COMPLETE NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STO...

The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

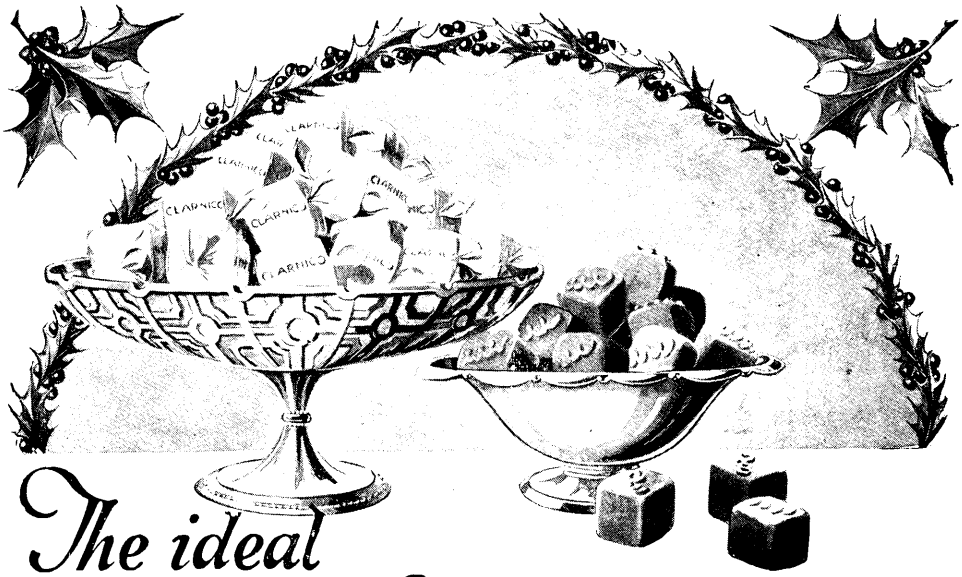
ALSO

CONAN DOYLE ON SHERLOCK HOLMES

IN HIS REMINISCENCES

JANUARY

ONE SHILLING NET



The ideal SWEETS *for* HOGMANAY

By whatever name you call it—New Year, Hogmanay or just January 1—the joyous Xmas spirit persists. You can't get away from it and won't want to, if you are wise.

The children are still at home: there are parties and theatres, and lots of fun.

This "spirit" has been "caught" and embodied in the delicious form of CLARNICO CONFECTIONERY; and in none of it more successfully than in the two following masterpieces of subtle blending:

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These are the famous Lily Brazils covered with a coating of the finest chocolate. They are extra delicious and eminently suitable for New Year festivities.

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Bring an appetite to breakfast!

How's your breakfast appetite?

Can you tackle a hearty meal that will keep you going at full pressure till one o'clock?

Or does the sight of even a boiled egg repel you?

If so, you need a little daily dose of Kruschen Salts to put your system right—to keep the engine running smoothly and truly.

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Because Kruschen contains not merely a single salt, like Epsom or Glauber, the effect of which is limited. There are six different salts in Kruschen, and ***every tiny pinch you take is a combination of those six salts.***

You take nothing on trust. Kruschen has won the confidence of millions by ***printing the analysis on every bottle.*** Your doctor will tell you that the six salts in Kruschen are necessary for healthy life, and that you feel well or ill according to the accuracy with which you maintain Nature's balance of them in your system.

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Try taking it in your breakfast cup of tea every morning. Experience for yourself the glorious feeling of fitness and exhilaration that comes when the system is freed from the clogging waste matter that has been producing listlessness, depression, headaches, sleeplessness, "nerves," and a general state of unhappiness. Feel the new, refreshed blood coursing through your veins. Acquire, in fact, an unfailing supply of "that Kruschen feeling."

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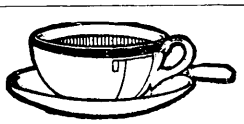
So get a 1s. 9d. bottle of Kruschen Salts at once. Start the good habit of the "little daily dose" now, and enjoy your breakfast ***every day.***



Tasteless in Tea

Put as much in your breakfast cup as will lie on a sixpence. It's the little daily dose that does it.

Kruschen Salts

Good Health for a Farthing a Day

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Snuggle-comfort for "Mother's Joy" is ensured by the little Silk-woven Tab

Soft and fleecy, pure, *new* wool—just like Down—so cosily warm and protecting, warding off the chilly hand of winter from your teenie bundle-of-love. Such is the Otterburn Baby Rug—with the little Silk Tab.

The little Otterburn Tab silently, but none the less *surely*, vouches for honest worth. In effect, it says: "This Rug, made—as all Baby-things should be made—by people with a conscience, is worth *far more* than its very reasonable price—for it safeguards the health of your Baby."

The small illustrations beneath show a few of the various ways in which the Otterburn Baby Rug can be used for the protection of Baby.

The Otterburn Baby Rug as a Pram Cover.

As a Cot Coverlet.

As a Nursing Wrap.

As a Cradle Coverlet.

Mother-love is the same the wide-world over—swift, and eager to procure the Best for Baby. That is why Otterburn Baby Rug orders come to us, cheek-by-jowl, from South Wales and South Africa.

Carefully and conscientiously made from the wool of hardy, healthy sheep, born, reared, and sheared in the Mother Country's Cheviot Hills, Otterburn Baby Rugs have endeared themselves to Mothers everywhere—at home and abroad alike.

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The "Otterburn" is substantial, fleecy, and warm, without undue weight. It lasts for years and washes excellently. In fact, with ordinary care, it *improves* with washing. Handy, yet *ample* in size, the "Otterburn" measures 30 in. by 36 in., and is made in Grey, Cream, Sky, Saxe, Rose, Navy and Biscuit Colours. Price **13/11**

Sold by Drapers, Pram Sellers, etc.

Ask to see *Otterburn* Baby Rugs and look for the little Tab. If your Draper is unable to supply, send us his name and address with your own, enclosing remittance for 13/11 and *stating colour* needed. We will then supply you, post free, and credit your shopman with the sale.

Otterburn Mill, Ltd., Otterburn, Northumberland

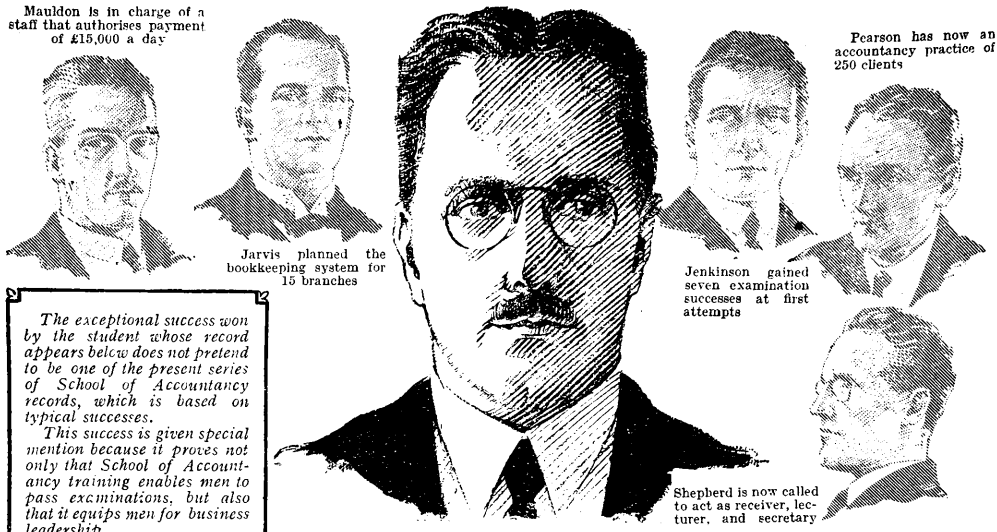
Trade enquiries are invited from Drapers, Pram Sellers and Stores dealing in Baby Wear

13/11 Otterburn Rug (11)

Made from Pure, New Cheviot Wool.

A Warning.

The silk-woven Tab showing the old Mill is stitched on each genuine Otterburn Rug. Look for it always. If you are offered an imitation, say "No" firmly; take no chances with Baby's Health and Comfort.



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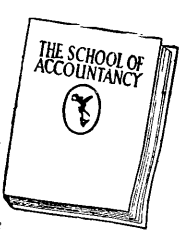
It contains useful information about careers and business training, gives particulars of all Courses and Terms, and includes facts which will definitely convince you that The School's Postal Training will qualify you to fill a responsible executive position.



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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Contents for January, 1924.

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THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
January, 1924.

"FOR GOD'S SAKE, MR. HOLMES, GIVE ME SOME ADVICE, FOR I AM AT MY WITS' END."

(See page 6.)

A NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY

THE ADVENTURE OF THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

ILLUSTRATED BY H. K. ELCOCK

HOLMES had read carefully a note which the last post had brought him. Then, with the dry chuckle which was his nearest approach to a laugh, he tossed it over to me.

"For a mixture of the modern and the mediæval, of the practical and of the wildly fanciful, I think this is surely the limit," said he. "What do you make of it, Watson?"

I read as follows:—

46, Old Jewry,
Nov. 19th.

Re Vampires.

Sir,

Our client, Mr. Robert Ferguson, of Ferguson and Muirhead, tea brokers, of Mincing Lane, has made some inquiry from us in a communication of even date concerning vampires. As our firm specializes entirely upon the assessment of machinery the matter hardly comes within our purview, and we have therefore recommended Mr. Ferguson to call upon you and lay the matter before you. We have not forgotten your successful action in the case of Matilda Briggs.

We are, Sir,
Faithfully yours,
MORRISON, MORRISON, AND DODD.
per E. J. C.

"Matilda Briggs was not the name of a young woman, Watson," said Holmes, in a reminiscent voice. "It was a ship which is associated with the giant rat of Sumatra, a story for which the world is not yet prepared. But what do we know about vampires? Does it come within our purview either? Anything is better than stagnation, but really we seem to have been switched on to a Grimm's fairy tale. Make a long arm, Watson, and see what V has to say."

I leaned back and took down the great index volume to which he referred. Holmes balanced it on his knee and his eyes moved slowly and lovingly over the record of old cases, mixed with the accumulated information of a lifetime.

"Voyage of the *Gloria Scott*," he read.

"That was a bad business. I have some recollection that you made a record of it, Watson, though I was unable to congratulate you upon the result. Victor Lynch, the forger. Venomous lizard or gila. Remarkable case, that! Vittoria, the circus belle. Vanderbilt and the Yeggman. Vipers. Vigor, the Hammersmith wonder. Hullo! Hullo! Good old index. You can't beat it. Listen to this, Watson. Vampirism in Hungary. And again, Vampires in Transylvania." He turned over the pages with eagerness, but after a short intent perusal he threw down the great book with a snarl of disappointment.

"Rubbish, Watson, rubbish! What have we to do with walking corpses who can only be held in their grave by stakes driven through their hearts? It's pure lunacy."

"But surely," said I, "the vampire was not necessarily a dead man? A living person might have the habit. I have read, for example, of the old sucking the blood of the young in order to retain their youth."

"You are right, Watson. It mentions the legend in one of these references. But are we to give serious attention to such things? This Agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. This world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply. I fear that we cannot take Mr. Robert Ferguson very seriously. Possibly this note may be from him, and may throw some light upon what is worrying him."

He took up a second letter which had lain unnoticed upon the table whilst he had been absorbed with the first. This he began to read with a smile of amusement upon his face which gradually faded away into an expression of intense interest and concentration. When he had finished he sat for some little time lost in thought with the letter dangling from his fingers. Finally, with a start, he aroused himself from his reverie.

"Cheeseman's, Lamberley. Where is Lamberley, Watson?"

"It is in Sussex, south of Horsham."

"Not very far, eh? And Cheeseman's?"

"I know that country, Holmes. It is full of old houses which are named after the men who built them centuries ago. You get Odley's and Harvey's and Carriton's—the folk are forgotten but their names live in their houses."

"Precisely," said Holmes, coldly. It was one of the peculiarities of his proud, self-contained nature that, though he docketed any fresh information very quickly and accurately in his brain, he seldom made any acknowledgment to the giver. "I rather fancy we shall know a good deal more about Cheeseman's, Lamberley, before we are through. The letter is, as I had hoped, from Robert Ferguson. By the way, he claims acquaintance with you."

"With me!"

"You had better read it."

He handed the letter across. It was headed with the address quoted.

DEAR MR. HOLMES (it said),—I have been recommended to you by my lawyers, but indeed the matter is so extraordinarily delicate that it is most difficult to discuss. It concerns a friend for whom I am acting. This gentleman married some five years ago a Peruvian lady, the daughter of a Peruvian merchant, whom he had met in connection with the importation of nitrates. The lady was very beautiful, but the fact of her foreign birth and of her alien religion always caused a separation of interests and of feelings between husband and wife, so that after a time his love may have cooled towards her and he may have come to regard their union as a mistake. He felt there were sides of her character which he could never explore or understand. This was the more painful as she was as loving a wife as a man could have—to all appearance absolutely devoted.

Now for the point which I will make more plain when we meet. Indeed, this note is merely to give you a general idea of the situation and to ascertain whether you would care to interest yourself in the matter. The lady began to show some curious traits quite alien to her ordinarily sweet and gentle disposition. The gentleman had been married twice and he had one son by the first wife. This boy was now fifteen, a very charming and affectionate youth, though unhappily injured through an accident in childhood. Twice the wife was caught in the act of assaulting this poor lad in the most unprovoked way. Once she struck him with a stick and left a great weal on his arm.

This was a small matter, however, compared with her conduct to her own child, a dear boy just under one year of age. On one occasion about a month ago this child had been left by its nurse for a few minutes. A loud cry from the baby, as of pain, called the nurse back. As she ran into the room she saw her employer, the lady, leaning over the baby and apparently biting his neck. There was a small wound in the neck, from which a stream of blood had escaped. The nurse was so horrified that she wished to call the husband, but the lady implored her not to do so, and actually gave her five pounds as a price for her silence.

No explanation was ever given, and for the moment the matter was passed over.

It left, however, a terrible impression upon the nurse's mind, and from that time she began to watch her mistress closely, and to keep a closer guard upon the baby, whom she tenderly loved. It seemed to her that even as she watched the mother, so the mother watched her, and that every time she was compelled to leave the baby alone the mother was waiting to get at it. Day and night the nurse covered the child, and day and night the silent, watchful mother seemed to be lying in wait as a wolf waits for a lamb. It must read most incredible to you, and yet I beg you to take it seriously, for a child's life and a man's sanity may depend upon it.

At last there came one dreadful day when the facts could no longer be concealed from the husband. The nurse's nerve had given way; she could stand the strain no longer, and she made a clean breast of it all to the man. To him it seemed as wild a tale as it may now seem to you. He knew his wife to be a loving wife, and, save for the assaults upon her stepson, a loving mother. Why, then, should she wound her own dear little baby? He told the nurse that she was dreaming, that her suspicions were those of a lunatic, and that such libels upon her mistress were not to be tolerated. Whilst they were talking, a sudden cry of pain was heard. Nurse and master rushed together to the nursery. Imagine his feelings, Mr. Holmes, as he saw his wife

"Hullo! Hullo! Good old index. You can't beat it. Listen to this, Watson."

rise from a kneeling position beside the cot, and saw blood upon the child's exposed neck and upon the sheet. With a cry of horror, he turned his wife's face to the light and saw blood all round her lips. It was she—she beyond all question—who had drunk the poor baby's blood.

So the matter stands. She is now confined to her room. There has been no explanation. The husband is half demented. He knows, and I know, little of Vampirism beyond the name. We had thought it was some wild tale of foreign parts. And yet here in the very heart of the English Sussex—well, all this can be discussed with you in the morning. Will you see me? Will you use your great powers in aiding a distracted man? If so, kindly wire to Ferguson, Cheeseman's, Lamberley, and I will be at your rooms by ten o'clock.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT FERGUSON.

P.S.—I believe your friend Watson played Rugby for Blackheath when I was three-quarter for Richmond. It is the only personal introduction which I can give.

"Of course I remember him," said I, as I laid down the letter. "Big Bob Ferguson, the finest three-quarter Richmond ever had. He was always a good-natured chap. It is like him to be so concerned over a friend's case."

Holmes looked at me thoughtfully and shook his head.

"I never get your limits, Watson," said he. "There are unexplored possibilities about you. Take a wire down, like a good fellow. 'Will examine your case with pleasure.'"

"*Your* case!"

"We must not let him think that this Agency is a home for the weak-minded. Of course it is his case. Send him that wire and let the matter rest till morning."

PROMPTLY at ten o'clock next morning Ferguson strode into our room. I had remembered him as a long, slab-sided man with loose limbs and a fine turn of speed, which had carried him round many an opposing back. There is surely nothing in life more painful than to meet the wreck of a fine athlete whom one has known in his prime. His great frame had fallen in, his flaxen hair was scanty, and his shoulders were bowed. I fear that I roused corresponding emotions in him.

"Hullo, Watson," said he, and his voice was still deep and hearty. "You don't look quite the man you did when I threw you over the ropes into the crowd at the Old Deer Park. I expect I have changed a bit also. But it's this last day or two that has aged me. I see by your telegram, Mr. Holmes, that it is no use my pretending to be anyone's deputy."

"It is simpler to deal direct," said Holmes.

"Of course it is. But you can imagine how difficult it is when you are speaking of the one woman whom you are bound to protect and help. What can I do? How am I to go to the police with such a story? And yet the kiddies have got to be protected. Is it madness, Mr. Holmes? Is it something in the blood? Have you any similar case in your experience? For God's sake, give me some advice, for I am at my wits' end."

"Very naturally, Mr. Ferguson. Now sit here and pull yourself together and give me a few clear answers. I can assure you that I am very far from being at my wits' end, and that I am confident we shall find some solution. First of all, tell me what steps you have taken. Is your wife still near the children?"

"We had a dreadful scene. She is a most loving woman, Mr. Holmes. If ever a woman loved a man with all her heart and soul, she loves me. She was cut to the heart that I should have discovered this horrible, this incredible secret. She would not even speak. She gave no answer to my reproaches, save to gaze at me with a sort of wild, despairing look in her eyes. Then she rushed to her room and locked herself in. Since then she has refused to see me. She has a maid who was with her before her marriage, Dolores by name—a friend rather than a servant. She takes her food to her."

"Then the child is in no immediate danger?"

"Mrs. Mason, the nurse, has sworn that she will not leave it night or day. I can absolutely trust her. I am more uneasy about poor little Jack, for, as I told you in my note, he has twice been assaulted by her."

"But never wounded?"

"No; she struck him savagely. It is the more terrible as he is a poor little inoffensive cripple." Ferguson's gaunt features softened as he spoke of his boy. "You would think that the dear lad's condition would soften anyone's heart. A fall in childhood and a twisted spine, Mr. Holmes. But the dearest, most loving heart within."

Holmes had picked up the letter of yesterday and was reading it over. "What other inmates are there in your house, Mr. Ferguson?"

"Two servants who have not been long

with us. One stable hand, Michael, who sleeps in the house. My wife, myself, my boy Jack, baby, Dolores, and Mrs. Mason. That is all."

"I gather that you did not know your wife well at the time of your marriage?"

"I had only known her a few weeks."

"How long had this maid Dolores been with her?"

"Some years."

"Then your wife's character would really be better known by Dolores than by you?"

"Yes, you may say so."

Holmes made a note.

"I fancy," said he, "that I may be of more use at Lamberley than here. It is eminently a case for personal investigation. If the lady remains in her room, our presence could not annoy or inconvenience her. Of course, we would stay at the inn."

Ferguson gave a gesture of relief.

"It is what I hoped, Mr. Holmes. There is an excellent train at two from Victoria, if you could come."

"Of course we could come. There is a lull at present. I can give you my undivided energies. Watson, of course, comes with us. But there are one or two points upon which I wish to be very sure before I start. This unhappy lady, as I understand it, has appeared to assault both the children, her own baby and your little son?"

"That is so."

"But the assaults take different forms, do they not? She has beaten your son."

"Once with a stick and once very savagely with her hands."

"Did she give no explanation why she struck him?"

"None, save that she hated him. Again and again she said so."

"Well, that is not unknown among stepmothers. A posthumous jealousy, we will say. Is the lady jealous by nature?"

"Yes, she is very jealous—jealous with all the strength of her fiery tropical love."

"But the boy—he is fifteen, I understand, and probably very developed in mind, since his body has been circumscribed in action. Did he give you no explanation of these assaults?"

"No; he declared there was no reason."

"Were they good friends at other times?"

"No; there was never any love between them."

"Yet you say he is affectionate?"

"Never in the world could there be so devoted a son. My life is his life. He is absorbed in what I say or do."

Once again Holmes made a note. For some time he sat lost in thought.

"No doubt you and the boy were great comrades before this second marriage. You were thrown very close together, were you not?"

"Very much so."

"And the boy, having so affectionate a nature, was devoted, no doubt, to the memory of his mother?"

"Most devoted."

"He would certainly seem to be a most interesting lad. There is one other point about these assaults. Were the strange attacks upon the baby and the assaults upon your son at the same period?"

"In the first case it was so. It was as if some frenzy had seized her, and she had vented her rage upon both. In the second case it was only Jack who suffered. Mrs. Mason had no complaint to make about the baby."

"That certainly complicates matters."

"I don't quite follow you, Mr. Holmes."

"Possibly not. One forms provisional theories and waits for time or fuller knowledge to explode them. A bad habit, Mr. Ferguson; but human nature is weak. I fear that your old friend here has given an exaggerated view of my scientific methods. However, I will only say at the present stage that your problem does not appear to me to be insoluble, and that you may expect to find us at Victoria at two o'clock."

IT was evening of a dull, foggy November day when, having left our bags at the Chequers, Lamberley, we drove through the Sussex clay of a long winding lane, and finally reached the isolated and ancient farmhouse in which Ferguson dwelt. It was a large, straggling building, very old in the centre, very new at the wings, with towering Tudor chimneys and a lichen-spotted, high-pitched roof of Horsham slabs. The door-steps were worn into curves, and the ancient tiles which lined the porch were marked with the rebus of a cheese and a man, after the original builder. Within, the ceilings were corrugated with heavy oaken beams, and the uneven floors sagged into sharp curves. An odour of age and decay pervaded the whole crumbling building.

There was one very large central room, into which Ferguson led us. Here, in a huge old-fashioned fireplace with an iron screen behind it dated 1670, there blazed and spluttered a splendid log fire.

The room, as I gazed round, was a most singular mixture of dates and of places. The half-panelled walls may well have belonged to the original yeoman farmer of the seventeenth century. They were ornamented, however, on the lower part by a line of well-chosen modern water-colours; while above, where yellow plaster took the place of oak, there was hung a fine collection of South American utensils and weapons, which

The woman turned her flushed and handsome face towards me. "Where is my husband?" she asked.

had been brought, no doubt, by the Peruvian lady upstairs. Holmes rose, with that quick curiosity which sprang from his eager mind, and examined them with some care. He returned with his eyes full of thought.

"Hullo!" he cried. "Hullo!"

A spaniel had lain in a basket in the corner. It came slowly forward towards its master, walking with difficulty. Its hind legs moved irregularly and its tail was on the ground. It licked Ferguson's hand.

"What is it, Mr. Holmes?"

"The dog. What's the matter with it?"

"That's what puzzled the vet. A sort of paralysis. Spinal meningitis, he thought. But it is passing. He'll be all right soon—won't you, Carlo?"

A shiver of assent passed through the drooping tail. The dog's mournful eyes passed from one of us to the other. He knew that we were discussing his case.

"Did it come on suddenly?"

"In a single night."

"How long ago?"

"It may have been four months ago."

"Very remarkable. Very suggestive."

"What do you see in it, Mr. Holmes?"

"A confirmation of what I had already thought."

"For God's sake, what *do* you think, Mr. Holmes? It may be a mere intellectual puzzle to you, but it is life and death to me! My wife a would-be murderer—my child in constant danger! Don't play with me, Mr. Holmes. It is too terribly serious."

The big Rugby three-quarter was trembling all over. Holmes put his hand soothingly upon his arm.

"I fear that there is pain for you, Mr. Ferguson, whatever the solution may be," said he. "I would spare you all I can. I cannot say more for the instant, but before I leave this house I hope I may have something definite."

"Please God you may! If you will excuse me, gentlemen, I will go up to my wife's room and see if there has been any change."

HE was away some minutes, during which Holmes resumed his examination of the curiosities upon the wall. When our host returned it was clear from his downcast face that he had made no progress. He brought with him a tall, slim, brown-faced girl.

"The tea is ready, Dolores," said Ferguson. "See that your mistress has everything she can wish."

"She verra ill," cried the girl, looking with indignant eyes at her master. "She no ask for food. She verra ill. She need doctor. I frightened stay alone with her without doctor."

Ferguson looked at me with a question in his eyes.

"I should be so glad if I could be of use."

"Would your mistress see Dr. Watson?"

"I take him. I no ask leave. She needs doctor."

"Then I'll come with you at once."

I followed the girl, who was quivering with strong emotion, up the staircase and down an ancient corridor. At the end was an iron-clamped and massive door. It struck me as I looked at it that if Ferguson tried to force his way to his wife he would find it no easy matter. The girl drew a key from her pocket, and the heavy oaken planks creaked upon their old hinges. I passed in and she swiftly followed, fastening the door behind her.

On the bed a woman was lying who was clearly in a high fever. She was only half conscious, but as I entered she raised a pair of frightened but beautiful eyes and glared at me in apprehension. Seeing a stranger, she appeared to be relieved, and sank back with a sigh upon the pillow. I stepped up to her with a few reassuring words, and she lay still while I took her pulse and temperature. Both were high, and yet my impression was that the condition was rather that of mental and nervous excitement than of any actual seizure.

"She lie like that one day, two day. I 'fraid she die," said the girl.

The woman turned her flushed and handsome face towards me.

"Where is my husband?"

"He is below, and would wish to see you."

"I will not see him. I will not see him." Then she seemed to wander off into delirium. "A fiend! A fiend! Oh, what shall I do with this devil?"

"Can I help you in any way?"

"No. No one can help. It is finished. All is destroyed. Do what I will, all is destroyed."

The woman must have some strange delusion. I could not see honest Bob Ferguson in the character of fiend or devil.

"Madame," I said, "your husband loves you dearly. He is deeply grieved at this happening."

Again she turned on me those glorious eyes.

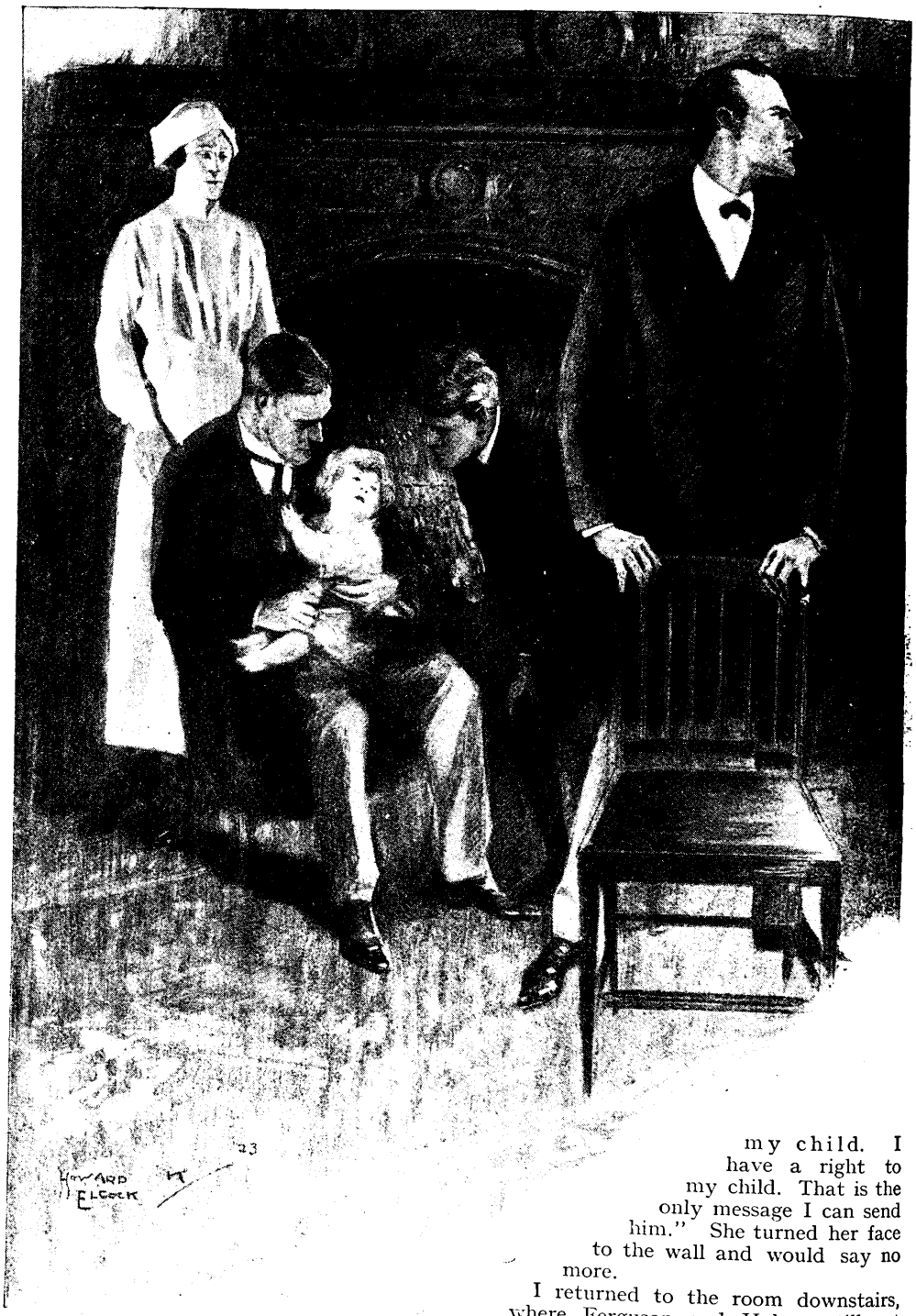
"He loves me. Yes. But do I not love him? Do I not love him even to sacrifice myself rather than break his dear heart. That is how I love him. And yet he could think of me—he could speak of me so."

"He is full of grief, but he cannot understand."

"No, he cannot understand. But he should trust."

"Will you not see him?" I suggested.

"No, no; I cannot forget those terrible



words nor the look upon his face. I will not see him. Go now. You can do nothing for me. Tell him only one thing. I want my child. I have a right to my child. That is the only message I can send him." She turned her face to the wall and would say no more.

I returned to the room downstairs, where Ferguson and Holmes still sat by the fire. Ferguson listened moodily to my account of the interview.

"How can I send her the child?" he said. "How do I know what strange

At this moment I chanced to glance at Holmes, and saw a most singular intentness in his expression. His eyes were fixed with eager curiosity upon something at the other side of the room.

impulse might come upon her? How can I ever forget how she rose from beside it with its blood upon her lips?" He shuddered at the recollection. "The child is safe with Mrs. Mason, and there he must remain."

A smart maid, the only modern thing which we had seen in the house, had brought in some tea. As she was serving it the door opened and a youth entered the room. He was a remarkable lad, pale-faced and fair-haired, with excitable light blue eyes which blazed into a sudden flame of emotion and joy as they rested upon his father. He rushed forward and threw his arms round his neck with the abandon of a loving girl.

"Oh, daddy," he cried, "I did not know that you were due yet. I should have been here to meet you. Oh, I am so glad to see you!"

Ferguson gently disengaged himself from the embrace with some little show of embarrassment.

"Dear old chap," said he, patting the flaxen head with a very tender hand. "I came early because my friends, Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson, have been persuaded to come down and spend an evening with us."

"Is that Mr. Holmes, the detective?"

"Yes."

The youth looked at us with a very penetrating and, as it seemed to me, unfriendly gaze.

"What about your other child, Mr. Ferguson?" asked Holmes. "Might we make the acquaintance of the baby?"

"Ask Mrs. Mason to bring baby down," said Ferguson. The boy went off with a curious, shambling gait which told my surgical eyes that he was suffering from a weak spine. Presently he returned, and behind him came a tall, gaunt woman bearing in her arms a very beautiful child, dark-eyed, golden-haired, a wonderful mixture of the Saxon and the Latin. Ferguson was evidently devoted to it, for he took it into his arms and fondled it most tenderly.

"Fancy anyone having the heart to hurt him," he muttered, as he glanced down at the small, angry red pucker upon the cherub throat.

It was at this moment that I chanced to glance at Holmes, and saw a most singular intentness in his expression. His face was as set as if it had been carved out of old ivory, and his eyes, which had glanced for a moment at father and child, were now fixed with eager curiosity upon something at the other side of the room. Following his gaze I could only guess that he was looking out through the window at the melancholy, dripping garden. It is true that a shutter had half-closed outside and obstructed the view, but none the less it was certainly at the window that Holmes was fixing his concentrated attention. Then he smiled and his eyes came back to the baby. On its chubby neck there was this small puckered mark. Without speaking, Holmes examined it with care. Finally he shook one of the dimpled fists which waved in front of him.

"Good-bye, little man. You have made a strange start in life. Nurse, I should wish to have a word with you in private."

He took her aside and spoke earnestly for a few minutes. I only heard the last words, which were: "Your anxiety will soon, I hope, be set at rest." The woman, who seemed to be a sour, silent kind of creature, withdrew with the child.

"What is Mrs. Mason like?" asked Holmes.

"Not very prepossessing externally, as you can see, but a heart of gold, and devoted to the child."

"Do you like her, Jack?" Holmes turned suddenly upon the boy. His expressive mobile face shadowed over, and he shook his head.

"Jacky has very strong likes and dislikes," said Ferguson, putting his arm round the boy. "Luckily I am one of his likes."

The boy cooed and nestled his head upon his father's breast. Ferguson gently disengaged him.

"Run away, little Jacky," said he, and he watched his son with loving eyes until he disappeared. "Now, Mr. Holmes," he continued, when the boy was gone, "I really feel that I have brought you on a fool's errand, for what can you possibly do, save give me your sympathy? It must be an exceedingly delicate and complex affair from your point of view."

"It is certainly delicate," said my friend, with an amused smile, "but I have not been struck up to now with its complexity. It has been a case for intellectual deduction, but when this original intellectual deduction is confirmed point by point by quite a number of independent incidents, then the subjective becomes objective and we can say confidently that we have reached our goal. I had, in fact, reached it before we left Baker Street, and the rest has merely been observation and confirmation."

Ferguson put his big hand to his furrowed forehead.

"For Heaven's sake, Holmes," he said, hoarsely, "if you can see the truth in this matter, do not keep me in suspense. How do I stand? What shall I do? I care nothing as to how you have found your facts so long as you have really got them."

"Certainly I owe you an explanation, and you shall have it. But you will permit me to handle the matter in my own way? Is the lady capable of seeing us, Watson?"

"She is ill, but she is quite rational."

"Very good. It is only in her presence that we can clear the matter up. Let us go up to her."

"She will not see me," cried Ferguson.

"Oh, yes, she will," said Holmes. He scribbled a few lines upon a sheet of paper. "You at least have the *entrée*, Watson. Will you have the goodness to give the lady this note?"

I ASCENDED again and handed the note to Dolores, who cautiously opened the door. A minute later I heard a cry from within, a cry in which joy and surprise seemed to be blended. Dolores looked out.

"She will see them. She will leesten," said she.

At my summons Ferguson and Holmes came up. As we entered the room Ferguson took a step or two towards his wife, who had raised herself in the bed, but she held out her hand to repulse him. He sank into an arm-chair, while Holmes seated himself beside him, after bowing to the lady, who looked at him with wide-eyed amazement.

"I think we can dispense with Dolores," said Holmes. "Oh, very well, madame, if you would rather she stayed I can see no objection. Now, Mr. Ferguson, I am a busy man with many calls, and my methods have to be short and direct. The swiftest surgery is the least painful. Let me first say what will ease your mind. Your wife

is a very good, a very loving, and a very ill-used woman."

Ferguson sat up with a cry of joy.

"Prove that, Mr. Holmes, and I am your debtor for ever."

"I will do so, but in doing so I must wound you deeply in another direction."

"I care nothing so long as you clear my wife. Everything on earth is insignificant compared to that."

"Let me tell you, then, the train of reasoning which passed through my mind in Baker Street. The idea of a vampire was to me absurd. Such things do not happen in criminal practice in England. And yet your observation was precise. You had seen the lady rise from beside the child's cot with the blood upon her lips."

"I did."

"Did it not occur to you that a bleeding wound may be sucked for some other purpose than to draw the blood from it? Was there not a Queen in English history who sucked such a wound to draw poison from it?"

"Poison!"

"A South American household. My instinct felt the presence of those weapons upon the wall before my eyes ever saw them. It might have been other poison, but that was what occurred to me. When I saw that little empty quiver beside the small bird-bow, it was just what I expected to see. If the child were pricked with one of those arrows dipped in curare or some other devilish drug, it would mean death if the venom were not sucked out.

"And the dog! If one were to use such a poison, would one not try it first in order to see that it had not lost its power? I did not foresee the dog, but at least I understood him and he fitted into my reconstruction.

"Now do you understand? Your wife feared such an attack. She saw it made and saved the child's life, and yet she shrank from telling you all the truth, for she knew how you loved the boy and feared lest it break your heart."

"Jacky!"

"I watched him as you fondled the child just now. His face was clearly reflected in the glass of the window where the shutter formed a background. I saw such jealousy, such cruel hatred, as I have seldom seen in a human face."

"My Jacky!"

"You have to face it, Mr. Ferguson. It is the more painful because it is a distorted love, a maniacal exaggerated love for you, and possibly for his dead mother, which has prompted his action. His very soul is consumed with hatred for this splendid child, whose health and beauty are a contrast to his own weakness."

"Good God! It is incredible!"

"Have I spoken the truth, madame?"

The lady was sobbing, with her face buried in the pillows. Now she turned to her husband.

"How could I tell you, Bob? I felt the blow it would be to you. It was better that I should wait and that it should come from some other lips than mine. When this gentleman, who seems to have powers of magic, wrote that he knew all, I was glad."

"I think a year at sea would be my prescription for Master Jacky," said Holmes, rising from his chair. "Only one thing is still clouded, madame. We can quite understand your attacks upon Master Jacky. There is a limit to a mother's patience. But how did you dare to leave the child these last two days?"

"I had told Mrs. Mason. She knew."

"Exactly. So I imagined."

Ferguson was standing by the bed, choking, his hands outstretched and quivering.

"This, I fancy, is the time for our exit, Watson," said Holmes in a whisper. "If you will take one elbow of the too faithful Dolores, I will take the other. There, now," he added, as he closed the door behind him. "I think we may leave them to settle the rest among themselves."

I HAVE only one further note of this case. It is the letter which Holmes wrote in final answer to that with which the narrative begins. It ran thus:—

Baker Street,
Nov. 21st.

Re Vampires.

Sir,

Referring to your letter of the 19th, I beg to state that I have looked into the inquiry of your client, Mr. Robert Ferguson, of Ferguson and Muirhead, tea brokers, of Mincing Lane, and that the matter has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. With thanks for your recommendation,

I am, Sir,
Faithfully yours,
SHERLOCK HOLMES.

MY ESCAPE FROM THE BOERS

Now Told in Full for the First Time

by

THE RT. HON.
WINSTON CHURCHILL

PART II.

Last month Mr. Winston Churchill brought his narrative up to the time when, after many exciting moments and narrow escapes, he at last, through the kindness of the British manager of the Transvaal Collieries and his assistants, found himself for the time being safely concealed in a coal-mine. The concluding words of the first instalment were:—

"My four friends trooped off with their lanterns, and I was left alone. Viewed from the velvety darkness of the pit, life seemed bathed in rosy light. After the perplexity and even despair through which I had passed I counted upon freedom as certain. Instead of a humiliating recapture and long months of monotonous imprisonment, probably in the common jail, I saw myself once more rejoining the Army with a real exploit to my credit, and in that full enjoyment of freedom and keen pursuit of adventure dear to the heart of youth. In this comfortable mood, and speeded by intense fatigue, I soon slept the sleep of the just—and of the triumphant."

I DO not know how many hours I slept, but the following afternoon must have been far advanced when I found myself thoroughly awake. I put out my hand for the candle, but could feel it nowhere. I did not know what pitfalls these mining galleries might contain, so I thought it better to lie quiet on my mattress and await developments. Several hours passed before the faint gleam of a lantern showed that someone was coming. It proved to be Mr. Howard himself, armed with a chicken and other good things. He also brought several books. He asked me why I had not lighted my candle. I said I could not find it.

"Didn't you put it under the mattress?" he asked.

"No."

"Then the rats must have got it."

He told me there were swarms of rats in the mine, that some years ago he had introduced a particular kind of white rat, which was an excellent scavenger, and that these had multiplied and thriven exceedingly. He told me he had been to the house of an English doctor twenty miles away to get the chicken. He was worried at the attitude of the two Dutch servants, who were very inquisitive about the depredations upon the leg of mutton for which I had been responsible. If he could not get another chicken cooked for the next day, he would have to take double helpings on his own plate and slip the surplus into a parcel for me while the servant was out of the room. He said that inquiries were being made for me all over the district by the Boers, and that the Pretoria Government was making a tremendous fuss about my escape. The fact that there were a number of English remaining in the Middelburg mining region indicated it as a likely place for me to have turned to, and all

persons of English origin were more or less suspect.

I again expressed my willingness to go on alone with a Kaffir guide and a pony, but this he utterly refused to entertain. It would take a lot of planning, he said, to get me out of the country, and I might have to stay in the mine for quite a long time.

"Here," he said, "you are absolutely safe. 'Mac'" (by which he meant one of the Scottish miners) "knows all the disused workings and places that no one else would dream of. There is one place here where the water actually touches the roof for a foot or two. If they searched the mine, Mac would dive under that with you into the workings cut off beyond the water. No one would ever think of looking there. We have frightened the Kaffirs with tales of ghosts, and, anyhow, we are watching their movements continually."

He stayed with me while I dined, and then departed, leaving me, among other things, half-a-dozen candles, which, duly warned, I tucked under my pillow and mattress.

I slept again for a long time, and woke suddenly with a feeling of movement about me. Something seemed to be pulling at my pillow. I put out my hand quickly. There was a perfect scurry. The rats were at the candles. I rescued the candles in time, and lighted one. Luckily for me, I have no horror of rats as such, and being reassured by their evident timidity, I was not particularly uneasy. All the same, the three days I passed in the mine were not among the most pleasant which my memory re-illumines. The patter of little feet and a

Mr. Howard said that inquiries were being made for me all over the district by the Boers.

perceptible sense of stir and scurry was continuous. Once I was waked up from a doze by one actually galloping across me. On the candle being lighted these beings became invisible.

The next day—if you can call it day—arrived in due course. This was the 14th December, and the third day since I had escaped from the States Model Schools. It was relieved by a visit from the two Scottish miners, with whom I had a long confabulation. I then learned, to my surprise, that the mine was only about two hundred feet deep.

There were parts of it, said Mac, where one could see the daylight up a disused shaft. Would I like to take a turn around the old workings and have a glimmer? We passed an hour or two wandering round and up and down these subterranean galleries, and spent a quarter of an hour near the bottom of the shaft, where, grey and faint, the light of the sun and of the upper world was discerned. On this promenade I saw numbers of rats. They seemed rather nice little beasts, quite white, with dark eyes which I was assured in the daylight were a bright pink. Three years afterwards a British officer on duty in the district wrote to me that he had heard my statement at a lecture about the white rats and their pink eyes, and thought it was the limit of mendacity. He had taken the trouble to visit the mine and see for himself, and he proceeded to apologize for having doubted my truthfulness.

ON the 15th Mr. Howard announced that the hue and cry seemed to be dying away. No trace of the fugitive had been discovered throughout the mining district. The talk among the Boer officials was now that I must be hiding at the house of some British sympathizer in Pretoria. They did not believe that it was possible I could have got out of the town. In these circumstances he thought that I might come up and have a walk on the veldt that night, and that if all was quiet the next morning I might shift my quarters to the back room of the office. On the one hand he seemed reassured, and on the other increasingly excited by the adventure. Accordingly, I had a fine stroll in the glorious fresh air and moonlight, and thereafter, anticipating slightly our programme, I took up my quarters behind packing-cases in the inner room of the office. Here I remained for three more days, walking each night on the endless plain with Mr. Howard or his assistant.

On the 16th, the fourth day of escape, Mr. Howard informed me he had made a plan to get me out of the country. The mine was connected with the railway by a branch line. In the neighbourhood of the mine there lived a Dutchman, Burgener by name, who was sending a consignment of wool to Delagoa Bay on the 19th. This gentleman was well disposed to the British. He had been approached by Mr. Howard, had been made a party to our secret, and was willing to assist. Mr. Burgener's wool was packed in great bales and would fill two or three large trucks. These trucks were to be loaded at the mine's siding. The bales could be so packed as to leave a small place in the centre of the truck in which I could be concealed. A tarpaulin would be fastened over each truck after it had been loaded, and it was very unlikely indeed that, if the fastenings were found intact, it would be removed at the frontier. Did I agree to take this chance?

I was more worried about this than almost anything that had happened to me so far in my adventure. When by extraordinary chance one has gained some great advantage or prize and actually had it in one's possession and had been enjoying it for several days, the idea of losing it becomes almost insupportable. I had really come to count upon freedom as a certainty, and the idea of having to put myself in a position in which I should be perfectly helpless, without a move of any kind, absolutely at the caprice of a searching party at the frontier, was profoundly harassing. Rather than face this ordeal I would much have preferred to start off on the veldt with a pony and a guide, and far from the haunts of man to make my way march by march beyond the wide territories of the Boer Republic. However, in the end I accepted the proposal of my generous rescuer, and arrangements were made accordingly.

The afternoon of the 18th dragged slowly away. I remember that I spent the greater part of it reading Stevenson's "Kidnapped." Those thrilling pages which describe the escape of David Balfour and Alan Breck in the glens awakened sensations with which I was only too familiar. To be a fugitive, to be a hunted man, to be "wanted," is a mental experience by itself. The risks of the battlefield, the hazards of the bullet or the shell, are one thing. Having the police after you is another. The need for concealment and deception breeds an actual sense of guilt very undermining to morale. Feeling that at any moment the officers of the law may present themselves, or any stranger may ask the questions, "Who are you?" "Where do you come from?" "Where are you going?"—to which questions no satisfactory answer could be given—gnawed the structure of self-confidence. I dreaded in every fibre the ordeal which

After an interval Mr. Howard's pale, sombre face appeared, suffused by a broad grin.

awaited me at Komati Poort, and which I must impotently and passively endure if I was to make good my escape from the enemy.

In this mood I was startled by the sound of rifle-shots close at hand, one after another at irregular intervals. A dozen sinister hypotheses flashed through my mind. The Boers had come! Howard and his handful of Englishmen were in open rebellion in the heart of the enemy's country! I had been strictly enjoined upon no account to leave my hiding-place behind the packing-cases, in any circumstances whatever, and I accordingly remained there in great anxiety. Presently it became clear that the worst had not happened. The sounds of voices and presently of laughter came from the office. Evidently a conversation amicable, sociable in its character was in progress. I resumed my companionship with Alan Breck. At last the voices died away, and then after an interval my door was opened and Mr. Howard's pale, sombre face appeared, suffused by a broad grin. He re-locked the door behind him and walked delicately towards me, evidently in great glee.

"The Field Cornet has been here," he said. "No, he was not looking for you. He says they caught you at Waterval Boven yesterday. But I didn't want him messing about, so I challenged him to a rifle match at bottles. He won two pounds off me and has gone away delighted.

" It is all fixed up for to-night," he added.

" What do I do ? " I asked.

" Nothing. You simply follow me when I come for you."

AT two o'clock on the morning of the 19th I awaited, fully dressed, the signal. The door opened. My host appeared. He beckoned. Not a word was spoken on either side. He led the way through the front office to the siding where three large bogie trucks stood. Three figures, evidently Dewsnap and the miners, were strolling about in different directions in the moonlight. A gang of Kaffirs were busy lifting an enormous bale, into the rearmost truck. Howard strolled along to the first truck and walked across the line past the end of it. As he did so he pointed with his right hand. I nipped on to the buffers and saw before me a hole between the wool bales and the end of the truck just wide enough to squeeze into. From this there led a narrow tunnel formed of wool bales into the centre of the truck. Here was a space wide enough to lie in, high enough to sit up in. In this I took up my abode.

Three or four hours later, when gleams of daylight had reached me through the interstices of my shelter and through chinks in the boards of the flooring of the truck, the noise of an approaching engine was heard. Then came the bumping and banging of coupling up. And again, after a further pause, we started rumbling off on our journey into the unknown.

I now took stock of my new abode and of the resources in munitions and supplies with which it was furnished. First there was a revolver. This was a moral support, though it was not easy to see in what way it could helpfully be applied to any problem I was likely to have to solve. Secondly, there were two roast chickens, some slices of meat, a loaf of bread, a melon, and three bottles of cold tea. The journey to the sea was not expected to take more than sixteen hours, but no one could tell what delay might occur to ordinary commercial traffic in time of war.

There was plenty of light now in the recess in which I was confined. There were many crevices in the boards composing the sides and floor of the truck, and through these the light found its way between the wool bales. Working along the tunnel to the end of the truck, I found a chink which must have been nearly an eighth of an inch in width, and through which it was possible to gain a partial view of the outer world. To check the progress of the journey I had learned by heart beforehand the names of all the stations on the route. I can remember many of them to-day: Witbank, Middelburg, Bergendal, Belfast, Dalmanutha, Machadodorp, Waterval Boven, Waterval Onder, Elands, Nooidgedacht, and so on to Komati Poort. We had by now reached the first of these. At this point the branch line from the mine joined the railway. Here, after two or three hours' delay and shunting, we were evidently coupled up to a regular train, and soon started off at a superior and very satisfactory pace. All day long we travelled eastward through the Transvaal, and when darkness fell we were laid up for the night at a station which, according to my reckoning, was Waterval Boven. We had accomplished nearly half of our journey. But how long should we wait on this siding ? It might be for days ; it would certainly be until the next morning. During all the dragging hours of the day I had lain on the floor of the truck occupying my mind as best I could, painting bright pictures of the pleasures of freedom, of the excitement of rejoining the Army, of the triumph of a successful escape—but haunted also perpetually by anxieties about the search at the frontier, an ordeal inevitable and constantly approaching. Now another apprehension laid hold upon me. I wanted to go to sleep. Indeed, I did not think I could possibly keep awake. But if I slept I might snore ! And if I snored while the train was at rest in the silent siding I might be heard. And if I were heard ! I decided in principle that it was only prudent to abstain from sleep, and shortly afterwards fell into a blissful slumber from which I was awakened the next morning by the banging and jerking of the train as the engine was again coupled to it.

Between Waterval Boven and Waterval Onder there is a very steep descent which the locomotive accomplishes by means of a rack and pinion. We ground our way down this at three or four miles an hour, and this feature made my reckoning certain that the next station was, in fact, Waterval Onder. All this day, too, we rattled through the enemy's country, and late in the afternoon we reached the dreaded Komati Poort. Peeping through my chink, I could see this was a considerable place, with numerous tracks of rails and several trains standing on them. Numbers of people were moving about. There were many voices and much shouting and whistling. After a preliminary inspection of the scene I retreated, as the train pulled up, into the very centre of my fastness, and covering myself up with a piece of sacking lay flat on the floor of the truck and awaited developments with a beating heart.

Three or four hours passed, and I did

I nipped on to the buffers and saw before me a hole between the wool bales and the end of the truck just wide enough to squeeze into.

not know whether we had been searched or not. Several times people had passed up and down the train talking in Dutch. But the tarpaulins had not been removed, and no special examination seemed to have been made of the truck. Meanwhile darkness had come on, and I had to resign myself to an indefinite continuance of my uncertainties. It was tantalizing to be held so long in jeopardy after all these hundreds of miles had been accomplished, and I was now within a few hundred yards of the frontier. Again I wondered about the dangers of snoring. But in the end I slept without mishap.

We were still stationary when I awoke. Perhaps they were searching the train so thoroughly that there was consequently a great delay! Alternatively, perhaps we were forgotten on the siding and would be left there for days or weeks. I was greatly tempted to peer out, but I resisted. At last, at eleven o'clock, we were coupled up, and almost immediately started. If I had been right in thinking that the station in which we had passed the night was Komati Poort, I was already in Portuguese territory. But perhaps I had made a mistake. Perhaps I had miscounted. Perhaps there was still another station before the frontier. Perhaps the search still impended. But all these doubts were dispelled when the train arrived at the next station. I peered through my chink and saw the uniform caps of the Portuguese officials on the platform and the name Resana Garcia painted on a board. I restrained all expression of my joy until we moved on again. Then, as we rumbled and banged along, I pushed my head out of the tarpaulin and sang and shouted and crowed at the top of my voice. Indeed, I was so carried away by thankfulness and delight that I fired my revolver two or three times in the air as a *feu de joie*. None of these follies led to any evil results.

IT was late in the afternoon when we reached Lourenço Marques. My train ran into a goods yard, and a crowd of Kaffirs advanced to unload it. I thought the moment had now come for me to quit my hiding-place, in which I had passed nearly three anxious and uncomfortable days. I had already thrown out every vestige of food and had removed all traces of my occupation. I now slipped out at the end of the truck between the couplings, and mingling unnoticed with the Kaffirs and loafers in the yard—which my slovenly and unkempt appearance well fitted me to do—I strolled my way towards the gates and found myself in the streets of Lourenço Marques.

Burgener was waiting outside the gates. We exchanged glances. He turned and walked off into the town, and I followed twenty yards behind. We walked through several streets and turned a number of corners. Presently he stopped and stood for a moment gazing up at the roof of the opposite house. I looked in the same direction, and there—blest vision!—I saw floating the gay colours of the Union Jack. It was the British Consulate.

The secretary of the British Consul evidently did not expect my arrival.

"Be off," he said. "The Consul cannot see you to-day. Come to his office at nine to-morrow, if you want anything."

At this I became so angry, and repeated so loudly that I insisted on seeing the Consul personally at once, that that gentleman himself looked out of the window and finally came down to the door and asked me my name. From that moment every resource of hospitality and welcome was at my disposal. A hot bath, clean clothing, an excellent dinner, means of telegraphing—all I could want.

I devoured the file of newspapers which was placed before me. Great events had taken place since I had climbed the wall of the States Model Schools. The Black Week of the Boer War had descended on the British Army. General Gatacre at Stormberg, Lord Methuen at Magersfontein, and Sir Redvers Buller at Colenso had all suffered staggering defeats, and casualties on a scale unknown to England since the Crimean War. All this made me eager to rejoin the Army, and the Consul himself was no less anxious to get me out of Lourenço Marques, which was full of Boers and Boer sympathizers. Happily the weekly steamer was leaving for Durban that very evening; in fact, it might almost be said it ran in connection with my train. On this steamer I decided to embark.

The news of my arrival had spread like wildfire through the town, and while we were at dinner the Consul was at first disturbed to see a group of strange figures in the garden. These, however, turned out to be Englishmen fully armed who had hurried up to the Consulate determined to resist any attempt at my recapture. Under the escort of these patriotic gentlemen I marched safely through the streets to the quay, and at about ten o'clock was on salt water in the steamship *Induna*.

SUCH is my tale. Youth seeks adventure. Journalism requires advertisement. Certainly I had found both. At one bound I became for the time quite famous. While the British nation was smarting under a series of military defeats such as are so often

necessary to evoke the exercise of its strength, the news of my escape from the Boers was received with enormous and no doubt disproportionate satisfaction. My messages calling for a quarter of a million men instead of the fifty thousand who had hitherto been sent; my audacious question: "What are the gentlemen of England doing? Are they all foxhunting?" were the subject of leading articles in every paper. Columns of undeserved eulogy extolled my enterprise, daring, and resource. I reached Durban to find myself a popular hero. I was received as if I had won a great victory. The harbour was decorated with flags. Bands and crowds thronged the quays. The admiral, the general, the mayor pressed on board to grasp my hand. I was nearly torn to pieces by enthusiastic kindness. Whirled along on the shoulders of the crowd, I was carried to the steps of the Town Hall, where nothing would content them but a speech, which after a becoming reluctance I was induced to deliver. Sheaves of telegrams from all parts of the world poured in upon me, and I started that night for the Army in a blaze of triumph.

I slipped out of the truck and found myself in the streets of Lourenço Marques.

Here, too, I was received with the greatest goodwill. I took up my quarters in the very platelayer's hut within one hundred yards of which I had a little more than a month before been taken prisoner, and there with the rude plenty of the Natal campaign

celebrated by a dinner to many friends my good fortune and Christmas Eve.

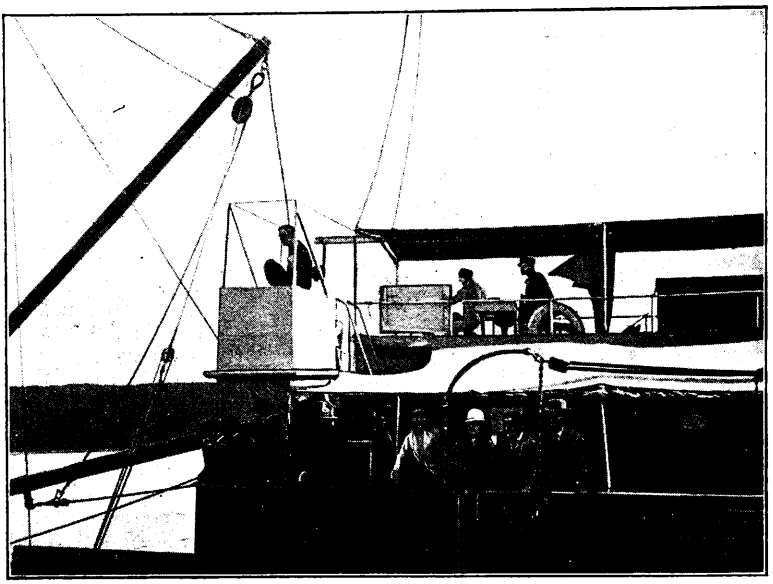
After Sir Redvers Buller, the Commander-in-Chief, had examined me at length upon the conditions prevailing in the Transvaal, and after I had given him whatever information I had been able to collect from the somewhat scanty viewpoint of my chink between the boards of the railway truck, he said to me :—

"You have done very well. Is there anything we can do for you ? "

I replied at once that I should like a commission in one of the irregular corps which were being improvised on all sides. The General, whom, of course, I had known off and on during the four years I had served in the Army, appeared somewhat disconcerted at this, and after a considerable pause inquired :—

"What about poor old Borthwick ? "

meaning thereby Sir Algernon Borthwick, afterwards Lord Glenesk, proprietor of the *Morning Post* newspaper. I replied that I was under a definite contract with him as war correspondent and could not possibly relinquish this engagement. The situation therefore raised considerable issues. In the various little wars of the previous few years it had been customary for military officers on leave to act as war correspondents, and even for officers actually serving to undertake this double duty. This had been considered to be a great abuse, and no doubt it was open to many objections.



From] Mr. Winston Churchill's arrival at Durban. *[Photos.*

No one had been more criticized in this connection than myself. I had served both on the Indian frontier and up the Nile as a soldier, and had also contributed openly and continually to the newspapers. After the Nile Expedition the War

From a] Addressing the enthusiastic crowds at Durban. *[Photo.*

Office had definitely and finally decided that no soldier could be a correspondent and no correspondent could be a soldier. Here then was the new rule in all its inviolate sanctity, and to make an exception to it on my account above all others was a very hard proposition. Sir Redvers Buller, long Adjutant-General at the War Office, a man of the world, a man of affairs, a representative of the strictest military school, found it very awkward. He took two or three turns round the room, eyeing me in a droll manner. Then at last he said :—

"All right. You can have a commission in Bungo's* regiment. You will have to do as much as you can for both jobs. But," he added, "you will get no pay for ours."

To this irregular arrangement I made haste to agree.

* Colonel Byng, now Lord Byng of Vimy.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 126.

(The Second of the Series.)

SKIS and toboggans, ice and snow,
To Switzerland our athletes go.

1. 'Tis true, no king of Switzerland was this,
   And yet the sight he saw was rather Swiss.
2. Devil or boy—who knows which it may be ?
   A veritable fiend of mischief he.
3. He lacks whereon to sleep who rose to fame
   By safe deliverance from fiery flame.
4. "Rub lightly" was unheard of in those days ;
   "Strike hard and often," and perchance 'twould blaze.
5. 'Tis once upon a time ; in poets' rhyme
   The word was common once upon a time.
6. Anent the lady—here behold your cue :
   But be not this, for that will never do.

KING COLE.

Answers to Acrostic No. 126 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 11th.*

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. 125.

HERE may an evening well be spent
At time of joy and merriment.

1. Our ills with this the doctor heals.
2. This place the hidden foe conceals.
3. African river should be black.
4. A tail we get, a tail we lack.
5. Sixteen or twelve go to a pound.
6. In prophet's name a home is found.
7. A phrase ; one letter changed, unwise.
8. Of coffee think, and Arab skies.
9. Six letters, though they sound like two,
   Will surely be too much for you.

PAX.

1. P	h y s i	C
2. A	m b u s	H
3. N	i g e	R
4. T	a	I
5. O	u n c e	S
6. M	a h o m e	T
7. I	d i o	M
8. M	o c h	A
9. E	x e e s	S

NOTES.—Light 4. Tail. 5. Troy or Avoirdupois.

WELL LOST?

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

THE sailor's voice roused him at its second repetition, as the boat lifted to the pitch-black sky on the flank of a pitch-black wave.

"You'd better come and look after that lady o' yourn!"

It was many years since Mr. Drahan had been spoken to in so peremptory a voice—not, in fact, since Mr. Drahan had started in business for himself at the age of eighteen. And with the passage of time his interlocutors had grown ever more deferential; until Antony Drahan had almost forgotten what it was like not to be addressed as a multi-millionaire.

He checked himself from resentment, savoured an ironic sense of humour. This fellow didn't know who he was!—had no idea that he was Mr. Antony Drahan of the Transatlantic Trust! He left himself the joke—what was the good of revealing himself, anyway? His mind cogitated the little problem, came to its decision, in a flash—and from the fellow's manner his consciousness opened suddenly to the content of his words.

He stumbled awkwardly over the thwarts to where the sailor sat, tiller in one hand, mainsheet in the other. At the steersman's feet, in the well of the boat, a woman lay stretched and motionless. Drahan bent over her. Her shoulders were bare in the thin evening-gown that clung to her like a sopped rag, her long wet hair wrapped about it. In the dim, uncertain light of the careering mast-head lamp, she looked a drowned corpse, beyond help. He touched her.

"Ain't dead, is she?" queried the sailor.

"No."

He slithered down beside her, drew her to him, held her close in his arms, her death-like head heavy on his shoulder, striving to communicate to her a little of his own scant bodily warmth.

"Not your wife, I suppose?" the old sailor threw at him as the boat slid swiftly down into a black hollow where the wind was suddenly stilled.

"Yes," he replied, curtly.

They relapsed into silence. The sailor, crouching at the tiller as, rather by feel than by sight, he nursed the boat through the foaming, overtopping perils that surged momentarily out of the blackness, distracted his concentrated attention by no unnecessary words. Antony Drahan sat cramped and still, clutching that cold body tightly to him. Presently he felt a flutter of life in it. She sighed, passed almost insensibly out of coma into the drugged sleep of utter exhaustion. Drahan spoke, out of a vacancy of thought.

"Where are you making for?"

"Gawd knows! We're just running. Ain't nothing else to be done in this sea."

"No other lights?"

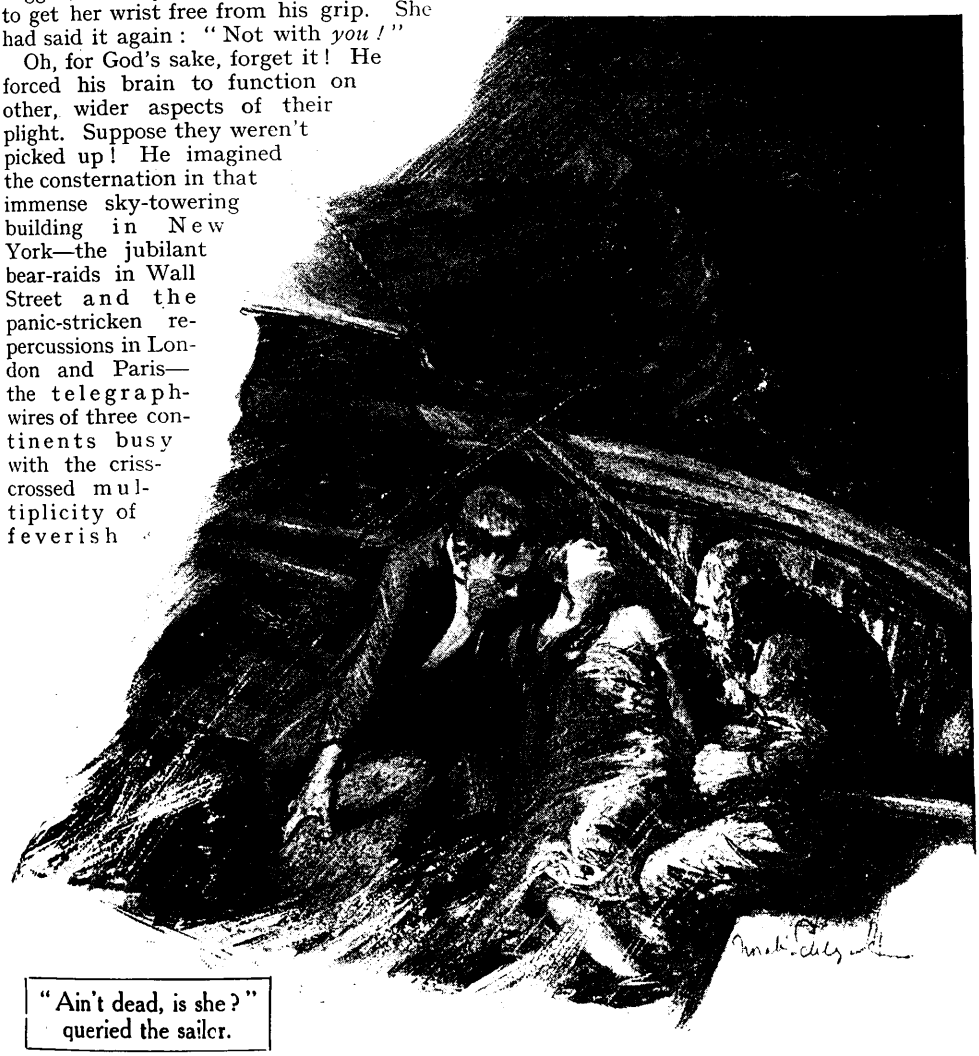
"No." The rugged old face, just seen in the faint illumination of the circling mast-head lamp, spoke with a gruff economy of energy. "Guess we're the only ones left."

The curt, callous-sounding statement pierced the numbness of his spirit with a little shock of horror. Good God! There must have been at least eight hundred people on the *Melanesian*. And now they two, *of all people*, were saved! He relinquished comprehension before the clumsy irony manifest in the scheme of things.

His brain began to work again, recapitulated the disaster, pieced the story together for himself. He felt again that sudden dull thud which jarred every fitting in the ship. He heard again that wild ringing of bells, the startling manifold shriek of shrill whistles, the trampling rush of crowding feet outside their cabin-de-luxe on the boat-deck. He recalled how he and Adela had stopped in their coldly bitter interchange of unforgivable words, the look of her strange

eyes that softened not in the sudden whiteness of her face. He had seized her wrist, dragged her towards the door, and she had resisted, coldly, stubbornly, head-high, the damned aristocrat still—the implacability of her scornful hatred of him had insulted him in this moment of life or death—her words rang in him still, never to be forgotten —"Not with *you!*" He had triumphed, by brute force, dragged her out to the deck among the swarm of people, now high-voiced in an unnerving clamour, now hushed in a dreadful silence. He remembered the breathlessly ejaculated answer of the hurrying officer as they jostled in the throng— "Derelict!—Ripped the bottom out of her!" The deck was already at an angle where they slid. And somehow or other he had got her into that boat, despite her dogged, foot-by-foot resistance, wrenching to get her wrist free from his grip. She had said it again: "Not with *you!*"

Oh, for God's sake, forget it! He forced his brain to function on other, wider aspects of their plight. Suppose they weren't picked up! He imagined the consternation in that immense sky-towering building in New York—the jubilant bear-raids in Wall Street and the panic-stricken repercussions in London and Paris—the telegraph-wires of three continents busy with the criss-crossed multiplicity of feverish readjustments that must ensue. Who would carry on in his place? Hardwick? He had never dared to get off the wireless with Hardwick yet. He was all right as second-in-command, but he wasn't big enough for supreme control. Hardwick was all right on oil, but he was no good when it came to steel—and he was a perfect fool at shipping. And Hennessey would be out for blood, too—wrecking them first (he could imagine Hennessey's exultant devastating flood of selling-orders) and picking up the pieces afterwards. Could Hardwick stand up against Hennessey? He lost himself in distant visions of brain-against-brain contests fought out by stampeded sheep-like markets, forgot the boat that slithered foam-squattering under her counter down the flank of one black wave to toss up high upon the next.



"Ain't dead, is she?" queried the sailor.

His mind reverted once more to that last hour on the ship, reconstructed that drama whose full implications had been blurred by the thought-stopping rush of events. He was in the sitting-room of his suite-de-luxe—a batch of radiograms had been handed to him as he got up from dinner. Janson, the perfect secretary, unobtrusively efficient, had slit them open as was his wont, passed him those imperative of his personal attention, risen in readiness to accompany him for the hour or two of swiftly-achieved work that would send the messenger-boys scampering to and from the wireless office. Adela—she had never looked more beautiful, her fine eyes calm upon him—was going to dance; she had promised the Mainwarings. That was antecedent; he was in the spacious sitting-room of his suite-de-luxe, the ship heaving and subsiding so slowly and evenly that its motion had become almost imperceptible. Sitting back in his chair, cigar in mouth, his eyes fixed on the Adams stucco-work of the ceiling, he had already dictated half-a-dozen summary decisions.

And then Janson had said, in his quiet, clear voice—curious how he had no premonition that he was unlocking disaster!—"There's that matter of Eberstein in Hamburg, sir—— ?"

Confound it, so there was. He had postponed the answer to Eberstein for consideration. What had he done with that radiogram? He remembered—he had crumpled it into the jacket-pocket of the lounge-suit he had been wearing that afternoon. He'd better have another look at it; it was an artfully-phrased question. The jacket was in his cabin, where he had changed for dinner. "All right, Janson, get on typing those others—I'll fetch it," he had said. And he also had gone blindly on the path of fate.

The jacket was not in his cabin—where the devil?—he remembered—he had gone through into Adela's cabin, stripped it off while he spoke to her. It ought to be there now—her maid was still eating with the second-class, had not cleared up yet. He went through the communicating door. Yes, there was the jacket. Before he reached it, the ship lurched and rolled on an unusually heavy wave. Adela's jewel-case—how careless to leave it out! But the suite was locked, of course—went slithering across the dressing-table. He was too late to save it. It crashed upon the floor, burst open in an eruption of glittering stones. He went down on hands and knees to pick them up. Among them was a small folded piece of paper. He opened it mechanically. It was a cablegram: "*Drahan (A) Melanesian Honolulu Thinking of you keep a stiff lip love George.*"

He had stared at it, sitting upon the floor for a full minute while credibility asserted itself. "*George?*" George Addiscombe! His mind leaped to the identification. *George Addiscombe!*—then—then—he looked at the damning words, felt suddenly sick and ill. But how had that cablegram come without his seeing it? His eye fell on the bracketed "A" after his name—a pre-arranged code, then?—and Janson—she must have bribed Janson. *Bribed Janson!* For a moment the bottom fell out of the universe.

He managed somehow to get up, to steady himself to the arm-chair, where he thudded down, gasping, for an attempt at clear thought. Adela!—Adela and George Addiscombe! She—she wasn't the cold statue, then, that—that these three years long he had accepted her to be. The fellow had dared to cable to her—secretly. "*Love—George.*" The worthless, dandified squanderer! He had dared to tell her to keep a stiff lip, in implied difficult endurance of—of him, Antony Drahan, to whom she owed everything! A savage, bitter anger surged up in him. They'd play with him, would they?—make a mock of him!—corrupt his servants!—deceive *him!*—him who with a word could make or break a thousand George Addiscombes!—him who had forced his triumphant path through the world by sheer brutal will-power!

AND Adela!—he couldn't believe it of her—he didn't know whether he loved her, but he had respected her, regarded her almost with awe—the rarest, most dearly-bought of all his acquisitions. She had seemed of a stuff too fine for common domestic intercourse—he had assumed that; let her live her own remote dignified inner life, content so that she symbolized to all men the regality of his success. He had never flattered himself that she loved him—she had never pretended to—but she owed it to him to play fair with him, to be grateful to him—yes, by God! to be grateful to him. Everything that money could buy had been hers—he had grudged nothing, gloried in a reckless outpouring at her feet—houses, jewels, furs, cars—her damned family would have starved had it not been for him. Even this trip round the world, taking him from his job, was the costly gratification of a whim of hers.

He had risen unsteadily to his feet. Well, this was the end! He'd pluck that mask off, anyway, once and for all—there'd be no more artistically-acted frigid lies between her and him—all his life he had insisted on a straight deal, straight as he had dealt himself—been merciless to the clever ones.

He had gone into the sitting-room.

"Janson, ask Mrs. Drahan to be good enough to come to me here."

"Yes, sir." Janson had gone, unsuspectingly.

He had waited, a cold cigar between his teeth, staring at the graph-chart (freights and expenses) of one of his shipping-lines upon the wall, realizing after a minute or two that it had no meaning for him.

And then she had appeared, superb, queenly in her evening-gown, Janson deferential behind her.

"You want me, Antony?" He could hear her calmly self-confident voice now.

He had found it difficult to speak, had only been able to look straight into those large, innocently-questioning eyes—to hand her that cablegram.

She had taken it, glanced at it, crushed it in her hand, turned and looked at him. There had been a silence.

He broke it, in a voice that sounded not his own.

"Janson, you're sacked! From this moment!"

"Sir?" He remembered how Janson's face had suddenly blanched. (And half an hour later the man was dead!—ironic.)

She had turned to him in expostulating protest.

"Antony!"

"I don't permit my servants to be bribed—even by my wife!" His tone had cut like a whip-lash.

She had flushed up in sudden indignation.

"I did not bribe Mr. Janson!"

He had turned to the trembling secretary.

"Did you suppress that cablegram?"

"Yes, sir—but—but I did it because—because there's nothing in the world I wouldn't do for Mrs. Drahan!"

"That will do. Get out of here—and you get off at Singapore."

Janson had gone, and they stood confronting one another in silence.

"Well?" she had said.

"You don't deny it, then?" He had been near spluttering, had had to keep a tight hand on himself.

She had shrugged her bare shoulders, superbly disdainful of answer.

"You've got nothing to say for yourself?"

"It may as well come now—you can put me off also at Singapore." She had been insultingly cool, self-controlled.

"Not before I've told you what I think of you!" he had burst out, his voice thick in his throat. And he had told her—had recapitulated all he had done for her, her family saved from ruin, the things he had lavished on her, the Golconda of precious things she had accepted from him—with what return?—the very money this fantastic trip was losing him.

She had held up a deprecating, weary hand.

"I know. You bought and paid for me—for three years you have implied it at every moment. There is no need to tell me."

"I made a bad bargain." He was master of himself again, his tone coldly bitter.

She had looked at him from her dignity, her eyes sombre in their steadiness.

"Yes. Perhaps."

The impudence of it! He had felt himself go white.

"You realize what you've thrown away, don't you?"

She had nodded, the slightest undulation of her superb head.

"Yes. Five million dollars last year, wasn't it? I ought to know. For three years I have heard nothing else—I have heard money, money, money, nothing but money, until——" she spoke with a measured precision that sent every word at him to full effect—"until my soul has ached—ached to escape from it——"

"To George Addiscombe?" He had smiled over tight teeth, in icy sarcasm.

She had shrugged her shoulders.

"At least, life to him is more than a sordid market-place."

It was the final outrage. He had gripped himself, framing already the phrase that should annihilate, from his side also, the last possibility of reconciliation—and then had come the shock, the sudden pandemonium of the shrieking whistles, the nightmare at the boats, that tense rebellious struggle where she tried to wrench away her wrist—"Not with *you!*"

HE shivered in the boat that went, spray-drenched, wallowing, dizzily-up, sickeningly-down, in the racing seas that whelmed with the black night. He felt faint and hungry—if only he could sleep—as *she* was sleeping! But he could not—that infernal double drama, one only ceasing to give place to the other, his private disaster to those screaming hundreds, reiterated itself in him with a vividness that was maddening, over and over again. He remembered suddenly that there were some cigarettes in his case. They might, with luck, be dry. The case was in his dinner-jacket, about the woman slumbering shiveringly close against him. He felt for it, with precaution.

She stirred, murmured out of a dream: "George—George!"

He set his teeth, opened the cigarette-case, tossed one, with his spirit-lighter, to the gruffly grateful steersman, lit his own, puffed staring at the yellow mast-light gyrating against the black sky. And then—imperceptibly—he was in his New

York office, feverishly, fiercely exultant as he took measure after measure to deal with Hennessey—he was—he was in oblivion—he was crumpled in the mindless dreamless sleep that is Nature's mercy.

JUST within that rim of shade where the coconut-palms ceased upon the dazzling white beach, a powerfully-built man, clad only in the remnants of tattered and sea-stained black trousers, sat watching a spitted fish broil over a crackling fire of husks. By the side of him lay the primitive net with which he had caught it, a torn-open shirt (his name yet visible on the collar-band) roughly fastened to two short pieces of driftwood. Just beyond, a spring of clear water went in a rivulet down to the scarcely-ruffled placidity of the lagoon. Half a mile out, in long, semicircular simultaneity of appearance, the spray shot up, white and glittering, from the enclosing reef ; its deep-toned boom a sound so continuous as to lapse out of notice. Nearer at hand, some hundreds of yards along the beach, the skeletal wreckage of a boat lay half-submerged, half upon the sand, lapped by tiny waves that failed to break.

The fish was cooked. The man removed it to a palm-leaf, threw a handful of husks upon the fire to keep it in existence, called :

" Adela ! "

A woman appeared from among the close-set trunks of the palm-grove, her arms full with dried fronds and fibrous husks. For her only garment, a length of torn, stained silk—in which Captain Molyneux of the Rue Royale would have failed to recognize one of his most exquisite creations—was wrapped around her. Her brown hair cascaded loose about her shoulders. Her skin was reddened by the sun, white only on the undersides of her arms. Yet she was beautiful—beautiful as a nymph emerging from a sacred grove. The adult dignity of civilized attire had fallen from her, she was freshly girlish in this reversion to the primitive. She deposited her load, sat down.

Antony Drahan divided the fish into two equal portions with an exiguous gold pocket-knife, reached for a jaggedly-burst-open canister of ship's biscuits close at hand.

" These biscuits won't last for more than a few days longer. We must try and find some bread-fruit. It ought to grow on this island. Looks like a melon. I remember reading about it once. You cook it between hot stones." He spoke, not easily conversational, but through a cold constraint, his sentences harshly detached from one another, avoiding a direct glance at her.

She parted the loose hair from her brows to look meditatively out to sea.

" Yes." Her tone also was devoid of intimacy. " I was thinking about that this morning. I found a tree that looked like it. I meant to ask you. I was thinking of a lot of things, in case——" She broke off. " Antony, do you think there's really any chance of being picked up ? Are we near the usual track of ships ? "

He shrugged his shoulders.

" I don't know. Nothing has passed these three days. We were about sixty hours in that boat, running before the wind."

She made no further remark and they ate in silence. His mind reverted to a many-times worried-over calculation—what were they doing ?—seven or eight knots ?—or perhaps more ?—or less ?—he had no idea. It had blown half a gale, but they had driven saggingly in that sea—say, seven—sixty hours—four hundred miles——

From these calculations, unsatisfying in their lack of stable basis, he found himself looking at a picture of themselves in the boat—the old, grey-whiskered sailor steering, hour after hour at his post with only those brief intermissions in the broiling heat of the two ensuing days when he had slept and the passenger had, after careful instruction, been entrusted with nursing the boat through the racing ever-overtaking surges—Adela white and silent, her face expressionless as she stared at the threatening sea, sitting against a thwart—himself, when they could abstain no longer for very faintness, doling out the water, the dry biscuit that was their ration. They had been spared the worst of sufferings. The boat had been provisioned upon the davits, contained a keg of water, two canisters of biscuits (of which this upon the beach was the second). He remembered his clumsy efforts to open the tin with the hatchet (for cutting the falls ?) stowed away in the locker. . . . And then that dawn, pale above the dark water, with the palm-trees, seen one moment, lost the next, tiny against the sky. They had been driving almost straight towards them, had scarcely needed to alter their course. . . .

He found himself looking at the terror of the reef as they approached it, the great white walls shooting up in ceaseless boom and crash, the hiss of their descent hardly completed before the next breaker rolled in. . . . And then that sudden relief in their anxious tension as they coasted round looking for an entrance—the narrow gap of dark swirling water between the leaping sheets of surf—their rush towards it, borne formidably forward on the breast of a great lifting roller—the half-heard shout of the old sailor as he lost steerage-power in its velocity—the thunderous stunning deluge that crashed down upon them, beating them

under—that desperate swim, dragging a leaden burden, through an agony of imagined sharks, to the gleaming beach that seemed almost to recede—his fall, face forward, gasping, on the hot sand where he had lain, impotent, for long minutes before he could sit up and look for the old sailor—in vain.

He saw himself dragging Adela to the shade of the palm-trees, saw her at long last revive, her eyes open at him in a long strange stare, her lips move for her first words.

"You've—saved me—again ?"

"Thank God !" His ejaculation had been automatic, his mind not yet functioning to full embracement of antecedent complications of existence.

"*I don't know.*" And, with her slowly-uttered words, the mists had rolled back from memory—from that last five minutes in their gilded state-room—that coldly-bitter conflict arrested at its climax, suspended, unresolved——

He looked round now to her where she sat, shoulder-draped with her hair, found her eyes full on him.

"You're thinking of—Hennessey ?" she asked.

Hostility leaped up in him, sensitively suspicious of a taunt. He did not answer, lest he should break the tacit and precarious truce between them. In these three days he had not once mentioned business, nor indeed any of the thoughts that gnawed at him behind his constrained reserve ; his words to her, as brief and toneless as might be, were concerned only with the actualities of the moment. Her reference to Hennessey, evocative of one aspect of the ravaging preoccupations he concealed within himself—"mere sordid money !" he gibed, in savagely derisive recollection, "at which her soul ached !"—was a touch on the yet raw wound she had contemptuously inflicted. If he had brooded, he had reason enough. Heaven knew what was happening beyond that narrow sea-horizon which held him prisoner—a life-work, a whole empire of power, crumbling to ruin ! And one word from him, could he have transmitted it, would have saved it ! She went on :—

"You were talking in your sleep last night. I heard you and crawled out of my shelter to see what it was. For a moment I thought you had met someone else upon the island. But you were sound asleep, gnashing your teeth, and calling out 'Hennessey !—Hennessey !'" She half-smiled. "It would have scared him, I think, if he had heard you." He softened ; it was perhaps not a taunt. "It's hard luck on you, Antony."

HE looked at her, clad in that shredded rag of clothing, her hands scratched and bleeding from the labours of a primitive squaw, saw her suddenly, by contrast, in that world which had been hers. He saw her quietly smiling, beautiful, exquisitely gowned, in that palatial home where her slightest want was ministered-to by a multitude of deferential servants ; saw her queening it in those thronged receptions where he thrilled with the pride of precious possession, noted the awed admiration of other men, the whispering of the women she outshone ; saw her as he had seen her, in London, Paris, and Romé, with ambassadors, princes, aristocrats of that mediæval-rooted Europe bowing over her hand as they did not bow to other women—to Hennessey's wife, for example—their eyes lighting up in instinctive recognition of one of themselves. That was her life ; as his was the high-speed, subtly shrewd, dynamically forceful, triumphant conquest of control over the mass-needs of mankind ; not mere plundering ; he organized, gave service where was none before ; which incidentally resulted in that ever-swelling flood of wealth that made her possible as an acquisition. That was her life, her appointed destiny—to grace civilization with her costly perfection of femininity ; would be her life with—with George Addiscombe or another man (he had no insight into the depths of her ; could not measure her potentialities of basic feeling) when—when they got out of this, if ever they did, parted in cold fulfilment of that truncated crisis on the ship.

"It's hard luck on us both," he said, curtly.

She did not immediately answer ; spoke, when she did, out of another plane of thought.

"You must let me cook next time. I must learn to do things."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"As you like."

There was another silence before she spoke again, in a sudden seriousness of apprehension.

"Antony—supposing we *never* get picked up ?"

The corners of his mouth went down in a grim smile.

"Humorous, isn't it ?—we two—of all people !—I sympathize with you."

She looked at him, said nothing. Somehow he felt a bit of a brute. He cogitated for a moment or two, wishing at the back of his mind that he had some tobacco, chewed a reed of grass to help his thought.

"Look here, Adela," he said, suddenly, "we've got to face things out—as you say, we may never get picked up. We can't go

on with that—that little discussion of ours left unfinished between us."

"No," she said, staring out to the sea.

"Well, listen to what I've been thinking. All that business—we won't go into the rights and wrongs of it now—is outside this isolated little world into which we've been pitched like Adam and Eve. It belongs to that other world where I am Antony Drahan of the Transatlantic Trust and you are——"

"Your odalisque." She spoke still staring out to the sea.

"I don't quite know what that means—but I'll take your word for it. Anyway, this is the proposition I want to make. While we're here we'll shut down on that little argument, just as it was shut down for us on that ship—forget it. We'll make the best job we can of things, together, until we're picked up. And then——"

"And then——?" She still looked away from him.

"Then we go back to where we left off." He paused for a glance at her, chewed at his stiff grass. "I want to tell you this, Adela. I never supposed you were in love with me—as a matter of fact, I hadn't much time to go in for sentiment myself, as you know—but I had no idea you loathed me to that extent. I'm sorry. I wouldn't keep a dog that was unwilling, let alone a wife. So you can make your mind easy about that. And I'll provide for you too—so, whatever man you go to, you need never talk of being bought and paid for again. I dare say, from one point of view, there's some compensation due to you. For what has happened to have occurred, I must have made you pretty miserable." He paused for a moment, evidently crushing back the potentialities of that topic. "Is it a deal?"

Her eyes came round to him, uncertain of him.

"You are bribing me again?"

"No." He laughed grimly. "I'm not in a position to bribe. For the first time in my life I'm in a place where if I wrote a cheque for a million dollars it isn't any use. I'm merely making an amicable proposition. While we're on this island, we forget that we were ever man and wife. When we're picked up, we go back to where we left off. Is it a deal?"

She nodded, with a grave smile, held out her hand to him.

"Until we're picked up——"

He sprang to his feet.

"Come along, then. Who knows?—a ship may pass at any minute. We've got to get a beacon ready for her—that's the first thing—something that'll make a smoke visible twenty miles off."

He snatched up the hatchet, for which he had dived perilously many times that morning, strode off into the palm-grove. She walked at his side, silent through the interlaced and deepening shadows. He conned over one or two commonplace conversational openings in an awkwardly felt incumbency of speech, left them unsaid.

It was she who spoke first.

"Adam," she said, smiling at him a little timidly—their new relationship unexplored between them—"we're like that, aren't we?—Adam and Eve—alone in a new beginning of the world."

He looked round to her, relaxed in their mutually-smiling glance.

"Sure," he agreed. "Adam and Eve"—he chuckled. "We might keep that up—it gives us a lead."

"Do you think they were a little frightened of each other at first?" she mused, the smile of fanciful thought still on the face half-seen between her long hair. "There was everything to learn about each other."

He was silent for a moment.

"I guess we're like that too," he said, suddenly. He stopped before a gale-wrecked palm, full length in an offering of its crest of sere fronds. "What about this stuff for our fire?"

THEY laboured through the afternoon, to and from the palm-grove and a little spur of the shore crowned by a bare outcrop of rock. The pile of dead palm-fronds, splintered wood, mosses, and dried grass rose imposingly. As they laboured, constraint dropped from them. They found themselves ever more frequently smiling at each other, talked with a direct and unembarrassed simplicity of speech unknown to them in that awkwardly incomplete intimacy when they called each other husband and wife in that New York house. He was surprised by her quick wit, by her unexpectedly sensible suggestions for the organization of their existence, as they came close together in their toil. He admired the unrepining pluckiness with which she accepted the situation—set it, privately, as a model for himself. He, too, would make the best of it, be cheerful—even if Hennessey was doing his diabolical damnedest. He pledged himself to it as he carried down armload after armload of fuel for that eventual fire which might, even yet, bring him face to face with Hennessey—in the nick of time; laughed at her as she dubbed herself squaw.

At last the pyre was finished, head-high. They stood regarding it.

"I wonder when we shall light it?" she said.

He shrugged his sun-red shoulders.

"Who knows?" he replied. "Perhaps to-morrow—perhaps not for months. But

"Whichever one of us sees a sail or a smudge of smoke on the horizon must run and kindle this."

we must be always ready." He turned to her with a smile. "Now, Eve, since you're the squaw, it's your job to see that the cooking-fire never goes out. I used the last spark in my lighter on it yesterday. And whichever one of us sees a sail or a smudge of smoke on the horizon must run and kindle this with a brand from it, not wasting a moment. That's the first law in this Garden of Eden."

She smiled back at him, parting the loose hair from her brow.

"Adam has spoken!" she said.

Together they went along the curving shore to the encampment where the smoke of their cooking-fire still went up like a blue thread. He stood, hatchet in hand, contemplating the primitive palm-frond shelter he had put up for her that first day.

"I guess I'll put up a better shanty for you than that," he remarked. "Something with a little more room to it."

Her eyes came round to him, large-orbed,

as though something had stopped inside her. He met her glance.

"I don't read more into the bargain than you meant," he said. "I'll knock up a hut for myself over there."

Her visible relief hurt him, but he enforced stoicism upon himself. It was an explicit part of the bargain. As man and wife they had divorced that night in the suite-de-luxe of that ship surging blindly forward to the sudden shock upon the derelict. And presently another ship would come. . . . "Oh, *damn* George Addiscombe!" he muttered to himself as she went off, smiling back at him over a shoulder glint, through the dark cascade of unbound hair, to fulfil her squaw-task of gathering fuel.

He watched her as she disappeared between the palm-trunks, and a sudden pang went through him, a sudden hypernaturally acute perception of her white-limbed reality. It was as though he saw her for the first time —the woman he had called wife. "And there," the thought shot through him, "*there*—where I could give her everything—she loathed me, loathed me with an aching soul!" Here——? But this was only a game of make-believe, terminated the moment their beacon-smoke rose into the sky. Or was there, fugitive behind those eyes of hers, a something else—a something new—something that could not peep out when he came home, his soul harshly-exultant with a conflict won over telephone and tape-machine? He ridiculed himself, summoned up, for antidote, an all-too-vivid vision of her frigidly hostile dignity as she stood crumpling that damning cablegram, heard again that searing "Not with *you!*" Nevertheless, as he went about his new job of building her a shanty, his thoughts had to be forced to remain on the exasperating problem of what Hennessey might be up to at that moment.

THEY sat, in a warm night of unimaginable stars, near the glow of their camp-fire, red in the sombre blueness opening to the shore. Their conversation had ceased, minutes back. Its last note of quiet amicability still persisted through the silence. Their thoughts had gone far away.

He was remembering that it was still daylight in New York. He saw the deep cañons filled with feverishly hurrying men, dwarfed to ant-dimensions by the sky-towering buildings they had created. He saw himself in his office—the view right across the Hudson from his lofty window, perceived, as he had been wont to perceive it, from his desk, in the momentary pause of thought before giving a sharply decisive answer into the telephone which would ring again, to be vocal with a new voice and a new problem, as soon as he had clicked it back into its rest. A nostalgia for it all clutched him. He craved for the will-subdued excitement of conflict with distant mercilessly-shrewd hostile brains, personally unknown to him as often as not, whose intentions, vacillations, false-moves, he deduced with a flash of intuition from a cryptic word in a cablegram, a sudden fluctuation in a market-price; craved for the intoxicating flash of his interest from quarter to quarter of the globe. What was happening to those Anatolian oil-concessions? That freight-war he had initiated against the other South American lines—had Hardwick compromised, frightened at responsibility now that the Chief was not there to direct the fight? Or had Blydenstein and the rest picked up their courage, gone out for Hardwick's blood? And Columbia Steel? As sure as fate, the newspaper-headlines were black with "*Bottom Still Out Of Columbias*"; the bears would be whooping, yelling, delirious in their destructive delight. If only he could get back for just a day! He'd bet all he owned that, in his wild-Irishman eagerness, Hennessey had over-sold the market! If he could only get back——! He worried at his not yet customary beard.

And she? She spoke out of her reverie.

"It scarcely seems real to me. I have to force myself to believe that it was really I who lived in that great house of ours with everything done for me, with nothing to do but to get up, put on a new Paris frock, loll back in a motor-car, talk inanities with a lot of other idle women. That gala-night at the Opera—do you remember?—it was only a month ago to-day, the night before we started."

He did remember, remembered how mysteriously beautiful she had looked, Cleopatra-like in a magnificence of pearls —George Addiscombe had been there too—he suppressed the thought.

"Poor Eve!" he said.

She smiled at him, unexpectedly; her face just seen in the blue night.

"Poor Adam!"

He did not answer.

"Supposing a ship came now——" she commenced again, musingly. "And we went back to it all——"

He grunted, sceptically, staring out over the dark sea where no ship's light twinkled. He thought of the pyre, undisturbed as they had built it, ready if the moment came.

"And then we should say good-bye——" she went on, following her thought.

"Yes. Then we say good-bye," he agreed, curtly, his voice toneless.

"But now—after this—we shall shake hands when we say good-bye, sha'n't we?"

Her eyes came round to him in the night. He forbore to look at them.

"Yes. I guess we shall shake hands," he admitted.

"All we've done!" she said, reminiscently. "I understand now why—over there, in that other world we've dropped out of—you did so much. You can't help it. It's born in you, you are bound to organize, to create. Here, what you have done—out of nothing—it is wonderful! We have lived—almost civilized—even to the needles you hammered out of the nails of the boat, and the thread you twisted out of fibre. What a terrible brain yours is—always thinking!" She finished on a note of playful awe.

He smiled, flattered.

"You've done your share, too," he said. "Wonderfully. I'd never have guessed you had it in you."

She looked out to the dark sea.

"It's absurd to say it—but I've been happy," she murmured, rather to herself than to him.

There was a silence where he went suddenly tremulous.

"Adela!"

She turned to him, held up an admonishing finger.

"Eve," she corrected. "Adela is out there, in that other world beyond the horizon—waiting to part from her millionaire husband."

He took a deep breath.

"Eve!" His voice was unsteady. "Do you think that if we got back we might perhaps not—not part?"

He heard her breath also come in a deep inhalation as she stared out into the night.

"No," she said, in a low voice. "No. It would be the same thing. You're not changed. In a month you'd have no time for me. I couldn't start it again. Let us keep to our bargain—*Adam!*" She stressed the playful name as she forced a dimly-seen smile for him.

He sat dark and gloomy in this rebuff.

"Then you can't—in any circumstances—*love* me?" he said, with difficulty jerking out the two final words.

She sighed.

"Perhaps—if Adela and Antony Drahan weren't always ghosts waiting to jump back into life out there—if"—her smile came round to him and his intently peering eyes saw its little twist of pathetic wistfulness—"if Eve lived yet a little longer with her Adam in this place where a million-dollar cheque isn't any use." She sighed again. "Who knows?—*perhaps!*" Her little laugh quivered as she rose abruptly to her feet, eluded his grasp. "Good night!"

He sat staring into the red embers, craving for a cigar.

THE next day, at an hour when the sun dipped, immense and glowing, to the empty desolation of the ocean, he walked along the beach in quest of certain sea-birds' eggs that were edible enough when fresh-laid. Eve (it had become almost habit in his mind to call her so) was back at the encampment, busy at the cooking-fire. They had not again referred to the last night's topic; she had been disconcertingly normal when they met that morning. But all day they had gone roving together, the best of comrades on that make-believe plane to which they were pledged, in search of fresh supplies of bread-fruit. Her beauty, emphasized in its primitive exiguity of costume, haunted him as he walked now in solitude, conflicted with his exasperated imaginations of unchecked bear-raids in that far-off, unreachable Wall Street where James Hennessey was now assuredly an unconstitutional king. His glance roved idly, seeing nothing in the double intermingling procession of his thoughts; that elusive, tantalizing "*perhaps*," that quivering little laugh, ringing in his ears. "*A little longer*——" His thoughts vanished suddenly. He stopped, stared out to sea, incredulous of his vision. There, clear upon the yellowing horizon, was a smudge of smoke!

His first, almost automatic, impulse was to dash back to the cooking-fire for the brand that should light the signal, to shout as he ran. He turned for the action—saw her in the distance, her shoulders glimmering white as she bent over the fire—checked suddenly. She had not seen that far-off wisp of smoke; did not see him. He glanced round at the heaped-up pyre, close above him on its platform of rock; hesitated; looked again out to sea. The steamer was passing hull-down on the horizon, but from its bridge his sudden column of smoke would be clearly visible. Then he looked once more, furtively, towards the woman absorbed in her task, unconscious of this dreamed-of chance of rescue, the woman whose "*perhaps!*" rang in his ears. It was a libel of Mr. Antony Drahan's enemies to call him unscrupulous. He was not. He was fantastic almost in his adherence to the straight deal. But now Mr. Antony Drahan, grotesque in a single garment of much-tattered dress-trousers and tugging at a beard that would have made him almost unrecognizable to friends and enemies alike, was false to his gods. He stood stock-still, watching that far-off steamer-smoke grow faint and small upon the horizon.

"I guess Mr. Hennessey can wait," he muttered to himself.

He saw the last wisp of it disappear into the glowing semicircle of the sun.

He turned back, empty-handed, along the beach, feeling himself suddenly, sickeningly, a traitor. It wasn't playing the game. Adela had her right to rescue—to the resumption of the life that was hers; to that shake-hands and good-bye to which they were

"Then you can't—in any circumstances—love me?" he said, with difficulty

pledged. He shrank, in his guilt of conscience, from meeting her eyes, from the necessary casual conversation with her, from even her mere propinquity. But he had to brace himself to it; did so, tried to smile as she looked up at him from the fire where the fish was ready broiled.

They were silent over their meal that night. The sun had gone down and the swift darkness shrouded them. They sat, both of them preoccupied, awkward in their rare speech. How she would turn on him, hating him, if she knew!

Suddenly she flung herself at him, lay warm and sobbing—sobbing—in his arms, her arms about his neck.

"Adam! Antony! Antony darling! forgive me! I've—I've let a ship go past!"

He gasped, the full implication of it breaking on him. *She* had let the ship go past!

He held her tight, soothed her, was once more not quite honest.

"Never mind, little Eve—Adela dear!—there's sure to be another."

She sobbed still as she clung to him.

"I—I don't care whether there is or not—so long as I've got you!" He bent his head down in sudden tenderness to kiss her brow. She withdrew herself abruptly, pushed him back, looked into his eyes from the night. "Before—before you do that," she said, "I want to tell you something. George—George Addiscombe was—was *nothing!*"

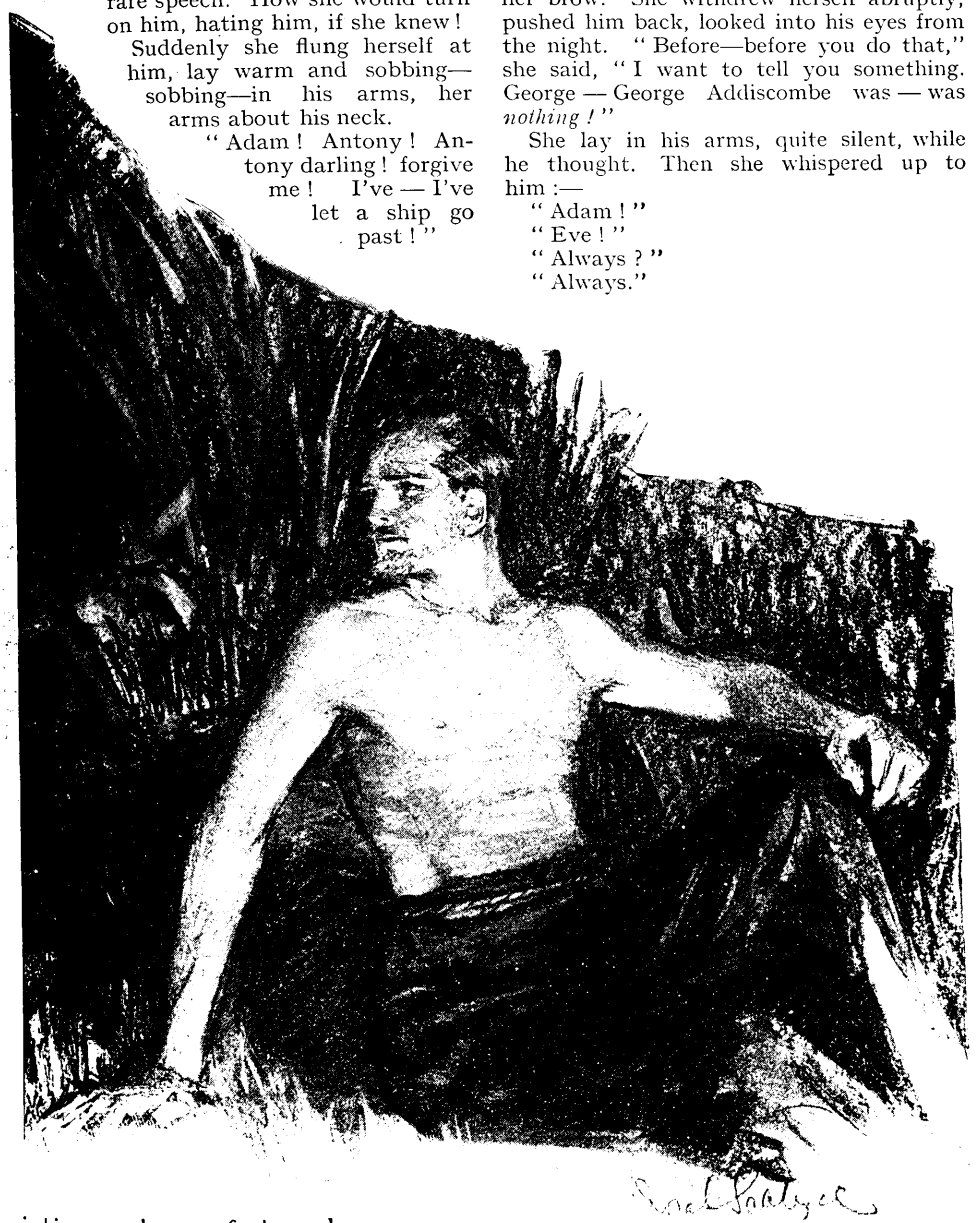
She lay in his arms, quite silent, while he thought. Then she whispered up to him:—

"Adam!"

"Eve!"

"Always?"

"Always."



jerking out the two final words.

When Yiso came to Limehouse

by

NELLIE TOM-GALLON and CALDER WILSON

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

BILL SIMMS wondered what had brought him out to Petticoat Lane on Sunday morning. In the lodging-house that he had patronized the night before, they let you stay in a bit longer on a Sunday—the convention of the Sabbath day of rest reaching even down to so low a depth as that.

Bill Simms said afterwards it was his luck that made him restless that morning. Luck had been jolly bad all the week, too; he muffed his tricks until he absolutely sweated with fear every time he spread his carpet and threw off the old overcoat that covered his dirty juggler's dress. All the more reason, therefore, that he should stay in peace and quiet on this day when he couldn't attempt to earn even the coppers that came his way on other days.

Anyway, here he was, in the same old overcoat that covered his finery on working days, wandering along the Lane, staring at the piles of old clothes on the barrows and stalls, looking longingly at the good ones, wishing he could get a new fit-out.

He gazed at a quite decently sound juggler's tights and singlet, decorated with the remains of spangles—wished with all his heart that he could replace his own broken-down street dress; next to it, hanging on the frame of the stall, was a complete blue cotton Japanese robe and wide trousers, the long loose sleeves filling softly in the wind, and waving and falling in a curious way, as though they beckoned to some other unseen wearer of a robe like them, in friendly greeting.

But out of the air only came an idea for Bill Simms, for suddenly he remembered that the rich and great of his profession in these days had abandoned tights and spangles—they died with the wonder-man, Paul Cinquevalli—and called themselves by names ending with "Soo," and clothed themselves in wondrous silks and embroideries from the East.

Bill knew in his scornful soul that they did it because it was so much easier to manipulate your tricks with wide sleeves and flowing robes to hide things under and in. Give some of these blighters on the West-end halls nothing but skin-tight clothing and they'd be helpless!—so he decided.

Then, with a little chill feeling creeping up his spine, he came back to his own affairs and remembered that during the last week he had muffed things badly all round. He frankly admitted to himself that the time was coming when he would have to have the help of a concealing dress such as the great ones up West sported. He looked again at the Japanese robe, swaying and twisting on the frame of the stall.

"Ten bob, an' it's yours, mate!" The woman in charge of the stall was quite civil. "Come, yer know it's cheap if yer wants to go to a fancy dress wiv yer bit o' skirt. It wouldn't be as low as that, I can blinkin' well tell yer, if it wasn't that it ain't everybody's idear of a winter costoom."

Bill Simms argued and bargained—helpless against the woman in charge of the stall. *She* knew perfectly well that he would not have been interested in the out-of-the-way dress if he hadn't really wanted it, so she stuck to her guns. The only thing she did give in over was to agree to put the dress aside till the next Sunday—because Bill literally hadn't got the money for it.

He went away with the fact in his mind that it was extremely unlikely that he *would* get the money—and a resolve to avoid the Lane next week.

But the fact that we no longer chink gold pleasantly in our pockets gave Bill Simms the chance to make a fresh start in the dress he had fixed his hopes on ; for when he had lived through four days of only very meagre earnings, on the Friday evening, treating himself to a modest glass of ale to raise his sinking spirits, luck flipped a scrap of paper in his direction.

The big, heavy man beside him, drinking a third whisky, suddenly pulled out a gold watch, swore when he saw what the time was, finished his drink and said good-night to the barmaid, and hurled himself through the swing doors all in the same instant.

And where his feet had hidden it till then lay a ten-shilling note. Bill grabbed it and ran out after the heavy man—he'd probably get a drink for his trouble was his instinct—in time to see the heavy figure jump successfully on a bus going at full speed.

Bill looked at the bit of paper, looked after the bus, then the note went into his pocket. The heavy man had looked the sort that could do without—probably wouldn't realize that he had lost it ; anyway, it was impossible to catch him.

And it meant the new start for Bill Simms. Sunday morning saw him in Petticoat Lane, handing over that note to the woman in charge of the stall, carrying off the bright cotton robe and trousers. He wasn't satisfied even then, for with a bit of cardboard he made himself a stencil of a crude but not ineffective design, and decorated the robe with red and yellow paint till it was a thing to wonder at.

Bill Simms argued and bargained—helpless against the woman in charge of the stall.

Perhaps it was the renewed hope that the costume gave him—perhaps the value of the hiding-places it afforded him in his tricks—but things began to look brighter for Bill on the very first day. The red and yellow balls seemed more intriguing when they came—surprisingly—out of the wide sleeves, before they were thrown into the air to weave intricate patterns before the eyes of his audience; the borrowed handkerchief rolled into a tight ball and vanished in the air, to be brought back in the form of dozens of coloured ones tied together by the corners, was easier—more effective—more productive of applause and coppers with the help of the Japanese dress than before.

Therefore things went well; Bill gradually extended his ground; knew that he was looked for in certain streets on certain exact days of the week. That was the way to work up a connection, and have the children ready at the windows with the coppers when the man with the lantern jaws and mop of grey hair, clothed in the very incongruous Japanese robe with its daubings of red and yellow paint, came twanging his one-stringed fiddle down the winter street.

IT was the day before one of those days on which the East-end holds holiday, and Bill started out as early as possible. He guessed money would be easier than usual on this day—he might work in two or three extra stands; people would pay up quicker for their amusement, and he be able to cut his programmes shorter than usual.

It was getting late in the afternoon; this would have to be the last stand for the day, Bill decided, when he came to Belting Street, down in Limehouse.

Belting Street is not a particularly cheerful place on a winter's afternoon—the mist rolls up from the river, and, if it is denied admittance to the little houses built close against the pavement, it still hangs itself about the walls, wreathes and twists round shutters, and clings to door jambs, waiting a chance to insinuate its coils into the ugly little boxes the moment there is a crack or cranny to slip through.

And to the big dark eyes of Nara Yamagata, peering out wistfully into the first illusive twists and wisps drifting up the street from the grey smooth water, Belting Street was the end of all hope and joy, the grave of life, as it appealed to her Japanese heart, longing for brightness and sun—for the sparkle of Eastern waters, the soft romantic shadow of Fujiyama over all things.

Nara was such a tiny doll-like figure, a something that almost should have been carefully packed in a cardboard box, with masses of tissue paper all round it to keep its quaint prettiness from being ruffled; that was how an imaginative onlooker would feel—until they saw Nara's face. And there rested tragedy and a woman's birthright of anxiety, though the creamy skin was smooth and the dark hair glossy and beautiful.

But in the bed behind Nara, where she looked so wistfully from the window into Belting Street, was the real doll—her baby boy, Kyto. And Kyto was indeed like a doll—for he lay very still—his big brown eyes staring up at the ceiling, watching the shadows the fire made there.

So he had lain for many heart-breaking days, till the little mother was in despair. Here in a strange land—the young husband who had brought her across so obediently from all the loved places that she knew, lying dead—Fate had laid a heavy hand on the flower-like, dainty life of Nara Yamagata.

She had come so tremblingly, even with her strong young husband, to this grey land of fogs and harsh voices—but he had the good position in the big bazaar where he was to sell cheap porcelain from his country at high prices. He had started well—had attracted business with his quaintness and stumbling English—then the climate had laid hold on him—a year ago; and he had left Nara with her baby and loneliness for the rest of her life.

With the thriftiness of her race she had managed to live sufficiently well with the savings that she had till she found work painting gauze fans for a big house. With the fatalism that was in her blood she settled down with her boy in the one room she could afford in Limehouse, resigned to the blow that Fate had dealt her. But when her little Kyto fell sick—then at last she was all in revolt against this last and heaviest blow.

The overworked, kindly doctor said there was nothing the matter with Kyto, yet nothing roused him—nothing interested him. He turned his head away from food, no matter how delicately the rice and fish was cooked, cried when Nara tried to coax him—whimpered to be let alone till her heart ached.

Day by day he was getting weaker—it seemed only that he could not breathe the air of this strange land. The kindly doctor told the little mother, before she made her graceful obeisance to speed his going, that she must rouse the baby, make him take an interest in something—or she would lose him.

She found that the one thing that would bring the eyes, that seemed already looking

beyond the walls of the dull room to some place no mortal can see, down to look at her was to tell Kyto the legends of old Japan in the simplest words. When she finished he would say :—

" I honourably thank my mother—more." Then he would fall asleep, and lie so still that Nara was frightened that never again would the eyes that had looked on this world for three years, and grown tired of it, open again.

Now only this very morning down in the poor street Nara had seen bunches of children hanging to the skirts of smiling mothers, busy on their careful shopping. And the children had all looked so well and healthy that her heart had ached for the child that was as the very fibre of her being, and lay there so still and straight.

Her anxiety—the isolation of her life—the silence of the room, seemed to-day to have brought Nara into a strange state of mind. It seemed almost as if life and the world of living men and women had forgotten her—passed her by and left her in some place that hung suspended between earth and the heaven to which she must go if Kyto was taken from her.

In that state of aloofness from things material, it did not surprise her when warning came that death was near for her baby. It came in the strangest way—the sound of a Japanese fiddle being softly played—the notes coming faintly, calling in a strange cadence of the land where she had been born, and where she had been wooed and wed, and her child born. So the street musicians had played in far-away Tokio when Nara, a girl with laughing bright eyes, had first seen the good husband her parents had chosen for her, and found him to her taste.

The dream was good, and if the honourable gods sent this warning that Kyto was to go to them—well, she must follow the baby, that was all.

Then Nara started and clasped her hands at her breast—for there came a horrible false note in the cadence—and the honourable gods do not play wrong notes ! Her dream was wiped away, she was the little frightened mother again, and the noise—it could not be called music—of the fiddle came from outside, in the misty, grey Belting Street.

On whispering, slippered feet Nara went across to the window and peered out again—and gripped at the curtain, wondering if she still dreamed—if the gods had really sent her a vision !

For down below her was a strange figure, in a dress that was friendly and familiar in her eyes, only that it had strange, ugly splashes of colour on it—and the figure sat on a little stool and played his one-stringed Japanese fiddle, and children and a few dock loafers crowded round and stared at the strange sight.

Then, when the crowd was big enough, the man in the Japanese dress threw on the ground a little straw mat, laid the fiddle down on it, and brought from hidden pockets various trifling objects, with which he proceeded to go through certain simple conjuring tricks.

NARA looked round to find that Kyto's eyes were turned towards the window—and her heart gave a great throb at the sight. Her baby must have heard that fiddle played, and some strange memory—perhaps an inherited one—had stirred interest in him.

Nara threw open the window and flung down one of her few coins when the performer had finished his tricks and was holding out a little metal bowl. And with extraordinary bravery she called down to the man with the lined face who had caught her penny so neatly.

" Wait, I pray—I come to speak to honourable magician," she said ; and the man, though astonished at the strangeness of the address, nodded in agreement that he should wait.

Nara gave another look at the child, still with his eyes turned to where he had heard a sound that interested him, then with wonderful, silent quickness she hurried down the stairs and out into the street.

Her hands clasped in appeal, she went, without the smallest fear, straight up to the man in the Japanese dress with its tawdry decorations.

" Oh, honourable and clever sir, I beg of you, save my little Kyto—my baby."

Bill Simms stared down at the mite of a woman in blank amazement. The poor little thing was crazy, of course, but it was such a queer sort of craziness. And Bill Simms had not had many appeals for help made to him in his lonely, struggling life.

" Why, missis, what's the matter with yer baby ? I ain't a doctor, y'know. P'r'aps you'd like me to go and get one for yer—eh ? I've finished for the day—it's gittin' too dark."

" Oh, no, I do not want the doctor—he is good and kind, but he cannot save my baby—and the gods have sent you to do it."

Of course, the little Chink woman was mad. Bill knew that. Still, she was wonderfully quiet and calm for a mad woman. In kindly fashion he started to soothe her, looking up at the house from which she had come, wondering if there was no one to look after her.

" It is a demon—one who has escaped

past Fo's two watch-dogs, and troubles my baby. The demon makes my baby sick and dull—the kind doctor man says he must be amused—Kwannon, the god of good women, who watched over me when he was born, has sent your honourable cleverness here to help me."

Demon—watch-dogs—Kwannon—honourable cleverness——! Small wonder that Bill Simms gasped, and lost his nerve and power of speech. When he recovered both he found that he was being dragged by eager, cold little hands towards the door from which Nara had emerged.

Bill hung back—for in Limehouse strange things happen to men lured by wonderful stories into strange houses; but he looked down into the pleading, dark mother-eyes—and to his credit did Nara no injustice, though he still protested.

"But, missis, I don't know nothink about your baby—I can't do anything—what on earth's the good of——"

"Honourable sir—if you will only come and make my baby look—see his mother again—make him understand that I need him—you have the so-very-beautiful balls—come and make him look at them—it will perhaps give the dogs of Fo a chance to catch the demon and take him away from my miserable dwelling."

"Oh, now I see—you want me to come and amuse your sick kid—is that it?" Bill Simms said, and gave up any attempt to keep away from the house door.

At his ready movement Nara made little pleased noises through her teeth—and hurried him the more up the narrow stairs, till they came to the room looking on the street where Kyto lay.

Nara never paused till they were within the room, and she had her captive safe there. Then she stood with her back against the door, panting and frightened.

Bill Simms went to one side of the bed and looked with kindly eyes at the mite of a boy lying there—and the eyes like brown velvet saw him, and moved to travel down his glowing dress with dawning interest.

Nara's pleased twittering, as of a mother-bird, started again, and she came across to the bed. In the brown velvet eyes she read a question.

"Yes, my babe, one of the honourable gods has deigned to come and see you—to make you happy, my Kyto. See—I raise you so that you may see him better."

Of course, the quick pattering Japanese was useless to Bill, so he asked, softly:—

"Who does the little chap think I am, missis? He looks a bit interested——"

"I have told him you are one of the honourable gods of my country—I think it had better be Yiso, the guardian of the little ones," Nara said, quite simply. "Would you like to be Yiso, sir?"

There was a queer, rather shy look on Bill Simms's face at the innocent question.

"Well, missis, we've got a God who looks after the little ones, though *His* name's a bit different from yours—sounds something like it, though—but you go ahead and call me anything you like that'll interest the little one. Do you want me to do a few tricks—will that please the little chap, do you think?"

"Oh, honourable sir, if you would only play with those wonderful balls of yours—the yellow ones, please. I could tell the little Kyto a story about them," Nara said, tears shining in her eyes, tears of hope and excitement.

"All right, go ahead and tell him his fairy-tale—then I'll give him a show—all to his own precious self—that'll fair astonish 'im. But cut along with the patter, missis."

RADIANT and glowing, Nara bent above the child, watching those solemn eyes that had been so near closing in a long sleep, and now were showing in their depths some faint wonder that made the mother-heart beat high.

"Kyto, see who has come to greet you from the Land of Shadows. See, it is Yiso—his honourable self. I told you that he was the guardian of all the little children."

Glory of glory, the baby lips opened after their weary silence, opened to ask:—

"I forget, my mother—where does Yiso come from?"

So small the whisper, it only seemed like a heavily-drawn breath to Bill Simms, smiling down in broad kindliness at the child.

"Yiso comes from the Underworld, my baby. There he guards the children who have come down to him to wait for their honourable parents—the big river that flows by the Field of Ten Thousand Ears of Rice; don't you remember, Kyto—I told you that when the babies tire of their play—see, here are his wide sleeves into which they creep to rest. And if sometimes they think they would like to play with the water—as babies do sometimes—then Yiso rolls it back so that they play in safety. You remember all that, do you not, my Kyto?"

"My mother—I am tired. Does Yiso come that I may creep into his sleeve and sleep?"

But at that Nara cried out in terror—and the big blue sleeve of Bill Simms's robe, which she had spread out with a dainty gesture as she told her legend, she flung from her as if it stung and burnt.

"No—no—my baby, my Kyto! Yiso

comes to tell you that you must stay here—with your mother. He is honourably anxious that you do so. He will be kind to you—show you the pretty yellow stars he plucks out of the sky for the children to play with—only promise that you will stay here with your miserable mother—say so!" Nara had dropped on her knees, and her terrified face was hidden in the pillow beside her baby.

"If the honourable god Yiso has come to tell me that I must stay—and not creep into his sleeve—I say so! Now will he please to show me the yellow stars he has plucked from the sky?"

So the bargain was made between the frantic little mother and her baby, and Nara got up from her knees, and curtsied deep to Bill Simms, smiling down at the quaint figures before him.

"Oh, honourable and clever sir, I beg of you, save my little Kyto—my baby."

"Honourable sir, I have told the very honourable lie and assured my Kyto that you are Yiso come from the Underworld, where you guard the little ones, and that you have brought with you some of the yellow stars you pluck from the sky for the children to play with. Will you please to show them to him?"

"Yellow stars—from the sky? Oh! my old balls you mean, missis. Well, here goes, then; and you must help me to make

a good show now. There's two or three frills and fusses I can put on to the tricks, if you help me."

And then, in breathless silence save for the rustle and swish of Bill Simms's simple apparatus of balls and sticks and glasses, began one of the strangest juggling performances ever given. Beside the little white bed, an oil lamp placed so as to throw as much light as possible on the quick-moving hands and bright-coloured balls, Bill Simms strained every nerve to interest and rouse a tiny child, dying for want of the brightness of his own native land—dying of the grim gloom and sorrow that rests on Limehouse—the place where the very air is saturated with the evil thoughts and desires of the dregs of humanity that drift from all corners of the earth, over the wide seas. The air is too heavy for a baby to breathe.

And Nara bent over the bed, watching her child, as in the long ago a mother bent over a manger, watching hers—and to each mother the baby compassed all that was worth while in the world they knew. And only the passing years could show what was the value of the frail life to mankind.

Presently, with a kindly smile, Bill Simms came to the end of all the tricks he knew, and bowed and nodded to the little head that was raised, all alert and interested by the marvels that had passed before its eyes.

And Kyto was pattering out quick words

And then began one of the strangest

in his native tongue—words at which his mother shook a very emphatic head.

"Wot's the kid say to it all, missis?"

Nara looked up—still with troubled eyes.

"Kyto says am I sure that the honourable god Yiso does not wish Kyto to climb into his long sleeve and go away with him—to play in the Field of Ten Thousand Ears of Rice? You have enchanted him, though you have roused him to such beautiful life."

Then, in the very human heart of a Cockney broken-down street juggler wisdom was born, and he clinched the business of holding back this baby from the dark shape that held out hands to seize it.

"Tell the kid, missis, that I brought him the stars down from the sky to see—and I'm leavin' one of 'em for 'im to play with. But this 'ere yellow star—it'll go back to the sky—plump—and stick there—if 'e doesn't make 'aste and run about, and get well enough for you to take him back 'ome again. Can you do that, by the way?"

"Oh, yes—if only my boy will get well enough for the voyage, I will manage it somehow—and leave the honourable grave of my husband to be cared for in memory only. But he will understand that I must save our son—say so!"

"Why, yes, I do 'say so' to that. You upsticks and get out of here right away, missis—and good luck go with you. Now then, sonny, look—here's the star from the sky that the old blighter Yiso 'as brought you. And remember—it goes back to the sky if you don't make haste and get well."

Bill made his best pseudo-Eastern bow then, and turned with a dignified swing of his gaudy robe, to go out of that room of such strange happenings.

But little Nara was on her knees at his feet, kissing his rough weather-broken hands—and when he drew them away Bill Simms hid them deep in those long sleeves of his—for they were wet with tears.

On the bed Kyto—alive and solemnly determined to carry out the bargain—bent forward and picked up the common, soiled, yellow-covered juggler's ball; put it to his forehead and made the Seven Bows of Reverence required as homage to a sacred thing.

juggling performances ever given.

A SCRAP OF PAPER

BY

"SAPPER" (H.C.McNEILE)

ILLUSTRATED BY BALLIOL SALMON

"ISN'T that Jack Delman, the polo-player?" I remarked to my companion as he resumed his seat.

My eyes idly followed the two people he had been speaking to, as they made their way out of the restaurant. The man, bronzed, clean-cut, hard-as-nails, typical of all that is best in English athleticism; the woman, graceful, fair, and utterly charming without being exactly pretty. They had paused by our table and spoken to the man I was dining with—spoken as people speak to a very old friend. And he had answered in the same strain. Then they had passed on, and Eustace Nolan, my companion, eminent critic and writer of *belles-lettres*, had sat down again with a faint reminiscent smile. He, too, watched them in silence until they were out of sight; then with the smile still on his lips he turned to me.

"Quite right," he remarked. "That's Jack Delman—polo-player, master of hounds, cricketer, golfer, etc., etc. And with him was Loraine Delman—his wife."

"Loraine Delman!" I repeated. "Surely the name is familiar!"

Eustace Nolan's smile expanded.

"To all save the utter Philistines even more so than his. She writes books, and very good books. Even I, who impartially damn everybody who practises that nefarious trade, have to admit they're good."

"Of course," I murmured, "I remember now." And then for want of something to say I continued, idly: "A rather daring experiment in the marriage-line; there can't be much in common between them. Do they get on well?"

"They didn't look as if they were on the verge of divorce, did they?" He was still smiling gently to himself, as a man smiles

who enjoys some secret thoughts of his own. "And yet she neither hunts—nor does she play either golf or tennis."

"A case of opposites hitting it off, I suppose." And I glanced across at him. "What the dickens are you smiling about in that aggravating way?"

He answered with another question.

"Did you happen to notice that pearl locket she was wearing?"

"I did. Why?"

"What do you think is inside it?"

I raised my eyebrows.

"My dear old boy," I remarked, "as to the best of my belief this is the first time I've ever seen her, how should I possibly know? Presumably a miniature of her husband—or of one of the children, if she's got any."

He lit a cigar with the solemnity of the true connoisseur before he spoke again.

"In that locket," he said, thoughtfully, "is the foundation of one of the happiest married lives that it has ever been my fortune to come in contact with—the married life of those two who have just left the restaurant. It consists of a scrap of paper, and on that scrap of paper is written as follows: 'Aristotle. Born 384 B.C. Died 322.'"

For a moment or two I thought he was joking. The smile still lingered on his lips, while he studied the lighted end of his cigar critically. Apparently satisfied, he looked across at me.

"Just that—and nothing more," he continued. "And yet it had nothing whatever to do with that gentleman's logic; rather was it all quite illogical."

"Confound you, Eustace," I cried, "cease riddling me with riddles. What magic charm did such a bald and uninteresting fact work? And how? And why? You've roused my curiosity; now you've got to satisfy it."

For a while he hesitated; then he beckoned for the bill.

"That's fair," he said, "though I don't know whether I'm justified in doing so. You see—it's not my secret. It's just one of those things which one comes across in life which belong to the sacred intimacy of others. But it's also one of those things which it does one good to remember. Such a small thing—and yet such a big one. So I just want your promise that it won't go farther, and then, if you care to, we'll stroll round to my rooms and I'll tell you the story of that scrap of paper."

"You have my promise, of course," I answered, and a few minutes later we were strolling along Piccadilly to his flat in Jermyn Street.

"I'VE known Loraine Delman," he began, when we were comfortably settled, "ever since she was the height of that coal-scuttle. She used, at the age of fourteen, to come and show me her immature attempts at writing—and even at that age I could see possibilities. She had to a marked extent what for want of a better phrase I will call the dramatic sense. In her baby way she could tell a story—and if only a few of our present-day writers would concentrate on that rather than on dissecting their kedgeree minds there would be the devil of a number more books sold.

"Right from the start I encouraged her to persevere. And I very soon realized that it was not just the whim of a growing girl. She was keen, and she had in her that creative impulse which must express itself. It is present in all of us—though modern civilization decrees that only the minority can attempt to give it its natural outlet. It so frequently fails to provide one with that necessary commodity — bread and butter.

"In her case it was different. A kindly aunt had died and left Loraine all her money, so that at the age of nineteen she had a thousand a year of her own, which was quite enough and yet not too much. At the age of twenty-one she completed her first book. She sent it to me, and I realized as soon as I had read it that all my hopes were going to be fulfilled. There were faults in it, of course—faults of technique, faults of construction—but what did that matter? The vital spark was there—the life spark. And that's all that counts. Technique can be acquired; the spark is given and can never be bought.

"However, this isn't a dissertation on the craft of writing. She got her first book published without the slightest difficulty. She'd have had none even without my help, but a private word from me settled things quicker. And a year later she finished her second. It fulfilled all the promise of the first, and made a great advance on it. In fact, it settled definitely that there was a big future in front of her, and, mentally, I sat down to watch it develop."

With a faint smile he pitched the butt-end of his cigar into the grate.

"It came almost as a shock to me when she wrote and told me that she was engaged. I suppose it hadn't occurred to me that she was grown-up; when you've dandled 'em as kids on your knee, and pulled the pig-tails of flapper-hood—I may say that it was before the days when the ambition of every girl was to make her head like a cedar-mop broom—you're apt to forget that they are grown-up. So one Sunday I went off to see the young man.

"Well, you know Jack Delman—so I won't describe him physically. And six years ago he was just the same—a perfect young specimen of manhood. How he'd met her and why he'd fallen in love with her, with her totally dissimilar tastes, is beside the point. All that matters is that they were perfectly dotty about one another, and since there was no reason for delay they intended to get married at once. He had money of his own and was a year older than she was—so that from the accepted standpoint it was a most satisfactory match. They would get a house in a hunting country, with a flat in London as well. And he would hunt and shoot and play polo—and she would have her work to occupy her. Also, later on, they were going to travel a bit. Everything quite idyllic. In fact, so idyllic that one or two faint and unworthy doubts I had in my mind almost died. Almost—not quite; I'm a cynical blighter, I fear.

"However, I had to confess to myself that there was no justification for them when I went to stay at their place soon after they returned from their honeymoon. Jack took me all round the stables—a form of entertainment which I particularly dread, as my knowledge of horses is confined to which end goes first. Then he took me on at tennis—a distressing affair, when I only succeeded in connecting with the ball twice, and then in the wrong direction. After that he gave up the unequal contest and left me to my own devices and Loraine.

"She was in the middle of a new book, and we discussed it in the sacred holy of holies which was set apart for her writing. I read a bit of it, with intense curiosity. What effect had marriage with this enthusiastic ball-striker had on her work? And I had to confess to myself that not only had it not suffered, but that it had improved.

"'Happy, my dear?' I said to her, as she slipped her arm through mine in the garden before dinner.

"'Utterly, completely, and absolutely,' she answered, and she certainly looked it.

"So did he; I've never seen a couple more intensely happy than they both seemed. He would ask her with intense solemnity if Mabel had been kissed by the villain yet; she would counter with tender inquiries as to the right front leg of one of his horses. And then they'd laugh and look at one another, while I pretended not to notice. For the look wasn't hard to interpret, and horses and books and ball games and work are just the merest etceteras of life when a man and a woman feel that way."

He paused and pushed the whisky in my direction.

"Help yourself, old man; I'm coming to our friend Aristotle soon. I didn't see them again for over two years: I was in America most of the time. And when I came back I had a lot of things to do which kept me in London. But one day at the club I ran into her publisher, and we lunched together. A human fellow—very human, who took a real interest in his authors as well as in their books.

"'Seen your *protégée* lately?' he asked, suddenly. 'Loraine Delman, I mean.'

"I told him I was only just back from the States and hadn't seen anybody.

"'A clinking good book—that last one of hers,' I continued. 'Or perhaps there is yet another that I haven't seen?'

"'There is,' he said, and his tone of voice made me look at him nervously.

"'What's the matter with it?' I asked. 'Isn't it up to form?'

"'Yes and no,' he answered, thoughtfully. 'It's good in its way—very good. Almost the best she's done, in fact. But there's a new note in it, Nolan—and one I'm sorry to see.'

"'And that is?' I asked.

"'Bitterness. I wondered if you could supply the clue.' And then he added as an after-thought: 'You know there was a baby, don't you?'

"'I didn't,' I said, 'but I'm not surprised.'

"'It died,' he remarked.

"'By Jove! I am out of things,' I cried. 'I wish I'd known: I'd have written to her. But perhaps that accounts for the bitterness.'

"'Perhaps it does,' he said, but it struck me he didn't think so.

"ANYWAY, what he said quite decided me. I should have gone down anyway to look them up; now I made up my mind to go at once. Loraine bitter! I didn't like the sound of that at all. Though, Heaven knows, the loss of her first kid might make any woman so.

"I wrote her a line telling her I was back, and by return I got a letter asking me to go and stay for as long as I liked. So down I went to their charming house in the hunting country, determined to solve the mystery of Loraine's bitterness. There was certainly no trace of it visible as she greeted me when I arrived about tea-time. She was just her own charming self, and for a few minutes we talked about my trip to America. Then the maid brought tea and lit the lamps, and we got down to more personal topics.

"'Where is Jack?' I asked, as she handed me my cup.

"'My dear Eustace,' she answered, with a faint smile, 'where do you think? Out

hunting, of course. He won't be back till late this evening. The meet was at the other side of the county.'

" ' I see,' I murmured. ' Only, perceiving the third cup, I wondered.'

" ' Hubert Daventry said he might drop in,' she answered, casually. ' Do you know him by any chance ? '

" ' The artist, do you mean ? ' and she nodded. ' Oh, yes, I know him.'

" I suppose there was something in the tone of my voice that said more than the mere words, for she looked at me quickly.

" ' Don't you like him ? '

" ' My dear, I only know him very slightly,' I replied, and changed the conversation.

" Now it was quite true that I did only know Hubert Daventry very slightly, but I knew his reputation very well. And he was one of the last men in the world whom I would have chosen to have hanging round any woman who was anything to do with me. Heaven knows, I'm not and never have been particularly squeamish, but Daventry was a putrid specimen. Clever, very good-looking, and most amusing—his speciality was other men's wives. There was a case of a fellow in some cavalry regiment who flogged him almost unconscious in Jermyn Street one night. . . . So you get the man. And, as so often happens, women didn't spot it—until it was too late. Why they don't recognize that particular brand is one of the unexplained mysteries, but there it is.

" And yet I had to admit to myself when he came in that there was nothing particularly spottable about him. The conversation while he remained was general ; he told a couple of stories about men I knew extremely well ; he seemed what, in fact, he was, an agreeable, well-bred man of the world.

" It was as he rose to go that he made the only remark which could possibly be construed into something slightly personal.

" ' I think I've got exactly what you want, Mrs. Delman. It took a bit of finding, and it will take more keeping. So you must let me know as soon as possible what you finally decide.'

" ' I will,' she said. ' And thank you most awfully.'

" With that he was gone, and she turned to me.

" ' He's looking for a small flat for me in London,' she said, quietly. ' They seem very hard to get.'

" ' But are you thinking of leaving this house ? ' I asked, surprised. ' I thought you loved it.'

" Her hands clenched at her sides.

" ' It stifles me, Eustace—utterly stifles me. From morning to night the atmosphere is concentrated sport, sport, sport. The people round here think of nothing else ; Jack thinks of nothing else. And if it wasn't for Hubert Daventry I don't know what I'd do. He's the only person with whom it is possible to obtain five minutes' intelligent conversation.'

" So it had come to that, had it ?

" ' My dear,' I said, gently, ' I'm sorry. Aren't things well with you and Jack ? '

" She didn't answer for a time, and when she did it was in a rather unexpected way.

" ' My new book,' she said, ' is utterly rotten. I'm under no delusions : it's rotten.'

" A STEP sounded in the hall, and she gripped my arm.

" ' Not a word to Jack. I trust you.'

" The next moment he came in—radiant with health, his pink coat covered with mud.

" ' Great to see you, old man ! ' he cried. ' Splendid run. Ten-mile point and pulled him down in the open.'

" He bubbled with it. We got the run field by field and spinney by spinney, and while he was drinking his whisky-and-soda I caught Loraine's eye. And the look she gave me said as plainly as if she had spoken : ' Now you can judge for yourself.' "

Nolan paused and lit a cigarette.

" It is boring," he continued, " there's no good denying it. Hunting shop to people who don't hunt is a dreadful infliction, and as I went up to dress for dinner things were clearer. And the clearer they became the more sorry I was. Though I'm not a marrying man myself, I've got illusions on the subject. Moreover, I loved both of them.

" At dinner that night things became clearer still. There were only the three of us, and they each talked to me rather than to one another. To the outsider everything was quite normal ; to me, who had known them in the past, the change was marked. No more of those little intimate jokes and leg-pulls, but just reserve. And it was I who quite unwittingly introduced the personal element by mentioning Daventry. I regretted it the instant after, but the mischief was done.

" Jack frowned heavily, and Loraine was up in arms at once.

" ' He was having tea here this afternoon, Jack,' she said, clearly.

" ' Well, he's a damned outsider,' returned her husband. ' Don't you agree with me, Eustace ? '

" ' Of course, he doesn't hunt,' said Loraine, sweetly.

" Jack laughed. ' Hunt ! That swab ! Why, he'd fall off a horse walking along the road.'

"'But then he does know that Rachmaninoff didn't build the Pyramids,' said his wife still more sweetly, and Jack flushed and dried up.

"It was all so foolish, and so easy, and so pathetic. And the devil of it was that there seemed to be nothing to do. However well you know two people, you can't interfere in a show of that sort unless you're specifically asked to. And even then the betting is that you will incur the undying enmity of both. The cure has got to come from within and not without, and during the next two or three days I began to fear that things had gone too far for any cure. Every night after dinner Jack retired to his study, and long after I'd gone to bed I used to hear him coming upstairs. He said nothing to me, and she didn't allude to the subject again—but it was obvious that things couldn't go on as they were. Something would have to happen, and happen soon. It did: on the night but one before I was due to go. Jack was dining out at some house in the neighbourhood with a bachelor party who were down for the hunting, and Loraine and I dined alone.

"IT was a crisp, frosty night, and after dinner we decided to go for a walk. For a long time we walked in silence, and then she deliberately reverted to the subject of her relations with Jack. Step by step she traced them, and I listened with a hopeless sort of feeling. Had they come to the parting of the roads, or had they not? That was the question—reiterated again and again.

"'I don't know what to do, Eustace,' she said, as we got back to the house again and went into the drawing-room. 'He'd be happy enough away from me once the shock was over. I'm no companion to him.'

"'You were once, my dear,' I said. 'You were both such wonderful pals.'

"'Yes—we were once,' she echoed, wearily. 'But you can't stand still, Eustace. Oh, it isn't his fault, and I don't think it's mine. It's just happened—that's all. He thinks of nothing, lives for nothing, cares for nothing but sport. Why, he was hunting four days after Billy died.'

"She was looking at a photograph in a silver frame—the photograph of her baby. And in her eyes was a look of passionate, yearning love.

"'But, dear girl,' I said, "that doesn't mean he didn't care. Men take things like that differently to women.'

"'Anyway, it doesn't matter,' she cried. 'Don't let's think about that. The point is what to do now. I can't work in this house; my nerves are all on edge. And am I to sacrifice the whole of my career, just because I haven't the nerve to take a final step to end it? Look at him! He goes off every night to his study to read some trashy sporting novel, and then he objects to my friends.'

"'Loraine,' I said, quietly, 'Daventry is a bit of a rotter.'

"'He's amusing, anyway, and surely I'm old enough to take care of myself,' she answered. 'No, Eustace—it's the old question. I was a fool to think that I could escape it. Just at first everything was wonderful; but now——'

"She paused and stared at the fire.

"'Don't you love him any more, my dear?' I asked, gently.

"'Love him! Oh, yes—I still love him, I suppose. In a way. But even so, love isn't everything, Eustace.'

"'It's damned near it,' I said. 'And it seems to me that once you've had the wonderful love which you and Jack had for one another you ought to think, and go on thinking again and again, before you cut it out of your life.'

"She made a little gesture of impatience.

"'I've been thinking for a year,' she answered. 'Oh, Eustace—I want to be free—free. And I can never be free in this house.'

"Free. The cry of all the ages. And what a futile cry it is! As if any human being can ever be free in the true sense of the word! We're all dependent on someone, or they're dependent on us. But all I said was:—

"'You were free enough here, Loraine, three years ago. A big love is the nearest approach to freedom you can have. It washes out selfishness.'

"But she wouldn't listen, and I knew it was best for her to get it off her mind. It wasn't as if she was going to leave Jack for good; they could still meet and spend some of their time together. If he wanted to—that's to say.

"'But don't you know that he wants to?' I said. 'I'm not much of a judge on such matters, but I've seen him looking at you when you didn't know he was, and, Loraine, I don't think he's altered.'

"She shook her head.

"'Oh, yes, he has! We've both altered. It's no one's fault—it's just happened.'

"Again and again she said that, and at length I saw there was no good going on.

"'If you feel that way—you'd better go, my dear. Perhaps you'll change your mind once you've taken the step.'

"'If only he wasn't so awfully decent,' she said, quietly, sitting down and cupping her hands under her chin. 'So wonderfully white. I've never seen Jack do a rotten thing—get drunk or make a beast of him-

"Great to see you, old man!" he cried. "Splendid run. Ten-mile point and pulled him down in the open."

self. Or even lose his temper. It's that which makes it so hard. I wouldn't hurt him, Eustace, for the world.'

"And then I realized. She was just arguing aloud; trying to convince herself—not me.

"'You admit it will hurt him, then, if you go?' I said.

"'It'll hurt me, too, in a way,' she said, standing up suddenly. 'Oh, don't you see that's the whole point. One part of me longs to be free; the other longs for the love and—and the passion of when we were first married. And between the two I'm on the rack.'

"Career versus love; the old story. And the decision must lie with her, and her alone. Only in her case the love was buried. I couldn't believe it was dead, somehow—though too long burial is a dangerous thing.

"'If only he wasn't so decent and straight,' she repeated, wearily. 'Anyway, let's go to bed.'

"AND at that moment the door opened and Jack entered. For a moment I stared at him in amazement, and I heard Loraine catch her breath. For Jack Delman was what I had never seen him before—drunk. Not tight, mark you—not merely merry, but blind drunk. He lurched to a chair, and sat there staring at us foolishly. His tie was half off, his waistcoat undone, and he wasn't a pleasant spectacle.

"'Jack!' gasped his wife. 'What's the matter with you?'

"'Matter, my dear,' he said, unsteadily. 'Nothing matter. I'se little—little bit—'toxicated. Thatsh all.'

"She swung round on me, and there was a new look in her eyes.

"'That settles it,' she said, quietly, and with that she left the room.

"The last straw, and I swore inwardly. If only he hadn't got drunk on that of all nights; if only, even, he'd gone straight to his own room. Upstairs the door of her room banged, and I turned to Jack.

"'I'll help you up to bed,' I said, curtly, and he laughed.

"'Thank you, Eustace, for your well-meant offer of assistance,' he answered, 'but I'm quite capable of getting there myself. Pretty good effort on my part, wasn't it?'

"I stared at him in amazement.

"'Good Lord, you're not drunk!' I said, foolishly.

"'Far from it,' he replied.

"'Then what the devil——' I began.

"'Oh, don't let's go over it again,' he broke in wearily. 'I happened to have been sitting over in that alcove behind the curtain in the window, reading one of my trashy hunting novels. And I'm afraid I've been eavesdropping.'

"'But, good heavens, old man!' I cried, 'why didn't you come out?'

"He stared at me sombrely.

"'What would have been the good?' he answered. 'We all know where we stand now. I'm not particularly bright, Eustace, as you heard to-night. My God is sport—and this house stifles her.' For a moment I thought he was going to break down. 'It didn't stifle her when we first came to it. Why, it was on that sofa that we used to discuss her first book after we got married.'

"He turned away, and was silent for a while.

"'If she wants to go, Eustace—she shall go. It's not fair to spoil her life—though, God knows, I've tried not to. I know I can't talk to her; I know I'm a perfect damned fool. But I'd hoped——' He paused abruptly, and stared at the window with a weary little smile that I had no clue to. 'However, that's over now. And I don't suppose it would have been much use anyway. But oh! great heavens, it's like cutting out part of one's life.'

"He buried his head in his hands, and his shoulders heaved.

"'Decent,' he muttered. 'What's the use of that? Once a man and a woman have been mates—decency is no good. I've been a fool, Eustace—all through. It didn't occur to me to sit moping after the kid died—though I loved him as much as she did. But it hurt her; I see it now.'

"Once again he was silent; then he swung round.

"'You're not to tell her,' he cried. 'You're to let her go on thinking I was drunk to-night. I got the idea, you see, from what she said—and got out through the window. Perhaps later on, when she's given things a trial—you might—let her know. And until then—look after her, old man. It's not her women pals I mind, though they frighten me to death—but if that sweep Daventry——'

"He paused and his fists clenched.

"'I'll look after her, Jack,' I said, gruffly. The momentary passion at the thought of Daventry had died out of his eyes; they were just hopelessly weary again.

"'Thanks,' he said. 'And if you don't mind I think I'll go to bed now.'

"I heard him go upstairs to his own room, and after a while I switched off the lights and followed. Things had come to a head with a vengeance, but maybe it was all for the best. We'd let her have her way, and later on, when a little more water had passed under the bridge, I'd tell her."

Nolan smiled faintly, and helped himself to a whisky-and-soda.

She paused and stared at the fire. "Don't you love him any more, my dear?" I asked, gently.

"Thus does man propose: Fate works otherwise. When I got down the next morning Jack had already gone out—hunting again. And shortly after Loraine came down herself. With an expressionless face she glanced at her husband's used plate, but she made no remark. And it was not till after breakfast that she told me she had written to Daventry saying she would take the flat.

"'It's not merely because of what happened last night, Eustace,' she remarked, quietly. 'That was just the final thing that settled it. And, in a way, I'm glad.'

"But was she? I watched her all that day as she moved about the house—fingering this, touching that, as if she were saying good-bye. And a dozen times the truth trembled on the tip of my tongue, but I bit it back. If things were to come right in the long run, it would be better to leave it for the present—much better. Later on I'd do it: it would keep. Just now she might think it was a put-up job—an excuse.

"IT was about three o'clock that she suddenly came into the room where I was doing some overdue work.

"'Eustace,' she said, and her voice was numb, 'they're bringing something up the drive. Something on a stretcher. Will you come?'

"For a moment I didn't understand; then I dashed to the front door. It was Jack right enough, and from the colour of his face I feared the worst.

"'Is he dead?' I muttered, stupidly.

"'No, sir,' said one of the men carrying him, 'but he's had a terrible fall. Over wire. Horse broke its back.'

"'Take him upstairs,' said Loraine, calmly. 'And, Eustace, please 'phone for the doctor.'

"She took charge of everything, and I ran about from room to room feeling the usual unutterable nuisance a man does in such circumstances. The doctor came, made his examination, and departed rubbing his hands.

"'No need for anxiety, Mrs. Delman,' he announced. 'He'll be hunting again in a month. But you must really speak to your young man, you know. He never turns his head from anything, but to-day he was more reckless than ever. We can't have him breaking his neck.'

"'Of course, this alters it, Eustace,' she said when the doctor had gone. 'I can't go until he's fit again.'

"And the truth trembled for the thirteenth time—trembled and came out. She listened to me with dawning amazement on her face, and when I'd finished she rose unsteadily to her feet.

"'Pretending,' she whispered. 'So as to give me a chance. Oh, thank God! thank God! my man—you weren't killed.' She walked over to the window and stood staring out. And then suddenly she bent forward, and took two books from behind the cushion on the seat.

"For a while she stared at them uncomprehendingly, and then I heard her whisper very low: 'Eustace—come here.'

"I crossed to her side, and together we looked at the books. One was a notebook filled with Jack's scrawling handwriting; the other was a volume of an Encyclopædia. And in it was a bit of paper on which was written—'Aristotle. Born 384 B.C. Died 322.'

"The books fell from her hands, and the next moment she was sobbing her heart out in my arms.

"'So that's what he went to his study for—and I talked about trashy hunting novels.'

"I confess that for the life of me I couldn't speak. I'd got the clue now to that twisted smile of his last night—dear lad.

"'Oh, you precious bit of paper!' she cried, kissing old Aristotle. And then she stared at me through her tear-drenched eyes.

"'Riding more recklessly than ever to-day. Oh, Jack—you've just got to forgive me. Go up and see him, Eustace: tell him you've told me. And ask him if I may come.'"

Again Nolan smiled quietly.

"As I say, I'm not a marrying man—but I have illusions. And they weren't shattered that afternoon. I just heard his voice—a bit low and shaky—as she came past me to his bedside; I just saw her go down on her knees beside him with a little sobbing cry. And then I went out and left them. And I suppose things must have been all right, for about two hours later Hubert Daventry rang up. He wanted to speak to Loraine. So I called through the door to tell her.

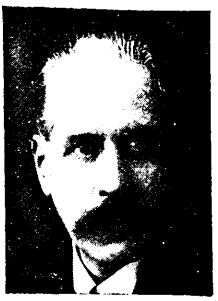
"They both answered.

"She said: 'Tell him I don't want his beastly flat.'

"He said: 'Tell him to go to blazes.'"

HOW CONJURING TRICKS ARE INVENTED

An Interview with Mr. Henry Bate.



MR. HENRY BATE.

Although the name of Mr. Henry Bate is unknown to the general public, he is one of the most active members of that exclusive body known as the Inner Magic Circle. His lifetime has been devoted to the invention and construction of conjuring tricks, ranging from the simplest parlour magic for amateurs to some of the most famous stage illusions presented by such well-known magicians as David Devant, J. N. Maskelyne, Chung Ling Soo, De Biere, and many others. In the following interview he relates, for the first time, many amusing experiences of life behind the scenes with famous conjurers, and, incidentally, discloses some interesting secrets of magic, including a "Vanishing Lady" illusion which can be performed in an ordinary drawing-room.

IF ever you have occasion to vanish an elephant, and you seek the advice of a famous magician as to how to go about it, he will probably refer you to Mr. Henry Bate. It may be that you have never heard of the gentleman, but if you intend to amuse your friends this winter by doing conjuring tricks with elephants—or, for that matter, any other objects—it is high time that you were introduced to him. Everybody who is anybody in magic knows Mr. Bate. He is the magicians' "universal provider," a past-master in the art of manufacturing magical apparatus, a man whose name and work are both regarded by the leading illusionists as "something to conjure with." To him the mechanical side of conjuring is an open book.

From what I know of Mr. Bate, I do not think that a request to vanish an elephant would perturb him in the least. He would probably stroke his chin thoughtfully and reply, "Yes—I *can* do that, but wouldn't it be an improvement if, after making your elephant disappear, we were to produce a hippopotamus in its place?" You see, he has had nearly forty years of this sort of thing, and his inventive brain is ready to cope with almost any magical problem you like to set him. Ever since his schooldays he has been puzzling out ways and means of mystifying his fellows.

"In common with most boys," he told me, "I developed a craze for conjuring when I was about sixteen. I differed from the rest only in that I had a naturally inventive mind, which I promptly turned to things magical. My father was a practical watchmaker and gunsmith, and I spent many hours in his workshop, ostensibly to learn his trade, though I am afraid I wasted much of my valuable time, and his equally valuable materials, in making little tricks with which to mystify my friends.

"One day whilst a schoolboy I went to the magical department of Hamley's, the famous toy dealers, to purchase a disappearing card trick which I had seen advertised. The gentleman who served me offered to demonstrate how the trick should be performed, but I replied, a little proudly perhaps, that I did not require any tuition. Amused at my self-assurance, he watched me perform the trick and then asked if I knew any more. I happened to have a little thing of my own invention, which consisted of making a coin apparently pass through the crown of a hat. I think he expected to see me do a sleight-of-hand trick that was as old as the hills. Instead, I surprised him by showing the coin apparently sticking half-way through the hat. He was completely baffled, and asked me where I had obtained the trick. I replied that I had made it myself. 'Can you make some more?' he asked. I told him that I could, whereupon he gave me an immediate order for ten pounds' worth.

THE PURSE TRICK, as performed by race-course swindlers. A warning to the simple-minded.

(1) " Here you are, gents, two genuine half-crowns. Watch me throw them in.

(2) " My right hand is quite empty—

" I returned home firmly convinced that my fortune was made—and thus commenced my career as a manufacturer of magic. I learned afterwards that the gentleman who had given me the order was none other than the late William Hamley himself."

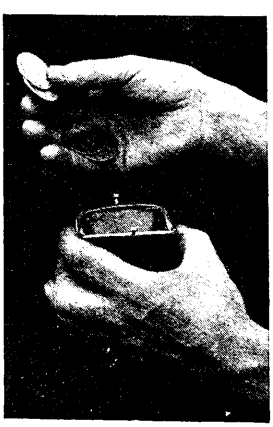
Once aroused, Mr. Bate's interest in magic never subsided. He read all the available books on the subject, attended the performances of well-known conjurers, and even made a first-hand study of the methods of the street-corner trickster.

Even as a youth he knew all there was to know about the " purse trick "—which leads us to another story.

" Once whilst I was in my father's shop at Maldon," he told me, " a particularly artful-looking customer entered and asked to see some rings. I recognized the man immediately as one I had seen performing the famous " purse trick " swindle at the local fair, and was therefore on my guard. Sure enough, after making some trifling purchase he tried to work the purse trick on me. After talking a lot of nonsense, he pulled from his pocket a small leather purse and two shining half-crowns. ' I will put these half-crowns into the purse—so,' he said, suiting the action to the word. ' Now, as you seem a smart lad, I will sell you this purse containing five shillings for half a crown.' I pretended to be profoundly impressed, but asked him to allow me to examine the purse first of all. He promptly emptied out the coins and handed me the purse, which I turned over and over with apparent curiosity, although, of course, I knew that there was no trick in its construction. Then, looking particularly innocent, I took two half-crowns from the till and apparently placed them in the purse as he had done. ' Now, you wouldn't trust *me* if I were to offer to sell you the purse, with its contents, for half a crown, would you ? ' I asked. ' Why, of course I would,' he replied. ' I saw you put the money in just a minute ago. Anyhow, you will not sell *me* the purse as it stands for half a crown, I'll wager.' So saying he took a half-crown out of his pocket and laid it upon the counter. ' Done ! ' I said, as I promptly pocketed the coin and handed him back his purse. I shall never forget the look of utter amazement on his face when he found the two coins inside the purse were pennies ! ' All right, sonny, you've won,' he said. ' Next time I'm down this way I'll come to you for lessons.' With

HOW THE PURSE TRICK IS DONE.

(6) When the half-crowns are exhibited two pennies are concealed between the first and third fingers of the right hand.



(7) The half-crowns are apparently thrown into the purse, but, by a clever sleight, the two pennies are allowed to fall instead.

(8) In the action of closing the purse the half-crowns are slipped behind it.

(3) "And so is my left" (the performer carelessly tosses the purse from one hand to the other).

(4) "In fact, both hands are empty. Now, who will give me half a crown for the lot? Thank you, sir."

(5) But the unfortunate purchaser finds, instead of two half-crowns, two pennies.

that he threw the purse on the floor and hurried out of the shop."

Mr. Bate is regarded as exceptionally expert in the purse trick, and has often been asked to demonstrate it in the presence of famous conjurers. The accompanying series of photographs, specially posed for this article, show exactly how it is done. A careful study of these, followed by a little practice, should enable readers to deceive their friends—legitimately, it is hoped!

"You must not run away with the idea that the so-called 'secret' of a trick is the only thing that matters," Mr. Bate explained after he had demonstrated it to me. "The whole art of magic depends upon its presentation. I could show you innumerable tricks, mechanical and otherwise. You might be able to go straight away and deceive a few of your friends with some of them. But it would take you years of practice and study to attain the necessary proficiency to enable you to present the majority of them in public. Even then you would only be a copyist, without any sign of that originality which is essential to the true magician. Those who cherish the belief that 'how it is done' is the most important factor in magic do a great injustice to the art of the illusionist. Whether the illusion that he presents is his own invention or not, the performer deserves far more credit than he is sometimes given for his skill in making what is often the simplest mechanical effect appear mysterious and supernatural."

For a few years Mr. Bate earned his living as a drawing-room conjurer, until an accident which resulted in a broken finger caused him to turn his attention solely to the manufacture of tricks.

The real turning-point in his career, however, was his first meeting with Mr. David Devant.

"When I was first introduced to Mr. Devant," he said, "I showed him a small illusion I had made, in which a handkerchief, previously vanished, was made to re-appear inside a sealed metal cylinder." (The details of the trick are fully explained in the accompanying photographs.) "He was so favourably impressed by this trick that he asked me if I could build him a really big illusion on similar lines. I thought the matter over, and soon hit upon an idea for producing a man under similar conditions, although the method itself was entirely different. Mr. Devant, with his showman's experience, immediately suggested that we should use a hollow barrel instead of a cylinder, and that the man produced should be dressed in the character of Diogenes. A further improvement upon the invention enabled us to have the sheets of paper at either end of the tub marked according to

(9) As the purse is thrown from hand to hand the half-crowns are thrown with it, under the purse. The clinking of the coins thus produced appears to come from inside the purse.

(10) When the purse is offered to a potential purchaser the coins are still held beneath the purse, being kept in position by the forefinger. At the last moment they are "palmed," and usually slipped into a secret pocket as the trickster casually carries his hand to grip the lapel of his coat.

THE "HANDKERCHIEF IN TUBE" TRICK.

(1) The first conjuring trick that Mr. Bate showed to David Devant, and from which the idea of "Diogenes" was evolved. The metal cylinder is first shown empty. Cigarette papers are fastened over either end by means of the rings.

instructions from members of the audience, in order to prove that there could be no substitution. As Mr. Devant has mentioned in an article he wrote for THE STRAND MAGAZINE some years ago, the illusion was a great success.

"Only once was there a slight mishap, when dear old Diogenes was late for his cue. In his hurry he mislaid his wig and beard, and was obliged to 'materialize' as a smooth-faced youth. I think that Mr. Devant was even more surprised than his audience!

"After this I continued to build all kinds of apparatus for Devant. His inventive brain was never at rest. No sooner had we finished one illusion than he would turn to me and ask: 'Well, Bate, what next? About time we did the Indian Rope Trick.' As you are probably aware, the trick to which he referred was one alleged to have been performed by Indian fakirs, in which a rope thrown into the air immediately became quite rigid, whereupon a boy climbed up it and vanished from sight. The trick had never been performed by any magician in this country, and was regarded as an utter impossibility, so that Mr. Devant's remarks were always taken as a joke.

"However, one day, whilst at my bench, I had a sudden 'brain-wave,' and after a moment's thought I evolved a definite plan for reproducing the effect of the Indian Rope Trick! In a fever of excitement I threw down the work in hand and immediately commenced a model of my new invention. Within an hour it was complete, and, although crude in construction, it worked perfectly. You can imagine my delight when I realized that I had discovered a secret which had puzzled conjurers for many years. I had actually found a means of vanishing a human being in full view of the audience without employing any kind of covering. That evening I added a postscript to a letter I had already written to Mr. Devant, mentioning that I had hit upon an idea for the rope trick. He came straight down to Hove post-haste, bringing Mr. Maskelyne with him. I had intended that they should not see the illusion until I had built it on a large scale, so that a real man could be made to vanish, but they were so impatient to see what I had invented that I was obliged to show them the rough model. I took Mr. Maskelyne up to see it first. He made no comment beyond the remark that it was 'very good.' Mr. Devant, however, admitted himself momentarily baffled, and, despite his long experience of magic, he was obliged to make several guesses before he hit upon the solution of the mystery. A week later the full-sized apparatus was built, the illusion was duly produced, and I am pleased to say it was a great success.

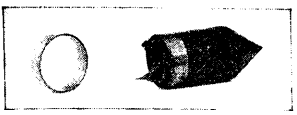
(2) The conjurer shows that both ends of the tube are thus sealed.

"After this my *clientèle* developed very considerably, and on several occasions we had as many as half-a-dozen of the most famous conjurers in the house at the same time. In fact, they nicknamed it 'the conjurers' home.'

"When professional magicians get together it is a case of 'Greek meeting Greek,' for

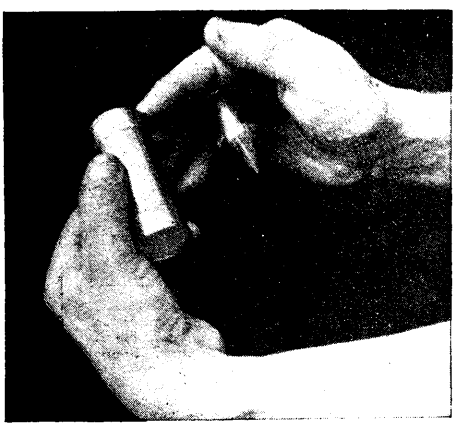
(3) A moment later one end of the tube is broken open, and a coloured handkerchief, previously vanished, is found inside.

nothing delights them more than to mystify one another. There is, for example, a thumb-tie feat performed by De Biere, in which he catches hoops over his arms whilst his thumbs are firmly tied together. This has completely puzzled many of his fellow-magicians, including myself. There is, however, a simple variation upon the same idea which, if properly worked, is very good fun. I will show you how it is done.



(4) The secret apparatus by which the trick is performed. The handkerchief is previously packed into this projectile-shaped container, the end of which is sealed with a cigarette paper in the same manner as the cylinder.

"First of all you ask somebody to tie your thumbs together as tightly as possible. Then you hold them out in front of you and get him to cover your hands with a hat or a cap. Next you explain that you are going to demonstrate a highly-interesting experiment, and ask for two gentlemen to assist you. Standing sideways to the audience, you ask one of the volunteers to stand immediately in front of you and the other immediately behind you, so that you are in single file. Then, whilst you are discoursing upon the mystery you are about to present, the man in front of you suddenly feels a sharp tap on his ear. At this, you immediately turn round to the fellow behind and say: 'Look here, old man, don't play about! I want to do this trick properly, you know.' You resume your discourse, but a moment later the man in front gets another little bang on the ear. This can be repeated as long as your victims will allow, and if you are accused of striking the man yourself, you may ask anybody to remove the cap and see that your thumbs are still firmly tied. The onlookers, who have watched your movements, will be amazed as well as amused. Finally, you may vary the trick by catching hoops over your arms whilst your thumbs are still tied—or you can place one arm through the back of a chair, cause your thumbs to be tied, and then instantly make your escape.



(5) Whilst the conjurer is showing the cylinder to the audience (see photo 2) this "fake" is secretly palmed, and afterwards surreptitiously slipped into the cylinder. The cigarette paper broken by the sharp point of the container is, of course, replaced by the duplicate paper fitted to the container itself.

"Of course, the secret lies in the method by which the thumbs are tied" (which is clearly explained in the photographs on page 58). "I may add that De Biere's method is entirely different and, to me, quite unfathomable.

"Talking of escapes," Mr. Bate continued, "I will show you an original method of freeing yourself from handcuffs, which any amateur can employ with a little practice. As you may know, the commonest trick of the street-corner handcuff 'expert' is to secrete a piece of string inside the lock of the handcuffs, which is afterwards partly teased out by means of a hairpin, so that the protruding ends may be pulled with a sharp jerk, which forces the lock. The method I will show you, however, is less clumsy and infinitely more effective."

Mr. Bate then produced a pair of ordinary police handcuffs, which I clamped upon his wrists, and although he held his hands well away from his body to prove that he could not possibly obtain access to a secret "key," he escaped in less than a second. The effect was utterly baffling!

Mr. Bate kindly consented to disclose his secret for the benefit of readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE who may wish to mystify their friends. The photographs on page 59 explain the feat in detail.

For many years Mr. Bate joined forces with Mr. David Devant, both at St. George's Hall and on tour. Wherever they went, a room in the theatre was set aside as a workshop, and the master magician and the master mechanician were always putting their heads together to invent and build new illusions.

"Many of the best ideas for stage illusions," explained Mr. Bate, "have been the result of casual remarks. For example, one day an enthusiastic amateur obtained an introduction to Devant, and suggested that it would be a marvellous effect to vanish a real motor-cycle, complete with rider, and with the engine running. Devant agreed that it certainly would *if* it were practicable. No sooner had the young man

gone than I turned to 'the guv'nor,' as we called him, and announced that I had the germ of an idea for carrying out the illusion that had been suggested. He seized upon it immediately and we set to work together to build a model. The result was a show we called 'Biff!' in which a real motor-cycle was ridden on to the stage, up a plank, and into a large wooden crate. The crate was then hoisted into the air on pulleys, and the engine was still heard to be running. A light (called the D.D. rays) was flashed, the roar of the engine ceased in an instant, and the crate fell to pieces. The motor-cycle and rider had vanished!

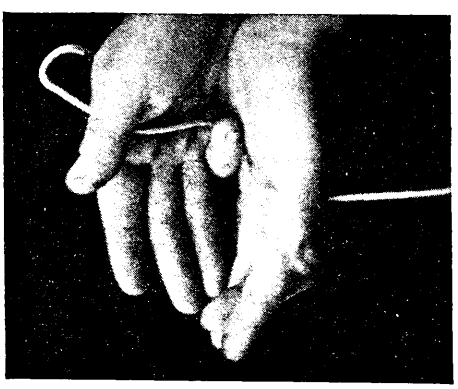
"I shall never forget the *début* of this illusion. In order to make sure that everything should go smoothly, I decided that I would ride the motor-cycle myself. I had never ridden one before in my life, but one of the attendants showed me how to start it and stop it, and I imagined that this was all the knowledge I required for stage purposes. Unfortunately I had not taken into account the fact that the stage had a considerable 'rake' towards the footlights, and no sooner had I made my entrance on the motor-cycle than I found myself careering at what seemed a break-neck speed towards a stout gentleman in the front row of the stalls. I turned the handlebars just in time to avoid the footlights, and the machine tilted to an angle of nearly forty-five degrees. Round and round the stage I went, wobbling and swerving to avoid collision with the wings, and causing Mr. Devant to jump all over the place in fear of his life. Eventually, however, I managed to bring the machine to a standstill inside the crate, and the vanishing proceeded without mishap.

"We had another illusion in which Devant was supposed to produce a 'ghost,' and on the evening prior to the first performance he called me into his room to see the costume which the 'spook' had donned for dress rehearsal. It was made of some thin, filmy material, treated with phosphorescent paint, which gave it a weird, lustrous sheen. 'What do you think of it?' he asked. 'Splendid,' I replied; 'it is beautifully sheeny, isn't it?' Whereupon came a wailing voice from inside the ghost, 'Nah den, guv'nor,' it said, 'dere vas no need to be personal.' At first I was at a loss to understand his meaning, until the head-dress was removed, revealing a small, dark-haired youngster obviously of the Jewish race.

"The performance of a magician entails a great deal of worry and mental strain lest anything should go wrong, and the ideal conjurer's assistant must be pre

THE THUMB-TIE TRICK.

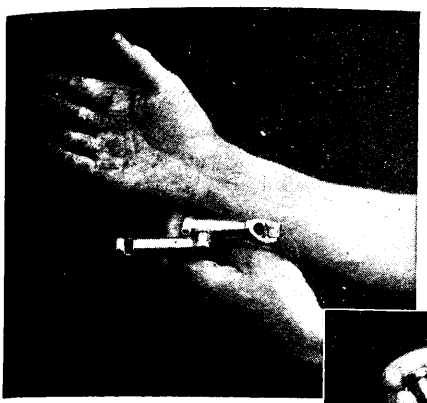
(1) The conjurer asks somebody to tie his thumbs as tightly as possible in this manner. He is then able to catch solid hoops over his arms and perform other remarkable feats although, apparently, his thumbs remain tied all the while.

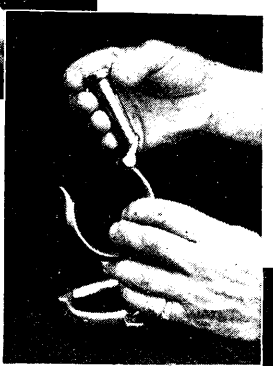


(2) The secret of the thumb-tie trick. As he puts the thumbs together, the conjurer secretly bends the little finger of the right hand and grips the string. Then, no matter how tightly the knot may be made—

(3)—a fair-sized loop is left. This enables the performer to slip his thumb out, and in again, in a flash. On returning the thumb into the loop, a slight tautening of the string helps to preserve the illusion that the thumbs are still immovable.

A NEW HANDCUFF ESCAPE.





(1) How the handcuff escape is effected. A small steel ball (taken from a bicycle bearing) is secreted between the first and second fingers of each hand.

(2) Upon the handcuffs being returned to the performer after inspection, he secretly slips a ball into each of the locking recesses of the handcuffs. (This is exaggerated for the purposes of illustration, but may be done without arousing the slightest suspicion.)

pared to rise to any emergency. On one occasion Devant asked me to run down with him in his car to Knowsley Hall in order to assist at a performance he was to give before their Majesties the King and Queen. As I was leaving St. George's Hall I suddenly came to an abrupt standstill on the staircase, then retraced my steps to the workshop. There I slipped into my handbag a few strips of brass, together with one or two small tools, and hurried from the building to the car which was waiting outside. To this day I have not the faintest idea what induced me to turn back so suddenly and fetch my little repair outfit. You may call it sub-conscious mind, premonition, instinct, or what you will, but I assure you I had not the slightest reason for taking any tools with me, for I had previously overhauled all the apparatus, and knew that everything was in apple-pie order.

"I gave no further thought to the incident until about ten minutes before the performance was due to commence, when one of the stage hands came to me with a look of grave anxiety upon his face. It appeared that the model conservatory, in which Mr. Devant intended to 'grow' some real roses for presentation to the Queen, had been badly broken through the carelessness of a scene-shifter. 'I don't know what the guv'nor will say when he hears of it!' exclaimed the stage hand, anxiously. 'Don't you dare to breathe a word to him about it!' I commanded, for I knew that the report of the accident might easily upset him for the entire performance. Then I suddenly thought of the bag I had brought. The conservatory was quickly carried outside, and I immediately set to work to try to repair the damage. To my delight the strips of brass saved the situation, and I managed to get the apparatus patched up and put back in its place exactly one minute before the curtain was due to rise. Long after the performance was over I told Mr. Devant what had occurred, and together we fervently blessed my little black bag.

"The famous box trick was the subject of an equally disconcerting incident. As you may remember, Mr. Devant used to allow an assistant to be locked inside a large box, which was afterwards securely bound with rope. In a few seconds the man would make

(3) The handcuffs are then clamped over the wrists in the ordinary way. Holding his hands well away from his body to prove that he does not obtain access to any secret "key," the performer grasps each handcuff in turn in the manner depicted, and a sharp pull brings it open. The ball will fall out between the first and second fingers, whence it may be disposed of at the first opportunity.

good his escape, although the fastenings and lashings were not tampered with in any way. Among the committee who were invited to come upon the stage from the audience to examine the box at every performance we noticed that one man seemed to be always in evidence. Night after night he came up and examined the box with the closest scrutiny, obviously determined to probe the secret of the trick if it took him several months. One evening, after the performance, Devant told me that he was afraid the gentleman in question was beginning to get very warm

upon the scent, and he suggested that we should be well advised to withdraw the box trick from our programme for a few weeks until his interest had subsided. 'Why not alter the method of working the effect?' I suggested. He jumped at the idea, and I immediately hurried home to my workshop and commenced to rebuild the box. I worked at it half-way through the night, and within twenty-four hours the illusion had been reconstructed on entirely new lines. I left the box at the theatre, together with a note asking Devant to see if he could discover the secret, and enclosing the 'key' to the mystery in a separate sealed envelope. He examined the apparatus for several hours in the hope of finding some sort of secret panel, but eventually had to admit himself beaten. Then he opened the envelope containing the solution of the problem, but this helped him no further, for the box was a mechanical paradox—it was impossible to escape from it until it had been securely fastened and roped.

"For several weeks the revised version of the box trick went remarkably well, until one evening the man who had to be imprisoned inside forgot the method by which he was enabled to escape. Perspiring with anxiety, Mr. Devant waited and waited for the man to make his reappearance, until the audience began to suspect that something was amiss. At last, in despair, Devant decided he would have to open the box in the ordinary way and pass over the failure of the illusion with as little fuss as possible. Upon the lid being raised, however, it was discovered that his distress at the failure of the illusion had caused the assistant to faint. He was lifted out unconscious and handed over to the care of a doctor, and the audience sympathetically accepted his indisposition as a complete excuse for the failure of the trick. Another assistant was introduced and the performance repeated—this time with absolute success.

"One of our famous magicians who was appearing at a large provincial hall had an illusion in which he produced various liquids from a bottle, but, not satisfied with the climax of this, asked me to make him a piece of apparatus which would enable him to conclude his performance by pouring several gallons of water from the same receptacle. I therefore fixed a large tank of water over the stage, from which a flexible metal tube ran down behind the back curtains. At the conclusion of his 'turn' the conjurer had merely to step to the back of the stage, where a hidden assistant secretly connected the piping to the back of his waistcoat, whence another tube ran under his armpit and down his sleeve to the bottle held in his hand. At rehearsals this worked very well, but on the first night of its production the tubing concealed beneath his clothing sprang a leak, and the audience were surprised to see enormous quantities of water saturating him right down to his feet, and pouring out of his boots. So that they should not see what had happened, the conjurer pretended that he had accidentally turned the bottle round the wrong way and spilled the contents over himself. The audience laughed uproariously, and the mishap was regarded as a really choice piece of comedy; but to repeat what the conjurer said to me when he came off would be prejudicial to public morals!

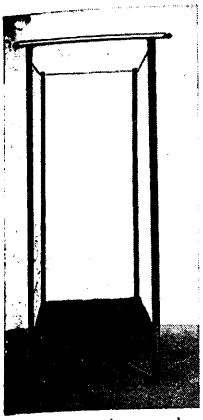
"One morning, later, whilst working in a room beneath the stage, I heard a loud report, and rushing upstairs found that a large model airship, which was one of the leading novelties of the week's programme, had burst and was on fire. The staff were well drilled for such an emergency as this, and in a very short time they had the conflagration in hand. One of the amateur firemen suddenly thought of the idea of utilizing the tank I had fixed above the stage as a means of playing on the flames from above. Unfortunately, I was immediately underneath him at the moment he turned on the water, and it poured down on me like a cataract. At that moment the conjurer for whom I had made the tank came in, and immediately he saw me he burst out laughing. That evening he presented me with a nicely bound copy of Shakespeare's works, on the wrapper of which he had written 'See page 349.' Upon this page he had marked two lines from 'Hamlet':—

'For 'tis sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petard.'"

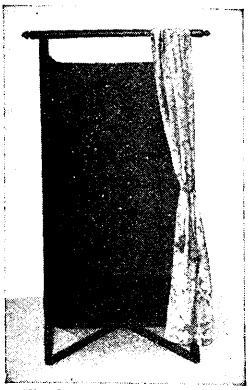
I asked Mr. Bate to explain how illusions are invented.

"The ideas for the effects themselves," he said, "arise from the most trivial incidents or from the most casual remarks. To decide what effect to produce, however, is much easier than to devise a means of producing it. The underlying principle of many illusions is this: the inventor first imagines all the possible solutions of the 'secret' that may arise in the minds of an average audience, and then tackles the problem from an entirely different angle. At the same time, if he can, so to speak, draw a red herring across the trail by making it appear that the effect is produced exactly as the onlooker supposes, so much the better. As a simple example, suppose a

A HOME-MADE "VANISHING LADY" ILLUSION.



(1) The bare framework of the "cabinet" is first offered for inspection.



(2) In full view of the audience the framework is draped with black curtains to form a kind of "tent."

conjurer can make his audience believe that a vanished coin has gone up his sleeve when he has merely 'palmed' it, the effect of the sleight is greatly enhanced by repeating it with his coat off.

"Some of the big illusions are based upon simple but little-known principles, whilst others are extremely complicated in their construction and difficult to present convincingly. Of course, from a practical point of view, the simpler the construction of an illusion the better, because it enables the apparatus to be examined minutely by members of the audience. I suppose you would not believe me if I told you that I could perform a 'disappearing lady' illusion in an ordinary drawing-room?"

"With apparatus that would bear inspection?" I asked.

Mr. Bate nodded.

"You shall see for yourself," he said.

A small wooden platform raised a few inches from the ground by four ordinary wooden legs was first placed in the centre of the room. Upon this a simple wooden framework was erected, which was draped with four dark curtains to form a kind of tent. The front curtain was suspended from curtain-rings so that it could be easily drawn. At Mr. Bate's invitation I examined the entire structure, but could find no suggestion of trickery in it. A young lady entered the room and stepped into the "tent."

"If desired," explained Mr. Bate, "a committee of two from the audience may be seated behind the tent during the performance. Now watch closely."

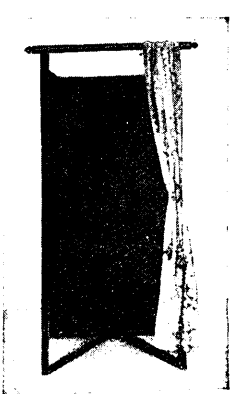
He then drew the front curtain, made a few passes with his hands, pulled the curtain open again, and the lady had vanished!

Mr. Bate invited me to take a peep behind the tent to see if I could discover where the lady had gone. There was no sign of her. I stepped round to the front again and watched closely whilst Mr. Bate drew the curtain once more. He made another pass with his hands, the curtain was opened, and the young lady stepped forward! Finally, I examined the entire apparatus once again, but failed to find any clue to the mystery.

Mr. Bate kindly consented to the publication of the accompanying photographs in order to help amateur conjurers to build the illusion for themselves.

Can you guess how it is done?

(3) The lady steps into the cabinet. The front curtain is drawn, the conjurer makes a few passes, the curtain is pulled away—



(4) And the lady has vanished!

(The complete explanation of this original illusion is given on page 106.)

"But still, I found it," insisted Falea.

ONE DROP OF MOONSHINE

by

JOHN RUSSELL

AUTHOR OF

"WHERE THE PAVEMENT ENDS."

ILLUSTRATED BY UGO MATANIA

FALEA found it. But Tumaui paddled the canoe from which Falea found it. And Motui owned the canoe which Tumaui paddled when Falea found it. And old Mata was the respected father of Motui, the canoe-owner, and of Tumaui, the paddler, and of Falea, who found it. There you have the claims in the case and the basis for some very pretty litigation. The trouble was that in the island of Fufuti are no courts and no judges, and the only instrument known to ancient custom for the settlement of legal disputes is a club studded with sharks' teeth.

Tumaui, the giant, was naturally first to recall that primitive fact.

"Then I suppose we shall have to fight for it," he said, simply. "That is the quickest way. We can fight, and whoever is not killed can take the pearl."

They were resting in purple shadow under the low and broad-thatched eaves that made a sort of veranda to their rambling hut; the four of them—old Mata and his three sons. Outward lay the bright white crescent of Fufuti beach—a scythe eternally reaping the roll of the Pacific. Between the sharp tips of its headlands an endless harvest was gathered; torn up in great blue sheaves on the reef, laid over shoreward rank by rank, to fall in rushing windrows of foam. They dwelt on the edge of that silver blade. Its curve was their world; its chord, their horizon; the thunder of its mighty shearing, the common pulse of their lives.

And now all at once it had yielded its chief prize. From the coral caverns it guarded they had plucked this treasure—a talisman that straightway changed every outlook, pushed back every limit, and keyed their peaceful tenor to a strange and violent note.

"But still, I found it," insisted Falea.

He was the youngest, a sea-godling with skin the tint of a new-minted penny, with features as delicately chiselled as a shell, and wavy hair sun-crisped and scented in wild orange juice. He kept a little apart from the rest, and in the pout of his lip, like a petal of scarlet hibiscus, was bitterness, the bitterness of frustrate boyish hopes.

"But still, I did find it!" he repeated.

"You have said so ten-ten times," returned Tumaui. "And if you had found it ten-ten times over that would make no difference. It is just as much mine. Who took you to the fishing, pray, and tended the proa while you dived? Who laid out the oysters to rot? I will fight you, if you like, Falea—your claim against my claim."

But Motui chuckled.

"Our brother is anxious to begin the only argument he understands. We others would rather take counsel a little further. I have my own claim, Tumaui. I told you where that deep-water shell-bed lay. I sent you there. Attend me, now. If you force a fight the rest of us would certainly kill you. That would give us your claim to divide among us. One-fourth part—say, four thousand Chili dollars."

They turned with one impulse, and his smirk accepted the tribute. People had another name for Motui—"Sharp-Wit" they called him; the eldest, the smallest, and the most cunning of Mata's sons. How far his brethren trusted his quality might have been measured by Tumaui's darker frown, by the godling's uneasiness, and by the twinkling suspicion of old Mata himself. Nevertheless they did most strictly attend him.

"How do you know it would be four thousand?" demanded Mata, and Motui made a gesture plausible and confident.

"Many things are known to me. I have been away—out there. I have been to Raratonga, and to Fiji, and even to Townsville. And to the Paumotus, where they gather pearls in baskets. Who should know but I? Once at Papeete I saw a pearl. It was a size smaller than this of ours. Yes; it was the next small size. But the fat French pearl buyer gave sixteen thousand Chili dollars for it," he added.

He did not use a native word for thousands; there is no such word in Fufuti speech. But they were all more or less familiar with pidgin-French symbols of trade. They had the same perception of gigantic wealth, found the same fascination in an actual figure. Hungrily, every eye sought the object again where it lay on the mat beside them, nested in an unrolled wisp of coco-nut fibre.

IT was an amazing pearl, such a one as comes to light now and then from Coromandel or Ceylon, from Thursday Island or the Low Archipelago, to shake the market and set the collectors of the world distracted. Not alone by its size—the equal of a robin's egg, but this was flawless, uniform in grain and colouring, singly and marvellously perfect, fit to adorn the bosom of Selene, with no more than the merest luminous thought of a blush upon it, like that the pallid goddess betrayed, perhaps, the time she spied the young Endymion.

So it might have seemed to some wandering beachcomber—who, as Tusitala of beloved memory tells us, is often poor relation to the poet—if he had chanced to spy it there.

To others of sober turn it might have been rather a sinister thing, for it was lovelier and far more precious than many a gem for which feuds have been fought and life, honour, and tears freely spilled; for which crowns and courtesans have been famed and have earned ill-fame; a deadly concentrate of lust, greed, and envy; a fateful corrosive on the minds of men.

To these dwellers by Fufuti beach—children of the sun, child-eyed and child-hearted survivors in the last, last remnant of an earthly paradise—it meant matters much simpler.

"Sixteen thousand Chili," remarked Mata, "would buy a real white man's house with a tin roof, and pigs and tobacco! Also, maybe, a new shot-gun which we need so

badly," he added, nodding toward the ancient, rusted fowling-piece on the wall.

It lay before them as yet unstoried; virgin; vastly potential. And each of the others understood Mata's covetous thrill in reading out its destiny, and each did the same for himself, with his own secret amendments, until, while they stared tense and eager, suddenly the dangerous silence was ended by a little quaver of merriment and the pearl itself flashed—presto!—with an effect of magic.

Startled, they saw it caught in slim brown fingers. And then presently they relaxed again. For the clever bit of sleight had been performed by the fifth member of their household, whom they had forgotten, whom they often did forget, so quiet she would keep for hours—Lele, the cripple girl.

SHE sat propped upon her low bedstead, a trundle-bed, in fact, a battered relic of Fufuti's only missionary establishment (lately dispersed) and Lele's own personal and unlucky inheritance. She had leaned from that couch to whip away the strip of coco-nut fibre and neatly possess herself of their prize. Now she rolled it and tossed it like a toy and held it up before the light to show its wan splendour.

"Pretty—it is pretty!" she cried. "But it is sad, too," she added softly to herself. "See how pale and sad. Like moonshine. Like a drop of moonshine!"

She made them smile. Even dark Tumaui and sulky Falea smiled at her whimsey. It was hard not to laugh with Lele, whenever Lele still chose to laugh.

There had been a time of plenteous laughter, of little else but laughter; a time when no other maid in the island could match her spendthrift spirit of youth and health. No other had been so apt to run and to play; to chase the rainbow fish a fathom deep through the blued champagne of the lagoon, to ride the roaring surf like a sky-tossed bubble, to dance like a wind-tormented leaf of the passion-vine until her lithe and strong young body seemed to melt in the rhythm of the chant.

Aye, she had laughed in those times. And she had sung. And she had had a way of calling folk and things and life itself by all manner of sharp or endearing little names—the way of a bird. And for the rest she had flirted—delightfully. Outrageously. With the entire male population; with Mata's three sons in particular. Until the question of her ultimate marriage, and her proper suppression in marriage, had become not so much a public topic as a public issue.

But a day had ended all that. The day, long to be remembered with mingled awe and humour by the easy-going islanders, when the mission of the late Rev. Dinwiddie fell, and great was the fall thereof.

It fell, quite literally, in the first hurricane of its first season; for the Reverend D. neglected to found himself on a rock, and the collapse of all his dreams of an orthodox, converted, flannel-shirted, hymn-singing Fufuti was equally complete with the wreck of beam and roof-tree, of corrugated iron slabs and imported worsted texts that strewed its beach. Nobody would have complained much, perhaps, except the reverend himself—nobody else would greatly have bemoaned that obvious rude jest of the old rude gods—if Lele had not happened to be an accidental sacrifice. Lele, the untamed creature marked for a first convert, who was somehow caught in the disaster, pinned down by a settling wall, crushed and maimed for life.

Since then she had come to live with Mata, her half-uncle and the only relative who could find a place for her. She came with her trundle-bed—and in truth, she did wonders; kept the house and the hearth, took direction of the two aged cooking-women, wove and sewed and braided sennit, and meanwhile contrived never to be seen off the couch where she reigned. It was her courage and her pride still to reign, an apparent queen; to be freshly garbed and combed and beflowered, with chains of shells and bright berries on her breast, with clusters of starry stephanotis in her glorious hair, to deck her beauty as before. Even though it meant nothing.

For it could mean nothing now to any man.

The three sons of Mata were kind. They were indulgent. They accepted her in fraternal harmony. Never again could she flutter them. Never again in their eyes, nor in any eyes, would she see the quick flame of jealousy and desire for Lele, a cripple girl.

Perhaps that fact like a fixed shadow had deepened her vision in unexpected ways; perhaps that wild young heart, bereft of youth, had gained an understanding and a tenderness of them in their peaceful, contented life together such as they never suspected. She was watching them anxiously from under lowered lashes while she played so lightly with the pearl.

"And yet of itself it is only an old oyster egg," she ventured, at last.

"Oyster egg?" echoed Motui, shocked. "A fine thing to call it! Have you no sense, girl?"

This time they did not smile. The superior male warned her of a limit. They had gone too far toward actual tragedy in this business.

"It is the most wonderful find ever was made on Fufuti," explained Motui. "It is

the happiest fortune that could come to us!"

Lele took the pearl in her hollowed hands, and held it out before them over her knee like a ball of cold fire in a cup, and so presided quite naturally as stake-holder and umpire.

"It has not made anyone very happy yet," she observed. "You still want to fight, Tumaui? Come—tell your plan, and what you would do if you won."

"Hoo!" said Tumaui in his big chest. "I would buy a fast schooner, like white men have, with a brass devil-devil to make it go without wind."

"All for yourself?" asked Lele.

"Of course!"

"You would be happy then?"

"Of course!"

"And Mata—what do you say?"

"I say, let us draw lots," returned the old man, sturdily. "It is fair. We put many small pebbles in a bag and draw one by one. He who gets the last pebble gets the pearl."

"For himself?"

"Yes."

"To buy pigs and shot-guns?"

"Yes!"

"That would make you happy?"

"Yes—yes!" nodded Mata.

"And you, Motui?"

Motui was ready. Trust Motui to be ready with a scheme. What they needed to settle the whole difficulty, Motui said, was an able salesman. If they waited for the regular trader to come around next month he would be sure to cheat them. On the other hand, if they should delegate one of their own number to visit the far markets—a man skilful, deep, and wise—doubtless he would get much more than sixteen thousand; would return triumphant, a sack of silver in either fist, with enough to satisfy everybody!

"I would ask no pay for my trouble," concluded the cunning Motui, modestly.

"Oh-ho!" said Lele. "You are that man?"

"I am the right man."

"To take the pearl away, yourself, among the white people—you would be happy?"

Motui admitted nothing would make him happier, and Lele came to the youngest son.

"Falea, it is your turn."

Throughout the session Falea had remained mostly a fretful auditor. He still kept to one side of the others. His grievance was heavier than theirs—as his years were lighter—and would allow no compromise, it seemed. For abruptly, at Lele's appeal, he kicked the balance sky-high.

"No! I will not have a turn. I will not join to be talked out of it. Thieves!" he cried, as he sprang to his feet.

IT was the snapping of their tension. Stealthily, Motui loosed a knife in his belt. Tumaui rose like a thunder-cloud.

"Who is a thief?"

"You—each of you!" declared Falea. "If I pick a coco-nut, is it mine? If I find a pearl—can anyone take it from me without stealing? Or any part of it?" he added, shouting them down.

A very handsome copper-bronze godling he looked.

"A part of a pearl is no good to me. The pearl itself is the charm—and with it I would be a king! I could go anywhere and have anything," he yearned. "I could see the white men's ports and ride their ships, and white men would wait on me. I could have a pink silk shirt, such as the trader wears; and a gold chain, and rings, and shoes—big yellow shoes. I could have a music-box and bottles of scent and sweet-scented oil, and neckties and a jew's-harp, and a watch with a bell in it, and a green umbrella, and three kinds of tinned meat for breakfast!"

At every lyric fling he had sidled a little nearer to Lele's couch, while the others drew together in common cause, intent and furious.

"You think you can get them?" Tumaui was bawling. "Fool!"

"I can try!" said Falea, and with the word, being near enough, made a desperate snatch. And they came huddling after and snatched to prevent him. And like him they snatched—the air.

Lele was still presiding. So far as they could see, she had not budged. She still held her hands out idly over her knee. But her hands were empty. With a graceful little gesture she showed how entirely empty, and smiled up ever so slightly at their stricken faces. But by magic, or by sleight—the pearl was gone!

It was gone, and the purple shadows seemed to darken about them as they stared and stammered.

"That drop of moonshine?" she answered, sweetly. "Oh, it is put away. It is safe. I have decided to keep it for myself."

They gave a four-fold gasp.

"Yes," she said. "Why not? It is the nature of this treasure that everyone wants it for himself alone. I do not notice that any of you thought of me, of Lele.

"*I* long for things, too. *I* would like to be happy, too. Greatly I would like it. I know little of white men or of white men's customs—and what I have learned has not made me very happy." (They should have winced at that.) "But you all believe the white men can sell you some wonderful happiness for your pearl. Very well! I

"Very well. I go. But mind, if you favour any rival to me—look out!"

shall keep it until the trader comes, to buy some happiness of my own."

She paused, and of a sudden her glance unveiled, the prisoned soul flamed out at them like a steel blade from a scabbard.

"Unless—you mean to search, to drag and trample me. Do, and I scream for the neighbours, and the pearl you never see again. Never—never, I promise. Not though you kill me. Now, go on," she cried. "Go on and search a poor cripple girl!"

As a matter of fact, with their racial handicap at such ungentle business, they hardly knew how to begin. The pearl was hidden. So small a thing she might have concealed anywhere roundabout. Bewildered, angry, and distrustful—vainly seeking to meet that inexpugnable feminine

injustice to man which men have sought in vain to meet—they edged off into the open and stood for a time with their heads together.

Meanwhile, Lele stayed alone under the deep-thatched eaves. She sank back until she leaned against the wall of the hut, an exhausted and very limp little peacemaker.

She roused from that reverie to find Tumaui standing alone before her on the mat.

"Lele!" he began, brusquely. He was under some difficulty in speaking; the whole pose and port of that brawny giant had been curiously schooled. "Lele, I have not many words," he said. "Only these. You are very sure of yourself, Lele. But you cannot shift alone. You will need protection. I am a strong protector. We would get on very well together—you and I."

She sat up in slow amazement, almost in terror, her fingers spread upon her breast.

"What—what are you trying to say?"

"Will you marry me, Lele?" he blurted.

She gazed incredulous, transfixed.

"Oh—oh—oh!" she breathed, and then with an effort, "I—I cannot tell. I will think of it. Go away, Tumaui."

Like one who discards an irksome part, Tumaui seemed to fill out again, so that he bulked over her.

"Very well. I go. But mind, I will not be beaten. If you favour any rival to me—look out! I twist his throat"—his great naked arms knotted—"like the string of an orange! Remember!"

He departed, and she was once more alone with her throbbing heart; alone, until there crept in under the eaves—her highly respected half-uncle, old Mata himself.

"Lele!" he began. As a man of domestic experience he did this sort of thing rather better; his brown face, wrinkled like a nut, showed nothing but benevolence. "Oh, Lele, what a very able girl you are! But you cannot manage by yourself. You will need a position to maintain you, Lele. I am a high-chief, and if I choose to take another wife she will have authority. We would get on very well together, you and I."

"What—what is the talk?"

"I am asking you in marriage, Lele."

She lowered her face in her hands.

"I must think. Go away, Mata."

"Very well," said the old gentleman, crestfallen. "I go. But I do not advise you to listen to any other proposals, my dear. These sons of mine are lively fellows. Nobody could keep them in order for you, save only me. Remember that!"

She never knew how long it was before another voice murmured in her ear—a smooth and luring voice this time.

"Lele—oh, Lele!" it began, and she looked up at Motui and his smirk. "Greatly I admire you, Lele. You are a very clever girl. Too clever not to make the most of your chance when I tell you—when I tell you that you need not *always* be a cripple, Lele. I know where you can be cured! We can go to that place together, you and I."

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

"There is a schooner leaving our harbour to-morrow for Fiji, and at Fiji is a hospital where the great white medicine doctors work their wonderful cures. Will you not be glad to be free again? Will you not rejoice to sport and to run as you used? Then come with me to Fiji!"

She swayed on her couch.

"Only marry me, Lele, and I will have you carried aboard to-night!"

Somehow, suffocated though she was, she found the force to wave him away.

"Very well," he said, spitefully. "I go. But no one can make you any better offer, Lele. No one else could give you such happiness. Mark what I say!"

YET that was not to be her last trial. That was not to be the top-note plucked upon her tautened soul. For while she lay, poignantly there stole a breath of wild orange, and speech as soft as the music of a wind-harp caressed her. Falea knelt by her side.

"Lele—oh, Lele! What a brave spirit is yours! How brave you are, Lele!" he whispered. "But do not think to live without love. Great is my love for you, Lele. Let us go far off together, you and I."

Long and long it seemed since any man had spoken to her like that; long and long it was to have been before ever a man spoke to her so again—never in this world.

"Let us wed, Lele!"

With words as sweet as song he wooed her, the way she had been wooed in the time of her strength and beauty and perfection, when, as a sea nymph, she had sung and danced along the strand and tasted the savour of life.

"Oh, Lele, you are like the flower in the cool shade! You are like the dew in the moss! Come with me! My canoe lies at the lagoon. I will carry you in my arms, and we will go away to some far island where none can find us. There we will be merry all day, and I will keep you and never let you go for great love, Lele!"

An arm came stealing and drawing her close till she fluttered like a netted bird. And in her own heart dwelt a traitor to subdue her; in her own veins beat an answering pulse. She had been a woman, cruelly robbed and deprived. She was a

woman still, amazingly and deliriously and beyond all dreaming enriched once more. Men desired her. Men strove for her. Men urged her with promises. With a lover's clasp about her and a lover's importunate murmur at her side, half-swooning, speechless, she had no will to resist.

Her fingers were slyly taken and forced open. A hot and eager hand crept to explore the looped necklaces on her breast and the mats and coverings about her. And she yielded. She was yielding. She was on the very point of yielding when, through misted eyes, she saw the young face so near her own suddenly convulsed with pain—saw a monstrous hand descend and grip the godling by the hair of his head!

"Ha! Have I caught you, rat?" thundered a raging voice. "After we agreed none should start searching for himself!"

Tumaui it was! Tumaui, who had stalked to nab Falea unawares. And while

"I still have it." said Lele. She held the pearl up before them to show its loveliness.

they fought, the other two came running from opposite corners of the hut.

"Hold him! Did he get the pearl?" cried Mata, and flung himself into the fray.

"Hold them both! One of them has the pearl!" chattered Motui, as he followed.

"Thieves!" sobbed Falea, half-strangled. "In another minute I would have won the pearl!"

"Come on then, all of you!" roared Tumaui. "Everybody in! This is the time to decide. I fight you all—so—and so—and so! Ho-ho! And the best one shall take the pearl!"

With a blow of his fist he sent Motui's knife spinning like a silver flying-fish. Falea he thrust down between his knees and gathered Motui in his arms to crush him; and so he might have done had not Mata hung like a slug at his mighty neck.

For a wink the forces balanced; they stayed in statued fury, a tangle of writhing limbs.

"STOP—stop, or I fire!"

The cry reached them through the heat of battle. It was the sort of cry to make them heed, and vaguely at first, and then in speedily-petrified astonishment, they were appraised of Lele. Sitting propped on her couch as before, as always, presiding. And presiding this time with a vengeance. Across her knee she held the rusty family fowling-piece which she had snatched from its nail on the wall behind.

"Stop!" she insisted; and they were anxious so to do. "Stand off!" she warned; and so they did.

"Be careful—it is loaded!" shrilled Mata.

For answer she cocked the weapon deliberately and covered them at point-blank range with its single eye of some ancient, huge calibre. It was a famous institution, that Mata family gun, the only one on the island. Many years had they kept it in deserved respect, and they flinched before its probing, merciless stare. And over it, and with its aid, she probed them as well.

At that instant was given her a final opportunity to read passion and jealousy and thwarted desire in the faces of her suitors—for the sake of Lele, a cripple girl.

"Wicked men!" She passed them in slow review. "Oh, wicked—wicked men!" she said, still shaken with the storm that had swept her so that the necklaces clicked on her heaving bosom. "Liars, every one! It was only the pearl you wanted!"

Their sullen eyes sought the ground, but presently Mata spoke their thought.

"For all that, you will have to choose among us, Lele. You will have to settle this. Pick someone, and give him the gun to defend himself, and you, and the pearl—if you still have the pearl—if you still have the pearl. Buy your own happiness as you will!"

"Yes—yes," they chorused. "Choose!"

"Very well," said Lele, after a pause. "I still have it." Without relinquishing the gun, she made a little flashing gesture of her free hand, and somehow, from somewhere—presto!—the treasure appeared again. She held it up before them to show its loveliness; the wondrous soft radiance of that fateful toy that seemed to light all the shadows. "And I will choose," she added.

"I do not marvel any more why it should be so sad. I know. Because it is so wicked. It made you wicked—Tumaui! Motui! Falea! Mata! Me it made wicked, also. And see how sad we are! Where are peace and content such as we used to know? Where are the trust and affection and loving kindness that bound us?"

They hung their heads before her.

"Now do I remember," she went on, in a kind of mournful exaltation, "now do I remember the wisdom of the white man! At the missionary's chapel I learned it, and indeed I have paid for it with the life and the hope out of my own body: '*The lust of riches is the seed of evil*,'" she quoted, with the full throat of knowledge and of suffering.

"So they say. So their Book has taught. So they must believe. And it is true! See how this evil seed has grown temptations and selfishness and wickedness in our hearts. Wherever it might go it would grow the same fruit. And so," she said, brooding upon them, yearning over them with great, tender, understanding eyes—child-like and still unfathomable—"and so, if it be mine to buy happiness with, let me buy for you and for the white men, too, by their own wisdom. If I must choose my happiness, let it be what it was and will be for ever——"

Swift as conjuring she slipped that glorious pearl into the muzzle of the gun, and aiming well over their heads toward the foaming reefs, while they covered their ears in dismay and awe—fired.

"Only moonshine, after all!"

THE EXIT OF BATTLING BILLSON

by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

THE Theatre Royal, Llunindnno, is in the middle of the principal thoroughfare of that repellent town, and immediately opposite its grubby main entrance there is a lamp-post. Under this lamp-post, as I approached, a man was standing. He was a large man, and his air was that of one who has recently passed through some trying experience. There was dust on his person, and he had lost his hat. At the sound of my footsteps he turned, and the rays of the lamp revealed the familiar features of my old friend Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge.

"Great Scott!" I ejaculated. "What are you doing here?"

There was no possibility of hallucination. It was the man himself in the flesh. And what Ukridge, a free agent, could be doing in Llunindnno was more than I could imagine. Situated, as its name implies, in Wales, it is a dark, dingy, dishevelled spot, inhabited by tough and sinister men with suspicious eyes and three-day beards; and to me, after a mere forty minutes' sojourn in the place, it was incredible that anyone should be there except on compulsion.

Ukridge gaped at me incredulously.

"Corky, old horse!" he said, "this is, upon my Sam, without exception the most amazing event in the world's history. The last bloke I expected to see."

"Same here. Is anything the matter?" I asked, eyeing his bedraggled appearance.

"Matter? I should say something was the matter!" snorted Ukridge, astonishment giving way to righteous indignation. "They chucked me out!"

"Chucked you out? Who? Where from?"

"This infernal theatre, laddie. After taking my good money, dash it! At least, I got in on my face, but that has nothing to do with the principle of the thing. Corky, my boy, don't you ever go about this world seeking for justice, because there's no such thing under the broad vault of heaven. I had just gone out for a breather after the first act, and when I came back I found some fiend in human shape had pinched my seat. And just because I tried to lift the fellow out by the ears, a dozen hired assassins swooped down and shot me out. Me, I'll trouble you! The injured party! Upon my Sam," he said, heatedly, with a longing look at the closed door, "I've a dashed good mind to——"

"I shouldn't," I said, soothingly. "After all, what does it matter? It's just one of those things that are bound to happen from time to time. The man of affairs passes them off with a light laugh."

"Yes, but——"

"Come and have a drink."

The suggestion made him waver. The light of battle died down in his eyes. He stood for a moment in thought.

"You wouldn't bung a brick through the window?" he queried, doubtfully.

"No, no!"

"Perhaps you're right."

He linked his arm in mine and we crossed the road to where the lights of a public-house shone like heartening beacons. The crisis was over.

"Corky," said Ukridge, warily laying down his mug of beer on the counter a few moments later, lest emotion should cause him to spill any of its precious contents, "I can't get over, I simply cannot get over the astounding fact of your being in this blighted town."

I explained my position. My presence in Llunindnno was due to the fact that the paper which occasionally made use of my services as a special writer had sent me to compose a fuller and more scholarly report than its local correspondent seemed capable of concocting of the activities of one Evan Jones, the latest of those revivalists who periodically convulse the emotions of the Welsh mining population. His last and biggest meeting was to take place next morning at eleven o'clock.

"But what are you doing here?" I asked.

"What am *I* doing here?" said Ukridge. "Who, me? Why, where else would you expect me to be? Haven't you heard?"

"Heard what?"

"Haven't you seen the posters?"

"What posters? I only arrived an hour ago."

"My dear old horse! Then naturally you aren't abreast of local affairs." He drained his mug, breathed contentedly, and led me out into the street. "Look!"

He was pointing at a poster, boldly lettered in red and black, which decorated the side-wall of the Bon Ton Millinery Emporium. The street-lighting system of Llunindnno is defective, but I was able to read what it said:—

ODDFELLOWS' HALL.

Special Ten-Round Contest.

LLOYD THOMAS

(Llunindnno)

vs.

BATTLING BILLSON

(Bermondsey).

"Comes off to-morrow night," said Ukridge. "And I don't mind telling you, laddie, that I expect to make a colossal fortune."

"Are you still managing the Battler?" I said, surprised at this dogged perseverance. "I should have thought that after your last two experiences you would have had about enough of it."

"Oh, he means business this time! I've been talking to him like a father."

"How much does he get?"

"Twenty quid."

"Twenty quid? Well, where does the colossal fortune come in? Your share will only be a tenner."

"No, my boy. You haven't got on to my devilish shrewdness. I'm not in on the purse at all this time. I'm the management."

"The management?"

"Well, part of it. You remember Isaac O'Brien, the bookie I was partner with till that chump Looney Coote smashed the business? Izzy Previn is his real name. We've gone shares in this thing. Izzy came down a week ago, hired the hall, and looked after the advertising and so on; and I arrived with good old Billson this afternoon. We're giving him twenty quid, and the other fellow's getting another twenty; and all the rest of the cash Izzy and I split on a fifty-fifty basis. Affluence, laddie! That's what it means. Affluence beyond the dreams of a Monte Cristo. Owing to this Jones fellow the place is crowded, and every sportsman for miles around will be there to-morrow at five bob a head, cheaper seats two-and-six, and standing-room one shilling. Add lemonade and fried fish privileges, and you have a proposition almost without parallel in the annals of commerce. I couldn't be more on velvet if they gave me a sack and a shovel and let me loose in the Mint."

I congratulated him in suitable terms.

"How is the Battler?" I asked.

"Trained to an ounce. Come and see him to-morrow morning."

"I can't come in the morning. I've got to go to this Jones meeting."

"Oh, yes. Well, make it early in the afternoon, then. Don't come later than three, because he will be resting. We're at Number Seven, Caerleon Street. Ask for the Cap and Feathers public-house, and turn sharp to the left."

I WAS in a curiously uplifted mood on the following afternoon as I set out to pay my respects to Mr. Billson. This was the first time I had had occasion to attend one of these revival meetings, and the effect it had had on me was to make me feel as if I had been imbibing large quantities of champagne to the accompaniment of a very loud orchestra. Even before the revivalist rose to speak, the proceedings had had an effervescent quality singularly unsettling to the sober mind, for the vast gathering had begun to sing hymns directly they took their seats; and while the opinion I had formed of the inhabitants of Llunindnno was not high, there was no denying their vocal powers. There is something about a Welsh voice when raised in song that no other voice seems to possess—a creepy, heart-

searching quality that gets right into a man's inner consciousness and stirs it up with a pole. And on top of this had come Evan Jones's address.

It did not take me long to understand why this man had gone through the countryside like a flame. He had magnetism, intense earnestness, and the voice of a prophet crying in the wilderness. His fiery eyes seemed to single out each individual in the hall, and every time he paused sighings and wailings went up like the smoke of a furnace. And then, after speaking for what I discovered with amazement on consulting my watch was considerably over an hour, he stopped. And I blinked like an aroused somnambulist, shook myself to make sure I was still there, and came away. And now, as I walked in search of the Cap and Feathers, I was, as I say, oddly exhilarated: and I was strolling along in a sort of trance when a sudden uproar jerked me from my thoughts. I looked about me, and saw the sign of the Cap and Feathers suspended over a building across the street.

It was a dubious-looking hostelry in a dubious neighbourhood: and the sounds proceeding from its interior were not reassuring to a peace-loving pedestrian. There was a good deal of shouting going on and much smashing of glass; and, as I stood there, the door flew open and a familiar figure emerged rather hastily. A moment later there appeared in the doorway a woman.

She was a small woman, but she carried the largest and most intimidating mop I had ever seen. It dripped dirty water as she brandished it; and the man, glancing apprehensively over his shoulder, proceeded rapidly on his way.

"Hullo, Mr. Billson!" I said, as he shot by me.

IT was not, perhaps, the best-chosen moment for endeavouring to engage him in light conversation. He showed no disposition whatever to linger. He vanished round the corner, and the woman, with a few winged words, gave her mop a victorious flourish and re-entered the public-house. I walked on, and a little later a huge figure stepped cautiously out of an alleyway and fell into step at my side.

"Didn't recognize you, mister," said Mr. Billson, apologetically.

"You seemed in rather a hurry," I agreed.

"R!" said Mr. Billson, and a thoughtful silence descended upon him for a space.

"Who," I asked, tactlessly, perhaps, "was your lady friend?"

Mr. Billson looked a trifle sheepish. Unnecessarily, in my opinion. Even heroes may legitimately quail before a mop wielded by an angry woman.

"She come out of a back room," he said, with embarrassment. "Started makin' a fuss when she saw what I'd done. So I come away. You can't dot a woman," argued Mr. Billson, chivalrously.

"Certainly not," I agreed. "But what was the trouble?"

"I been doin' good," said Mr. Billson, virtuously.

"Doing good?"

"Spillin' their beers."

"Whose beers?"

"All of their beers. I went in and there was a lot of sinful fellers drinkin' beers. So I spilled 'em. All of 'em. Walked round and spilled all of them beers, one after the other. Not 'arf surprised them pore sinners wasn't," said Mr. Billson, with what sounded to me not unlike a worldly chuckle.

"I can readily imagine it."

"Huh?"

"I say I bet they were."

"R!" said Mr. Billson. He frowned. "Beer," he proceeded, with cold austerity, "ain't right. Sinful, that's what beer is. It stingeth like a serpent and biteth like a ruddy adder."

My mouth watered a little. Beer like that was what I had been scouring the country for for years. I thought it imprudent, however, to say so. For some reason which I could not fathom, my companion, once as fond of his half-pint as the next man, seemed to have conceived a puritanical hostility to the beverage. I decided to change the subject.

"I'm looking forward to seeing you fight to-night," I said.

He eyed me woodenly

"Me?"

"Yes. At the Oddfellows' Hall, you know."

He shook his head.

"I ain't fighting at no Oddfellows' Hall," he replied. "Not at no Oddfellows' Hall nor nowhere else I'm not fighting, not to-night nor no night." He pondered stolidly, and then, as if coming to the conclusion that his last sentence could be improved by the addition of a negative, added "No!"

And having said this, he suddenly stopped and stiffened like a pointing dog; and, looking up to see what interesting object by the wayside had attracted his notice, I perceived that we were standing beneath another public-house sign, that of the Blue Boar. Its windows were hospitably open, and through them came a musical clinking of glasses. Mr. Billson licked his lips with a quiet relish.

"'Scuse me, mister," he said, and left me abruptly.

MY one thought now was to reach Ukridge as quickly as possible, in order to acquaint him with these sinister developments. For I was startled. More, I was alarmed and uneasy. In one of the star performers at a special ten-round contest, scheduled to take place that evening, Mr. Billson's attitude seemed to me peculiar, not to say disquieting. So, even though a sudden crash and uproar from the interior of the Blue Boar called invitingly to me to linger, I hurried on, and neither stopped, looked, nor listened until I stood on the steps of Number Seven, Caerleon Street. And eventually, after my prolonged ringing and knocking had finally induced a female of advanced years to come up and open the door, I found Ukridge lying on a horse-hair sofa in the far corner of the sitting-room.

I unloaded my grave news. It was wasting time to try to break it gently.

"I've just seen Billson," I said, "and he seems to be in rather a strange mood. In fact, I'm sorry to say, old man, he rather gave me the impression——"

"That he wasn't going to fight to-night?" said Ukridge, with a strange calm. "Quite correct. He isn't. He's just been in here to tell me so. What I like about the man is his consideration for all concerned. *He* doesn't want to upset anybody's arrangements."

"But what's the trouble? Is he kicking about only getting twenty pounds?"

"No. He thinks fighting's sinful!"

"What?"

"Nothing more nor less, Corky, my boy. Like chumps, we took our eyes off him for half a second this morning, and he sneaked off to that revival meeting. Went out shortly after a light and wholesome breakfast for what he called a bit of a mooch round, and came in half an hour ago a changed man. Full of loving-kindness, curse him. Nasty shifty gleam in his eye. Told us he thought fighting sinful and it was all off, and then buzzed out to spread the Word."

I was shaken to the core. Wilberforce Billson, the peerless but temperamental Battler, had never been an ideal pugilist to manage, but hitherto he had drawn the line at anything like this. Other little problems which he might have brought up for his manager to solve might have been overcome by patience and tact; but not this one. The psychology of Mr. Billson was as an open book to me. He possessed one of those single-track minds, capable of accommodating but one idea at a time, and he had the tenacity of the simple soul. Argument would leave him unshaken. On that bone-like head Reason would beat in vain. And, these things being so, I was at a loss to account for Ukridge's extraordinary calm. His fortitude in the hour of ruin amazed me.

His next remark, however, offered an explanation.

"We're putting on a substitute," he said.

I was relieved.

"Oh, you've got a substitute? That's a bit of luck. Where did you find him?"

"As a matter of lact, laddie, I've decided to go on myself."

"What! You!"

"Only way out, my boy. No other solution."

I stared at the man. Years of the closest acquaintance with S. F. Ukridge had rendered me almost surprise-proof at anything he might do, but this was too much.

"Do you mean to tell me that you seriously intend to go out there to-night and appear in the ring?" I cried.

"Perfectly straightforward business-like proposition, old man," said Ukridge, stoutly. "I'm in excellent shape. I sparred with Billson every day while he was training."

"Yes, but——"

"The fact is, laddie, you don't realize my potentialities. Recently, it's true, I've allowed myself to become slack and what you might call enervated, but, damme, when I was on that trip in that tramp-steamer, scarcely a week used to go by without my having a good earnest scrap with somebody. Nothing barred," said Ukridge, musing lovingly on the care-free past, "except biting and bottles."

"Yes, but, hang it—a professional pugilist!"

"Well, to be absolutely accurate, laddie," said Ukridge, suddenly dropping the heroic manner and becoming confidential, "the thing's going to be fixed. Izzy Previn has seen the bloke Thomas's manager, and has arranged a gentleman's agreement. The manager, a Class A bloodsucker, insists on us giving his man another twenty pounds after the fight, but that can't be helped. In return, the Thomas bloke consents to play light for three rounds, at the end of which period, laddie, he will tap me on the side of the head and I shall go down and out, a popular loser. What's more, I'm allowed to hit him hard—once—just so long as it isn't on the nose. So you see, a little tact, a little diplomacy, and the whole thing fixed up as satisfactorily as anyone could wish."

"But suppose the audience demands its money back when they find they're going to see a substitute?"

"My dear old horse," protested Ukridge, "surely you don't imagine that a man with a business head like mine overlooked that?

The mop dripped dirty water as she brandished it; and the man, glancing apprehensively over his shoulder, proceeded rapidly on his way.

Naturally, I'm going to fight as Battling Billson. Nobody knows him in this town. I'm a good big chap, just as much a heavyweight as he is. No, laddie, pick how you will you can't pick a flaw in this."

"Why mayn't you hit him on the nose ?"

"I don't know. People have these strange whims. And now, Corky, my boy, I think you had better leave me. I ought to relax."

THE Oddfellows' Hall was certainly filling up nicely when I arrived that night. Indeed, it seemed as though Llunindnno's devotees of sport would cram it to the roof. I took my place in the line before the pay-window, and, having completed the business end of the transaction, went in and inquired my way to the dressing-rooms. And presently, after wandering through divers passages, I came upon Ukridge, clad for the ring and swathed in his familiar yellow mackintosh.

"You're going to have a wonderful house," I said. "The populace is rolling up in shoals."

He received the information with a strange lack of enthusiasm. I looked at him in concern, and was disquieted by his forlorn appearance. That face, which had beamed so triumphantly at our last meeting, was pale and set. Those eyes, which normally shone with the flame of an unquenchable optimism, seemed dull and careworn. And even as I looked at him he seemed to rouse himself from a stupor and, reaching out for his shirt, which hung on a near-by peg, proceeded to pull it over his head.

"What's the matter ?" I asked.

His head popped out of the shirt, and he eyed me wanly.

"I'm off," he announced, briefly.

"Off ? How do you mean, off ?" I tried to soothe what I took to be an eleventh-hour attack of stage-fright. "You'll be all right."

Ukridge laughed hollowly.

"Once the gong goes, you'll forget the crowd."

"It isn't the crowd," said Ukridge, in a pale voice, climbing into his trousers. "Corky, old man," he went on, earnestly, "if ever you feel your angry passions rising to the point where you want to swat a stranger in a public place, restrain yourself. There's nothing in it. This bloke Thomas was in here a moment ago with his manager to settle the final details. He's the fellow I had the trouble with at the theatre last night !"

"The man you pulled out of the seat by his ears ?" I gasped.

Ukridge nodded.

"Recognized me at once, confound him, and it was all his manager, a thoroughly decent cove whom I liked, could do to prevent him getting at me there and then."

"Good Lord !" I said, aghast at this grim development, yet thinking how thoroughly characteristic it was of Ukridge, when he had a whole townful of people to quarrel with, to pick the one professional pugilist.

At this moment, when Ukridge was lacing his left shoe, the door opened and a man came in.

The new-comer was stout, dark, and beady-eyed, and from his manner of easy comradeship and the fact that when he spoke he supplemented words with the language of the waving palm, I deduced that this must be Mr. Izzy Previn, recently trading as Isaac O'Brien. He was cheeriness itself.

"Vell," he said, with ill-timed exuberance, "how'th the boy ?"

The boy cast a sour look at him.

"The house," proceeded Mr. Previn, with an almost lyrical enthusiasm, "is abtholutely full. Crammed, jammed, and packed. They're hanging from the roof by their eyelids. It'th goin' to be a knock-out."

The expression, considering the circumstances, could hardly have been less happily chosen. Ukridge winced painfully, then spoke in no uncertain voice.

"I'm not going to fight !"

Mr. Previn's exuberance fell from him like a garment. His cigar dropped from his mouth, and his beady eyes glittered with sudden consternation.

"What do you mean ?"

"Rather an unfortunate thing has happened," I explained. "It seems that this man Thomas is a fellow Ukridge had trouble with at the theatre last night."

"What do you mean, Ukridge ?" broke in Mr. Previn. "This is Battling Billson."

"I've told Corky all about it," said Ukridge over his shoulder as he laced his right shoe. "Old pal of mine."

"Oh !" said Mr. Previn, relieved. "Of course, if Mr. Corky is a friend of yours and quite understands that all this is quite private among ourselves and don't want talking about outside, all right. But what were you thayin' ? I can't make head or tail of it. How do you mean, you're not goin' to fight ? Of course you're goin' to fight."

"Thomas was in here just now," I said. "Ukridge and he had a row at the theatre last night, and naturally Ukridge is afraid he will go back on the agreement."

"Nonthense," said Mr. Previn, and his manner was that of one soothing a refractory child. "*He* won't go back on the agreement. He promised he'd play light and he

Ukridge spoke in no uncertain voice. "I'm not going to fight!"

will play light. Gave me his word as a gentleman."

"He isn't a gentleman," Ukridge pointed out, moodily.

"But lithen!"

"I'm going to get out of here as quick as I dashed well can!"

"Conthider!" pleaded Mr. Previn, clawing great chunks out of the air.

Ukridge began to button his collar.

"Reflect!" moaned Mr. Previn. "There's that lovely audience all sitting out there, jammed like thardines, waiting for the thing to start. Do you expect me to go and tell 'em there ain't goin' to be no fight? I'm thurprised at you," said Mr. Previn, trying an appeal to his pride. "Where's your manly spirit? A big, husky feller like you, that's done all sorts of scrappin' in your time——"

"Not," Ukridge pointed out coldly, "with any damned professional pugilists who've got a grievance against me."

"*He* won't hurt you."

"He won't get the chance."

"You'll be as safe and cosy in that ring with him as if you was playing ball with your little thister."

Ukridge said he hadn't got a little sister.

"But think!" implored Mr. Previn, flapping like a seal. "Think of the money! Do you realize we'll have to return it all, every penny of it?"

A spasm of pain passed over Ukridge's face, but he continued buttoning his collar.

"And not only that," said Mr. Previn, "but, if you ask me, they'll be so mad when they hear there ain't goin' to be no fight, they'll lynch me."

Ukridge seemed to regard this possibility with calm.

"And you, too," added Mr. Previn.

Ukridge started. It was a plausible theory, and one that had not occurred to him before. He paused irresolutely. And at this moment a man came hurrying in.

"What's the matter?" he demanded, fussily. "Thomas has been in the ring for five minutes. Isn't your man ready?"

"In one half tick," said Mr. Previn. He turned meaningly to Ukridge. "That's right, ain't it? You'll be ready in half a tick?"

Ukridge nodded wanly. In silence he shed shirt, trousers, shoes, and collar, parting from them as if they were old friends whom he never expected to see again. One wistful glance he cast at his mackintosh, lying forlornly across a chair; and then, with more than a suggestion of a funeral procession, we started down the corridor that led to the main hall. The hum of many voices came to us; there was a sudden blaze of light, and we were there.

I MUST say for the sport-loving citizens of Llunindnno that they appeared to be fair-minded men. Stranger in their midst though he was, they gave Ukridge an excellent reception as he climbed into the ring; and for a moment, such is the tonic effect of applause on a large scale, his depression seemed to lift. A faint, gratified smile played about his drawn mouth, and I think it would have developed into a bashful grin, had he not at this instant caught sight of the redoubtable Mr. Thomas towering massively across the way. I saw him blink, as one who, thinking absently of this and that, walks suddenly into a lamp-post; and his look of unhappiness returned.

My heart bled for him. If the offer of my little savings in the bank could have transported him there and then to the safety of his London lodgings, I would have made it unreservedly. Mr. Previn had disappeared, leaving me standing at the ring-side, and as nobody seemed to object I remained there, thus getting an excellent view of the mass of bone and sinew that made up Lloyd Thomas. And there was certainly plenty of him to see.

Mr. Thomas was, I should imagine, one of those men who do not look their most formidable in mufti—for otherwise I could not conceive how even the fact that he had stolen his seat could have led Ukridge to lay the hand of violence upon him. In the exiguous costume of the ring he looked a person from whom the sensible man would suffer almost any affront with meekness. He was about six feet in height, and where ever a man could bulge with muscle he bulged. For a moment my anxiety for Ukridge was tinged with a wistful regret that I should never see this sinewy citizen in action with Mr. Billson. It would, I mused, have been a battle worth coming even to Llunindnno to see.

The referee, meanwhile, had been introducing the principals in the curt, impressive fashion of referees. He now retired, and with a strange foreboding note a gong sounded on the farther side of the ring. The seconds scuttled under the ropes. The man Thomas, struggling—it seemed to me—with powerful emotions, came ponderously out of his corner.

In these reminiscences of a vivid and varied career, it is as a profound thinker that I have for the most part had occasion to portray Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge. I was now to be reminded that he also had it in him to be a doer. Even as Mr. Thomas shuffled towards him, his left fist shot out and thudded against the other's ribs. In short, in a delicate and difficult situation, Ukridge was comporting himself with an adequacy that surprised me. However great might have been his reluctance to embark on this contest, once in he was doing well.

And then, half-way through the first round, the truth dawned upon me. Injured though Mr. Thomas had been, the gentleman's agreement still held. The word of a Thomas was as good as his bond. Poignant though his dislike of Ukridge might be, nevertheless, having pledged himself to mildness and self-restraint for the first three rounds, he intended to abide by the contract. Probably, in the interval between his visit to Ukridge's dressing-room and his appearance in the ring, his manager had been talking earnestly to him. At any rate, whether it was managerial authority or his own sheer nobility of character that influenced him, the fact remains that he treated Ukridge with a quite remarkable forbearance, and the latter reached his corner at the end of round one practically intact.

And it was this that undid him. No sooner had the gong sounded for round two than out he pranced from his corner, thoroughly above himself. He bounded at Mr. Thomas like a Dervish.

I could read his thoughts as if he had spoken them. Nothing could be clearer than that he had altogether failed to grasp the true position of affairs. Instead of recog-

nizing his adversary's forbearance for what it was and being decently grateful for it, he was filled with a sinful pride. Here, he told himself, was a man who had a solid grievance against him—and, dash it, the fellow couldn't hurt him a bit. What the whole thing boiled down to, he felt, was that he, Ukridge, was better than he had suspected, a man to be reckoned with, and one who could show a distinguished gathering of patrons of sport something worth looking at. The consequence was that, where any sensible person would have grasped the situation at once and endeavoured to show his appreciation by toying with Mr. Thomas in gingerly fashion, whispering soothing compliments into his ear during the clinches, and generally trying to lay the foundations of a beautiful friendship against the moment when the gentleman's agreement should lapse, Ukridge committed the one unforgivable act. There was a brief moment of fiddling and feinting in the centre of the ring, then a sharp smacking sound, a startled yelp, and Mr. Thomas, with gradually reddening eye, leaning against the ropes and muttering to himself in Welsh.

Ukridge had hit him on the nose!

ONCE more I must pay a tribute to the fair-mindedness of the sportsmen of Llunindnno. The stricken man was one of them—possibly Llunindnno's favourite son—yet nothing could have exceeded the heartiness with which they greeted the visitor's achievement. A shout went up as if Ukridge had done each individual present a personal favour. It continued as he advanced buoyantly upon his antagonist, and—to show how entirely Llunindnno audiences render themselves impartial and free from any personal bias—it became redoubled as Mr. Thomas, swinging a fist like a ham, knocked Ukridge flat on his back. Whatever happened, so long as it was sufficiently violent, seemed to be all right with that broad-minded audience.

Ukridge heaved himself laboriously to one knee. His sensibilities had been ruffled by this unexpected blow, about fifteen times as hard as the others he had received since the beginning of the affray, but he was a man of mettle and determination. However humbly he might quail before a threatening landlady, or however nimbly he might glide down a side-street at the sight of an approaching creditor, there was nothing wrong with his fighting heart when it came to a straight issue between man and man, untinged by the financial element. He struggled painfully to his feet, while Mr. Thomas, now definitely abandoning the gentleman's agreement, hovered about him with ready fists, only restrained by the fact that one of Ukridge's gloves still touched the floor.

It was at this tensest of moments that a voice spoke in my ear.

"'Alf a mo', mister!"

A hand pushed me gently aside. Something large obscured the lights. And Wilberforce Billson, squeezing under the ropes, clambered into the ring.

FOR the purposes of the historian it was a good thing that for the first few moments after this astounding occurrence a dazed silence held the audience in its grip. Otherwise, it might have been difficult to probe motives and explain underlying causes. I think the spectators were either too surprised to shout, or else they entertained for a few brief seconds the idea that Mr. Billson was the forerunner of a posse of plain-clothes police about to raid the place. At any rate, for a space they were silent, and he was enabled to say his say.

"Fightin'," bellowed Mr. Billson, "ain't right!"

There was an uneasy rustle in the audience. The voice of the referee came thinly, saying, "Here! Hi!"

"Sinful," explained Mr. Billson, in a voice like a fog-horn.

His oration was interrupted by Mr. Thomas, who was endeavouring to get round him and attack Ukridge. The Battler pushed him gently back.

"Gents," he roared, "I, too, have been a man of voylence! I 'ave struck men in anger. R, yes! But I 'ave seen the light. Oh, my brothers——"

The rest of his remarks were lost. With a startling suddenness the frozen silence melted. In every part of the hall indignant seatholders were rising to state their views.

But it is doubtful whether, even if he had been granted a continuance of their attention, Mr. Billson would have spoken to much greater length; for at this moment Lloyd Thomas, who had been gnawing at the strings of his gloves with the air of a man who is able to stand just so much and whose limit has been exceeded, now suddenly shed these obstacles to the freer expression of self, and, advancing barehanded, smote Mr. Billson violently on the jaw.

Mr. Billson turned. He was pained, one could see that, but more spiritually than physically. For a moment he seemed uncertain how to proceed. Then he turned the other cheek.

The fermenting Mr. Thomas smote that, too.

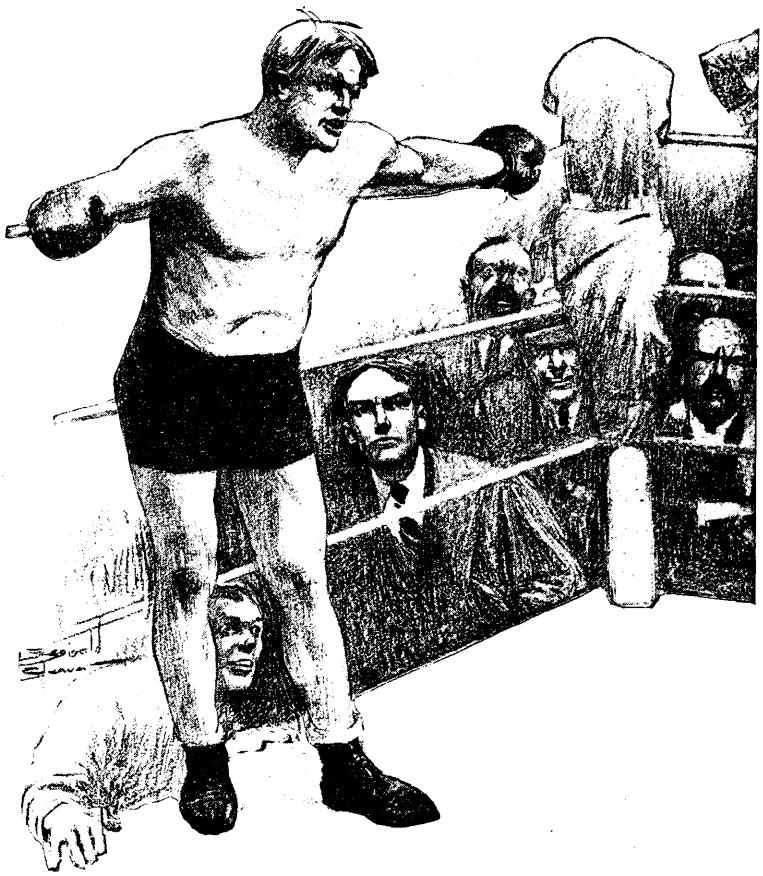
There was no vacillation or uncertainty now about Wilberforce Billson. He plainly considered that he had done all that could reasonably be expected of any pacifist. A man has only two cheeks. He flung up a mast-like arm to block a third blow, countered with an accuracy and spirit which sent his aggressor reeling to the ropes; and then, swiftly removing his coat, went into action with the unregenerate zeal that had made him the petted hero of a hundred waterfronts. And I, tenderly scooping Ukridge up as he dropped from the ring, hurried him away along the corridor to his dressing-room. I would have given much to remain and witness a mix-up which, if the police did not interfere, promised to be the battle of the ages, but the claims of friendship are paramount.

Ten minutes later, however, when Ukridge, washed, clothed, and restored as near to the normal as a man may be who has received the full weight of a Lloyd Thomas on a vital spot, was reaching for his mackintosh, there filtered through the intervening doors and passageways a sudden roar so compelling that my sporting spirit declined to ignore it.

"Back in a minute, old man," I said.

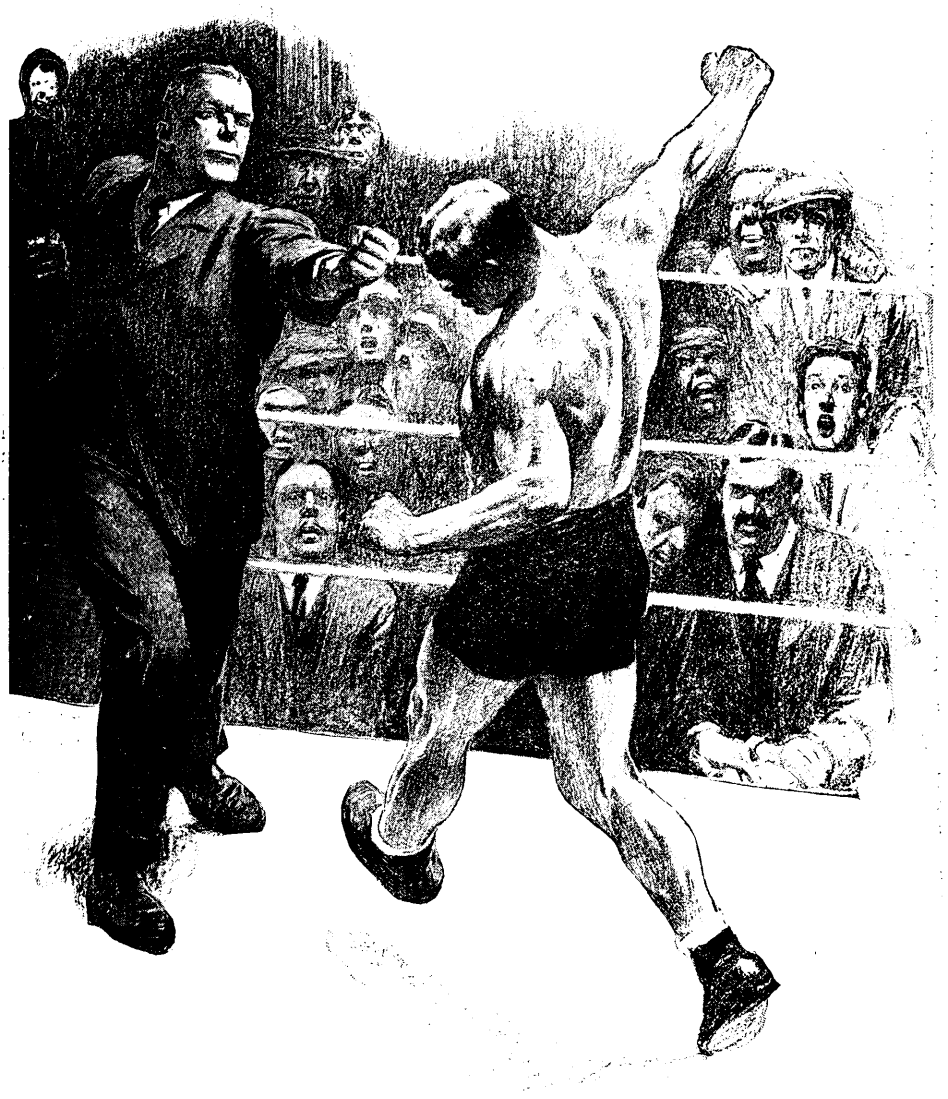
And, urged by that ever-swelling roar, I cantered back to the hall.

IN the interval during which I had been ministering to my stricken friend a certain decorum seemed to have been restored to the proceedings. The conflict had lost its first riotous abandon. Upholders of the decencies of debate had induced Mr. Thomas to resume his gloves, and a pair had also been thrust upon the Battler. Moreover, it was apparent that the etiquette of the tourney now governed the conflict, for rounds had been introduced, and one had just finished as I came in view of the ring. Mr. Billson was leaning back in a chair in one corner undergoing treatment by his seconds, and in the opposite corner loomed Mr. Thomas;



Billson flung up an arm to block a third blow, and countered

and one sight of the two men was enough to tell me what had caused that sudden tremendous outburst of enthusiasm among the patriots of Llunindnno. In the last stages of the round which had just concluded the native son must have hung open, and exhaustion was writ large upon him. Mr. Thomas, on the contrary, leaned forward with hands on knees, wearing an impatient look, as if this formality of a rest between rounds irked his imperious spirit.



with an accuracy and spirit which sent his aggressor reeling to the ropes.

forged ahead in no uncertain manner. Perhaps some chance blow had found its way through the Battler's guard, laying him open and defenceless to the final attack. For his attitude, as he sagged in his corner, was that of one whose moments are numbered. His eyes were closed, his mouth

The gong sounded and he sprang from his seat.

"Laddie!" breathed an anguished voice, and a hand clutched my arm.

I was dimly aware of Ukridge standing beside me. I shook him off. This was no moment for conversation. My whole

attention was concentrated on what was happening in the ring.

"I say, laddie!"

Matters in there had reached that tense stage when audiences lose their self-control—when strong men stand on seats and weak men cry "Siddown!" The air was full of that electrical thrill that precedes the knock-out.

And the next moment it came. But it was not Lloyd Thomas who delivered it. From some mysterious reservoir of vitality Wilberforce Billson, the pride of Bermondsey, who an instant before had been reeling under his antagonist's blows like a stricken hulk before a hurricane, produced that one last punch that wins battles. Up it came, whizzing straight to its mark, a stupendous, miraculous upper-cut which caught Mr. Thomas on the angle of the jaw just as he lurched forward to complete his task. It was the last word. Anything milder Llunindnno's favourite son might have borne with fortitude, for his was a teak-like frame impervious to most things short of dynamite; but this was final. It left no avenue for argument or evasion. Lloyd Thomas spun round once in a complete circle, dropped his hands, and sank slowly to the ground.

There was one wild shout from the audience, and then a solemn hush fell. And in this hush Ukridge's voice spoke once more in my ear.

"I say, laddie, that blighter Previn has bolted with every penny of the receipts!"

THE little sitting-room of Number Seven, Caerleon Street, was very quiet and gave the impression of being dark. This was because there is so much of Ukridge and he takes Fate's blows so hardly that, when anything goes wrong, his gloom seems to fill a room like a fog. For some minutes after our return from the Oddfellows' Hall a gruesome silence had prevailed. Ukridge had exhausted his vocabulary on the subject of Mr. Previn; and as for me, the disaster seemed so tremendous as to render words of sympathy a mere mockery.

"And there's another thing I've just remembered," said Ukridge, hollowly, stirring on his sofa.

"What's that?" I inquired, in a bedside voice.

"The bloke Thomas. He was to have got another twenty pounds."

"He'll hardly claim it, surely?"

"He'll claim it all right," said Ukridge, moodily. "Except, by Jove," he went on, a sudden note of optimism in his voice, "that he doesn't know where I am. I was forgetting that. Lucky we legged it away from the hall before he could grab me."

"You don't think that Previn, when he was making the arrangements with Thomas's manager, may have mentioned where you were staying?"

"Not likely. Why should he? What reason would he have?"

"Gentleman to see you, sir," crooned the aged female at the door.

The gentleman walked in. It was the man who had come to the dressing-room to announce that Thomas was in the ring; and though on that occasion we had not been formally introduced I did not need Ukridge's faint groan to tell me who he was.

"Mr. Previn?" he said. He was a brisk man, direct in manner and speech.

"He's not here," said Ukridge.

"You'll do. You're his partner. I've come for that twenty pounds."

There was a painful silence.

"It's gone," said Ukridge.

"What's gone?"

"The money, dash it. And Previn, too. He's bolted."

A hard look came into the other's eyes. Dim as the light was, it was strong enough to show his expression, and that expression was not an agreeable one.

"That won't do," he said, in a metallic voice.

"Now, my dear old horse——"

"It's no good trying anything like that on me. I want my money, or I'm going to call a policeman. Now, then!"

"But, laddie, be reasonable."

"Made a mistake in not getting it in advance. But now'll do. Out with it!"

"But I keep telling you Previn's bolted!"

"He's certainly bolted," I put in, trying to be helpful.

"That's right, mister," said a voice at the door. "I met 'im sneakin' away."

It was Wilberforce Billson. He stood in the doorway diffidently, as one not sure of his welcome. His whole bearing was apologetic. He had a nasty bruise on his left cheek and one of his eyes was closed, but he bore no other signs of his recent conflict.

Ukridge was gazing upon him with bulging eyes.

"You *met* him!" he moaned. "You actually met him?"

"R," said Mr. Billson. "When I was comin' to the 'all. I seen 'im puttin' all that money into a liddle bag, and then 'e 'urried off."

"Good Lord!" I cried. "Didn't you suspect what he was up to?"

"R," agreed Mr. Billson. "I always knew 'e was a wrong 'un."

"Then why, you poor woollen-headed fish," bellowed Ukridge, exploding, "why on earth didn't you stop him?"

"I never thought of that," admitted Mr. Billson, apologetically.

"I want my money, or I'm going to call a policeman. Now, then!"

Ukridge laughed a hideous laugh.

"I just pushed 'im in the face," proceeded Mr. Billson, "and took the liddle bag away from 'im."

He placed on the table a small weather-worn suitcase that jingled musically as he moved it; then, with the air of one who dismisses some triviality from his mind, moved to the door.

"'Scuse me, gents," said Battling Billson, deprecatingly. "Can't stop. I've got to go and spread the light."

(Another story by P. G. Wodehouse next month.)

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

CHAPTER VIII.

PULLING UP THE ANCHOR.

A CHANGE OF PLANS.

MY life had been a pleasant one with my steadily-increasing literary success, my practice, which was enough to keep me pleasantly occupied, and my sport, which I treat in a separate chapter. Suddenly, however, there came a development which shook me out of my rut, and caused an absolute change in my life and plans. One daughter, Mary, had been born to us, our household was a happy one, and as I have never had personal ambitions, since the simple things of life have always been the most pleasant to me, it is possible that I would have remained in Southsea permanently but for this new episode in my life. It arose when, in 1889, Koch announced that he had discovered a sure cure for consumption and that he would demonstrate it upon a certain date in Berlin.

A great urge came upon me suddenly that I should go to Berlin and see him do so. I could give no clear reason for this, but it was an irresistible impulse, and I at once determined to go. Had I been a well-known doctor or a specialist in consumption it would have been more intelligible, but I had, as a matter of fact, no great interest in the more recent developments of my own profession, and a very strong belief that much of the so-called progress was illusory. However, at a few hours' notice I packed up a bag and started off alone upon this curious adventure. I had had an interchange of letters with Mr. W. T. Stead over some matter, and I called upon him at the *Review of Reviews* office as I passed through London to ask him if he could give me an introduction to Koch or to Dr. Bergmann, who was to give the demonstration. Mr. Stead was very amiable to this big unknown provincial doctor, and he gave me a letter for the British Ambassador —Sir Edward Malet, if I remember right— and for Mr. Lowe, the *Times* correspondent. He also asked me to do a character sketch of Koch for him, adding that he would have Count Mattei as a feature of his magazine this month and Koch the next. I said: "Then you will have the greatest man of science and the greatest quack in Europe following each other." Stead glared at me angrily, for it seems that the Mattei treatment, with its blue electricity and the rest of it, was at that moment his particular fad. However, we parted amiably, and all through his life we kept in distant touch, though we came into sharp collision at the time of the Boer War. He was a brave and honest man, and if he was impulsive at times, it was only the sudden outflame of that fire which made him the great force for good that he was.

I went on to Berlin that night, and found myself in the Continental express with a very handsome and courteous London physician bound upon the same errand as myself. We passed most of the night

talking, and I learned that his name was Malcolm Morris, and that he also had been a provincial doctor, but that he had come to London and had made a considerable hit as a skin specialist in Harley Street. It was the beginning of a friendship which still endures.

MY VISIT TO BERLIN.

Having arrived at Berlin the great thing was to be present at Bergmann's demonstration, which was to be next day at twelve. I went to our Ambassador, was kept long waiting, had a chilly reception, and was dismissed without help or consolation. Then I tried the *Times* correspondent, but he could not help me either. He and his amiable wife showed me every courtesy and invited me to dinner that night. Tickets were simply not to be had, and neither money nor interest could procure them. I conceived the wild idea of getting one from Koch himself and made my way to his house. While there I had the curious experience of seeing his mail arrive—a large sack full of letters, which was emptied out on the floor of the hall, and exhibited every sort of stamp in Europe. It was a sign of all the sad, broken lives and wearied hearts which were turning in hope to Berlin. Koch remained a veiled prophet, however, and would see neither me nor anyone else. I was fairly at my wits' ends and could not imagine how I could attain my end.

Next day I went down to the great building where the address was to be given and managed by bribing the porter to get into the outer hall. The huge audience was assembling in a room beyond. I tried further bribing that I might be slipped in, but the official became abusive. People streamed past me, but I was always the waiter at the gate. Finally everyone had gone in, and then a group of men came hustling across, Bergmann, bearded and formidable, in the van, with a tail of house surgeons and satellites behind him. I threw myself across his path. "I have come a thousand miles," said I. "May I not come in?" He halted and glared at me through his spectacles. "Perhaps you would like to take my place," he roared, working himself up into that sudden folly of excitement which seems so strange in the heavy German nature. "That is the only place left. Yes, yes, take my place by all means. My classes are filled with Englishmen already." He fairly spat out the word "Englishmen," and I learned afterwards that some recent quarrel with Morell Mackenzie over the illness of the Emperor Frederick had greatly incensed him. I am glad to say that I kept my temper and my polite manner, which is always the best shield when one is met by brutal rudeness. "Not at all," I said. "I would not intrude if there is really no room." He glared at me again, all beard and spectacles, and rushed on with his court all grinning at the snub which the presumptuous Englishman had received. One of them lingered, however—a kindly American. "That was bad behaviour," said he. "See here! If you meet me at four this afternoon I will show you my full notes of the lecture, and I know the cases he is about to show, so we can see them together to-morrow." Then he followed on.

SO it came about that I attained my end after all, but in a roundabout way. I studied the lecture and the cases, and I had the temerity to disagree with every one, and to come to the conclusion that the whole thing was experimental and premature. A wave of madness had seized the world, and from all parts, notably from England, poor afflicted people were rushing to Berlin for a cure, some of them in such advanced stages of disease that they died in the train. I felt so strongly about it and so sure of my ground that I wrote a letter of warning to the *Daily Telegraph*, and I rather think that this letter was the very first which appeared upon the side of doubt and caution. I need not say that the event proved the truth of my forecast.

MALCOLM MORRIS'S ADVICE.

Two days later I was back in Southsea, but I came back a changed man. I had spread my wings and had felt something of the powers within me. Especially I had been influenced by a long talk with Malcolm Morris, in which he assured me that I was wasting my life in the provinces and had too small a field for my activities. He insisted that I should leave general practice and go to London. I answered that I was by no means sure of my literary success as yet, and that I could not so easily abandon the medical career which had cost my mother such sacrifices and myself so many years of study. He asked me if there was any special branch of the profession on which I could concentrate so as to get away from general practice. I said that of late years I had been interested in eye work, and had amused myself by correcting refractions and prescribing glasses in the Portsmouth Eye Hospital under Mr. Vernon Ford. "Well," said Morris, "why not specialize upon the eye? Go to Vienna, put in six months' work, come back and start in London. Thus you will have a nice clean life with plenty of leisure for your literature." I came home with this

great suggestion buzzing in my head, and as my wife was quite willing, and Mary, my little girl, was old enough now to be left with her grandmother, there seemed to be no obstacle in the way. There were no difficulties about disposing of the practice, for it was so small and so purely personal that it could not be sold to another and simply had to dissolve.

LEARNING TO FACE AN AUDIENCE.

The Portsmouth Literary and Scientific Society gave me a God-speed banquet. I have many pleasant and some comic reminiscences of this society, of which I had been secretary for several years. We kept the sacred flame burning in the old city with our weekly papers and discussions during the long winters. It was there that I learned to face an audience, which proved to be of the first importance for my life's work. I was naturally of a very nervous, backward, self-distrustful disposition in such things, and I have been told that the signal that I was about to join in the discussion was that the whole long bench on which I sat, with everyone on it, used to shake with my emotion. But, once up, I learned to speak out, to conceal my trepidations, and to choose my phrases. I gave three papers, one on the Arctic seas, one on Carlyle, and one on Gibbon. The former gave me a quite unmerited reputation as a sportsman, for I borrowed from a local taxidermist every bird and beast that he possessed which could conceivably find its way into the Arctic circle. These I piled upon the lecture table, and the audience, concluding that I had shot them all, looked upon me with great respect. Next morning they were back with the taxidermist once more.

We had some weird people and incidents at these debates. I remember one very learned discussion on fossils and the age of the strata, which was ended by a cadaverous major-general of the Evangelical persuasion, who rose and said in a hollow voice that all this speculation was vain, and indeed incomprehensible, since we knew on an authority which could not possibly be questioned that the world was made exactly five thousand eight hundred and ninety years ago. This put the lid on the debate and we all crept home to bed.

"ONE OF THE TIGHT CORNERS OF MY LIFE."

My political work also caused me to learn to speak. I was what was called a Liberal Unionist—that is, a man whose general position was Liberal, but who could not see his way to support Gladstone's Irish policy. Perhaps we were wrong. However, that was my view at the time. I had a dreadful first experience of platform speaking on a large scale, for at a huge meeting at the Amphitheatre the candidate, Sir William Crossman, was delayed, and to prevent a fiasco I was pushed on at a moment's notice to face an audience of three thousand people. It was one of the tight corners of my life. I hardly knew myself what I said, but the Irish part of me came to my aid and supplied me with a torrent of more or less incoherent words and similes which roused the audience greatly, though it read to me afterwards more like a comic stump speech than a serious political effort. But it was what they wanted, and they were mostly on their feet before I finished. I was amazed when I read it next day, and especially the last crowning sentence, which was: "England and Ireland are wedded together with the sapphire wedding ring of the sea, and what God has placed together let no man pluck asunder." It was not very good logic, but whether it was eloquence or rhodomontade I could not even now determine.

I was one of the acting secretaries when Mr. Balfour came down to address a great meeting, and as such, when the hall was full, I waited on the kerb outside to receive him. Presently his carriage drove up and out he stepped, tall, thin, and aristocratic. There were two notorious partisans of the other side waiting for him, and I warned them not to make trouble. However, the moment Balfour appeared, one of them opened a huge mouth with the intention of emitting a howl of execration. But it never got out, for I clapped my hand pretty forcibly over the orifice while I held him by the neck with the other hand. His companion hit me on the head with a stick, and was promptly knocked down by one of my companions. Meanwhile Balfour got safely in, and we two secretaries followed, rather dishevelled after our adventure. I met Lord Balfour several times in after life, but I never told him how I had once had my hat smashed in his defence.

What with the Literary Society and the politicians, I left a gap behind me in Portsmouth, and so did my gentle wife, who was universally popular for her amiable and generous character. It was a wrench to us to leave so many good friends. However, towards the end of 1889 the die was cast, and we closed the door of Bush Villa behind us for the last time. I had days of privation there and days of growing success during the eight long years that I had spent in Portsmouth. We had got so used to it that it was with a sense of wonderful freedom and exhilarating adventure that we set forth upon the next phase of our lives.

I borrowed from a local taxidermist every bird and beast that he possessed. These I piled upon the table, and the audience, concluding that I had shot them all, looked upon me with great respect.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREAT BREAK.

IN VIENNA.

WE set forth upon a bitter winter day at the close of 1889 with every chance of being snowed up on our long trek. We got through all right, however, and found ourselves in Vienna, arriving on a deadly cold night, with deep snow under foot and a cutting blizzard in the air. As we looked from the station the electric lights threw out the shining silver drift of snowflakes against the absolute darkness of the sky. It was a gloomy, ominous reception, but half an hour afterwards, when we were in the warm, cosy, crowded, tobacco-laden restaurant attached to our hotel, we took a more cheerful view of our surroundings.

We found a modest *pension* which was within our means, and we put in a very pleasant four months, during which I attended eye lectures at the Krankenhaus, but could certainly have learned far more in London, for even if one has a fair knowledge of conversational German it is very different from following accurately a rapid lecture filled with technical terms. No doubt "has studied in Vienna" sounds well in a specialist's record, but it is usually taken for granted that he has exhausted his own country before going abroad, which was by no means the case with me. Therefore, so far as eye-work goes, my winter was wasted, nor can I trace any particular spiritual or intellectual advance. On the other hand, I saw a little of gay Viennese society, I received kind and welcome hospitality from Brinsley Richards, the *Times* correspondent, and his wife, and I had some excellent skating. I also wrote one short book, "The Doings of Raffles Haw," not a very notable achievement, by which I was able to pay my current expenses without encroaching on the very few hundred pounds which were absolutely all that I had in the world. This money was invested on the advice of a friend, and as it was almost all lost—like so much more that I have earned—it is just as well that I was never driven back upon it.

With the spring my work in Vienna had finished, if it can be said to have ever begun, and we returned *viâ* Paris, putting in a few days there with Landolt, who was the most famous French oculist of his time. It was great to find ourselves back in London once more with the feeling that we were now on the real field of battle, where we must conquer or perish, for our boats were burned behind us. It is easy now to look back and think that the issue was clear, but it was by no means so at the time, for I had earned little, though my reputation was growing. It was only my own inward conviction of the permanent merits of "The White Company," still appearing month by month in *Cornhill*, which sustained my confidence. I had come through so much in the early days at Southsea that nothing could alarm me personally, but I had a wife and child now, and the stern simplicity of life which was possible and even pleasant in early days was now no longer to be thought of.

I START AS A SPECIALIST.

We took rooms in Montague Place, and I went forth to search for some place where I could put up my plate as an oculist. I was aware that many of the big men do not find time to work out refractions, which in some cases of astigmatism take a long time to adjust when done by retinoscopy. I was capable at this work and liked it, so I hoped that some of it might drift my way. But to get it, it was clearly necessary that I should live among the big men, so that the patient could be easily referred to me. I searched the doctors' quarters, and at last found suitable accommodation at 2, Devonshire Place, which is at the top of Wimpole Street, and close to the classical Harley Street. There for a hundred and twenty pounds a year I got the use of a front room with part use of a waiting-room. I was soon to find that they were both waiting-rooms, and now I know that it was better so.

Every morning I walked from the lodgings at Montague Place, reached my consulting-room at ten, and sat there until three or four, with never a ring to disturb my serenity. Could better conditions for reflection and work be found? It was ideal, and so long as I was thoroughly unsuccessful in my professional venture there was every chance of improvement in my literary prospects. Therefore, when I returned to the lodgings at tea-time I bore my little sheaves with me, the first-fruits of a considerable harvest.

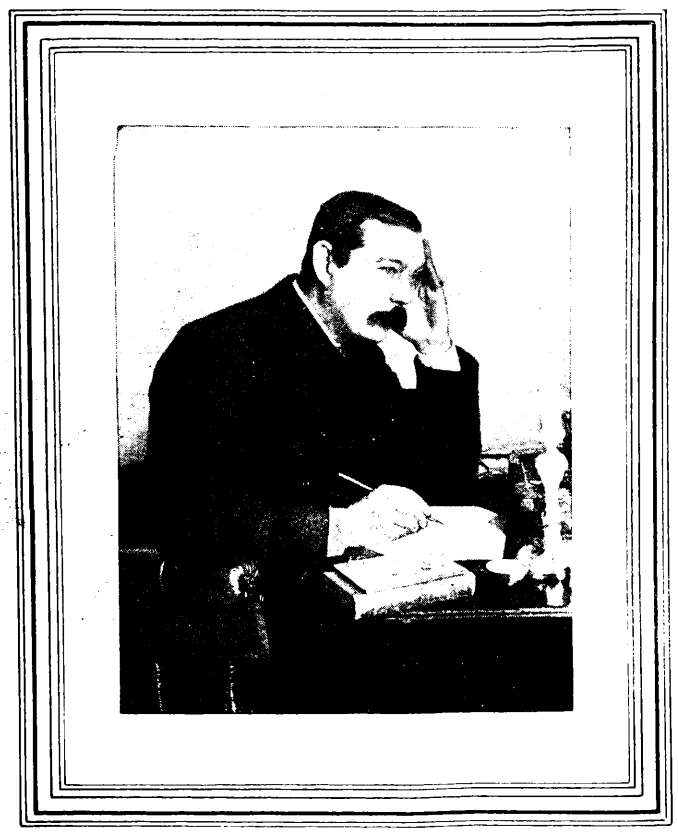
SHERLOCK HOLMES AND "THE STRAND."

A number of monthly magazines were coming out at that time, notable among which was THE STRAND, then as now under the editorship of Greenhough Smith. Considering these various journals with their

disconnected stories, it had struck me that a single character running through a series, if it only engaged the attention of the reader, would bind that reader to that particular magazine. On the other hand, it had long seemed to me that the ordinary serial might be an impediment rather than a help to a magazine, since, sooner or later, one missed one number and afterwards it had lost all interest. Clearly the ideal compromise was a character which carried through, and yet instalments which were each complete in themselves, so that the purchaser was always sure that he could read the whole contents of the magazine. I believe that I was the first to realize this and THE STRAND MAGAZINE the first to put it into practice.

Looking round for my central character I felt that Sherlock Holmes, whom I had already handled in two little books, would easily lend himself to a succession of short stories. These I began in the long hours of waiting in my consulting-room. Greenhough Smith liked them from the first, and encouraged me to go ahead with them. My literary affairs had been taken up by that king of agents, A. P. Watt, who relieved me of all the hateful bargaining, and handled things so well that any immediate anxiety for money soon disappeared. It was as well, for not one single patient had ever crossed the threshold of my room.

I was now once more at a cross-roads of my life, and Providence, which I recognize at every step, made me realize it in a very energetic and unpleasant way. I was starting off for my usual trudge one morning from our lodgings when icy shivers passed over me, and I only got back in time to avoid a total collapse. It was a virulent attack of influenza, at a time when influenza was in its deadly prime. Only three years before my dear sister Annette, after spending her whole life on the family needs, had died of it at Lisbon at the very moment when my success would have enabled me to recall her from her long servitude. Now it was my turn, and I very nearly followed her. I can remember no pain or extreme discomfort, and no psychic experiences, but for a week I was in great danger, and then found myself as weak as a child, and as emotional, but with a mind as clear as crystal. It was then, as I surveyed my own life, that I saw how foolish I was to waste my literary earnings in keeping up an oculist's room in Wimpole Street, and I determined with a wild rush of joy to cut the painter and to trust for ever to my power of writing. I remember in my delight taking the handkerchief which lay upon the coverlet in my



Conan Doyle and his most famous character.

This portrait was taken at the time the early Sherlock Holmes stories were written.

enfeebled hand and tossing it up to the ceiling in my exultation. I should at last be my own master. No longer would I have to conform to professional dress or try to please anyone else. I would be free to live how I liked and where I liked. It was one of the great moments of exultation of my life. The date was in August, 1890.

Presently I was about, hobbling on a stick and reflecting that if I lived to be eighty I knew already exactly how it would feel. I haunted house-agents, got lists of suburban villas, and spent some weeks, as my strength returned, in searching for a new home. Finally I found a suitable house, modest but comfortable, isolated and yet one of a row. It was 12, Tennison Road, South Norwood. There we settled down, and there I made my first effort to live entirely by my pen. It soon became evident that I had been playing the game well within my powers, and that I should have no difficulty in providing a sufficient income. It seemed as if I had settled into a life which might be continuous, and I little foresaw that an unexpected blow was about to fall upon us, and that we were not at the end, but really at the beginning, of our wanderings.

I could not know this, however, and I settled down with a stout heart to do some literary work worthy of the name. The difficulty of the Holmes work was that every story really needed as clear-cut and original a plot as a longish book would do. One cannot without effort spin plots at such a rate. They are apt to become thin or to break. I was determined, now that I had no longer the excuse of absolute pecuniary pressure, never again to write anything which was not as good as I could possibly make it, and therefore I would not write a Holmes story without a worthy plot and without a problem which interested my own mind, for that is the first requisite before you can interest anyone else. If I have been able to sustain this character for a long time, and if the public find, as they will find, that the last story is as good as the first, it is entirely due to the fact that I never, or hardly ever, forced a story. Some have thought there was a falling off in the stories, and the criticism was neatly expressed by a Cornish boatman who said to me, "I think, sir, when Holmes fell over that cliff he may not have killed himself, but, all the same, he was never quite the same man afterwards." I think, however, that if the reader began the series backwards, so that he brought a fresh mind to the last stories, he would agree with me that, though the general average may not be conspicuously high, still the last one is as good as the first.

"THE REFUGEES."

I was weary, however, of inventing plots, and I set myself now to do some work which would certainly be less remunerative but would be more ambitious from a literary point of view. I had long been attracted by the epoch of Louis the Fourteenth and by those Huguenots who were the French equivalents of our Puritans. I had a good knowledge of the memoirs of that date, and many notes already prepared, so that it did not take me long to write "The Refugees." It has stood the acid test of time very well, so I may say that it was a success. Soon after its appearance it was translated into French, and my dear old mother, herself a great French scholar, had the joy when she visited Fontainebleau to hear the official guide tell the drove of tourists that if they really wanted to know about the Court of the great monarch they would find the clearest and most accurate account in an Englishman's book, "The Refugees." I expect the guide would have been considerably astonished had he then and there been kissed by an elderly English lady, but it was an experience which he must have narrowly missed. I used in this book, also, a great deal which was drawn from Parkman, that great but neglected historian, who was in my opinion the greatest serious writer that America has produced.

During this Norwood interval I was certainly working hard, for besides "The Refugees" I wrote "The Great Shadow," a booklet which I should put in the very front of my work for merit, and two other little books on a very inferior plane—"The Parasite" and "Beyond the City." The latter was of a domestic type unusual for me. It was pirated in New York just before the new Copyright Act came into force, and the rascal publisher, thinking that a portrait—any sort of portrait—of the author would look well upon the cover, and being quite ignorant of my identity, put a very pretty and well-dressed young woman as my presentment. I still preserve a copy of this most flattering representation. All these books had some decent success, though none of it was remarkable. It was still the Sherlock Holmes stories for which the public clamoured, and these from time to time I endeavoured to supply. At last, after I had done two series of them, I saw that I was in danger of having my hand forced, and of being entirely identified with what I regarded as a lower stratum of literary achievement. Therefore, as a sign of my resolution, I determined to end the life of my hero.

THE "DEATH" OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

The idea was in my mind when I went with my wife for a short holiday in Switzerland,

in the course of which we walked down the Lauterbrunnen Valley. I saw there the wonderful falls of Reichenbach, a terrible place, and one that I thought would make a worthy tomb for poor Sherlock, even if I buried my banking account along with him. So there I laid him, fully determined that he should stay there—as, indeed, for some years he did. I was amazed at the concern expressed by the public. They say that a man is never properly appreciated until he is dead, and the general protest against my summary execution of Holmes taught me how many and how numerous were his friends. "You Brute" was the beginning of the letter of remonstrance which one lady sent me, and I expect she spoke for others besides herself. I heard of many who wept. I fear I was utterly callous myself, and only glad to have a chance of opening out into new fields of imagination, for the temptation of high prices made it difficult to get one's thoughts away from Holmes.

That Sherlock Holmes was anything but mythical to many is shown by the fact that I have had many letters addressed to him with requests that I forward them. Watson has also had a number of letters in which he has been asked for the address or for the autograph of his more brilliant *confrère*. A Press-cutting agency wrote to Watson asking whether Holmes would not wish to subscribe. When Holmes retired several elderly ladies were ready to keep house for him, and one sought to ingratiate herself by assuring me that she knew all about bee-keeping and could "segregate the queen." I had considerable offers also for Holmes if he would examine and solve various family mysteries. Once the offer—from Poland—was that I should myself go, and my reward was practically left to my own judgment. I had judgment enough, however, to avoid it altogether.

The "death" of Sherlock Holmes.

From the famous drawing by Sidney Paget, published in this magazine thirty years ago.

I have often been asked whether I had myself the qualities which I depicted, or whether I was merely the Watson that I look. Of course, I am well aware that it is one thing to grapple with a practical problem and quite another thing when you are allowed to solve it under your own conditions. I have no delusions about that. At the same time a man cannot spin a character out of his own inner consciousness and make it really life-like unless he has some possibilities of that character within him—which is a dangerous admission for one who has drawn so many villains as I. In my poem "The Inner Room," describing our multiplex personality, I say:—

"There are others who are sitting,
Grim as doom,
In the dim, ill-boding shadow
Of my room.
Darkling figures, stern or quaint,
Now a savage, now a saint,
Showing fitfully and faint
In the gloom."

Among those figures there may perhaps be an astute detective also, but I find that in real life in order to find him I have to inhibit all the others and get into a mood when there is no one in the room but he. Then I get results, and have several times solved problems by Holmes's methods after the police have been baffled. Yet I must admit that in ordinary life I am by no means observant, and that I have to throw myself into an artificial frame of mind before I can weigh evidence and anticipate the sequence of events.

"SHERLOCKOLMITOS."

People have often asked me whether I knew the end of a Holmes story before I

started it. Of course I did. One could not possibly steer a course if one did not know one's destination. The first thing is to get your idea. Having got that key-idea, one's next task is to conceal it, and lay emphasis upon everything which can make for a different explanation. Holmes, however, can see all the fallacies of the alternatives, and arrives more or less dramatically at the true solution by steps which he can describe and justify. He shows his powers by what the South Americans now call "Sherlock-olmitos," which means clever little deductions, which often have nothing to do with the matter in hand, but impress the reader with a general sense of power. The same effect is gained by his offhand allusion to other cases. Heaven knows how many titles I have thrown about in a casual way, and how many readers have begged me to satisfy their curiosity as to "Rigoletto and His Abominable Wife," "The Adventure of the Tired Captain," or "The Curious Experience of the Patterson Family in the Island of Uffa"! Once or twice, as in "The Adventure of the Second Stain," which in my judgment is one of the neatest of the stories, I did actually use the title years before I wrote a story to correspond.

THERE are some questions concerned with particular stories which turn up periodically from every quarter of the globe. In "The Adventure of the Priory School" Holmes remarks in his offhand way that by looking at a bicycle track on a damp moor one can say which way it was heading. I had so many remonstrances upon this point, varying from pity to anger, that I took out my bicycle and tried. I had imagined that the observations of the way in which the track of the hind wheel overlaid the track of the front one when the machine was not running dead straight would show the direction. I found that my correspondents were right and I was wrong, for this would be the same whichever way the cycle was moving. On the other hand, the real solution was much simpler, for on an undulating moor the wheels make a deeper impression uphill and a more shallow one downhill; so Holmes was justified of his wisdom after all.

Sometimes I have got upon dangerous ground where I have taken risks through my own want of knowledge of the correct atmosphere. I have, for example, never been a racing man, and yet I ventured to write "Silver Blaze," in which the mystery depends upon the laws of training and racing. The story is all right, and Holmes may have been at the top of his form, but my ignorance cries aloud to heaven. I read an excellent and very damaging criticism of the story in some sporting paper, written clearly by a man who *did* know, in which he explained the exact penalties which would have come upon everyone concerned if they had acted as I described. Half would have been in jail and the other half warned off the Turf for ever. However, I have never been nervous about details, and one must be masterful sometimes. When an alarmed editor wrote to me once: "There is no second line of rails at that point," I answered: "I make one." On the other hand, there are cases where accuracy is essential.

I do not wish to be ungrateful to Holmes, who has been a good friend to me in many ways. If I have sometimes been inclined to weary of him, it is because his character admits of no light or shade. He is a calculating machine, and anything you add to that simply weakens the effect. Thus the variety of the stories must depend upon the romance and compact handling of the plots. I would say a word for Watson also, who in the course of seven volumes never shows one gleam of humour or makes one single joke. To make a real character one must sacrifice everything to consistency and remember Goldsmith's criticism of Johnson that "he would make the little fishes talk like whales."

I do not think that I ever realized what a living actual personality Holmes had become to the more guileless readers until I heard of the very pleasing story of the char-à-bancs of French schoolboys who, when asked what they wanted to see first in London, replied unanimously that they wanted to see Mr. Holmes's lodgings in Baker Street. Many have asked me which house it is, but that is a point which for excellent reasons I will not decide.

SHERLOCK HOLMES ON THE STAGE.

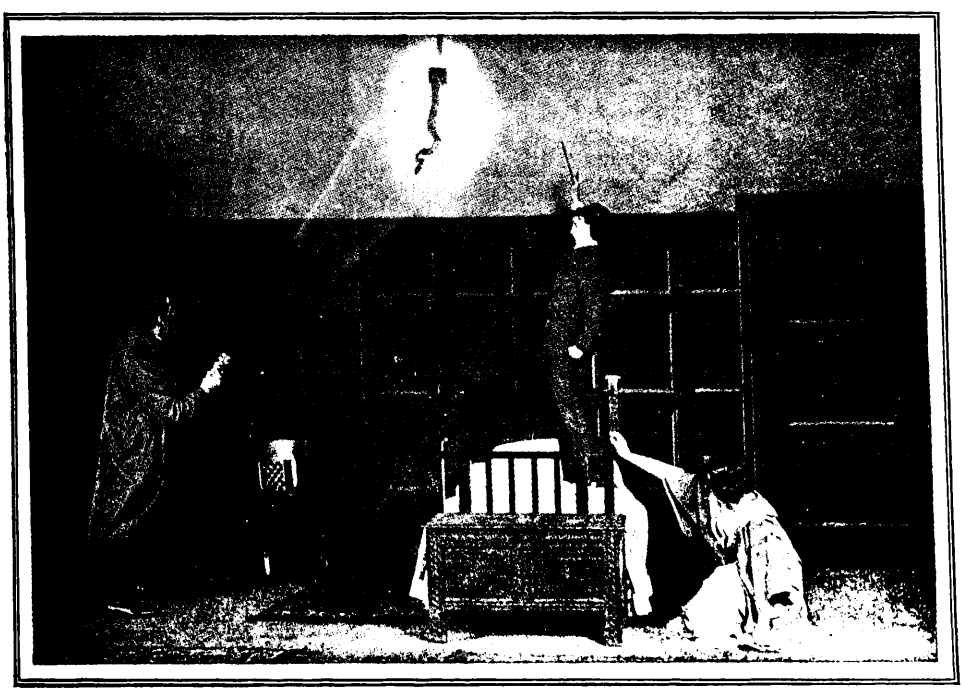
The impression that Holmes was a real person of flesh and blood may have been intensified by his frequent appearance upon the stage. After the withdrawal of my dramatization of "Rodney Stone" from a theatre upon which I held a six months' lease I determined to play a bold and energetic game, and certainly I never played a bolder. When I saw the course that things were taking I shut myself up and devoted my whole mind to making a sensational Sherlock Holmes drama. I wrote it in a week and called it "The Speckled Band," after the short story of that name. I do not think that I exaggerate if I say that within a fortnight of the one play shutting down I had a company working upon the rehearsals of a second one, which had been written in the interval. It was a considerable success. Lyn Harding, as the half epileptic and wholly formidable Dr. Grimesby Rylott, was most masterful, while

Saintsbury as Sherlock Holmes was also very good. Before the end of the run I had cleared off all that I had lost upon the boxing play, and I had created a permanent property of some value. It became a stock piece and is even now touring the country.

We had a fine rock boa to play the title-*rôle*, a snake which was the pride of my heart, so one can imagine my disgust when I saw that one critic ended his disparaging review by the words, "The crisis of the play was produced by the appearance of a palpably artificial serpent." I was inclined to offer him a goodly sum if he would undertake to go to bed with it. We had several snakes at different times, but they were none of them born actors and they were all inclined either to hang down from the hole in the wall like inanimate bell-pulls, or else to turn back through the hole and get even with the stage carpenter, who pinched their tails in order to make them more lively. Finally we used artificial snakes, and everyone, including the stage carpenter, agreed that it was more satisfactory.

H. A. Saintsbury, who has played Sherlock Holmes many hundreds of times.

This was the second Sherlock Holmes play. I should have spoken about the first, which was produced very much earlier—in fact, at the time of the African war. It was written and most wonderfully acted by William Gillette, the famous American. Since he used my characters and to some extent my plots, he naturally gave me a share in the undertaking, which proved to be very successful. "May I marry Holmes?" was one cable which I received from him when in the throes of composition. "You may marry or murder or do what you like with him," was my heartless reply. I was charmed both with the play, the acting, and the pecuniary result. I think that every man with a drop of artistic blood in his veins would agree that the latter consideration, though very welcome when it does arrive, is still the last of which he thinks.



H. A. Saintsbury as Sherlock Holmes in a thrilling scene from "The Speckled Band."

SIR JAMES BARRIE'S PARODY.

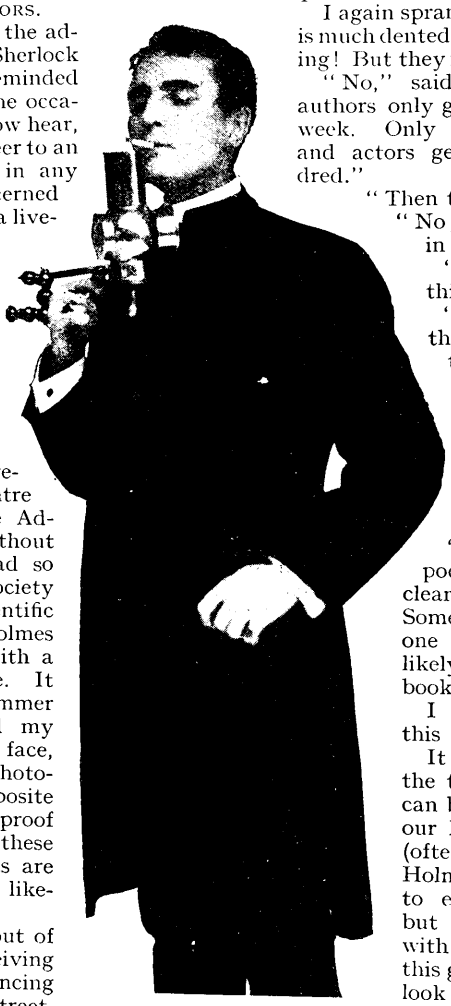
It is known to but few that Sir James Barrie paid his respects to Sherlock Holmes in the rollicking parody now printed for the first time. It was really a gay gesture of resignation over the failure which he had encountered with a comic opera for which he undertook to write the libretto. I collaborated with him on this, but in spite of our joint efforts the piece fell flat. Whereupon Barrie sent me a parody on Holmes, written on the fly-leaves of one of his books. It ran thus :—

THE ADVENTURE OF THE TWO COLLABORATORS.

In bringing to a close the adventures of my friend Sherlock Holmes I am perforce reminded that he never, save on the occasion which, as you will now hear, brought his singular career to an end, consented to act in any mystery which was concerned with persons who made a livelihood by their pen. "I am not particular about the people I mix among for business purposes," he would say, "but at literary characters I draw the line."

We were in our rooms in Baker Street one evening. I was (I remember) by the centre table writing out "The Adventure of the Man Without a Cork Leg" (which had so puzzled the Royal Society and all the other scientific bodies of Europe), and Holmes was amusing himself with a little revolver practice. It was his custom of a summer evening to fire round my head, just shaving my face, until he had made a photograph of me on the opposite wall, and it is a slight proof of his skill that many of these portraits in pistol shots are considered admirable likenesses.

I happened to look out of the window, and, perceiving two gentlemen advancing rapidly along Baker Street, asked him who they were. He immediately lit his pipe, and, twisting himself on a chair into the figure 8, replied :—



William Gillette, the famous American actor, who scored a great success both here and in the States as the famous detective.

"They are two collaborators in comic opera, and their play has not been a triumph."

I sprang from my chair to the ceiling in amazement, and he then explained :—

"My dear Watson, they are obviously men who follow some low calling. That much even you should be able to read in their faces. Those little pieces of blue paper which they fling angrily from them are Durrant's Press Notices. Of these they have obviously hundreds about their person (see how their pockets bulge). They would not dance on them if they were pleasant reading."

I again sprang to the ceiling (which is much dented) and shouted: "Amazing! But they may be mere authors."

"No," said Holmes, "for mere authors only get one Press notice a week. Only criminals, dramatists, and actors get them by the hundred."

"Then they may be actors."

"No; actors would come in a carriage."

"Can you tell me anything else about them?"

"A great deal. From the mud on the boots of the tall one I perceive that he comes from South Norwood. The other is as obviously a Scotch author."

"How can you tell that?"

"He is carrying in his pocket a book called (I clearly see) 'Auld Licht Something.' Would anyone but the author be likely to carry about a book with such a title?"

I had to confess that this was improbable.

It was now evident that the two men (if such they can be called) were seeking our lodgings. I have said (often) that my friend Holmes seldom gave way to emotion of any kind, but he now turned livid with passion. Presently this gave place to a strange look of triumph.

"Watson," he said, "that big fellow has for years taken the credit for my most remarkable doings, but at last I have him—at last!"

Up I went to the ceiling, and when I returned the strangers were in the room.

"I perceive, gentlemen," said Mr. Sherlock Holmes, "that you are at present afflicted by an extraordinary novelty."

The handsomer of our visitors asked in amazement how he knew this, but the big one only scowled.

"You forget that you wear a ring on your fourth finger," replied Mr. Holmes, calmly.

I was about to jump to the ceiling when the big brute interposed.

"That Tommy-rot is all very well for the public, Holmes," said he, "but you can drop it before me. And, Watson, if you go up to the ceiling again I shall make you stay there."

John Barrymore — another American Sherlock Holmes.

Here I observed a curious phenomenon. My friend Sherlock Holmes *shrank*. He became small before my eyes. I looked longingly at the ceiling, but dared not.

"Let us cut the first four pages," said the big man, "and proceed to business. I want to know why——"

"Allow me," said Mr. Holmes, with some of his old courage. "You want to know why the public does not go to your opera."

"Exactly," said the other, ironically, "as you perceive by my shirt stud." He added more gravely: "And as you can only find out in one way I must insist on your witnessing an entire performance of the piece."

It was an anxious moment for me. I shuddered, for I knew that if Holmes went I should have to go with him. But my friend had a heart of gold. "Never," he cried, fiercely. "I will do anything for you save that."

"Your continued existence depends on it," said the big man, menacingly.

"I would rather melt into air," replied Holmes, proudly taking another chair. "But I can tell you why the public don't go to your piece without sitting the thing out myself."

"Why?"

"Because," replied Holmes, calmly, "they prefer to stay away."

A dead silence followed that extraordinary remark. For a moment the two intruders gazed with awe upon the man who had unravelled their mystery so wonderfully. Then drawing their knives——

Holmes grew less and less, until nothing was left save a ring of smoke which slowly circled to the ceiling.

The last words of great men are often noteworthy. These were the last words of Sherlock Holmes: "Fool, fool! I have kept you in luxury for years. By my help you have ridden extensively in cabs, where no author was ever seen before. *Henceforth you will ride in buses!*"

The brute sank into a chair aghast.

The other author did not turn a hair.

Dennis Neilson-Terry as Holmes in "The Crown Diamonds: An Evening with Sherlock Holmes."

To A. Conan Doyle,
from his friend,
J. M. Barrie.

This parody, the best of all the numerous parodies, may be taken as an example not only of the author's wit, but of his debonair courage, for it was written immediately after our joint failure, which at the moment was a bitter thought for both of us. There is, indeed, nothing more miserable than a theatrical failure, for you feel how many others who have backed you have been affected by it. It was, I am glad to say, my only experience of it, and I have no doubt that Barrie could say the same.

Before I leave the subject of the many impersonations of Holmes I may say that all of them,

and all the drawings, are very unlike my own original idea of the man. I saw him as very tall—"over six feet, but so excessively lean that he seemed considerably taller," said "A Study in Scarlet." He had, as I imagined him, a thin, razor-like face, with a great hawk's-bill of a nose, and two small eyes set close together on either side of it. Such was my conception. It chanced, however, that poor Sidney finally discussed and a small sum offered for them by a French company it seemed treasure trove, and I was very glad to accept. Afterwards I had to buy them back again at exactly ten times what I had received, so the deal was a disastrous one. But now they have been done by the Stoll Company with Eille Norwood as Holmes, and it was worth all the expense to get so fine a production. Norwood has since played the part

Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes in a scene from the play at the Princes Theatre, London.

The photograph shows the making of a wax model of Holmes with which the famous detective traps his great rival.

Paget, who, before his premature death, drew all the original pictures, had a younger brother, whose name, I think, was Harold, who served him as a model. The handsome Harold took the place of the more powerful but uglier Sherlock, and perhaps from the point of view of my lady readers it was as well. The stage has followed the type set up by the pictures.

Films, of course, were unknown when the stories appeared, and when these rights were on the stage and won the approbation of the London public. He has that rare quality which can only be described as glamour, which compels you to watch an actor eagerly even when he is doing nothing. He has the brooding eye which excites expectation, and he has also a quite unrivalled power of disguise. My only criticism of the films is that they introduce telephones, motor-cars, and other luxuries of which the Victorian Holmes never dreamed.

(*To be continued.*)

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.—9.

The BORGIA TOUCH

BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

THE whole Riviera from Hyères to Monaco lay basking in a glorious flood of spring sunshine. From her balcony Judith leaned, in an exquisite *négligé*, and sang joyfully the strain of the Neapolitan ditty which was then the air of the moment in the *cafés*—a song of love, and flowers, and passion. She looked over her shoulder and called back through the French windows :—

"Hurry, Joseph! I've something to show you."

Londe presently appeared. He had not finished dressing, and he wore a silk dressing gown, a gorgeous purple-coloured garment, with an embroidered girdle about his waist. He turned his face seaward for a moment and drew in a long breath of the lemon-scented air. Afterwards he looked down at the little quay, close to which a yacht lay at anchor.

"The south wind has gone, then," he observed, with satisfaction. "I like it better when the *Judith* lies close at hand."

"Pooh!" she laughed. "You never forget."

He turned and seated himself at the round breakfast table, whose dainty appurtenances glittered in the sunlight.

"Well, what is it you want to show me?" he asked, absently, watching the curve of Judith's white arm as she lifted the coffee-pot.

With the other hand she pushed an illustrated paper across to him, and pointed proudly to the open page.

"Me!" she exclaimed. "What do you think of me, Joseph? Am I not beautiful?"

He stared at the full-length picture for a moment, blankly. It was a photograph of Judith, taken at a happy moment—Judith exquisitely gowned, brilliant, happy. A man in tennis clothes was standing talking to her. It was entitled, "Mrs. Broadbent and the Vicomte d'Aix on the tennis courts at Monte Carlo."

"You let them take this?" he muttered, jumping up and staring at the picture with fascinated eyes.

"Why not?" she answered, happily. "See how beautiful I look, Joseph. It was a Poiret gown. And the lace hat—Elise says herself that no one can wear those hats as I do."

"How shall you like to wear the asylum clothes again?" he asked, roughly.

"Asylum! Joseph, don't be horrible!" she protested.

"I mean it," he insisted, his voice shaking with suppressed anger. "Coarse flannel next your skin, a bath with yellow soap once a week, and a serge covering like a sack to wrap around your body."

She began to sob. She was like a child who has been scolded.

"Don't you suppose they'll see that picture in London, and know that we are back in Monte Carlo?" he went on, bluntly. "Don't you remember that we have enemies, the business of whose life it is to track us down? Worton, through whom I might have been a sane man at this moment, if you hadn't interfered, with your accursed susceptibility; Worton and the grubbing cipher-reader, who escaped at the last moment, and the girl who had a father. Don't you know they are hunting for us, all of them? They are fools, but even fools blunder into

success sometimes. They were here looking for us only in January, because of that affair of the young man. We have had a rest—two months, practically in hiding. Now, directly we get back again where there are some interests in life for me, you beckon to them, back in England, to come and start the chase again. You fool! Can't you realize that there isn't one of them who won't recognize that picture? Your brain must be shrivelling day by day."

She sprang away from him. Her beautiful eyes were still wet with tears and her lips quivering.

"I am very sorry, Joseph," she sobbed. "You know that sometimes I don't think. It seems to get more difficult every day, and I cannot remember. Of course it was very foolish of me. That awful place! It comes back to me now. Horrible! Horrible!"

She wrung her hands. He contemplated her with gloomy satisfaction. Her agony pleased him.

"You're getting worse," he pronounced. "You're getting more childish every day. The world fades away from you."

"It is true," she faltered. "There are times when I cannot think, when I feel the clouds coming. Save me, Joseph! You are so clever. You can do something!"

He remained motionless and thoughtful.

"Nobody can do anything for you," he pronounced, pitilessly. "Your days for thought are past. You must cling to the sensations of the moment. Make the best of them, for there is nothing else in life for you. If, by any chance," he added, "they get you back again through this"—he touched the picture—"and they take away all your soft clothes and luxuries, you will be a screaming lunatic in a week."

"Don't let them take me, Joseph," she pleaded. "Don't let them!"

He sat with clenched fists, gazing over the Mediterranean, seeing nothing of its gorgeous patches of blue, the pools of light, and glittering jewel-strewn sheen. He tasted the whole bitterness of foreknowledge.

"Of what account are you, after all?" he muttered. "Here am I, a different order of being altogether. Fit for any position in the world, save for that one tiny clot of madness, one evil pin-prick, which nothing can move. I could be a master of science. I have all the knowledge those others strive for. I have vision. I was made to be their master. And here I am all the time dodging fate, with the cunning of a lunatic, waiting for the hand upon my shoulder, the grim sentence of my fellows! I, their chief, the lord of all knowledge!"

She was almost in hysterics now.

"Don't let them take me, Joseph!" she cried, again and again.

He pointed to the paper.

"You!" he muttered. "What do you matter? A butterfly without a soul, a thing of beauty, all husk and show, risking hell for both of us to gratify your vanity."

"I didn't think, indeed I didn't think," she pleaded. "The camera-man was there. It was all over before I could turn."

He waved her away. He was thinking again.

"They will be here directly," he reflected. "The bespectacled pedant—a fool still, but getting wiser with the experience of many failures—the girl with the angry eyes, and the aristocratic policeman. They are none of them very clever, but they will get us some day. They hang on. They will be here, perhaps this morning."

"You are cleverer than they are, Joseph," she moaned. "You always win. There is the car ready, the yacht, or shall we fly? We can fly from Nice."

"My time for winning draws near to an end," he declared, with a somewhat ominous note of prophecy in his tone. "I have heard the warning. I have heard the footsteps amongst the hills, the footsteps upon wool, passing over the hills, coming downwards, always downwards. What have I done evil? I, who saved thousands of lives. It is that missing atom of brain. If I had that I should know."

"I was a fool," she moaned.

Suddenly the villa gates swung to. The sound of horses' hoofs reached their ears from the drive. She lifted her head eagerly, expectantly. All the gloom and sorrow had passed. She clapped her hands.

"It is Armand," she cried. "It is the Vicomte. How beautifully he rides, and what a lovely horse!"

Londe rose to his feet.

"Amuse yourself with him for a time," he advised. "I must go and think. I must decide whether we disappear or face the storm."

ANN stepped off the train at Monte Carlo with fifty pounds in her pocket, a single trunk containing in chief her two evening gowns, one afternoon toilette, and a revolver. She engaged a room at a small hotel, took out her tickets for the Salon Privé and the Sporting Club, and paid a visit to an official of the place. He received her politely, but without enthusiasm.

"You will not know my name," she said, "but I am, as a matter of fact, the advanced guard of a small Commission who are coming out here to try to effect the arrest of a

dangerous criminal whom we believe to be living in the place."

It was an unfortunate start. Officials at Monte Carlo do not like to be told that their Principality could possibly harbour members of the criminal fraternity.

"Indeed, mademoiselle!" was the civil but cold response. "Perhaps you can tell me the names of the members of this Commission to which you allude?"

"That man who calls himself Broadbent is a murderer and a lunatic," she declared. "He was responsible for the death of one young man here a few months ago. We came over then directly we read about the case, but both Mr. and Mrs. Broadbent had disappeared."

"Mademoiselle," the official said, patiently, "the circumstances concerning the death of that young man have been fully inquired into. There is not the slightest foundation for the statement which you have just made."

"You let them take this?" he muttered, staring at the picture with fascinated eyes.

"One is Sir Francis Worton," she replied, "who is the head of the Home Branch of the English Secret Service. He is bringing an emissary from Scotland Yard with him, and there is also another gentleman, Mr. Daniel Rocke, a friend of Sir Francis."

"Do you know the name of this supposed criminal?" the official asked.

"He passes under the name of Broadbent," she confided. "His wife's picture was in the *Tatler* this week."

Her companion smiled a little superciliously.

"It happens," he remarked, "that we have recently investigated the antecedents of the gentleman in question. We discovered nothing against him. Mr. and Mrs. Broadbent are very valued and welcome visitors to the Principality."

Ann frowned.

Ann checked a somewhat hasty reply.

"Why did they leave the place, then, the day after the young man's suicide?" she demanded.

"Their leaving the place was a perfectly natural happening," was the civil but cold rejoinder. "Mrs. Broadbent was naturally very much upset, and the doctor ordered her an immediate change. As to their being in hiding, they were, I believe, in Rome the whole of the time. I remember now that one of the gentlemen of whom you have been speaking came to make inquiries here. We told him then that we could discover nothing against either this gentleman or his wife. They have come back here quite openly, and until official representations are

made to me, I shall do nothing to interfere with their comfort."

"Will you permit me, sir, to tell you the history of this man and his wife?" Ann persisted.

"Another time, mademoiselle," was the somewhat impatient answer. "There are demands upon me this morning."

"The man has been in a lunatic asylum," she declared, indignantly. "He has committed three murders."

"These incidents do not appear in the *dossier* of James Broadbent which we have," the official assured her, smiling. "Mademoiselle, you will permit me to wish you good morning. I will receive your friends when they arrive, if they should care to pay me a visit."

Ann was repulsed. For the first time she doubted the wisdom of the instinct which had made her leave London at a moment's notice, upon seeing the picture. Daniel, as it chanced, had been away in Somersetshire, Sir Francis was in Ireland, and no one at Scotland Yard was willing to move without more definite information than she was able to give. She had sent off desperate telegrams, and herself caught the first possible train. Now that she was here it seemed that there was nothing she could do. For the first time, too, she appreciated the almost brilliant cunning of the man who had escaped them so often, who did not even take a pseudonym with which he was not prepared to link a perfectly connected and irreproachable past. She was inclined to be depressed as she walked disconsolately through the clean, attractive streets. She had some idea of going back to her hotel. Then a seat outside the Café de Paris, a smiling waiter, her favourite air from "Thaïs," played by the red-coated band, decided her fate. She sat down and ordered a Dubonnet, herself becoming one of the gay throng. And at the next table sat Londe!

HE was seated sideways to her, a little turned away, and she realized from the first the futility of any attempt at escape. She was content to study him for a few minutes. He was perfectly dressed, in the negligent fashion of the place, in well-fitting grey tweeds, grey Homburg hat, and brown shoes. His beard was carefully trimmed, his complexion and alert manner showed no signs of decadence, nor of evil conscience. His tie was fastened by a single pearl pin. He was talking eagerly and forcefully to his two companions, men of middle age and professional appearance, who seemed to listen to him with the utmost respect. They were speaking in French, and, so far as Ann could gather, of some abstruse scientific subject. She listened in wonder to Londe's unhesitating stream of conversation, his accent and gestures. He was evidently holding forth on some subject on which he was an authority. Then suddenly, without any warning, he turned round in his chair and looked her full in the face. He rose at once to his feet and bowed courteously. There was no shadow of embarrassment or disturbance in his manner.

"My dear young lady!" he exclaimed. "This is most delightful—a charming surprise. Permit me to present Monsieur le Professeur Trenchard, of Paris. Docteur Coppet, the resident physician here. Miss Ann Lancaster."

Londe's manner was perfect. There was no escape, scarcely an alternative. In less than a minute Ann found herself seated between the other two men, her glass of Dubonnet replenished, the guest of the man who had killed her father, the man whom she knew to be a lunatic with death always at his finger-tips—the man whom she had come to destroy.

"You are fortunate in your acquaintance with Mr. Broadbent," Docteur Coppet remarked to her in an undertone. "He is certainly one of the most brilliant men of the day. Professeur Trenchard has travelled all the way from Paris to see him, after studying a paper of his on 'comparative lunacy.'"

"I have heard that he was an authority on the subject," Ann murmured.

"The greatest—I should say the greatest," the doctor confided, enthusiastically. "It is a privilege to have been able to make his acquaintance here."

Londe brought his scientific discussion to an abrupt conclusion and turned courteously to Ann.

"Are your friends—er—with you, Miss Lancaster?" he inquired.

"Not yet," she answered. "They are following—perhaps to-morrow."

"I see," he murmured. "You are here for the purpose of making preliminary investigations."

"Precisely."

"And you expect them to-morrow, did I understand you to say?"

"They may be delayed until the next day," she replied. "They are certainly coming."

"And in the meantime you are alone?"

"I am alone," Ann admitted.

"You must dine with us to-night at the Villa," Londe suggested. "I am sure my wife will be charmed."

The sound of music and the gay voices around seemed suddenly to die away. She felt herself struggling in the throes of a horrible nightmare. It seemed incredible

Londe rose at once and bowed courteously. "My dear young lady!" he exclaimed. "This is most delightful—a charming surprise."

that this man, the horror of her life, should be sitting here, mixing with his fellow-creatures, light-heartedly, with dignity, and even condescension, that he should be asking her without the slightest sign of hesitation to accept his hospitality. It was grotesque and terrifying.

"I am afraid——" she began.

"I shall take no refusal," Londe interrupted, cheerfully. "To-night, as it happens, we entertain a little company of friends. Monsieur le Professeur, Monsieur le Docteur here, the Vicomte d'Aix—well, there may be others, but of these I know. We certainly shall not leave you alone at your hotel."

"My experience of your hospitality ——" she began, trying not to tremble.

He laughed at her.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "life is a great game, and to taste its full savour one should be prepared for the unexpected, one should have the courage always to face it. You shall be fetched at eight o'clock by the Vicomte d'Aix. He is a harmless youth who adores my wife. He shall also conduct you home. May I know at what hotel?"

"The St. James's," she murmured.

"It is arranged," Londe declared, rising to his feet.

A moment later she was wondering whether it was not a dream. Three distinguished-looking men—Londe himself, perhaps, with his burly frame and assured air, the most noticeable—were strolling away towards a waiting motor-car. She watched him—the central figure—with absorbing curiosity. He was apparently well known. A gendarme saluted, a lady bowed, a man and woman waved their salute from across the road. He bore himself with dignity—almost with condescension—her father's murderer, a lunatic criminal, a man who had baffled the police a dozen times and to secure whom they were even now rushing hot-foot across France. She herself had travelled without food or sleep to urge the police on to his track. And he apparently welcomed her with pleasure, had asked her to dine at the Villa, had behaved with the courtesy of a man of the world, had ignored with the most perfect diplomacy the blood feud which lay between them!

The remainder of the day passed restlessly. There came no word from Daniel at the hotel, not even the telegram she had expected to let her know that he had started. At seven o'clock she changed into the more impressive of her simple evening toilettes. She made up her mind that if the Vicomte called for her she would go. She would leave word at the office where she was, and if there were no other guests she would decline to stay. There could be no risk. The Vicomte was a well-known young Frenchman of fashion. She would go with him and return with him. Even Daniel could not disapprove, and she would be able to spy out the land. She would be able to decide whether his attitude was a magnificent bluff, or whether it were really his intention to stand firm, to entrench himself behind his great fame, and risk the whole truth becoming known.

At eight o'clock she descended to the lounge, and a few minutes later a very elegantly turned-out young man, whom she recognized by his picture as the Vicomte, entered and, after looking around, approached her, hat in hand.

"I have the honour to address Mademoiselle Lancaster?" he inquired.

"That is my name," she admitting, rising. "I suppose you are the Vicomte d'Aix?"

He bowed low.

"I have the privilege to escort you to the Villa Violette," he announced.

"I am quite ready," she replied.

So far he was entirely canonical. She took her place by his side in the small but luxurious limousine. They drove off in silence.

"You are very well acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Broadbent?" Ann inquired, presently.

"I can scarcely call myself an old friend," he admitted, "but I visit them a great deal. I think that Mme. Broadbent is the most beautiful woman I have ever seen in my life."

"I shall be interested to meet her again," Ann observed.

"She is like a beautiful flower unfolding a little farther every day," the young man continued, enthusiastically. "She is entrancing."

"How do you get on with her husband?" Ann asked, bluntly.

The young man's attitude showed that he regarded the question as not being altogether in the best of taste.

"Monsieur Broadbent is a man of science," he pointed out. "I respect him greatly. We are not on intimate terms. I do not call him my friend."

"Do you know whether they are leaving Monte Carlo soon?" his companion inquired.

"I have heard no mention of their doing so," the Vicomte replied. "I trust not."

At the Villa they were received with some ceremony. A butler welcomed them in the hall. Two other menservants were in evidence. An irreproachable-looking maid took charge of Ann. The whole atmosphere of the place was normal. In the little drawing-room her last apprehensions vanished. The Professeur from Paris was

The sunlight was shining full into the room, giving a strange impression of debauchery to the remains of the dessert, the half-filled wine glasses.

already there, the local doctor, Londe and his wife.

Ann gave a little gasp as she shook hands with her hostess. The Vicomte had not exaggerated. Judith, in her gown of pale blue velvet, a rope of pearls around her neck, her beautiful hair becomingly arranged, youth and health alight in her face, was indescribable. She seemed scarcely more than twenty-five years of age, and she had the conquering presence of a woman at whose feet the world lay. Her welcome to Ann was kindly but indifferent. She had the air of never having seen her before. They went in to dinner almost at once.

For ever afterwards that meal remained a hazy memory with Ann. Its appurtenances were all, of their kind, perfect—the lighting, the food, the wine, the noiseless service. One or other of the guests talked to her and she replied, glibly enough, but mechanically. She could not keep her eyes away from Londe. He was at once the perfect host, the savant, the courtier. He kept Professeur Trenchard interested, at times almost excited, yet he never allowed the general conversation to flag. He dropped a valuable hint to the doctor as to one of his cases, explained minutely the only safe system at roulette by the use of which heavy loss was impossible, and smilingly acknowledged that his own large winnings were solely a matter of chance, that he had not the patience himself to play upon any system at all. The meal drew to an end. At Londe's request coffee and liqueurs were served at the table. With only two women, he suggested, an adjournment was unsociable. A little haze of cigarette smoke hung around the table. Conversation grew louder at one end, softer at the other. The Vicomte was leaning towards Judith. Her eyes shone like brilliant but unspeaking stars through the haze. . . . And then Ann was suddenly conscious that she was struggling against a curiously potent sense of sleepiness. The voices around her died away, became louder again, and then receded like the waves of the sea. Her eyes ached, her head drooped. She felt herself mumbling an apology. She lurched a little forward. Once more the voices had gone. There was silence—relief.

THE awakening was the most wonderful thing she had ever known. It came suddenly and without a start, just as though she had opened her eyes after a long night's sleep in her own bed. She sat up and looked around her, dazed and incredulous. The most amazing thing of all was that she was still at the dinner table. The sunlight was shining full into the room, paling the electric light, giving a strange impression of debauchery to the remains of the dessert, the half-filled wine and liqueur glasses, the cigarette ashes on the plates. Opposite to her, as though aroused by her movement, the doctor opened his eyes and gazed wonderingly around. The Professeur followed suit. The Vicomte, with a little groan, staggered to his feet. Only two places at the table were empty—the places of Londe and his wife.

"Why, it's morning," the Vicomte exclaimed, with pitiful inadequacy.

"What is this thing which has happened to us all?" the Professeur cried.

Then they saw a piece of paper in front of Londe's place. The Professeur seized and read it aloud :—

> *"The Borgias provided sometimes strange entertainment for their guests. We, of the modern world, follow mildly in their footsteps. Both my wife and I, hating farewells, have chosen this means of bidding all our friends adieu, and to the Professeur particularly I bequeath this memory of the dreamless night which I trust he will spend, an example of the drug we were discussing this afternoon.—'Tartuffe.'"*

The Professeur was a man of science first and a human being afterwards. His mind was entirely occupied with his own sensations.

"It is amazing," he declared. "I must have gone off to sleep in ten seconds. I had no dreams. I have slept like a child."

"I have certainly lost some patients," the doctor grumbled. "It is eight o'clock, and I may have been wanted a dozen times. A foolish joke!"

"Joke!" the Vicomte repeated, miserably. "Mon Dieu! If it is true that they have gone I am a broken man."

Ann threw open the French windows. A little breath of flower-scented breeze swept in, mingled with the flavour of the sea. On the horizon the white hull of a yacht glittered in the sunshine. She pointed towards it.

"There is the real humour of the situation," she cried, bitterly. "The worst of it is that no one but myself can appreciate it."

The butler threw open the door.

"*Le petit déjeuner* is served upon the terrace, madame et messieurs," he announced.

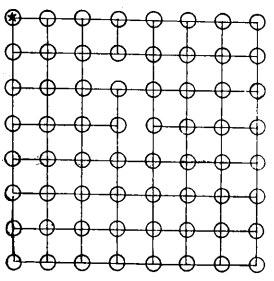
(The final story in this thrilling series will appear next month.)

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

680.—A MOTOR-RIDE PUZZLE.

SOMETIMES the introduction of an apparently trivial new condition will make an easy puzzle quite perplexing. Here is an example. The diagram represents a map of Puzzleland with sixty-four towns connected by the only available roads. A man, setting out from the town marked with a star, wishes to visit every town once and once only in sixteen straight runs, ending at the starting-point.



This would not be difficult except for the fact that two little roads near the centre are omitted, because they are not available, being under repair. How is the feat to be performed?

681.—THE QUEEN AND THE KNIGHT.

A WHITE queen and a black knight are placed at hazard on the chessboard. What are the odds that neither piece will be so placed that it can take the other? Some will guess that the chances must be greatly in favour of one piece attacking the other, while some will take quite the contrary view. What are the exact probabilities?

682.—A COMMON DIVISOR.

HERE is a puzzle that has lately been the subject of frequent inquiries by correspondents, only, of course, the actual figures are varied considerably. A country newspaper states that many schoolmasters have suffered in health in their attempts to master it! Perhaps this is merely a little journalistic exaggeration, for it is really a very simple question if only you have the cunning to hit on the method of attacking it. This is the question: Find a common divisor for the three numbers, 480,608, 508,811, and 723,217, so that the remainder shall be the same in every case.

683.—A CHARADE.

My *first* is seen in every house
Where cleanly people live,
And patronized by all who love
But little toil to give.

My *next* the fond, admiring youth
Begs of his lady fair;
Receives it as a pledge of love,
And treasures it with care.

My *whole* forms part of what must tend
To sweeten your repose;
And brings my rhyme, charade, and all,
In one word to a close.

684.—A DIGITAL DIFFICULTY.

I AM frequently asked by correspondents to present occasionally a puzzle with a deferred solution and give acknowledgment to the reader who first sends in the correct answer. As a matter of fact, my solutions are on the press some time before the reader sees the puzzles to which they refer, which is the reason why I am not able to comment on the ingenious answers sometimes sent to me. The solution to the following little problem I shall withhold until some reader sends me the correct answer, and the first to do so will be duly credited with his skill.

Arrange the ten digits, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0, in such order that they shall form a number that may be divided by every number from 2 to 18 without in any case a remainder. As an example, if I arrange them thus, 1 2 7 4 9 5 3 6 8 0, this number can be divided by 2, 3, 4, 5, and so on up to 16, without any remainder, but it breaks down at 17.

CHRISTMAS PROBLEMS—SOLUTIONS.

POCKET MONEY.

WHEN he left home Tomkins must have had three shillings and sixpence in his pocket.

THE STAIRCASE RACE.

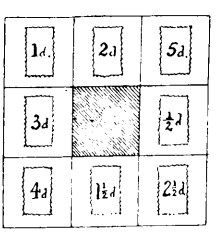
IF the staircase were such that each man would reach the top in a certain number of full leaps, without taking a reduced number at his last leap, the smallest possible number of risers would, of course, be 60 (that is, $3 \times 4 \times 5$). But the sketch showed us that A, taking three risers at a leap, has one odd step at the end; B, taking four at a leap, will have three only at the end; and C, taking five at a leap, will have four only at the finish. Therefore, we have to find the smallest number that, when divided by 3, leaves a remainder 1, when divided by 4 leaves 3, and when divided by 5 leaves a remainder 4. This number is 19. So there were 19 risers in all, only four being left out in the sketch.

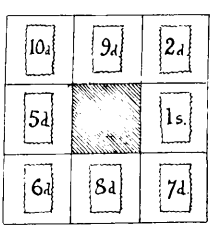
THE COST OF A SUIT.

THE cost of Melville's suit was £6 15s., the coat costing £3 7s. 6d., the trousers £2 5s., and the vest £1 2s. 6d.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.

THE smallest sum on the three sides is 8d., and the largest 1s. 9d., as here shown.



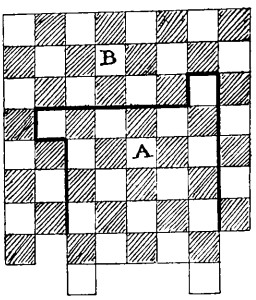


AN OLD ENIGMA.

THE word is BEDFELLOW, which exactly answers all the conditions.

MAKING A CHESSBOARD.

THE illustration shows how the linoleum may be cut into only two pieces so as to form a perfect chess-



board. Cut along the dark line. Then give piece A a quarter turn in a clockwise direction, and it will fit into B in a most satisfactory manner.

QUEER CHESS.

PLAY as follows :—

WHITE.	BLACK.
1. P—K B 3	1. P—K 3
2. K—B 2	2. Q—B 3
3. K—Kt 3	3. Q takes B P, ch.
4. K—R 4	4. B—K 2, checkmate.

THE CLOWN CLOCK.

THE time will be 3 hrs. $1\frac{4}{11}$ min. The minute-hand, on the wrong pinion, will thus have gone $16\frac{4}{11}$ minute points, while the hour-hand will have travelled $60 + 60 + 60 + 16\frac{4}{11} = 196\frac{4}{11}$ points. And $16\frac{4}{11}$ multiplied by 12 is $196\frac{4}{11}$. So the hands are together and the time indicated as stated.

THE NINE BARRELS.

THERE are 42 different arrangements. The positions of the 1 and 9 are fixed. Always place the 2 beneath the 1. Then, if the 3 be beneath the 2 there are 5 arrangements. If the 3 be to the right of the 1 there are 5 arrangements with 4 under the 2, 5 with 5 under the 2, 4 with 6 under 2, 2 with 7 under 2. We have thus 21 arrangements in all. But the 2 might have been always to the right of 1, instead of beneath, and then we get 21 reversed and reflected arrangements (practically similar), making 42 in all. Either the 4, 5, or 6 must always be in the centre.

THE SECRET OF THE "VANISHING LADY" ILLUSION.

(*See page* 61.)

THE proportions of the cabinet should be about 3ft. wide by 3ft. 6in. deep, and about 6ft. high. The curtains should be made of thin black material of the kind used by tailors for lining men's suits, and should be hooked *inside* the framework.

The cabinet thus constructed may be closely inspected without any clue to the trick being discovered. The simple, though not obvious, explanation is that the lady who enters the cabinet takes the necessary "apparatus" with her.

When the front curtain is drawn she takes from beneath her clothing a thin black curtain of the same material as the other curtains surrounding the cabinet, shakes out the folds, and hangs it up in front of her, as shown in the accompanying photograph.

The cabinet is then thrown open, and so long as she stands perfectly still behind this her presence cannot be detected. Provided the room is illuminated by artificial light, it is impossible to discern any difference in the size of the cabinet.

If the performer is a good showman, he will show the "empty" cabinet for a few seconds only, talking all the while, and then draw the curtain again.

The lady immediately rolls up the extra curtain (which occupies a very small space) and again conceals it on her person. Then she steps from the cabinet, makes her bow and her exit, and leaves the audience to resume their examination of the empty cabinet, and to puzzle out for themselves "how it is done."

To face end of Text.

CAN YOU FIND THEM?

If he has Health help him Keep it

THIS merry youngster possesses an asset of infinite value—sturdy good health. Help him to preserve it.

Physical growth and mental development during childhood depend entirely upon whether a child's diet is yielding sufficient nourishment.

Make "Ovaltine" the daily beverage for your children, for this unique preparation is 100 per cent. nourishment. It contains the concentrated nutriment extracted from creamy milk, fresh eggs and ripe barley malt—Nature's Tonic Foods. One cup of "Ovaltine" contains more nourishment than 7 cups of cocoa or 3 eggs.

Brain, nerves, and muscles are all reinforced by this delicious beverage. "Ovaltine" is equally beneficial for mother and father too.

OVALTINE

TONIC FOOD BEVERAGE

Builds-up Brain, Nerve and Body

Sold by all Chemists at 1/6, 2/6 and 4/6. It is economical to purchase the larger sized tins.

A. WANDER, Ltd., London, E.C.1.

'OVALTINE' RUSKS

Appetising, easily digested, and very nourishing. *2/6 per tin.*

P. 220

NEW HAIR GROWTH

Now is your chance to get Kotalko and see what it will do for YOUR HAIR. Try Kotalko if you are bald, if you have dandruff, if you are losing your hair. Legions of users report that Kotalko has succeeded when all else failed. *Good hair is priceless!*

KOTALKO
TRUE HAIR GROWER

Mr. Jack Evans, widely known athlete, was almost entirely bald, as shown in photo. He had been losing his hair a long time, he writes, but it started growing anew when he began with Kotalko. By using only three boxes of Kotalko he obtained full growth anew just as you see in the larger photo.

Miss Little, from a photograph.

Dear Sirs,—What Kotalko has done for me is nothing short of wonderful.

Several years ago I lost all my hair.

My head was bare and shiny just like the back of my hand.

I had been under a hair specialist and a doctor, but all in vain.

One day, on seeing your advertisement, I decided to try Kotalko, and I am simply delighted that I did so, for I now have a head of beautiful curly, silk-like hair, which is admired by everyone.

Kotalko has certainly proved itself a true hair grower.

(Signed) MARY LITTLE.

30,000 TEST BOXES!

Do you know that when your hair falls out, or comes out on the comb, the roots DO NOT come also. They remain in the scalp, and in very many cases can be invigorated and aided to grow new hair again even after a long time. Be sure to try Kotalko.

Mr. P. Tucker, from a photograph.

Torrington, N. Devon.

After trying different treatments without result, I was very disappointed, and thought I should be bald all my life, or else have to wear a wig.

Then I read about Kotalko, and decided to give it a trial. Please bear in mind that I was quite bald and my head was as shiny as could be when I started using your compound.

After I had used about two tins I found I had got hair coming all over my head. I continued to use it, and now I have got a good head of hair again, as shown in the photograph.—Yours very truly,

(Signed) P. TUCKER.

Are You Losing Hair, or Bald?

You may save time by purchasing a full-size box of Kotalko at a busy chemist's almost anywhere. Accept nothing else. Or if you wish, you may send sixpence in stamps and receive from us a TESTING BOX of KOTALKO post-paid. Please fill out the coupon or copy it on letter. Only one box for one person. Cut out this advertisement. It may not appear again.

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J. HART BRITTAIN, Ltd.,
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Or Copy It.

Please send me, post paid, Testing Box of KOTALKO with directions, for which I enclose 6d. in payment.

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Barratts are sole makers of these remarkably economical, good-looking boots. They have been imitated, but only Barratts experience and careful experiment have succeeded in producing a Double-Sole Boot equal in appearance and not appreciably heavier than an ordinary town boot. The "clump" sole, attached during making, does not impair flexibility. It is easily removed when it requires renewal without disturbing the main sole, the welts, or the insole. These important parts are always kept intact and damp-proof, preventing the insole rotting. Double Wear is certain. All the boot is built to wear well:—First grade supple box calf uppers, solid leather stiffeners, solid leather insoles and Double Soles of best English sole leather stitched on handsewn principles, all give comfortable dry wear for remarkably lengthy periods. Made in Derby (as illustrated) or Balmoral pattern (Style 1614). Direct ordering from factory by post cuts out all middlemen's superfluous profits. Double Wear halves your boot bills.

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Overseas Extra. **Style 1655.**

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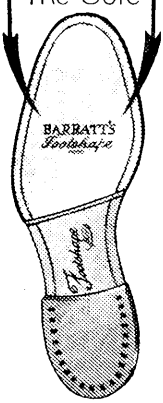

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FOR over fifty years a tin, tube or bottle of "Vaseline" Petroleum Jelly has been indispensable to every well-organised house.

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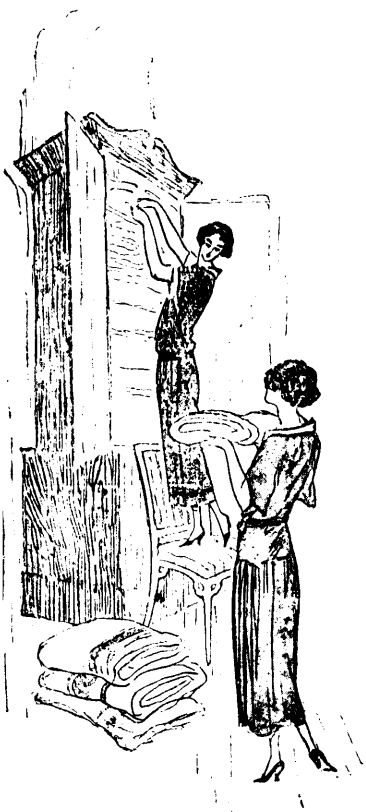

When you snuggle down into bed on a chilly winter night, you bless the warm, fleecy blankets that enfold you in soft comfort. Washed with Lux in the Spring, they are as good as new, not one harsh or brittle strand in any of them.

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