it's a shame! We're going to 'ave more of *'is* stuff!"

WHEN I succeeded Mr. Mylanarski as conductor of the Scottish Orchestra in November, 1910, I made my *début* in Glasgow with many misgivings and fears. I had only paid flying visits there, and had heard that the Glasgow people were slow in making new friends. However, everything went off with great *éclat*, and I felt it wouldn't be very long before the audience and myself would be on the friendliest terms. That has certainly

turned out to be the case, as is proved by the fact that on the last night of the season the entire audience sang "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" and "Auld Lang Syne." This was the first experience I had ever had of the kind, and it touched me deeply. Returning, however, to that first evening, I had shaken hands and said good-bye to the committee, and was just about to enter my taxi, when two little girls, with very red hair, asked me to sign their autograph book. "I shall have to do it in pencil," said I. "That's all right," said the elder, with an accent you could cut with a knife. The book being duly signed, I returned it to the girl, who, after looking at it, asked me in a very disappointed tone, "Aren't you Mr. Mylanarski?" "No," said I, with my most amiable smile; "my name is Landon Ronald." The girl turned to her companion and said, "Have you got the india-rubber, Jean?"

ANOTHER story which I am very fond of telling against myself, and which I have recounted so often in public that I fear it will be a "chestnut" to many, occurred to me soon after I was appointed Principal of the Guildhall School of Music. All the City Companies vied with one another to entertain me, a kindness which I deeply appreciated. I received an invitation to attend a banquet given in honour of the Fine Arts—I believe by the Drapers' Company. Sir Alexander Mackenzie (the Principal of the Royal Academy of Music) had promised to propose the toast of "Music," and I was to be in that blissful position of not having to speak at all. On my arrival at their superb hall, I was met on the staircase by the clerk, who informed me that Sir Alexander Mackenzie had sent a wire saying that illness prevented his attendance, and that it devolved on me, as an official of the City, to propose the toast in his stead. This came as a great shock, and incidentally spoilt my appetite. However, with the help of some admirable food and some good Scotch whisky, I was beginning to feel "fit for the fight" as the time drew near for me to speak. I had written down certain notes on the back of the menu, and was just taking my final "wee drappie," when the Master of the Ceremonies, who was an enormous man with a long black beard, came and touched me on the shoulder and said, in a fairly audible whisper, "Mr. Landon Ronald, will you make your speech now, *or let the guests enjoy themselves a little longer?*"

Next month's "Variations" will be: "The First Time I Conducted"—"On Accompanying at Windsor and Balmoral."

DINNER AT SEVEN-THIRTY

THE features of Mr. Hartley Pope, sitting back in the corner of a first-class compartment on the 5.47 p.m. down to Woldington, bore an expression of dignified reserve. From 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. each day — with perhaps a slight relaxation during the luncheon interval — that expression rarely changed. Many years before he had adopted it, together with a morning coat, a collar with wide flaps, a silk hat, and a brown leather dispatch-case, as, so to say, part of the livery in which he conducted his business.

As the result of long usage, it had tended to encroach on his private existence, and although his sister, who kept house for him, had never been deceived, many other of his associates were inclined to the view that Mr. Pope was a rather unapproachable individual.

It was not the truth. Mr. Pope was as human as the most human of us. His favourite drink was bitter, his favourite newspaper was a picture one—though he read the *Financial Times*—his favourite form of theatrical entertainment, the revue. He had an eye for a pretty woman and a great relish for anecdotes—that story about the barmaid and the jockey (you remember ?) was part of his social stock-in-trade.

In the corner obliquely opposite him sat a girl. She was clothed in a neat tailor-made of striped navy cashmere, a small hat of brown velvet, brown shoes, and, over shapely ankles and equally shapely calves, brown silk stockings. Without appearing to do so, Mr. Pope had observed her ankles and her silk stockings, and very cursorily glanced at her face.

It was while he was studying her features that she looked up and caught his eye. Mr. Pope blushed. They had travelled together on that train each evening for six months, but had never spoken. But to cover up his confusion Mr. Pope observed pleasantly across the carriage :—

"A nice evening!"

The girl received his overture in chilly silence, and Mr. Pope blushed more deeply still. He was hurt and humiliated. A young officer next to him giggled. Mr. Pope raised his paper, and for a time pretended to be engrossed in a particularly gruesome murder "story" on the front page.

But his thoughts were elsewhere. He was wondering angrily what he had done to deserve such treatment. If that fool of a young officer next to him had made the remark it would, he was sure, have been received in a very different spirit.

Yet this was only one of many incidents that had occurred recently to disturb Mr. Pope's serenity. He was being made to realize that he had reached the age when a man is supposed to have finished and done with the lighter, pleasanter things of life—neat ankles and silk stockings, trim figures and pretty faces—all that goes to give zest to the game of living—in a word, romance.

He was supposed to have finished with all that—had his fling and settled down—he, Mr. Pope, who had hardly ever thought of

such a thing—never, in fact, since that day, twelve years ago, when——

The train ran into a station—its only stop until it reached Woldington—and all the other occupants of the compartment alighted. Mr. Pope generally had his carriage to himself thence onwards, for the 5.47 was a "fast" train. He followed with his eyes the young lady of the ankles as she walked along the platform, until the train began to move again. Then he turned half-reluctantly to his *Evening Standard*.

Outside on the platform somebody shouted, and the next moment the door of his carriage was flung open. A young man, rather excited and very breathless, stumbled in, without bothering to shut the door after him, and, flinging a brown leather case he carried on to the rack, dropped into the opposite corner. Mr. Pope himself pulled the door to.

"Cut it rather fine," the young man observed, cheerfully. He was rather a pleasant-looking young fellow, about twenty-four years of age. He was wearing a straw hat, a light grey suit, which showed signs of wear, soft collar, and brown brogue shoes. A bank clerk possibly, Mr. Pope thought, or perhaps an architect's draughtsman or an authorized clerk on the Stock Exchange. Mr. Pope preserved his expression of aloofness and murmured:—

"Ah! Yes."

The young man glanced round.

"George!" he remarked. "I'm in a First." He grimaced. "With a third-class ticket."

Mr. Pope decided at once that he was neither a bank clerk nor a draughtsman nor a Stock Exchange clerk. He might be a gentleman or he might be a humble *employé* in a commercial counting-house. None of the other possibilities would have so frankly admitted that third-class ticket. Mr. Pope felt a slight glow of approval.

"Since we don't stop till Woldington," he observed, "you won't be worried by ticket-inspectors for a little while, anyhow."

The young man sat up with a jerk.

"Woldington!" he exclaimed. "Isn't this the London train?"

The question being so obviously futile, he did not wait for an answer.

"I'm going to pull the communication-cord. It would be

"George!" he said. "What an ass!"

Mr. Pope opened out his paper. "Rather awkward," he murmured, non-committally.

The young man stood up. "I say!" he observed, "it's worse than that. It's a bally tragedy." Dismay was written all over him. He thought for a minute. Then he looked at Mr. Pope.

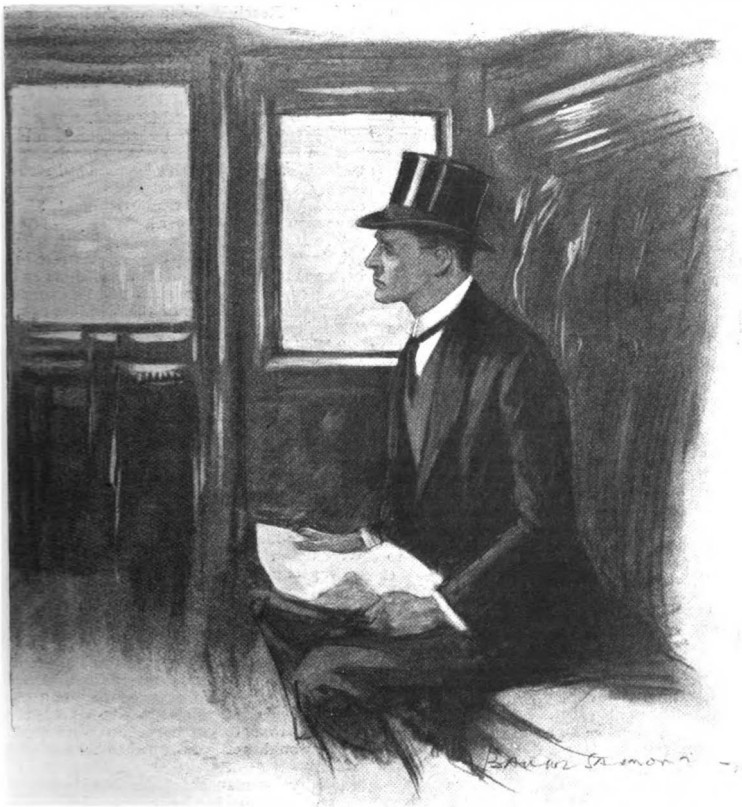
"I tell you what," he said. "I'm going

to pull the communication-cord. It would be cheap at five pounds. I've got a most important appointment in town at half-past six, with dinner at seven-thirty."

He put up his hand.

"I could jump out before the train stopped," the young man interrupted.

Mr. Pope drew down the corners of his mouth, a facial contortion peculiarly effective, and the young man allowed his arm to



cheap at five pounds. I've got a most important appointment in town at half-past six."

drop to his side. He looked out of the window, and Mr. Pope knew he was wondering what his chances were if he leapt from the carriage on to the permanent way.

"I don't think I should do that if I were you," Mr. Pope remarked. "It would probably mean more delay. They'd arrest you and want to know all about it. They might take you along to the next station and lock you up for the night."

The young man hesitated. "D'you think they would?"

Mr. Pope dismissed the young man and resumed the broken thread of his ruminations.

"I knew a man once——" Mr. Pope began.

Twelve years ago Mr. Pope had, by the narrowest of chances, missed a romance of

his own. Her name was Julienne Ferris, and she lived near Mr. Pope, but in a very much smaller house. She lived with her aunt, and Mr. Pope met her occasionally in the afternoons at the local tennis club. Several times he had accompanied her home.

No more than that. Mr. Pope had been rather shy as a young man in the presence of ladies. Besides, he knew what his parents' views would have been on the subject of an alliance—a *mésalliance*—with Miss Ferris. Nevertheless, after a terrific emotional and mental storm which lasted a week, he had resolved to throw prudence to the winds and declare himself—to offer to Miss Julienne—he called her Julie in his thoughts—his hand and heart, and by no means insignificant, though prospective, fortune.

A week before, however, Julie, who was partly French, and spoke the language like a native, had accepted a post as English mistress in a Belgian girls' school, and on the day Mr. Pope reached his momentous decision she left England.

Mr. Pope remembered the day almost as though it had been yesterday. It was in November, and a thick fog overspread London. Julienne had been accompanied to Victoria by her aunt—her sole surviving relative—and there handed over to the Belgian lady who had engaged her. On her way from Victoria to Charing Cross, after seeing her niece off, the aunt had been knocked down by a brewer's dray and killed, and, as she alone had Julienne's address and appeared to have trusted to her memory to retain it, Mr. Pope was prevented, at least for the time being, from even writing to her.

He had heard nothing of her since. Such things frequently occur. A single broken link in the chain of circumstance that binds us one to another, and a friend may be completely lost sight of for many years, if not for ever. A short time afterwards his mother and father had died within three months of each other, leaving his sister to keep house for him. He had taken a seat on the board of the company with which his chief investments were concerned, and had rapidly found the business to demand a large part of his day. He had taken a commission in the Territorials.

From the age of twenty—when Julie had gone away—up to the time when the war came—Mr. Pope had led an extremely active and full life. During the war, too, his thoughts had been pretty well occupied.

It was only since his return that this sense of something lacking—this consciousness of the passing of the years and of opportunities lost—had begun to bother him.

If only he had not let Julie go! If he had not so confidingly trusted to luck to re-establish communication with her! If he had not dallied so long over making up his mind!

HE sat up with a jerk to realize that his fellow-traveller was addressing him.

"Reach Woldington?" he echoed, in response to the other's question. "Let me see, six-thirty, I believe. Yes, of course, six-thirty.

"Surely your friends will wait?" he added.

The young man leaned forward.

"It isn't friends," he said, miserably. "It's a friend, a lady. I was to meet her by the bookstall. You can't leave a girl standing by a bookstall for an hour or more all alone. Why, anything might happen! She'd have men speaking to her! Why——!"

"It is awkward," Mr. Pope agreed.

The young man's cheerful, boyish face had become almost haggard. "Why, some bally porter or something might ask her to move on!" He looked out of the window again. "Besides, she wouldn't wait."

"Well," Mr. Pope suggested, "perhaps, after all, in the circumstances——"

The young man was on his feet again. "Good God!" he exclaimed, passionately, "that's just the point—the circumstances, I mean. If it weren't—if this had happened at any other time—I wouldn't mind. At least, not so much. But to-night——!"

"Sit down," Mr. Pope said. He flung his paper on to the seat and the young man sat down obediently. "Now let's think what can be done. There's an up train leaves Woldington about five minutes before this train gets in. After that there's not another train for half an hour. Unfortunately, the up train is a slow one. Still——"

He leaned forward. "Just outside Wealdstone Road—that's the station before Woldington—we shall slow up crossing the points. We always do slow up there—it's an awkward bend. If you could manage to jump out you'd just be able to get back to Wealdstone Road in time to catch the up train there. That would get you up before half-past seven."

The young man shook his head. Plainly he was itching to be communicative—to lay his heart and soul bare with the disarming ingenuousness of youth. He saw his opportunity now.

"It's awfully decent of you to be so interested," he said, "and perhaps you think I'm kicking up a frightful fuss about a little thing. But the fact is——"

He looked at Mr. Pope and flushed youthfully.

"It isn't as though I was just taking her out somewhere for the evening," he said. "The fact is, we're to be married to-morrow.

Only her old brute of a father won't hear of it. And she's running away."

Mr. Pope looked rather more severe than he had looked for the past ten minutes. Running away this evening and getting married to-morrow was not in accordance with his views of the right order of events. He didn't so much object to the running away. Indeed, the idea rather appealed to him. It was solacing to think that even in the twentieth century romance was not entirely dead. But you had to draw a line somewhere.

The young man may have divined his scruples, for he explained hurriedly :—

"I'm taking her along to a married sister of mine for the night, and we're to be married at a registry office first thing to-morrow morning."

Mr. Pope's features relaxed.

"The devil of it is," the young man went on, "she's not the sort of girl to be left about on a station for an hour."

"She wouldn't stand for it?" Mr. Pope suggested, and the looseness of his phraseology was the measure of his warm personal interest in the affair.

"Yes, that, and—well, you know, she isn't the sort of girl a man passes without a second glance. Jolly nice looking and smart, and all that sort of thing."

"*Distinguée*," Mr. Pope hinted.

"Yes. Just that. There are women, you know——"

"Yes." Mr. Pope suddenly found himself thinking of Julie. She was certainly *distinguée*. Very. The sort of woman you could be proud of being seen with. If she'd only a father to oppose the match, Mr. Pope felt he'd quite enjoy running off with her.

The young man was enlarging on his theme. "Such a sporting kid, too," he was saying. "I'm as poor as a church mouse. My governor kicked the bucket last year and left me pretty much on the rocks. And her governor's quite well off. That's the silly part of it. Wants her to marry a little blighter of a chap in the margarine trade, just because he's got a bank balance as big as the North Sea. So you can understand I feel pretty sick at letting her down."

Mr. Pope suddenly crossed his legs and picked up his paper. He had just had a brilliant inspiration, but it was not his habit to betray his excitement.

"I suppose this young lady you refer to—if she knew what had happened—would manage to keep herself occupied till you arrived?"

For a moment the young man looked startled. "Why——" he began, and then hastily substituted: "Oh, of course!" He added: "What I'm afraid of is that when I don't turn up she'll be in such a stew that she'll simply clear off home again. And she'll never forgive me. You can quite understand it, can't you? She's supposed to be staying the night with a friend of the family, but the friend doesn't know anything about it."

He became very miserable. "I say, it's jolly decent of you to be so sympathetic and all that," he observed, "but I don't really see——"

"You think you'll be able to jump out of the train all right when we slow down, and catch the other at Wealdstone Road?" Mr. Pope interrupted.

"Lord, yes!" the young man replied, "if it slows down to anything below ten miles an hour. But I don't see——"

"Then," said Mr. Pope, "I suppose when I get to Woldington I call up the Station Hotel at the other end and get the head-waiter to find your friend and tell her what's happened? How would that do?"

HE turned over his paper casually, while he waited for the acknowledgment of this brilliant suggestion. It came, and it was adequate. The young man's face expressed wonder, surprise, conviction, relief, joy, and thankfulness in rapid succession, and when he found his voice it was to utter "By Jove!" with such an abandonment of admiration that Mr. Pope was more than satisfied.

"Tell me," said Mr. Pope, "what she will be wearing. I shall have to describe her. Fortunately, I know the head-waiter at the Station Hotel, but I'm afraid I could hardly ask him to interrogate any young woman who happened to be waiting at the bookstall."

Again, for a moment, the young man looked unaccountably perturbed. "Well," he said, hastily pulling himself together, "I expect she'll be wearing the togs she's to be married in. Sort of fairly light grey costume with buttons, grey suède shoes and stockings, and one of those topping little hats with quill things sticking out—green, I think it is."

He looked a little doubtfully at Mr. Pope. "I think I could describe her better than her clothes," he observed.

Mr. Pope nodded absently. He was recalling Julie as he had seen her for the last time. Julie had been fond of grey—a light grey, smart and well tailored—but, of course, in her day suède shoes had not been generally worn. And hats were large then. He liked large hats. Not but that some of these small toque things were quite effective. He remembered having seen Julie in a toque once—a toque of grey fur. She had been perfectly adorable. He felt rather superior when he recalled the young man's very vague description of his *fiancée's* clothes. He remembered that when he had been for a walk with Julie

he could describe her apparel down to the number of buttons on her jacket. It had been expected in those days. But now——

"Not that she's thin, either," he heard the young man droning on. "But she's not the sort ever to get fat."

The young man looked at Mr. Pope earnestly. "Oh, but hang it all!" he said, in a sudden burst of irresistible frankness, "a fellow doesn't fall in love with a girl's figure, does he? As long as she's not absolutely a frump! The thing is the girl herself, the way she looks at you, the way she thinks about things, the funny little thrill you get when her hair just brushes across your face or when she puts her hand on your arm to prevent your doing some damn silly thing or other. I tell you, since I've known Pippa—that's my name for her, you know, Pippa Passes sort of thing—since I've known her I've done things I never thought I could do. I've practically knocked off swearing, I've——"

Mr. Pope looked at his watch ostentatiously. The young man's confidences made him the slightest bit uncomfortable. He questioned if this were not carrying ingenuousness a step too far.

The boy saw the movement. "Where are we?" he asked.

The engine's whistle sounded shrilly and they flashed through a station. Then the speed began perceptibly to slacken.

"Thought so," Mr. Pope said. "Now's the time." He looked at his companion. "D'you think you'll manage it?" he asked, anxiously. He was surprised to find himself getting quite worked up. "There's a board beside the line which says something about 'five miles an hour when passing over points.' But it's a bit of a jump."

The young man was supremely confident. "Trust me," he said. He reached up to the rack above Mr. Pope's head and took down the case. Then he held out his hand. "You don't know how much I'm indebted to you," he said. "I hope——"

Mr. Pope shook his head perfunctorily. "You'd better take the other door," he remarked. "The guard will be watching on this side. 'Ware the up train. I think now is just about the moment."

THE train had dropped into a crawl, and jerked as it passed over the points. Mr. Pope opened the farther door of the carriage and stepped aside for the other to pass. The young man twisted himself out of the door on to the footboard and coolly closed the door after him.

Mr. Pope put his head through the open window. "By the way," he shouted—for the engine's exhaust was being passed through the furnace as the train began to gather speed again—"hadn't you better tell me your young woman's name, so that the waiter——"

The young man, on the point of jumping, shouted something that Mr. Pope did not catch, and leapt.

Mr. Pope involuntarily shut his eyes for a second. When he opened them he saw the young man stumble to his knees in the track between the two lines of rails below, stagger to his feet, wave a hand towards the train, and then turn and begin to run.

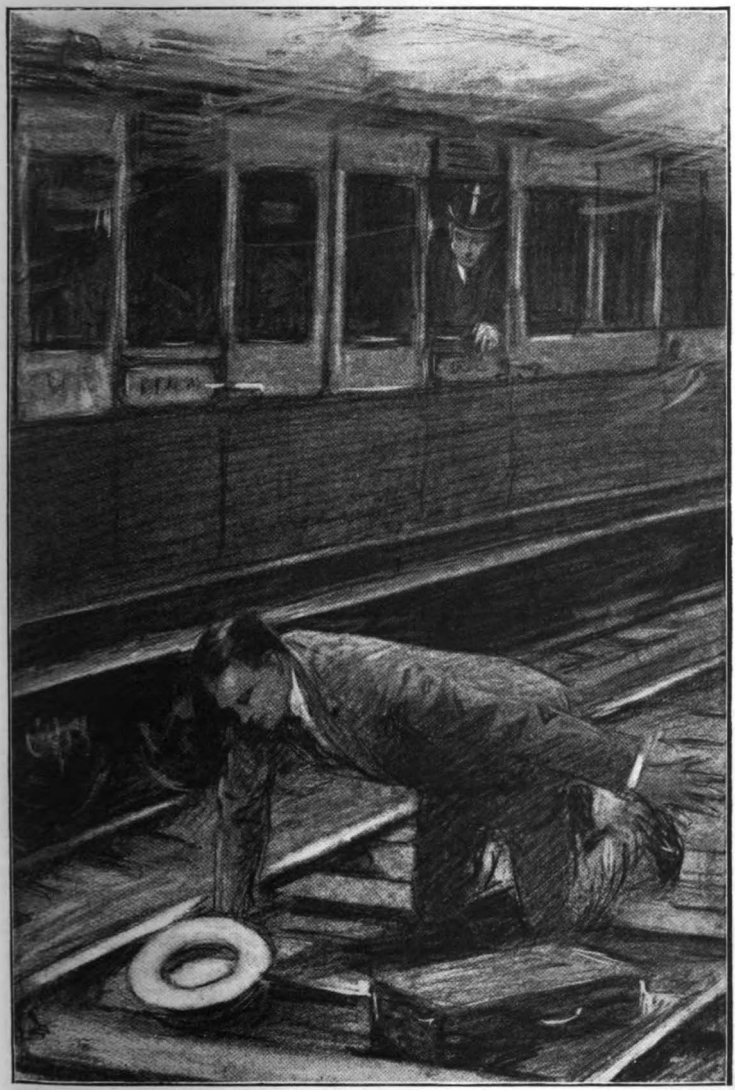
Mr. Pope dropped on to the seat and passed his handkerchief across his perspiring brow. Then he noticed a slip of paper on the floor—evidently pulled out of his pocket by the young man. He picked it up. It was a rather pressing demand from a tailor for a long overdue account, and was directed to Mr. Gregory Haviland at an address in North-west London. Mr. Pope smiled, and put the slip of paper in his waistcoat pocket.

"Plucky young beggar!" he muttered. What it was to be young! Not, of course, that he himself was old. Far from it. Five years older than Julie? Ah, but after thirty a man aged so much more slowly than a woman. A man was as young as he felt, and Mr. Pope felt very young just then.

He compared himself with George Sitwell, his next-door neighbour, left a widower on the birth of his first—and therefore only—child. Sitwell couldn't be much over thirty-five. Yet Mr. Pope could give him points in all directions. Sitwell was the Head Master at the County School in Woldington, and his sole interest in life outside of school lay in his collection of foreign stamps. That very afternoon Mr. Pope had attended a sale on his behalf and paid out the ridiculous sum of three hundred pounds for a set of a dozen examples of the Bagdad Occupation issue.

Sitwell, good Lord! Imagine Sitwell in the situation Mr. Pope had just handled with such resourcefulness! The fellow would simply have sat stock still in his place and looked lugubrious. Foreign stamps! Sitwell lacked mental vigour, that was what was the matter with him. And he could give Mr. Pope a good six years in point of age!

At Woldington he got out and crossed the footbridge. By the booking-office on the up side there was a telephone call-box. Mr. Pope entered, placed his bag on the floor, lifted the receiver, and gave a number. It was the number of the Station Hotel. Mr. Pope knew it. He had stayed at the Station Hotel on a number of occasions when he had missed the last train in the evening after a theatre. Also when he had wished to catch a very early train down to the South Coast at Easter and such times. There was, indeed, a small private dining-room at the Station Hotel that Mr. Pope had



"Mr. Pope involuntarily shut his eyes. When he opened them he saw the young man stumble to his knees between the lines of rails below."

engaged for the evening on two occasions during an otherwise blameless twelve years.

Mr. Pope asked to be permitted to speak to Saunders, the head-waiter. Saunders came to the 'phone, and Mr. Pope briefly outlined to him the little *contretemps* he counted on Saunders to put right.

And as he was talking a brilliant idea came to him.

"Oh! And look here, Saunders," he remarked, "these young people are—er—sort of *protégées* of mine. I'd like to do something to give them a sort of send-off, you know—because I can't be there personally." The last was a hasty extemporization for Saunders's benefit.

"So, I say, Saunders, I want you to give 'em a nice little feed at my expense—you know, perhaps a few oysters to begin with wouldn't be a bad notion. And a bottle of that Château Loudenne. I leave it to you to do them well."

He chuckled to himself. This was a good scheme. He could see himself repeating the story—to his sister first of all when he felt in a provocative mood, and then to one or two men who went up in the morning by his train. Then, perhaps, to his co-directors after the next board meeting. Ah! and to old Sitwell. It would make a good story.

A further refinement suggested itself as peculiarly appropriate to the occasion—though he thought he'd miss this out in repeating the story to his sister.

"You there, Saunders? Well, look here, suppose you serve them in that little private room on the first floor. You know. The room with the piano. Put a few flowers on the table and the sideboard. And perhaps, instead of the claret, you might make it champagne. Eh! What's that? No, I haven't finished! Damn!"

Mr. Pope's expletive fell harmlessly into the unresponsive mouthpiece. He had had his three minutes and the line was disconnected.

For a moment or two he hesitated. There were several things he had wanted to explain to Saunders. As to tips—— And, of course, his name had better not be mentioned. And then——

FOR the third time that evening Mr. Pope had an inspiration. Why should he not run up to town and join the little party?—even if he only got in at the death. After all, he was the host, and it was hardly in keeping for him to remain absent from the whole proceedings. Besides, might not his presence do something towards enlivening the occasion? It has already been observed that Mr. Pope was not entirely without those arts of social intercourse that may do so much to banish the twin demons of boredom and restraint when two or three are gathered together round a festive board.

Mr. Pope imagined himself proposing a toast—"The bride and bridegroom of the morrow!" He revolved in his mind a few felicitous phrases suitable to the occasion. Nor would he neglect the more serious side of the great undertaking in which these two young people were about jointly to engage.

While he wandered up and down the empty platform waiting for the next up train he thought again of his own life and its blasted promise, and a well-worn couplet occurred to him:—

'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

He would quote that to them; but he would round it out, complete it, with a couplet of his own composed on the spot—which had the additional merit of rhyming:—

'Tis better still to love and keep,
Though joy and sorrow both you reap.

The train came in as he hit upon the second line, but most of the way up to town his thoughts were occupied with alternative rhymes, thus:—

'Tis better still to love and keep
Till life is rounded with a sleep.

Finally, however, he decided that his first choice was the best and most appropriate to the circumstances.

When at length the train drew into the terminus Mr. Pope could hardly restrain his eagerness to meet his young *protégées*, as he chose to consider them. Hurrying past the ticket-collector, he made straight for the Station Hotel. In the vestibule he buttonholed a passing waiter without ceremony or preface.

"Where's Saunders?" he demanded. "I want Saunders. Send him to me."

He stood there restlessly tattooing with his foot on the floor—a rather excited, flurried Mr. Pope, with his silk hat not quite straight, his bag and umbrella in one hand and his evening paper, very crumpled and creased, in the other. Very little of his habitual austerity of appearance remained. And the sparkle of anticipation in his eyes gave him an almost youthful look that somehow did not completely fit in with the more impersonal elements of his exterior.

After a few moments he was made aware of Saunders's presence at his left elbow by a deferential "Good evening, sir."

He turned sharply and drew the head-waiter into a more secluded part of the foyer.

"Ah! Saunders, good evening. Er—you attended to that little matter, Saunders?"

Saunders was perfectly imperturbable.

"Yes, sir."

"Everything all right, eh? They cut us

off in the middle. I hadn't finished. I wanted to tell you, Saunders, not to accept anything in the way of tips. I'll see to all that. And perhaps, if you haven't mentioned it already, it would be as well to keep my name out of it. You see, Saunders——"

Mr. Pope broke off in some confusion, realizing that by some means or other he was not maintaining strict consistence. Saunders helped him out.

"Just so, sir. But I'm sorry, sir, the lady wouldn't listen to me until I mentioned your name."

"Really!" Mr. Pope could not conceal his surprise.

"Yes, sir. But as soon as I said Mr. Pope, sir, she became, as you might say, another person. Quite pleasant and affable. 'Mr. Hartley Pope?' she inquired, and when I said that was your name she smiled, and came with me quite docile. She said she didn't know what it was all about, but if it was Mr. Hartley Pope it was all right."

Mr. Pope remained bewildered, but he did not choose that Saunders should observe it, and he murmured, hastily:—

"Ah, no doubt. She would recognize the name. Knows the company probably—Hartley Pope and Knight."

He broke off.

"And the young man, Saunders? I suppose——" he inquired, suddenly.

"He hasn't turned up yet, sir. The young lady's up there alone, waiting for him. The room's all ready, sir, just as you said, and I asked her if she'd like anything to drink just to pass the time like, but she said 'No.' So I gave her some magazines and she seemed quite happy, sir, sitting on the settee."

"Good heavens! Saunders!" Mr. Pope interposed, "you don't mean to say she's been waiting all this time up there alone?"

"Well, sir——" Saunders was mildly indignant at the suggestion of rebuke in Mr. Pope's voice. He pointed out that he could hardly have offered to keep her company, besides having his duties to attend to.

"That's quite all right, Saunders," Mr. Pope remarked, consolingly. "I'm not blaming you. But it's very unfortunate."

He pondered a moment. "I think I'd better go up and see this—er—young woman."

Saunders led the way, but at the door of the private dining-room Mr. Pope paused. "You've made no mistake, Saunders, I hope?" he said. "The description was a little vague and loose, I'm afraid."

Saunders looked at him stolidly. "Green hat, grey costume, neat figure, silk stockings," he said. "That's what you said, sir, as far as I remember."

"Quite right, Saunders," Mr. Pope responded. "By the way, did you notice her age? She should be about twenty-four, I suppose."

He had given up all attempt to deceive Saunders as to his familiarity with the lady.

Saunders shook his head sagaciously. "I never was no good at guessing a lady's age, sir," he remarked. "She might be twenty-four—or then, again, she might be thirty-six."

"Thirty-six, Saunders!"

"She might be. I don't say she is."

Saunders was more stolid than ever, and Mr. Pope was rapidly becoming a bundle of nerves. He drew out a pocket-handkerchief and blew his nose loudly.

"I think I'd better go in now, Saunders," he said, in a slightly weary tone. "Perhaps you'll announce me."

Saunders opened the door and stepped inside, his form blocking out Mr. Pope.

"Excuse me, miss," he said, "Mr. Pope has arrived and is here." He spoke rather pompously, then stood aside for Mr. Pope to enter, and rapidly withdrew.

THE little room in which Mr. Pope found himself was not, as has been explained, entirely unfamiliar to him. But he had never seen it so attractively arranged as this evening. The small round table was set for two, and glittered and shone with white damask and polished cutlery. In the centre stood a tall vase of yellow and purple irises, and about the room were smaller vases of sweet-peas, while on a table under the window stood a huge bowl of roses. The room was a riot of flowers and glittering tableware and cut glass, which the six shaded electric lights made to shine and gleam.

And yet Mr. Pope was aware at first of only one thing in the room, and that was the splash of bright green over on the farther side, which was the hat of the lady sitting on the settee. She held a magazine on her knees and sat there, motionless, as patient to all appearances now as she had been an hour and more ago when Saunders had first installed her there.

Mr. Pope, after hesitating the fraction of a second within the doorway, stepped forward, a phrase of profound, abased apology on his lips.

It was never spoken. He stopped midway across the room and passed a hand swiftly across his forehead.

"Julie!" he exclaimed.

And then:—

"Julie, my dear!"

He rushed forward, his hands outstretched. With the slightest possible jerk of her knees she shook the magazine off on to the floor and took his hands in hers, smiling serenely.

Then she stood up. She was dressed in a plain costume of grey, neatly pressed and fitting like a glove, but the least bit threadbare. Her shoes were of grey suède and her stockings of grey silk. But the gloves she had left lying on the settee had been darned in several places, and the handbag that lay beside them was slightly worn at the edges.

Mr. Pope, however, noticed none of these things. All he did notice were the little lines at the corners of her eyes and behind their brightness the tired, almost frightened look in the eyes themselves.

"My dear!" he said again.

She gave a little rippling laugh that was music to him.

"Well, you wonderful man," she exclaimed, "how on earth did you discover me? I've only been in England twelve hours."

She looked at him, and she did not try to hide the fact that she was glad to see him, nor that, mingled with her pleasure, was a certain admiration at what she believed to be his astuteness.

"I—I——" Mr. Pope stammered. To hide his confusion he turned and waved his arm at the table.

"Let's eat," he said, with a sudden courtly masterfulness. "The feast is prepared." He found the bell and pressed it. "I'm sorry to have kept you so long. Explanations can follow."

IT was not until they reached the coffee that the explanations were concluded. Then, as he held a match to Julie's cigarette, Mr. Pope observed:—

"Poor beggar! I wonder if she waited. We shall never know, I suppose." He was referring to the young man in the train. Out of the fullness of his heart he sighed.

And Julie sighed, too, very prettily. "I can't bear to think of their not being happy together after having made us so happy," she observed, from which it will be gathered that the meal had not been entirely devoted to the other couple. "But I'm sure she waited. A woman always does. I waited for twelve years."

Mr. Pope caught her fingers and lifted them to his lips. Then he looked at his watch.

"Agnes goes to bed at eleven," he said. "I think we'd better be moving."

He had risen and was looking for his bag, which he had dropped just inside the door. "Have to give 'em a cheque," he explained. He found the bag as Saunders arrived with his bill.

Placing the bag on his knees, he inserted a key in the lock. But the key would not turn, and when he pressed back the catch he found that it was not locked.

"By Jove!" he remarked, "that was pretty careless." He dropped the keys into his pocket and opened the bag.

Julie, who was attending to her hair in the glass over the mantelpiece, turned at his amazed ejaculation.

He was taking from the bag a sheaf of newspapers. When they had been removed nothing remained. He shut the bag and turned it over curiously. Gradually the light of understanding spread over his features and he sprang to his feet, his hands clenched and his face quickly became purple.

"Well, of all the impudent, dastardly swindles!" he burst out. "Under my very nose!" Too overcome for coherent expression, he pointed to the bag lying open and empty on the floor. "Changed it right under my own eyes!" he spluttered. "Of all the shameless——"

He caught Julie's eye. There was the suggestion of a smile in it, and Mr. Pope stopped dead in the middle of his outburst. But he could not easily overlook the outrage that had been played on him by the young man in the train.

"Three hundred pounds' worth of unique, irreplaceable foreign stamps—as well as my cheque-book!" he growled. "He must have followed me from the sale-room. A complete put-up job. The police will have to know about this."

Julie's smile spread.

"Am I too expensive at three hundred pounds?" she inquired, demurely.

"Good heavens, my dear child!" Mr. Pope exclaimed. And he, too, began to smile—grudgingly at first, and then without restraint as the amusing side of the affair struck him. He picked up his bill from the table.

"You'll have to help me out with this, at all events," he observed, with mock solemnity.

Julie picked up the rather threadbare bag and took out two one-pound notes.

"All I have in the world," she remarked, as she handed them to him. "So you can understand a certain tenderness on my part towards your young friend." She shrugged her shoulders. "*C'est la vie!*"

"Eh!" exclaimed Mr. Pope. He was looking rather stupidly at the notes. "Oh, yes, of course!"

He drew from his waistcoat pocket the tailor's bill he had picked up in the carriage after the young man had gone, and, tearing it into small pieces, dropped it into the grate.

"Of course," he repeated, "as you observe, *c'est la vie!*"

He picked up the bag and carefully closed

"'Well, you wonderful man,' she exclaimed, 'how on earth did you discover me?'"

it. "I can stop those cheques all right in the morning," he said, "but won't old Sitwell be mad!" He thought about that for a moment and chuckled. "He'll never see the joke," he remarked.

He never did.

THE SENSE of HUMOUR IN CHILDREN

by DR. C. W. KIMMINS

(Chief Inspector of the Education Department of the L.C.C.)

THAT a sense of humour is a priceless possession is generally acknowledged. In all the important crises of life, the ability to bring to bear on a difficult situation the eternal spirit of childhood is a very great solace which is denied to those in whom the sense of humour is lacking. An investigation of the sense of humour in children at different ages, and the conditions which are favourable to its full play and development, becomes, therefore, a matter of more than ordinary interest. For this purpose the writer has analysed some thousands of funny stories and jokes, which were obtained from children in response to the following questions :—

(1) Give an account of the funniest story you have ever read or heard.

(2) Of all the jokes that you can remember, give an account of the one which made you laugh the most.

For children who were too young to give written answers, oral methods were adopted by careful observers.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS.

During the inquiry the points to which most attention was given in the records of funny stories and jokes were those dealing with the type of story, the element of superiority in which the stupidity of the object is emphasized, playing with words, boisterous fun (ragging and playing the fool), the misfortunes of others, and the nature of the element of surprise in the joke.

The changes noted from age to age can only be roughly approximated, as some of the elements are constant in their appeal. There are, however, certain elements which predominate at particular periods of the school life and can be clearly distinguished.

CHILDREN OF FIVE AND SIX YEARS OF AGE.

At the ages of five and six children are amused by action, noise, and dramatic effects : someone falling down, funny dancing, bumping into each other, grotesque faces and figures, things upside down and inside out, dressing up when they take part, and funny sounds. Jokes told to young children only appeal through the dramatic instinct and depend for their effect on the inflections of the voice and the facial expressions or actions of the narrator. Verbal or written fun, without dramatic action, can only be appreciated when children can read fairly fluently. One observer read in an ordinary voice some of a well-known comedian's most obvious stories to the children in an infant school without raising a smile. Funny or grotesque illustrations drawn in front of the children by the teacher, which they are afterwards allowed to reproduce, greatly delight small children, probably due to the actions and discussions produced as the picture grows.

The appreciation of humour by young children must not be confused with children's smart and witty sayings. These are said without any intention of their being humorous. It is *naïveté* pure and simple. Sully in his Essay on Laughter records the case of a child of three who, having heard his mother say that Mr. Fawkes was coming to lunch, said, "Will Mrs. Knives come too ?" A child of five, who had been placed in Class 2B by his teacher, on being asked by the head mistress what class he was in, said "2B," and then said quite distinctly to the boy next to him, "or not to be" ; but cases of puns of children under seven are very rare.

As examples of *naïveté* may be quoted :—

(*a*) A clever child wrote a play which was acted by children. In the first act there was a wedding, and at the end of the ceremony the husband said, "And now, my dear, I must leave you and go abroad and make my fortune." In the second act he returned, bringing bags of gold and beautiful presents for his wife. Recording his adventures, he concluded by saying, "I have had to work very hard." "Yes, my dear," replied his wife, "and I also have not been idle," and drawing aside a curtain she presented him with four children.

(*b*) A father, entering his little son's bedroom, overheard this portion of the boy's evening prayer : "If I should die during the night, please excuse me coming to heaven in my pyjamas."

The Punch and Judy Show, which is a

very great favourite with children, is universal in its appeal. In some form it is to be found in all highly civilized communities. When a good performance of this type is analysed, it is found to embrace practically all the essential elements of mirth-production. The University professor and the street urchin vie with each other in their appreciation of the Punch and Judy Show, provided, of course, that a good standard of production is reached.

The irresistible appeal of Charlie Chaplin to young children is due to the fact that he is breaking all the usual conventions of society and is doing, in a very amusing way, the very things that children are forbidden to do. The continual movement, variety, and change of action, so dear to the child mind, increase the effect.

SEVEN YEARS OF AGE.

The records of children of this age mark the transition from the purely visual type of humorous situation to an elementary playing with words. At this stage there is a very marked difference between the boys and girls. The stories of the boys mainly consist of cinema and fairy tales, and many of the jokes have for their basis the misfortunes of others. On the other hand, the stories of the girls are almost exclusively fairy tales, a large percentage of which are about the story of the three bears, which retains its appeal to children far longer than might have been anticipated. In the girls' records there are many riddles and much play upon words, but these elements are missing from those of the boys. Humorous situations, based on the misfortunes of others, do not bulk so largely in the girls' as in the boys' records.

"A sense of humour is a priceless possession."

EIGHT YEARS OF AGE.

At this stage the misfortunes of others and fairy stories, including those about talking animals, are very common in the records of boys and girls. The boys now take an interest in riddles and playing with words. but in this respect are far behind the girls. The feeling of superiority makes its appearance in the accounts of mistakes of younger children. The girls here, as at other ages, associate stupidity with the boys, but there is no reciprocal action in the case of the boys. The favourite fairy story is still the three bears. There is a marked increase now in domestic stories. Those of boisterous fun are far more common with the girls than with the boys. A great falling off is to be noted in cinema stories.

NINE YEARS OF AGE.

Here there is a very great change. The intelligent child of this age has, to a large extent, overcome the mechanical arts of reading and writing, is a voracious reader, and is rapidly acquiring a fair background of useful knowledge. Boys and girls of this period are particularly interested in funny stories and jokes. The good fairy story is still very popular, especially with girls. The domestic story is improving, and accounts of comic incidents from well-known books are quoted. One girl of nine says: "The funniest book I have ever read is Mr. Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors." The feeling of superiority is increasing, and stories and jokes of amusing mistakes are very popular.

The story of the woman, the deck-chair, the oranges, and the shark, which has a great vogue among children, appears at this stage.

There was a storm at sea, and in order to lighten the ship, the sailors threw overboard a fat woman, a box of oranges, and a deck-chair. The storm having abated, a large shark was caught and was hauled aboard. On cutting it open the woman was found sitting in the deck-chair selling oranges at three a penny.

An amusing story, or one considered to be amusing. by the children, spreads rapidly through the school and from school to school. Riddles and play upon words still maintain their position at this age, but the popularity of the misfortunes of others, as a source of merriment, is ceasing to interest, and soon disappears entirely.

TEN YEARS OF AGE.

The children are still very keen, and books of jokes and comic papers are eagerly bought

and read. The power of graphic description has improved. Funny stories from good books are increasing in number. "Alice in Wonderland," "Helen's Babies," "Three Men in a Boat," and "Tom Sawyer" are often quoted. At this age much attention is given to the affairs of the class-room as affording suitable material for the gratification of the sense of humour. The inspector is the subject of much ridicule; *e.g.* :—

(*a*) An inspector was writing out his report on the school in an empty class-room. Being disturbed by a great noise in an adjoining room, he rushed in, seized the person who was talking more than the others, took him into his room, refused to hear any explanation, ordered him to sit quietly on a chair, and went on with his report. Shortly afterwards a knock was heard and a small boy entered the room. "What do you want?" said the inspector. "Please, sir, you've got our teacher," said the boy.

(*b*) An inspector was testing the arithmetic in a class, and inverted the numbers given by writing them on the blackboard; *e.g.*, if the children said 26, he would write 62; if they said 87, he would write 78, and so on. At last a rude boy said, "33—now muck about with that."

"The Punch and Judy Show is universal in its appeal."

The teacher who explains the meaning of a word, and asks the children to construct sentences containing the word, gives much scope for laughter; *e.g.* :—

(*a*) A teacher, in reply to questions, explained that "trickling" was another word for running, and that the word "anecdote" meant a short tale. He then asked the children to construct a sentence containing these words. One of the answers was, "A dog was trickling down the street, with a tin-can tied to his anecdote."

(*b*) The children were told to make up a sentence containing the word "notwithstanding," to which a boy replied, "My brother has shiny trousers, but notwithstanding."

The appropriate attitude of the children to the teacher is also a subject of merriment; *e.g.* :—

(*a*) A teacher explained that the word "heirloom" meant something which descended from father to son, whereupon a boy said, "Well, teacher, that's the funniest word I've ever heard for a pair of trousers."

(*b*) The subject of the Flood was under discussion, and the children were asking what the people in the Ark were doing all the time the water was going down. The teacher ventured the suggestion that much of their time was spent in fishing, but a boy refused to accept this theory on the ground that there were only two worms in the Ark.

Such incidents satisfy the requirement of the feeling of superiority, which is still a very important factor. At this age the fairy story still retains its hold and boisterous fun is kept within its proper limits. Riddles are on the decrease, but the play upon words is increasing and improving in quality.

ELEVEN TO THIRTEEN YEARS OF AGE.

The stories and jokes of the boys and girls of nine and ten years of age give evidence of a considerable advance in the appreciation of amusing incidents. Naturally the material is of a primitive type, but it was improving rapidly and appeared to give promise of important developments, especially in the play upon words and in the selection of funny stories from good literature. At the ages under consideration, however, there is a very marked deterioration, especially at twelve years of age, when the sense of humour seems to have disappeared entirely. This period appears to mark quite clearly the parting of the ways. Great physical changes are taking place; rapid growth is in progress and reaches its maximum increase at twelve years of age, when, according to the most trustworthy figures, the boy increases in height by seven and the girl by nine centimetres, after which the curve of growth tends to flatten. Associated with these physical changes there is a tendency for the children to break away to a certain

extent from established authority and to think out things for themselves, and the appreciation of good literature is weakened. The funny story is now of a more personal nature; it is a story they have heard rather than one they have read. Their own experiences bulk largely. The element of superiority runs riot and they delight in extravagant stories of stupidity concerned with adults rather than children. American exaggeration and Irish stories are very popular, and the sayings of parrots are the sole survivors of the earlier animal stories. As examples of exaggeration stories the following may be mentioned :—

(*a*) An American passing the Law Courts in a bus asked the conductor how long it took to put up "that block of buildings." The conductor replied, "Oh, about seven years." "In our country," said the American, "that would have taken about seven weeks." Later on the bus was passing Westminster Abbey, and the American inquired what was the name of the building. The conductor replied that he didn't know, as it wasn't there when he passed in the morning.

(*b*) A man was shaving when a sudden knock was heard at the door; this startled him, and he had the misfortune to cut off his nose. In his excitement he dropped his razor, which cut off one of his toes. A doctor was called in and bound up the wounds. After some days the bandages were removed, when it was found that the nose had been fixed on to the foot and the toe on to the face. The man made a complete recovery, but it was very awkward, because every time he wanted to blow his nose he had to take his boot off.

Of the Irish stories, the Maryhill incident is the most popular :—

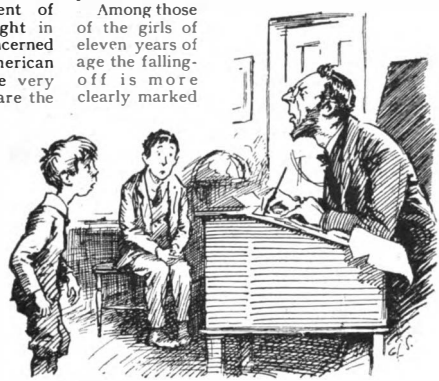
An Irishman who had never been on a railway journey before was told to take his ticket at the booking office in the same way as the other passengers. In front of him a lady going to Maryhill said to the booking clerk, "Maryhill, single"; and the Irishman followed with "Pat Murphy, married."

This is the age when many stories are related of the idiosyncrasies of the English, Scotch, and Welsh, a very popular one being the nature of the presents taken home by representatives of England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Englishman brought home "A tea-cosy from Cork," the Welshman "A tea-pot from Dublin," and the Scotsman "a cup and saucer bearing the inscription 'The Great Western Railway Company.'"

The boys' football stories are singularly bad, and betray an inadequate sense of humour. The boisterous fun element comes into a larger proportion of stories than at any other period, and consists mainly of ragging stories and somewhat crude practical jokes.

Among those of the girls of eleven years of age the falling-off is more clearly marked than in those of the boys, which in many cases show a slight improvement on the ten-year-old stories. The story of the woman who slipped on the polished plate of the *Victory* marking the place where Nelson fell, and who told the guide that she was not surprised that Nelson fell on this spot for she nearly fell there herself, is often quoted. Far and away the lowest point in the material which affords amusement is reached with boys and girls at the age of twelve. Towards the close of the thirteen-year-old stage there is, in the case of girls, a recovery; but there is no indication of this in that of the boys. With them it is not reached until the age of fourteen and, in some cases, fifteen years.



"Please, sir, you've got our teacher."

During the eleven-to-thirteen period the riddle practically disappears and is not revived at later ages.

The great change during this period is the diversion from fun found in childish incidents, in the fairy story, in books of some literary merit, and in the affairs of the class-room, which are so common during the ages of nine and ten, to adult material of an inferior kind, much of which is imperfectly understood. When the revival comes there is a far greater resemblance to the material of the ten-year-old child than to that of children in the serious gap from eleven to thirteen, and there is far less of the boisterous element, Irish stories of stupidity, and those dealing with American exaggeration.

FOURTEEN TO EIGHTEEN YEARS OF AGE.

During this period a very great improvement takes place. In the selection of funny stories, a much larger percentage comes from the work of well-known writers. The stories of W. W. Jacobs and Ian Hay ("Happy-Go-Lucky" especially) are very popular. Of individual stories, "Three Men in a Boat," "Daddy-Long-Legs," "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," "The Young Visiters," "Huckleberry Finn," "Tom Sawyer," "Helen's Babies," and "Alice in Wonderland" are much quoted. The culture of a good home has a great influence on the choice and variety of stories; whereas the very poor child relies on the school and the comic papers for his material. Stories for which originality is claimed by the narrator are mainly *naïveté* stories of young children. Their personal contributions, however, increase in value, and some of them give considerable promise of future witticisms. The children quote less and less of the old stories.

At seventeen and eighteen years of age there appears to be a still further improvement, and some of the stories and jokes are remarkably good. The boisterous fun element is gradually disappearing, and is of a very different character from that of the eleven-to-thirteen period.

DOMESTIC STORIES.

The home-stories are principally of three types:—

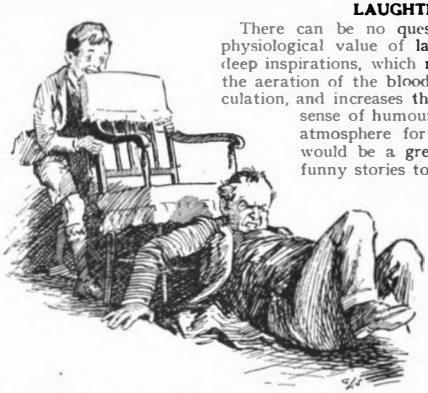
1. Those in which the father is the object of ridicule, such, for example, as:—

(*a*) A child had a favourite dog called Paddy. One night an accident happened, and Paddy was killed. The mother broke the news to the child the following morning, and was surprised to find that so little notice was taken of it. Later on the mother heard screams coming from the nursery, and the child cried out, "Oh, mother, Paddy's dead." "But I told you so at breakfast time," said the mother. "I didn't understand you, mother," replied the child. "I thought you said Daddy."

(*b*) A child was admiring her mother's new silk dress: her mother, interested in natural history, explained to her that all the beautiful silk came from a little worm. "Was that Daddy, mum?" asked the child.

2. Those in which the child deals with visitors who have to be informed that the mother is out, whereas she is in, and by stupidity the child reveals the fact; and

3. The sayings of young children, some of which are said to be original; for example, a child had noticed that her father, in presenting his books to his friends, always wrote in them, "With the Author's Compliments." On receiving a birthday present of a Bible from her little girl, her mother found on the first page the inscription, "With the Author's Compliments."

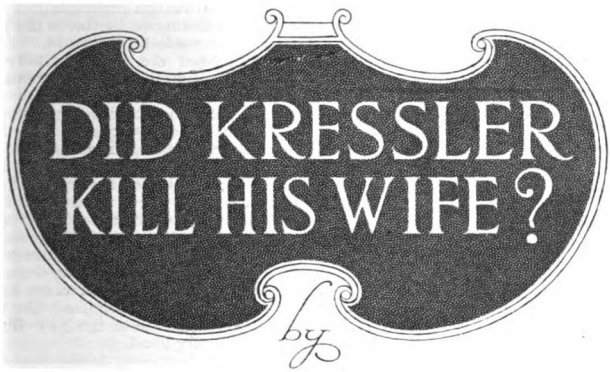


"Opportunity should be given for practical jokes."

THE VALUE AND FUNCTION OF LAUGHTER.

There can be no question of the great physiological value of laughter. It causes deep inspirations, which result in improving the aeration of the blood, quickens the circulation, and increases the joy of life. The sense of humour requires a joyous atmosphere for its operation. It would be a great mistake to tell funny stories to a person suffering from sea-sickness. There would be no suitable response and the stories would be wasted. After a period of restraint the conditions for laughter are highly favourable. At Church parade laughter is readily produced because it follows a period of restraint during which laughter would have been unseemly.

In young children laughter within limits should be encouraged, and opportunity should be given for the full exercise of the spirit of play and practical jokes. Later on visual humour will be followed by play upon words, and with intelligent children this may be succeeded by playing with thoughts in the form of witticisms.



H. de VERE STACPOOLE

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

I.

THE boat train was drawing into Victoria, and Kressler, seated in the corner of a smoking carriage and strapping a bag, was finishing a conversation about orchids.

The party of the second part in this conversation, a stout little man looking bored and stiff, was exchanging a travelling cap for a bowler, trying to arrange his thoughts in a fitting manner to meet London after a fifteen years' absence in India, and, at the same time, not to appear rude.

"Of course," said Kressler, "all those variations taking the forms of insects and beetles and so on are due simply to modifications of the pieces of the floral envelopes. The envelopes are constructed irregularly upon a ternary type and have three exterior and three interior pieces. The exterior pieces are less brightly coloured than the interior, and the two lateral ones are often of a somewhat different form from the other. If I had a pencil and bit of paper I could explain better."

"It don't matter," said the little man, hurriedly. "I take your meaning. Well, here we are at last." He let the window down on the platform side and, as the train came to a standstill, hailed a porter.

Kressler did the same.

"Not that," said Kressler. "I'll take that myself." He referred to a parcel in the rack overhead, a brown canvassed parcel that bore the stamp of the East as well as the initials "J. K."

When his luggage had been arranged on and about two taxis, Kressler got into the first, disposed the J. K. parcel on one of the front seats, tipped the porter half a crown, and said: "26A, Pont Street."

Kressler was forty-seven years of age; a lean, tanned, nervous individual with a heavy moustache and the eyes of a fanatic; he had one idea with a double string, and one hobby—the Orchidaceæ and the Coleoptera.

His glass-houses at Kniveton, down in Bucks, covered acres, his town house at 26A, Pont Street, had almost the atmosphere of a glass-house, due to the heating of a great conservatory at its back, a conservatory where choice specimens of the terrestrial ophrydeæ of Pleurothallis, Cattleya, Vanilleæ, Maxillaria Cypripedium, and other marvels held court and received old pre-war German professors from Tubingen, orchid fanatics from America, men from Kew. His collection of beetles was unique. Men laughed at Kressler for diverting part of his great wealth into the collection and cultivation of these forms; had he taken up with race-horses, or broken himself over theatres, they would have reckoned him sane enough, but for a man to devote his life to beetles and orchids! Maybe they were right, seeing that Kressler devoted to these things an ambition that might have made him Prime Minister, had it been properly coupled with his will-power and wealth—seeing also that he was married to a charming little fluffy-headed woman whom he left now and then for months and months, whilst he was off on

one of his mad slants in pursuit of his heart's desire. He was just back now from the Solomon Islands, by way of India, after an absence of nine months.

The cabs stopped at No. 26A, Pont Street. Kressler ran up the steps, rang, and was admitted by Burden. Burden, though of the breed of the old English side-whiskered butler, had still something floral about him, caught, maybe, from his environment. In form he suggested a bulb; his colour was even more florid than the interior pieces of Maxillaria Cypripedium.

"Got my wire?" asked Kressler.

"Yes, sir," replied Burden, taking his master's hat and making to take the parcel he carried.

"Don't bother," said Kressler. "Where's your mistress?"

"The mistress said she'd be back before you came, sir. She went to the New Burlington Art Club reception."

"Tea-party thing?" asked Kressler.

"Yes, sir, I believe so."

Kressler looked at his watch: it pointed to ten minutes past five.

"Well," he said, "you can tell her I'm in the library when she comes. See to my luggage, and have those cases of specimens put somewhere dry."

He crossed the hall, and Burden, slipping before him, opened the door of the library.

It was a pleasant room with a window giving upon the conservatory. On the centre table lay a pile of letters. Letters, circulars, seed catalogues, bulb catalogues, a monstrous pile that had already been dealt with by his secretary.

Kressler pointed to the letters.

"Shove those on the side table," said he.

Then, placing the parcel he carried on the table before him, he sat down and drew a penknife from his pocket whilst Burden closed the door.

Kressler opened the penknife and began carefully to rip the sewing of the canvas cover. This done, and the cover removed, he came upon a layer of dried moss, bound around with thin strips of bamboo. Something of the sun and mystery of the tropics seemed to emanate from the vaguely-scented bundle which Kressler now began to work upon with his knife, dividing the bamboo strips and tearing the moss apart till he reached the core—a huge bronze-coloured beetle, the wing edges bright as gold; brilliant as when alive, owing to the preservative properties of the barea moss.

Gathering the moss together, he threw the canvas cover into the fireplace. Then, turning to the table, he sat down before the beetle.

There were plenty of beetles in the packing-cases that Burden was unshipping from the taxis, but there was no beetle like this for beauty and strangeness, either in the packing-cases or the whole known world.

He repacked the thing carefully in the moss, placed it on top of a bureau by the window, and, taking his seat on a chair to rest, he fell into a momentary reverie. He saw again the sunlight of the South, smelt again the perfume of the forests, the heady, dank, dreamy smell of liantasse in swinging cables, cassi in golden flower, vanilla beans, and earth that, like a red magician, lurked behind the gorgeous arras, building trees, twisting vine cables, painting flowers, globing fruit, creating insects of the strangest pattern.

The door opened, and to the dreamer thus engaged little Mrs. Kressler came in.

She wore a broad-brimmed hat and she held the programme of the New Burlington Art Club in her hand.

II.

"MARY!" cried Kressler, rising to meet and kiss her.

"I knew I'd be late," said she. "I left in time, but the taxi broke down and I had a dispute and—oh, John, how brown you are! Let me look at you in the light—brown as a coffee-berry, and so tired-looking. Have you had tea?"

"No."

"Then come along—I've tons to tell you." She had. Over the tea-cups in the dining-room—she had ordered an egg to be boiled for his tea—she told him the kitchen chimney at Kniveton had taken it into its head to smoke; how the Lacys were going to be divorced, how Uncle George's rheumatism was, and how much she had paid a new modiste for the gown she was wearing—one-fifth of what Paquin would charge.

John listened, wiping the tea from his long moustache, and interested, despite himself and the fact that she was not talking about orchids or the Coleoptera.

Nine months in the wilder places of the earth give one an appetite for things homely and simple, and the doings of the great, even of the greatest, would have had but little appeal for Kressler, who found such interest in the doings of the sweep at Kniveton and the misdoings of the Lacys.

After tea they went to the drawing-room, where she played for him whilst he smoked a cigarette, then they had dinner, and after dinner they 'phoned for the electric brougham and went to the Gaiety.

Going to bed, Kressler peeped into the library to see that the beetle was all right; he did not lock it away, it wanted plenty of air after its journey, dry, warm air, such as that of the library. He fetched a newspaper and folded it into a sort of mattress so that air might get to the under side of his treasure:

then, having smoked a last cigarette, he went to bed.

The most extraordinary thing about the Kressiers, or perhaps the most ordinary thing, was the fact that Mrs. Kressler existed in a different world from her husband. They lived together, laughed, walked, talked, and ate together, but they didn't think together. This little woman, who had something of the comfortable appearance of a dormouse, had scarcely an idea of the ambitus or object of Kressler's activities; he went sometimes to foreign places to collect "specimens," his orchid houses were the finest in England, he was very proud of them—this she knew, nor searched for further knowledge, content with the fact that he was a good, if sometimes absent, husband, never bothering about her commonplace doings, and allowing her seven hundred a year for pin-money.

So it came about that next morning at nine o'clock, and just after her husband had left the house for Kew on important business, Mrs. Kressler, floating into the library, and seeing some dirty-looking moss lying on an old newspaper on the bureau, and some canvas in the grate, called the housemaid, who was dusting the hall, and told her to remove them.

III.

KRESSLER came home for luncheon at one o'clock, bringing Professor Skeines with him.

Mrs. Kressler was out, attending a sale at Derry and Toms, so they had the table and the conversation to themselves, with a bottle of old Madeira.

Skeines's conversation was about as interesting as the contents of a bulb catalogue to the uninitiated, but Kressler seemed to enjoy it, even though it was not all about orchids.

He listened with seeming interest whilst Skeines pulled Professor Pullman's monograph on the *Hexandria* to pieces, pointing out with devilish derision his inclusion amongst the *Liliaceæ* of a rush that had no place there—with seeming interest, for suddenly in a pause of the talk he prised Skeines from his subject as one prises a limpet from a rock and fastened him on to the Coleoptera.

"And now I'll show you something worth seeing," said Kressler, rising from the table. He left the room, leaving the door ajar, and old Skeines, pouring out another glass of Madeira, heard him cross the hall to the library. Then he heard the voice of Kressler crying aloud for Mary, whoever Mary might be, and the voice of a female making answer:—

"The missus told me to throw it out; sir."

Skeines pricked his ears; a long silence followed the simple announcement. Then came Kressler's voice:—

"Told you to throw it out!"

"Yes, sir; that and some old stuff that was in the grate."

"Told—you—to—throw—it out! Where to?—What!—Which! Where the—where did you throw it?"

"All the rubbish goes into the dustbin, sir!"

"All the rubbish—but this was not rubbish! Can't you understand—the only golden stag in the world—Great Scot! Where's the dustbin?"

"In the area, sir, but it will have been emptied by this."

"Emptied, where?"

"Into the dust-cart, sir."

"What dust-cart?"

"The one that comes every day, sir."

"Where does it come from?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Great Scot! Great Scot!—where's Burden?"

"The missus sent him to Harrods, sir, to match some Japanese lamp shades."

"Lamps, lamp shades!—Great Scot! Does the cook know? Run down and ask her, quick; tell her what's happened—quick."

Old Skeines, vastly interested, and withal amused as one at a tragic play where the acting is perfect, poured himself out another glass of Madeira and sat listening to the uneasy footsteps in the hall.

Skeines was unmarried, and his always fair estimate of his own wisdom was not diminished either in volume or intensity by the domestic tragedy unfolding to his ears.

He thought of the *Lilium Skeinesensi* which a foolish wife might have boiled, mistaking it for an onion. Of his essay "On the relation of the stamen to the calyx as determining the poisonous nature of certain plants," of which matrimony might have made jam-pot lids.

Then suddenly came the voice of Mary.

"Please, sir, the cook says the dustman called at twelve as usual and she doesn't know where he comes from, but it's the London County Council does the work, she believes, and——"

"Where's my hat?"

"Here, sir."

Skeines heard the hall door opened, a passing taxi being hailed, Kressler's voice crying "Spring Gardens," and the hall door shut.

He was not annoyed at being forgotten in this manner by his host—he knew him too well. He finished the Madeira, smoked a cigarette, and then he, too, departed.

IV.

IT was not till four o'clock on the following day that Kressler returned home for good. After definite knowledge of the fruitlessness of his quest had come the recognition of defeat and a feeling of

"'All the rubbish goes into the dustbin, sir.' 'All the rubbish—but this was not rubbish! Can't you understand——'"

abandonment. He had dined at his club, reviewing—as he ate the food he could not taste—the men he had interviewed, high officials and dustmen, the things he had seen, from dust carts to dust destructors, and the great fact that his quest was hopeless. He drifted into the Alhambra, and returned home at one o'clock in the morning. He listened to the easy breathing, speaking of the sleep of the just, that came from his wife's bedroom, then he stole off to his own room, and after early breakfast next morning, started for Richmond, where Skeines lived.

He did not want to meet his wife. He dreaded what he might say. He recognized that it was not all her fault, not her fault that she had been born with a mind destitute of interest in the things that really mattered, a commonplace frivolous mind—yet he did not want to meet her. He did not want to think of her. If she had destroyed the thing in a temper he might have forgiven her more easily than he could forgive her for this passionless, stupid crime, born of want of interest in his aspirations and doings.

Luncheon with Skeines and a blow in the Park, however, had a cooling effect, and by the time of his return home, about four o'clock, he was not only able to think calmly about his wife, but he was actually anxious to meet her. To meet her and punish her, by telling her exactly what she had done and in language that a child could understand.

"The mistress is in the drawing-room, sir," said Burden.

She was. Placid and content. Tea had just been brought in, and as Kressler entered she was in the act of pouring out a cup. Calm, and evidently without any sense of special wrong-doing.

"John," said Mrs. Kressler, as though suddenly remembering, "I'm so sorry. Mary tells me that old thing you left in the library and that old canvas in the grate oughtn't to have been thrown out—I told her to——"

"I know," said Kressler. "It was a beetle—there's no use in bothering about it—two lumps, please."

He took his cup and sat down, and Mrs. Kressler, nothing loth, turned the conversation in another direction. She knew nothing of the wild incidents of yesterday; Mary had simply said that the master had seemed put out. He still seemed put out, so she started to draw him away from himself with light gossip and with such apparent success that she was surprised when, tea being over, Kressler, returning to the subject like the Biblical dog, said :—

"I want to talk to you, Mary, about that thing; sit down here beside me on the sofa. I want to tell you the story of it so that you may see what it meant to me."

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Kressler. Fetching the half-knitted jumper she was at work on, she sat down beside him on the broad comfortable sofa, and he began.

V.

"YOU remember, or maybe you don't remember, that before starting I had engaged a collector to meet me at Rangoon."

"I remember something about that," said Mrs. Kressler, "because you got so angry with me when I asked you what he was going to collect."

"If I got angry," said Kressler, "it was simply because the fact was obvious that the expedition being in search of new specimens of certain endogenous plants grouped under the name Orchidaceæ and certain new forms of life, we were going to collect those, if possible. Well, I met this man at Rangoon. Simmonds was his name. I had engaged him on good credentials; an hour's conversation with him confirmed them. Here was no hired collector—would you mind putting those knitting needles aside, dear, their movements rather interrupt me?—here was no man paid for doing a job; here was a man with a passionate attachment to his subject, a man whose life had been spent in the wilder places of the world in pursuit of science. He was a remarkable man, even in personal appearance, not unlike Burden in figure and face, if one can imagine Burden with an intellect and some inches shorter in stature; but the thing that struck me most was his head. It was very large, quite enormous, making him a subject of ridicule, indeed, to boys and dull-witted persons.

"He had already obtained for me an option upon a schooner of sixty tons, the *Madras*, owned by a Dutch gentleman of the name of Papenhayne, resident in Rangoon; having inspected her I signed the contract for a year's hire. A week later we had obtained our crew, and the provisions and water having been brought on board, we started, shaping our course for Borneo.

"One might ask me, 'Why pass the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, those well-known haunts of the orchid?' and I would reply 'Over-done.' Robbed by innumerable collectors of the rarer specimens, these islands, small in area, are over-done. Simmonds well knew that, and, led by his sagacity, we discarded the obvious, steering, as I said, for Borneo.

"Reaching Sarawak we put in to Igan, which is situated on a bend of the Rejang river. Between here and Muka we made our hunting-ground, and here, led by Simmonds, I secured a rich harvest. Half the contents of those packing-cases. Think of it, in that small tract of country disdained by

collectors I secured all those, simply because I was led by a man of knowledge and genius."

"It's something like shopping, isn't it?" said Mrs. Kressler. "Sometimes in side streets you find shops that are much better and cheaper than the big shops—if you know the ropes."

"Just so," said Kressler, pleased at this sudden flash of intelligence in his spouse. "Simmonds knew the ropes, as you put it, and, having exhausted this piece of country, we re-embarked and set sail for Sandal Wood Island in the Sunda group. It is quite a small island, but very rich in its flora and fauna and strangely neglected by collectors, and having secured a fairly good haul, we left for Mallicollo, in the New Hebrides, stopping there only for water and leaving the next day for a small island to the south which Simmonds had marked down, and where our luck still held good. We spent a fortnight there, and on the eve of our departure for Suva Simmonds made a proposition to me.

"It seems that somewhere about a year before a Dutchman named Van Horne had given him information of the possibilities of Malaita in the Solomon Islands. Van Horne was a collector, and he had marked down a special bay to the west of Malaita where the woods were extraordinarily rich. The only difficulty was the natives. The natives of Malaita are head-hunters to a man; crafty, subtle, and sly, they are the most dangerous people in the Eastern world. Civilization has never really touched them. They are cannibals, but they kill really less for food than for the strange passion that has come down to them from immemorial times, the passion for securing and collecting heads. Head lust, one might call it.

"Well, Simmonds proposed to me that we should sail for Malaita and, risking the natives, explore the woods spoken of by Van Horne. Such was his devotion to me, that, though he was only my paid agent who could have chosen safe places, he put every personal consideration aside—you quite appreciate that fact, don't you?"

"Yes—go on," said Mrs. Kressler, nestling close to him as if for protection against the head-hunters. "I quite see, they'd want to get his head, wouldn't they?—you said it was so big."

"I wasn't thinking of that—I meant risk of life. He was ready to risk his life for my sake and for the sake of the objects of our search. You see that clearly?"

"Yes, quite."

"WELL, I accepted his suggestion, after due consideration, and next day we set sail for Malaita, favoured by fine weather, and in due course we arrived at the bay indicated by Van Horne. It was a narrow bay protected by a reef and backed by dense groves of coco-nuts, pandanus, bread-fruit, and other tropical trees, but sign of natives there was none. Everything seemed in our favour, and then, all of a sudden, bad luck came, for on the morning after our arrival I was troubled by an attack of fever. I must have taken it at Mallicollo. However that may be, it quite prostrated me, and, despite large doses of quinine, I was helpless and unable to land. Then it was that Simmonds showed himself again in his true colours. He determined to go ashore alone, taking with him two Kanakas we had picked up at Mallicollo. I pointed out to him the risk attending the landing of such a small party, but he was quite determined, and I was too weak to argue with him. So he went, taking provisions sufficient for three or four days, an automatic pistol, and the tin collecting box which he always carried slung across his shoulder by a strap.

"On the evening of the next day one of the Kanakas returned, hailing the ship from the beach. A boat put off for him, and he came on board bearing a note from Simmonds. The note briefly stated that he had discovered what he called the wonder of the world, the golden stag he called it—a beetle absolutely unknown to science. He gave a short description, and finished by saying that he was pushing farther into the woods and would return on the following day. You can fancy my feelings. The fever quite left me. I was myself again. My appetite came back, and that night I slept soundly, though dreaming, indeed, the most splendid dream, in which I walked with my friend amongst groves where the flora was of almost impossible beauty. Next day I could scarcely rest watching the beach for his return, but evening came and passed and night fell without a sign of him. Next morning was the same. No sign; the day passed and night was falling when a hail from the beach reached us, but it was not Simmonds.

"It was Ramua, the second Kanaka, returned without his master. When we got him on board he was too exhausted to speak, then, after a while, when we had given him some food and brandy, he recovered enough to be able to tell his tale.

"He said that shortly after leaving us they had struck a part of the forest where 'Master with the big head,' that was the name he employed, speaking in the native, had expressed great joy over an insect which he had collected, and placed it in his tin box. He had sent the other Kanaka back with a note to me, and then he and Ramua had pushed on, seeking more things but finding little of importance, though, indeed, the forest was filled with plants and insects not inferior in

"'Yes—go on,' said Mrs. Kressler, nestling close to him as if for protection."

looks to the one which had given his master such delight.

"Of course, I knew at once the truth, that Simmonds, as so often happens after a big find, had struck the commonplace again, and, spurred by his first success, had pushed on farther and farther. Ramua's narrative bore me out. Simmonds had indeed pushed on, making towards the north so as to avoid the hills, and that night, as they slept, he and Ramua had been seized by natives, bound,and carried captive to a village situated in a clearing and close to the shore.

"Ramua on the way had managed to loosen his bonds, and, struggling free of them, had broken away and escaped. He could not tell what the natives had done to Simmonds, whether they had killed him or whether he still lived. He had made his way back to the ship by that beast instinct common to primitive man, and he declared, on being questioned, that he could find the village again if I cared to lead a relief expedition and take him as guide.

"OF course, I determined on that course of action at once. There were seven of us. Myself, Masters, the captain of the schooner, three sailors, one of whom acted as bo'sun, and the two Kanakas. We had four repeating rifles and four revolvers on board, and plenty of ammunition; these we collected, with enough provisions to last us four days, and, having given Ramua six hours in which to rest himself and sleep, we started just as day was breaking beyond the hills.

"We landed without opposition or difficulty, and, leaving a man behind to take the boat back to the schooner and keep watch, we struck inland, led by Ramua, through a forest where the cable lianas swung overhead, and the tree tops, moving in the land breeze that had just sprung up, showed the sky lit with morning.

"As the light grew stronger I could see what a paradise for the collector this was likely to be, but, filled as my mind was with the fate of Simmonds, I was blind to the possibilities around me. I had but one idea, to push on.

"At noon we halted for a rest and some food, and two hours later we resumed the march, Ramua still leading with the unerring instinct of a dog, till we reached a part of the forest where only bread-fruit grew, interspersed with great patches of the Mammee apple.

"Here Ramua called a halt and whispered that we were within earshot of the village.

"It was just sundown and darkness was coming through the trees. He said that our plan was to wait a few hours till the moon rose, then, the village being asleep, we could prospect the place, free Simmonds if he were still alive, perhaps without giving the alarm, or, if necessary, attack the place with better chance of success in the moonlight than we would have now that dusk was full upon us. He said that if they intended killing Simmonds they would have done so by this. We fell in with his plan and, lying down, rested ourselves whilst darkness came on and the forest turned black with night.

"Presently a faint green light began to glow above us. It was the light of the rising moon. It grew stronger and, as it grew, the whisper came from Ramua that it was time for us to move. I ordered the men to look to their arms, see that their spare ammunition was all right, and walk softly; then, following Ramua in single file, we moved off.

"It was easy going, and the ground, covered by a growth of low fern between the Mammee apples and the bread-fruit tracts, gave no sound to our footsteps. Ten minutes passed, then, Ramua halting, we spread out and, peeping through the bushes, saw the native village in its clearing, the moon full upon the grass-thatched huts and, full in the moonlight in the open space around which the huts were grouped, a little fire burning and sending its smoke to the sky.

"Three sticks in the form of a tripod were placed over the fire and from them something hung on a string, twirling in the smoke. Beside the fire squatted an old man feeding the flickering flames with dried leaves and bits of tinder, the smoke rising in volumes at every handful so that sometimes the thing that was being smoked was invisible. Not another soul was in sight; the village slept well and soundly, and the reason of its sleep was evident in the embers of a greater fire just dying out and the bones around it. The village was gorged.

"Ramua, who was beside me, plucked my sleeve, pointed out the old man by the fire and whispered: 'Devil-devil doctor.' Then he held up a finger and whispered: 'Wait!'

"He rose, slipped away through the trees, and presently returned with something in his hands. It was a fathom of tough ground liana as thick as whipcord. Then, holding up his finger again, he glided away. Presently he reappeared in the full moonlight, crossing the open space like a ghost, towards the old man, approaching him from behind.

"The devil-doctor heard and saw nothing. Then suddenly the liana was round his neck, twisted tight, and he was lying on the ground kicking, and, in a moment, dead. Not a cry had broken the stillness of the night to alarm the village, nothing but just the faint sound of the old man's brief struggle that might have been the sound of a bush pig in the undergrowth.

"Then Ramua removed the thing that was hanging from the tripod and picked up something that lay beside the body of the devil-doctor, something that shone in the moonlight. It was Simmonds's collecting box—the other thing, which he had removed from the tripod, was Simmonds's head.

"Coming back to us bearing these things, one in each hand, he whispered us to follow him, and striking through the trees we left the sleeping village behind us, reaching the beach as dawn was breaking and setting sail an hour later.

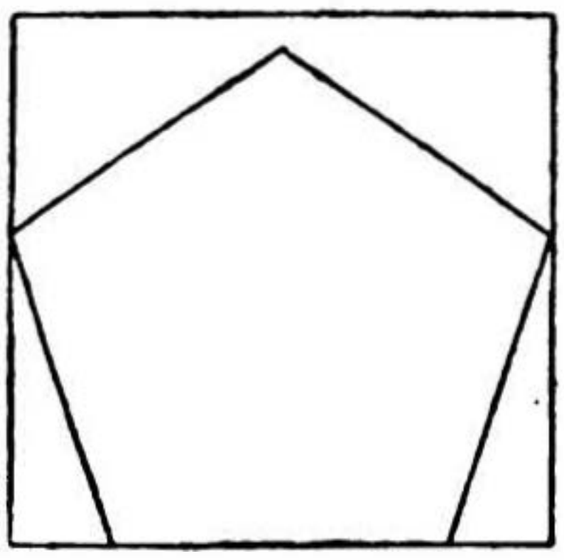
"We buried the remains of my friend at sea, and the golden stag for which he had risked his life—for which he gave his life—went to a London dustbin. To a London dust destructor; that is all I wanted to tell you—now you know."

Kressler paused, but Mrs. Kressler said nothing. The cruel fatality of the whole business seemed to have stricken her dumb as she sat there, her head reclining against his shoulder. Kressler, half-shocked with the effect of his revelation, looked down at her face—she was asleep!

PERPLEXITIES. By Henry E. Dudeney.

579.—FOLDING A PENTAGON.

I AM reminded of my promise in the issue for last June to present another puzzle in paper folding of a rather more difficult character than the Hexagon example that we then considered. Let us, then, try our hands at this. If you are given a perfectly square piece of paper, how are you to fold it so as to indicate by creases a regular pentagon, as in our illustration, all ready to be cut out? Remember that you must use your fingers alone, without any instrument or measure whatever.



580.—EXPLORING MOUNT NEVEREST.

PROFESSOR WALKINGHOLME, one of the exploring party, was allotted the special task of making a complete circuit of the base of the mountain at a certain level. The circuit was exactly 100 miles in length and he had to do it all alone on foot. He could walk 20 miles a day, but he could only carry rations for two days at a time, the rations for each day being packed in sealed boxes for convenience in dumping. He walked his full 20 miles every day and consumed one day's ration as he walked. What is the shortest time in which he could complete the circuit? This simple question will be found to form one of the most fascinating puzzles that we have considered for some time. It made a considerable demand on Professor Walkingholme's well-known ingenuity. The reader who can find the correct solution may congratulate himself. The idea was suggested to me by Mr. H. F. Heath.

581.—TIMING THE MOTOR-CAR.

"I WAS walking along the road at three and a half miles an hour," said Mr. Pipkins, "when the motor-car dashed past me and only missed me by a few inches."

"Do you know at what speed it was going?" asked his friend.

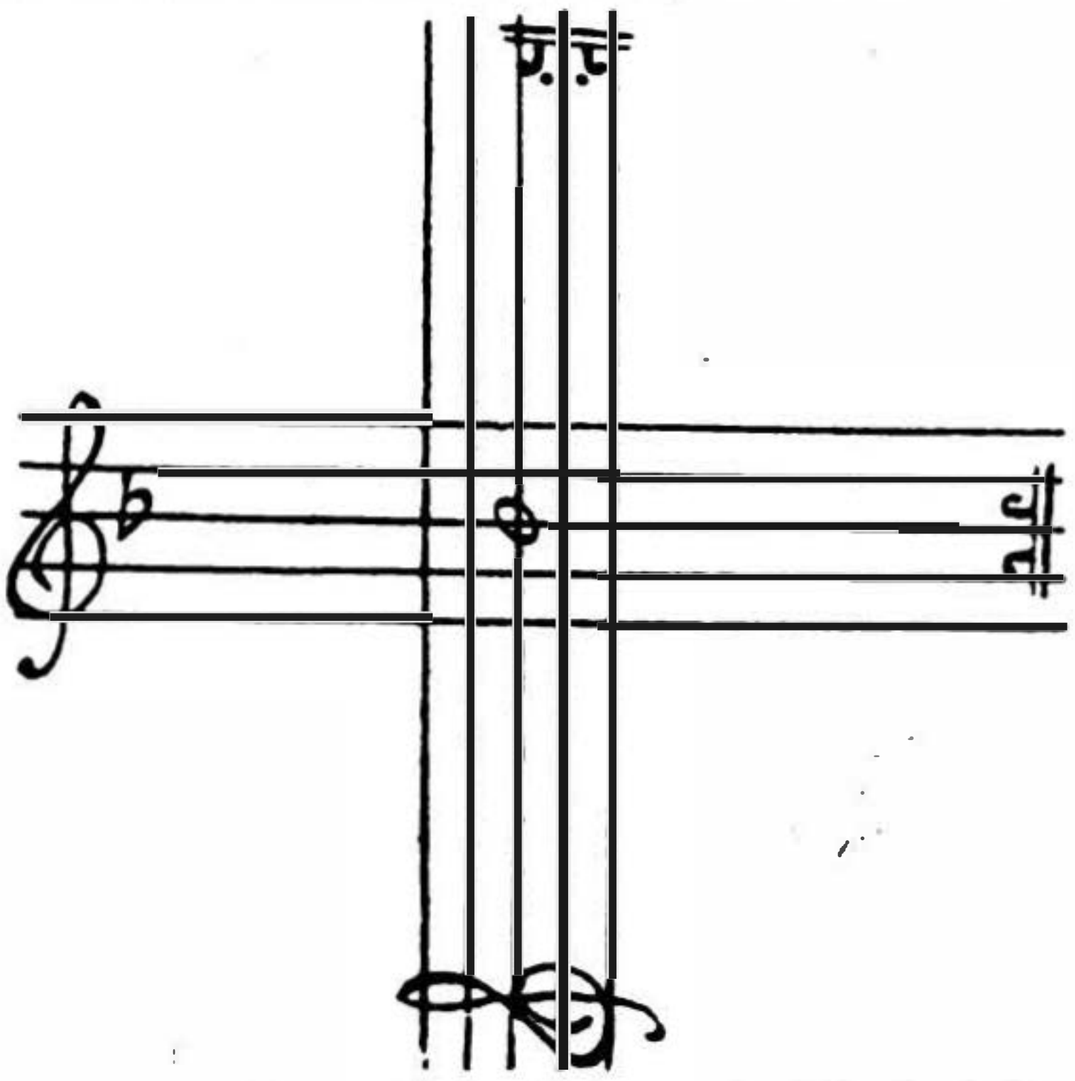
"Well, from the moment it passed me to its disappearance round a corner I took twenty-seven steps, and walking on reached that corner with one hundred and thirty-five steps more."

"Then, assuming that you walked, and the car ran, each at a uniform rate, we can easily work out the speed."

What was the answer? This is a good trap for the youthful arithmetician, who will imagine all sorts of difficulties. such as the unknown length of the man s steps, but it is absurdly simple when properly grasped.

582.—A MUSICAL ENIGMA.

HERE is an old musical enigma sent to me by a correspondent ("K. L."). The solution is not known, and I have not hit on it. Perhaps readers can make



some suggestions. I give it as received in facsimile, and assume that the omission of the flat in the vertical clef is intentional. My correspondent's old copy is in violet ink, which may not be material to a solution, but had better be mentioned.

583.—A NEW ALPHABET PUZZLE.

IT was shown (in our issue for May, 1918) that a sentence may be formed from the twenty-six letters of the alphabet and only two repeated letters. One of the examples given was BLOWZY FRIGHTS VEX AND JUMP QUICK, where the U and I are repeated. It has been suggested to me to form words (not necessarily a sentence) by using as many letters of the alphabet as possible (no repetitions), and it is obvious that by striking out the word QUICK above and substituting DANK for AND we get a solution with only the letters C and Q omitted. Can you form words with only a single letter dropped?

SOLUTIONS TO THE PUZZLE CRANKS' SYMPOSIUM.

REDUCTIONS IN PRICE.

It is evident that the salesman's rule was to take off three-eighths of the price at every reduction. Therefore, to be consistent, the motor-car should be offered at £78 2s. 6d. after the next reduction.

SOME WORD PUZZLES.

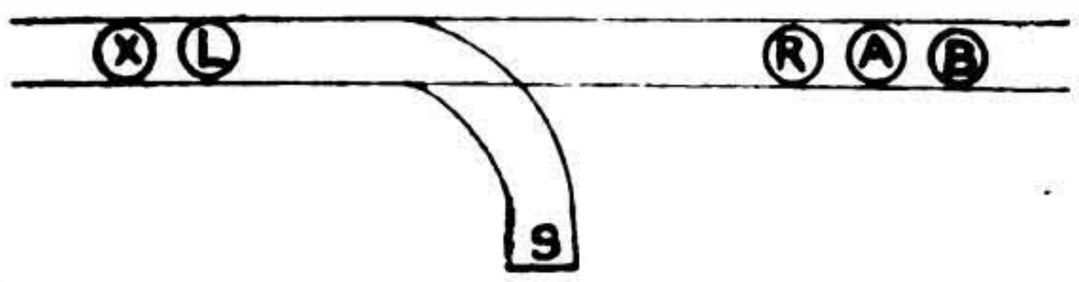
The first word is SKILL—KILL—ILL, and the second TELEGRAPH. Mr. Wingleford's last question is answered by POSTMAN, for no matter how many letters you may take from him he still remains a postman.

THE CIRCULATING MOTOR-CAR.

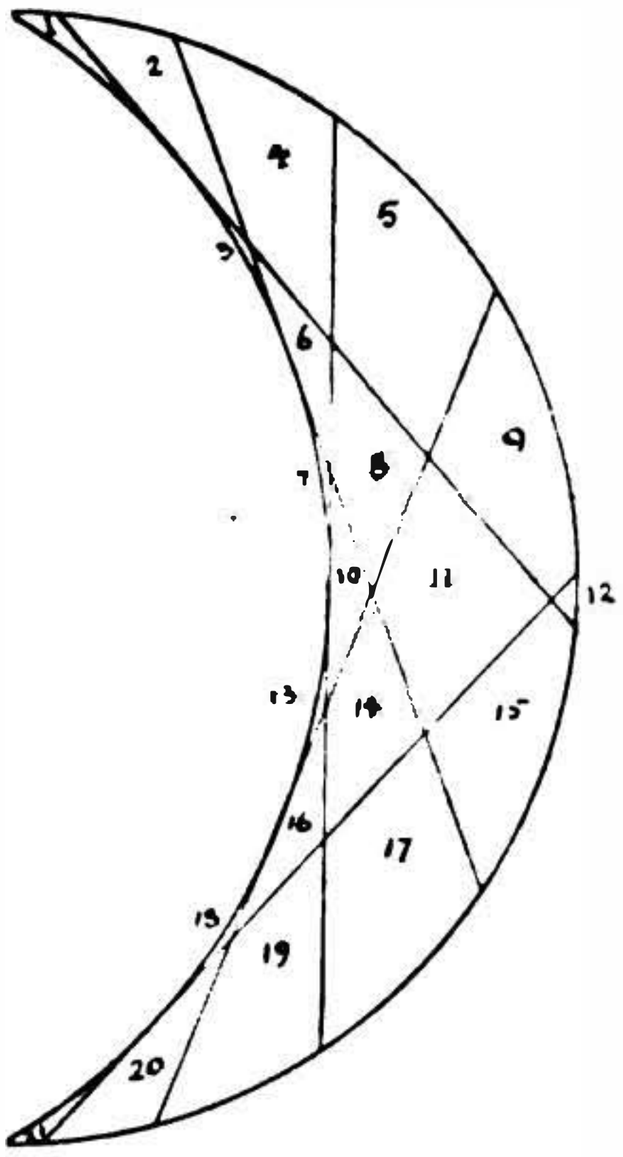
As the outside wheels went twice as fast as the inside ones the circle they described was twice the length of the inner circle. Therefore one circle had twice the diameter of the other, and, since the wheels were 5 feet apart, the diameter of the larger circle was 20 feet. Multiply 20 feet by 3·1416 (the familiar approximate value for "pi") and we get 62·832 feet as the length of the circumference of the larger circle.

RAILWAY SHUNTING.

Make a rough sketch like our diagram and use five counters marked X, L, R, A, and B. The engines are L and R, and the two cars on the right A and B. The three cars on the left are never separated, so we call them X. The side track is marked S. Now, play as follows: L to S, R A B to left (as far as necessary),



L off S to left, A B L to right, R to S, A B L to left, X A B L to right, R off S to left, R to right, R X A to left, R takes A to S, R X to left, R X to right, R to left, R to A, R A to left, R A to right, R A X B to left, R takes B to S, R A X to left, R A X to right, R A to left, R A to B, and both trains right away. There are thus 24 moves, but first two moves involve no change of direction, so number of moves according to conditions is 22. The last move, "trains right away," does require a change of direction on the part of R.



DISSECTING THE MOON.

The illustration shows that the five cuts can be so cunningly made as to produce as many as twenty-one pieces.

A POLISH GAMBLE.

At the start of play Wobblestaff put £260 on the table, the Baron £80, and the Count £140. After the three games it will be found that each player was left with £160 and Wobblestaff had lost £100.

PAWNS AGAINST PIECES.

1. P takes Kt (*a*) and P takes Q P, ch. (*b*), 1. R takes P; 2. P to R 6 and P to R 7, 2. P to Q Kt 3 (*c*); 3. P to R 8 (Q) and Q to R 6, ch., 3. K to B 2; 4. Q takes Kt P and Q to R 7, ch., 4. B to Kt 2 (*d*); 5. Q takes B and Q to Kt 5, 5. Q to K 8, ch. (*e*); 6. K to B sq. and K takes Q, 6. R to K 2, ch.; 7. Q to K 2 and Q takes R, ch., etc. (*f*).

(*a*) 1. P takes Q would be fatal to White's chance of winning. (*b*) P takes Kt P would also be bad for White. (*c*) If 4...Q to R 7; 5. P to R 8 (Q) and Q takes Q. (*d*) If Black K moved, 5. Q takes R and Q takes Q! (*e*) If Q to Kt 5, ch.; 6. P to R 3 and P takes Q! (*f*) It will be seen that if White once gets a Q and can hold it for one move the game of Black is invariably hopeless. And Black in the position given could not prevent White queening. There are slightly better last moves on both sides, but I have selected those that afford instructive examples of play. In no case could Black save the game.

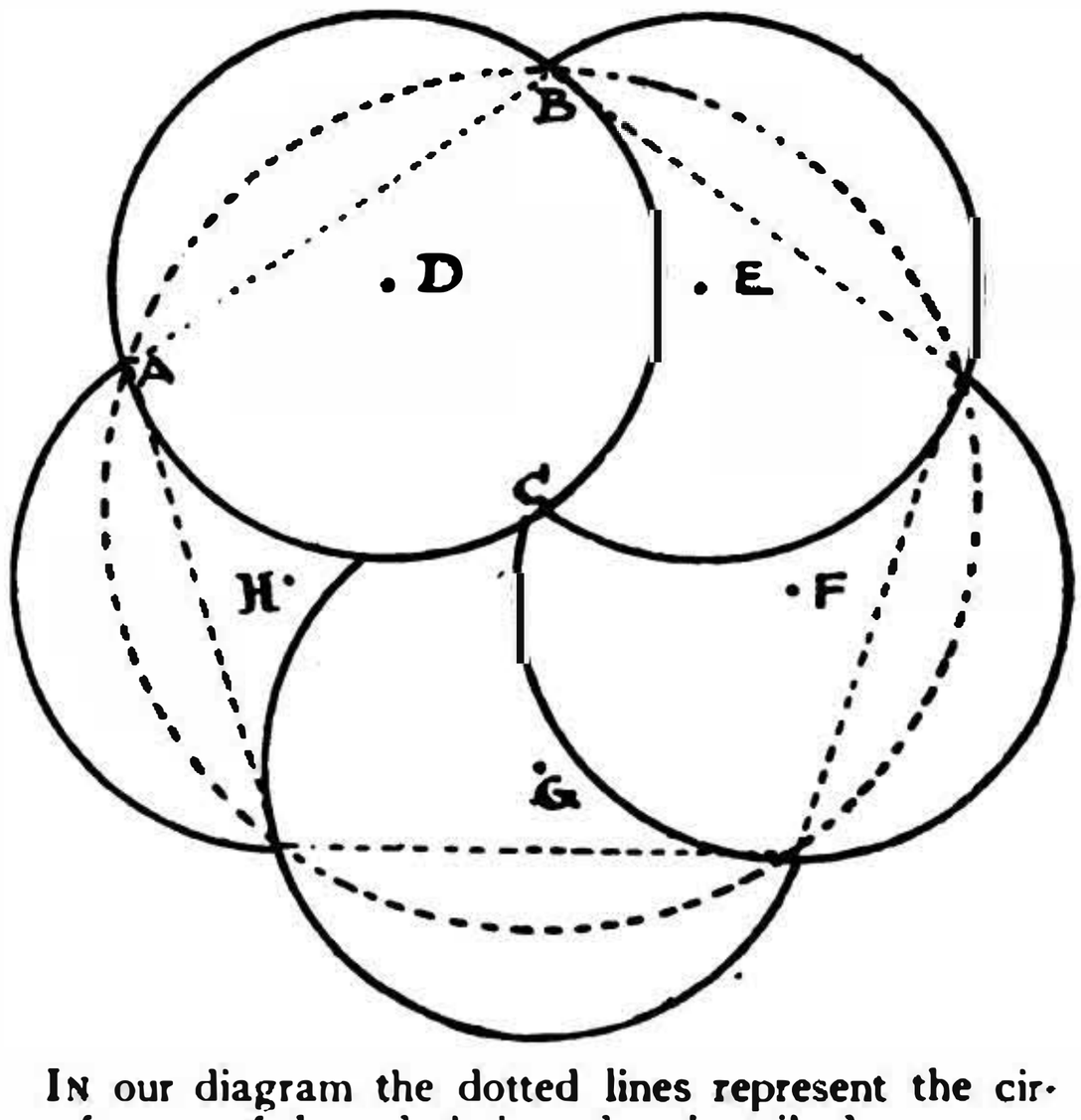
BRUIN GOES SHOPPING.

What the bear wanted was muslin'.

A CURIOUS LEGACY.

As it is evident that Catherine, Jane, and Mary received respectively £122, £132, and £142, making together the £396 left to the three wives, if John Smith receives as much as his wife Catherine, £122; Henry Snooks half as much again as his wife Jane, £198; and Tom Crow twice as much as his wife Mary, £284: we have correctly paired these married couples and exactly accounted for the £1,000.

THE CIRCLE AND DISCS.



In our diagram the dotted lines represent the circumference of the red circle and an inscribed pentagon. The centre of both is C. Find D, a point equidistant from A, B, and C, and with radius A D draw the circle A B C. Five discs of this size will cover the circle if placed with their centres at D, E, F, G, and H. If the diameter of the large circle is 6 inches, the diameter of the discs is a little less than 4 inches, or 4 inches "to the nearest half-inch." It requires a little care and practice correctly to place the five discs without shifting, unless you make some secret markings that would not be noticed by others.

"RAFFLES" IN VIENNA

by

JOSEPH GOLLOMB

ILLUSTRATED BY E·VERPILLEUX

IF you read the story of Hugo Breitwisser in the dry records of the Vienna police, as I glanced at it, you would find no mention of him as Robin Hood, the gallant outlaw of Sherwood Forest who robbed the rich to give to the poor. But if you were to hear the story, as I heard it, from the lips of Inspector Johann Rapp, the simple policeman who has made the Crime Museum of the Vienna police both an art collection and a marvellous school for hunters of criminals, you would feel the thrill of his picture of both Robin Hood and Raffles coming to life in one man and living in himself the best stories you had read about them.

We were standing in the room of burglar exhibits in the Crime Museum, Inspector Rapp and I, when he turned to a specially-constructed case full of some sort of paraphernalia.

"It is the tool-chest of Hugo Breitwisser," Inspector Rapp said, proudly. "He was the Edison of burglars, the Robin Hood of the modern world, the Raffles of fiction come to life. He drew on fiction for his life, and in the living improved on fiction. When he was killed two years ago he was only twenty-eight. Had he lived ten more years such as he lived since leaving the university, his name would ring round the world and go down in romance as the super-burglar in all history. But—judge for yourself.

"He was the son of cultured parents of excellent reputation," he went on. "How he came to shoot off on his tangent of crime you must ask whatever powers create the genius and the monster. Even as a stripling Hugo knew what his career was to be. He had read of Robin Hood, and he found his hero. I don't mean to say that if he hadn't come across the story of Robin Hood he would have stayed a good citizen. No, the character and destiny of the man were there early in life, and he planned his career with the same care, detail, and thought that his fond parents devoted to preparing him for mechanical engineering.

"Indeed, it was at his own urging that he was sent to the University of Gratz to study engineering. Not that he wanted to learn the profession for itself. But he knew it would give him considerable training in tool-making, knowledge of tensile strength of metals, or the construction of vaults and safes, of the action of acids and gases on iron and steel. You see, he was going to college to study burglary; and he was planning his own college course. It is the only case I have ever heard of a criminal preparing for his profession in the same way that a lawyer or a doctor prepares for theirs.

"His single-mindedness as a young man in the university was that of a genius. He took lessons in wrestling and 'jiu-jitsu,' just as young policemen learn these things—and for the opposite reasons. He kept away from dissipation because it took off the edge of keenness of nerve and mind. He 'clubbed' and made friends with all sorts of men, because it is with all sorts of men that a super-criminal would have to deal.

"One day during a hard winter soon after Breitwisser left the university a big coal dealer was visited in his office by a decorously-dressed, serious-minded young man.

"'I am the secretary of a gentleman of

considerable means,' the visitor said. 'He is moved by the plight of the poor this winter. There are leeches of coal dealers who take this opportunity of raising the price of fuel to prohibitive prices——'

"'What do you want?' the coal dealer interrupted him, sharply. His prices were highest of all.

"'My employer wishes to distribute a large quantity of coal to the poor. But he wants to remain anonymous. So if your prices are reasonable I am empowered to order from you. You will also have to furnish a list of about one thousand names and addresses of the poorest people in the city and deliver the coal in your wagons. For all this you will be paid in cash.'

"The coal dealer stared. But, smarting under the characterization of 'leech,' he began by asking the top price. To his great astonishment and delight, the young man accepted, and gave him a large order, paying for it in crisp new bills. The only conditions imposed were that deliveries were to be made at once, and that no effort would be made to find out who the anonymous donor was.

"The joyful merchant gladly accepted them and proceeded to carry them out at top speed. All day and night hundreds of poor families were roused to find sacks of coal dumped down on their thresholds, sent, as they were told, by some unknown lover of the poor. The next day the newspapers were full of the handsome charity.

"THE other item that filled the newspapers that day was an account of a highly successful burglary of the coal merchant's safe the night before. All the money he had received from the 'secretary of the anonymous benefactor of the poor' had been taken, and another sum in addition. The two events, united apparently by accident, stirred the public. The police found the burglary an extraordinarily skilful performance, with not a trace as to who had done it.

"It would have remained a complete mystery to this day had not the newspapers received, a few days later, copies of an anonymous note. It read: —

"'What I took from the safe of coal-dealer Metz on Monday night was largely my own money, which I had paid him that day for deliveries of coal to the poor. The sum above that was the ten per cent. I paid myself out of his money for the trouble of making a leech disgorge the blood he had sucked from the veins of the poor.—ROBIN HOOD.'

"It was not till several years later," continued Inspector Rapp, "that we found in Hugo Breitwisser the man who had robbed the coal dealer and befriended the poor. But from the day of the appearance of the note in the newspapers his deeds began to fill the imagination of the public.

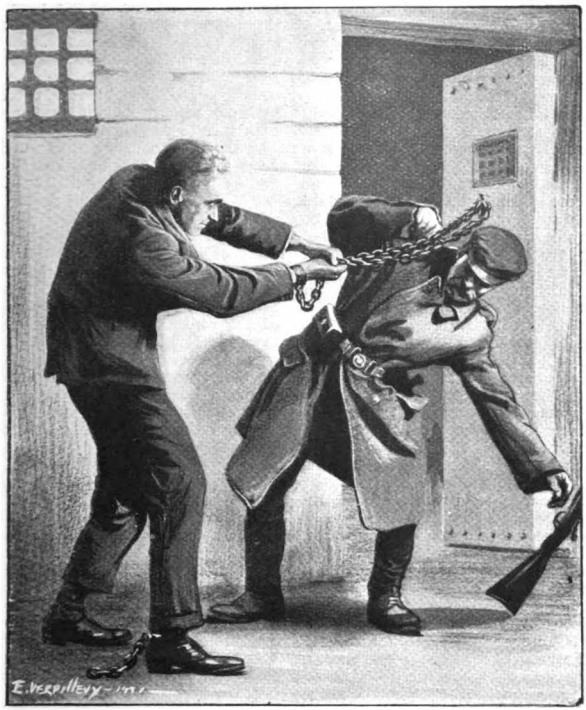
"As for the police, we began to see in a whole series of expert burglaries the work of some one man. Thanks largely to Professor Gross and his school of criminologists, we soon learned a great deal about this master-burglar's methods. But we did not, could not, keep up with his new ones. No sooner did we solve one method of his—and each one was in advance of those used by other burglars—than he developed something new. It was usually his own invention—a specially effective explosive, a sensitive device to register the working of the tumblers of safes too strong to blow up, or a gas torch of irresistible power.

"But we were helped by Breitwisser himself. He confined himself almost exclusively to robbing notorious exploiters of the poor; and almost immediately after each robbery whole districts of poverty-stricken people would receive gifts of food, clothing, and fuel, or, most frequently of all, money. All this gave us plenty of clues in our hunt, and several times the police of Vienna caught glimpses of him.

"But it was a serious matter for some of them. Hugo Breitwisser had learned from the American criminal a great readiness to shoot when cornered. The first time this happened was when we had laid a trap for him. We 'planted' a story in the newspaper that a certain wholesale butcher, who had the reputation of being a hard creditor, had just closed a big deal with the Government and had bought a lot of jewellery in celebration.

"For two weeks we had our men hidden every night on the premises of this dealer. One night Breitwisser came. We did not know he had effected an entrance into the house until he was actually in the room where the safe was. It was pitch dark. Our first intimation that he was there was the sight of a tiny electric light moving about the room. Two of our men hurled themselves at what we thought would be the man behind the light. Our hands only found a long, slender collapsible rod, with Breitwisser himself somewhere six feet behind it.

"By the time one of our men found the switch and turned on the lights Breitwisser was at the window. As it was three storeys above the ground, with nothing to break the leap, they thought surely they had him. So our men jumped for him, not thinking it necessary to shoot. But he had a revolver in his hand, and shot down two of our men, killing one and mortally wounding another. What we did not know—and he did—was that at the window there was a patent rope fire-escape. Before we could seize him he had jumped from the window, the end of the rope about himself.



" With the chain as a weapon, Breitwisser knocked the sentry unconscious."

" He landed safely—but in the arms of our men. They talk to this day of the terrific fight he put up. Nevertheless, they landed him in jail that night. They had caught ' Robin Hood ' at last.

" The newspapers were full of him next day and for two weeks thereafter, while he was awaiting trial for robbery and murder. With what we thought pardonable vanity, he asked for copies of every newspaper that said anything about him. He got them; and the prison keepers thought it not at all curious that he should want to keep them all.

" But one day his cell was found empty. Somehow or other he had concealed a phial of some acid, with which he had burned away the end of one of his window bars and twisted it so that it gave him an opening. Hanging from the other bars was found a rope—of paper. He had so twisted a lot of newspapers that they formed a continuous rope, tied with strings of mattress-covering, so that the paper did not untwist again. Once on the ground, he made good his escape."

It seemed incredible, what Inspector Rapp was telling me. But he turned to the Breitwisser exhibit, and there was the " rope " itself. Like the egg which Columbus caused to stand on end, it seemed a simple matter once you saw it.

" Soon afterwards the war broke out," Inspector Rapp continued. " In the great tumult Breitwisser was almost forgotten. But one day a squad of hunters for army evaders caught him in their net. They didn't know who he was, and thought him an ordinary slacker. So they took only ordinary precautions. He escaped from the military prison with ridiculous ease.

" But in a land where every able-bodied young man was in the army it was difficult

for Breitwisser to remain hidden. Besides, there was always in the man a hardihood, a thirst for adventure, a love of thrill that tempted him into danger. So that he was captured again by the military authorities, this time known as a deserter.

"He was put in chains, and after a speedy court-martial sentenced to be shot. An hour before the firing squad came for him Breitwisser hung the chain that bound his hands and legs in one strand on a hook in the wall. He then turned and manœuvred until the chain was twisted tight. Somehow he managed to endure the agony as the twisted chain dug into his wrist. And with a final whirl he put such a strain on the twist that a weak link snapped—and Breitwisser's hands were loose.

"He called out as though in pain. The sentry came into the cell, thinking Breitwisser was still bound. With the chain as a weapon, Breitwisser knocked the sentry unconscious. Wrapped in the sentry's great-coat, the young devil stole into the prison yard, and lay hidden for days in a pile of scrap material. At that time our army was breaking under a sudden offensive of the Russians. In the general preoccupation that followed he escaped—and we heard no more of him until the great climax to his story.

"The war ended with Austria prostrate. But, as vultures prey on prostrate bodies, so poor Austria has suffered from *schieber*—profiteers, who made swollen fortunes from illegal trading in food. One of these—let us call him Schwartz—made the acquaintance of a dashing young artillery officer. He thought the meeting accidental. It wasn't. It was of Breitwisser's planning.

"He had planned it, inspired by the character of the English gentleman-burglar of fiction—Raffles. The officer, who called himself Reinhard, was an exceedingly charming fellow and a gay companion. Schwartz, like all the newly-rich, didn't know how to play enjoyably, and was most anxious to learn. Reinhard was a genius at playing. So Schwartz became a most eager pupil.

"It was at Reinhard's suggestion that Schwartz gave a gay costume party at his house. The young officer, with characteristic boldness and imagination, chose to dress as Robin Hood, in doublet and hose of Lincoln green. The party, consisting of other profiteers and their female friends, proceeded to get as drunk as only such a crowd can.

"Reinhard took his host aside. 'Some of your friends are getting to be a little—well, exhilarated. If any of them should lose their jewellery while dancing it would not be at all pleasant. Why don't you suggest to them, while they are still sober, that they let you put their jewels away in your safe?'

"Schwartz thought this a good idea, and so did his friends. They were all a bit timid, anyway, as people with uneasy consciences are. So into Schwartz's competent safe went their jewellery and pocket-books. And into the room where the safe was wandered Reinhard, clad in Lincoln green, a little more than staggering, singing at the top of his voice the current *cabaret* favourite. The servants thought nothing of it—he had been living with Schwartz for some days, and had the free run of the house.

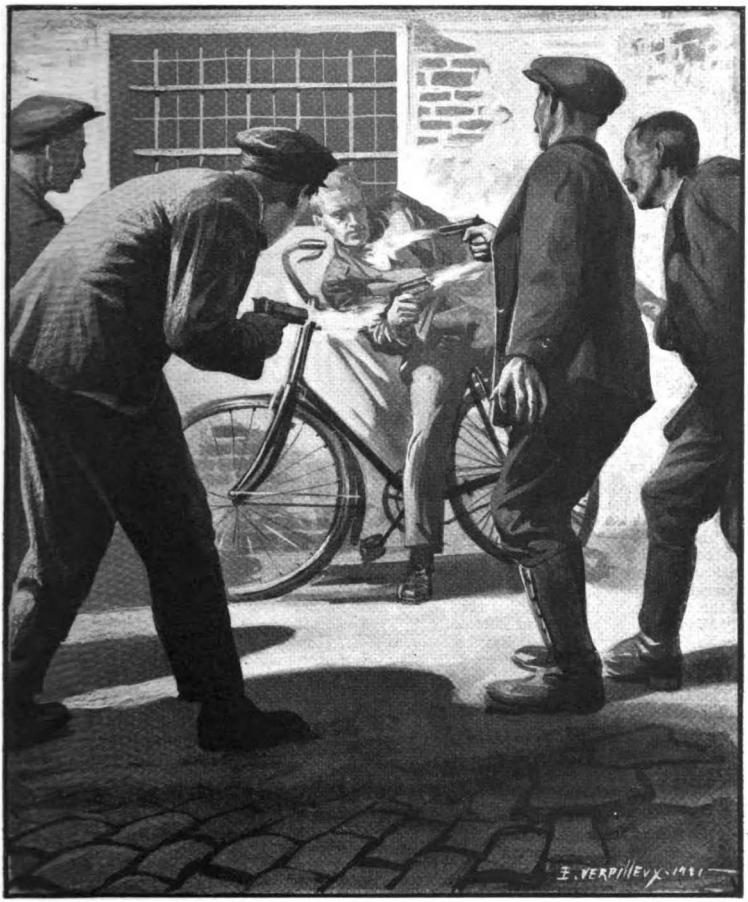
"But once inside the room, Reinhard, without stopping his singing, lost his stagger. Going to Schwartz's bed—it was the profiteer's own bedroom—Reinhard dragged out the mattress. From Schwartz's own cupboard he took out a complete set of paraphernalia, which he had devised after a study of the wall safe. Shoving his black mask over his forehead and adjusting his other mask of steel and glass, he blew holes in the steel door with his torch. Never for a moment, however, did he stop singing—or was 'shouting' the better word?

"Into the holes he stuffed his most improved explosive. With Schwartz's own mattress he muffled the explosion. Five minutes later, when he emerged again, staggering, and re-entered the ballroom, there was over twenty thousand pounds' worth of jewels stuffed in his Robin Hood wallet. Soon after he drifted out of the crowd and was gone."

AS Inspector Rapp spoke I was sure I caught a note of admiration, almost liking, for the romantic young robber he was describing; and there seemed to me something like regret as he told of the close of his career.

"With the proceeds of the haul," he went on, "Breitwisser retired into hiding. He took a house in a small village and quietly fitted it up to his needs and tastes. To begin with, he had accumulated a good library—the man was a passionate reader. Little by little the books found their way into the fine room he had built for them. Then he fitted up a laboratory, and a machine shop with electrical power, the finest tool-grinding machines, and costly scientific apparatus of all kinds. Here he lived quietly, studying, experimenting, developing new technique in his profession, minding his own business; friendly with his humble neighbours; generous, but not to an extent that would draw attention to him. He did everything that was careful.

"The one thing that led to his undoing was that he had been—too careful. He had chosen too small a town. Neighbours began to speculate, to talk, to pry. Their speculations spread. One day a whisper reached us. Five of our men put on the garb of



"Without warning, both sides opened fire, and Breitwisser toppled over his bicycle—dead."

peasants and strolled down to his cottage. He was in the yard cleaning his bicycle. Our men knew his readiness with the revolver, and had theirs ready.

"It is hard to tell who became suspicious first, Breitwisser or our men. At any rate, without warning, both sides opened fire, and Breitwisser toppled over his bicycle—dead."

The Austrians have their folk tales, and those who befriend the poor are often immortalized in them. Whether a robber can become the hero of such a legend, as Robin Hood became the hero of earlier days, it is impossible to tell now. But certain it is that fiction can find material in this man, who went to fiction as a guide to living, and then outstripped his guide.

The VALIANT

by

HOLWORTHY HALL and ROBERT MIDDLEMASS

ILLUSTRATED BY UGO MATANIA

WITH hands behind his back, Father Daly stood looking out of the window. The Governor of the prison sat at his desk, reflectively smoking a long, thin cigar. For several minutes neither had spoken.

The Governor blew a cloud of smoke to the ceiling, inspected the end of his cigar critically, drummed fingers on the desk. He glanced at the clock, peered over his shoulder at the chaplain, and cleared his throat.

"Was he quiet when you left him?"

"Perfectly calm," replied Father Daly, a trifle abstracted, "and I believe he'll stay so to the end."

The Governor threw away his cigar, but took another from the box on his desk. He was verging toward sixty, and his responsibilities had printed themselves in italics on his countenance. His brown hair and bushy eyebrows were heavily shot with grey; there were deep parentheses of wrinkles at the corners of his mouth, and innumerable fine lines about his eyes. His bearing indicated that he was accustomed to rank as a despot, and yet his expression was far from that of an unreasoning tyrant. The Governor believed that in each of us there is a constant oscillation of good and evil; that all evil should justly be punished in this world, and that all good should be generously rewarded—in the next.

"You've got to admit he's plucky," the Governor said. "I never saw such nerve in all my life. It isn't bluff, and it isn't a trance, either, like some of them have—it's plain nerve." He shook his head in frank admiration.

"That's the pity of it—that a man with all his courage hasn't a better use for it," said Father Daly, sorrowfully. "Even now it is very difficult for me to reconcile his character, as I see it, with what we know he has done."

"I can't understand him a bit."

"Nor I."

"When he sent for you last night I hoped he was going to talk," the Governor admitted.

"He did talk, very freely."

"What about?"

Father Daly smiled faintly, and sat beside the desk. "Everything," he said.

"Himself?" queried the Governor, looking up quickly.

"No. That seems to be the only subject he isn't interested in."

The Governor leaned on his desk with both elbows.

"He still won't give you any hint as to who he really is?"

"Not the slightest. He doesn't intend to, either. He intends to die as a man of mystery to us. Sometimes I wonder if he isn't just as much of a mystery to himself."

"Oh, he's trying to shield somebody, that's all. James Dyke isn't his right name—we know that; and we know all the rest of his story is a fake, too. Well, where is his motive? I'll tell you where it is: it's to keep his family and his friends, wherever they are, from knowing what has happened. Lots of them have the same idea, but I never knew one to carry it as far as this before. All we know is that we have a man under sentence of death; and we don't know who he is, or where he comes from, or anything else about him, or any more than we did four months ago."

Father Daly stroked his chin reflectively. He was a slender, white-haired priest of

somewhat more than middle age, dressed in slightly shabby clericals. His face was calm, intellectual, and inspiring; but just at this moment it gave evidence of a peculiar depression.

"It takes moral courage for a man to shut himself away from his family and his friends like that," he said. "They could have comforted him."

"Not necessarily," said the Governor, getting up, looking at the clock, and glancing out of one of the windows. "I believe I'm getting too old for this sort of thing. An execution didn't bother me so much years ago, but every time one comes along nowadays, my nerves seem to become raw. This time it's ten times worse than ever."

"It certainly isn't a pleasant duty, even with the worst of them," agreed Father Daly, grimly.

"But," said the Governor, wheeling back abruptly, "what bothers *me* is why I should hate this one more than any of the others. The boy is absolutely guilty."

"Yes; he killed a man."

"And he pleaded guilty. So he deserves just what he's going to get."

"That is the law. However, has it ever occurred to you that every now and then when a criminal behaves in a rather gentlemanly fashion to us, we instinctively think of him as just a little less of a criminal?"

"It has," agreed the Governor. "But all the same, this attitude of his makes me curiously nervous. He pleaded guilty, but he doesn't *act* guiltily. I feel just as if at eight o'clock this morning we were going to do something every bit as criminal as he did. I can't help it. And when I begin to feel like that, why, I suppose it's pretty nearly time I sent in my resignation."

"His whole attitude has been very remarkable," said Father Daly, reflectively. "Why, only a few minutes ago I found myself comparing it with the fortitude that the Christian martyrs carried to their death, and yet——"

"He's no martyr!"

"I know. And he's anything in the world but a Christian. That was just what I was going to say."

"Has he any religious streak in him at all?"

"I'm afraid not. He listens to me very attentively, but——"—the chaplain shrugged his shoulders—"it's only because I offer him companionship. Anybody else would do quite as well—and any other topic would suit him better."

"Well, if he wants to face God as a heathen, *we* can't force him to change his mind."

"No," agreed Father Daly, with gentle reproach; "but we can never give up trying to save his immortal soul. And his soul tonight seems dark and foreboding. Yet I haven't given up hope."

"No—you wouldn't."

"I must go back to him. Are you going to talk to him again yourself?" asked the chaplain.

THE Governor opened a drawer of his desk, and brought out a large envelope.

"There's three hundred pounds of his in here," he said. "If he'll only tell me who to send that money to, the mystery will be half solved. But he won't. He hasn't done so up to now. Anyway, I'm going to have another shot at making him talk."

"Shall I go with you to see him, or do you want to see him alone?"

The Governor sat deliberately with one hand at his forehead and the other hand tapping the desk.

"Father," he said, "you have given me an idea. I believe I'm going to do something now that's never been done before in this prison; that is to say—not during the twenty-eight years that *I've* been Governor."

"And that is——?"

"Instead of our going to see him, I'll have that boy brought into this office and let him sit here with you and me."

"All right," agreed the chaplain. "But what is your idea, exactly?"

"Perhaps," said the Governor, tapping the desk with his knuckles, "perhaps if he sits here awhile with just you and me, and we tackle him properly, he will feel different and tell us about himself. It will be quite different from being in his cell; it'll be so much less formal, and maybe he'll weaken." He rang a bell. "Jones," he said to the warder who appeared, "I want you to fetch Dyke here." The jailer stared blankly at him, and the Governor's voice took on an added note of authority. "Fetch Dyke here to me."

"Yes, sir," said the warder, disappearing, just as the telephone on the desk rang.

A few moments later the Governor mopped his forehead with a handkerchief as he hung the receiver up.

"That was Querk, the K.C.," he said. "He says there's a girl on her way here with a special permit from the Home Office to see Dyke. She thinks he's her long-lost brother. She's due here any minute." Again he looked at the clock.

"Poor girl!" commented the chaplain.

Dyke and three warders appeared at the door. The condemned man halted, waiting passively to be told what to do next. He had a lean, pale face, with high forehead, good eyes, and a strong chin. His mouth was ruled in a firm, straight line, and his wavy hair was prematurely grey. His

"The Governor leaned back and surveyed the prisoner thoughtfully. 'Dyke,' he said, 'I want

figure had the elasticity of youth, but he might have passed among strangers either as a man of forty, or as a man of twenty-five, depending upon the mobility of his features at a given moment.

"The escort will remain there," said the Governor. "Come in, Dyke. Sit down."

DYKE went directly to the chair indicated and sat down.

"Thank you, sir," he said, simply.

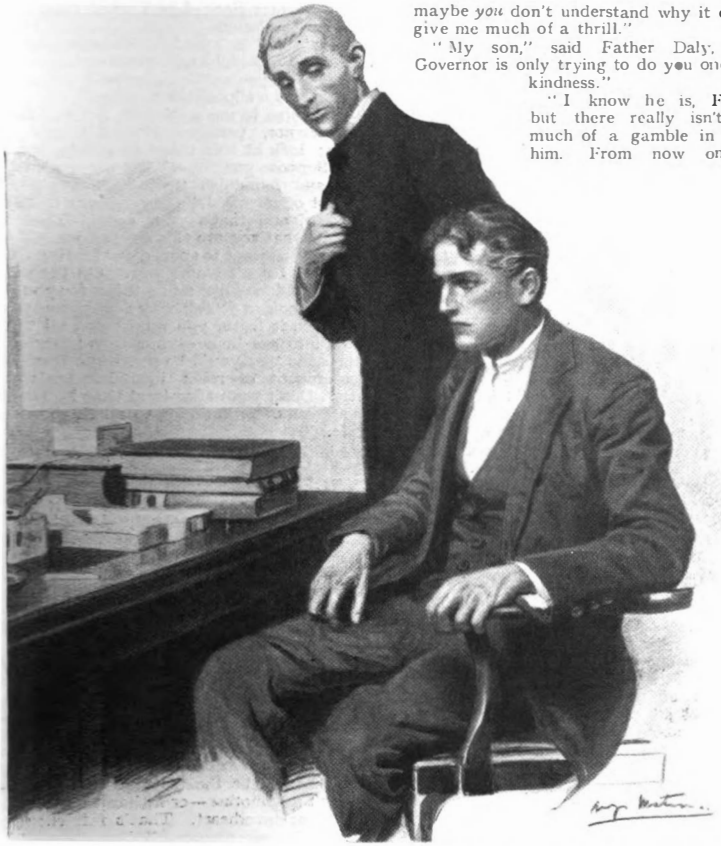
The Governor leaned back and surveyed the prisoner thoughtfully.

"Dyke," he said, "I want to tell you that from first to last all the time you've been here you have behaved yourself like a gentleman."

"Why should I cause trouble?" the man asked. His manner was vaguely cynical without being in the least impertinent.

"Well, you *haven't* caused any trouble, and I've tried to show what I think about it. I have made you as comfortable as the law would let me."

"You have been very kind to me," he said. Then, glancing over his shoulder at



to tell you that all the time you've been here you have behaved yourself like a gentleman.'"

the chaplain, he added: "And you, too, Father."

"I have had you brought in here to talk." Dyke looked inquiringly at the Governor. "To talk with Father Daly and me."

"All right," replied Dyke, carelessly.

"You don't seem to understand that I'm doing something a long way out of the ordinary for you," said the Governor, a trifle piqued at this cool reception of a very distinguished favour.

"Oh, yes, I do," said Dyke; "but maybe *you* don't understand why it doesn't give me much of a thrill."

"My son," said Father Daly, "the Governor is only trying to do you one more kindness."

"I know he is, Father; but there really isn't very much of a gamble in it for him. From now on, one place is about the same as another—from my point of view."

"What do you mean?" asked the Governor.

"Why, I mean," said Dyke, his voice very faintly sarcastic, "that I'm just as much a condemned prisoner here as when I was in my cell."

"Would you rather wait in your cell?" asked the Governor.

"Oh, no; this is a little pleasanter, except——"

"Except what?"

" In my cell I could smoke."

" What do you want — cigar or cigarette ? "

" Thank you," said Dyke. " A cigarette, please."

The Governor opened a drawer of his desk, took out a box of cigarettes, removed one and handed it to Dyke. Then he struck a match, held it while Dyke got a light, and carefully put out the match.

" Thanks. You're a good host," said Dyke, smiling faintly.

" Before it's too late," said the Governor, " I wish you'd think over what Father Daly and I have said to you so many times."

" I've thought of nothing else," replied Dyke.

" Then—as man to man—and this is your last chance—who are you ? "

Dyke inspected the cigarette.

" Who am I ? James Dyke—a murderer."

" That isn't your real name," the Governor protested.

" You're not going to hang a name—you're going to hang a *man*," said Dyke. " What difference does it make whether you call me Dyke or something else ? "

" You had another name once. What was it ? "

" If I had, I've forgotten it."

" Your mind is made up, my son ? " put in the chaplain.

" Yes, Father. It is."

" You see this pile of letters ? " said the Governor.

" Yes, sir," replied Dyke.

" Every one of them is about the same thing, and altogether we've had many hundreds of them. These are just a few samples."

" What about them ? " asked Dyke.

" We've had letters from all over the British Isles."

" Well ? " murmured the condemned man.

" Do you know what every one of those letters says ? " the Governor asked, impressively.

" No, sir."

" Who *are* you—and are you the missing son—or brother—or husband—or sweetheart ? "

Dyke flicked his cigarette ashes to the floor.

" Have they been answered ? " he asked.

" No ; and that is your fault."

" How's that ? " asked Dyke.

" How can we tell them who you are ? Can't you see you *ought* to make it clear ? "

" No, sir," said Dyke. " I can't exactly see that. Suppose you explain it to me."

" You're trying to shield somebody, aren't you ? " broke from the Governor suddenly.

" Yes—no, I'm not ! "

The Governor glanced at Father Daly and nodded with elation.

" Who is it ? " he asked. " Your family ? "

" I said I'm not," Dyke persisted.

" But first, you said you were."

" That was a slip of the tongue."

" Just listen to me a minute, Dyke," said the Governor, persuasively. " Don't be narrow ; look at this thing in a big, broad way. Suppose you should tell me your real name, and I publish it, it will bring an awful lot of sorrow, let's say, to *one* family. *one* home, and that's your own. That is probably what you are thinking about. Am I right ? You want to spare your family, and in one way I don't blame you. On the surface, it would look like a fine thing for you to do. But look at it *this* way : suppose you tell the exact truth, you might put all that sorrow into *one* home—your own ; though at the same time you'd be putting a tremendous amount of relief into hundreds of others. Don't you understand that ? Don't you see you owe something to all these other people ? "

" I do not," replied Dyke.

FATHER DALY, who had been pacing to and fro silently, suddenly halted.

" The Governor is absolutely right," he said. " You *do* owe something to the other people—you owe them peace of mind ; and for the sake of all those hundreds of poor distressed women, who imagine God knows what, I beg of you to tell us who you are."

" Father, I simply can't do it," replied Dyke.

" Think carefully, my boy ; think very carefully. We're not asking out of idle curiosity," the chaplain urged.

" I know that, Father," said Dyke ; " but please don't let's talk about it any more. It's quite simple to tell the writers of those letters that I'm not the man they're looking for. That will be the truth, too. Because I haven't any mother—or father—or sister—or wife—or sweetheart. That's fair enough, isn't it ? "

Father Daly sighed wearily. " As you will, my son," he said.

" There's one more thing," put in the Governor.

" Yes, sir."

The Governor took up the envelope from his desk. " That belongs to you. Three hundred pounds."

" Good-looking, isn't it ? " was Dyke's only comment.

" What do you want us to do with it ? " the Governor asked casually.

" Well, I can't very well take them with me ; so, under the circumstances, I'd like to put them where they'll do the most good," replied Dyke.

"Who do you want us to send it to?" the Governor asked, more casually yet.

Dyke laughed quietly.

"Now sir, you didn't think you were going to catch me that way, did you?"

The Governor frowned. "Perhaps somebody would be glad of the money," he said.

Dyke crossed his legs and tossed the envelope to the desk.

"I don't know," he said. "I'll think of something to do with it. I'll tell you in—in time. Is there anything else?"

"Not unless you want to make some sort of statement."

"No; I think I've said everything. I killed a man, and I'm not sorry for it—that is, I'm not sorry I killed that particular person. I——"

Father Daly raised his hand.

"Repentance——" he began.

"Father," Dyke interrupted, "I have heard that repentance is the sick-bed of the soul—and mine is very well and flourishing. The man deserved to be killed; he wasn't fit to live. It was my duty to kill him, and I did it. I had never struck a man in anger in all my life, but when I knew what that fellow had done, I knew I had to kill him, and I did it deliberately and intentionally—and carefully. I knew what I was doing, and I haven't any excuse—that is, I haven't any excuse that satisfies the law. Now, I learned pretty early in life that whatever you do in this world you have to pay for in one way or another. If you kill a man, the price you have to pay is this"—he made a gesture which swept the entire room—"and I'm going to pay it. That's all there is to say about that. And in less than an hour from now, while my body is lying dead, if a couple of angel policemen arrest my soul and take it up before the Creator——"

"Hush, my boy," protested the chaplain, profoundly shocked.

"I beg your pardon, Father. I don't mean to trample on anything that's sacred to you, but what I do mean to say is this: if I've got to be judged after my death for the crime of murder, I'm not afraid; because the other fellow will certainly be there, too, won't he? And the whole story—both sides of it—will be known. *You* never heard it and never will; and they never heard it in court either. In the circumstances, I'm quite willing to take my chance. That's how concerned I am about the hereafter. And, if it'll make you feel any better, Father, why, I *do* rather think there's going to be a hereafter. I read a book once that said a milligram of musk will give out perfume for seven thousand years, and a milligram of radium will give out light for *seventy* thousand. Why shouldn't a soul—mine, for instance—live more than twenty-seven? But if there *isn't* any hereafter—if we just die and are dead and that's all—why, I'm still not sorry and I'm not afraid, because I'm square with the other fellow—the law is square with me, and it's all balanced on the books."

A WARDER knocked at the door.

"Well? What is it?" asked the Governor.

"Visitor to see you, sir. With a note from the Home Office."

"A girl?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have her thoroughly searched, and then wait till I call you. Dyke," he added, turning to the condemned man, "a young woman has just come to see you—do you want to see her?"

"I don't think so. What does she want?"

"She thinks perhaps she's your sister, and she's come hundreds of miles to find out."

"She's wrong. I haven't any sister."

The Governor hesitated a moment. Then: "Shall I tell her that, or do you want to tell her yourself?"

"Oh, you tell her. But—just a second—she's come hundreds of miles to see me, did you say?"

"Yes; and she's got special permission from the Home Office to talk to you."

"And a year ago," said Dyke, "nobody'd have crossed the street to look at me. Now they come hundreds of miles!"

Father Daly turned to him.

"This is one of your debts to humanity, Dyke. It wouldn't take you two minutes to see her; and, if you don't, after she's made that long journey in hope and dread and suffering——"

"Where can I talk with her—here?"

"If you wish," said the Governor.

"Alone?"

"Father and I will leave you with her and two armed guards."

"I haven't the faintest idea who the girl is," said Dyke; "but if she happens to be some poor, misguided, sentimental fool, with a dose of cyanide of potassium for me, she's wasting her time. I wouldn't cheat the law in this matter for anything in the world—not even to please a young lady."

The Governor went into the next room.

"Has she been thoroughly searched?" he asked a warder.

"Yes, sir."

"Everything all right?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bring her in, then," he said, throwing away his cigar.

A young girl appeared on the threshold, and cast about in mingled curiosity and apprehension. She was fresh and wholesome,

and rather pretty; but her manner betrayed a certain spiritual aloofness from the ultra-modern world. Her dress was not quite old-fashioned, yet it hinted at the taste and repression of an old-fashioned home.

She was neither timid nor aggressive, but was self-unconscious. She looked at the Governor squarely, yet not in boldness, nor in feminine appeal. Rather she had the fearlessness of a girl who had lost none of her illusions about men in general. Her expression was essentially serious; it conveyed, however, the idea that her seriousness was due to her present mission, and that ordinarily she took active joy in the mere pleasure of existence.

The Governor, who had expected a very different type of visitor, coughed slightly. "All right, Wilson," he said; and the warder went out.

"WILL you sit down?"

"Thank you," the girl said, taking the chair beside his desk and regarding him trustfully. He was palpably affected by her youth and innocence, and not quite sure how best to proceed, but eventually made an awkward beginning.

"You want to see Dyke, I understand?"

"Yes—I *hope* I'm not—too late."

"No, you're not too late." He was appraising her carefully. "But I want to ask you a few questions beforehand. I just want to make it easier for you, not harder. Where do you live?"

"In Wheatley—a Cumberland village."

"And you live there with your father and mother?"

"No; just my mother and I. My father died when I was a little baby."

"Why didn't your mother come here herself, instead of sending you?"

"She couldn't She's ill."

"I see. Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"Just one brother—this one. He and I were the only children. We were very fond of each other." She was a shade more at her ease now.

"He was considerably older than you?" asked the Governor.

"Oh, yes. Ten years older."

"Why did he leave home?"

"I don't really know, except that he just wanted to live in large towns. Wheatley is very small."

"How long is it since you last saw him?"

"Eight years."

"As long as that?"

The Governor's voice was almost paternal. "H'm! And how old are you now?"

"Almost eighteen."

"Almost eighteen," the Governor repeated slowly. "H'm! And are you sure after all this time that you would recognize your brother if you saw him?"

"Well"—she looked down, as if embarrassed to make the admission—"of course, I—I *think* so; but perhaps I couldn't. You see, I was only a little girl when he went away. He wasn't a bad boy; I don't think he ever could be really bad. But if this *is* my brother, he has been in a great deal of trouble, and you know that trouble makes people look different."

"Yes, it does. But what is it makes you think this man Dyke may be your brother—and why didn't you think of it sooner? The case has been in the papers for the last six months."

"It wasn't until the day before yesterday that mother saw a photograph of him in one of the papers. It did look just the least little *bit* like him, and mother wanted me to come and find out for sure."

"I see," said the Governor. "It's too bad she couldn't come herself. She would probably know him, whether he had changed or not."

"Yes; but I'll do the best I can."

"When was the last time you heard from him, and where was he, and what was he doing?"

"Why, it's about six or seven years since we had a letter from Joe. He was in New Zealand then."

"What doing?"

"I don't remember. Before he left home, though, he worked in a library. He liked books."

"Why do you suppose he didn't write home?" asked the Governor, suspiciously.

"I—I couldn't say. He was just—thoughtless."

"Wasn't in trouble of any kind?"

"Oh, *no!* Never. That is—unless he's—here now."

The Governor deliberated. Then:—

"How are you going to identify him? You say that it is quite possible you wouldn't know him even if you saw him; and I'll guarantee this man Dyke won't help you out very much. How do you think you're going to tell? Suppose he doesn't want to be recognized by you or anybody else? Suppose he's so ashamed of himself that he——?"

"I had thought of that," the girl broke in. "I'm just going to talk to him—ask him questions—about things he and I used to do together. I'll watch his face, and if he is my brother I am sure I can tell."

The Governor looked at her with tolerant doubt.

"What did you and your brother ever do together that would help you now?"

"He used to play games with me when I was a little girl, and tell me stories: that's

"'Dyke, this is the young lady who has come all the way from Cumberland to see you.' Dyke inspected her coldly from head to foot."

what I'm counting on mostly—the stories."

"I'm afraid——" the Governor began.

"Especially Shakespeare stories," said the girl. "He used to get the plots of the plays—all the Shakespeare plays—out of a book by a man named Lamb, and then he'd tell me

the stories in his own words. It was wonderful!"

The Governor shook his head.

"Why do you do that?" she asked.

"I'm afraid this boy isn't your brother. I'll let you see him for yourself, only you might as well be prepared. If he turns out to be your brother—which he won't—you can have, say, twenty minutes with him. If he isn't, please cut it as short as you can."

The girl's lips trembled.

"You see," she said, "I must tell mother something perfectly definite. She has always worried about him, and—and *now* the suspense is terrible for her. It would be awful for us if this *is* Joe; but even that would be better for mother than just to stay awake at nights, and wonder and wonder, and never *know* what became of him."

"Come along then," he said, and took her to his own office.

"Dyke, this is the young lady who has come all the way from Cumberland to see you."

Dyke, who had been talking in an undertone to Father Daly, raised his head quickly.

"Yes, sir?"

The girl had risen, breathless, and stood fixed. Dyke inspected her coldly from head to foot.

"Thank you," he said to the Governor. "It won't take long."

The Governor had been scanning the girl's expression. Now, as he saw that she neither recognized Dyke nor failed to recognize him, he made a little grimace in confirmation of his own judgment. Then he and Father Daly left them with the armed guard.

DYKE and the girl faced each other; Dyke, well-poised and insouciant, giving the impression of complete indifference to the moment. The girl, on the other hand, was deeply agitated, and her agitation was gradually increased by Dyke's own attitude.

"Mother sent me to see you," she declared, after several efforts to speak.

"Yes?" He was politely callous.

"You see, we haven't seen or heard of my brother Joe for ever so long, and mother thought—after she saw a picture of you in the paper——"

"That I might be your brother Joe?"

"Yes, that's it," she declared, obviously relieved.

"Well, you can easily see that I'm not your brother, can't you?"

She was looking hard at him now.

"I'm not sure. You look a little like him, just as the picture in the paper did; but then again, it's so long"—she crinkled her eyebrows dubiously—"and I thought of Joe so differently——"

"As a matter of fact," he said, "I couldn't be *your* brother or anybody else's brother, because I never had a sister. So that rather settles it." His manner had become somewhat indulgent, as though to a child.

"Honestly?" she exclaimed.

"Honestly."

The girl, however, was unconvinced, and became more appealing.

"What is your real name?"

"Dyke—Dyke—James Dyke."

"You mean that?"

"Certainly. You don't think I'd tell a lie at this stage of the game, do you?"

"No, I don't believe you would. Where do you come from—I mean where were you born?"

"In London; but I've lived all over the place."

"Didn't you ever live in Cumberland?" she asked quickly.

"No. Never."

"What kind of work did you do—what was your business?"

"Oh, I'm a sort of Jack-of-all-trades. I have been everything a man could be—except a success."

"Do you like books?"

"Books?"

"Yes—books to read."

"I don't read when there's anything better to do."

"Did you ever work in a library—for a living, I mean?"

"Oh, no."

The girl was growing confused.

"I hope you don't mind my asking so many questions," she said. "But I——"

"No—go on, if it will relieve you," said Dyke.

"Did you ever want to be an actor? Or *were* you ever?"

"No."

"Do you know any poetry?" the question came, helplessly.

"Not to speak of."

She paused a moment; and then, watching him very earnestly, recited just above her breath:—

"'Thou knowst the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which——'"

Realizing that Dyke's expression was one of utter vacuity she faltered and broke off, but continued to watch him unwaveringly.

"Don't you know what that is?" she asked.

"No. To tell the truth, it sounds silly to *me*. Doesn't it to you?"

She gathered courage and put him to one

more test, though her intonation had become slightly forlorn :—

"'*Good night, good night, parting is such sweet sorrow*
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.'"

"Eh?" exclaimed Dyke, his mouth twitching in apparent amusement.

"What comes next?" she asked.

"Good Lord! I don't know."

She gazed intently, almost imploringly, at him, as though making a struggle to read his mind. Then she relaxed and held out her hand.

"Good-bye. You—you're *not* Joe, are you? I—I had to come and find out, though. I hope I haven't made you too unhappy."

Dyke ignored her hand.

"You're not going now?" he asked.

"Yes," she said, spiritless. "I promised the—is he the Governor—that man in there? I said I should not stay if you weren't my brother. And you aren't, so——"

"You're going back to your mother?"

"Yes," she said, quietly.

"I'm surprised that she sent a girl like you on a sorry errand like this, instead of——"

"She's ill."

"Oh, that's too bad."

"She's very ill," said the girl, twisting her handkerchief. "And most of it is from worrying about Joe."

"Still," said Dyke, "when you tell her that her son isn't a murderer—at least, that he isn't *this* one—that will comfort her a good deal, won't it?"

"Yes, I think perhaps it will," she admitted reluctantly; "only——"

"Only what?"

"I don't think mother will ever be *really* well again until she finds out for certain where Joe is and what has become of him."

Dyke shook his head compassionately.

"Mothers ought not to be treated like that," he said. "I wish I'd treated *mine* better. By the way, you didn't tell me what your name is."

"Josephine Paris."

"Paris!" Dyke had become suddenly attentive. "That's an unusual name. I've heard it somewhere, too."

"Just like the name of the city—in France."

"And your brother's name was Joseph?" Dyke queried, knitting his brows.

"Yes—they used to call us Joe and Josie; that's funny, isn't it?"

"No," said Dyke, thoughtfully. "I don't think it's so very funny—I rather like it."

He passed his hand over his forehead, as if trying to coerce his memory.

"WHAT'S the matter?" she asked.

"I was thinking of something," said Dyke, frowning. "Now, what on earth was that boy's name! Wait a minute, don't tell me—wait a minute—I've got it!" He punctuated his triumph with one fist in the palm of the other hand. "Joseph Anthony Paris!"

The girl stared at him, amazed. "Why," she declared, "that's his name! That's Joe! How did you ever——?"

"Wait! Now listen carefully to what I say, and don't interrupt me, because we've only got a minute or two, and I want you to remember this correctly." His manner had suddenly become very forcible and convincing. "I want you to tell your mother. During the war I was in France for four years. Early one morning we'd made a big trench raid, and there was an officer who'd been wounded coming back, and was lying out there in a shell-hole under fire. The Germans were getting ready for a raid on their own, so they were putting down a barrage. This officer was lying right in the middle of it. Well, all of a sudden a young fellow I knew by the name of Cox dashed out of our trench and went for that officer. He had to go through a curtain of shells and, more than that, they opened on him with rifles and machine-guns. The chances were just about a million to one against him, and he must have known it, but he went out just the same. He got the officer in his arms and started back, but he'd only gone a few yards when a shell burst close to them. We got them in, but the youngster died an hour later. I had a few words with him, and just before he died he was telling me how he'd enlisted under a wrong name—that his real name was Joseph Anthony Paris. I was going to take a message for his folks at home, but the Germans came over then. And when I got back Cox—that is, Paris—was dead."

The girl put both hands to her breast. "Oh!" she breathed softly.

"If that was your brother's name," said Dyke, "then you can tell your mother that he died like a brave man and a soldier, in France."

"Joe—my brother Joe—is dead?" the girl said, slowly.

"On the field of battle. It was one of the wonderful heroic things that went almost unnoticed, as so many of them did. If an officer had seen it, there would have been a decoration for your mother to keep and remember him by."

"And you were there—and saw it?"

"I was there and saw it. It was five years ago now. That's why you and your

mother haven't heard from him. It certainly ought to make your mother happy when she knows that her boy died as a soldier and not as a criminal."

"Yes, yes; it will!" the girl declared, transfigured.

"And does it make you happy, too?" Dyke asked.

"Yes. So happy—after what we were both afraid of—I can't even cry—yet." She brushed her eyes with her handkerchief. "I can hardly wait to take the news to her."

DYKE was struck by a sudden inspiration.

"I want to give you something else to take to her," he said, picking up from the desk the envelope containing the money. "I want you to give this to your mother from me. Tell her it is from a man who saw how your brother died, so it's a sort of memorial for him." He touched her arm as she absently began to tear open the envelope. "No; don't you open it—let *her* do it."

"What is it? Can't I know?" she asked.

"Never mind now," said Dyke, "but give it to her. It's all I have in the world and it's too late now for me to do anything else with it. And get your mother to buy a little gold locket to wear for her son—and you get one, too, and wear it—here!" He touched his heart. "Will you?"

"Yes—I will," she said. "And yet somehow I shall almost feel that I'm wearing it for you, too."

"Oh, no! You mustn't ever do that. I'm not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with a boy like your brother. And now"—glancing at the clock—"I'm afraid it *is* time for you to go. I'm sorry, but—you'd better. I'm glad you came before it was too late, though."

"Good-bye, and thank you," she said, giving him her hand. "You've done more for me—and mother—than I could possibly tell you. And—and I'm so sorry for you—so *truly* sorry—I wish I could only do something to make you a tiny bit happier, too. *Is* there anything I could do?"

Dyke stared at her and by degrees became wistful.

"Why—yes, there is," he said. "Only I——" He left the sentence uncompleted.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I can't tell you," said Dyke, looking away. "I never should have let myself think of it."

"Please tell me," the girl pleaded. "I want you to. For—for Joe's sake, tell me what I can do."

"Well"—Dyke's voice was low and desolate—"during all the months I've been in prison, you're the first girl I've seen. I didn't ever expect to see one again. I'd forgotten how much like angels women look. I've been terribly lonely, this morning especially, and if you really do want to do something for me—for your brother's sake—you see, you're going to leave me in just a minute and—and I haven't any sister of my own, or anybody else, to say good-bye to me—so, if you could—*really* say good-bye——"

She looked at him for a moment, understood, flushed, and then slowly moved into his outstretched arms. He held her close to him, touched his lips to her forehead twice, and then released her.

"Good-bye, my dear," he said, thickly.

"Good-bye." She endeavoured to smile, but her voice caught in her throat. "Good-bye."

"What is it?" Dyke asked, impulsively.

"N—nothing," she answered.

"Nothing?"

"I was thinking," she declared, clutching her handkerchief tight in her palm, "I was thinking what I used to say to my brother—for good night." She very nearly broke down. "If I *only* could have—have said it to him just once more—for good-bye."

"What was it?" Dyke's mouth twitched.

"I—I told it to you once, and you said it was silly."

"Say it again," asked Dyke, gently.

She could not quite control her voice.

"'*Good night, good night, parting is such sweet sorrow*
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.'"

She went uncertainly toward the door, hesitated, almost turned back, and then with a little choking sob hurried away. For several seconds Dyke stood rigidly intent upon that doorway; until at length, without changing his attitude or his expression, he spoke very tenderly and reminiscently:—

"'*Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast:*
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest.'"

THE Governor and Father Daly came in quietly, and as they saw Dyke, rapt and unconscious of them, they looked at each other, questioningly. The Governor glanced at the clock and was about to interrupt Dyke's solitary reflections, but Father Daly quietly restrained him.

Dyke turned at last, as though unwillingly, from the door. There were depths in his eyes, and his thoughts were evidently far away. He sat heavily in the chair and leaned outward, his right hand on his knee.

"He held her close to him, touched his lips to her forehead twice, and then released her."

He put his left hand to his throat as though to protect it from a sudden pain. Then gazing straight ahead into the unknown, he spoke in reverie :—

"'*Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,*
It seems to me most strange that men
should fear ;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.'"

He stopped, musing for a time, while the Governor glanced perplexedly at Father Daly to discover if the priest could interpret this. Father Daly's face was illuminated.

Again Dyke spoke :—

"'*Cowards die many times before their*
deaths ;
The valiant never taste of death but
once.'"

He stopped again and shuddered a trifle ; his head drooped and he repeated, barely above a whisper :—

"'*The valiant never taste of death but*
once.'"

The door opened noiselessly. It was but three minutes to eight. There was a moment of dead silence ; Dyke lifted his head and caught sight of the grim figure at the open door. With a quick intake of his breath, he started half out of his seat and stared, fascinated ; he sank back slowly, turned his head to gaze first at Father Daly and then at the Governor. The Governor averted his eyes, but Father Daly's expression was of supreme pity and encouragement. Involuntarily, Dyke's hand again went creeping upward toward his throat, but he arrested it. He grasped the arms of his chair and braced himself. Then, rising, he stood very erect, in almost the position of a soldier at attention.

"All right, let's go," he said, his voice low and steady.

AN INDIVIDUALIST FROM BLUE WING

by Edgar Milne

ILLUSTRATED BY WILTON WILLIAMS

MR. THRELFALL, of the firm of Smiles, Threlfall, and Threlfall, solicitors, of Lincoln's Inn Fields, was returning from a week-end in Hampshire with a celibate aunt.

The holiday had not been altogether a success, for the weather had been bad, the old lady's temper uncertain, and Mr. Threlfall had had the misfortune to sit on Roger, the cat: so that, on the whole, Mr. Threlfall reflected, so far as recreation went, he might just as well have stayed at home.

He was now alone in a first-class railway carriage, absorbed in the *Times*, when, just as the train was leaving East Croydon, the door was flung violently open and an individual clambered in—an individual whom Mr. Threlfall still tells his friends about and whom he will probably never forget to his dying day.

The stranger was a ruddy, middle-sized man wearing a tall white hat. This does not sound unorthodox, but literally no one ever does wear a tall white hat except a Paris cabman, and this was snow-white with a green band. The new-comer's clothes would have offended the sense of propriety of a music-hall knockabout comedian, consisting as they did of baggy grey tweeds with a white spot pattern like dominoes, with trousers preternaturally wide in the flank and tight at the ankle, terminating in black spats and white tennis shoes. He wore a pink collar, a huge flowing pink tie, and a yellow rose in his button-hole. An oblong tortoiseshell-framed eyeglass was wedged into his right eye and secured by a green silk ribbon an inch wide. But all these sartorial details made less impression on Mr. Threlfall than his fellow-passenger's taste in whiskers, for although a comparatively young man—probably not more than thirty—he sported a curiously-trimmed chin-beard, bright tawny in colour and made more incongruous by an absurd inch and half wide "tooth-brush tuft" on his upper lip. His blond hair was brushed forward in the familiar mode of 1860 or the "bobbed" style of certain young ladies of to-day.

"Fine morning!" volunteered the stranger, cheerily, disposing his feet on the opposite cushions and proceeding to mop his brow with a capacious apple-green handkerchief.

Mr. Threlfall was too startled to speak. Was this fellow who thus dared to invade his privacy, the privacy of a first-class compartment, a professional clown, an itinerant mummer, or an escaped lunatic? Mr. Threlfall seemed to remember dimly some such apparition as this in a disreputable vaudeville show of his youth—or was it on the sands at Margate? But the whiskers—these were tangibly, palpably, lamentably, startlingly real, and the whole *tenue*, although revolting, was new, clean, and costly. The lunatic (for, of course, he must be a lunatic) momentarily turned his attention to the parcel of newspapers he had previously thrown down on the seat at his side, and Mr. Threlfall, while pretending to be absorbed in his *Times*, glanced furtively at their titles. He made out the *Beekeeper's Journal*, the *Economist*, the *Auctioneer's Record*, and the *Taxidermist*. There were also three or four small bound books which Mr. Threlfall at first took for popular novels, but which

turned out to be "How to Speak Russian in Three Months," "The Amateur Joiner," and the "Elements of Biology." Observing Mr. Threlfall's interest, the stranger suddenly remarked :—

"Well, old man, do you like my get-up ?"

"H'm !—a little eccentric," murmured Mr. Threlfall.

"It's a free country, ain't it ?" asked his companion, sharply.

"Quite," agreed Mr. Threlfall.

"I'm a free man, ain't I ?"

"I suppose so," assented Mr. Threlfall.

"You bet I am, old man."

Mr. Threlfall resented being addressed so familiarly by a perfect stranger, but in dealing with a lunatic from whom there is no immediate escape it is necessary to be tactful, so he smiled weakly.

"I can dress as I like, eat what I like, say what I like, and do what I like. I'm not a slave any more. I'm a *man !*"

Mr. Threlfall would have liked to have corrected this term to maniac, but he only murmured, "Quite so."

"You bet your life ! My name's Slode—James P. Slode of Blue Wing, Manitoba. You don't happen to have been an officer, do you ?"

Mr. Threlfall shook his head.

"I remember an R.T.O. at Bertincourt that looked as like you as two peas. Were you in the war at all ?"

Mr. Threlfall flushed slightly.

"I—I wasn't accepted for active service—abroad. I did my bit at home. In the Milk Control Office—and elsewhere."

"Say no more, old man. I served four years and a quarter—at the front. I'm free now. I went home, found my section turned into a Government chemical works, and Blue Wing grown into a small town. I sold my real estate for eighty-five thousand dollars, cash, and took the next express train east. They wanted to keep me there a spell ; but I told them I was a free man and so I am, by gum ! I'm going to do what I like. No more orders and regulations for me. No more *verbotens* and *defendus*, neither."

Slode produced a cigar-box from his capacious coat-pocket, removed a rubber band, and opening the lid disclosed several dozen large cigars with green and gold bands. He offered the box to Mr. Threlfall and, upon that gentleman politely declining, he selected a couple himself, closed the box, and returned it to his pocket.

"I tell you, old man, it's a great thing to do anything you like, to be absolutely independent. Simply *great !*"

"How ?" asked Mr. Threlfall.

"Well—no rules. No ruddy conventions. Do as you damn well please."

As he spoke, Slode ignited a vesuvian, which exploded so loudly that Mr. Threlfall involuntarily jumped ; and lit a cigar which he puffed for a few seconds ruminatively. Then, when he had ascertained it was burning well, he removed it, lit the second cigar, adjusted the pair in opposite corners of his mouth, and calmly resumed his puffing. You would have thought that with his handicap articulation would have been difficult ; but Slode managed it.

"Ever seen anyone do this before ?"

"Never," asseverated Mr. Threlfall. "Why do you do it ?"

"Because I can afford it," replied Slode. "Any fool can smoke one cigar at a time. Hallo, what's that ?"

"What is what ?" inquired Mr. Threlfall, following his companion's eye. There was a framed and glazed notice on the wall of the compartment. It read :—

> TO STOP THE TRAIN
>
> PULL THIS CORD.
>
> PENALTY FOR IMPROPER USE, £5.

As Slode's gaze rested on this announcement his cigar-laden countenance became still further contorted. He became so much amused at last that he removed the cigars and laid them carefully in the ash-tray by the window-sill and chuckled loudly. He passed his apple-green handkerchief over his forehead.

"I could stop this blessed train, if I liked."

"You'd better not," ejaculated Mr. Threlfall.

"Why not ?" asked Slode. And then, before the other could interfere, he rose, reached up quickly, seized the suspended cord, and pulled it vigorously.

"Good heavens, man !" cried Mr. Threlfall, in horror, "what have you done ?"

Instantly both felt the sensation of brakes applied, of violently interrupted movement, the cacophonous grinding of metal, and the train came to a standstill in the midst of open country. Scores of heads were thrust from carriage windows, passengers began to alight, and a couple of guards were observed running along the footboard, glaring into the carriages and shouting at intervals.

"Who pulled the cord ? Who's stopped the train ?"

At last a train official was heard approaching very close to Slode's compartment. Slode, who was standing by the window, put his hand smilingly into his breast-pocket, took out a thick roll of notes, selected one, and returned the remainder.

"Are you the guard of this train?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir." The poor man was breathless with his sudden exertions.

"Is there much excitement?"

"What do *you* think? Train stopped dead three mile short of Hale Junction. Someone pulled the cord. First time such a thing's happened in twenty years, to my knowledge."

Slode fairly beamed.

"Splendid," he murmured, "really first rate. Well worth it. Every darn window full o' heads. Wind up and no mistake. Well, here you are, guard!"

Slode leaned from the window, extending a five-pound note.

"Take it, my lad. It's worth it. I don't grudge the money."

The guard took the note, recognized its denomination, and stared blankly.

"What's this for?" he demanded.

"Why, 'penalty for improper use, £5.' It's all right—good money."

The guard exploded. "Did you pull that cord?"

"Yes. I certainly did. You needn't bother about a receipt. I just wanted to see if the machinery worked all right."

The assistant guard was now alongside.

"Says he pulled the cord," explained No. 1; "look here, mister, this five-pound note ain't no good to me. I'll just trouble you for your name and address." Then to No. 2 he said, "Let's get on, Bill. You'll pay for this," he resumed hotly to Slode. "You'll jolly well pay for this."

"Ain't I offering to pay? I'm giving you good money."

"What the deuce d'ye mean by stopping the train?"

"I didn't stop the train. *You*—or p'r'aps the engineer—stopped the train. *I'm* paying the statutory amount, ain't I? You did it well and I'm quite pleased with you, my man."

The train was now on the point of resuming its journey, the guard clinging to the footboard.

"You look to me like a ruddy circus freak. You must be insane!"

"Come inside and have a chat," suggested Slode, affably.

"You'll hear from me at Waterloo."

"Ain't that what Wellington said to Napoleon?"

MR. THRELFALL, who had during this colloquy been sitting in the far corner of the compartment, trembling lest he should be implicated in this disgraceful episode, saw with relief the official disappear.

Slode broke into unrestrained laughter.

"My—now that is what I call a real pleasant interlude!" he exclaimed. "Thoroughly enjoyable. Far better than a front seat at a prize-fight at twice the money."

"You have singular ideas of humour!"

"Right, every time, old man! I recognize the kind of entertainment I want and go straight for it. I hadn't been an hour at Southampton when I crossed the railway track, finding I was on the wrong platform. The porter stopped me. 'How much?' I asked. 'Forty shillings,' he said. I counted out the money and crossed the track. I was just stepping up on the platform when another porter stopped me. 'You can't come this way. Go round and take the subway.' 'How much to cross the track again?' He said there was no charge, so I crossed deliberately in the presence of about a million people, so it only cost twenty shillings a trip."

"If you're not careful you'll find yourself in jail or the lunatic asylum," observed Mr. Threlfall, fretfully.

"Not while my money holds out," retorted Slode, confidently; "people make allowances for a sportsman who can afford to back his fancy. I'm just wondering how much of that five pounds will find its way into the pockets of the railroad company?"

Slode's wonder was perhaps not unjustified, for the train eventually steamed into Waterloo and Slode alighted and boisterously hailed a porter, unabashed and unimpeded. As for Mr. Threlfall, with his heart in his mouth, he hurried away, with Slode's valedictory "So long, old man! Hope to see you again," sounding *diminuendo* in his ears.

"A confounded lunatic," he muttered to himself. "The fellow's upset me for the day. Heavens, what an experience!"

Slode, collecting his luggage, a large Saratoga trunk painted a bright pink, with "J. P. Slode" in bold black letters on its front, got into a taxi, tipped the porter half a crown and a cigar, and drove to the Oxford Palace Hotel. His arrival naturally created a sensation; but he managed to settle with the driver without too great a congestion of the traffic, enter the portals, and make his way to the desk. Instantly the transaction of affairs was arrested at the sight of this highly eccentric individual who seemed to have mistaken the public entrance of the Oxford Palace Hotel for the stage-door of the Palladium.

Slode stuck his glass into his right eye and stroked his egregious beard.

"I wired for a first-class room from Southampton," he explained to the clerk. The clerk took a single look at him, a look which embraced the staring white hat, with its green band, the pink collar, the beard,

"The guard exploded. 'Did you pull that cord?' 'Yes; I just wanted to see if the machinery worked all right.'"

and the domino-spotted tweeds, and accomplished an involuntary ingurgitation of breath.

"What name?" he asked.

Slode told him. The clerk excused himself, and the next moment reappeared with the manager. The latter grasped the situation on the spot and wasted no time in deprecatory language.

"Sorry," he said, absolutely full up!"

"Full up?" echoed Slode. "Look here, mister—understand me—expense is no object. I'll pay ten pounds in advance. I——"

"Stand aside, please. These other gentlemen are waiting. Sorry we can't oblige you. Good day!"

Slode's sublime self-confidence, although he felt himself thus summarily elbowed aside, did not desert him.

"Right you are, old man! But I guess there are others. You're losing more'n *I* am." And raising his preposterous white topper in the direction of the startled group by the reception desk, he retraced his footsteps to the door. The hall-porter, pocketing a generous tip, gave him the name of another hotel, and summoned another taxi for him. Slode hied himself there; but alas! his reception at the Royal Charles was like his reception at the Oxford Palace, and—to cut a long story short—the brisk and ridiculous individualist from Blue Wing, Manitoba, who wanted to do what he liked, went from caravanserai to caravanserai for several hours with no more success than that of the camel who sought to pass through the eye of a needle or the rich man who tried to get into heaven, all because he was not garbed in the conventional raiment which a tyrannical fashion prescribed for male members of the human species who seek hospitality west of Aldgate Pump. He had, however, left his pink Saratoga with the hall-porter of the Oxford Palace to be called for; and he eventually contrived to procure an apology for a meal at the Charing Cross Railway Buffet. But at nine o'clock that evening it was rather a weary and dispirited Slode who broke away from his ribald pursuers in Villiers Street, turned sharply to the left, and, in the gathering dusk, entered the Embankment gardens. He told himself he had had a great day and cocked his hat with renewed bravado. He admitted that his refusal at the hotels was a check, but only a temporary one, and a man who has slept for four years in barns, cellars, and dug-outs can make light of a little thing like that. It showed the force of prejudice and convention in this silly old country. They wanted to crush out a man's individuality: all he had to do was to wear a mackintosh and a golf cap and they'd take him in fast enough. But he wouldn't give in to them! They were not going to dictate to *him*, James P. Slode, what sort of clothes he was going to wear or how his whiskers should be trimmed—not by a long chalk! No, sir-*ee!* "I'm not going to give in, and become a ruddy slave again! I can do as I like now, because I've got the money to pay for it."

IT was, he told himself, as he mechanically took a seat upon a bench, different when he was Private J. P. Slode, No. A.D.1952, C.E.F. Then he had to do as he was told; and what a dog's life he had led! Cowering under the glance of every paltry little pipsqueak, just because he called himself an officer, bullied by the sergeant-major, hauled over the coals if there was a button undone or the string of his puttees untied—Gad, what a life!

He had sworn then he'd be a free man some day, free to do just what he pleased and not care a hang—not if he was reclining on a feather bed in the middle of a barrack square, with a jug of beer in each hand and Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig came barging along! And now he was free—he didn't give a hang for anybody's opinion, and for two cents he'd curl up and go to sleep on this very bench, yes, this very——

He turned. Up to now he had almost been unaware that he was not the only occupant of the bench. There was another, a girl, plainly but neatly clad. A pretty girl, too, though rather pale; she was reading a letter and seemed so engrossed in it that she paid no more attention to Slode than he had paid to her. Yet a single glance at her profile somehow transfixed Slode, instantly arresting all his fugitive fancies.

Where had he seen that profile before? Was it not—could it be? Even before she had turned and confronted him, a wave of emotion had passed through Slode, and his growing mood of languor became exchanged for a lively eagerness. He jumped up from the bench, with outstretched palm, ejaculating:—

"Snakes alive! it's *Elise*—Elise Lebrun of Hersin-Coupigny! Don't you remember me, ma'm'selle?"

The girl, still seated, surveyed the fantastic figure before her in mingled astonishment and alarm.

"No, m'sieu, I am sure I have *nevaire* seen you before!"

Slode recollected himself and laughed loudly.

"No, of course—of course, you wouldn't recognize me. But you are Ma'm'selle Elise, are you not? Don't you remember Jim—Jim Slode, the Canadian soldier—10th battalion—Jim of Blue Wing—who was sick—billeted at your house at Hersin-Coupigny during the War? Have you forgotten, you

—you gave me this—a keepsake—just before the last push in August, '18?"

And Slode pulled out of his waistcoat-pocket an ingeniously chased pencil-case, fashioned out of an empty cartridge, with a silver top and an inscription in silver filagree:—

"*E. le B. à Jim. En souvenir*, 1915-18."

On his companion's features, now no longer pale, laughter and perplexity struggled for mastery, as she gazed alternately from the modest little trinket to Slode. Suddenly a light seemed to break in upon her, and with merry vivacity she took Slode's extended hand.

"Forgive me, M'sieu Jim. I am so stupid and your disguise—oh, it is so clevaire! You also—you go to the ball—and I nevaire guess. Your costume, it is superb—*épatant!*"

She withdrew a step in which to survey him more completely—from the snow-white hat to the shoes, now alas! not so white: the originality, audacity, and arresting salience of what in her native tongue is called the *tout ensemble*—and then no longer could she restrain her mirth. The longer she looked at Slode the more she laughed.

"To think that you are M'sieu Jim—*le brav' soldat*, Jim Slode, that my mother and my little brothers are so fond at Hersin-Coupigny! Oh, but you are funny—but funny! You will take the great prize. You will have *un succès fou* at the ball."

Slode stroked his ridiculous beard thoughtfully, and Elise shrieked with laughter.

"Look here, Elise," he said, "what ball?"

"Why, the ball you attend to-night. Many gentlemen at the hotel also go. It is at Covent Garden, is it not?"

They had left the bench and were walking now side by side.

"Ma'm'selle Elise," resumed Slode, after a pause, "what are *you* doing in London?"

"Oh, I came over six months ago. I have a very good situation. It is in a big hotel, where the housekeeper is French and a great friend of my mother. See, the letter I have is from my mother; it tells me all the news from poor Hersin-Coupigny and Lens and Bethune. Some of it is very sad. I am so sorry for the poor people. But I am very happy in my place in the bureau where I assist in the accounts and write many letters in French for the manager."

Slode pondered.

"Look here, ma'm'selle, about that ball this evening—how would you like to come with me? I am alone, you see."

She turned and regarded him with her large grey eyes opened their widest.

"But, Jim!" she cried, "how is it possible? I have no *costume de bal*. I have not even a proper dress. *Et puis, alors*, I must ask Madame's permission. If I were not back at twelve o'clock, what would she think?"

"Don't you be a slave, Elise! What does it matter what she thinks? Ain't I an old friend of your mother's? I'll look after you. You're not afraid of me, Elise?"

"No-o. But——"

He seized her hand and drew it through his arm. An empty taxi was passing; he hailed it. A strange feeling was creeping over him, a feeling he did not stop to analyse, the feeling of a swimmer who has been battling overmuch with the breakers and who finds his feet at last touching a sandy bottom, the feeling of an amateur actor who after his first ordeal before a hostile audience, sees the grateful curtain descending. At last he had struck a friend, reviving sweet and gentle memories, the only sweet and gentle memories which had found a lodgment in Slode's bosom for six years or so. In spite of all his bounce and bluff Slode began to wonder if he had not, after all, been a bit "off his chump" lately! What if this charming girl at his side knew the truth? What would she think of him? Wouldn't she run away and leave him as if he were really a ruddy lunatic?

Well, anyhow, she had given him the means of escape which otherwise his pride would have scorned. He must keep up the illusion.

"Driver, where can a lady buy, hire, or steal a fancy dress at this hour of the evening?"

The taxi-man grinned.

"Reckon Claxton's would be open, sir. Open till ten or eleven when there's a Covent Garden ball on. Shall I drive there, sir?"

"As quick as you know how, my lad," returned Slode, assisting Elise into the vehicle.

"If only we could get even a domino," murmured the girl, ecstatically, "it would do. I have always longed to see a great *bal masqué* in your beautiful *Jardin de Couvent!*"

SLODE had brought off his *coup*, but still he wasn't wholly happy. Something seemed to have affected his mentality. In spite of the triumphant success of his own get-up (an exquisite Charles I. had slapped him exuberantly on the back and assured him that he was an "absolute peach"), notwithstanding Elise's radiant joy and her own dainty prettiness as a red, white, and blue vivandière, something seemed to have snapped inside Slode. His recent self-confidence was replaced by a strange diffidence. When Elise insisted on his mingling with the other dancers he did so to please her, and immediately afterwards showed a preference for quiet corners behind screens or palms where

he could take her little hand in his and make her talk to him about old times at Hersin-Coupigny, where he had taught her English or halma, and she had played a wheezy piano "pinched" from a ruined mansion in Arras or mended his and his comrade's socks and underwear.

AFTER a champagne supper (where Elise, timidly sipping the wine, pronounced it not nearly as sweet as the champagne *renommé* to which Jim had once treated her at the Coq d'Or, in her native village) Slode's spirits greatly improved; but he still shrank from the gaze of the crowd.

"Don't mind me, little girl. I'll sit here and you go and fox-trot with Uncle Sam or Richelieu. Don't mind me. I just like watching you. To me, you're just the sweetest thing that ever happened. No other girl here is a patch on you."

Elise's sheer joy radiated.

"Oh, Jim, I have nevaire been so happy! I could almost cry when you say the othaire girl is not 'one patch.' That is how you speak to me five years ago when we promenade together in the Grand Place of Hersin-Coupigny and shop in the marché."

"I meant it then, too!" declared Slode, and the next moment he had surrendered his little vivandière to the arm of Dick Whittington and stood watching the couple thread their saltatory way through the maze of dancers.

As he stood there he was made perpetually aware that he attracted attention. Such phrases reached his ear, as:—

"Good Lord, dear, look."

"Did you *ever!* What's he supposed to be?—the Mad Hatter?"

He frequently rubbed his forehead with his finger-tips, as if suffering from headache or feverishness. Sometimes his restless eye fastened itself upon his giant-spotted trousers strapped down to his white tennis shoes, with the black spats, and at such times you would have sworn it was a look of disgust which crept over his features. It was as though he were being awakened from a dream and were trying to realize what had happened to him. He regarded the Paris cabman's hat in his hand as if it were an unclean thing which he would like to pitch across the great ballroom. He ran his fingers through his tawny beard and visibly shuddered. The thought occurred to him, "I expect if I'd been a different sort I might after what I've been through have taken to drink. But I took to clothes instead and got drunk on 'em. I've been on a tremendous bust and I guess I'm just sobering up."

He gazed down at his habiliments ruefully. But Elise returned and he brightened up at once. He fetched her an ice, and then another. A quarter of an hour passed, and then a slim young gentleman in correct

"No longer could she restrain her mirth. The

evening raiment approached the pair where they sat and made a bow.

"Excuse me," he said, deferentially, "but are you 'A.D. 1952'?"

Slode was on his feet like an electrically-worked automaton, just as in the old days, eyes front, chest out, fingers touching the seam of his trousers, and only pulled himself up in time before giving the regulation salute of the private in the ranks when accosted by an officer.

'Ye-es, sir," he stammered. "How did you——?"

The slim young man laughed pleasantly.

"I thought you would like to know that I have just seen the winning list and you are awarded Gentlemen's First Prize."

"Wha-a-at!" ejaculated Slode. Elise clapped her hands joyfully.

"There, Jim, what did I tell you! Now you can be happy. You need not be anxious any more. You have done it. It is splendid —*splendid!*"

Slode collapsed into his seat and closed his eyes, while the young man went on talking.

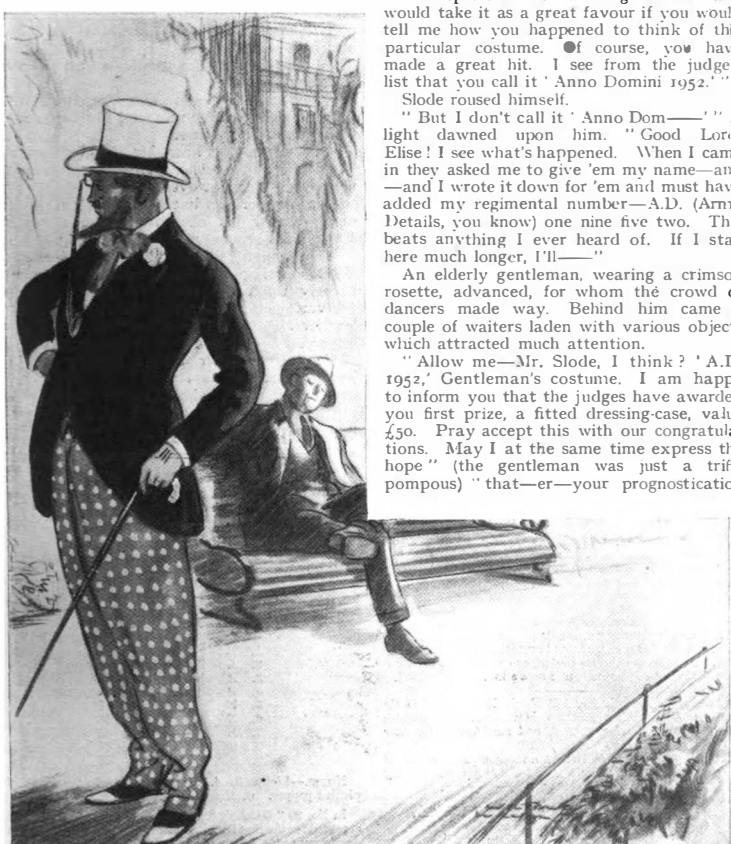
"I represent the *Morning Gleaner* and would take it as a great favour if you would tell me how you happened to think of this particular costume. Of course, you have made a great hit. I see from the judge's list that you call it 'Anno Domini 1952.'"

Slode roused himself.

"But I don't call it 'Anno Dom——'" A light dawned upon him. "Good Lord, Elise! I see what's happened. When I came in they asked me to give 'em my name—and —and I wrote it down for 'em and must have added my regimental number—A.D. (Army Details, you know) one nine five two. This beats anything I ever heard of. If I stay here much longer, I'll——"

An elderly gentleman, wearing a crimson rosette, advanced, for whom the crowd of dancers made way. Behind him came a couple of waiters laden with various objects which attracted much attention.

"Allow me—Mr. Slode, I think? 'A.D. 1952,' Gentleman's costume. I am happy to inform you that the judges have awarded you first prize, a fitted dressing-case, value £50. Pray accept this with our congratulations. May I at the same time express the hope" (the gentleman was just a trifle pompous) "that—er—your prognostication



longer she looked at Slode the more she laughed."

of the dress of our—er—immediate posterity must not—ha, ha!—be accepted too literally?"

Slode and Mlle. Lebrun stood up. It was Elise who took the beautiful dressing-case. Then there ensued a blinding flash, the shutters of half-a-dozen cameras went snap, followed by universal peals of merriment.

The Master of Ceremonies, still smiling at his jest, and the waiters passed on.

"ARE you feeling better now, Jim?"

Slode nodded. He looked at his watch—an ancient gold turnip—and saw that it was nearly two o'clock.

"Do you mind if we go now, Elise?"

"Oh, no, Jim! It is terribly late. I hope Madame will never find out. My domino will cover everything. You can put my street dress in here." Elise roguishly held up the beautiful dressing-case.

"HAVE you far to go, Elise? What is the name of your hotel?"

"*Ma foi*, Jim, have I not told you? It is the Oxford Palace."

"*The Oxford Palace!*"

"Yes. Why are you so surprised? What is your hotel, Jim?"

"Mine?" returned Slode, grimly. "Oh, mine's a mighty long way off. Ever hear of it—the Hôtel de Bivouac?"

"Nevaire. But why do you not take a room for the night at the Oxford Palace? It is so late and you could move to-morrow, if you liked. I can arrange it for you with Martin, the night-porter. He is a great friend of mine."

The taxi duly drew up in front of the entrance of the hotel where not so many hours before had been witnessed Slode's rebuff. The door was closed, but Elise pressed the bell and it swung open, revealing the muscular, rubicund, efficient person of Martin, the Swiss night-porter.

"*Bon soir, M. Martin,*" observed Mlle. Lebrun, affably.

"*Ah, c'est vous, mademoiselle!*" exclaimed the surprised Martin, surprised and pleased, for was not mademoiselle a general favourite in the famous caravanserai?

"Monsieur Martin, let me introduce to you my *fiancé*. We have just returned from the ball at Covent Garden."

"*Enchanté, monsieur.*" Mr. Martin grinned and bowed.

"I think there is a room vacant, is there not, M. Martin?"

"Yes, mademoiselle. One-twenty-eight."

As she spoke Elise removed her belongings from the dressing-case.

"Very good. Show Mr. Slode into it. Good night, Jim, dear. Thank you so much for a very pleasant evening."

The big porter's back was turned. Slode again seized his opportunity. He caught Elise in his arms and kissed her.

"Good night, little girl," he said, tenderly. While closing the receptacle his eye fell eagerly upon the contents ranged within, the various implements in their neat morocco leather sheaths. "Good night, and I promise you I—I'll be my old self to-morrow."

He watched her bound lightly up the broad staircase.

"Thank God, she'll never know!" he muttered softly to himself. "A.D. 1921's good enough for me, *now!*"

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 102.

(The Second of the Series.)

THIS is the old-time season of Noël;
That brings you cheer from those who wish you well.

1. A calling this, high-sounding, but plebeian.
2. An epithet of darkness Tartarean.
3. Mere blue or grey, or colour red as roses.
4. Cut out—a custom that our state imposes.
5. The verdant green, making the Wild West smile.
6. Write down in Latin and curtail meanwhile.
7. A realm that, in its centre, owns the king.
8. No end to this, unless it be a sting. EDI.

Answers to Acrostic No. 102 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 January 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. 101.

SOLVERS and readers, *one* and *two*
This Christmastide we wish to you.

1. His ship with this the sailor guides.
2. Sensation Scottish loch provides.
3. Who picked a peck? First name is here;
4. Now let his second name appear.
5. A British tribe when Rome held sway.
6. A character in Shakespeare's play.
7. River in France must lose its head;
8. And here its tail must go instead.
9. Your daughter's brother and his net
   In fourteen lines of verse are met.

PAX.

1.	H	e l	M
2.	A	w	E
3.	P	e t e	R
4.	P	i p e	R
5.	I	c e n	I
6.	N	y	M
7.	E	i n	E
8.	S	e i	N
9.	S	o n n e	T

NOTES.—Lights 3, 4. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper. 6. Henry V. 7, 8. Seine.

In No. 99 "Galahalt" (a knight of the Round Table) is accepted for the first light. The third light was inaccurate: Arthur was grandson, not son, of a king. The A.E. much regrets the error, and thinks that all answers to this light must be accepted.

Days of Childhood

Mother is seen tucking up the little ones, and the Good-night Kiss is all the sweeter in anticipation of the piece of Toffee-de-Luxe promised for the morrow.

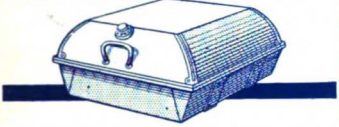
Printed by THE CORNWALL PRESS, Ltd., Paris Garden, Stamford St., S.E., for the Proprietors, GEORGE NEWNES, LTD.

You're a Perfect Cook

Earn a reputation for perfect cooking and keep it by using an "ONWARD" Roaster. The "ONWARD" ensures a well-cooked dish *every* time, and the way it makes tough old fowl as crisp and tender as a chicken is simply magical. There's no fear of a spoiled dinner if you use an "ONWARD." It cooks to a "turn."

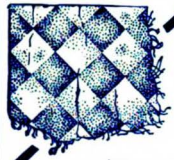
If your dealer cannot supply you, we will send you an "ONWARD" (size 12in. by 11in.) direct for 6/6 (carr. paid).

The ONWARD Roaster



May be obtained from any Ironmonger, or from Patentee and Sole Maker:

EDWIN CHAMBERS, LTD.,
"S" Dept., "Onward" Works, Leeds Rd., BRADFORD.



Prevent your LINO from wearing out!

Before it goes too far, protect the surface by polishing it with RONUK. Above all, stop scrubbing, which rots the material.

RONUK

Sanitary
FLOOR POLISH

LENGTHENS THE LIFE OF LINO

Has a very pleasant smell, is an effective safeguard against disease germs and keeps the floor perfectly clean and healthy.

SOLD EVERYWHERE.

When buying RONUK, ask to see that wonderful labour-saving device, the RONUK HOME POLISHER, or send for fully descriptive leaflets, to

RONUK Ltd., Portslade, Sussex.

Stop using Oil Lamps!

Adopt Clear, Portable Acetylene Gas

—the nearest approach to Daylight that Science has yet discovered.

The DARGUE Patent ACETYLENE Table Lamp

No. 1 Size. Fitted complete, with 12-inch Silk Shade..... 68/6

No. 2 Size. Fitted complete, with 15-inch Silk Shade..... 110/-

is self-contained, easy and clean to operate, absolutely safe, economical in use, and of handsome design in solid brass. It gives a soft, white light for five to eight hours (No. 1 size), or 7½ to 12 hours (No. 2 size) from one charge according to size of burner used—and solves the lighting question for Overseas, Camps, Farms, Bungalows, Shooting Boxes, Golf Club houses, etc., situated away from Town Gas Supplies.

No. 1 gives 50 c.p. for 5 hrs.; 40 c.p. for 6½ hrs.; or 30 c.p. for 8 hrs.

No. 2 gives 50 c.p. for 7½ hrs.; 40 c.p. for 10 hrs.; or 30 c.p. for 12 hrs.

Sent Postage and Packing Free in U.K. Extra abroad.

Dargue Acetylene Lamp & Burner only, without Fittings No. 1 size, 30/-. No. 2 size, 48/-.

Other fittings extra; fitted as illustrated. No. 1 size, 68/6; No. 2, 110/-.

Money refunded if dissatisfied. Over 15,000 sold.

The same lamp is supplied with special fittings for Drawing-Room, Hall, Kitchen, Bedroom, Corridor, Garage, Stable, etc., all of which are illustrated and described in our

FREE BOOK ON LAMPS FOR COUNTRY LIGHTING

Send a postcard for it to-day.

The Dargue Acetylene Gas Co., Ltd.,
No. 1, Dargue Chambers, Grey St., Newcastle-on-Tyne, Eng.

A Child can fix them.

ENGLEBERT
SOLES HEELS **SUBSOLES** AND TIPS

"Springy, Light and Watertight"

For Cold, Damp Days!

Englebert Subsoles, fixed with the rubber solution supplied free with each pair, will make your boots absolutely chill and water-proof.

Lightest in Weight — Longest in Wear. Dainty and Durable — Smart and Strong.

If you cannot obtain them from your regular dealer, send us his name and address, or we will forward a pair of Subsoles, with free tube of solution, post free for 4/6 (Gent.'s) or 3/- (Ladies').

Please state size when ordering.

ENGLEBERT TYRES, Ltd.,
101, Bolsover Street, Great Portland Street, LONDON, W.1.

And at 81, Downing Street, London Road, Manchester.

CROWN

Toilet Dainties

are

Distinguished and Delightful

They comprise

Talcum Powder
Complexion Powder
Solidified Brilliantine
Brilliantine (Liquid)
Vanishing Cream
Shaving Powder
Shaving Stick
Tooth Powder
Corodenta (for cleaning Dental Plates)
Tooth Paste

Also to be obtained in charming Presentation Caskets suitable for either Ladies or Gentlemen.

The Crown Perfumery Co. Ltd. London, Paris and New York